



# REGIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

October 2008

## *RPA Board Members*

*President: Amelia Wilson, Vice-president: Joe Engbeck, Treasurer: Pete Wilson, Secretary: Martha Martin  
Judy Bank, Martha Breed, Tim Gordon, Hulet Hornbeck, Martha Martin, Kathleen Nimr, Carroll Williams*



## MEASURE WW NEEDS YOUR VOTE AND YOUR HELP

Your help is needed! RPA members in particular, and all East Bay residents will have an opportunity to support our local and regional parks in a crucial way. In the November election, Measure WW on the November 4<sup>th</sup> ballot in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties will help protect and enhance our regional parks by simply extending the terms of the regional park bond act that voters approved in 1988. No tax increase needed.

Measure WW has something in it for almost everyone. We feel confident that RPA members know how important this Measure really is. It provides funds to city park and recreation departments, and makes it possible to acquire more regional park land and trails for walking, hiking, and biking as well as for environmental maintenance, the protection and renewal of our urban creeks, the rehabilitation of aging park facilities, and wildlife habitat restoration. For a complete project list, please visit [www.yesforparks.org](http://www.yesforparks.org).

Measure WW is supported by a broad coalition of East Bay leaders and organizations,

including the Sierra Club, Save Mount Diablo, Regional Parks Association, the League of

Women Voters of the Bay Area, League of Conservation Voters of the East Bay, the Contra Costa Council, Congressmembers Barbara Lee, George Miller, Pete Stark and Ellen Tauscher, as well as former sheriff Richard Rainey, and every member of the Alameda and Contra Costa County Boards of Supervisors, and many more organizations.

But in order for Measure WW to pass, it needs support from two-thirds of the registered voters in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

(continued page 2)

## .....Measure WW

The campaign will be won largely by having a strong volunteer base of dedicated local residents who care deeply about our East Bay Regional Parks, people who are committed to helping the campaign reach out to those hundreds of thousands of voters who live in the region. And that, we are certain, means each and every RPA member.

The Yes on Measure WW campaign is now signing up volunteers and accepting financial contributions. To get involved in the campaign to protect and preserve our regional parks, visit [www.yesforparks.org](http://www.yesforparks.org) .

Perhaps the single most important thing you can do (beside casting your Yes for Measure WW) is to personally call and/or email five friends who may be undecided on Measure WW and strongly encourage them to have the vision to insure that we continue to enjoy parks and open space for the future.  
###

"One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise."

Aldo Leopold *A Sand County Almanac*

## EBRPD's Wildfire Hazard Reduction Plans

Fire season is upon us once again. Strong northeasterly winds-Diablo Winds-are sweeping over the hills, drying out the vegetation in our parks and open space lands, and renewing the possibility of runaway wildfire, especially on the wildland/urban interface. Those of us who witnessed and survived the wildfires of 1970 and 1991 are all too familiar with the extraordinary damage and disruption such fires can cause. Fortunately, a major effort is being made to avoid or at least minimize the threat of future wildfires in the East Bay Region.

In early October, in order to learn more about what is being done in our regional parks, the Regional Parks Association board of directors visited several sites where the East Bay Regional Park District is carrying out vegetation management/fuel reduction projects. Our tour was led by Assistant Fire Chief John Swanson of the Park District, who was very honest, forthright, and realistic about the difficulties of planning and beginning to implement a large-scale, pre-emergency, fire mitigation program of the kind the Park District is preparing to carry out. Thousands of wildland acres and tens of thousands of citizens are directly involved. Approvals must be sought not only from citizens, but also from city, state, and federal agencies, including the California Office of Emergency Services, FEMA, the Bureau of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Forestry (Calfire). The cities of Richmond, Berkeley, Oakland, and San Leandro are also directly affected.

We are happy to report that John

..... Measure WW continued

The campaign will be won largely by having a strong volunteer base of dedicated local residents who care deeply about our East Bay Regional Parks, people who are committed to helping the campaign reach out to those hundreds of thousands of voters who live in the region. And that, we are certain, means each and every RPA member.

**Perhaps the single most important thing you can do (beside casting your Yes for Measure WW) is to personally call and/or email five friends who may be undecided on Measure WW and strongly encourage them to have the vision to insure that we continue to enjoy parks and open space now and in the future.**

Visit [www.yesforparks.org](http://www.yesforparks.org) .

*"One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise."*

-Aldo Leopold *A Sand County Almanac*

..... Wildfire Hazard continued

Swanson comes to this task with impressive credentials. He has been involved in forest management and fire fighting for three decades. He brings broad perspective and a long-range view of the work that must be done. And he is diplomatic-both patient and genuinely respectful of differing points of view and conflicting opinions. We look forward to working with him.

In the area known as the "Sibley Triangle" he talked about the eucalyptus removal work that upset so many neighbors and left the area looking unnecessarily ugly and raw. As an experienced wildlands firefighter he described the extreme hazard presented by dense stands of non-native eucalyptus trees. But he also explained how the District can and will change its approach to such projects so as to minimize environmental impacts and political conflict. For example, to avoid disrupting native trees and shrubs while minimizing soil erosion, cable-logging will be used on very steep slopes. Scenic values as well as habitat for birds and other wildlife can be preserved by removing eucalyptus on a step-by-step, phase-by-phase basis rather than by clear-cutting. Thinning and the removal of ladder fuels can make a grove far safer than an untended stand of eucalyptus with the characteristically heavy accumulation of leaves, branches, and bark that can cause trouble during a wind-driven wildfire.

Reducing the wildfire hazard in the Oakland/Berkeley Hills is going to be a long and difficult job, but the RPA board now feels that the Park District is going about it in a thoughtful and constructive way. Please let us know if you have

questions about this subject that merit further discussion.

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE CALIFORNIA RED-LEGGED FROG

### 1.3 Million Acres May Regain Protection

Under scrutiny for political corruption regarding numerous endangered species decisions and facing a lawsuit over improper tampering with protected critical habitat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may restore approximately 1.3 million acres of critical habitat as protection for the California red-legged frog. On September 16, 2008, the Service proposed quadrupling the protected acreage in 28 California counties, bringing the total of protected frog habitat to nearly 1,805,000 acres.

A quote from RPA's friend and ally Jeff Miller, president of Alameda Creek Alliance and conservation advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity, sends us this good news:

"No endangered species can survive without its habitat intact, and the red-legged frog desperately needs protection of adequate wetlands habitat throughout its former range. This proposal is step toward biological meaningful protections for the frog, but unfortunately numerous other endangered species still have inadequate habitat protections because bureaucrats have illegally slashed millions of acres from proposals by agency scientists."

In 2007 the Center for Biological Diversity and other groups filed lawsuits

challenging the Service's refusal to properly designate critical habitat areas for 19 endangered species, including the California red-legged frog. The suits are part of a broader effort by the Center to challenge political corruption harming 55 endangered species and over 8.5 million acres of wildlife habitat. Many of the flawed critical habitat decisions were engineered by Julie MacDonald, the disgraced former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior who resigned in 2007 following a scathing report by the Inspector General and investigations into political meddling in scientific decisions by MacDonald and other high level officials in the Department of Interior and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

###

Notes from our ever-energetic board member Marty Martin:

A new staging area has opened for Sibley- Roundtop parks, located on Old Tunnel Road, off Fish Ranch Road. Take Fish Ranch (cross over the Caldecott Tunnel) to where it ends at Old Tunnel Road. Follow Old Tunnel Road a few hundred feet to the staging area. An especially beautiful multi-use segment of the East Bay Skyline Trail is nearby. It parallels Round Top Creek and is shaded by large live oaks.

Due to the recent invasion of those awful choking quagga mussels in California waters, EBRPD has instituted a rigorous new inspection for all boats using its lakes and reservoirs and aquatic facilities operated with other agencies, such as Contra Loma. Boats and gear (paddles, life jackets, seats, etc.) must be absolutely dry or your boat will not be

allowed on the water. Inspection takes (according to my experience) 10 minutes to inspect each boat. The \$3.00 inspection fee for each boat is paid at the entrance. Good work, EBRPD; it's a small price to pay to keep these invasive mussels "at bay."

###

Not feeling up for such vigorous activities? You're never too old to ride the National Register-listed 1911 Tilden carousel, now beautifully refurbished and re-opened Oct 4.

It's been delighting young and old at Tilden since 1948. Yes, you could take your grandkids or the neighbor kids – but you really don't need an excuse to enjoy this Herscell-Spillman "Menagerie Edition" carousel, only one of two still operating.