



October 31, 2011

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102
Via: Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org

Mayor Edwin Lee
City Hall, Room 200
San Francisco, CA 94102
Via: mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org

RE: Surfrider Support for Sharp Park Restoration Legislation (Avalos)

Dear Board of Supervisors and Mayor Lee:

Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots, environmental non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our oceans, waves and beaches through a powerful activist network. Surfrider Foundation San Francisco Chapter is writing to express our support for recently introduced legislation by Supervisor John Avalos to restore Sharp Park wetlands and create a new public park in partnership with the National Park Service. We believe this legislation is necessary to ensure that the Sharp Park coastal areas are protected in the face of sea level rise, that endangered species in the area are protected from harm, and the 3,000 foot seawall does not persist in this area. We believe repurposing Sharp Park demonstrates a sustainability opportunity to this sensitive coastal area and is the best option for allocating scarce recreation funding back to our neighborhood parks. The National Park Service is our nation's most trusted steward for ensuring protection and enjoyment of our public spaces. Their ability to fund restoration and engage in sound management efforts will best support the goal of Surfrider Foundation and the community to support a sustainable approach to protecting our coasts through implementation of a sustainable shoreline management strategy.

As you know, Sharp Park has been mismanaged in recent years to the detriment of the coastal ecosystems and beaches, as well as endangered wildlife. Restoring Sharp Park in partnership with the National Park Service will not only save San Francisco money, but it will also preserve the coastal environment and two of the Bay Area's most imperiled animals, the San Francisco garter snake and the California red-legged frog. The proposed legislation can work to create a more sustainable landscape through an integrated Managed Retreat strategy, which allows for adaptation to the growing pressures of climate change and sea level rise.



Surfrider Foundation is advocating for successful coastal management, as we have done with several other successful campaigns along our coasts. Surfrider led efforts, like the Ventura Chapter's - Surfer's Point Restoration project, support an ecosystem friendly and sustainable approach to protecting our coasts as well as endangered species, through an implementation of a sustainable shoreline management strategy. (See www.surferspoint.org for more information on this campaign).

The proposed dredging of the main lagoon at Sharp Park and physical manipulation of the coastal lands is of the utmost concern for Surfrider Foundation. Not only do these activities critically endanger the sensitive species living in the area, but they also affect the natural shoreline processes and water quality that Surfrider Foundation works to protect along the 1,100-mile shoreline of California and all over the world. Under the current management plan, there is dredging planned for the lagoon and pumphouse at Sharp Park, which are adjacent to an existing seawall and beach. In 2010, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department working group on Sharp Park found that as a long-term goal “a naturally managed system is the most sustainable approach to manage the property’s coastal acreage.” However, maintaining the existence of the seawall will continue to accelerate beachfront erosion and will change the natural beach profile. Surfrider is concerned that the dredge and fill of the lagoon will negatively impact the existing seawall, leading to required reinforcement of the seawall. Any reinforcement of the seawall or additional armoring of the beach will significantly contribute to erosion of the adjacent beach, and will result in the loss of enjoyment of the beach resources. The current infrastructure maintenance regime merely leads to more unnatural and unsustainable actions on this coastline.

Clearly, there are urgent environmental and infrastructure needs that must be addressed and a financial roadmap must be developed for the successful future of Sharp Park. Surfrider Foundation supports the transition of the oceanfront park space into a natural hiking area that is most congruent with the changing oceanfront environment. The viability of this type of sustainable change to restore Sharp Park depends on the success of the current ordinance as introduced by Supervisor John Avalos and the critical partnership with the National Park Service in order to best serve the current community and the future generations to come.

We urge your support fo the legislation to Restore Sharp Park!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Michael Stewart, Vice-Chair San Francisco Chapter of Surfrider Foundation