

Submitted by: Ceil Scandone, Senior Regional Planner 

Subject: Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening

Date: May 7, 2009

### Executive Summary

Bay Area cities, counties and regional agencies are developing and implementing climate action plans. Drought conditions remind us that our water supply is under increasing pressure. Urban runoff pollutes our creeks, rivers and water bodies, and strains the capacity of flood control systems. Landfill capacity and the energy to transport discarded resources to landfills are limited. ***Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening*** provides guidance and tools public agencies can use to address these issues. Developed by Alameda County's StopWaste.Org, ***Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening*** is a whole systems approach to the design, construction, and maintenance of landscapes that contributes to the health of the San Francisco Bay watershed. This methodology extends green building principles to the area outside the building, as well as to greenbelts and parks. The Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Coalition is an alliance of public agencies, utilities, non-profits, landscape professionals, and businesses established to promote the Bay-Friendly standards and provide a complete package of educational and outreach tools. StopWaste.Org and the Coalition will make a presentation about and seek support for ***Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening*** initiatives.

### Recommended Action

- Endorse the Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening 7 Principles Charter.
- Encourage ABAG staff to identify opportunities to incorporate Bay-Friendly criteria in relevant programs, such as the Bay Area Green Business Program, the San Francisco Estuary Project, EcoWise Certified and FOCUS.
- Encourage StopWaste.Org and the Coalition to continue development of a verification program for the design and construction of new landscapes in the Bay Area.
- Inform ABAG members of the Board's actions

### Next Steps

- Incorporate Bay-Friendly criteria in relevant ABAG programs.
- Direct staff to communicate the Board's actions to ABAG members.

### Attachments

1. Declaration of Support of the 7 Principles of Bay-Friendly Landscaping.
2. Signers of the Declaration of Support.
3. Cities in Alameda County that have adopted and are developing policies that require Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes for new civic landscape projects.



# ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS

Representing City and County Governments of the San Francisco Bay Area



## MEMO

Date: May 7, 2009  
To: Executive Board  
From: Ceil Scandone, Senior Regional Planner   
Subject: Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening

### **Executive Summary**

Bay Area cities, counties and regional agencies are developing and implementing climate action plans to address our most significant environmental challenges. Current drought conditions remind us that California's water supply is under increasing pressure. Water quality is in peril, with urban runoff polluting our creeks, streams, rivers and water bodies, and straining the capacity of our flood control systems. Landfill capacity and the energy used in transporting discarded resources to landfills are limited. The ***Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Program*** provides guidance and tools public agencies can use to address these critical issues.

Developed by Alameda County's StopWaste.Org, Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening is a whole systems approach to the design, construction, and maintenance of landscapes that contributes to the health of the San Francisco Bay watershed. This methodology is an integral component of green building programs, extending green building principles to the area outside the building, as well as to greenbelts and parks.

The Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Coalition (Coalition) is an alliance of stakeholders representing public agencies, utilities, non-profits, landscape professionals and associations and businesses from around the San Francisco Bay Area. The Coalition promotes the Bay-Friendly standards and provides a complete package of educational and outreach tools. The Coalition has developed and is asking stakeholders to sign a ***7 Principles Charter*** to demonstrate their support of Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening as a model approach to sustainable landscaping.

On April 1, 2009, StopWaste.Org and Coalition representatives made a presentation to the Regional Planning Committee and suggested ways that ABAG could advance Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening in the region. The Committee endorsed the recommended Bay-Friendly actions and directed staff to schedule a presentation to the Executive Board to seek support for their initiatives.

StopWaste.Org, and the Coalition are requesting that the Executive Board:

- endorse the Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening 7 Principles Charter.
- encourage ABAG staff to identify opportunities to incorporate Bay-Friendly criteria in relevant programs, such as the Bay Area Green Business Program, the San Francisco Estuary Project, EcoWise Certified and FOCUS.
- encourage StopWaste.Org and the Coalition to continue development of a verification program for the design and construction of new landscapes in the Bay Area.
- direct staff to inform ABAG members of the Board's actions.

## Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening

### Introduction

Like conventional building techniques, conventional landscaping practices can contribute to environmental degradation. Conventional landscaping often features large lawns, non-native plants, and extensive irrigation and depends on the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides. It also tends to be maintenance-intensive requiring a great deal of watering, mowing, blowing, trimming, and removal of plant debris that can end up in landfills. By contrast, sustainable landscaping practices seek to conserve natural resources, reduce waste, minimize maintenance, chemical & water use, prevent pollution & stormwater runoff and build soil health.

While there are several comprehensive green building standards such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by the U.S. Green Building Council and Green Point Rated Homes by Build It Green, Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening is one of the first comprehensive sustainable landscape standards in the country. There are many standards for landscaping that address single issues such as stormwater pollution prevention or water efficiency but few that provide a holistic approach.

Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening was initiated in 2001 by StopWaste.Org, the joint powers agency legally known as the Alameda County Waste Management Authority (Authority) and the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board (Board), for its members: Alameda County, the 14 cities within the county, and 2 sanitary districts. Public and private stakeholders developed the *7 Principles of Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening* and created the *Bay-Friendly Landscaping Guidelines: Sustainable Practices for Landscape Professionals*. The Guidelines complement and coordinate with green building and waste management standards, water efficiency programs and stormwater pollution prevention protocols.

Bay-Friendly subsequently developed other resources, such as model policies and programs, and training services. To date, 180 Bay-Friendly Qualified Landscape Maintenance Professionals have been trained in Alameda, Marin and Contra Costa counties. The Bay-Friendly Garden Tour has attracted 2,000 residents annually over the last 6 years, and a workshop series for home gardeners offered in fall and spring registers 50 people or more per class.

StopWaste.Org has provided Bay-Friendly technical assistance to over 50 public and public-benefit projects and has awarded nearly \$350,000 in Bay-Friendly landscaping grants for projects such as parks, street medians, city hall renovations, fire stations, libraries, senior centers and affordable housing projects in Alameda County. These projects have demonstrated that the Bay-Friendly principles and practices work in diverse situations and conditions.

StopWaste.Org staff regularly receive requests from agencies, utilities, landscape associations and businesses all over the region, the state and the country to share Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening. Agencies in Marin and Contra Costa Counties have replicated the Maintenance Training & Qualification Program. The Sacramento area has adapted the Bay-Friendly approach to create the River-Friendly Landscape Guidelines. New York State has asked for information on the program. And the US EPA is adapting Bay-Friendly tools for a national audience.

## **Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Coalition**

In 2006, diverse stakeholders established the Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Coalition (Coalition) to assist in the expansion of the Bay-Friendly programs and resources. A fiscally-sponsored project of StopWaste.Org, the Coalition offers general membership and sponsorship opportunities for public agencies; organizations; businesses in environmental protection and quality, waste and water management, air and water quality, and landscaping; and home gardeners. The Coalition promotes the adoption of Bay-Friendly Programs by Bay Area jurisdictions, and implementation of sustainable practices in landscapes and gardens. More information about the Coalition can be found on their website at: [www.bayfriendlycoalition.com](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.com).

## **Bay-Friendly Guidelines & Tools**

Bay-Friendly provides a comprehensive package of tools – for public agencies, home gardeners, and professionals – to support and encourage informed decisions about sustainable landscaping. This approach enables the Coalition to promote implementation across sectors.

In addition to the Guidelines, the Bay-Friendly toolkit / resources include:

- Landscape scorecards for the design and construction of new landscapes
- Trainings and qualification programs for landscape professionals
- Model landscape specifications
- Professional landscape guides on Sustainable Landscaping, Mulch, Grasscycling, and Using Recycled and Salvaged Materials in the Landscape.
- Regional Bay-Friendly Conference for landscape professionals
- Comprehensive home gardener guide and workshops for home gardeners
- Educational garden tours for home gardeners and more

Bay-Friendly programs and materials are applicable to communities throughout the region. They are consistent with a number of ABAG programs. StopWaste.Org staff participated in the development of the Green Business program landscaper checklist. ABAG's Eco-Wise Certified program for structural Integrated Pest Management complements StopWaste.Org's Bay-Friendly and Green Building programs. The Bay-Friendly tools and resources are available on the StopWaste.Org website at <http://www.stopwaste.org>.

## **Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes**

A new tool being developed by StopWaste.Org and the Coalition, due for release in 2010, is the Bay-Friendly Rated Landscape toolkit. Similar to the US Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), or Build It Green's Green Point Rated Homes, Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes will be a third party system available to jurisdictions throughout the region. The program will train independent raters, and reward designers and contractors whose landscapes meet the Bay-Friendly standards with branded materials and signage that can be placed on the landscape as a visible seal of approval.

The development of a third party rating system is dependent upon interest and support from ABAG members and other public and private stakeholders in the greater Bay Area. With a Bay-Friendly Landscape Rater system in place, local governments can encourage or require that

public and private landscapes be built to a Bay-Friendly standard just as many have already required that buildings are built to a LEED or Green Point Rated Home green building standard.

StopWaste.Org has developed many of the tools needed to create the standard; however broader support is needed for it to become a regional tool. Local and regional governments working together on this effort are more likely to attract grant funding needed to complete development and implement the system in the Bay Area and beyond.

### **Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening 7 Principles Charter**

In 2008, at the Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening Conference, the Coalition introduced the *Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening 7 Principles Charter* (Charter) (*attachment 1*), and initiated a signature campaign to increase awareness and broaden Bay-Friendly's reach. To date, 23 entities, including the Authority and Board, 4 cities, several water districts, and the San Francisco Estuary Project, have signed the Charter (*attachment 2*). StopWaste.Org and the Bay-Friendly Coalition are requesting ABAG's endorsement and assistance in encouraging all Bay Area cities and counties to sign the Charter.

Briefly, the "7 Principles" are:

1. Landscape Locally
2. Landscape for Less to the Landfill
3. Nurture the Soil
4. Conserve Water
5. Conserve Energy
6. Protect Water & Air Quality
7. Create Wildlife Habitat

The Charter is an important initial step toward achieving sustainable landscaping goals. In Alameda County, 11 jurisdictions have taken a further step by adopting an ordinance requiring use of the Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes in civic landscape projects. All 17 Member Agencies of StopWaste.Org are expected to have ordinances by mid 2009 (*attachment 3*).

Endorsement of the Charter by the ABAG Executive Board will assist StopWaste.Org and the Coalition as they conduct outreach to ABAG members. It can also provide direction to relevant ABAG programs with diverse environmental goals such as water and resource conservation, reduction of waste and pollution and the creation of healthy urban environments.

### **Benefits of a Regional Approach**

StopWaste.Org and the Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Coalition provide critical leadership for creating a regional approach to sustainable landscaping and gardening in the Bay Area. The benefits of a regional approach include:

- Provides a consistent definition and recognizable brand of sustainable landscaping that is less confusing, easily recognized, and avoids conflicting "best" practices for consumers, professionals, and local governments.

- Leverages staff time to avoid reinventing programs and materials and encourage economy of scale.
- Leverages data & information by sharing our knowledge and increasing access to information to the public and to the landscape/horticulture industry.
- Strengthens the ability to influence markets and research toward sustainable landscape practices, products and services.
- Leverages financial resources by forming partnerships to solicit funding/conduct regional projects, media campaigns, rebate programs and more.

StopWaste.Org and the Coalition are eager to share these resources with the ABAG member jurisdictions and gain their support. On April 1, 2009, their representatives presented Bay-Friendly to the Regional Planning Committee, which endorsed the recommended Bay-Friendly actions and directed staff to schedule a presentation to the Executive Board.

### **StopWaste.Org/Bay-Friendly Coalition Presentation – May 21, 2009**

At the Executive Board meeting on May 21, 2009, Teresa Eade, Senior Program Manager of StopWaste.Org, and Michelle LeBeau of the Coalition will present the Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening Program. The presentation will cover the following points:

- How a comprehensive, sustainable landscaping program can help local agencies reduce greenhouse gas emissions; conserve energy and water; reduce stormwater runoff, air pollution and waste; increase recycling; and create healthier communities.
- What Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Gardening offers: tools for public agencies, landscape professionals, and home gardeners to implement sustainable landscaping practices.
- Support needed from Regional Agencies, Boards of Supervisors and City Councils to accelerate expansion of sustainable landscaping regionally through a common standard.

### **ACTION REQUESTED:**

THAT the Executive Board

- endorse the Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening 7 Principles Charter.
- encourage ABAG staff to identify opportunities to incorporate Bay-Friendly criteria in relevant programs, such as the Bay Area Green Business Program, the San Francisco Estuary Project , EcoWise Certified and FOCUS.
- encourage StopWaste.Org and the Coalition to continue development of a verification program for the design and construction of new landscapes in the Bay Area.
- direct staff to inform ABAG members of the Board's actions

### **Attachments:**

1. Declaration of Support of the 7 Principles of Bay-Friendly Landscaping
2. Signers of the Declaration of Support.
3. Cities in Alameda County that have adopted and are developing policies that require Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes for new civic landscape projects.



***BAY-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING & GARDENING***



***7 PRINCIPLES CHARTER***

***WHEREAS***, public agencies set forth goals for preserving and improving the natural and built environment, protecting the health of residents and visitors, and conserving natural resources; and

***WHEREAS***, a sustainable landscape can have a significant positive effect on energy, water and resource efficiency, waste and pollution generation, wildlife habitat, and the human health over the life of the landscape; and

***WHEREAS***, Bay-Friendly landscape design, construction, operation, and maintenance contributes to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, improves air quality and enhances quality of life; and

***WHEREAS***, California's water supply is limited and under increasing pressure, and Bay-Friendly landscaping and gardening conserves water; and

***WHEREAS***, Bay-Friendly landscape and gardening practices support and enhance green building practices by extending them beyond the building and into the landscape, and recognizing that landscapes are a vital part of our built environment; and

***WHEREAS***, in recent years, sustainable landscape design, construction, and operational techniques have become increasingly widespread in the Bay Area and California, with many homeowners, commercial property owners and landscape professionals voluntarily seeking to incorporate sustainable landscaping techniques into their projects; and

***WHEREAS***, it is critical to both the economic and environmental health of the greater Bay Area that local officials provide leadership in the area of sustainable landscaping;

***NOW THEREFORE***, be it resolved this [enter date] at [enter Agency name and location] the [enter title of official body – board, council, etc...] are Charter Signatories to the 7 Principles of Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening as a model approach to sustainable landscaping:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(name and title)**



## **7 PRINCIPLES OF BAY FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING & GARDENING**

- 1) ***Landscape Locally;*** recognizes that built landscapes are a part of the larger ecosystem of the San Francisco Bay watershed and that they can contribute to it's health if designed and maintained using sustainable practices.
- 2) ***Landscape for Less to the Landfill;*** means that we should reduce waste by choosing the right plants, using recycled and salvaged products in the landscape and by composting, mulching and grasscycling plant debris.
- 3) ***Nurture the Soil;*** soils are living ecosystems and when landscape practices allow the soil food web to thrive it can filter pollution, store water, provide plant nutrients, and help plants resist pests naturally.
- 4) ***Conserve Water;*** means using a holistic approach of creating drought resistant soils with compost and mulch, selecting plants naturally adapted to summer-dry climates, using stormwater, graywater and recycled water in the landscape as much as possible and using efficient irrigation systems that include self adjusting, weather-based controllers.
- 5) ***Conserve Energy;*** by reducing the need for mowing and shearing, by shading buildings and paved areas, using efficient outdoor lighting, and buying local landscape products.
- 6) ***Protect Water & Air Quality;*** through maximizing impervious surfaces and minimizing stormwater runoff, using integrated pest management, minimizing the use of synthetic pesticides and avoiding overuse of fertilizers, reducing fossil fuel consumption, and planting trees to remove CO<sub>2</sub> and absorb air pollutants.
- 7) ***Create Wildlife Habitat;*** recognizes that biodiversity is crucial to the health of natural ecosystems and that by using native plants and increasing the diversity of plant palettes, our built landscape can provide food, water, shelter for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects and animals.



*Attachment 2*

**BAY-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING & GARDENING  
COALITION**

**7 PRINCIPLES DECLARATION SIGNERS**

	<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>REGION</b>	<b>SIGNATORY</b>	<b>DATE SIGNED</b>
1	California Invasive Plant Council	Statewide	Doug Johnson, Executive Director	January 8, 2008
2	Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board	Alameda County	Jean Quan, Chair	January 15, 2008
3	Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program	Alameda County	Kathy Cote, Chair	December 11, 2007
4	Alameda County Waste Management Authority	Alameda County	Dennis Waspi, President	January 15, 2008
5	American Society of Landscape Architects, Northern California Chapter	Northern California	Ive Haugeland, President	December 10, 2007
6	East Bay Municipal Utility District	East Bay	Dennis Diemer, General Manager	February 26, 2008
7	Ecology Center	Berkeley	Martin Bourque, Executive Director	January 11, 2008
8	City of El Cerrito	El Cerrito	William Jones III, Mayor	February 19, 2008
9	City of Palo Alto	Palo Alto	Emily Harrison, Assistant City Manager	January 22, 2008
10	City of San Pablo	San Pablo	Sharon Brown, Mayor	January 22, 2008
11	LifeGarden	Walnut Creek	Judith Adler, Board President	January 12, 2008
12	Marin Municipal Water District	Marin County	Larry Russell, Board President	January 16, 2008
13	North Marin Water District	North Marin County	Rick Frites, Board President	December 18, 2007
14	Mauby All Natural	Santa Clara County	Brian Debasitis, Founder	February 15, 2008
15	City and County of San Francisco, Department of the Environment	San Francisco County	Jared Blumenfeld, Director	January 8, 2008
16	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	San Francisco County	Anthony Irons, Deputy General Manager	February 29, 2008
17	San Francisco Estuary Project	Bay Area	Thomas Mumley, Chair	February 1, 2008
18	Sustainable Conservation	Statewide	Ashley Boren, Executive Director	February 13, 2008
19	The Watershed Project	Bay Area	Briggs Nisbet, Board Chair	February 25, 2008
20	University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Department	Statewide	Richard Standiford, Associate Vice President	January 30, 2008
21	University of California Cooperative Extension Urban Horticulture Dept.	Contra Costa County	Bethallyn Black, Program Manager	January 22, 2008
22	Zone 7 Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Alameda County	Dick Quigley, Board Vice President	February 20, 2008
23	City of San Jose	Santa Clara County	John Stufflebean, Director, Environmental Sciences	January 28, 2008





## **Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening**

### **Alameda County Jurisdictions with Policies Adopted / In Process**

#### **Jurisdictions in Alameda County that have Adopted Policies for Mandatory Civic Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes**

Alameda County  
City of Albany  
Castro Valley Sanitary District  
City of Emeryville  
City of Hayward  
City of Newark  
Oro Loma Sanitary District  
City of Piedmont  
City of Pleasanton  
City of San Leandro  
Union City

#### **Jurisdictions in Alameda County that have Adopted Policies for Voluntary Private Sector Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes**

City of Albany  
City of Hayward  
City of Oakland  
City of San Leandro  
Union City

#### **Jurisdictions in Alameda County that are in the Process of Adopting a Policy for Mandatory Civic Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes**

City of Alameda  
City of Berkeley  
City of Dublin  
City of Livermore  
City of Fremont  
City of Oakland

