

## MEMO

July 2, 2008

**TO:** ABAG Executive Board

**FR:** Kenneth Kirkey, ABAG Planning Director

Jaqueline Guzman, ABAG Regional Planner 

**RE:** Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

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At the July 17<sup>th</sup> Executive Board meeting, staff will seek support for staff recommendations related to regional adoption of Priority Conservation Area nominations for inclusion as a key component of the FOCUS Program, the Bay Area's Regional Blueprint Plan. The Joint Policy Committee (JPC) supported the programmatic addition of Priority Conservation Areas to FOCUS at its May meeting, and at their June meeting, the ABAG Regional Planning Committee (RPC) motioned that the staff recommendations be advanced to the Executive Board for adoption. Since the June presentation of these recommendations to the ABAG RPC, one recommendation change has been made for the Tomales Dunes nomination. This area is no longer being recommended for consideration as a PCA through this first round of nominations because it has been brought to our attention that a local planning process is currently underway for that area. This recommendation is consistent with other nominations not being recommended at this time due to a lack of consensus given an existing planning process underway. This memo outlines the purpose for identifying Priority Conservation Areas as part of the FOCUS Program, the staff recommendations on PCA nominations received, and lessons learned through the first call for nominations.

### FOCUS & Priority Conservation Areas

FOCUS is an incentive-based development and conservation strategy for the nine county San Francisco Bay Area. It encourages future growth in areas near existing or planned transit and within existing communities (priority development areas) and the conservation of regionally significant resource areas that have consensus for protection in the near-term (priority conservation areas).

The purpose for identifying Priority Conservation Areas as part of the FOCUS Program is to highlight near-term opportunities for land conservation in the San Francisco Bay Area for which there is consensus for protection. Highlighting these areas as part of a regional planning program is intended to help inform the distribution of public funds and leverage private funds and new partnerships to invest in these areas. Decisions as to what land to conserve and how (purchase or easement) will need to be determined at the local level among willing and interested landowners and a land trust or other entity. If interest exists for conserving a piece of land among all parties, PCAs can serve as a tool to try to help leverage funding and partnerships.

Adoption of PCAs as part of the FOCUS Program advances implementation of regional goals to support livable communities and protect and steward the lands we depend on. Ultimately, land use decisions get made on the local level as to where to grow and what areas to preserve, so adoption of a priority area does

not change local plans or zoning. FOCUS intends to help inform local decisions and to help local entities achieve their goals that also benefit the region.

Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Approximately 100 nominations were received through the first call for PCA nominations. The nominations received represent an array of conservation values ranging from agriculture to habitat and recreation. Nominations were solicited for areas that represent regionally significant conservation values and have consensus and urgency for protection. Nominations were submitted by local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Staff has worked over the last several months to reduce the amount of overlap among the nominations submitted, ensure local government support for a nomination made within their jurisdiction, and maintain communication with regional and local conservation-related planning efforts. Staff has received input from local governments and a review panel comprised of land conservation experts from across the region as well as stakeholder representation from economic, affordable housing, and urban land development entities.

In summary, most nominations submitted will be recommended for adoption to ABAG's Executive Board in July, 2008. However, upon review against the nomination criteria, some nominations are not ready for recommendation as part of the FOCUS Program at this time. A nomination may not be considered ready for the following reasons:

- A local government could not support the nomination at this time. (relates to the consensus criteria)
- A local planning process is underway, which included planning for the nominated area. (relates to the consensus criteria)
- Although locally important, the nomination did not amount to appropriate consideration as a regionally significant area. (relates to the regional significance criteria)

The following nominations are *not being recommended* at this time for the following reasons:

Area Name	Area Location	Recommendation Notes
Oak Knoll	City of Oakland, southeast of Leona Canyon Regional Open Space Preserve	The City is working on a plan for this area. There is support for preserving a portion of the site as open space, but it should not be designated as a PCA until the planning process has been completed.
Albany Waterfront	City of Albany, west of Interstate 80	The City is working on a plan for this area. Support exists for preserving a portion of the site as open space, but it should not be designated as a PCA until the planning process has been completed.
Gill Tract	City of Albany, southwest corner of San Pablo Ave. and Buchanan St.	Although this site has a demonstration farm, this educational component is not a regionally significant agricultural use.
Area 4, Also known as Pintail and Whistling Wings Duck Clubs	City of Newark, south of Mowry Avenue and east of Mowry Slough	The City's opposition to this nomination demonstrates a lack of consensus.
Fremont-Coyote Tract	City of Fremont, north of Highway 84 and west of Paseo Padre Parkway	Opposition to this nomination from the City and land owner demonstrates a lack of consensus.

Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

July 1, 2008

Page 3

Area Name	Area Location	Recommendation Notes
Patterson Ranch	City of Fremont, west of Ardenwood Boulevard and Paseo Padre Parkway	The City's opposition to this nomination demonstrates a lack of consensus.
Site 3- Sabercat	City of Fremont, foothills near Interstate 680	The area lacks regional significance and development proposals for the area indicate a lack of consensus for conservation.
Alameda Naval Air Station Area	City of Alameda	The City is working on a plan for this area. There is support for preserving a portion of the site as open space, but it should not be designated as a PCA until the planning process has been completed.
Bollinger Valley Study Area	Town of Moraga	Specific plan for area in progress
North Richmond Shoreline	City of Richmond, south of Breuner Marsh	General Plan Update in process, and city cannot support nomination at this time, which demonstrates a lack of consensus.
Fossil Creek	City of El Cerrito, south of Arlington Blvd. and west of Potrero Ave.	Area locally but not regionally significant.
Point Molate Area	City of Richmond	General Plan Update in process, and city cannot support nomination at this time, which demonstrates a lack of consensus.
North Richmond Wetlands Area	City of Richmond	General Plan Update in process, and city cannot support nomination at this time, which demonstrates a lack of consensus.
Pittsburg-Antioch Shoreline Area	City of Pittsburg and City of Antioch	Cities do not support nomination, which demonstrates a lack of consensus at this time.
Concord Naval Weapons Station Area	City of Concord	Reuse plan in process, and city does not support nomination at this time, which demonstrates a lack of consensus.
Hanna Ranch	City of Novato, east of Highway 101 and north of Highway 37	Lacks consensus as demonstrated by inconsistency with the Novato General Plan and landowner opposition.
Francia Property	City of Mountain View	Area locally but not regionally significant.
7th & Lawton open space	City and County of San Francisco	Area locally but not regionally significant.
Crestmont Hills	City and County of San Francisco	Area locally but not regionally significant.
Hunters Point serpentine hillside	City and County of San Francisco	Community planning process underway.
Brotherhood Way	City and County of San Francisco	Area locally but not regionally significant.
Redwood City Bayfront Tidal Plain Area	City of Redwood City	Lacks consensus as indicated by the City of Redwood City's lack of support for the nomination at this time.
Burnham Strip / El Granada Waterfront	Unincorporated El Granada, San Mateo County	Area locally but not regionally significant.

Area Name	Area Location	Recommendation Notes
Tomales Dunes	Marin County	Lacks consensus as indicated by Marin County's lack of support for the nomination at this time given the master planning process underway for the area.

Future nomination cycles are expected. Thus, a nomination not recommended for adoption through the first call for nominations, can be re-submitted in following nomination cycles stating how the original reason for non-recommendation has been addressed. Staff is recommending that the next call for nominations occur in the summer of 2009.

*The staff recommendations for regional adoption of Priority Conservation Areas follow as an attachment.*

Lessons Learned & Potential Improvements to Future PCA Nomination Cycles

Several important lessons were learned through the first call for nominations and review process. Staff would like to continually improve future calls for PCA nominations and will incorporate these lessons into future nomination cycles.

- Although consensus is a nomination criterion, local government support can only be secured for certain if it is explicitly stated as a requirement in the nomination guidelines. During the first round of review, staff ensured local governments did not oppose nominations made within their boundaries by undertaking a concerted outreach effort to notify local governments of nominations made within their boundaries and requested that staff be notified if a nomination could not be supported.
  - Going forward, nominees will have to demonstrate local government support through a council or board of supervisor's resolution.
- Although the nomination criteria emphasized consensus for protection, some nominations were submitted for areas that clearly still needed additional time to reach a general level of consensus.
  - The proposed requirement to ask nominees to demonstrate local government support is also expected to help address this.
- Although the San Francisco Bay Area region has been very successful in establishing a network of open space, many opportunities still exist to conserve and enhance this network. This point was realized when staff received an overwhelming response to the first call for nominations.
  - Staff will continue to collaborate with the Coastal Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Program and regional conservation organizations to support collaborative approaches to conservation within this region.
- Although applicants were encouraged to collaborate on nomination submissions and some counties did, many nominations received were still duplicative or overlapping.
  - Staff will modify the nomination guidelines to incorporate guidance on how to coordinate nominations at the city and county levels.
- The nomination criteria for urgency was not very helpful in the review of nominations received because relatively any nominated area in the region can demonstrate some opportunity for conservation or threat to the ecological integrity of the area.
  - Going forward, this criterion will be tailored to emphasize near-term conservation opportunities.
- Although regional significance was a nomination criterion, some submitted nominations were essentially locally important but not regionally significant projects. While regionally significant resources pass through urbanized areas, such as regional trails and waterways, and should be considered as part of the PCA process of the FOCUS Program, staff does not see site specific

public serving spaces, such as pocket parks, as aligned with the goals of conserving regionally significant resource areas. Local projects in Priority Development Areas will be supported through the Priority Development Area process, since they support efforts to create complete communities. Staff will continue working with the Coastal Conservancy's Bay Area Program and private foundations to secure capital funding for Priority Development Areas that would support the development and restoration of urban parks.

- Going forward, staff will provide specific guidance as to distinguish between a local and a regionally significant nomination.
- Communication of what PCAs are and are not intended to achieve should be emphasized early and often.
  - Staff will continue to refine the communication strategy for PCAs. The creation of additional online information and a report is intended to clarify this message.

With these lessons learned in mind, staff is recommending that the next call for nominations occur in the summer of 2009. A later call for nominations will provide time to build resources for the first round of adopted areas.

#### Next Steps

Following adoption of Priority Conservation Areas by the Executive Board, staff will proceed to summarize the adopted PCAs and highlight the benefits of a coordinated strategy for development and conservation through FOCUS. Mapping and outreach materials will serve as tools to highlight the conservation values PCAs provide. These materials will provide PCA contacts with a resource to help leverage additional funding and partnerships. FOCUS staff will also provide assistance in convening meetings with key funders and potential partners outside the traditional conservation community.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the ABAG Executive Board supports the staff recommendations on Priority Conservation Area nominations received for inclusion in the FOCUS Program, the Bay Area's Regional Blueprint Plan.

Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

**ALAMEDA COUNTY NOMINATIONS**

Area Name	Recommendation Notes	Lead Nominating Agency
Leona Canyon Creek Tributaries		City of Oakland
Temescal Creek/North Oakland		City of Oakland
Ridgemont West		City of Oakland
South Hills, San Leandro Creek		City of Oakland
East Bay Greenway		City of Oakland
Butters Canyon/Headwaters of Peralta Creek		Butters Land Trust
North Livermore, South Livermore Valley	Area modified to include only those areas in Livermore & Unincorporated Alameda County.	City of Livermore
Albany Hill		City of Albany
Union City Hillside Area		City of Union City
Site 1-Coyote Hills	Excluded areas zoned for industrial, including Cargill lands.	City of Fremont
Chain of Lakes Area		East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)
Bethany Reservoir Area		EBRPD
Cedar Mountain Area		EBRPD
Duarte Canyon Area		EBRPD
Potential Oakland Gateway Area		EBRPD
Potential Tesla Area		EBRPD

Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY NOMINATIONS**

Area Name	Recommendation Notes	Lead Nominating Agency
Central Hercules and Waterfront District		City of Hercules
Big Canyon Preserve		City of San Ramon
MOSO and NON-MOSO Open Space		Town of Moraga
Acalanes Ridge Open Space		City of Walnut Creek
Indian Valley		East Bay Municipal Utility District
Burton Ridge		City of Lafayette
Lafayette Ridge		City of Lafayette
Contra Costa County Agricultural Core		Contra Costa County, Community Development Department
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (ECCC HCP/NCCP)	Area modified to include only areas of medium and high priority and to exclude the area within the City of Antioch.	Contra Costa County
Point Edith Wetlands Area		EBRPD
Delta Recreation Area		EBRPD
Potential Pinole Watershed Area		EBRPD

Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

**MARIN COUNTY NOMINATIONS**

Area Name	Recommendation Notes	Lead Nominating Agency
3rd Valley Creek/Chicken Ranch Beach Conservation Area		Tomales Bay Watershed Council
San Geronimo Valley headwaters of the Lagunitas Watershed and shore of Tomales Bay		Salmon Protection And Watershed Network
Marin County Agricultural Lands		Marin Agricultural Land Trust
Marin City Ridge		National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
North GGNRA Lagunitas Creek Parcels		National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Central Marin Ridge lands		Marin County Parks and Open Space Department
North County Gateway		Marin County Parks and Open Space Department
Bothin Waterfront		Marin County Parks and Open Space
Big Rock Ridge Lands		Marin County Parks and Open Space Department
Tiburon Ridge Lands		Marin County Parks and Open Space Department
Bowman Canyon		Marin Conservation League
St. Vincent's and Silveira Properties		Marin Audubon Society/Marin Baylands Advocates

## Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

Area Name	Recommendation Notes	Lead Nominating Agency
Central Marin Bayfront, Madera Bay Park		Marin Audubon Society/Marin Baylands Advocates
Central Marin Bayfront, Canalways		Marin Audubon Society

### NAPA COUNTY NOMINATIONS

Area Name	Recommendation Notes	Lead Nominating Agency
Napa County Agricultural Lands and Watersheds		County of Napa
Blue Oak Woodlands of the Lake District		Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
Interior Mountains – Moore Creek to Milliken Creek		Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
Palisades—Mt St Helena to Anqwin		Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
Southern Mountains -- Skyline Park to Newell Preserve		Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
Napa Valley - Napa River Corridor	Area modified to be consistent with City of American Canyon General Plan	Land Trust of Napa County
Bothe-Napa Valley State Park to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park Priority Conservation Area		Save-the-Redwoods League
Redwood & Dry Creek Watersheds Priority Conservation Area		Save-the-Redwoods League
Lake Curry/Suisun Creek Watershed		Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY NOMINATIONS**

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Recommendation Notes</b>	<b>Lead Nominating Agency</b>
Upper Stevens Creek Watershed Area		Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Upper Los Gatos Creek Watershed		Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
East Berryessa Foothills		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Alum Rock Foothills		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Joseph D. Grant to Coyote Ridge		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
East Coyote Foothills to Almaden Quicksilver	Removed the overlap with Coyote Valley Specific Plan Area	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Anderson/Coyote Connection		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
East Gilroy Foothills		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
South County Regional Trail Connection		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Lexington Hills		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Sanborn Skyline		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Baylands		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Soap Lake	Recommendation is only for the portion within the Bay Area region, although the natural area extends beyond	The Nature Conservancy
Rancho Canada		Santa Clara County Open Space Authority

**Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas**

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Recommendation Notes</b>	<b>Lead Nominating Agency</b>
South County Agriculture		Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
Pescadero/Tar Creek		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Paradise Valley to Calero		Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department

**SAN FRANCISCO CITY AND COUNTY NOMINATIONS**

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Lead Nominating Agency</b>
Aquavista/Twin Peaks	City of San Francisco Planning Department
Palou-Phelps, Bayview	City of San Francisco Planning Department
Sutro Tower, Inc	California Native Plant Society Yerba Buena Chapter
Bayview Hill radio property	California Native Plant Society Yerba Buena Chapter

**SOLANO COUNTY**

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Lead Nominating Agency</b>
Vacaville-Fairfield-Solano Greenbelt and Cement Hill	City of Fairfield
Western Hills (including part of the Vallejo Lakes Property)	Solano County
Tri City and County Cooperative Planning Area	Solano County
Blue Ridge Hills (Vaca Mountains)	Solano County

Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

**SAN MATEO COUNTY**

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Recommendation Notes</b>	<b>Lead Nominating Agency</b>
Montara Mountain Complex	Excluding the El Granada, Moss Beach, and Montara urban areas.	Peninsula Open Space Trust
Lobitos Ridge Corridor		Peninsula Open Space Trust
Gateway to the San Mateo County Coast		Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Pacifica Conservation Area: South of Mussell Rock to McNee Ranch State Park		National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Upper San Gregorio Creek Headwaters		Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
San Francisco Watershed Lands to Wilder Ranch State Park Priority Conservation Area		Save-the-Redwoods League

**SONOMA COUNTY NOMINATIONS**

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Lead Nominating Agency</b>
Upper Mark West Watershed	Sotoyome Resource Conservation District
Petaluma Watershed Southeastern Portion	Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District
Laguna de Santa Rosa	Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation
Santa Rosa Plain	Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation

## Staff Recommendations for Regional Adoption of Priority Conservation Areas

Presentation to ABAG's Executive Board

July 17, 2008

Area Name	Lead Nominating Agency
Coastal Sonoma to Armstrong Redwoods	Save-the-Redwoods League
Pitkin Marsh – Atascadero Creek Watershed	Sonoma Land Trust
Sonoma Baylands	Sonoma Land Trust
The Cedars	Sonoma Land Trust
Northern Mayacamas	Sonoma Land Trust
Coastal Access and Resource Protection	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Coastal Agriculture	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Sonoma County Gateway	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Russian River Access	Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
Sonoma Mountain	Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

### MULTIPLE COUNTY NOMINATIONS

Area Name	Recommendation Notes	Lead Nominating Agency
San Francisco Bay Trail – Bay Area Ridge Trail		San Francisco Bay Trail Project
Regional Trails System Gaps	Potential regional trail in San Ramon no longer included as part of this nomination as consistent with the newly adopted 2007 EBRPD Master Plan Map. In Richmond, a General Plan Update is in process, and city cannot support nomination at this time.	East Bay Regional Park District



# City of Albany

405 KAINS AVENUE • ALBANY, CALIFORNIA 94706

May 30, 2008

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

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FAX (510) 528-5797

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PH. (510) 528-5858  
FAX (510) 526-9190

**CITY CLERK**

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**CITY COUNCIL**

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**RECREATION & COMMUNITY  
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1249 Marin Avenue

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FAX (510) 528-8914

- Friendship Club  
Childcare Program  
PH. (510) 559-7220
- Senior Center  
PH. (510) 524-9122  
FAX (510) 524-8940
- Teen Center  
PH. (510) 525-0576

**Kenneth Kirkley**  
Association of Bay Area Governments  
P.O. Box 2050  
Oakland, CA 94604-2050

**Subject: Priority Conservation Area Designation for the Albany Waterfront**

Dear Mr. Kirkley:

The City of Albany is writing with respect to the staff recommendation not to designate the Albany Waterfront as a Priority Conservation Area. The City of Albany feels strongly that the City's Albany Waterfront nomination meets the PCA program criteria as originally described by ABAG, that it is of key regional conservation significance, and urges reconsideration of the recommendation. The features of the Albany Waterfront include its highly visible location in the central Bay, ecological importance of the beach areas, creeks, wetlands and salt marshes, habitats for wildlife, and linkages with the Bay Trail and with public lands in the Eastshore State Park.

The ABAG staff recommendation is correct in that the City has initiated a planning process for the Albany Waterfront. One of the objectives of the planning process is to create a vision for the future character of privately owned-lands at the Albany Waterfront. It is important to understand, however, that there is broad consensus of support for the protection and enhancement of the beach and shoreline, creeks, wetlands, and marsh areas of the waterfront. The PCA nomination has been described potentially as a key consideration in the distribution of conservation funding in the Bay Area, and this important area should not be viewed as less competitive in seeking these funds as a result of pro-actively initiating our planning process.

The City recognizes, and is strongly supportive of other PCA nominations from the East Bay Regional Park District and the San Francisco Bay Trail that include portions of the Albany Waterfront. From our perspective, their nominations are very general in nature, and involve numerous potential projects, and that do not address all of the potential conservation activities on the Albany Waterfront.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

**Beth Pollard**  
City Administrator

