

Albany Bulb – Safety Hazard Removal

City of Albany

May 2008

Description: This project will create a safer environment, and increase the usable area of The Bulb through the removal of exposed concrete and rebar that are remnants of this former landfill, and through the removal of noxious weeds, planting of native species, and habitat restoration.

The Bulb is a semi-wild area, reserved for hiking, enjoying views, observing birds and animals, and providing opportunities for solitude. It was created early in the 1960's and filled until 1983. Landfilled material consisted primarily of construction debris and landscape wastes. Municipal wastes and industrial wastes were not allowed.

The Albany Bulb is included in the Eastshore State Park Plan, which was adopted in 2002, however the land is still owned by the City of Albany. The ESP Plan designates the Bulb as "Conservation" and contains policies to protect and enhance upland habitat for wildlife. Policies in the ESP Plan that relate to the removal of safety hazards at the Bulb are as follows:

A-13 and A-15 Develop and implement a program for the removal of safety hazards associated with construction debris on the surface of the Neck and Bulb (e.g., unstable rubble piles, unsafe structures and protruding rebar). The clean-up program should be designed to minimize disturbance to upland wildlife habitat. Approaches that involve mass grading and wholesale removal of vegetation are not appropriate...Break up large concrete and construction debris to improve appearance, reduce safety hazards, etc.

Cost: It is estimated the project would be \$250,000 (\$8,000/day over 30 working days).

Benefits: Removal of exposed concrete, rubble, and protruding rebar will enhance the conservation value and accessibility of the Albany Bulb. Removal of noxious weeds, planting locally native species, and improving the overall habitat will help protect and enhance upland habitat for wildlife.

Lagoon Reclamation at Albany Bulb (a.k.a. Albany Landfill)

City of Albany

May 2008

Description: The proposed project will enhance the existing West and East Lagoons by breaching the dikes at several locations, thereby making the lagoons contiguous with San Francisco Bay and facilitating tidal water level fluctuations and tidal flow. The Albany Bulb (landfill) is owned by the City of Albany, and is included in the Eastshore State Park Plan as conservation.

The Bulb was constructed in the early 1960's and filled until 1983. Landfilled material consisted primarily of construction debris and landscape wastes. In 1999, the Regional Water Quality Control Board issued an Order, indicating that the landfill may be closed in its present condition provided suitable (benefiting aquatic resources) reclamation projects are completed. In 2004 the *Conceptual Plan – Reclamation of the West and East Lagoon – Albany Landfill* was completed (Streamborn Consulting Services). In anticipation of an environmental assessment, a *Biotic Section for Initial Study* was finalized in February 2005 (H.T. Harvey Associates, Ecological Consultants). Based on that study, "The project is not expected to have any significant impacts on biotic resources or habitats." These studies were completed through a grant from the State Department of Parks and Recreation. In May 2005, the RWQCB lifted the closure order on the landfill, finding that it posed no threat to water quality. Although the project would provide environmental enhancements, no further action has been taken to implement the lagoon reclamation project.

Project Cost: Total project cost is estimated at \$440,000 in 2005 dollars.

Design/Permitting/CEQA/NEPA estimated to be \$148,000

West Lagoon Construction estimated to be \$97,000

breach excavation and material segregation = 1,700 cyds; place and spread

excavated material = 1,700 cyds; pathway construction

East Lagoon Construction estimated to be \$136,000

breach excavation & material segregation = 600 cyds; surgical exaction = 500

cyds; place and spread excavated material = 1,500 cyds; imported soil = 500 cyds;

place & compact imported soil = 500 cyds; invasive vegetation removal;

revegetation = .05 acres; fence and signage

Benefits: By breaching these lagoons, the majority of the existing dikes will be isolated from the remainder of the landfill, and provide enhanced roosting habitat for birds. The dikes have historically provided a pathway for humans to walk the perimeter of the Bulb. Based on a site visit and comments from the BCDC staff, a new pathway is proposed along the east side of the West Lagoon to provide continued access around the perimeter of the Bulb. The Albany Bulb is one of the furthest land extensions into the San Francisco Bay. This relatively isolated rocky shoreline area provides good foraging habitat for seabird and aquatic species that were directly impacted by the Cosco Busan oil spill. Shorebird surveys were conducted by H.T. Harvey & Associates in 2001 and 2002. Twenty-nine avian bird species (both terrestrial and shorebirds) were detected at the East Lagoon and West Lagoons during fall 2001, and 34 species during spring 2002. Attached are tables listing the avian use of the West and East Lagoons.

Interim Bay Trail Extension through Golden Gate Fields Property

Albany, California

May 2008

Description: The proposed project will enhance the recreational opportunities at the Albany Waterfront by constructing an interim segment of the Bay Trail through lands owned by Golden Gate Fields Racetrack. This approximately one (1) mile trail would connect two existing segments of the Bay Trail, thereby closing an important gap in the Bay Trail. Plans to build this interim trail have been prepared by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) trails division and are 95% complete. The trail will be a paved trail for combined pedestrian and bicycle use, which would be separated from the adjoining parking lot and travel lane by a fence and/or median barriers.

EBRPD staff has been working cooperatively with Golden Gate Fields (GGF) staff to address their needs. Except for the lack of construction funding, the only remaining issue appears to be the length of time associated with a right-of-way agreement (e.g., easement, license, encroachment). According to EBRPD staff, they and GGF are continuing to hold these discussions.

Cost: The project cost is estimated at \$850,000.

Benefits: The goal of the San Francisco Bay Trail program is to provide a continuous bicycle and pedestrian trail around the entire Bay. When completed the Bay Trail will provide residents and visitors a unique recreational opportunity. At present, the Bay Trail in this area terminates at Buchanan Street (Albany) on the north side of GGF, and at Gilman Street (Berkeley) on the south side of GGF. This trail is being completed in incremental steps, and completion of this trail segment would result in a significant benefit to the goals of the SF Bay Trail program.

Albany Salt Marsh Expansion
Albany, California
May 2008

Description: The proposed project will expand and enhance an existing salt marsh located immediately northwest of the intersection of Buchanan Street and Highway 80, and north of the Golden Gate Fields racetrack. The existing salt marsh, which is approximately 2 acres, would be expanded into land owned by Golden Gate Fields that is used partly for parking and for maintenance and corporation yard purposes.

Through grant opportunities, Friends of Five Creeks (a non-profit group), commissioned the following studies to evaluate the feasibility of this salt marsh expansion. Thus, in 2001, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was conducted by Levine-Fricke to determine subsurface conditions of the area. As a result of this assessment, there were no documented sources or specific areas of potential hazardous material releases identified at the site. However, the assessment recommended that if the site is excavated for conversion back into a salt marsh, that additional subsurface soil and groundwater assessment be conducted. In 2002, Balance Hydrologics conducted a hydrologic feasibility assessment of wetland restoration for the site. A combined program of measuring and modeling tidal water levels was used and two alternatives were modeled. The study found that the tidal regimes in the Albany Mudflats and the existing Salt Marsh make it conducive to restore and expand the salt marsh wetland. The report also recommended the desired elevations (through excavation) that would be needed to create the desired habitat. Future studies would need to design for anticipated sea level rise, including potential flooding of Buchanan Street.

Cost: The estimated cost to restore and expand the Albany Salt Marsh is \$2,100,000.

Benefits: The site was historically part of a submerged tidelands system that was prevalent around the San Francisco Bay. Much of the tidelands in the area of the Albany Salt March were filled and virtually all that remains is this 2-acre marsh. Enhancing this salt marsh, and expanding its size to approximately 4 acres, will benefit fish and bird wildlife species, and serve to help mitigate some of the impacts to wildlife caused by the Cosco Busan oil spill of November 2007.

Albany Plateau Recreational Enhancements

City of Albany

May 2008

Description: The proposed project will enhance the recreational opportunities available to park users of the Albany Waterfront, particularly the Albany Plateau. The Albany Plateau is owned by State Parks and EBRPD, is included within the Eastshore State Park, and is currently designated as a recreation/conservation area under the Eastshore State Park General Plan. The project would provide basic amenities, as well as more extensive improvements to facilitate increased recreational use of the area. As identified in the Eastshore State Park General Plan, and in the City of Albany's Proposal for the Albany Portion of the Eastshore State Park, this project would include:

- 1) Park/Recreation Equipment: Picnic/barbeque facilities and turf area for informal recreation. It is estimated that equipment costs would be approximately \$185,000; minor construction costs may also be needed.
- 2) Trail System: A path system would be designed around the northern edge of the Plateau. Pedestrian and bicycle paths leading from these perimeter paths to other parts of the plateau may be desirable as well. Establishment of additional paths is intended to encourage recreational users to the Plateau area, and encourage alternative modes of transportation at the park. It is estimated that costs to design and construct a pedestrian/bicycle path system would be approximately \$75,000.

Benefits: Most importantly, this project will help increase the amount of recreational opportunity for users of the Eastshore State Park. This project would accomplish a number of the priority goals identified within the Eastshore State Park General Plan and the City of Albany's Proposal for the Albany Portion of the Eastshore State Park. Additionally, this project would complement the burrowing owl habitat creation project currently underway on the Plateau, which is a joint effort of the City of Albany and East Bay Regional Park District.

Note: An interpretive center at the Plateau is not proposed as part of this submittal. A Proposal for the Albany Portion of the Eastshore State Park envisioned a small interpretive center at the Albany Plateau, to be used by schools and park rangers, and include restrooms, and potentially a food service area for students. EBRPD staff indicates that an interpretative facility is planned for the Berkeley Brickyard. A restroom and educational outdoor classroom is included as part of the Neck and Bulb submittal.

Albany Bulb/Neck Recreational Enhancements

City of Albany

May 2008

Description: The proposed project will enhance the recreational opportunities available to park users of the Albany Waterfront, particularly the Albany Bulb and Neck. The City of Albany owns the Albany Bulb and a portion of the Neck. State Parks and EBRPD own the major portion of the Neck. Both areas, as discussed in the Eastshore State Park General Plan, are identified to become part of the Eastshore State Park. The project would provide basic amenities as well as more extensive improvements to facilitate increased recreational use of the area. As identified in the Albany Park Master Plan, this project would include:

- 1) Park/Recreation Equipment: Picnic, drinking fountain and restroom (porta-potty) facilities be installed on the City-owned portion of the Neck to encourage extended recreational use. It is estimated that equipment costs would be approximately \$75,000.

- 2) Educational outdoor classroom: Enhancements to the existing “cove” structure would be conducted to create a small-scale participatory educational program, with the help of interpretive exhibits, for use by schools and park rangers to provide information and education on the history of the site, the geology and characteristics of the bay lands and landfill areas, and other natural and important features of the setting. The “cove” would be restored to allow for accessibility for students and docent led groups. It is estimated that costs to create this educational outdoor classroom would be approximately \$20,000.

Benefits: This project will help increase the amount of recreational opportunity for users of the Eastshore State Park. This project would accomplish a number of the priority goals identified within the Albany Park Master Plan. Additionally, development of the educational outdoor classroom as part of this project would serve as a valuable resource for local schools and educational groups allowing for a facility to foster watershed education and appreciation.

Albany Bulb/Neck Emergency Access

City of Albany

May 2008

Description: The proposed project will restore and enhance emergency access roads along the Albany Bulb and Neck. As made evident by the recent Cosco Busan oil spill, access roads within this vicinity have been overgrown with vegetation, and roads have been degraded. The City of Albany took the initiative to implement this project immediately following the oil spill in order to ensure adequate emergency access to the area was developed. Emergency access will allow for re-grading of the roadways and minor removal of vegetation to ensure emergency vehicles have safe passage within the area should emergency services be necessary.

Costs for emergency access improvements are currently estimated at \$60,000. Because this work is being done as a result of the Cosco Busan oil spill, the City is seeking reimbursement for this work. At present no contract has been entered into, however work is expected to begin by mid-April (includes brush clearing, road maintenance).

Benefits: This project will help ensure adequate accessibility to any area along the waterfront in case of an emergency. Secondly, improving the emergency access roadways will allow a recreational opportunity for park users wishing to utilize a trail-type system within the area.

Albany Beach Expansion Project
Eastshore State Park
February 6, 2009

Description: The proposed project will enhance and expand Albany Beach, which is within Eastshore State Park, adjacent to Golden Gate Fields, in the City of Albany, California. It will remove existing debris and non-native vegetation, and import sand to expand the existing three-acre beach and adjacent dune complex to about five-acres. In addition, sand could also be placed off-shore to create new shallow subtidal habitat suitable for colonization by eel grass.

Improved public access to the beach will be provided by installation of new walkways and fencing that will channel people to the beach while minimizing impacts to the dune complex. Native dune vegetation will be planted to stabilize the upper beach and dunes, and to prevent wind erosion. Interpretive exhibits will be installed and small picnic areas and restrooms are also planned to enhance recreational use of the area. Project construction costs are estimated at \$2,000,000. Additional funding will be required for periodic beach nourishment, and long-term maintenance and monitoring of the proposed improvements.

Benefits: This project will remove debris, such as creosote timbers, which are harmful to San Francisco Bay fisheries and invertebrates. It will remove inorganic debris, such as plastics, that may be ingested by waterbirds. The existing 1000 foot long sandy beach would be expanded along the Albany shoreline by importing clean dredged sand from the Bay. This will provide enhanced and expanded foraging habitat for shorebirds.

Upland dune areas will also be expanded by use of imported sand. Coastal beach and dune complexes have been virtually eliminated along the East Bay shoreline. In small, scattered locations beaches and dunes have been reestablishing. However, most of these areas lack any native vegetation. Many special-status plants historically occurred only in such areas, but are presently absent from the East Bay. Plants such as robust spineflower, Nuttall's locoweed and sea blite could be introduced into the protected beach and dune complex.

Shallow subtidal habitat could be created by importing sand to create a substrate suitable for colonization by eel grass. This habitat type is very important as nurseries for fish and invertebrates. They also provide good foraging habitat for seabirds that were directly impacted by the Cosco Busan oil spill.

This project is supported by Citizens for Eastshore Parks. It is included in the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Data Base as a Tier 2 Project in need of funding for design and construction. It is also consistent with the San Francisco Baylands Ecosystems Habitat Goals. The project is included as a proposed project in the Eastshore State Park General Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report.