

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
December 2, 2010

GLEN CANYON PARK MASTER PLAN

Project No. 10-039-01
Project Manager: Amy Hutzl

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$289,950 to the Trust for Public Land to develop a Master Plan for Glen Canyon Park, San Francisco, including a plan for the recreation area and a plan and design for enhancement of trails.

LOCATION: Glen Canyon Park, in the south central portion of the City and County of San Francisco (Exhibit 1).

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Photos](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of up to \$289,950 (two hundred eight nine thousand nine hundred fifty dollars) to the Trust for Public Land (“TPL”) to develop a Master Plan (“Master Plan”) for the recreation area and trails in Glen Canyon Park, City and County of San Francisco. This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, TPL shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule and budget; and the scopes of work and the roster of contractors to be employed in the project.
2. TPL shall develop the Master Plan in close consultation with the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
 2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program, Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding public access.
 3. The Trust for Public Land is a non-profit organization existing under 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$289,950 to the Trust for Public Land (“TPL”) to develop a Master Plan for Glen Canyon Park in San Francisco.

Glen Canyon Park (the “Park”) is a 68.8 acre park located in the south central portion of San Francisco and managed by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (“RPD”). The Park consists of a highly used indoor and outdoor recreation area, which includes a Recreation Center with a gym, auditorium, bathrooms, and offices, as well as outdoor tennis courts, baseball/softball fields, a large sports meadow, several picnic area, and an outdoor playground. Beyond the active recreation area stretches 60 acres of riparian coastal scrub, grassland, and urban forest habitats, a mile of above ground creek, and over four miles of hiking trails.

Though heavily used, the Park is in critical need of attention and renovation. Islais Creek runs for one mile above ground and then underground in culverts; the playing fields located above the decaying wooden culverts experience shifting ground and irrigation issues. The Recreation Center was built in 1934 and is seismically unsafe, inaccessible to people with disabilities, has significant roof problems, and has a warped and sinking floor due to the underground creek that runs along one corner. The playground is also not accessible to people with disabilities and is constructed of treated wood which contains arsenic. Numerous social trails have developed over the years, creating erosion issues on the hillsides and impacting water quality in the creek. In addition, there is an ongoing effort to protect the native habitats in Glen Canyon, particularly the riparian habitats, from invasive plant species such as Cape ivy.

Recognizing the high level of public use and significant need for renovation, the City of San Francisco has committed city bond funds for improvements at Glen Canyon Park. RPD has \$900,000 designated for trail construction and \$5.8 million designated for construction of the recreation area from the 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Park Bond (Proposition A). TPL will work closely with the RPD and the community to develop a viable Master Plan that holistically integrates the Park’s historical recreational facility with its vast natural area. RPD will use the Master Plan to implement improvements at the Park. TPL’s involvement and the proposed Conservancy grant will 1) enable the RPD bond funds to go farther and be used solely for final design and implementation, and 2) expedite the completion of the Master Plan in a cost effective manner while engaging the community. RPD will likely need to raise additional funds to implement all of the recommendations of the Master Plan and may return to the Conservancy with a grant proposal for implementation to supplement their bond funds.

TPL will conduct a two part planning process, the first focused on the recreation area and the second focused on the trails. Part I: The planning stage for the recreation area will entail data gathering, consultant team selection, facilitation of six planning workshops for community members and stakeholders, and preparation of a final community-supported Master Plan, with phasing and costs. The Master Plan will be used by RPD to conduct subsequent final design work for the renovation and construction phase. Part II: The planning effort for the trails will entail the above work as well as the design phase. Conservancy and matching funds will be used primarily to fund professional services consultants, including landscape architects, planners, and technical consultants (geotechnical engineers, structural engineers, surveyors, and arborists) as well as support for TPL's project staff, including a project manager and community outreach associate, and project expenses, such as postage, printing, and travel. The Master Plan will be completed by the end of 2011. The City of San Francisco will conduct environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") upon completion of the Master Plan, followed by final design of the recreation area and implementation of the trails and recreation area. RPD's goal is to complete the project by the end of 2013.

Since 1972, TPL has worked with willing landowners, community groups, and national, state, and local agencies to complete more than 3,000 land conservation projects in 46 states, and has a successful history of planning and revitalizing public urban parks in cities across the United States. TPL has a successful history of partnering with the RPD and also a successful history of working with the Conservancy. TPL has completed significant acquisitions in the San Francisco Bay Area and along the California Coast in partnership with the Conservancy.

Site Description: Glen Canyon Park has incredible, yet often under-recognized, historical, ecological, and recreational features.

This urban canyon offers 60 acres of biologically diverse urban wilderness with trails, educational displays, and vista points. Glen Canyon Park is one of San Francisco's 31 significant natural resource areas, with three native plant communities: riparian, grassland, and coastal scrub, as well as a 17-acre exotic forest of Eucalyptus trees near the entrance to the Park. The canyon is home to 170 species of native plants (including coyote brush, sticky monkey flower, coastal sage, and bee plant), 43 species of birds (such as white-crowned sparrow, black phoebe, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, and great horned owl), and 30 species of butterflies. Other wildlife includes skunk, raccoon, coyote, western fence lizard, and meadow mouse.

The Park provides a glimpse into coastal California's geologic history for visitors. Ranging in elevation from 225 feet above sea level at the south end to 575 feet along the canyon's northern rim, the Park is characterized by layered chert outcroppings on the steep upper slopes and 100-200 million year old bedrock under the ravine-fill of the canyon's lower slope. The road cuts along O'Shaughnessy Boulevard at the Parks' western boundary show the dramatic geologic layering and folding and the trails through the park pass through and around numerous rock outcroppings.

Perhaps the canyon's most significant feature is a one-mile above-ground stretch of the north fork of Islais Creek, which flows year round and is one of a handful of above ground creek segments remaining in San Francisco. The creek is home to a lush riparian community of willow, sycamore, alder, currant, red columbine, seep monkey flower, lady fern, and horsetail. Juncos, hummingbirds, warblers, chickadees, and bushtits can be seen in the trees. The creek

provides habitat for adult and larval insects which provide food for resident and migrating birds as well as bats, dragonflies, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals.

The active recreation area includes a 17,600 square foot Recreation Center built in 1934 with a gym, auditorium, offices, and bathrooms, as well as two outdoor tennis courts, two baseball/softball diamonds, a large sports meadow, and a fenced-in outdoor playground. Activities offered by the RPD at the Recreation Center include badminton, tennis, volleyball, basketball, and soccer, as well as art and music classes for youth. RPD offers scholarships for underserved youth to enroll in these classes. The park also hosts a two-story, 3,960 square foot daycare center built in the 1960s. The facility is leased to Glenridge Co-operative Nursery School during the school year and used by RPD for Silver Tree Summer Camp, which has been running summer youth activities in the Park for over 60 years.

The Park is located in Glen Park, a dense, urban neighborhood, and is surrounded by numerous schools, major roads, and a commercial area. The park is easily accessible by public transit, located within walking distance from the Glen Park BART Station and with a Muni bus stop located at the south entrance. The Park also offers the potential for regional trail connections. There are over 4 miles of trails within the Park, which can potentially link directly into the Twin Peaks trail networks to the north and thereby connect with the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Additionally, there are numerous opportunities to improve trail connections to nearby schools, playgrounds, and neighborhoods.

Project History: Once hunting territory for the Ohlone, the region of Glen Canyon Park has sustained centuries of transformation. After serving as grazing land for the Mission Dolores longhorn cattle and sheep in the early 19th century, the region was transfigured by the invasive but characteristic blue gum eucalyptus planted by mayor and one-time owner, Adolph Sutro. Purchased and revived in 1889 by the Crocker Real Estate Company as the Glen Park Picnic Grounds, the canyon housed an amusement park, aviary, and small zoo. This land of leisure and recreation soon became a site of survival when, in 1906, hundreds of San Francisco residents rendered homeless from the devastating earthquake and city-wide fires sought refuge in the canyon's emergency-rigged camps. In 1922, the City and County of San Francisco purchased the property for \$30,000 for protection as an urban recreation area.

In 1941, O'Shaughnessy Boulevard was completed, cutting off the west side of the park and its watershed and diminishing Islais Creek, one of the few aboveground and free-flowing creeks in San Francisco. Since then, community organizations, such as the Friends of Glen Canyon Park and the Glen Park Association, have worked arduously to improve the park's recreational facilities and restore its natural areas. A 1970s plan to widen O'Shaughnessy Boulevard was defeated by the "Gum Tree ladies," a group of local women united around the efforts to save Glen Canyon from development.

In 2002, the RPD secured grant funding from the Conservancy to implement recommendations from Glen Park's Natural Resources Inventory and Master Plan. The Conservancy's \$250,000 grant was matched by \$250,000 from RPD and was used to improve a number of trails on the hillsides and reduce the social trail network, install erosion control features along sections of the hillside trails below O'Shaughnessy Boulevard, install interpretive signs, and restore native plant habitat along portions of Islais Creek. During the same time period, RPD held three community meetings, each drawing approximately 50-70 participants. These community planning meetings identified the need to rebuild or renovate the Recreation Center, and initiated a Park

Improvement Plan (“PIP”) centered around four community-developed concepts: 1) Rebuilding, relocating, and/or expanding the Recreation Center with gym, auditorium, activity space, and environmental education center; 2) Revitalizing the Canyon into a “Living Classroom” offering a unique ecological experience combining recreation and education; 3) Expanding play and picnic areas, and upgrading courts and fields; and 4) Daylighting or resurfacing the below ground portions of Islais Creek.

The PIP, which had involved so much enthusiastic community commitment, was not able to be completed due to lack of funding. Fortunately, in 2008, Glen Canyon Park was included in the City of San Francisco’s Clean and Safe Neighborhood Park Bond (Proposition A), which was passed by the voters. RPD has designated \$900,000 of the bond funds towards trail work and \$5.8 million towards the recreation area. With this proposed grant from the Conservancy, TPL proposes to build on Glen Canyon Park’s 2003 PIP to initiate a fresh and comprehensive community planning and visioning approach, resulting in a fully supported and achievable Master Plan with clear steps of implementation and measurable outcomes.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$289,950.00
TPL (Private Foundation and Corporate Grants)	<u>\$193,300.00</u>
Total Project Costs	\$483,250.00

Conservancy funds are anticipated to come from the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 funds may be used for the purposes of promoting access to and enjoyment of the urban open space resources in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. In addition, Proposition 84 funds may be utilized to finance planning necessary for the successful design, selection, and implementation of such projects. Consistent with the purposes of Proposition 84, the proposed project will be undertaken pursuant to the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code), and will consist of planning necessary to improve access to and visitor-serving amenities at Glen Canyon Park in the City and County of San Francisco.

TPL has raised \$193,300 in funds from a variety of private sources to contribute towards the Master Plan. Conservancy and TPL-raised funds will be used for: 1) TPL project staff (project manager, community outreach associate, legal, marketing, and government affairs), 2) professional services (landscape architects, planners, and technical consultants), 3) TPL program support services, and 4) printing, postage, travel, and office expenses.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, sections 31160 *et seq.* regarding San Francisco Bay projects.

Pursuant to Section 31162, the Conservancy may award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that help to achieve various specific goals, including the goals of improving public

access to urban open spaces, protecting natural habitats and open space resources of regional importance, and promoting projects that provide open space and natural areas accessible to urban populations for recreational purposes. The proposed project is located entirely within San Francisco County, one of the designated nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Consistent with Section 31162(a), the proposed project will produce a Master Plan for improved public access to urban open spaces. The proposed project will not have a significant adverse effect on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife.

Consistent with Section 31162(b), the proposed project will plan for increased protection of natural habitats, scenic areas and open-space resources of regional importance in Glen Canyon Park.

Consistent with Section 31162(d), the proposed project will plan for enhancement of Glen Canyon Park, which is easily accessible of to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes.

In addition, the proposed project satisfies criteria for determining project priority under Section 31163(c), as follows: (1) the proposed project is supported by adopted local plans, including the RPD's Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan (2006), the San Francisco Planning Department's Glen Park Community Plan (in draft, not yet adopted), the San Francisco Stormwater Design Guidelines adopted by the San Francisco Public Utility Commission in 2010, and the San Francisco Climate Action Plan (2004), (2) the proposed project will serve a regional consistency (Glen Canyon Park is a heavily used park attracting visitors from multiple nearby neighborhoods and from throughout San Francisco); (3) the proposed project will be implemented in a timely way (the Master Plan will be completed within one year); (4), the proposed project provides opportunities for benefits that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented, as there are City of San Francisco bond funds available for implementation that necessitate a Master Plan; and (5) the proposed project will include matching funds from other sources (TPL).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2007
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 10, Objective G** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will develop a plan for enhancement of one mile of riparian habitat along Islais Creek.

Consistent with **Goal 10, Objective I**, the proposed project will develop a plan to enhance watershed functions in Glen Canyon.

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective A**, the proposed project will develop a plan to provide a recreational facility that includes picnic and staging areas, interpretive signs, and interpretive or educational centers.

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective H**, the proposed project will develop a plan for regionally significant trails and community connectors.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on June 4, 2009, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The Glen Park Master plan effort is supported by many individuals and entities, including State Senator Mark Leno, Assemblyperson Tom Ammiano, San Francisco Supervisors Bevan Dufty and Sean Elsbernd, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, and Friends of Glen Canyon Park (see Exhibit 3: Project Letters).
4. **Location:** The proposed project is located in the south central portion of San Francisco, within the nine-county Bay Area.
5. **Need:** Conservancy funds are needed to allow TPL to complete the Master Plan in a timely fashion with significant community involvement, allowing the RPD to proceed with implementation using their bond funds.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** Glen Canyon Park is a large, heavily used park in San Francisco that provides a unique combination of significant active recreation at the entry to a 60 acre canyon that allows visitors to experience wildlife in the city. The canyon is home to a mile long stretch of above ground creek (one of a handful of remaining creeks in San Francisco), significant urban wildlife habitat (riparian, scrub, and grassland), and over four miles of hiking trails.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** Glen Canyon Park is not located in an area vulnerable to future sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** The Park is in urgent need of attention. The playing fields located above the decaying wooden culverts that carry the underground portion of Islais Creek experience shifting ground and irrigation issues. The Recreation Center was built in 1934 and is seismically unsafe, inaccessible to people with disabilities, has significant roof problems, and has a warped and sinking floor due to the underground creek that runs along one corner. The playground is also not accessible to people with disabilities and is constructed of treated wood which contains arsenic. Numerous social trails have developed over the years, creating erosion issues on the hillsides and impacting water quality in the creek. In addition, there is an ongoing effort to protect the native habitats in Glen Canyon, particularly the riparian habitats, from invasive plant species such as Cape ivy. The Master Plan will address these issues and allow for RPD to move forward with park improvements.

9. **Resolution of more than one issue:** TPL's is committed to creating a holistic Master Plan that considers the recreational, historical, and ecological aspects of the entire park. The Master Plan will strive to have the park's recreation area and associated facilities complement the extensive natural areas, with integration of the two areas as much as possible.
10. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
11. **Conflict resolution:** The Master Plan effort will need to address conflicting objectives by park users. The park is large and good design can assist with efforts to accommodate most uses, such as picnicking, dog walking, organized sports, hiking, and playground use by children.
13. **Readiness:** TPL has raised the remaining funds needed for the Master Plan and is ready to proceed and complete the Master Plan by the end of 2011. RPD has designated bond funds for implementation of the Master Plan and has a goal of completing the Glen Canyon Park work by end of 2013.
14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.
16. **Cooperation:** The Master Plan process will engage numerous committees and commissions in San Francisco, as well as elected officials, nongovernmental organizations, and community groups, such as the Friends of Glen Canyon Park, the Glen Canyon Merchants Association, and California Native Plant Society. In addition, park users, such as Glenridge Co-operative Nursery School, recreational/sports organizations, and neighbors, will be invited to participate in the planning effort.
17. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** As Glen Canyon Park is located in a coastal region, it is projected to have less severe temperature increases than inland regions. For this reason, Glen Canyon Park is an important refuge for human use and overall biodiversity. The Park also supports a critical watershed for the San Francisco area. Islais Creek is one of the few remaining spots in San Francisco providing fresh water, abundant insect life, and shelter for resident and migrating birds. The proposed project aims to protect and enhance important habitats and ecosystem processes of this urban open space. This is essential to minimizing threats from global warming to California's biodiversity. The recommendations for ecological improvements and protection that will result from TPL's proposed Master Planning Project for Glen Canyon Park will protect land for supporting native species in responding to climate change. The Master Plan will identify and provide recommendations for management of invasive species in order to reduce the impacts of this major stressor on biodiversity and restoration and enhancement of a riparian corridor in an urban coastal watershed area to protect biodiversity.
18. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The restoration of an open space within an urban area will help support regional efforts to encourage transit-oriented, high-density development and reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Local trail enhancements through the park that provide pleasant, safe, and walkable connections to other neighborhoods may alleviate the need for local vehicle trips. Trail and recreation center design will include measures to avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emissions to the extent feasible and consistent with the project objectives.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

The proposed master planning project is statutorily and categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under two sections of 14 Cal. Code of Regulations. The proposed master planning activities are statutorily exempt pursuant to Section 15262 in that they will involve feasibility and planning analysis for possible future action that has not yet been adopted, approved or funded and they will include consideration of environmental factors. The master planning activities are likewise categorically exempt under §15306 to the extent that they involve basic data collection and resource evaluation activities. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.