

California Native Grasslands Association
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE BOARD
Date: 7-12-19 Board Meeting

5b: Conservation Committee

Chair: Jim Hanson

Committee Members: Emily Allen, Robert Evans, Michele Hammond

CONSERVATION REPORT – July, 2019



1. Save TESLA as a Park, Livermore Legislative Round 3 - Friends of TESLA now has a legislative bill SB 767 resubmitted to be able to sell this State Park land that is currently intended for an off-road vehicle park for public park purposes. CNGA and CNPS submitted support letters and an East Bay CNPS member has also been attending the State legislative committee hearings and stating CNGA support too.

Action: None needed at this time. This bill is similar to the legislation from last year

that almost made it to the Governor.

Goal: Keep CNGA support visible for Save TESLA legislation in 2109 to conserve the Oak Savannah w/ *Poa secunda* grasslands, etc.

2. Mayor & Richmond City Council reviewing SunCal developer proposal for Pt. Molate - Mayor Tom Butt and a Council majority voted to give SunCal Development exclusive right to negotiate on the Pt. Molate property. They are scheduled to return to Council in October. Jim made a presentation on the financing issues of the City's plan at an April forum of 100 citizens, and helped lead two hikes on the flora of Pt. Molate, including the grasses, sedges, and rushes, in June.



Action: Along with the Sierra Club and Pt. Molate Alliance members, Jim is currently meeting with City Council members about economic issues with the proposed luxury

housing plan.

Goal: Work with community and supporting organizations to make it clear in the city and regionally that ecological degradation, subsidizing luxury shoreline housing, and building next to a refinery with one road in and out is a bad plan for the environment, for economic equity, and the the city's social and fiscal health.

3. UC Field Station Richmond, expansion onto rare shoreline coastal prairie

I've been visiting this prairie both before and after I sent in CNGA's comments on the "Richmond Global Campus" EIR. UCB is now developing a large book storage facility onto the prairie, but it is not evident that they are following the EIR and mitigating for impacts and controlling the invasive *Phalaris aquatica* that has been allowed to take over large sections of the prairie over many years.



Figure 1 *Phalaris aquatica* impacts from construction on the rare shoreline *Danthonia/Stipa*/high forb coastal prairie.

Action: I met the new biologist who is monitoring the site. There may be some contact to UCB management to attempt to leverage a campus response to the EIR requirements/guidance for construction on the site, including invasive plant management.

4. CDFW "RCIS" plan for East Bay – CDFW is preparing Regional Conservation Investment Strategy plans to identify lands for mitigation, most likely for CEQA-identified impacts. Their RCIS plan for the East Bay only considered mitigation for threatened and endangered plants and animals, and not sensitive plant communities even though sensitive plant communities (such as native perennial grasslands) are supposed to be surveyed and considered for mitigation in CEQA.

Action: The official public comment period for the three initial RCIS plans is closed, but there needs to be a way to get these plans to recognize and account for sensitive plant communities.

5. Sibley/McCosker Parks and other FIVE other East Bay Regional Parks Land Use Plan Amendment/DEIR's up for comment in 2019 –

No new developments since EB CNPS chapter, Sierra Club and other environmental organizations spoke to assure comprehensive floristic surveys for, and avoidance of, sensitive native grasslands plant communities for mountain bike mixed use trails in CEQA documents.

6. Big Tejon Ranch Centennial Project, Los Angeles – CNPS has filed a CEQA lawsuit.

Goal: Follow the project and provide updates with CNGA Facebook posts.

7. Gov. Newsom's emergency vegetation reduction projects and conservation of native grassland and other flora

State Cal Fire has announced a 14 mile fuel break for the East Bay Hills as one of several "emergency fuel reduction projects" in California. Emily also has a project in Mendocino County.

Action: Participated in meeting with Moraga-Orinda Fire, local fuel break project sponsor, and environmental consultants they hired to call for protection of sensitive plant communities (such as native perennial grasslands) in any fuel break work. We were assured that this was going to mostly be a "shaded fuel break" with most work on foot and not lots of heavy equipment. They plan to do prescribed burns of the grasslands. I also recently met with one of the co-sponsors, Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan in San Ramon as part of an Environmental Roundtable. I asked about follow-up funds for the new emergency vegetation fuel work.