

Capital Improvement Project Proposal
to Build and Operate

The San Francisco Nature Center

At the Sunset Richmond Treatment Site

To: Recreation and Parks Department



Presented By: San Francisco Rescued Orphan Mammal Program

The San Francisco Nature Center



*Black –Necked Stilts can be seen in 6 San Francisco locations.
Pictured here with a marbled godwit. Photo Tom Kuhn*

Proposed Project:

To build and operate the San Francisco Nature Center and wildlife hospital on the Sunset Richmond Treatment Site.

Project Goals / Overview

The goal of the San Francisco Nature Center is to open the hearts and minds of all who visit to become stewards of the environment. The way there is paved with public education and public participation that fosters a closer connection with our natural world. We want to invest in a sustainable future for our children and hope you'll join us in achieving this goal with your support of this project.

- Buildings will be models of sustainable building methods, generating active and passive solar energy and employing innovative energy efficiency.
- The project will feature a premiere wildlife hospital with state of the art educational components, making this a prominent feature of the center.
- The landscaping will be habitat and organic food demonstration gardens designed for self guided tours and workshops for community involvement.
- The Butterfly Garden picnic area and “picnic concession” behind the millwright house will provide a much needed relaxation area at the park’s west end, and serve organically grown picnic fare to highlight sustainable food production as a worldwide environmental issue.
- Educational classes, seminars, workshops and programs will be offered on a wide range of environmental issues. The Center will provide a venue for the Bay Area’s environmental organizations to share the work they do with the public and encourage participation. Naturalist classes that focus on San Francisco ecology will be offered for all ages throughout the year.

Project Component Description



Wildlife Hospital and Wildlife Education Program

Thousands of people from around the Bay Area flock to Golden Gate Park annually with binoculars in hand, hoping to glimpse some of the beautiful resident and migratory birds that the park attracts. Thousands more flock to the ocean to view our water birds. And it's not just out-of-towners that enjoy San Francisco's abundance of diverse wildlife species. San Franciscans are renowned for our love of animals, be it domestic or wild. SF USD teachers regularly plead for SF ROMP to provide more wildlife education classes for their students. High school and college newspapers regularly seek wildlife stories. The overwhelming outpouring of residents wanting to help our wildlife during the recent oil spill maintained headline news position for days.

With 1.6 million shore and water birds that utilize our coastline annually, and 70% of our songbirds in peril according to the 2007 National Audubon Society report released in the press last week, we are clearly a county that needs a wildlife care facility.

San Francisco is one of the few Bay Area counties without a wildlife hospital and nature education center. Most Bay Area counties have provided land, and usually the facility for this purpose, to the mutual benefit of all.

Currently Animal Care and Control Officers drive our birds all the way to Burlingame, to the Peninsula Humane Society in San Mateo, to receive care. The stress of transportation harms the chance of survival for these debilitated birds. Short-staffing and local emergencies can delay birds being driven out of county to care. San Francisco Rescued Orphan Mammal Program provides a foster care program for orphaned wildlife under license of the California Department of Fish and Game. Local Veterinarians volunteer their time and skill to assist mammals

in need of care. A wildlife hospital is needed to provide care on site. Copies of newsletters from neighboring county wildlife rehabilitation facilities are included to provide examples of what other counties offer.

The Richmond Sunset Treatment Site is the ideal location for this purpose for many reasons, not least of which is the availability of a parcel of land large enough to accommodate a 100' long flight aviary for recovering raptors, water pools for recovering water birds, songbird and hummingbird aviaries and baby mammal pens. The naturalistic setting of the west end of the park and relative quiet are also conducive to a healing environment for our wildlife. We hope that half of the land at this site will be conserved as natural habitat and reforestation.

The San Francisco Nature Center proposes to be the first wildlife care center to utilize a high tech approach to wildlife education. Remote cameras located in the baby bird room, water pools, flight aviaries and baby mammal pens will stream real-time video to large flat screen monitors in the nature education center providing the unique educational opportunity for park visitors to view wildlife up close and learn about our native and migratory wildlife without interfering with the rehabilitation process.

Docents will provide information to visitors about our native wildlife; the causes of patients coming into care, the rehabilitation process, and ways in which we can all protect our wildlife. We expect residents will want to visit often to follow patients through recovery to release back to the wild.

The Department of Fish and Game has approved this teaching modality, but San Francisco will be the first county to implement this innovative high-tech educational tool. This feature will be a focal point of The Nature Center's goal to promote stewardship of San Francisco's rich biodiversity. We will be asking our high tech community to partner with us on this project, and provide technical and design assistance as well as components to manifest this innovative educational tool.

California wildlife rehabilitation facilities are licensed and regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game, and carry all necessary insurance including workers compensation. Wildlife rehabilitation facilities that operate on City and County land typically enter into an MOU with the local municipality, rendering the municipality harmless for any liability associated with the care of wildlife. These MOU's are standard. To the best knowledge of the CDFG wildlife rehabilitation coordinator, there has never been a case in which the state or a local municipality has been sued in conjunction with any aspect of wildlife rehabilitation. Trained and licensed wildlife rehabilitators, complying with CDFG regulations, will operate this center. With over 10 years of wildlife rehabilitation experience, I am thrilled to be coordinating this exciting project.

Project Component Description



Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden Picnic Area and Picnic Concession

Thousands of people jog, bike, skate or drive through the park to the ocean every day. Few of these people pack a lunch before they set out. Those that find themselves hungry upon reaching the ocean have two choices: they can sit down to a cooked meal with table service at the Beach Chalet or leave the park to go get something to eat.

The west end of Golden Gate Park is in need of a picnic area where people can buy healthy picnic fare and relax in the park to enjoy it. We don't want people to leave the park because they're hungry. We want them to stay for a picnic that will enhance their visit to the park and Nature Center. A picnic is quintessential relaxation. Kids don't have to remain seated; parents can relax in the sun. We want to make the experience even better by adding butterflies and hummingbirds. Nature is a wonderful tonic that slows us down so that we can see the intricate petals of the flowers and smell the subtle scents they exude.

Behind the millwright house, and across the service road from the millwright house, are sunny and protected areas - ideal for a butterfly and hummingbird garden picnic area.

The millwright house, while too small for a nature education center, would accommodate a small but efficient commercial kitchen with a serving hatch at the North end to prepare and serve beverages, salads, soups and sandwiches made with local organically grown food. This will promote environmentally sustainable food production. The roughly 700 square foot space could also accommodate a few indoor café tables, clean restrooms that would be locked when the concession closes. We would like to offer a small selection of sustainable energy books for sale, with a focus on windmills as original sustainable energy generators. The café area would also display and sell posters of the world's famous windmills, including the Murphy windmill. We are hoping that the millwright house will be able to be rehabilitated to preserve it and utilize it for a functional and educational use.

Project Component Description



Educational classes, seminars, workshops and programs

Education Curriculum

The Nature Center will offer programs that explore San Francisco's rich biodiversity, as well as a wide range of global environmental issues. There are many wonderful environmental organizations anxious to utilize the Nature Center for sharing their knowledge and ideas for a better future with all of us. Most of these organizations have only office space.

The Nature Center will provide Bay Area environmental organizations with a much-needed venue to offer classes, seminars, workshops and programs of a community enhancing nature. In learning about the work these organizations are doing, we can gain a greater understanding and appreciation of our natural world, the challenges we face, and ways we can meet and overcome these challenges. The Nature Center will also serve as a venue for environmental authors to speak, when on book tours.

The Nature Center maximize outdoor hands-on learning opportunities, as well as providing classroom curriculum of an approachable and stimulating nature.

Green building, green energy generating, energy efficiency, greenhouse gasses, global warming, recycling, composting, organic gardening, pesticides and pesticide reduction, air pollution, water pollution, ecosystems, plant and animal habitat, endangered species, wildlife conservation, mycology, pollinators, the state of our oceans including red tides, el ninos, algae blooms and marine mammals, salmon protection and creek bed ecology, are examples of the long list of topics that will provide for ongoing classes and discussions.

The Richmond Sunset Treatment Site has been used to compost the park's green waste since the closure of the sewage treatment plant in 1997. Now that this composting is being re-located to Transverse Drive, our project sponsors are anxious to work with you to establish the Nature Center.

We propose to utilize approximately ½ of the area of the Richmond Sunset Treatment Site (2 acres): 2500 sf hospital, 1500 sf education center, outdoor enclosures and aviaries, and parking. We would like the remaining 2 acres to be reforested and retained as natural parkland, with the exception of a possible park log storage area and construction material staging area at the NE corner.

Construction permits for green building on public land are apparently fast tracked through the State. So with the park's support of this project, The Nature Center could open in mid 2010. The estimated cost of the project is two million dollars. We believe that this investment in our children's education and park visitors' enjoyment is a sound one. Program operations and operating costs will be funded through a combination of public and private donors and grantors, as are other like facilities. We fully expect that the Nature Center will receive the funding support it needs, and will begin working to secure these funds immediately.

Our project sponsors look forward to discussing the opportunity we have with this location and bond money to bring this center to San Francisco.

San Francisco Nature Center Project Sponsors (partial list)

Jamie Ray, Lead Sponsor
Director SF ROMP wildlife rehabilitation
879 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA. 94121
(415) 221-3498
Jamie_ray@comcast.net.

David Bushnell
450 Architects
450 Clementina San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 456- 0450
Specializing in green building and sustainable consulting. David was the architect of the award winning green built Waldorf School in San Francisco.

John McCune, General Contractor
McCune Construction, specializing in large public/ private project management and green building.
888 N 1st St San Jose, CA
(408) 297-3330