

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

D. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

4. BOARD AND STAFF REPORTS

- a. A New Conservation Model Through “30x30” Conservation Movement (Alvarez)

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only. The Board of Directors will receive a presentation on this agenda item to introduce the actions the Park District is taking consistent with its mission, vision and Master Plan to advance a new model of conservation to accelerate the pace and scale of climate-smart conservation of the natural world to protect biodiversity and combat climate change.

REVENUE/COST

A state report, *Pathways to 30x30 California – Accelerating Conservation of California’s Nature* identifies state funding to jumpstart progress on 30x30 including \$768 million set aside for nature-based solutions, \$600 million for coastal resilience projects, \$645 million in habitat restoration and \$105 million for wildlife corridors and fish passage projects. Figure 1 lists the Fiscal Year 2021-22 California Budget Act allocations presented at the California Natural Resources Agency 30x30 Partnership Kick Off event on September 28, 2022 totaling \$1.6 billion to advance 30x30 objectives and strategies through various existing and new grant programs.

Advancing 30x30 Figure 1

Ocean Protection Council ~\$230 million
State Coastal Conservancy ~ \$700 million <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Habitat Restoration and Protection• Acquisition• Nature-based Solution for Coastal Resilience• Wildfire Resilience
Wildlife Conservation Board ~\$245 million <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rangeland, Grazing and Grassland Protection• Forest Conservation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak Woodlands Conservation • California Desert Conservation • Climate Adaptation and Resiliency
Department of Fish and Wildlife <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Restoration ~54 million • Wildlife Corridors ~ \$42 million • Natural Community Conservation Planning and Acquisition ~\$36 million • Reginal Conservation Investment Strategies ~ \$5 million
California Natural Resources Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal Nature-Based Solution ~\$100 million
State Conservancies ~ \$120 million

BACKGROUND

The conservation movement to protect thirty percent (30%) of the Earth's lands and waters by 2030 is a global initiative with the participation of seventy-two (72) countries, including the United States with the State of California leading the way.

Federal Actions

On January 27, 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, to address the acknowledged climate crisis. This order included the specific goal to protect thirty percent (30%) of the nation's lands and oceans by 2030. This initiative brings together multiple public policy issue areas including public health, food supplies, biodiversity and equity. It specifically calls for national leadership on conservation to help mitigate climate induced events including wildfire and flooding, as well as addressing inequitable access to the outdoors. These issues are highlighted in the policy report, America the Beautiful, as well as job creation and support for a healthy economy. Stakeholders and coalitions identified as central to the creation and implementation of this order include scientists, Tribal leaders, senior agency officials, Members of Congress and their staff, state elected officials, state agencies, outdoor recreation businesses and users, and leaders on equity and justice in conservation.

The America the Beautiful report outlines eight key principles including collaboration, inclusion, local leadership, Tribal Nation leadership, job creation, community health, stewardship by farmers, and use of science to develop strategies for flexible and adaptive approaches. All eight principles align with the Park District's Policy Climate Framework, which was adopted by Board Resolution No. 2018-04-081 on April 17, 2018. The report's goals are to be reviewed and quantified annually by the Secretary of the Interior in a report to the National Climate Task Force with updates about progress.

State Actions

Prior to Federal actions, on October 7, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Nature-based Solutions Executive Order N-82-20 (30x30 EO) seeking to advance biodiversity conservation as

an administration priority by elevating the role of nature in the fight against climate change. Specifically, this Executive Order commits California to the goal of conserving thirty percent (30%) of its lands and coastal waters by 2030.

In the months following the 30x30 EO, a collaborative governance model including government agencies and institutions, scientists and community stakeholders contributed to the development of the *Pathways to 30x30 California – Accelerating Conservation of California’s Nature* (Pathways Report) to implement the Governor Newsom’s 30x30 policy. The Pathways Report is an outcome of collaborative work of thousands of Californians who participated through nine state agency hosted workshops, five topical advisory panels, consultation with over sixty Tribal Nations, and input from community organizations, coalitions and interest groups.

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) led the effort by convening and coordinating the contribution of key stakeholders including, California Department of Conservation, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, California Conservation Corps, State Coastal Conservancy amongst other state agencies; and organizations through the 30x30 Coordinating Committee – including the California Biodiversity Council, California Natural Resources Agency Tribal Committee, California Biodiversity Network (CBN), of which Deputy General Manager Dr. Ana M. Alvarez serves on its Steering Committee, and regional working groups and coalitions such as Together Bay Area of which Legislative and Policy Management Analyst Lisa Baldinger serves on its Board of Directors.

For the purposes of California’s 30x30 goal and through a robust stakeholder engagement process, a “30x30 Conservation Area” was defined as “*Land and coastal water areas that are durably protected and managed to sustain functional ecosystems, both intact and restored, and the diversity of life that they support.*” Through this definition and the best available data sets, it was determined that approximately twenty-four percent (24%) of California lands and sixteen percent (16%) of its coastal waters are already conserved.

California’s Pathways Report Objectives

The *Pathways to 30x30 California – Accelerating Conservation of California’s Nature* (Pathways Report) was published on Earth Day - April 22, 2022 as a strategy to conserve an additional six million acres of land and half a million acres of coastal waters to reach the thirty percent (30%) goal. It should be noted that the Park District contributed to the development of Pathways Report’s Appendix D, *Conserving California: Advancing Science in Support of 30x30*.

The Pathways Report highlights the Governor’s Executive Order directive to meet three critical objectives, described as:

1. Protect and Restore Biodiversity
2. Improves Equitable Access to Nature for All and Reflect the Needs and Interests of Local Communities
3. Mitigate and Build Resilience to Climate Change through Climate-Smart Land Management

To achieve these identified objects, the report expands with ten pathways, many of which align with the Park District’s current practices, including:

- Accelerate Regionally Led Conservation

- Execute Strategic Land Acquisitions
- Increase Voluntary Conservation Easements
- Enhance Conservation of Existing Public Lands and Coastal Waters
- Institutionalize Advance Mitigation
- Expand and Accelerate Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
- Strengthen Coordination Among Governments
- Align Investments to Maximize Conservation Benefits
- Advance and Promote Complementary Conservation Measures
- Evaluate Conservation Outcomes and Adaptively Manage

East Bay Regional Park District Actions

California's 30x30 Conservation Initiative leans-in regionally led conservation for its implementation. The East Bay Regional Park District has been at the front and center as a contributing partner in the development of the state's 30x30 framework under the leadership of General Manager Sabrina B. Landreth with the participation of Deputy General Manager Dr. Alvarez at the CNRA 30x30 Partnership Planning Committee, CBD Steering Committee and contributing author to Pathways Report Appendix D; and, at the regional level with the participation at Together Bay Area working group which is no longer in effect by former Assistant General Manager of Acquisition, Stewardship and Development, Kristina Kelchner.

The Park District submitted information regarding land types through CNRA's online portal for consideration in the land conservation analysis. As of to date, 42% of Park District's parklands, shorelines and preserves are included in the "30x30 Conservation Areas". Currently the Park District is conducting a conservation status review of its remaining public lands that may contribute to the six million acres gap to reach the conservation of thirty percent (30%) of California's lands.

Additionally, General Manager Sabrina B. Landreth has convened a cross-divisional 30x30 Leadership Working Group to prioritize acquisitions, strategize on accelerating environmental restoration, climate mitigation and climate-smart stewardship to build climate resiliency as well as to launch an inclusive and collaborative pathway for all Park District employees to be part of the 30x30 conservation movement. The Park District's 30x30 Leadership Working Group attended in-person the September 28, 2022, 30x30 Partnership Kick Off event and had an opportunity to meet with various state department representatives who will be managing the state grant programs advancing 30x30.

Furthermore, the Park District will continue to advance meaningful regional partnerships with academic and research institutions, community-based organizations and governmental agencies to identify and swiftly accelerate regional action to advance climate resiliency through nature-based solutions that enhance biodiversity, address social equity and increases public access to public lands. The Park District's body of work will be prioritized based on funding opportunities through Federal and State programs associated with 30x30 conservation movement.

ALTERNATIVES

None recommended.