



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

DATE: October 15, 2014
TO: San Francisco Planning Commission
FROM: Timothy Johnston, Planning Department, EP
RE: Appeal of Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project. Planning Department Case No. 2013.1220E
HEARING DATE: October 23, 2014

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An appeal has been received concerning a preliminary mitigated negative declaration for the following project:

Case No. 2013.1220E – Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project, 520 John Muir Drive, San Francisco: The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) proposes to implement the proposed project in order to clean up soil contamination at the Pacific Rod and Gun Club (PRGC), located on the southwest side of Lake Merced. Soil contamination is the result of the former use of lead shot and clay targets made with asphaltic materials at the skeet and trap shooting ranges. The SFPUC prepared the PRGC Upland Soil Remedial Action Plan in response to a Cleanup Order issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region to the SFPUC and the PRGC. The project consists of excavation and appropriate off-site disposal of up to 46,500 cubic yards of soils containing elevated concentrations of lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and backfilling of excavated areas with clean fill material.

This matter is calendared for public hearing on October 23, 2014. Enclosed are the appeal letter, the staff responses, the amended mitigated negative declaration, and the draft motion.

If you have any questions related to this project's environmental evaluation, please contact me at (415) 575-9035 or Timothy.Johnston@sfgov.org.

Thank you.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Appeal of Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration Executive Summary

HEARING DATE: October 23, 2014

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Hearing Date: October 23, 2014
Case No.: **2013.1220E**
Project Location: **Pacific Rod and Gun Club, 520 John Muir Drive, San Francisco**
Zoning: Public Use District
Open Space Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 7283/004
Project Sponsor: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Yin Lan Zhang – (415) 487-5201
YZhang@sfgov.org
Staff Contact: Timothy Johnston – (415) 575-9035
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PROPOSED COMMISSION ACTION:

Consider whether to uphold staff's decision to prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), or whether to overturn that decision and require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report due to specified potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission proposes to clean up soil contamination at the Pacific Rod and Gun Club (PRGC), located on the southwest side of Lake Merced. Soil contamination is the result of the former use of lead shot and clay targets made with asphaltic materials at the skeet and trap shooting ranges. The SFPUC prepared the PRGC Upland Soil Remedial Action Plan in response to a Cleanup Order issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region to the SFPUC and the PRGC. The project consists of excavation and appropriate off-site disposal of up to 46,500 cubic yards of soils containing elevated concentrations of lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and backfilling of excavated areas with clean fill material.

ISSUES:

The Planning Department published a Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration (PMND) on June 25, 2014, and received an appeal letter from the Pacific Rod and Gun Club on July 25, 2014, appealing the determination to issue a MND. The appeal letter states that the PMND fails to adequately address the following issues:

1. "Piecemealing"
2. Historical Resources

3. Aesthetic Resources
4. Project impacts that warrant preparation of an EIR

Seven other comment letters were received that address a variety of concerns: dust; biological resources; aesthetics; and need for the project. All of the issues raised in the appeal letter and other comment letters have been addressed in the attached materials, which include:

- A draft Motion upholding the decision to issue a MND;
- Exhibit A to draft Motion, Planning Department Response to the Appeal Letter;
- Exhibit B: Appeal Letter from Pacific Rod and Gun Club;
- Exhibit C: Comment Letters (Golden Gate Audubon Society; Dolphin Club; Friends of the Gulls; Frank H. (Bert) Swan, Ph.D.; Peter Griffith; Jeanine Mahl; and Dick Morten); and
- PMND and Initial Study as amended, with deletions shown in ~~striketrough~~ and additions shown in double-underlined text. The amendments in the PMND do not change the overall conclusion of the PMND.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the motion to uphold the PMND. No substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that a significant environmental effect may occur as a result of the project has been presented that would warrant preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Commission Motion [XXXX]

HEARING DATE: October 23, 2014

Hearing Date: October 23, 2014
Case No.: **2013.1220E**
Project Location: **Pacific Rod and Gun Club, 520 John Muir Drive, San Francisco**
Zoning: Public Use District
Open Space Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 7283/004
Project Sponsor: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATED TO THE APPEAL OF THE PRELIMINARY MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, FILE NUMBER 2013.1220E FOR THE PROPOSED UPLAND SOIL REMEDIATION PROJECT (“PROJECT”) AT THE PACIFIC ROD AND GUN CLUB, 520 JOHN MUIR DRIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO

MOVED, that the San Francisco Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) hereby AFFIRMS the decision to issue a Mitigated Negative Declaration, based on the following findings:

1. On August 29, 2013, pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the State CEQA Guidelines, and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code, the Planning Department (“Department”) received an Environmental Evaluation Application form for the Project, in order that it might conduct an initial evaluation to determine whether the Project might have a significant impact on the environment.
2. On June 25, 2014, the Department determined that the Project, as proposed, could not have a significant effect on the environment.
3. On June 25, 2014, a notice of determination that a Mitigated Negative Declaration would be issued for the Project was duly published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City, and the Mitigated Negative Declaration posted in the Department offices, and distributed all in accordance with law.
4. On July 25, 2014 an appeal of the decision to issue a Mitigated Negative Declaration was timely filed by David Cincotta of Jeffer, Mangels, Butler & Mitchell, LLP on behalf of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club.
5. Between July 10 and July 31, 2014, seven comment letters were received addressing various environmental concerns and the project in general. Comments were received from the following organizations and individuals: Golden Gate Audubon Society; Dolphin Club; Friends of the Gulls; Frank H. (Bert) Swan, Ph.D.; Peter Griffith; Jeanine Mahl; and Dick Morten.
6. A staff memorandum addresses and responds to all points raised by the appellant in the appeal letter. That memorandum is attached as Exhibit A and staff’s findings as to those points are

incorporated by reference herein as the Commission's own findings. Copies of that memorandum have been delivered to the City Planning Commission, and a copy of that memorandum is on file and available for public review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, Suite 500.

7. On October 15, 2014, amendments were made to the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration to add additional sources of setting information and clarify setting and impact discussions, based on comments from the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Such amendments do not include new, undisclosed environmental impacts and do not change the conclusions reached in the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration. The changes do not require "substantial revision" of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration, and therefore recirculation of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration would not be required.
8. On October 23, 2014, the Commission held a duly noticed and advertised public hearing on the appeal of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration, at which testimony on the merits of the appeal, both in favor of and in opposition to, was received.
9. All points raised in the appeal of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration at the October 23, 2014 City Planning Commission hearing have been responded to either in the Memorandum or orally at the public hearing.
10. After consideration of the points raised by appellant, both in writing and at the October 23, 2014 hearing, the San Francisco Planning Department reaffirms its conclusion that the proposed project could not have a significant effect upon the environment.
11. In reviewing the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration issued for the Project, the Planning Commission has had available for its review and consideration all information pertaining to the Project in the Planning Department's case file.
12. The Planning Commission finds that Planning Department's determination on the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the Department's independent judgment and analysis.

The City Planning Commission HEREBY DOES FIND that the proposed Project, could not have a significant effect on the environment, as shown in the analysis of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, and HEREBY DOES AFFIRM the decision to issue a Mitigated Negative Declaration, as prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Motion was ADOPTED by the City Planning Commission on October 23, 2014.

Jonas Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: [Date]

EXHIBIT A

Draft Motion
Planning Department Response to the Appeal Letter



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

Exhibit A to Draft Motion Planning Department Response to Appeal of Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration

CASE NO. 2013.1220E – PACIFIC ROD AND GUN CLUB UPLAND SOIL REMEDIAL ACTION PROJECT
PUBLISHED ON JUNE 25, 2014

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BACKGROUND

An environmental evaluation application (2013.1220E) for the proposed project at 520 John Muir Drive (Assessor's Block 7283, Lot 4) was filed on behalf of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission on August 29, 2013, for a proposal to implement the Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Plan (the "project"), which would clean up soil contamination at the Pacific Rod and Gun Club (PRGC), located on the southwest side of Lake Merced in San Francisco, California. The SFPUC leases the site to the PRGC, which built and has operated skeet and trap shooting facilities at the site since 1934. Soil contamination is the result of the former use of lead shot and clay targets made with asphaltic materials at the skeet and trap shooting ranges. The SFPUC prepared the PRGC Remedial Action Plan (RAP) in response to a Cleanup Order R2-2013-0023 (the Order) issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region (RWQCB) to the SFPUC and the PRGC. The project consists of excavation and appropriate off-site disposal of up to 46,500 cubic yards of soils containing elevated concentrations of lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and backfilling of excavated areas with clean fill material. The project consists solely of construction activities associated with remediation of contaminated soils at the site, which is estimated to take approximately 57 weeks to complete.

The Order allows for the PRGC cleanup to occur as two independent tasks—upland soils and lake sediments—and establishes specific site investigation or remediation tasks and compliance schedules for each task. The Order requires the completion of three tasks for the upland soils area: 1) an evaluation of human health risks associated with the exposure to site contaminants and development of appropriate human health cleanup standards; 2) preparation of a RAP for removing or managing soil to meet the human health cleanup standards; and 3) implementation of the RAP. The first two tasks have been completed; the project consists of the third task, RAP implementation. For lake sediments, the Order requires the preparation of an ecological risk assessment to determine whether elevated levels of lead, arsenic, and PAHs in lake sediments pose an unacceptable risk to benthic organisms and wildlife. If this investigation indicates that there are unacceptable risks to the benthic community and wildlife exposed to contaminants in site sediments, then the RWQCB would require preparation and implementation of a RAP for lake sediments. The compliance dates in the Order require completion of the upland soil remediation in advance of the lake sediment investigation.

Because most of the buildings and structures on the PRGC site are more than 50 years old, the entire site was evaluated for its potential significance as a historical resource, which included

analysis of the property as a cultural landscape. ESA and its subconsultant, Denise Bradley Cultural Landscapes, completed an evaluation of the PRGC following the standards of the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, using the criteria outlined in PRC Section 5024.1. This study included extensive review of historical information to evaluate the potential significance and integrity of the PRGC as a cultural landscape according to National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) criteria. This evaluation included the following: architectural and historic landscape field surveys of the project site; review of archival site photographs, newspapers, and references on the development of trap and skeet shooting and recreation in San Francisco; interviews with PRGC members knowledgeable of its history; and interviews with individuals from national, state, and Bay Area skeet shootings organizations and clubs; and visits to Bay Area clubs for comparative purposes. The results of the field surveys and associated research are provided in the following technical report: Pacific Rod and Gun Club Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report,¹ which was presented as an appendix to the PMND.

The Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report found that the PRGC appears eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR at the local level of significance under Criterion A/1 for its association with the broad pattern of history related to the increased popularity of sport hunting and with the interrelated development of skeet, during the period in which it evolved from a type of shooting practice into a competitive sport. This occurred during the decades preceding World War II within the context of the early 20th century wildlife conservation movement. The period of significance for the PRGC under Criterion A/1 appears to begin in 1934 when the club moved to the Lake Merced site and to end in 1941, with the United States' entry into World War II, which ended the club's initial period of development. Although the activities of the club remained unchanged after World War II, its post-war expansion period (1946-early 1960s) was more directly linked with other contexts than to the early 20th century wildlife conservation movement, such as the broad interest in outdoor recreation that occurred as a result of the nation's post-World War II prosperity and an increased interest in skeet, which was a by-product of World War II training practices.

The features constructed on the PRGC property during its period of significance (1934-1941) and that relate to its significance under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1 (for its association with the broad pattern of history related to the increased popularity of sport hunting and the development of skeet within the context of the early 20th century wildlife conservation movement) were identified as contributing features to the PRGC cultural landscape. The primary features from this period that contribute to the PRGC cultural landscape are Skeet Fields 4 to 7 (including semi-circular station paths, high and low target launching houses, and wooden fences), the broad terrace for these fields, the Clubhouse, the Caretaker's House, the Rifle Range building, and the Shell House. These features, and the cultural landscape as a whole, retain sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance. The buildings, structures, and elements of the landscape that are identified as

¹ Denise Bradley, Cultural Landscapes, 2014. *Pacific Rod and Gun Club, San Francisco, CA, Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report*, May 2014.

contributing to the cultural landscape are a historical resource, as defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, and the property is identified as a historical resource in the PMND.

Those features that: (1) may have been present during the period of significance but were not associated with the pre-World War II design or function of the site as an outdoor target shooting range/sportsmen's club (for example, vegetation); or (2) were added to the property after the end of its period of significance in 1941 (although in some cases these are compatible with its pre-World War II design or function as an outdoor target shooting range/sportsmen's club) were identified as non-contributing features and, therefore, were considered to not be components of the historical resource. The Cultural Landscape Report presented historic context to identify the theme, geographic area, and chronological period of the PRGC's historical significance, which in turn supported the identification of its specific period of significance.

Because upland soil remediation requires the excavation and backfilling of soil, contributing elements of the historic resource would be removed for proposed construction activities. The PMND includes project mitigation measures that would ensure that the features that contribute to the cultural landscape of the PRGC are retained, protected and/or rebuilt in a similar size, design, location, and materials as existing. These include the following: Mitigation Measure M-CP-1a, Record and Reconstruct the Semi-Circular Station Paths at Skeet Fields 4 – 7; Mitigation Measure M-CP-1b, Record, Protect, and Return (or Replace in-Kind) the High/Low Houses and Wood Fences at Skeet Fields 4-7; and Mitigation Measure M-CP-1c, Protect the Four Contributory Buildings During Construction. As noted in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3), a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Standards) shall be considered as mitigated to a less-than-significant level. Because the project would comply with the Standards (specifically the Standards for Rehabilitation), impacts on the historical resource would be less than significant.

The edge of the PRGC site slopes steeply towards Lake Merced. The proposed project would affect approximately 0.85 acres of state wetlands and 0.29 of coastal scrub vegetation adjacent to Lake Merced. To reduce these temporary impacts, the project includes Mitigation Measure M-BI-2, Restoration of Coastal Scrub, Riparian Scrub, and Wetlands. This measure requires that the final grading plan restore topography of the affected habitat areas to pre-project conditions and that vegetation consistent with the coastal scrub, riparian scrub, and wetlands be planted following site remediation. The plan includes performance criteria and monitoring to ensure the restoration effort is successful.

The proposed project also includes removal of trees in order to remove contaminated soils. The PMND analysis determined that tree removal could result in a substantial adverse impact on the scenic quality of the area and designated scenic roadways, such as views from John Muir Drive/49-Mile Scenic Drive of Lake Merced. The project includes Mitigation Measure M-AE-3, Screening Vegetation, which requires planting trees and shrubs at the eastern end of the site to screen views of the PRGC facilities and includes performance standards defining the timing and

success of the vegetation screening. With implementation of this measure, impacts on scenic vistas and resources would be less than significant.

The proposed project would require the following project approvals, with approval by the SFPUC identified as the Approval Action under Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code for the whole of the proposed project:

- US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps): Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit
- California Coastal Commission (CCC): Issuance of Coastal Development Permit (wetlands affected by the project are potentially within CCC's retained permit jurisdiction for Lake Merced)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB): National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) order 2009-0009-DWQ, General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW): Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement
- RWQCB: Approval of the RAP and CWA Section 401
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD): Construction permit
- San Francisco Planning Commission: Approval of a Coastal Development Permit
- SFPUC: Approval of the project and construction contracts, wastewater enterprise stormwater control plan, and other implementation actions
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors: Approval of the RAP, appropriation of funding, consideration of any appeals of the Planning Commission's adoption of the IS/MND
- San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW): Approval of any necessary construction permits for additional site entrance, if needed, and street parking restrictions
- San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic: Approval of any necessary construction permits for additional site entrance and street parking restrictions

A Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration (PMND) was published on June 25, 2014. On July 25, 2014, Mr. David Cincotta of Jeffer, Mangels, Butler, and Mitchell LLP, representing the Pacific Rod and Gun Club, filed a letter appealing the PMND. The concerns discussed below are summarized from the appeal letter, a copy of which is included within this appeal packet. Each concern topic is summarized, followed by relevant quotes from the appeal letter, and a response. The concerns are listed generally in the order presented in the appeal letter.

CONCERN 1: The appellant states that the proposed project will cause potentially significant environmental impacts and argues that a lead agency must prepare an EIR when a project may cause potentially significant environmental impacts.

“To summarize, the 300-page MND is a strained attempt to justify the City's election not to prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) to study the potential impacts associated with a significant excavation and remediation project on a site that is ecologically, historically and culturally significant, and may potentially suffer significant environmental impacts unless further analysis is undertaken through the EIR process. The IS/MND falls woefully short of demonstrating that implementation of the RAP will not cause potentially-significant environmental impacts. Through this appeal, the Club implores the City to do a proper analysis through an EIR before allowing this RAP to move forward.” (Page 1 of the Appeal Letter)

“II. Lead Agency is Obligated to Prepare an EIR When a Project May Cause Potentially-Significant Environmental Impacts

CEQA is premised on a ‘strong presumption’ in favor of requiring a lead agency to prepare an EIR as opposed to adopting a negative declaration prior to approving a project. Indeed, so long as substantial evidence in the record supports a ‘fair argument’ that a project may cause even a single, potentially-significant environmental impact, the agency must prepare an EIR. The obligation to prepare an EIR remains even when other substantial evidence before the agency indicates that the project may not have a substantial impact on the environment. As described by a prominent CEQA treatise, ‘the fair argument standard . . . prevents the lead agency from weighing competing evidence to determine who has a better argument concerning the likelihood or extent of a potential environmental impact.’ Accordingly, CEQA's ‘fair argument’ standard establishes a low threshold for the obligation to prepare an EIR which is met by the presence of any substantial evidence in the record of potential environmental impacts.” (Page 2 of the Appeal Letter)

“There is Substantial Evidence to Support a Fair Argument that the Overall CEQA Project will Significantly Impact the Environment” (Page 3 of the Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 1: The appellant misinterprets the CEQA requirements for EIR preparation.

CEQA requirements do not require preparation of an EIR when a project may cause potentially significant environmental impacts, as the appellant contends. An MND is the appropriate CEQA analysis if the initial study determines that potentially significant environmental impacts can be reduced to less-than-significant levels with mitigation measures that are made part of the project. An EIR is only required if there are no applicable mitigation measures or if mitigation measures would not reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels; in which case, the project would be

considered to have a significant effect on the environment. According to CEQA Section 15070 (b), a lead agency shall prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) when:

The initial study identifies potentially significant effects, but:

- (1) Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed MND and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and
- (2) There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.

The PMND identifies a number of potentially significant impacts of the proposed project; however, it also demonstrates how identified and feasible mitigation measures would reduce those potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. Accordingly, the City's decision to prepare an MND is correct and an EIR is not required.

CONCERN 2: The appellant asserts the proposed project should have included the remediation of contaminated lake sediments and that failure to include those elements is "piecemealing."

"The Remediation Project is a comprehensive action that is comprised of multiple components. As described in the Initial Study supporting the MND:

Order R2-2013-0023 requires the completion of three tasks for the upland soils area: 1) an evaluation of human health risks associated with the exposure to site contaminants and development of appropriate human health cleanup standards; 2) preparation of a remedial action plan (RAP) for removing or managing soil to meet the human health cleanup standards; and 3) implementation of the RAP. The first two tasks have been completed and are discussed further below; the project considered in this initial study (IS) consists of the third task, RAP implementation. For lake sediments, Order R2-20 13-0023 requires the preparation of an ecological risk assessment to determine whether elevated levels of lead, arsenic, and PAHs in lake sediments pose an unacceptable risk to benthic organisms and wildlife. If this investigation indicates that there are unacceptable risks to the benthic community and wildlife exposed to contaminants in site sediments, then the RWQCB Order requires preparation and implementation of a RAP for lake sediments.

Out of this comprehensive plan, the IS/MND reviews only one component: implementation of the RAP." (Page 2 of the Appeal Letter)

"The IS/MND does not evaluate foreseeable and integrally related components of the overall Remediation Project, and therefore, fails to adequately evaluate the 'project' for purposes

of CEQA. ... The Remediation Project is a single, comprehensive CEQA project, as indicated by the following factors among others:

- the contamination is allegedly from a single source (the Clubs' use of lead shot and PAH-laden targets between 1934 - 1994)
- the same contaminants (lead and PAHs), which are the focus of the Order, are found in all areas of the site that is the subject of the Order:
- the Order and its component parts all pertain to the same site, i.e., the Club's property at Lake Merced; and
- the eventual post-reclamation uses of the site will likely incorporate use of both the upland areas and Lake Merced.

Restoration of the site, and by extension, satisfaction of the Order, will not be achieved until both soil and lake sediments are remediated.

The failure to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the study and remediation of lake sediments renders the CEQA analysis inadequate, as environmental impacts associated with those activities will not be considered in connection with the impacts of soil remediation. For example, the IS/MND anticipates that soil remediation may generate 40 truck trips per day. If, however, sediment remediation were to happen concurrently with soil remediation, the 'project' may generate more than the estimated 40 daily truck trips, which could impact the findings of significance related to traffic impacts. The analysis of seemingly every potential impact in the IS/MND would be implicated by remediation of lake sediments. Accordingly, the IS/MND should be revised to evaluate the complete Remediation Project." (Pages 3 and 4 of Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 2: The proposed upland soil remediation project has independent utility from the lake sediment investigation and possible remediation, and thus is properly considered a separate project under CEQA.

The appellant asserts that the project description should have included remediation of lake sediments because the Order addresses both upland soils and lake sediments, and that failure to include both elements as part of this project's project description is "piecemealing." Appellant is correct that under CEQA, the lead agency is required to consider the whole of the project in one environmental review and not "piecemeal" what should properly be considered one project into smaller projects, thus minimizing the environmental impacts of the project as a whole. Here, piecemealing has not occurred because the three components raised by appellant—the proposed project, possible lake sediment remediation, and future site uses (discussed below under Concern 3)—are properly considered to be separate projects.

The primary question for understanding whether proposed activities should be considered one project or separate projects under CEQA is whether those activities have "independent utility" from each other—that is, whether they rely on or trigger the need for each other. Here, each of these three components has independent utility from the others. As discussed below, the

proposed upland soil remediation does not rely on or trigger the need for lake sediment remediation.

While the Order addresses both upland soil and lake sediments, remediation of lake sediments is not “a foreseeable integrally related component of the proposed Remediation Project,” simply because the Order includes lake sediments as a potential future task, as asserted by the appellant. Remediation of submerged areas is speculative because no action may be required in the future by the RWQCB. The purpose of the Order is to require:

...the Dischargers to submit plans to remediate soil to meet human health risk standards for current and reasonably foreseeable future land uses. This Order also requires the Dischargers to evaluate if remediation of lake sediment to meet ecological risk standards is necessary. (emphasis added)

The Order acknowledges that remediation of lake sediments may not be needed and provides separate tasks and timelines for Upland Soils and Lake Sediments. The Order requires preparation of an ecological risk assessment to determine “whether elevated lead, arsenic and PAHs in sediments pose an unacceptable risk to benthic organisms and wildlife (emphasis added),” and thus, if any remedial action is needed for the protection of the benthic community and wildlife. The City obviously cannot piecemeal a project that may never take place and never be considered a “project” under CEQA. In fact, as discussed below, the record of studies at the site supports the conclusion that no future action may be required.

Previous investigations summarized in the Order suggest that cleanup of lake sediments may not be necessary for the following reasons:

- In May 1990, bioassay tests conducted using lead-containing sediments samples reported no fish mortality;
- An investigation conducted in 1992 did not show signs of adverse impacts from lead on benthic invertebrate fauna and other organisms in the Lake; and
- In April 1995, the California Department of Fish and Game (now, Department of Fish and Wildlife) determined that, because of the limited number of waterfowl species using the Lake and on the mode of feeding observed for waterfowl, the risk of lead uptake from ingestion of lead pellets or lead-contaminated sediments by waterfowl was low, and the RWQCB determined that the remedial action plan required by the previous (rescinded) 1994 RWQCB cleanup order was not necessary.

Should the findings of the ecological risk assessment confirm the results of these previous investigations, no remediation of lake sediments would be required. Thus, the applicant’s assertion that “Restoration of the site, and by extension, satisfaction of the Order, will not be achieved until both soil and lake sediments are remediated” is both speculative and incorrect. Lake sediments may not require remediation and the Order may be satisfied upon completion of the proposed remedial action (the proposed project) and the ecological risk assessment.

As discussed above, the Order stipulates separate tasks for Upland Soils and for Lake Sediments, as well as separate compliance dates for completion of these tasks. The Order establishes a compliance date for completion of the upland soil remedial action by January 1, 2016, which requires that upland soil remediation commence prior to lake sediment remediation, if it is needed at all. The potential need for lake sediment remediation, and associated compliance dates for preparation of a remedial action plan and completion of remedial action, would not be determined until sometime in the future, as determined by the RWQCB Executive Officer following review of the ecological risk assessment. However, whether the Upland Soil and Lake Sediments were considered together in one document by the RWQCB is not the legal standard for determining whether they should be considered one project under CEQA. As discussed above, the standard under CEQA is whether the activities have independent utility from each other, which in this case, they do. Upland soil remediation is independent of the lake sediment investigation because completion of upland soil remediation does not obligate or require lake sediment remediation. For these reasons, the appellant's contention that these activities should be considered one project is not correct under CEQA.

Furthermore, the appellant's assertion that lake sediment remediation should be an integral part of the proposed project because "the eventual post-reclamation uses of the site will likely incorporate use of both the upland areas and Lake Merced" is also speculative and incorrect. The project proposes soil remediation to meet human health risk standards to allow for unrestricted future use of the site. The project does not require or preclude any future use of the site. This is addressed further below under Concern 3. The assumption that eventual site use would incorporate both upland areas and Lake Merced is questionable, particularly because the project includes restoration of wetland, riparian scrub, and coastal scrub vegetation that currently limits lake access and use at the site.

CONCERN 3: The appellant asserts that the PMND should evaluate post-project use of the site and that failure to include future use in the project description is "piecemealing."

"The CEQA analysis must evaluate future development or uses that are made possible by the proposed action. In *City of Antioch v. Antioch City Council* (1986) 187 Cal.App.3d 1325 ('*City of Antioch*'), the city approved a road and sewer extension project pursuant to a negative declaration. The city's analysis, however, reviewed only the impacts of the construction project, and not reasonably foreseeable future uses made possible by the initial approval (*Id.* at pp. 1329-1330). Finding that the city had impermissibly narrowed the scope of the project, the court reasoned that an initial study must evaluate foreseeable future development made possible by the initial approval, and that the fact that future development may take several forms does not excuse environmental review.

The IS/MND fails to describe potential environmental impacts associated with post-project uses made possible by remediation. Although the exact post-remediation use of the site

may be unknown as of this time, *City of Antioch* requires that the IS/MND evaluate in a general sense the type of development or use that can be reasonably expected to occur, due to the proposed approval.

Thus, while even without external guidance *City of Antioch* would likely require the City to evaluate such general uses as public recreation or open space, the Order and related materials provide clear guidance as to the types of developments and uses that will be made possible via remediation. Pursuant to the Order, the RAP for soil remediation must 'meet human health risk standards for current and reasonably foreseeable future land uses.' The phrase 'future reasonably future land uses' is informed by AMEC's Supplemental Investigation and Health Risk Assessment Report (April 2012), which states that 'for this HHRA ... future conditions are based on reasonably likely use options specified in the most recent version of the Lake Merced Watershed Plan.' Thus the IS/MND must be revised to address the environmental impacts of future uses made possible by the proposed remediation, including uses consistent with the Lake Merced Watershed Plan."² (Pages 4 and 5 of Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 3: The proposed project has independent utility from the future uses of the site, and thus is properly considered a separate project under CEQA from those activities. No change in future use is proposed.

The project does not propose a change in site use. Remediation to cleanup standards required for reasonably foreseeable future uses, namely continued recreational use of the site, would allow unrestricted future use of the site, but does not require or obligate any such use. The appellant asserts that the PMND should evaluate the type of future development or use of the project site that would be expected to occur as a result of project approval. As discussed above under Concern 2, the primary question for understanding whether proposed activities should be considered one project or separate projects under CEQA is whether those activities have "independent utility" from each other—that is, whether they rely on or trigger the need for each other. The upland soil remediation project has independent utility from future site use because site cleanup does not require or preclude future uses of the site.

The appellant correctly quotes that, pursuant to the Order, the RAP for soil remediation must "meet human health risk standards for current and reasonably foreseeable future land uses." As indicated, the AMEC health risk assessment based its exposure assessment on future land use scenarios for the site in the Lake Merced Watershed Report, which include various recreational

² Despite SFPUC's insistence on such intensive and costly remediation of the property that it could conceivably be sited for uses as sensitive as housing or childcare, SFPUC has yet to identify any potential post-remediation uses.

activities.³ Identification of reasonably foreseeable future land uses is an integral part of the development of a risk assessment model, which must account for the potential exposure pathways through which future on-site users may be exposed to contaminants in soil. This, in turn, is used to identify potential human health risks and appropriate cleanup standards to ensure that site remediation is protective of the health of future site users. Use of the potential future land use scenarios provided in the Lake Merced Watershed Report to identify potential receptors and exposure pathways in no way implies that any one of these uses will ultimately be developed on the project site, but merely provides a way to establish appropriate cleanup standards.

Regardless, under any of these possible recreational activities, the risk assessment concluded that “future use is not expected to change materially in terms of the types of possible users and frequencies and durations of exposure” (AMEC, 2012, page ES-3). The potentially exposed human receptors identified for the health risk assessment included the following:

- Current caretaker
- Current and future workers
- Current adult recreational users
- Current and future occasional visitors (adults and children)
- Current and future off-site residents (adults and children)
- Future adult and child recreational users
- Future construction workers

Using these potential receptors, the health risk assessment evaluated exposure pathways and toxicity of known contaminants to develop appropriate cleanup goals in accordance with the Order. The cleanup goals established in the RAP are designed to allow for the widest possible array of unrestricted future uses of the site, and would avoid the imposition of deed restrictions which could limit future potential uses, consistent with the Project sponsor’s objectives. The RAP uses cleanup goals for lead in soil that have been established by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) for residential properties because these cleanup levels would be protective of all future users, including children. OEHHA cleanup standards are only provided for either a residential scenario (more stringent) or a commercial/industrial scenario (less stringent). Of these, the residential cleanup standard is appropriate for the PRGC cleanup because potential future users could include children, which require more stringent cleanup criteria. This cleanup standard was not selected, as the appellant speculates, to provide for future “sensitive land uses such as housing or childcare”, but to provide for future unrestricted use of the site.

The appellant also contends that the soil remediation project should include the potential future use of the site following remediation. However, potential future uses of the site are independent

³ The Lake Merced Watershed Report (SFPUC, 2011) provides a purpose, vision, long-term goals, and guidelines to provide a framework to guide decision-making for the watershed, and serve as the basis for developing and evaluating future projects, initiatives, and management actions. The report has not been subject to CEQA or approved by the SFPUC.

of the soil remediation and would not be determined by the proposed project. Therefore, the appellant's contention is incorrect under CEQA. Any proposal for new or different uses of the site in the future would be developed through a public process, with community input from any local stakeholders and residents of San Francisco (including the PRGC should they choose to participate) among others, which would then be subject to a separate CEQA review process, as appropriate. The identification of future uses prior to conducting a public planning process would be a speculative exercise at this point.

CONCERN 4: The appellant asserts that compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in accordance with CEQA Guidelines does not demonstrate that mitigation measures (M-CP-1a, M-CP-1b, and M-CP-1c) would reduce impacts on historical resources to a less-than-significant level.

"The IS/MND recognizes that significant impacts to historic resources may result from the RAP, although it incomprehensibly concludes that such impacts will be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. Specifically, Impact CP-1 finds that by removing certain contributory features at the club facility (i.e., the semi-circular station paths and wood safety fences at skeet fields 4-7 and the high/low houses) and also due to the potential for damage for the contributory features remaining onsite during the remediation, the RAP may cause significant environmental impacts. Through the implementation of mitigation measures M-CP-1a, M-CP-1b, and M-CP-1c, the IS/MND concludes that Impact CP-1 will be rendered less than significant. This conclusion is presented without adequate supporting evidence that such measures will minimize the impact to a less-than-significant level.

From the analysis prepared by the Club, it appears that the IS/MND's proposed mitigation measures cannot and will not reduce Impact CP-1 to a less-than-significant level.

First, the IS/MND misstates the CEQA Guidelines provision that is the basis for the mitigation measures. The IS/MND states that under CEQA [Guidelines] Section 15064.5(b)(3), 'a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's [Secretary] Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Restructuring Historic Buildings shall be considered as mitigated to a less-than-significant level.' This is a generous interpretation of the Guidelines. In reality, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3) states that compliance with the Secretary's Standards will 'generally' render an impact less than significant. Accordingly, compliance with Secretary's standards does not mean that an impact is *per se* less than significant as indicated in the IS/MND, and the City is obligated to determine, based on analysis and substantial evidence, that the proposed mitigation would reduce Impact CP-1 to a less-than-significant level." (Page 5 and 6 of the Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 4: Implementation of mitigation measures that are compliant with the Standards would retain and preserve the historic character of the historical resource, thus rendering the impact less than significant.

The appellant erroneously asserts that compliance with the Standards (as required by mitigation measures M-CP-1a, M-CP-1b and M-CP-1c) does not mean that an impact is *per se* less than significant. The PMND correctly interprets that the CEQA [Guidelines] Section 15064.5(b)(3), which state, "Generally, a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Restructuring Historic Buildings shall be considered as mitigated to a less-than-significant level on the historic resource." As discussed on PMND page 53, the Standards require that the historic character of a property be retained and preserved. It follows, then, that if a project adheres to the Standards and the historic character of a property is retained and preserved, there would be no substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Section 15064.5, and the impact would be less than significant.

Proposed mitigation measures M-CP-1a, M-CP-1b, and M-CP-1c are in accordance with the Standards because they would preserve and protect, or in some cases, temporarily remove and reestablish, all identified contributors to the cultural landscape. Thus, the historic character of the historical resource would be retained and preserved. The City finds there is substantial evidence to support a less-than-significant finding with implementation of these mitigation measures.

CONCERN 5: The appellant asserts that, regardless of the argument in Comment 4, the proposed mitigation measures M-CP-1a and M-CP-1b are not in compliance with the Standards because historic structures would be removed and, therefore, these measures would not reduce impacts on historical resources to a less-than-significant level.

"Second, even assuming *arguendo* that use of the Secretary's Standards under the 'Rehabilitation' criteria could render Impact CP-1 less-than-significant, Mitigation Measures M-CP-1a and M-CP-1b are inconsistent with that Standard. Under the RAP, certain facilities and structures will be removed and then reconstructed. The Secretary's Rehabilitation Standard does not authorize the removal of historic structures. By contrast, Rehabilitation Standard No. 2 states: 'the historic character of a property will be retained and preserved ... *the removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*' Mitigation Measures CP-1a and M-CP-1b directly contradict the Secretary's Rehabilitation Standards by moving, relocating and altering the significant features and spaces of the Club. There is no substantial evidence to demonstrate that these measures will mitigate Impact CP-1 to a less-than-significant level and to the contrary, they are likely to destroy the historic resources." (Page 6 and 7 of the Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 5: Mitigation Measures M-CP-1a and M-CP-1b are consistent with the Standards. These measures would temporarily remove, then reestablish or reconstruct, all identified contributors to the cultural landscape, thereby preserving and protecting these features in accordance with the Standards.

When the Standards state that *“the removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided”* it is referring to the permanent removal and/or demolition of the character-defining features of a historical resource. The Standards include flexibility to temporarily remove character-defining features in order to repair or replace them with similar materials. For example, the temporary removal for repair of character-defining wooden windows would not be considered to diminish a building’s historical integrity. In this case, certain features of the PRGC cultural landscape would be temporarily relocated and protected during project construction, and then replaced in their original position. Under no circumstances would the character-defining features of the PRGC cultural landscape be permanently removed.

As noted on PMND page 53, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation require that the historic character of a property be retained and preserved, and that the removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property be avoided. In meeting these objectives, repair is emphasized over replacement, but replacement of historic features is allowable under the Standards with the provision that the new features should match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. The Standards recognize situations where replacement in-kind is not technically, economically, or environmentally feasible. In such situations, compatible substitute materials that have similar characteristics can be considered. The mitigation measures in the PMND incorporate this guidance for repair and replacement as a means to ensure the retention and preservation of the historic character of the PRGC as a historical resource.

Mitigation Measure M-CP-1a, Record and Reconstruct the Semi-Circular Station Paths at Skeet Fields 4 – 7, in particular, provides the SFPUC with the flexibility allowed under the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation to reconstruct the semi-circular Skeet Fields 4-7 in the same size, configuration, location as the existing fields and using materials that are compatible with the historic character of the cultural landscape; the reuse of the existing concrete is not required because this material post-dates the period of significance. Mitigation Measure M-CP1b, Record, Protect, and Return (or Replace in-Kind) the High/Low Houses and Wood Fences at Skeet Fields 4-7, provides the SFPUC with the flexibility allowed under the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation to replace the high/low houses and wood fences at Skeet Fields 4-7 in a similar size, design, location, and materials as existing, if they are found to have been previously damaged beyond repair, if they are in poor structural condition, or if it is infeasible to return them to their original location due to their condition or other factors.

The PMND appropriately concluded that Mitigation Measures CP-1a through M-CP-1c would reduce impacts to the historical resource to a less-than-significant level because they would: (1)

record and reconstruct the semi-circular station paths at Skeet Fields 4 – 7 (Mitigation Measure M-CP-1); (2) record, protect, and return (or replace in-kind) the high/low houses and wood fences at Skeet Fields 4-7 (Mitigation Measure M-CP-1b); and (3) protect the four contributory buildings during construction (Mitigation Measure M-CP-1c). These measures would ensure that the character-defining features (described in detail on pages 50 and 51 in the IS/MND) that contribute to the historic character of the cultural landscape of the PRGC are retained, protected and/or reconstructed in a similar size, design, location, and materials as existing, in keeping with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

With implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project would meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. As noted in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3), a project that follows the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (Standards) for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* shall be considered as mitigated to a less-than-significant level. For these reasons, the PMND correctly and appropriately identified mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to the historical resource to a less-than-significant level.

CONCERN 6: The appellant asserts that PMND does not identify and appropriately mitigate potential adverse impacts on historical resources that could occur during the construction period (i.e., during removal, storage, and replacement of historic structures).

“Third, the IS/MND overlooks the fact that the historical resource (i.e., the cultural landscape) will be adversely affected during the period of time between when the structures are removed from the Club’s facility and when they are replaced. The IS/MND acknowledges that numerous contributory features will be removed from the site for an extended period of time, yet the document fails to identify the impact and describe corresponding mitigation.” (Page 7 of the Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 6: The appellant’s claim that the PMND overlooks potential impacts on contributors of the historical resource during the construction period is incorrect. These potential impacts are identified and adequately mitigated in the PMND.

As discussed in the PMND (page 52), the PRGC site contains multiple features that contribute to its significance as an historical resource during its period of historical significance (1934 – 1941). These features are Skeet Fields 4-7 (including the level terrace, their semi-circular station paths, the high and low houses, and safety fences) and the four buildings that house the operational and social functions of the club (the Clubhouse, Caretaker’s House, Rifle Range Building, and the Shell House). Of these features, only the high and low houses and safety fences from the four skeet fields would be removed and replaced and thus could be potentially “adversely affected during the period of time between when the structures are removed from the Club’s facility and when they are replaced.”

The physical effects of the temporary relocation of the high/low houses and wood fences at Skeet Fields 4 – 7 are addressed by Mitigation Measure M-CP-1b (Record, Protect, and Return (or Replace in Kind) the High/Low Houses and Wood Fences at Skeet Fields 4-7) on PMND pages 54-55, which requires the following:

- During site remediation activities, the SFPUC shall protect these features from accidental damage during earth moving by storing these elements within a locked, chain-link fence enclosure and posting “Keep Out” or “No Trespassing” signs.
- Following site remediation, the SFPUC shall return these features to their original positions at the reconstructed skeet fields 4-7. Based on the pre-construction recording and depending on their structural condition, any damaged components should be repaired in keeping with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation...

Thus, the PMND addresses potential impacts to these contributory historical features that could occur during the approximately 57-week duration of construction. Mitigation Measure M-CP-1b stipulates that the high/low houses shall be protected during the construction period and requires that any damage that occurs during this period be repaired. As a result, these impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

In addition, the physical effects to the four contributory buildings (Clubhouse, Caretaker’s House, Rifle Range Building, and the Shell House), during construction are addressed in Mitigation Measures M-CP-1c (Protect the Four Contributory Buildings During Construction), M-NO-2a (Preconstruction Surveys and Repair), and M-NO-2b (Construction Equipment Restrictions Near Buildings). Mitigation Measure M-CP-1b requires that the buildings “.....shall be adequately protected from accidental damage due to construction activities and vandalism. These structures shall be surrounded by protective fencing and shall be secured from entry by boarding up all windows and doors, and posting ‘Keep Out’ or ‘No Trespassing’ signs on each building. Following site remediation, these buildings shall be returned to their original appearance by removing all temporary construction fencing, window and door protection, and signage.” Mitigation Measures M-NO-2a and M-NO-2b further reduce potential impacts on contributory buildings by limiting construction equipment in close proximity to these buildings and by repairing any documented new cracks or other changes in the structures that are attributable to construction.

Therefore, the PMND does identify the potential for physical impacts on the historical resource during the remediation period and does provide appropriate mitigation to reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

CONCERN 7: The appellant claims that additional features of the PRGC site are historical resources based on a historic resource evaluation prepared by its consultant, Page & Turnbull. Based on its evaluation, the project would have significant impacts on historical resources.

“2. A July 2014 Historic Resource Evaluation of the Club Demonstrates that the IS/MND Does Not Evaluate the Full Extent of the RAP's Potential Impacts to Historic Resources

A July 2014 Historic Resource Evaluation of the Club prepared by the noted historic architectural firm Page & Turnbull (‘Page & Turnbull Evaluation’) both demonstrates that the Club is a historic resource and that the Bradley Evaluation fails to account for key information. The Page & Turnbull Evaluation is a comprehensive analysis of the Club as a historic resource. The Evaluation, which is based on, among other research, a site visit, documentary review, photographic review, and interviews with Club members, is consistent with the Planning Department's outline for Historic Resource Evaluation Reports. Using this methodology, Page & Turnbull concluded that the Club is a historical resource as a cultural landscape, and that the Club's period of significance extends from 1934 to 1964.

The IS/MND fails to consider whether the RAP will impact features that are contributory to the historic resource during the period of significance identified in the Page & Turnbull Evaluation. Specifically, the IS/MND relied exclusively on the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report to define the period of significance and corresponding contributory features. This resulted in the intentional exclusion of numerous potentially-contributory features in the IS/MND's impacts analysis. For example, the IS/MND does not evaluate potential impacts to the Trap House, the Trap Fields and their configuration, various commemorative markers, the Duck Tower, or the three-bay garage, all of which contribute to the Club as a historical resource. Under Page & Turnbull's analysis, many if not all of the excluded features may be considered contributory, and could be adversely affected by the RAP. Neither the existing analysis in the IS/MND nor its corresponding mitigation measures account for impacts to contributory features built between 1941 and 1964. Therefore, a fair argument exists that the project may cause significant impacts to historic resources.” (Pages 7 and 8 of the Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 7: There are no additional ‘historic resources’ at the PRGC site or vicinity that could be affected by the proposed project that were not already considered as part of the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report or in the PMND.

The appellant asserts that the PMND does not evaluate the full extent of the RAP's potential impacts to historical resources. The alleged discrepancy in the identification of contributory features to the cultural landscape, and associated impacts to them, arises from differing periods of significance for the cultural landscape between the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report and the Page & Turnbull Evaluation. The Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report identifies the period of significance from 1934 to 1941, based on a thorough presentation of historic context and analysis of the PRGC's association with the broad patterns of history as follows:

The period of significance for the PRGC's significance under Criterion A/1 appears to begin in 1934 when the club moved to the Lake Merced site and to end in 1941 with the United States' entry into World War II, which ended the club's initial period of development. Although the activities of the club remained unchanged after World War II, its post-war expansion period (1946-early 1960s) was more directly linked with other contexts, including the broad interest in outdoor recreation that occurred within the context of the nation's post-World War II prosperity and an increased interest in skeet that was a by-product of World War II training practices, than to the early 20th century conservation movement (page 39).

As a result, only those buildings, structures, and important elements of the landscape i.e., the level terrace, linear arrangement, and semi-circular path system of skeet fields 4 to 7 (the form and dimensions, not the concrete materials) constructed between 1934 and 1941 are considered contributory elements to the cultural landscape. Buildings, structures, and landscape features completed after 1941 were not considered contributory elements because they are not directly associated with the historic context identified under CRHR Criterion A/1, which is the early 20th Century conservation movement. The PMND does not identify potential impacts to the Trap House, the Trap Fields and their configuration, various commemorative markers, the Duck Tower, or the three-bay garage, because they post-date the period of significance (post-1941) and do not contribute to the PRGC cultural landscape, i.e., the identified historical resource.

The Page & Turnbull Evaluation identified a much longer period of significance, from 1934 to 1964, which would encompass many more buildings constructed in the post-war period, and as a result, identified many more potentially "historic" buildings and structures that could be affected by the proposed project. However, the end date of period of significance (1964) identified in the evaluation conducted by Page & Turnbull is not substantiated with any evidence that the site is historically significant during World War II or the post-war period, and did not develop a detailed post-war historic context to support their conclusions. Rather, the Page & Turnbull Evaluations states that:

The end of the proposed period of significance is fifty years prior to the date of this evaluation, marking the generally accepted threshold for California Register eligibility in the absence of exceptional historic significance (Page & Turnbull, page 56).

While fifty years is the generally accepted age threshold for California Register eligibility, it is not the threshold for actual significance of any given resource. The period of significance must be substantiated by a significant association with historic events for consideration under Criterion A/1 (Public Resources Code Section 5024.1). As described above, the Page & Turnbull Evaluation does not provide supporting evidence that the site is historically significant for any events during World War II or the post-war period.

In contrast, the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report and the PMND do provide substantial evidence for the period of significance of 1934 -1941 (Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report pages 39-41; PMND page 48), the buildings and structures identified as contributors to the cultural landscape during the period of significance from 1934 – 1941, and the features and structures identified as contributing to the historical resource (Cultural Landscape Evaluate Report pages 42-50; PMND pages 50-51).. In addition, the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report provides a detailed discussion of the seven aspects of integrity – location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association – that convey the individual significance of the historical resource under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1 and further substantiate this determination. Moreover, the substantial evidence standard, not the fair argument test, applies to the lead agency’s determination regarding whether an historical resource is present in the first place (*Valley Advocates v. City of Fresno* [2008] 160 Cal.App.4th 1039). Therefore, impacts on structures built in the post-war period would not be impacts on the historical resource as the appellant asserts.

CONCERN 8. The appellant asserts that the PMND fails to address potential impacts to additional features it claims contribute to cultural landscape and should be considered historic resources, including Lake Merced as an adjacent natural system, the general sloping topography of the grounds, and several mature trees planted in the southern portion of the property.

“Further, the IS/MND fails to identify, and account for potential impacts to, numerous features that contribute to the Club as a significant cultural landscape. Page & Turnbull identified several contributory features beyond those addressed in the IS MND, namely: Lake Merced as an adjacent natural system, the general sloping topography of the grounds, and several mature trees planted in the southern portion of the property. Due to the lack of an evaluation of potential impacts to these features in the IS/MND, that document does not provide substantial evidence to support the conclusion that the project will not result in significant impacts to historic resources.” (Page 8 of the Appeal)

RESPONSE 8. The Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report considered Lake Merced as a recreational area, the mature trees at the project site, and site topography in its evaluation and appropriately found that none of these features contributes to the cultural landscape.

The appellant’s assertion that the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report failed to address San Francisco recreation, specifically around Lake Merced, is incorrect. This potential association was considered and rejected in the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report, as follows:

Association with Recreation around Lake Merced. The development of the PRGC site is part of a broad pattern of history associated with the development of recreation in San Francisco. More specifically, the PRGC site is associated with the pattern of expansion of recreation around Lake Merced that occurred during the 1910s-1930s after the

SVWC began selling its land within the lake's watershed and after the SFPUC purchased the lake in 1930. Three golf courses (San Francisco Club in 1915, the Olympic Club in 1918, and Harding Park in 1925) were developed adjacent to the lake during this period. The PRGC was granted a lease by the SFPUC for outdoor target shooting activities in 1934 and constructed two skeet fields at its present-day site on the shore of the lake in that year. The SFPUC also expanded fishing and boating activities associated with the lake during this period. The initial stocking of the lake with sport fish (black bass) occurred in the early 1930s, and the first boat concession was granted in 1938. However, the PRGC site does not appear to possess individual significance under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1 for this association. It was one of several recreational facilities that developed on and around the lake during this period. Additionally, there is nothing inherent in its physical features that necessarily expresses or illustrates this association. In summary, the PRGC site does not appear to be individually significant under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1 for its association with the expansion of recreation around Lake Merced that occurred during the 1910s-1930s.

With regard to the assertion that Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report failed to mention Lake Merced as an adjacent natural system, the report stated the following:

The primary land use at the PRGC site is outdoor target shooting . . . This arrangement of features—the site's spatial organization—has been shaped by the needs of this primary land use and by the long and narrow shape of the site situated between the lake and a public road. The shape of the site, the need to set the shooting activities back from the road, and the need to provide a safety zone for the falling targets (a shotfall zone) resulted in the linear arrangement of the skeet and trap fields along the edge of the site next to the lake. The portion of the shotfall area that extends out into Lake Merced is outside of the lease area for the PRGC and outside of the boundary of the PRGC cultural landscape (page 29).

Research conducted for the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report found that the Lake Merced site was chosen by the PRGC not so much because of its beauty as an adjacent natural system, but due to: (1) the gradual slope made it relatively easy to grade for the fields; (2) its availability – it was open space with no buildings around it in the early 1930s; and 3) the lake provided an extended shotfall area. As such, the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report appropriately addressed Lake Merced in its evaluation, and did not identify the Lake itself as a contributing feature to the cultural landscape.

With regard to the assertion that the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report failed to address the mature trees on the property as part of the historical resource, this topic was considered and rejected in the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report as follows:

Secondary features that were present on site during the period of significance but that do not contribute to the design or function of the site as an outdoor target shooting range or to its function as a sportsmen’s club include (1) the parking lot on the western end of the site, (2) the internal road on the eastern end of the site, (3) the small stand of trees (six eucalyptus and one Monterey cypress) in the area between the Rifle Range building and Field 8 (the remains of a larger stand of trees that predate the club’s usage of the site trees), (4) several large eucalyptus trees along the southern edge of the site in the vicinity of the Caretaker’s House and Clubhouse (the remains of a larger stand of trees that predate the club’s usage of the site trees), (5) four Monterey pine trees (the remains of a longer row that was planted in the mid-1930s to define edge of the site next to John Muir Drive), and (6) a large Monterey cypress tree located on the west side of the primary entrance to the Rifle Range building. In the case of the trees listed above, their presence reflects the common usage of these species (eucalyptus, Monterey cypress, and Monterey pine) in San Francisco during the first half of the 20th century rather than a specific relationship to the functioning of the site as an outdoor shooting range (page 45).

As such, the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report correctly noted that the mature trees on the project site are non-contributors to the cultural landscape because they are not related to the site’s historical significance, or to the design or function of the site as an outdoor target shooting range and sportsmen’s club (i.e., the reasons for which the site is historically significant). The Page & Turnbull Report incorrectly identifies the trees as historically significant when in fact they are ancillary to the site and, for the most part, existed prior to any recreational uses at the site.

With regard to site topography, specifically, the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report states the following:

The PRGC site is relatively flat but slopes slightly down from its south side next to John Muir Drive toward the lake and from the entrance down toward the east end of the property..... The shoreline drops off steeply at the north end and northwest portion of the site, but, according to the characterization of the site in the Lake Merced Watershed Report, the remaining shoreline interface is “generally much more gradual than is typical for shoreline conditions around the lake” (SFPUC, 2011:14). The topographic modifications to the site are related to its use and function as an outdoor target shooting range and club. These include the large level terrace for the parking lot and trap and skeet range (Fields 1 to 7) which

occupies the majority of the area on the western portion of the site, the smaller terrace where Fields 8 and 9 are located on the east end of the site, and a bank that extends along the south side of the site that provides the transition between the elevation along John Muir Drive and the lower elevation of the site. Minor topographic modifications include the leveling of the area that accommodates the footprint of Clubhouse and Caretakers House which are located immediately to the north of the south-side bank (pages 29-30).

The Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report also identifies that one of the contributing features for the PRGC cultural landscape related to its significance under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1 for the period between 1934 and 1941 is Fields 4 to 7 (1938) and their character-defining features, which include *a level terrace* (page 49). As such, Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report identified certain portions of the topography on the project site as character defining to the cultural landscape. The Page & Turnbull Evaluation incorrectly identifies the ‘natural slope’ of the site as a contributor to its historic significance, when in fact, the original slope has been terraced to accommodate the recreational uses.

With these topics addressed in the Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report, the PMND provides substantial evidence to support the conclusion that the project would not result in significant historical resource impacts related to buildings or structures built after 1941, or to other elements deemed non-historic such as trees, topography, or Lake Merced.

CONCERN 9: The appellant asserts that project mitigation measure M-AE-3, would not fully mitigate aesthetic impacts because planted vegetation would take time to mature.

“C. The IS/MND Does Not Fully Account for Potentially-Significant Aesthetic Impacts

The RAP will require removal of a substantial amount of vegetation that currently screens on-site structures. Due to the possible removal of mature trees that screen the eastern portion of the site, the implementation of the RAP could result in potentially-significant aesthetic impacts. The IS/MND describes the potential impact as follows:

Removing the maximum potential number of trees in this vicinity could result in a substantial adverse effect on the scenic quality of the area and designated scenic resources. These include views from John Muir Drive/49-Mile Scenic Drive and of Lake Merced, and would result in a significant impact.

To mitigate this impact, the IS/MND relies on M-AE-3 which provides:

The SFPUC shall identify the location and spacing of new plantings that would, at maturity, screen views of the eastern portion of the site. New plants shall include native

species indigenous to the San Francisco Peninsula and/or shrubs and trees typical of the surrounding area. Plantings (by way of species type, size, and location) shall ensure that direct views of the site east of the entrance road are substantially obstructed from any location within a ten-year period. The SFPUC shall monitor and photograph screening vegetation annually after completion of remediation activities. If it is determined that success standards are not being met, SFPUC shall take immediate action to re-plant screening vegetation to ensure compliance by the tenth-year period.

A plain reading of M-AE-3 indicates that the mitigation measure would not fully mitigate the corresponding aesthetic impact. M-AE-3 is premised on the basis that replacement trees will accomplish the same screening effect as the trees that currently screen the eastern portion of the site. However, M-AE-3 indicates that this screening will not occur, if at all, until the trees have been in place for 10 years. This means that a 10-year period may exist during which the scenic quality of the area and its designated resources may be impacted due to the lack of adequate screening of on-site structures. As the IS/MND does not include a mitigation measure to account for what is conceded to be a potentially-significant impact, there is no substantial evidence to conclude that the RAP will not result in a significant aesthetic impact.” (Pages 8 and 9 of the Appeal Letter)

RESPONSE TO CONCERN 9: Mitigation Measures M-AE-3 would reduce long-term aesthetic resources impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The appellant asserts that because Mitigation Measure M-AE-3 includes a 10 year period for complete implementation of the measure, a potentially significant impact on aesthetics could occur during the mitigation implementation period. CEQA Section 21081.6(b) indicates that:

A public agency shall provide that measures to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other measures. Conditions of project approval may be set forth in referenced documents which address required mitigation measures or, in the case of the adoption of a plan, policy, regulation, or other public project, by incorporating the mitigation measures into the plan, policy, regulation, or project design.

CEQA Section 20181.6(c) states that:

Prior to the close of the public review period for a draft environmental impact report or mitigated negative declaration, a responsible agency, or a public agency having jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project, shall either submit to the lead agency complete and detailed performance objectives for mitigation measures which would address the significant effects on the environment identified by the responsible agency or agency having jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project, or refer the lead agency to appropriate, readily available guidelines or reference documents. Any mitigation measures submitted to a lead agency by a responsible agency or an

agency having jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project shall be limited to measures which mitigate impacts to resources which are subject to the statutory authority of, and definitions applicable to, that agency. Compliance or noncompliance by a responsible agency or agency having jurisdiction over natural resources affected by a project with that requirement shall not limit the authority of the responsible agency or agency having jurisdiction over natural resources affected by a project, or the authority of the lead agency, to approve, condition, or deny projects as provided by this division or any other provision of law.

There is no requirement under CEQA that a mitigation measure must be implemented within a specific timeframe to avoid a potential significant impact and in many cases, such as installation of screening vegetation or restoration activities, mitigation implementation requires time for vegetation or habitat to become successfully established. Mitigation Measure M-AE-3 includes performance objectives, means to measure success, and a provision for corrective actions. In this case it is expected that screening vegetation would fully mature within 10 years; however, substantial screening would occur earlier than that as vegetation matures. As such, the long-term aesthetic resources effects associated with the proposed project are adequately addressed in the PMND and there is no substantial evidence to support the appellant's assertion that the proposed project would result in a significant aesthetics impact.

OTHER CONCERNS

Seven comment letters were received from the following organizations and individuals: Golden Gate Audubon Society; Dolphin Club; Friends of the Gulls; Frank H. (Bert) Swan, Ph.D.; Peter Griffith; Jeanine Mahl; and Dick Morten. Comments primarily address air quality (dust), biological resources, aesthetics, and need for the project. These comments are summarized below and indicate where revisions have been made to the PMND, as applicable. The amendments do not change the overall conclusion of the PMND.

- **Dick Allen, Dolphin Club** – inquired whether the removal of 81 or more trees would alter wind patterns and velocity on South Lake, and expressed the concern that any wind velocity increase would negatively affect rowing activities on Lake Merced.
- **Dick Morten** – stated that tree removals should only occur if necessary and after habitat and wildlife impacts have been evaluated; that the IS/MND should not indicate that the PRGC has any right to future site use, and that site structures should not be considered historic resources because they may not have been constructed according to code.
- **Golden Gate Audubon Society** – provided comments and recommendations on various topics below:
 - *Fugitive Dust* – expressed concern about the potential for fugitive dust and contaminated material to enter Lake Merced and waterbirds, aquatic wildlife, and recreationists; proposed the establishment of monitoring stations and an

emergency dust plan. In response to this comment, additional discussion was added to Section E.13, Biological Resources, on pages 135-136.

- **Bird Data** – proposed using bird data available for the entire area surrounding Lake Merced in analysis of impacts to birds. Provided additional information about the Fox Sparrow, Western Kingbird, Black Phoebe, Townsend’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Tricolored Blackbird, and Great Blue Heron. In response to these comments, Section E.13, Biological Resources, was revised on pages 124 and 134.
 - **Nesting birds** – suggested that work exclusion zones be placed around nests built during project activities and that monitoring and surveys be conducted throughout the birding season.
 - **Tree Removal** – questioned the 10-year screening requirement for tree replacement described in Mitigation Measure M-AE-3 and proposes that tree health, as evaluated by a qualified professional, be used as success criteria. In addition, provided recommendations for tree replacement species and numbers.
 - **Future Site Use** – indicated that cleanup for unrestricted future use appears contradictory to the project description which states that PRGC activities would be suspended during construction and Mitigation Measures M-CP-1a and M-CP-1b that would restore skeet fields 4-7. Suggested those measures be postponed until after future site use is determined by the SFPUC. Also suggested that a groundwater recharge plan be prepared for the site.
 - **Coyotes** – suggested measures to reduce project impacts on potential coyote dens.
- **Friends of the Gulls** – Requested that Friends of the Gulls be added to distribution list for project updates.
 - **Frank H. (Bert) Swan, Ph.D.** – expressed the opinion that the AMEC health risk assessment assumptions are unrealistically conservative and warrant additional evaluation, such as biological testing of on-site and off-site gophers to determine the bioavailability of PAHs; asserted that vehicle emissions and runoff from pavement along John Muir Boulevard contribute to PAHs and lead in soil; claimed that the project requires an EIR and a cost benefit analysis of alternative remediation methods; and, indicated the proposed remediation is not based on adequate data and cost considerations.
 - **Jeanine Mahl** – Supported Dr. Swan’s position, questioned whether existing toxicity levels really pose a health risk, and argued for further soil and animal testing and environmental impact studies.
 - **Peter Griffith** – Requested that an EIR/cost benefit analysis be completed prior to project implementation.

EXHIBIT B

Appeal Letter from Pacific Rod and Gun Club

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July 25, 2014

RECEIVED

Sarah Jones
Environmental Review Officer
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1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
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JUL 25 2014
CITY & COUNTY OF S.F.
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
RECEPTION DESK

Re: Appeal of Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration: Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project (Case No. 2013.1220E)

Dear Ms. Jones:

We represent the Pacific Rod and Gun Club (“Club”) in conjunction with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission’s (“SFPUC”) proposed Remedial Action Project (“RAP”). The Club has reviewed the above-referenced initial study and preliminary mitigated negative declaration (“IS/MND”), and by this letter, appeals its proposed adoption by the City and County of San Francisco (“City”). To summarize, the 300-page MND is a strained attempt to justify the City’s election not to prepare an environmental impact report (“EIR”) to study the potential impacts associated with a significant excavation and remediation project on a site that is ecologically, historically and culturally significant, and may potentially suffer significant environmental impacts unless further analysis is undertaken through the EIR process. The IS/MND falls woefully short of demonstrating that implementation of the RAP will not cause potentially-significant environmental impacts. Through this appeal, the Club implores the City to do a proper analysis through an EIR before allowing this RAP to move forward.¹

I. Background

On June 12, 2013, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (“Regional Board”) issued Order No. R2-2013-023 (“Order”) to the Club and to SFPUC. The Order requires the Club and SFPUC to remediate soil contamination “to human health risk standards for current and reasonable foreseeable future land uses” and also to evaluate and remediate contaminated lake sediment to the extent necessary (the “Remediation Project”). (Emphasis added) Contamination in the form of lead, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and arsenic is the result of the use of lead shot and certain clay targets for purposes of skeet and trap shooting near the water’s edge at Lake Merced.

¹ Appeals of proposed mitigated negative declarations are authorized pursuant to Administrative Code § 31.11(e).

The Remediation Project is a comprehensive action that is comprised of multiple components. As described in the Initial Study supporting the MND:

Order R2-2013-0023 requires the completion of three tasks for the upland soils area: 1) an evaluation of human health risks associated with the exposure to site contaminants and development of appropriate human health cleanup standards; 2) preparation of a remedial action plan (RAP) for removing or managing soil to meet the human health cleanup standards; and 3) implementation of the RAP. The first two tasks have been completed and are discussed further below; the project considered in this initial study (IS) consists of the third task, RAP implementation. For lake sediments, Order R2-2013-0023 requires the preparation of an ecological risk assessment to determine whether elevated levels of lead, arsenic, and PAHs in lake sediments pose an unacceptable risk to benthic organisms and wildlife. If this investigation indicates that there are unacceptable risks to the benthic community and wildlife exposed to contaminants in site sediments, then the RWQCB Order requires preparation and implementation of a RAP for lake sediments.²

Out of this comprehensive plan, the IS/MND reviews only one component: implementation of the RAP.

II. A Lead Agency is Obligated to Prepare an EIR When a Project May Cause Potentially-Significant Environmental Impacts

CEQA is premised on a “strong presumption” in favor of requiring a lead agency to prepare an EIR as opposed to adopting a negative declaration prior to approving a project.³ Indeed, so long as substantial evidence in the record supports a “fair argument” that a project may cause even a single, potentially-significant environmental impact, the agency must prepare an EIR.⁴ The obligation to prepare an EIR remains even when other substantial evidence before the agency indicates that the project may not have a substantial impact on the environment. As described by a prominent CEQA treatise, “the fair argument standard. . . prevents the lead agency from weighing competing evidence to determine who has a better argument concerning the likelihood or extent of a potential environmental impact.”⁵ Accordingly, CEQA’s “fair argument” standard establishes a low threshold for the obligation to prepare an EIR, which is met by the presence of any substantial evidence in the record of potential environmental impacts.

² IS/MND, p. 6.

³ See e.g., Pub. Resources Code § 21100(a); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14 § 15064(a)(1), (f)(1).

⁴ Cal. Code Regs., tit. § 15064 (f)(1) (“...If a lead agency is presented with a fair argument that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency shall prepare an EIR even though it may also be presented with other substantial evidence that the project will not have a significant effect (No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 68)”.)

⁵ CEB, Practice Under the California Environmental Quality Act, § 6.37.

III. There is Substantial Evidence to Support a Fair Argument that the Overall CEQA Project will Significantly Impact the Environment

A. The City is Improperly “Piecemealing” the Project to Avoid Evaluation of the Full Scope of its Potential Impacts

A necessary predicate to a proper CEQA evaluation is to accurately define the scope of the “project” that is the subject of the analysis. Generally, the term “project” denotes “an activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment” that is undertaken or approved by a public agency.⁶ The CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14 § 15000 et seq.) further clarify that the project includes the “whole of an action” that may cause an environmental impact.⁷ The term “project” was intentionally given a broad definition so as to “maximize protection of the environment.”⁸ Further, CEQA “cannot be avoided by chopping up proposed projects into bite-sized pieces which, individually considered, might be found to have no significant effect on the environment or to be only ministerial.”⁹ By requiring that agencies evaluate the “whole of an action,” CEQA and its implementing regulations prevent so-called “piecemealing” of environmental review.

1. The MND Does Not Account for Integral Components of the Remediation Project

A CEQA project includes all integrally-related components of an overall land use or remediation action. In *Nelson v. County of Kern* (2010) 190 Cal.App.4th 252, 272 (“*Nelson*”), for example, the Court of Appeal rejected a county’s approval of a mine reclamation plan pursuant to a negative declaration because the county failed to evaluate the impacts of mining operations that were foreseeable, but which were to be authorized by a separate approval. For purposes of defining the “project,” the court noted that “both aspects were integrally related to the whole of the action...” and that both were “phase[s] of the overall usage of the land...by means of which the land will be restored.”¹⁰ The court ordered that the county’s mitigated negative declaration be set aside, and that the related permit approvals also be set aside pending an adequate CEQA review.¹¹

The IS/MND does not evaluate foreseeable and integrally related components of the overall Remediation Project, and therefore, fails to adequately evaluate the “project” for purposes of CEQA. Similar to the *Nelson* decision, the IS/MND contemplates not just implementation of the RAP, but also further evaluation and remediation of contaminated

⁶ Pub. Resources Code, § 21065.

⁷ Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14 § 15378(a).

⁸ *San Joaquin Raptor/Wildlife Rescue Center v. County of Stanislaus* (1994) 27 Cal.App.4th 713, 730.

⁹ *Tuolumne County Citizens for Responsible Growth v. City of Sonora* (2007) Cal.4th 1214

¹⁰ *Nelson*, 190 Cal.App.4th at 272.

¹¹ *Id.* at 285.

lake sediment. The Remediation Project is a single, comprehensive CEQA project, as indicated by the following factors among others:

- the contamination is allegedly from a single source (the Clubs' use of lead shot and PAH-laden targets between 1934 – 1994)
- the same contaminants (lead and PAHs), which are the focus of the Order, are found in all areas of the site that is the subject of the Order;
- the Order and its component parts all pertain to the same site, i.e., the Club's property at Lake Merced; and
- the eventual post-reclamation uses of the site will likely incorporate use of both the upland areas and Lake Merced.

Restoration of the site, and by extension, satisfaction of the Order, will not be achieved until both soil and lake sediments are remediated.

As remediation of lake sediments is foreseeable, and is also an integrally-related component of the Remediation Project, the IS/MND must be revised to take into account those environmental impacts that may result as part of the investigation and remediation of lake sediments. The failure to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the study and remediation of lake sediments renders the CEQA analysis inadequate, as environmental impacts associated with those activities will not be considered in connection with the impacts of soil remediation. For example, the IS/MND anticipates that soil remediation may generate 40 truck trips per day.¹² If however, sediment remediation were to happen concurrently with soil remediation, the "project" may generate more than the estimated 40 daily truck trips, which could impact the findings of significance related to traffic impacts. The analysis of seemingly every potential impact in the IS/MND would be implicated by remediation of lake sediments. Accordingly, the IS/MND should be revised to evaluate the complete Remediation Project.

2. The IS/MND Does Not Evaluate Post-Project Use of the Site as Required by CEQA

The CEQA analysis must evaluate future development or uses that are made possible by the proposed action. In *City of Antioch v. Antioch City Council* (1986) 187 Cal.App.3d 1325 ("*City of Antioch*"), the city approved a road and sewer extension project pursuant to a negative declaration. The city's analysis, however, reviewed only the impacts of the construction project, and not reasonably foreseeable future uses made possible by the initial approval.¹³ Finding that the city had impermissibly narrowed the scope of the project, the court reasoned that an initial study must evaluate foreseeable future development made possible by the

¹² IS/MND, p. 70.

¹³ *Id.* at pp. 1329-1330.

initial approval, and that “the fact that future development may take several forms does not excuse environmental review.”¹⁴

The IS/MND fails to describe potential environmental impacts associated with post-project uses made possible by remediation. Although the exact post-remediation use of the site may be unknown as of this time, *City of Antioch* requires that the IS/MND evaluate in a general sense the type of development or use that can be reasonably expected to occur, due to the proposed approval.

Thus, while even without external guidance *City of Antioch* would likely require the City to evaluate such general uses as public recreation or open space, the Order and related materials provide clear guidance as to the types of developments and uses that will be made possible via remediation. Pursuant to the Order, the RAP for soil remediation must “meet human health risk standards for current and reasonably foreseeable future land uses.” The phrase “future reasonably future land uses” is informed by AMEC’s Supplemental Investigation and Health Risk Assessment Report (April 2012), which states that “for this HHRA...future conditions are based on reasonably likely use options specified in the most recent version of the Lake Merced Watershed Plan.”¹⁵ Thus the IS/MND must be revised to address the environmental impacts of future uses made possible by the proposed remediation, including uses consistent with the Lake Merced Watershed Plan.¹⁶

Because the MND does not analyze or evaluate the complete CEQA “project,” the MND is not supported by substantial evidence.

B. The Project will Cause Significant Impacts to Historical Resources

1. The IS/MND’s Conclusion that Impacts to Cultural Resources Will Be Less than Significant Are Not Supported by Substantial Evidence.

The IS/MND recognizes that the Club is a historic resource that may be adversely affected by the RAP. As part of its evaluation, the City enlisted a consultant to prepare an evaluation of the site as a historical landscape (the “Bradley Evaluation”).¹⁷ The Bradley Evaluation concludes that the Club may be eligible for listing under the National Register of Historic Places (“NRHP”) and the California Register of Historic Resources (“CRHR”) as a

¹⁴ *Id.* at 1338. (Emphasis added); also stating that “[the city] cannot pretend [no development] will occur; it simply must assume the *general* form, location and amount of such development that now seems reasonable to anticipate...and evaluate that development...”

¹⁵ AMEC, Supplemental Investigation and Health Risk Assessment Report, Pacific Rod and Gun Club, San Francisco, California (April 2012) at p. 26.

¹⁶ Despite SFPUC’s insistence on such intensive and costly remediation of the property that it could conceivably be sited for uses as sensitive as housing or childcare, SFPUC has yet to identify any potential post-remediation uses.

¹⁷ See IS/MND at p. 47, fn. 28, Denise Bradley, Cultural Landscapes, 2014. *Pacific Rod and Gun Club, San Francisco, CA, Cultural Landscape Evaluation Report*, May 2014.

“cultural landscape.”¹⁸ Specifically, the Bradley Evaluation concludes that the Club meets two of the criteria for NRHP/CRHR listing, due to its association with events significant to broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage and for its propensity to yield historic information, which the report refers to as Criterion A/1 and Criterion A/4, respectively.¹⁹ According to the Bradley Evaluation, the Club’s historical significance derives from the time period between 1934-1941.²⁰

The IS/MND recognizes that significant impacts to historic resources may result from the RAP, although it incomprehensibly concludes that such impacts will be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. Specifically, Impact CP-1 finds that by removing certain contributory features at the club facility (i.e., the semi-circular station paths and wood safety fences at skeet fields 4-7 and the high/low houses) and also due to the potential for damage for the contributory features remaining onsite during the remediation, the RAP may cause significant environmental impacts.²¹ Through the implementation of mitigation measures M-CP-1a, M-CP-1b, and M-CP-1c, the IS/MND concludes that Impact CP-1 will be rendered less than significant. This conclusion is presented without adequate supporting evidence that such measures will minimize the impact to a less-than-significant level.

From the analysis prepared by the Club, it appears that the IS/MND’s proposed mitigation measures cannot and will not reduce Impact CP-1 to a less-than-significant level.

First, the IS/MND misstates the CEQA Guidelines provision that is the basis for the mitigation measures. The IS/MND states that under CEQA [Guidelines] Section 15064.5(b)(3), “a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior’s [Secretary] Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Restructuring Historic Buildings shall be considered as mitigated to a less-than-significant level.”²² This is a generous interpretation of the Guidelines. In reality, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3) states that compliance with the Secretary’s Standards will “generally” render an impact less than significant. Accordingly, compliance with Secretary’s standards does not mean that an impact is *per se* less than significant as indicated in the IS/MND, and the City is obligated to determine, based on analysis and substantial evidence, that the proposed mitigation would reduce Impact CP-1 to a less-than-significant level.

Second, even assuming *arguendo* that use of the Secretary’s Standards under the “Rehabilitation” criteria could render Impact CP-1 less-than-significant, Mitigation Measures M-CP-1a and M-CP-1b are inconsistent with that Standard. Under the RAP, certain facilities and

¹⁸ *Id.* at 47.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 47-49.

²⁰ *Id.* at 48.

²¹ *Id.* at 53-54.

²² *Id.* at 53.

structures will be removed and then reconstructed.²³ The Secretary's Rehabilitation Standard does not authorize the removal of historic structures. By contrast, Rehabilitation Standard No. 2 states: "the historic character of a property will be retained and preserved...*the removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*"²⁴ Mitigation Measures CP-1a and M-CP-1b directly contradict the Secretary's Rehabilitation Standards by moving, relocating and altering the significant features and spaces of the Club. There is no substantial evidence to demonstrate that these measures will mitigate Impact CP-1 to a less-than-significant level, and to the contrary, they are likely to destroy the historic resources.

Third, the IS/MND overlooks the fact that the historical resource (i.e., the cultural landscape) will be adversely affected during the period of time between when the structures are removed from the Club's facility and when they are replaced. The IS/MND acknowledges that numerous contributory features will be removed from the site for an extended period of time, yet the document fails to identify the impact and describe corresponding mitigation.

2. A July 2014 Historic Resource Evaluation of the Club Demonstrates that the IS/MND Does Not Evaluate the Full Extent of the RAP's Potential Impacts to Historic Resources

A July 2014 Historic Resource Evaluation of the Club prepared by the noted historic architectural firm Page & Turnbull ("Page & Turnbull Evaluation") both demonstrates that the Club is a historic resource and that the Bradley Evaluation fails to account for key information.²⁵ The Page & Turnbull Evaluation is a comprehensive analysis of the Club as a historic resource. The Evaluation, which is based on, among other research, a site visit, documentary review, photographic review, and interviews with Club members, is consistent with the Planning Department's outline for Historic Resource Evaluation Reports.²⁶ Using this methodology, Page & Turnbull concluded that the Club is a historical resource as a cultural landscape, and that the Club's period of significance extends from 1934 to 1964.²⁷

The IS/MND fails to consider whether the RAP will impact features that are contributory to the historic resource during the period of significance identified in the Page & Turnbull Evaluation. Specifically, the IS/MND relied exclusively on the Bradley Evaluation to define the period of significance and corresponding contributory features. This resulted in the intentional exclusion of numerous potentially-contributory features in the IS/MND's impacts analysis. For example, the IS/MND does not evaluate potential impacts to the Trap House, the

²³ See Mitigation Measure CP-1-a (semi-circular station paths at skeet fields 4-7 will be removed and reconstructed); see also Mitigation Measure CP-1-b (8 wood frame high/low houses at skeet fields 4-7 will be removed from the site and then re-affixed upon completion of remediation activities).

²⁴ Emphasis added.

²⁵ See Exhibit I attached hereto, Page & Turnbull, Pacific Rod and Gun Club, Historic Resource Evaluation (July 2014) ("Page & Turnbull Evaluation")

²⁶ *Id.* at 2.

²⁷ *Id.* at 55.

Trap Fields and their configuration, various commemorative markers, the Duck Tower, or the three-bay garage, all of which contribute to the Club as a historical resource.²⁸ Under Page & Turnbull's analysis, many if not all of the excluded features may be considered contributory, and could be adversely affected by the RAP. Neither the existing analysis in the IS/MND nor its corresponding mitigation measures account for impacts to contributory features built between 1941 and 1964. Therefore, a fair argument exists that the project may cause significant impacts to historic resources.

Further, the IS/MND fails to identify, and account for potential impacts to, numerous features that contribute to the Club as a significant cultural landscape. Page & Turnbull identified several contributory features beyond those addressed in the IS MND, namely: Lake Merced as an adjacent natural system, the general sloping topography of the grounds, and several mature trees planted in the southern portion of the property.²⁹ Due to the lack of an evaluation of potential impacts to these features in the IS/MND, that document does not provide substantial evidence to support the conclusion that the project will not result in significant impacts to historic resources.

C. The IS/MND Does Not Fully Account for Potentially-Significant Aesthetic Impacts

The RAP will require removal of a substantial amount of vegetation that currently screens on-site structures. Due to the possible removal of mature trees that screen the eastern portion of the site, the implementation of the RAP could result in potentially-significant aesthetic impacts.³⁰ The IS/MND describes the potential impact as follows:

Removing the maximum potential number of trees in this vicinity could result in a substantial adverse effect on the scenic quality of the area and designated scenic resources. These include views from John Muir Drive/49-Mile Scenic Drive and of Lake Merced, and would result in a significant impact.³¹

To mitigate this impact, the IS/MND relies on M-AE-3 which provides:

The SFPUC shall identify the location and spacing of new plantings that would, at maturity, screen views of the eastern portion of the site. New plants shall include native species indigenous to the San Francisco Peninsula and/or shrubs and trees typical of the surrounding area. Plantings (by way of species type, size, and location) shall ensure that direct views of the site east of

²⁸ See IS/MND, p. 51-52.

²⁹ Page & Turnbull Evaluation, pp. 58-59.

³⁰ IS/MND, p. 43.

³¹ *Ibid.*

the entrance road are substantially obstructed from any location within a ten-year period. The SFPUC shall monitor and photograph screening vegetation annually after completion of remediation activities. If it is determined that success standards are not being met, SFPUC shall take immediate action to re-plant screening vegetation to ensure compliance by the tenth-year period.³²

A plain reading of M-AE-3 indicates that the mitigation measure would not fully mitigate the corresponding aesthetic impact. M-AE-3 is premised on the basis that replacement trees will accomplish the same screening effect as the trees that currently screen the eastern portion of the site. However, M-AE-3 indicates that this screening will not occur, if at all, until the trees have been in place for 10 years. This means that a 10-year period may exist during which the scenic quality of the area and its designated resources may be impacted due to the lack of adequate screening of on-site structures. As the IS/MND does not include a mitigation measure to account for what is conceded to be a potentially-significant impact, there is no substantial evidence to conclude that the RAP will not result in a significant aesthetic impact.

IV. Conclusion

The Club believes that the IS/MND is impermissibly narrow in its scope due to an improper definition of the CEQA “project” by minimizing and “piecemealing” the Remediation Project and not defining a future use of the site. This has the effect of avoiding the analysis of potentially-significant impacts.

Further, a review of the IS/MND indicates that the RAP may result in a number of potentially-significant environmental impacts which are not addressed by the IS/MND. Substantial evidence in the record, including the Page & Turnbull Evaluation, supports a fair argument that the project will result in one or more significant environmental impacts, and on that basis, the City must prepare an EIR before taking action on the RAP. The sheer size of the IS/MND—at over 300 pages—is a testament to the fact that a fair argument exists that the project may result in one or potentially-significant impacts.

³² *Ibid.*

Sarah Jones
July 25, 2014
Page 10

Finally, the Club has shown that the IS/MND fails to describe adequate mitigation to protect historic resources and natural aesthetic values that are described in the document as "significant." Based on the foregoing, the Club appeals the proposed IS/MND, and requests the Commission to require a complete and proper analysis through the EIR process.

Sincerely,



on behalf of

DAVID P. CINCOTTA, Of Counsel to
Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP

Enclosure
DPC:gjc

PACIFIC ROD AND GUN CLUB
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION
[13041]

PREPARED FOR:
PATRICK GILLIGAN
PACIFIC ROD AND GUN CLUB

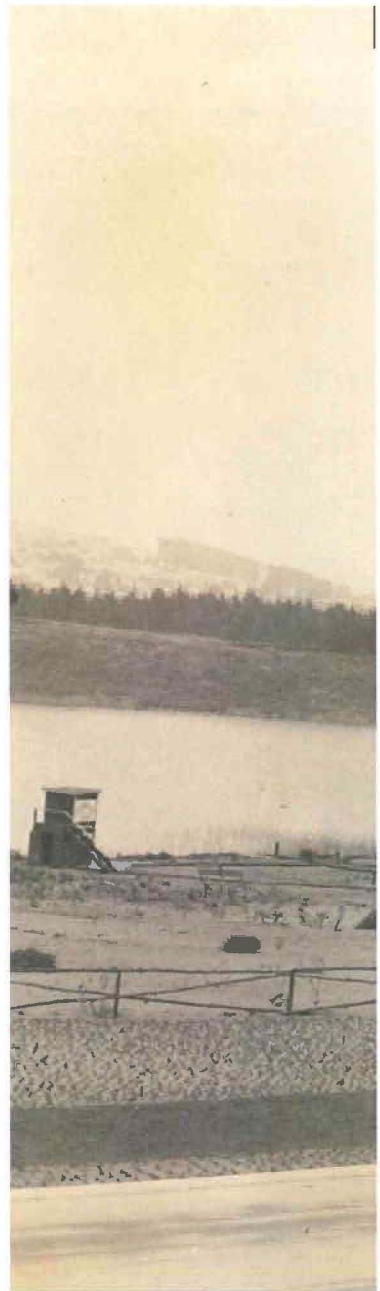


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I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) has been prepared at the request of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club (PRGC) to evaluate the potential historic significance of its grounds. Located at 520 John Muir Drive, the PRGC grounds comprise a recreational landscape encompassing approximately 14 acres along the southwest shore of Lake Merced in southwestern San Francisco (Figure 1). The property that the PRGC leases from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) also encompasses an adjacent 13-acre portion of Lake Merced. The PRGC grounds contain nine shooting fields—three used for trap shooting and six used for skeet—as well as programmatic buildings and structures that have historically supported the recreational and social missions of the organization. These include a clubhouse, field house, trap house, indoor rifle range, groundkeeper’s cottage, and duck tower. In addition, the grounds contain a number of buildings, small features, and circulation routes that contribute to its everyday operations (Figure 2). The PRGC grounds are located within Block 7283, Lot 004—a large parcel surrounding Lake Merced that is owned by the SFPUC. The lot is zoned P, Public, with a height and bulk district of OS.

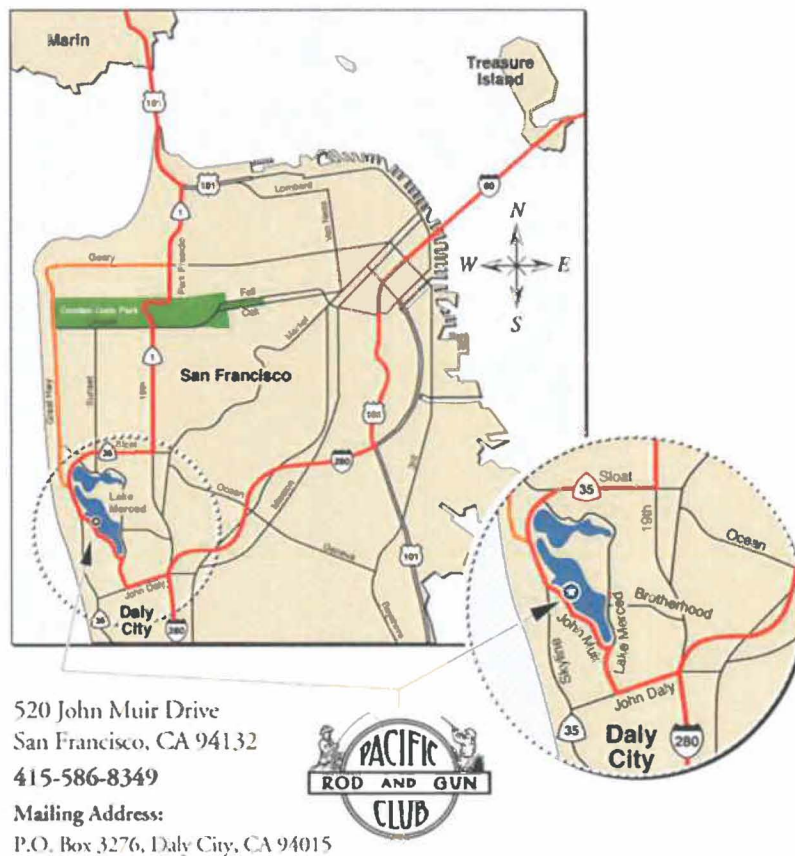


Figure 1. Location of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds and Lake Merced within San Francisco.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club



Figure 2. Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds, identifying the locations of shooting fields and major buildings.
Source: Bing Maps ©2014 Microsoft Corporation, edited by author

METHODOLOGY

This report follows the outline provided by the San Francisco Planning Department for Historic Resource Evaluation Reports, in combination with guidelines for cultural landscape evaluation derived from *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* and *National Register Bulletin No. 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*. The report provides a physical description and historic context for the Pacific Rod and Gun Club, as well as an evaluation of the property's eligibility for listing in the San Francisco Landmark Register and California Register of Historical Resources (California Register).

Page & Turnbull staff members conducted a site visit in July 2013, where they recorded notes about the site's features and took digital photographs. Page & Turnbull then conducted research at various repositories, including the San Francisco Planning Department and San Francisco Public Library. Other reference materials were provided by the Pacific Rod and Gun Club, including many historical newspaper articles and photographs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report evaluates the eligibility of the PRGC grounds, located at 520 John Muir Drive, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Page & Turnbull's findings indicate that the subject property appears to be eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events) as a cultural landscape that includes contributing features. The PRGC grounds would therefore be considered an individual historic resource for the purpose of review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Please see the evaluation section of this report for more details.

II. CURRENT HISTORIC STATUS

The following section examines the national, state, and local historical ratings currently assigned to the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds as a whole and its individual features are not currently listed in the National Register.

CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historic resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds as a whole and its individual features are not currently listed in the California Register.

SAN FRANCISCO CITY LANDMARKS

San Francisco City Landmarks are buildings, properties, structures, sites, districts and objects of "special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value and are an important part of the City's historical and architectural heritage."¹ Adopted in 1967 as Article 10 of the City Planning Code, the San Francisco City Landmark program protects listed buildings from inappropriate alterations and demolitions through review by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission. These properties provide significant and unique examples of the past that are irreplaceable, and help protect the surrounding neighborhood from inappropriate development.

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds as a whole and its individual features are not currently listed as San Francisco City Landmarks and do not contribute to an identified historic district.

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE STATUS CODE

Properties listed in or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation are assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (Status Code) of "1" to "7" to establish their historical significance in relation to the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources. These assigned Status Codes are inventoried in the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) database. Properties with a Status Code of "1" or "2" are

¹ San Francisco Planning Department, *Preservation Bulletin No. 9 – Landmarks*, San Francisco, January 2003.

either eligible for listing in the California Register or the National Register, or are already listed in one or both of the registers. Properties assigned Status Codes of “3” or “4” appear to be eligible for listing in either register, but normally require more research to support this rating. Properties assigned a Status Code of “5” have typically been determined to be locally significant or to have contextual importance. Properties with a Status Code of “6” are not eligible for listing in either register. Finally, a Status Code of “7” means that the resource has not been evaluated for the National Register or the California Register, or needs reevaluation.

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds have not been assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code.

1976 DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY SURVEY

The 1976 Department of City Planning Architectural Quality Survey (1976 DCP Survey) is what is referred to in preservation parlance as a “reconnaissance” or “windshield” survey. The survey looked at the entire City and County of San Francisco to identify and rate architecturally significant buildings and structures on a scale of “-2” (detrimental) to “+5” (extraordinary). No research was performed and the potential historical significance of a resource was not considered when a rating was assigned. Buildings rated “3” or higher in the survey represent approximately the top two percent of San Francisco’s building stock in terms of architectural significance. However, it should be noted that the 1976 DCP Survey has come under increasing scrutiny over the past decade due to the fact that it has not been updated in over twenty-five years. As a result, the 1976 DCP Survey has not been officially recognized by the San Francisco Planning Department as a valid local register of historic resources for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds are not listed in the 1976 DCP Survey.

In sum, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds are not currently listed as a historic resource within any official register or survey. However, because the property is more than 50 years old, the San Francisco Planning Department considers it to be a potential historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

III. DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds comprise an approximately 14-acre shooting range and recreational facility located along the shore of Lake Merced in southwestern San Francisco, roughly seven miles from the city's downtown. PRGC's lakeside grounds contain nine trap and skeet shooting fields arranged side by side, five major programmatic buildings, one shooting tower, numerous additional buildings and small-scale features, and circulation routes that support the property's continued use as a shooting sports facility and social center. The buildings are vernacular in style. The oldest among them, dating to the 1930s, are consistent in their exterior materials, roof forms, and minimally rustic design features such as exposed rafter tails. The property gradually slopes east toward the shore of Lake Merced, but the nine shooting fields and the site's expansive parking lot are largely level. Vegetation patterns include grass cover across the fields, a tree edge line along John Muir Drive, and shrub growth near the lakeshore.

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club campus is an active cultural landscape. The property's constituent elements are not simply its buildings and structures, but also the spatial and functional relationships that exist among its varied built and natural elements, and between its internal features and its broader site, including Lake Merced. In order to capture the landscape characteristics that define the Pacific Rod and Gun Club site, the following description employs categories laid out in the National Park Service publication *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*.

NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES

Lake Merced is the primary natural feature associated with the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds. 13 acres of the lake lie within the area that the PRGC leases from the SFPUC, and the lake is a prominent element of the subject property's immediate surroundings, lying adjacent to the PRGC site along the entire length of its northeast edge (approximately 1,500 feet). The lake consists of four linked basins, all containing fresh water fed by rain and springs. North and East Lakes follow an east-west axis between the San Francisco State University campus and the San Francisco Zoological Park. South Lake runs at a diagonal from northwest to southeast and terminates at a causeway, which separates it from Impound Lake.

The lake and its shores also comprise a vibrant ecosystem and wildlife habitat. According to San Francisco Recreation and Park's *Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan*,

Lake Merced contains the largest expanse of wetland habitat in San Francisco and supports an array of sensitive plant and animal species. In addition, because the lake is the largest freshwater coastal lake and wetland system between the Point Reyes Peninsula in northern Marin County and Pescadero Marsh in southern San Mateo County, it provides valuable refuge for thousands of migratory birds. This combination of extensive native habitat with high wildlife functioning and the presence of numerous rare species make Lake Merced an important ecological resource.²

The natural systems of Lake Merced, particularly its South Lake, are contributing elements to the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds. Historically, the club has been linked to recreational fishing and conservation efforts at the lake. The lake also provides a scenic backdrop to the nine shooting fields, which are arranged on an axis roughly parallel to the shore and facing the water. Additionally, the

² *Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan*, San Francisco Recreation and Parks, February 2006, 6.1-1.

lake contributes to the grounds' relatively undeveloped setting. Lake Merced is a natural resource embedded within the dense urban fabric of San Francisco, and its shores create a wooded and somewhat secluded setting that is dramatically different from surrounding areas of the city (**Figures 3 and 4**).



Figure 3. Lake Merced viewed from the Indoor Range, facing northeast
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 4. Lake Merced viewed from Field 4, facing southeast
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds are arranged on a parcel of land that follows the shore of Lake Merced for a length of approximately 1,500 feet. Within this elongated site, the spatial organization of the grounds' constituent features is characterized by the separation of the linearly arranged shooting fields from their supporting buildings, which are divided into two clusters within the property. The fields are situated side by side leading from northwest to southeast, following the edge of Lake Merced. They form the spine of the property and are the primary components of the grounds used by many of its visitors. Fields 1-7 lie alongside a broad surface parking lot, which provides access to the fields for shooters and spectators.

Three buildings—the Trap House, the Field House, and Restroom Building—are situated within and around the parking lot. These buildings are functionally related to the public recreation activities that occur on the shooting fields. The remaining buildings comprise a cluster that is located toward the south end of the property, alongside the paved access drive.

The fields themselves are arranged in accordance with the established conventions of their respective shooting disciplines. Each trap field is formed by five poured concrete radial arms at ground level, with three lateral cords (**Figure 5**). The front-most cord connects the forward ends of the arms and contains five shooting stations (**Figure 6**). Each trap field has a trap house, containing a clay trap launcher, located sixteen yards ahead of its front shooting stations. The skeet fields are organized differently, each consisting of a poured concrete semicircular arc at ground level with a base cord connecting its two ends. A shooting apron leads from the base cord to the top of the arc, at the rear of the field (**Figure 7**). Each field contains a high house and a low house, which stand at opposite ends of the arc (**Figure 8**). These buildings contain clay pigeon launchers. The skeet fields are separated from one another by spans of vertical wood plank fencing.



Figure 5. Representative trap field, viewed facing northeast.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 6. Stands located at the trap shooting stations.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 7. Semi-circular arc and base cord of a representative skeet shooting field.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 8. High house and low house at opposite ends of a skeet field base cord.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

CULTURAL TRADITIONS

The PRGC is a long-standing institution within San Francisco. Founded by a community of sportsmen (Figure 9), the club and its facilities convey recreational shooting and fishing as shared, social pursuits. The continued use of the shooting fields and other PRGC facilities by club members and the public forge a direct link between the organization's present-day operations and its original recreation and conservation missions.



Figure 9. Early members of the PRGC.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

CIRCULATION

The circulation patterns of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club site allow for vehicle access to the site and pedestrian access among and within the shooting fields. The grounds are accessed by a primary entrance on John Muir Drive; a turnoff leads to the large gravel surface parking lot (Figure 10), as well as to a paved asphalt access drive that leads to the building cluster and Fields 8 and 9, located at the southeastern end of the grounds (Figure 11). A concrete sidewalk follows the southwest edges of Fields 1-7 and is the primary pedestrian route from field to field (Figure 12).



Figure 10. Main parking lot, viewed facing northeast.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 11. Primary concrete sidewalk alongside the trap fields.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 12. Automobile access drive, viewed facing southeast toward Fields 8 and 9
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The other circulation routes on the property are within the fields themselves. Shooters move from station to station along the prescribed paths established on the fields. The trap fields' radial pathways lead forward to five shooting stations, located sixteen yards from the trap house. Shooters move from pathway to pathway along the lateral cords. Each skeet field contains seven stations along its arc (Figure 13), with the eighth station at the center of the base cord, midway between the high house and low house (Figure 14). On Fields 4, 5, 6, and 7, the eighth station connects to the rear of the field by a flared concrete apron (Figures 15 and 16).



Figure 13. Shooting station on the arc of Field 9.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 14. Front shooting station on base cord of Field 9.
Source: Page & Turabull, 2013



Figure 15. Concrete apron on Field 4
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 16. Distance marks on concrete apron of skeet field
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

VEGETATION

Major vegetation patterns within the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds include areas of grass, clusters and edges of mature trees, and wetland plants and upland shrubs along the edge of the lake. The vegetation pattern that most closely supports the operations of the site is the arrangement of mown grass across the level surfaces of the shooting fields, inside of and surrounding the poured concrete pathways (Figure 17). While patchy in some areas, the grass cover is continuous across much of the property and surrounds buildings at the southwest end of the site.

While the shooting fields are carefully maintained and kept free of tree growth, other areas of the grounds contain stands of mature trees, most appearing to have been planted deliberately. An edge line of trees is located alongside John Muir Drive, serving as a visual screen between the PRGC grounds and the adjacent traffic corridor. The trees that form the edge line southeast of the main vehicle entrance are mature and provide a strong visual barrier to the road, while the trees northwest of the entrance are younger and form a less consistent barrier. A circular cluster of Eucalyptus trees is located southeast of the indoor range building (Figure 18). Dense tree growth delineates the northwest edge of the subject property.



Figure 17. Grass cover on Field 9.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 18. Circular cluster of trees near Indoor Range.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The shore of Lake Merced, located ahead of the shooting fields, contains a mixture of wetland and upland vegetation that does not appear to be maintained. The shore is edged by a band of California bulrush (**Figure 4**). The site's slope toward the water features a variety of shrubs, including yellow bush lupine (**Figure 19**). Evergreen bushes northwest of the shooting fields may be remnants of intentional plantings that were in place by 1938 (**Figure 103**).



Figure 19. Shrubs and bushes near the edge of Lake Merced.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

TOPOGRAPHY

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds occupy a site that slopes from John Muir Drive to the shore of Lake Merced. The slope is most dramatic alongside the road: here, it appears that earth has been excavated to create a visible edge that separates the PRGC site from its surroundings. The ground lowers approximately 10' from the road at the southeast end of the site, and it lowers less than 5' at the northwest end (**Figure 20**). The ground surfaces of the parking lot and shooting fields are largely level. The site slopes down gradually to the south and to the east—particularly east of the fields, where the ground reaches the edge of the lake (**Figure 21**).



Figure 20. Edge slope at west end of the PRGC grounds.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 21. Slope towards Lake Merced, ahead of the skeet fields.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Field House

The Field House, constructed in 1948, is a one-story building with a rectangular plan, approximately 65' x 20', with a shallowly pitched gabled roof on two levels. The southeast section of the building is the original volume, and the northwest section, with a slightly higher roof ridge, is an addition built in 1949. A shed-roofed rear wing projects from the southwest façade. The building is clad in stucco and has a concrete foundation. Rafter tails are exposed underneath the eaves.

The primary façade faces northeast and features four bays (**Figure 22**). A paired sliding door and a wood-framed, open sales counter are located at the southwest end. A porch spans this section of the façade and has a railing of vertical wood boards. A shed-roofed awning extends over the sliding doors. The remainder of the façade contains two fixed picture windows within wood frames. Arranged in between these windows is an inscription recessed within the stucco cladding, reading, "Pacific Rod & Gun" (**Figure 23**).

The building's southeast façade contains a central single-leaf, strap-hinged, metal personnel door flanked by two fixed, wood-sash windows (**Figure 24**). One of these windows is a one-over-one window whose lower sash has been infilled with a plywood board. The door opens to a concrete landing within a shallow portico. A frame rises from the portico roof and holds an identification sign for the building. The southeast wall of the rear addition features a three-panel wood door and wood-sash window. The southwest (rear) façade has no features apart from an adjoining plywood storage shed (**Figures 25 and 26**). The northwest façade contains a single-leaf wood door and fixed picture window (**Figure 27**). The door opens to a wood disability access ramp with a wood handrail. The northwest wall of the rear wing contains a three-panel wood door and a two-light, wood-sash window.



Figure 22. Northeast façade of the Club house, viewed facing southwest
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

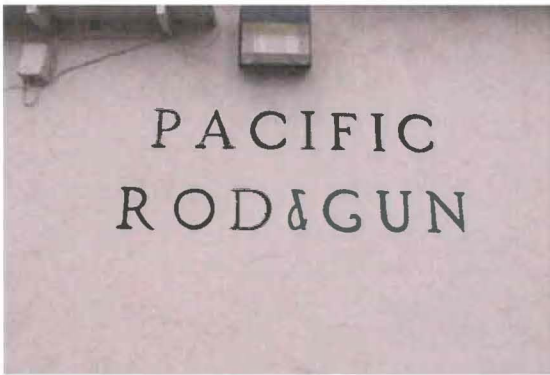


Figure 23. Detail of inscription in stucco of northeast façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 24. Southeast façade, viewed facing northwest.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 25. East end of southwest façade, viewed facing northeast.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 26. West end of southwest façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 27. Northwest façade, viewed facing southeast.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Trap House

The Trap House, constructed c. 1949, is a one-story, side-gabled building with a rectangular plan, approximately 20' x 30' (Figures 28 and 29). The building has a poured concrete foundation and is clad in broad plywood boards with battens. Narrower boards and more tightly spaced battens are found within the building's gables. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. All windows have wood sashes and consist of two vertically oriented lights. The slab foundation extends approximately 5' northeast of the building, forming a porch that spans the entire width of the northeast (primary) façade. The porch is sheltered underneath a shallowly pitched shed roof with exposed rafters underneath. At the center of this façade is a paired wood door—the primary entrance to the building (Figure 30). The door is flanked by two windows. A railing of vertical wood boards surrounds the porch. Poured concrete steps, flanked by wood handrails, lead northeast from the center of the porch to reach the ground.

The southeast façade contains two windows and a wood six-panel door; a floodlight is located in the gable peak (Figures 31 and 32). The southwest (rear) façade features three evenly spaced wood-sash window pairings (Figure 33). Rafter tails are exposed underneath the eaves on this façade (Figure 34). The northwest façade contains one central window (Figure 35).



Figure 28. Trap House and surroundings, viewed facing west.

Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 29. Southeast and northeast facades, viewed facing west.

Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 30. Paired, primary door on northeast façade within porch.

Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 31. Southeast façade, viewed facing northwest.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 32. Detail of gable on southeast façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 33. Southwest façade, viewed facing northeast.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 34. Rafter tails under eaves on southwest façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 35. Northwest façade, viewed facing southeast
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Restroom Building

The Restroom Building, constructed in an undetermined year but appearing to date to the 1950s, is located along the southwest edge of the parking lot. It is a rectangular-plan building, approximately 20' x 12', standing on a concrete slab foundation (**Figure 36**). It is covered in similar broad plywood boards with battens as the Trap House. It has a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles, and rafters are exposed underneath all eaves. The windows on the building are pairings of side-by-side, sliding aluminum-sash windows within wood frames. The northeast façade contains two of these windows. A planting bed, approximately 1' deep, is located alongside the foundation and spans the width of the façade. The southeast façade features a single-leaf wood door and window. The door opens to the railed landing of a concrete stoop, with steps leading down to the parking lot. The southwest, rear, façade contains no features, and the northwest façade is identical to the southeast façade, only with a reverse arrangement.

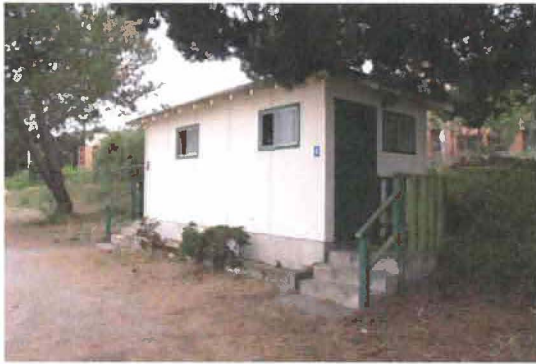


Figure 36. Northeast and northwest facades
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

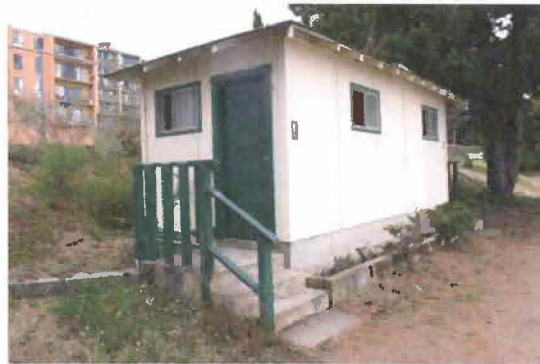


Figure 37. Southeast and northeast facades
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Indoor Rifle Range

The Indoor Rifle Range, constructed in 1939, is a one-story-over-basement, gabled, elongated rectangular building, approximately 30' x 100' (**Figure 38**). The building has three sections that are nearly identical in dimension, and all follow the same axis northeast toward the lake. The sections have roof ridges at slightly different levels. The building has a concrete foundation, and it occupies a sloped site with the basement exposed at its northeast end. The building is clad in horizontal wood shiplap siding across the first floor as well as the exposed basement, and its roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The northeastern section of the building has exposed rafters underneath its eaves.



Figure 38. Southwest and southeast facades, viewed facing north
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The primary façade faces southwest and contains one wood two-panel door and a two-over-two, single-hung, wood-sash window with ogee lugs (Figures 39, 40, and 41). A pairing of wood-sash two-light windows is located in the center of the gable. The door opens to a wood landing with handrails, and concrete steps lead down to the paved asphalt drive. The southeast façade contains a single-leaf wood door that opens to a railed wood landing with steps. The northeastern section of the façade contains a first-story door, which is located approximately 5' above the ground due to the sloped site. This door presumably opened to a landing and stairs, which no longer exist. A basement two-panel door is located near the northeast end of the façade, sheltered underneath a projecting shed roof (Figure 42). Louvered vents are located underneath the eaves.



Figure 39. Southeast façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 40. Detail of landing on southeast façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 41. Detail of window on southwest façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 42. Basement door on southeast façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The northeast façade features a shed-roof addition that spans the width of the façade (Figure 43). The addition is clad in plywood boards and features a two-light, vertically-oriented window. A second window void with identical dimensions is apparent, but it has been infilled with plywood. On the wall above the addition, the façade contains two fixed windows immediately below the gable. The northwest façade (Figure 44) contains a single-leaf door with railed wood landing and steps. Near the west corner of the building is a ribbon of eight two-over-two, single-hung wood-sash windows (Figure 5). Five of these have ogee lugs, while the remainder appear to have been replaced with contrasting wood-sash windows with wide meeting rails. The southernmost four windows of this ribbon were installed over existing windows and serve as storms. One louvered vent and four infilled vents are located underneath the eave on this façade.



Figure 43. Northeast façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 44. Northwest façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 45. Detail of windows on northwest façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Garage

The Garage, constructed in an undetermined year but appearing to date from the 1950s, is a one-story, flat-roofed, rectangular building on a concrete slab foundation (**Figures 46 and 47**). It is clad in vertical wood board siding with occasional battens. The north façade features three bays, each containing a five-part wood panel rolling door. The east façade contains a wood panel pedestrian door (**Figure 47**). T-shaped wood utility poles are attached to the centers of the east and west facades and rise to a height of approximately 3' above the roofline.



Figure 46. North façade of the Garage, viewed facing south
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 47. West facade
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

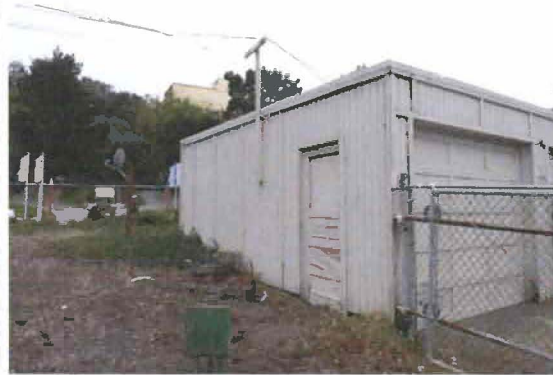


Figure 48. East facade
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Groundkeeper's Cottage

The Groundkeeper's Cottage, appearing to date to the 1930s or 1940s, is a one-story, gabled building with a rectangular plan, clad in horizontal wood shiplap siding with wood corner boards. Its roof is covered in asphalt shingles, and rafter tails are exposed underneath the eaves. The building has a shed-roof addition that projects from the east façade. The primary façade faces west and contains a central ribbon of three one-over-one, wood-sash, single-hung windows with ogee lugs (**Figure 49**). These windows are flanked by fixed, decorative wood shutters. At the south end of this façade is a projecting, enclosed entryway with shed roof, with an aluminum screen door and one-over-one wood-sash window. The gable end of this façade is clad in vertical wood boards.

The north façade contains two single and two pairings of wood-sash windows, identical to those on the primary façade (**Figure 50**). The pairings have decorative shutters. At the east end of the façade, a single-leaf wood door opens from the addition to a railed wood landing with steps. On the east façade, the addition contains a window void that has been infilled with a smaller one-over-one wood-sash window; the lower light and remainder of the void are covered by wood boards (**Figures 51 and 52**). The façade also features an aluminum-sash side-by-side sliding window. The gable above the addition is clad in wood shingles. The south façade features two bays, each containing a one-over-one, wood-sash, single-hung window with ogee lugs (**Figure 53**). An additional fixed window is below the eave beside the south corner of the building.



Figure 49. West façade of Groundkeeper's Cottage, viewed facing east
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 50. East and north facades, viewed facing southwest
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 51. South and east facades, viewed facing northwest
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 52. Detail of windows on addition on east façade
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 53. Detail of wood-sash window on south façade
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Club House

The Club House, constructed in 1937, is a one-story-over-basement building formed by two rectangular, side-gabled volumes arranged together on an L-plan, with a prominent flat-roofed addition on the east façade as well as a rear addition located between the two volumes (Figures 54 and 55). The building is clad in horizontal wood shiplap siding and has a roof covered in asphalt shingles. Rafter tails are exposed underneath the eaves. The building occupies a sloped site, and the basement is exposed under the east wing.

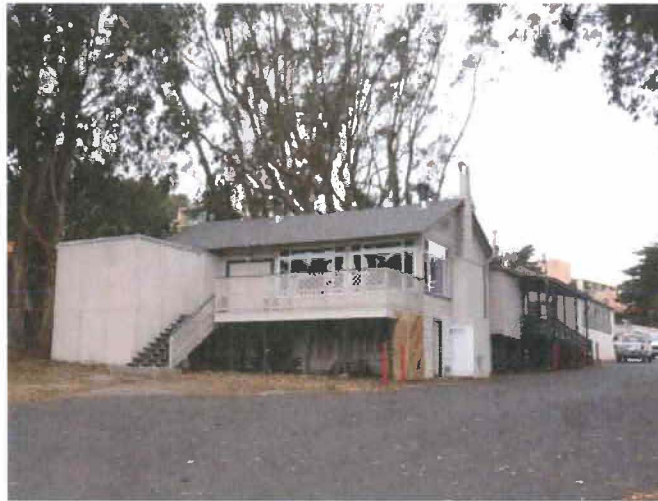


Figure 54. East and north facades of the Club House, viewed facing southwest.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 55. East and north facades of the Club House, viewed facing southwest.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The primary façade faces north and has two sections: the gabled end of the front volume, and the north wall of the building's ell (**Figure 56**). The gabled end section features a cinder block chimney that rises approximately 12' from the ground; a metal pipe continues the rise to above the peak of the gable. On the first floor, a large wood-sash prairie window is located east of the chimney. Two doors flank the chimney at the basement level—one a four-panel wood door, the other a single-leaf door (**Figures 57 and 58**). Because of the building's sloped site, these doors open at ground level. Beside the western door is a wood-sash, one-over-one window. The ell is recessed at its center, containing a wood two-panel door and a picture window in a wood frame. A pairing of one-over-one wood-sash windows, holding textured glass, is located at the west end of the ell. A shed-roofed wood porch spans most of the width of the ell on this facade. The porch has a railing of vertical wood boards, and it is connected to a wood disability access ramp with wood lattice railing (**Figures 59 and 60**). The ramp leads west, turns at the building's northwest corner, and reaches grade alongside the west façade. The portion of the ell on the first story not covered by the porch projects approximately 4' forward, with a shed roof. This projection is supported by wood posts; underneath it is a wood door at the basement level.



Figure 56. North façade, viewed facing southwest.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 57. Detail of basement door on north façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 58. Detail of basement door on north façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 59. North façade of ell and west façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 60. Porch railing detail.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The west façade features a projecting, semi-enclosed porch with a shed roof (**Figure 61**). Within the porch, a wood door—containing two panels and an upper screen—opens to a wood landing, and stairs and a railing lead north to reach the ground. South of the portico is a three-pane, wood-sash window, as well as three plywood storage sheds (**Figure 62**). A louvered vent is located within the gable. The south façade of the Club House features two pairs of side-by-side windows, appearing to be aluminum-sash sliders (**Figure 63**).



Figure 61. Detail of portico on west façade.
 Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 62. West façade, viewed facing east.
 Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 63. East end of south façade.
 Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The east façade has two exposed stories—the first story and the basement—due to the building’s sloped site. A two-story, flat-roof addition, clad in vertical wood board siding, projects from the south end of this façade (**Figure 64**). It has no additional features. A raised wood porch spans the portion of the façade not covered by the addition. The upper level contains a paired door and two vinyl-sash prairie windows. The porch has a wood lattice railing, and a wood stair leads to the ground in front of the paired door. The exterior wall of the basement, visible underneath the porch, features a series of wood support posts.



Figure 64. East façade.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Field Support Buildings and Structures

Other support buildings near the shooting fields appear to have been constructed between the 1960s and 1980s. South of the indoor range building is a small shed, appearing to have been building c. 1970s-1980s, is approximately 10' x 6', with a shed roof that projects widely over the front façade and exposes rafters in the soffits (Figure 65). The building is clad in vertical wood boards and rests on a concrete slab foundation. The primary (south) façade contains two identical bays, each containing a pairing of vertically oriented, aluminum-sash casement windows. These windows appear to have been installed in existing door openings that extend to the foundation; the lower areas of the openings have been infilled with plywood. The east façade has no openings. The north façade contains one screen door (Figure 66). The west façade contains a single-leaf wood door.



Figure 65. South façade of shed
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

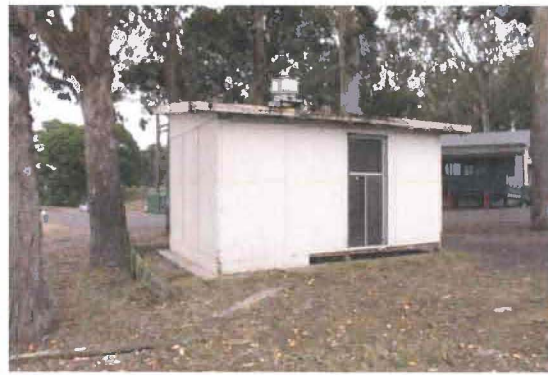


Figure 66. East and north facades
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Fields 1, 2, and 3—the trap fields—each features a trap house that contains a trap clay launcher. These structures have square plans, approximately 5' x 5', and have slightly sloped shed roofs (Figure 67). They rise approximately 2' from the ground. The walls are concrete apart from their north walls, which are formed by hinged, fold-down metal doors. The roofs are covered in asphalt rolled roofing.



Figure 67. Trap clay launcher visible within a trap house
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Each skeet field features a high house and a low house, which are positioned on opposite ends of their respective base cords. Each of these buildings is square in plan, approximately 5' x 5', and features a small rectangular or square open window facing across the base cord. These windows allow pigeons to be launched in front of the field. On Field 4, the high and low houses have flat roofs and appear to be clad in T1-11 siding (Figures 68 and 69). On Fields 5, 6, and 7, high and low houses are clad in stucco and have slightly sloped shed roofs. Panels of T1-11 siding are found underneath the eaves (Figures 70 and 71). The low houses are approximately 5' tall, while the high houses are approximately 12' tall. Tall houses have railed wood stairs leading to hinged doors on the upper level that allow access into the launcher chamber. The high houses on Fields 5 and 6 project northwest on the first story; the roof of each projection serves as a landing platform for a door on the upper level. The high and low houses on Fields 8 and 9 have similar designs and materials, although these fields share a combined low and high house that straddles the protection fence (Figure 72 and 73).



Figure 68. Field 4 high house.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 69. Field 4 low house.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 70. Field 7 high house.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 71. Low house.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 72. Field 8 high house and low house.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 73. Combined high house/low house. between
Fields 8 and 9
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Fields 4, 5, 6, and 7 each feature a launching house located 36' ahead of the central shooting station on the base cord (**Figures 74 and 75**). These buildings are similar to the trap houses on Fields 1, 2, and 3. Fields 4, 5, and 7 each feature a scoring building, approximately 5' x 5', clad in plywood with hip roofs covered in asphalt shingles. Each building contains an open, wood-frame service window on the facades facing the shooting fields, and a single-leaf wood door on the side facing away (**Figure 76**). Field 6 features two plywood-on-frame storage buildings, approximately 5' x 5', with shed roofs (**Figure 77**).



Figure 74. Representative trap house on skeet field.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 75. Field 7 trap house.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 76. Hip-roofed skeet field support building.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 77. Shed-roofed skeet field support building.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Additional buildings within the PRGC grounds include a small structure approximately 4' x 4', located east of the Indoor Range and formed by plywood board walls with diagonal wood boards attached to two sides (Figure 78). West of the Club House are four side-by-side metal shipping containers. The westernmost container has one flush metal door on its north façade and two metal turbine ventilators on its roof (Figure 79).



Figure 78. Unidentified plywood-on-frame building.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 79. Shipping containers.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The duck tower at Field 6 is an open steel-frame tower, approximately 40' tall, formed by four X-braced sides supporting a railed upper platform of metal grating (Figures 80 and 81). The tower's base measures approximately 12' x 12', and each corner of the tower is anchored in a concrete footer. The base surrounds a shed-roof, plywood-on-frame support building used for scoring or storage. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation and has a service window that can be closed with a fold-down plywood panel. A gabled shed is located in the center of the upper platform, with a paired door facing northeast toward the adjacent shooting field. A square metal chute emerges from the center of the roof of the lower building and rises to reach the upper platform underneath the gabled

shed. A circular caged ladder scales the lower half of the tower on its southwest side. The ladder connects to a platform within the tower frame, which then leads to an interior ladder that climbs to an opening in the upper platform.



Figure 80. Duck tower, viewed facing southeast.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 81. Duck tower and Field 6, viewed facing north.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

VIEWS AND VISTAS

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds are characterized by visual relationships within and out of the site. The function of the skeet and trap fields requires that no obstructing elements are located between the shooting stations and the areas in front of the fields, where the pigeons are launched and

fired upon. Clear views from the rear of the fields toward the shooting areas are also maintained for spectators.

Most areas of the property have a visual relationship with Lake Merced, which serves as a scenic backdrop to the activities that take place on the shooting fields (**Figure 82**). These views reinforce the naturalistic qualities of the site. In addition, the Field House, Trap House, and Club House all feature prominent porches that face toward the lake.



Figure 82. View across the southeast end of the PRGC grounds, toward Lake Merced.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds contain five protection fences that delineate the skeet shooting fields from one another (**Figure 83**). These fences, which run perpendicular to the shooting fields's lateral axis, bound Fields 4, 5, 6, and 7 along their northwestern sides; one additional fence is located between Fields 8 and 9. These fences are approximately 80' in length and are formed by vertical wood boards (**Figure 84**). The fences are approximately 5' tall and step up to a height of approximately 10' at their northeastern ends. Metal chain-link fencing leads along the southwest edge of Fields 1, 2, and 3 (**Figure 85**) and bounds the edge of the property along John Muir Drive. A pattern board, formed by horizontal wood ties, is located east of Field 9 (**Figure 86**).



Figure 83. Protection fence between skeet fields.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 84. Detail of protection fence.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 85. Chain-link fencing alongside trap fields.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 86. Pattern board near Field 9.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

Benches for spectators are located around the shooting fields. The benches at Fields 1-7 are formed by wood planks on steel legs (Figure 87). The benches at Fields 8 and 9 are formed by wood boards attached to cast concrete legs (Figure 88). Other permanent small-scale features within the fields include metal scoring stands located beside the front shooting stations of the trap fields (Figure 6) and T-shaped gun stands.



Figure 87. Bench facing Field 4.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 88. Bench facing Field 8.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

The grounds also contain commemorative markers and signage. Some of the shooting fields have been dedicated to the memory of past club members, and these fields feature small memorial markers. The oldest of these, appearing to date to the 1940s and 1950s, have metal plaques affixed to concrete bases (Figure 89). More recent markers, appearing to date after 1970, have granite plaques with engraved inscriptions (Figure 90). Southwest of the Field House is an engraved historical wayside sign, formed by horizontal wood boards within a frame and hung from a contemporary wood stand (Figure 91).



Figure 89. Metal plaque and concrete base of memorial marker.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 90. Granite plaque on memorial marker.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013



Figure 91. Historical wayside sign, located behind the Field House.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

SURROUNDING AREA

The PRGC is located in the southwestern corner of San Francisco, a relatively sparsely developed area of the city. The property's immediate setting is dominated by Lake Merced's South Lake to the north and east. The shores are edged by bulrush, low shrub growth, and a band of trees that is continuous around much of the lake. Lake Merced's perimeter is surrounded by a network of recreational properties that date to the first half of the twentieth century. Southeast of the PRGC grounds is the Olympic Club, a property that is comprised of two eighteen-hole courses. The Harding Park Golf Course lies east across Lake Merced from the PRGC property, and the San Francisco Golf Club is located on the east side of Impound Lake from the Olympic Club. These properties are characterized by their low density land use. They feature cleared golf holes—containing fairways, tee boxes, sand bunkers, and putting greens—separated by edge lines of trees. Immediately north of the PRGC, also located along the shore of Lake Merced, is the San Francisco Police Department Range, an indoor shooting facility.

John Muir Drive passes directly southwest of the PRGC site. Across John Muir Drive are the Lakeshore Apartments, a complex of five-story, Modernist residential buildings that are visible from the PRGC grounds (**Figure 92**). Beyond the Lakeside Apartments is Skyline Boulevard, a divided-lane state highway that runs from north to south. Across Skyline Boulevard, approximately 1,000 feet west of the PRGC grounds, is Fort Funston, a unit of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. This former military landscape occupies a site located along approximately 1.5 miles of the Pacific Ocean and contains a network of recreational hiking trails and remnant coastal defense infrastructure.



Figure 92. View facing southwest from Field 4 toward the Lakewood Apartments.
Source: Page & Turnbull, 2013

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

EARLY SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY

European settlement of what is now San Francisco took place in 1776, with the simultaneous establishment of the Presidio of San Francisco by representatives of the Spanish Viceroy and the founding of Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores) by Franciscan missionaries. The Spanish colonial era persisted until 1821, when Mexico earned its independence from Spain, taking with it the former Spanish colony of Alta California. During the Mexican period, the region's economy was based primarily on cattle ranching, and a small trading village known as Yerba Buena grew up around a plaza (today known as Portsmouth Square) located above a cove in San Francisco Bay. In 1839, a few streets were laid out around the Plaza, and settlement expanded up the slopes of Nob Hill.

During the Mexican-American war in 1846, the village was occupied by U.S. military forces and was renamed San Francisco the following year. Around the same time, a surveyor named Jasper O'Farrell extended the original street grid, while also laying out Market Street from what is now the Ferry Building to Twin Peaks. Blocks north of this line were laid out in small 50-*vara* square blocks, whereas blocks south of Market were laid out in larger 100-*vara* blocks.³

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 brought explosive growth to San Francisco, with thousands of would-be gold-seekers making their way to the isolated outpost on the edge of the North American continent. Between 1846 and 1852, the population of San Francisco mushroomed from less than one thousand people to almost 35,000. The lack of level land for development around Portsmouth Square soon pushed development south to Market Street, eastward onto filled tidal lands, and westward toward Nob Hill. At this time, most buildings in San Francisco were concentrated downtown, and the outlying portions of the peninsula remained unsettled throughout much of the late nineteenth century.

With the decline of gold production during the mid-1850s, San Francisco's economy diversified to include agriculture, manufacturing, shipping, construction, and banking.⁴ Prospering from these industries, a new elite of merchants, bankers, and industrialists rose to shape the development of the city as the foremost financial, industrial, and shipping center of the West.

LAKE MERCED NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY, SAN FRANCISCO

The area around Lake Merced was originally inhabited by the Ramaytush Ohlone tribe of Native Americans, who used the area to fish, hunt, and gather other resources. Stone tools unearthed on the San Francisco State University campus provide archaeological evidence of their presence.

The Spanish explorer Don Bruno de Heceta gave the lake its current name when his party camped on its shores on September 24, 1775, the feast day of Our Lady of Mercy (*Merced*). During the early years of Spanish settlement in San Francisco, the shores of Lake Merced were used as common land for grazing cattle.⁵ In 1835, under Mexican rule, the land was privatized and granted to a rancher named Jose Antonio Galindo. With its rugged terrain ringed by sand dunes and Twin Peaks, the Lake Merced area remained predominately rural for much longer than other districts of San Francisco. The

³ *Vara* is derived from an antiquated Spanish unit of measurement

⁴ Rand Richards, *Historic San Francisco. A Concise History and Guide* (San Francisco: Heritage House Publishers, 2001), 77.

⁵ Zoeth Skinner Ethridge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, (New York: John C. Rankin, 1912); available online at <http://www.sfgenealogy.com/sf/history/hbbegidx.htm>; accessed September 18, 2007.

Rancho Laguna de la Merced and its neighbor, the San Miguel Rancho, were the last of the old Mexican ranches to be incorporated into the city.

At the time of the Gold Rush and California's entry into the Union, the area around Lake Merced became a popular spot for horse racing and dueling. Senator David Broderick and California Associate Supreme Court Justice David Terry fought an 1859 duel on the southern shores of the lake to settle a debate over slavery. The site of the duel is now marked by two granite columns and the Duel Hole, the seventh hole in the San Francisco Golf Club course.

The Spring Valley Water Company (SVWC) purchased Lake Merced and the surrounding land in 1868 in an attempt to establish a monopoly over San Francisco's water supply. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the city began to pipe in fresh water from a farther distance, leading to the eventual collapse of the SVWC's monopoly. The company began to sell off some of its land holdings as early as the 1890s. In the 1910s and 1920s, several golf courses were built on property the company leased or sold to local golf clubs. The United States Army also established the Lake Merced Military Reservation (later renamed Fort Funston) on the coastal side of Lake Merced at this time, which further limited private development in this sector of the city.⁶

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the first significant development began on the scrub-covered dunes of the Sunset district and progressed into the Parkside district north of Lake Merced. With the completion of the Twin Peaks Tunnel in 1917, Ingleside, to the east of the lake, became a prime location for development. A 1912 newspaper article proclaimed, "Ingleside is now vying with Richmond and Sunset."⁷ As late as 1920, however, the Lake Merced District was still predominately rural (**Figure 93**).⁸ The City of San Francisco acquired much of the SVWC's land around Lake Merced at an undetermined time prior to the 1930s.



Figure 93. Lake Merced in the 1920s.
Source: Greg Gaar Collection, reproduced for FoundSF,
http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Lake_Merced_100_years_ago

The 1930s brought significant change. The areas around Lake Merced constituted one of the largest tracts of undeveloped private land in San Francisco, which enticed the rapidly-expanding San

⁶ Sara Marcellino and Brandon Jebens, "The History of Human Use at Lake Merced," San Francisco State University, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://bss.sfsu.edu/holzman/lakemerced/landuse.htm>.

⁷ "Ingleside Is Now Vying with Richmond and Sunset," *San Francisco Call*, April 13, 1912, 18.

⁸ Ibid.

Francisco State College (later renamed San Francisco State University) to purchase land for a new campus from the SVWC in 1937. However, construction for the new campus did not begin until after World War II, and the campus was not occupied until 1953.⁹

RECREATIONAL HISTORY OF LAKE MERCED

Lake Merced offered a setting for San Franciscans' recreational pursuits beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. Because its surrounding areas remained so lightly developed until well into the twentieth century, the lake retained its natural setting and was viewed as a refuge from the growing city. Yet it was also so proximate to the city that it could easily be reached with a carriage ride.

One of the earliest formal recreational facilities constructed near Lake Merced—and perhaps the earliest—was the Ocean View Riding Park, a horseracing track that is visible in an illustrated bird's eye view of the city from 1876 (**Figure 94**). The track lay north of the lake, accessed by an east-west carriage path that also led to a number of saloons in the vicinity. This path, which developed into present-day Ocean Avenue, experienced steady weekend pleasure traffic by the end of the nineteenth century, as families from the city took trips west to enjoy wildflowers near Lake Merced and to visit the beaches on the Pacific Ocean.¹⁰



Figure 94. Detail of Lake Merced area from bird's eye illustration of San Francisco, 1876.
Source: George H. Goddard, *Birdseye View of San Francisco and Surrounding Country*, Library of Congress,
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/prhtml/panhome.html>

Yet because the SVWC owned the land surrounding Lake Merced and held its water rights, the lake itself and its shores were not accessible to most San Franciscans. After the SVWC began to sell off its land holdings in the 1890s, however, private entities were able to either purchase or lease parcels near the lake and then prepare them for development.

Within a few decades, golf became a defining recreational activity at Lake Merced, which would boast four golf courses in its immediate vicinity. The land that was available at Lake Merced was large

⁹ "San Francisco State University," Western Neighborhoods Project, accessed September 18, 2007, <http://www.outsidelands.org/>, accessed September 18, 2007.

¹⁰ Richard Brandt and Woody LaBounty, *San Francisco's Ocean View, Merced Heights, and Ingleside (OMI) Neighborhoods, 1862-1959*, prepared for the City of San Francisco Planning Department, 2010, 22-23.

enough to accommodate the necessary scale of a course. The first course near the lake belonged to the San Francisco Golf Club. This private club had made use of a military course within the Presidio until 1905, when its members established a new course at the southeastern corner of Lake Merced's South Lake.¹¹ A newspaper article published while the course was being planned stated that the SVWC was eager to lease land to the club, as golfers "may aid in the task of keeping trespassers out."¹²

Another organization, the Lakeside Golf Club, established a course along the southwestern shore of Lake Merced in 1916, but it struggled financially. In 1918, the Olympic Club—a private athletic club founded in 1860—took over the Lakeside course and constructed a second, adjacent 18-hole course.¹³ Four years later, the Lake Merced Golf Club, another private club, purchased 140 acres of land from the SVWC, located south of the San Francisco Golf Club. Here, they constructed a course of their own, which opened in June of 1923.¹⁴

While these courses were open to private members of their respective clubs, the City of San Francisco soon constructed a golf course alongside Lake Merced that would be available to the public (**Figure 95**). In 1925, the 163-acre, 18-hole Harding Park Golf Course opened on the wedge-shaped parcel located between South Lake, East Lake, and North Lake. Since that year, Harding Park has hosted the San Francisco City Championship, the longest-held, consecutively played golf competition in the world.¹⁵ The course continues to be operated by San Francisco Recreation and Parks.



Figure 95. Harding Park Golf Course with Lake Merced in background, 1926.
Source: San Francisco Public Library Digital Historical Photograph Collection

¹¹ "New Golf Club is Organized," *San Francisco Call*, June 7, 1905, 10.

¹² "City Golf Club Seeks New Links," *San Francisco Call*, April 23, 1904, 10.

¹³ "Since 1860," The Olympic Club, accessed May 16, 2014.

<http://www.olyclub.com/Default.aspx?p=DynamicModule&pageid=324007&ssid=217778&vnf=1>.

¹⁴ "History," Lake Merced Golf Club, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.lmgc.org/about-us/history/>.

¹⁵ "History," Harding Park Golf Course, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.tpc.com/tpc-harding-park-history>.

Yet golf was not the only form of recreation that found a home in the vicinity of Lake Merced. Herbert Fleishhacker, the founder of the San Francisco Zoological Gardens, selected a site at the northwestern corner of Lake Merced's North Lake as the location of the zoo. Fleishhacker had originally investigated developing it within Golden Gate Park, but the superintendent objected to the intrusion that such facilities would cause to the park's idyllic setting. The SVWC agreed to sell 30 acres in 1922. By 1925, the grounds of the zoo had expanded to include other recreational facilities, including the Fleishhacker Playfield, the Mother's Building (designed for mothers and their children), and, most notably, the Fleishhacker Pool. When it was constructed, this public swimming pool was the largest in the United States; at a length 1,000 feet, it could hold 6 million gallons of saltwater and as many as 10,000 swimmers.¹⁶ While the zoo still operates on its grounds near Lake Merced, the associated sites have been demolished. The Fleishhacker Pool closed in 1971 and was ultimately filled with gravel, now forming the foundation of the zoo's main parking lot.¹⁷

Lake Merced also has an extensive boating history, particularly for fishing and rowing. The lake was first opened for fishing in 1939; prior to this, San Francisco had lacked any spot where the public could cast for freshwater fish. Several years in advance of the opening, the lake was stocked with bass, and yearly surveys were conducted to assess the species' population. The public was allowed to fish starting in early July of 1939, and immediately 200 people were renting boats daily in order to get onto the water.¹⁸ The lake was soon called "San Francisco's backyard fishing pond."¹⁹ A Modernist boathouse was constructed during the 1950s at the north end of South Lake. High school teams and local rowing organizations, including the Pacific Rowing Club, the San Francisco Rowing Club, and the California Dragon Boat Association, have used the lake in recent decades.

San Francisco Recreation and Parks currently manages Lake Merced as a public natural area. An approximately 4.5-mile paved perimeter trail leads around the lake, connecting a series of outlooks and docks. A dog play area is located along the north edge of East Lake.

RECREATIONAL SPORTING CLUBS

So-called "rod and gun clubs"—or stand-alone anglers' and gun clubs—grew out of fishing and hunting cultures that gained popularity in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior to the Civil War, shooting and casting had largely been understood as frivolous hobbies, or else had been undertaken for the subsistence purposes. Following the war, however, these pursuits gained broader appeal as socially acceptable forms of leisure. In accordance with this change of view, Americans who took part in fishing and hunting became known as "sportsmen," which was reflected in the title of the national periodical *The American Sportsman*, first published in 1871. This and related magazines that followed—*Forest and Stream*, *Field and Stream*, and *American Angler*—served as important venues through which the ideologies of the sporting field reached the public.²⁰

¹⁶ "Our History," San Francisco Zoological Park, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.sfzoo.org/about/zoo-history.htm>.

¹⁷ Alex Bevk, "Fleishhacker Pool, Now a Parking Lot," *Curbed San Francisco*, April 9, 2012, http://sf.curbed.com/archives/2012/04/09/fleishhacker_pool_now_a_parking_lot.php.

¹⁸ Ed Neal, "Lake Merced Bass Angling Proves Hit," July 10, 1939, n.p. (available in Pacific Rod and Gun Club scrapbooks).

¹⁹ Ed Neal, "'Backyard' Fishing at Lake Merced," May 30, 1940, n.p. (available in Pacific Rod and Gun Club scrapbooks).

²⁰ John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2001), 45-49.

As the magazines directly linked the value of the shooting and casting sports to the value of the natural environment, they were early and significant components of conservation discourse in the United States. Editorials espoused the transcendent benefits of leaving cities and immersing oneself in natural areas. Within the context of expanding cities and industry in the United States, sportsmen were urged to take responsibility for the well-being of game populations. George Hallock, the original editor of *Forest and Stream*, gave the magazine the protracted subtitle, “A Weekly Journal Devoted to Field and Aquatic Sports, Practical Natural History, Fish Culture, the Protection of Game, Preservation of Forests, and the Inculcation in Men and Women of a Healthy Interest in Outdoor Recreation and Study.”²¹

According to historian John F. Reiger, Hallock and his successor at the magazine, George Bird Grinnell, both “seemed to feel that an older, more refined way of life was passing out of existence under the assault of rapid industrialization and its accompanying Philistinism, and that ‘correct’ hunting and fishing were two of the ways of differentiating the gentleman.”²² This elitist view of sportsmanship, informed by British precedent, was not the only conservation-minded perspective among American sportsmen. There was a widespread awareness apart from the social elite that wildlife habitat were diminishing in many hunting and fishing areas that had become accessible to population centers. As early as the 1870s, sportsmen began a “club movement” that coalesced around the values disseminated by sporting periodicals. The movement was made up of hundreds of local, regional, and national organizations committed to furthering responsible conservation policy and thought. George Hallock distinguished between “Sportsmen’s Clubs” (those involving field shooters), gun clubs (those involving trap shooters), and anglers’ clubs. Yet organizations in all three categories shared broad aims to discuss the state of wildlife and habitats, to share sporting experiences, and to promote the futures of their respective disciplines.²³

By the time the conservation and sporting club movement gained steam in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, trap shooting had become a popular pursuit in the United States. While shooting competitions using fixed targets were first held at the end of the eighteenth century, trap had been practiced in the United States since around 1825, and the earliest known competition had taken place in 1831. The discipline developed specifically to simulate live bird hunting: its most basic characteristic is a target released into the air away from the shooter. Live pigeons initially served as targets, but marksmen later launched glass balls containing feathers. In the late nineteenth century, clay discs were developed to replace the earlier forms of targets; during matches, the clay discs were thrown from launching machines known as traps. The shooter stands uprange from the trap machine and waits for the target to be thrown. The launcher oscillates within an 35-degree arc, which prevents the shooter from anticipating the path of the target.²⁴

Skeet shooting developed subsequent to the trap discipline. Skeet also imitates hunting in the field, and it was formulated in response to the challenges faced by upland bird hunters in the twentieth century. Reflecting the concerns of the earliest sporting clubs, hunting areas were less and less accessible to urban residents. Additionally, as a result of national conservation efforts, bag limits and shorter hunting seasons were imposed to lower the cumulative impact of hunting on game populations. Marksmen found trap shooting inadequate, as it did not test their skills for a full range of shooting angles. Charles Davis of Andover, Massachusetts devised the first iteration of skeet shooting in 1920 by laying out 12 stations around a 50-yard circle, featuring one trap launcher. Skeet fields were soon revised into semi-circles, with two trap houses—the high house and low house—

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 52.

²³ Ibid., 57-59.

²⁴ “The History of Shooting Sports,” *1995 USA Shooting Media Guide*, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/sports/olympics/longterm/shooting/shthist.htm>.

located at opposite ends. According to the rules of this field, shooters move through the stations and shoot at pigeons launched from either (and occasionally both) of the houses. Skeet proved exceptionally popular across the country during the 1920s, and the first National Skeet Championships were held in 1926.²⁵

The conservation and sporting club movements accommodated the growing popularity of trap and skeet across the United States, and enthusiasts organized themselves into local organizations. These shooting sports required specific facilities—namely fields appropriate to their respective rules of play. Angling clubs also had their own building needs, particularly boathouses. Club members practiced their shared interests and gathered with like-minded individuals in informal settings; the groups served as de-facto fraternal organizations, and therefore it was common for such clubs to construct additional support buildings, including club houses, bunkhouses, and cooking and eating areas.

Sporting clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area were abundant. Perhaps the earliest of these was the California Wing Club, which was established during the 1870s.²⁶ The first stand-alone fishing club was the San Francisco Fly Casting Club, founded in 1894 as the second casting club established in the United States. This organization emphasized ocean fishing; in 1933, it developed into the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club, which moved into the Works Progress Administration-built Anglers Lodge and casting pools in Golden Gate Park in 1939.²⁷ The San Francisco Rod and Gun Club was founded by 1896.²⁸

By the first decades of the twentieth century, many gun clubs were active surrounding the San Francisco Bay. While no exhaustive list has been compiled of all such clubs, a review of historic newspapers between 1865 and 1922 reveals that the following shooting clubs were operating:

- Contra Costa Gun Club (Pinole)
- Exposition City Gun Club (Presidio/San Francisco)
- Golden Gate Gun Club (Alameda)
- Mountain View Gun Club (Mountain View)
- Olympic Gun Club
- Point Richmond Blue Rock Club (Point Richmond)
- San Francisco Surf Club
- San Mateo Gun Club (San Mateo)
- Schellville Rod and Gun Club (Schellville)

In addition to this active group of sporting clubs, the San Francisco newspapers reported on numerous other clubs that were based in cities and towns along the coast and in the Central Valley. The major activities put on by all these organizations were weekly shoots and frequent inter-club competitions.^{29 30 31 32 33}

²⁵ Barry Greenberg, "History of Skeet and NSSA," National Skeet Shooting Association, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.nssa-nsc.org/index.php/nssa-skeet-shooting/about-nssa/skeet-history/>.

²⁶ "Trap Shooters Will Be Busy at the Stege Grounds Today," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 23, 1911, 58.

²⁷ "History of the Club," Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.ggacc.org/p/p.aspx?mld=3>.

²⁸ "An Anglers' Meeting," *San Francisco Call*, April 9, 1896, 9.

²⁹ "Good Sport for Hunters," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 9, 1899, 8.

³⁰ "Trap Shooting in Many Places," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 14, 1907, A3.

³¹ "Will Hold Shoot at Ingleside Traps," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 23, 1909, 51.

³² "Trapshooters to Be Busy Sunday," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 31, 1922, 14.

³³ "S.F. Surf Club is a Member of National Body," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 28, 1922, H3.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PACIFIC ROD AND GUN CLUB

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club was founded in 1928 by a group of enthusiastic San Francisco sportsmen who wished to create opportunities for recreational fishing and shooting in and around the city, as well as to advocate for natural resource conservation.³⁴ From the outset, the organization's activities focused on these two sports—hence “rod and gun”—which previously had been represented separately in other sporting clubs in the city, such as the Olympic Gun Club and the San Francisco Surf Club.

This group first met informally, but members soon laid plans to grow—beginning with the question of facilities. According to an organizational history written by the club's founding president, Joe Springer, the members' first order of business was securing property and establishing grounds to support the group's mission. They signed a lease for land at Cuttings Wharf, located on the Napa River north of San Francisco. Club members themselves financed and built the first clubhouse. To accommodate members who overnights there, the clubhouse contained a bunk room, dining room, kitchen, showers, and toilets. As fishing was one of the club's early focuses, it was important that the grounds gave members direct access to the water. Shooting was also accommodated on the new grounds, as a trapshooting field was built adjacent to the clubhouse. Both officially opened on February 22, 1929.³⁵

The PRGC was incorporated with the State of California in June of that year, with fifty members on its roster. Despite having its clubhouse and grounds outside of San Francisco, the club continued to hold meetings in the city—first at a restaurant, Topsy's Chicken Roost at the Beach, and later in the basement of a member's home in the Mission District.³⁶

Members entered regional and national casting contests during this early period, and the profile of the club began to rise. In the PRGC's first summer, club member August “Primo” Libenais broke a world record at a casting match against Atlantic Coast sportsmen. The *New York Times* reported this feat, stating that “[t]he East could make only an average of 398 feet 9 inches, a mark which is ordinarily good enough to win any match, but not large enough to match the extraordinary casting of the Pacific Coast men.”³⁷

The PRGC had opportunities early on to act on its conservation mission. Members met with other regional sportsmen to wage a campaign against a proposed project to dredge the Napa River, which had the potential to harm striped bass habitats.³⁸

While each passing year attracted new members to the organization, a major boon came in 1930: the Pacific Rod and Gun Club constructed its first skeet shooting facilities, reflecting skeet's rising popularity across the country. This development came twofold: the club installed its first skeet field on its Napa River grounds, and it also merged with the Bay Sportsmen Club, in the process absorbing that club's existing skeet facilities at Fort Funston (located southwest of PRGC's current Lake Merced location).

³⁴ Joe Springer, “Early History,” Pacific Rod and Gun Club, accessed April 18, 2014, <http://prgc.net/early-history-by-joe-springer/>.

³⁵ Springer, “Early History.”

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Libenais Makes Record Cast of 527 Feet as Coast Team Wins Telegraphic Match,” *New York Times*, August 26, 1929, 18.

³⁸ Springer, “Early History.”

As soon as the club introduced skeet shooting, its membership swelled—so much so that leaders paid off the club’s debts the following year, in 1931. The increased popularity, however, strained the club’s facilities, and a larger space became necessary. Club members Don Westwater, Joe Springer, and Walter Campbell chose a site on the southwestern shore of Lake Merced in San Francisco. This site, the current home to the PRGC, was leased from the city. While the club faced opposition from area golfers and horseback riders, the mayor of San Francisco, Angelo Rossi, supported the plans and pushed its development forward.³⁹

As the Lake Merced site was being planned, the club also embarked on an important conservation campaign. Members assisted another regional group, the Associated Sportsmen, in developing and lobbying for a bill that banned the commercial catching and selling of striped bass. Partly due to the efforts of PRGC members, the Fisher-Cronin Bill was passed in 1935, following a long campaign.⁴⁰

During early 1934, the Lake Merced site was graded and groomed in preparation for the construction of the club’s facilities. Two skeet fields were built, along with a winding entrance roadway (**Figure 96**). On June 22, the club received its first permit from the city to operate a shooting range (**Figure 97**). That month, the new facilities were dedicated, with Mayor Rossi firing the opening shot during the ceremony. Later that month, the club hosted a major tournament on these grounds, the Northern California Skeet Championship. It was the first in a long series of high-profile regional and state tournaments that were held at the site over the next decades.⁴¹



Figure 96. Aerial image, c. 1934, showing the southwestern shore of Lake Merced. The semicircular arcs of the two skeet fields are visible. The field at right appears to be roughly where Field 8 is now; the field at upper left appears to be in roughly the location of Field 7. North is up.

Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

<p>Form No. F. 13</p> <p>License No. _____</p> <p>APPLICATION FOR PERMIT AS</p> <p><i>Shooting Range</i></p> <p>TO THE HONORABLE, THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS:</p> <p>In conformity with the Charter, and the ordinances of the City and County of San Francisco, the undersigned hereby presents an application.</p> <p><i>Shooting Range</i></p> <p>For the _____ PERIOD _____ ending</p> <p>SEP 30 1934</p> <p>NAME OF APPLICANT <i>Walter S. Campbell, V.P.</i></p> <p>LOCATION <i>Pac. Rod & Gun Club</i></p> <p><i>Dayline Blvd. at</i></p> <p><i>Lake Merced St.</i></p> <p>GRANTED San Francisco, 1934-22-34</p> <p>By Board of Police Commissioners</p>	<p>Form No. F. 13</p> <p>Permit No. _____</p> <p>APPLICATION FOR PERMIT AS</p> <p><i>Shooting Range</i></p> <p>NAME OF APPLICANT <i>Walter S. Campbell</i></p> <p>LOCATION <i>Pacific Rod & Gun Club</i></p> <p>_____ St.</p> <p>For the _____ PERIOD _____ ending</p> <p>SEP 30 1934</p> <p>GRANTED JUL 30 1934 City Board of Police Commissioners</p> <p><i>J.R.O. 7-2-34</i></p>
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Figure 97. Initial lease from the City of San Francisco to the PRGC, authorizing the Lake Merced site to be used as a shooting range, 1934.
Source: San Francisco Public Library Ephemera Files

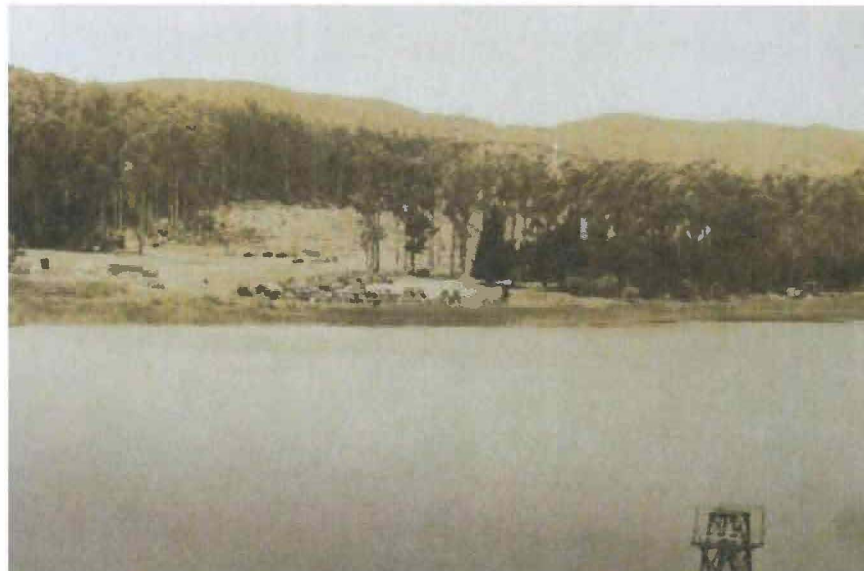


Figure 98. Pacific Rod and Gun Club, viewed northwest from Lake Merced, c. 1934. The grounds appear to contain no supporting buildings, although it had two skeet fields: one at center, and the other at right.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

The profile of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club continued to rise. In 1936, PRGC was chosen to host the California State Championship. The site still functioned without a clubhouse until 1937, when members loaned construction funds to the club. After this building was completed, all of the club's social and business activities were moved to the Lake Merced grounds. Meetings were no longer held in members' basements, and the club vacated its clubhouse on the Napa River.⁴² Photographs of the club grounds from this time illustrate that a two-story field house had been constructed alongside the main skeet field, and that the arc of the field featured a wood boardwalk (Figure 99). Soon, a frame lunch room building was constructed at the rear of the field (Figure 100).



Figure 99. The PRGC grounds in the earliest years of the Lake Merced site; a field house with tower is located at the rear of the field.

Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

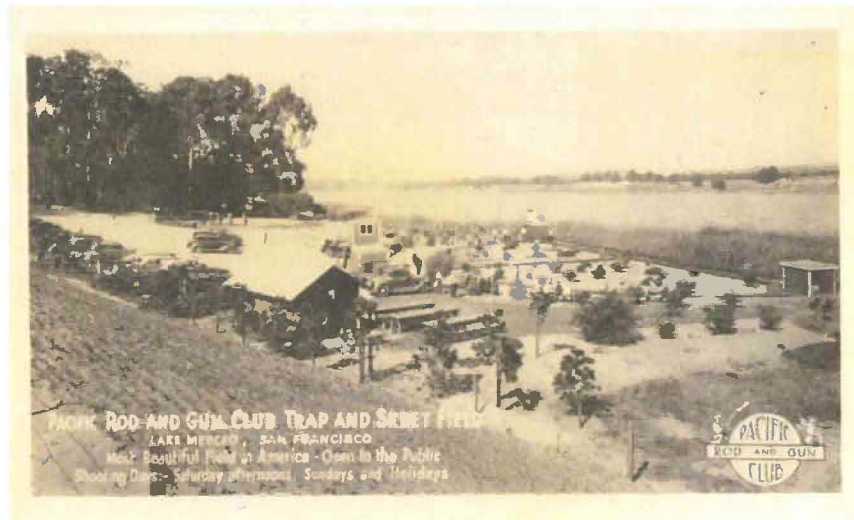


Figure 100. The main skeet field at the PRGC grounds, c. mid-1930s.

A lunch room is located alongside the tree edge line.

Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

⁴² Ibid.

That winter, Lake Merced flooded its banks and filled the PRGC grounds (**Figures 101 and 102**). As the water receded, the club was left to reconstruct its shooting fields. Members regraded the land and relocated some buildings west, onto higher ground. The facilities opened again on April 10, 1938; according to Joe Springer, they were “bigger and better than ever.”⁴³ The expansion of the club grounds was even noted in the “Wood, Field and Stream” column of the *New York Times*, which stated that “the [PRGC] club facilities at San Francisco are said to be the best in the country, and four new ranges have been added to the skeet layout there.”⁴⁴



Figure 101. High house, low house, and protection fence on a skeet field during the flood, 1937.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club



Figure 102. Lunch room after Lake Merced flooded, 1937.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

An aerial photograph of the site, dated August 1938, shows how the facilities had developed up to this point (**Figure 103**). The axis of the four skeet fields, placed side by side, was the most evident feature on the grounds. (These fields correspond to the present-day Fields 4-7.) It appears that one trap field was located at the southwestern end of the site. A stand of mature trees surrounded the clubhouse, obscuring any other buildings located in this cluster. The aerial photograph shows another significant feature: John Muir Drive leading alongside the southern boundary of the PRGC grounds. The construction of this roadway prompted the club to make landscape improvements to allow access and to delineate its property from the adjacent thoroughfare. A line of young trees were

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Raymond R. Camp, “Wood, Field and Stream,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1939, 15.

planted as a barrier between the club grounds and the adjacent road, and a wood fence was constructed alongside the southwest edge of the property (**Figure 104**). The new automobile entrance from John Muir Drive was flanked by an impressive wood gateway, from which hung a rustic sign with the club's name formed from sticks (**Figure 105**).



Figure 103. Detail of 1938 aerial photograph, showing four primary skeet fields at the PRGC site. North is up.
Source: David Rumsey Map Collection



Figure 104. PRGC grounds viewed facing southeast, c. late 1930s. Wood fence is visible alongside the road
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club



Figure 105. Wood gate above entrance drive into PRGC grounds, c. late 1930s.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club had formed a rifle club in 1934, but the organization went without proper facilities for rifles and pistols until a rifle range—presumably the Indoor Rifle Range currently on the site—was constructed on the Lake Merced site in 1939.⁴⁵ It opened on March 1, containing seven alleys with 50', 60', and 75' targets.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Springer, "Early History."

⁴⁶ Paul A. Saasta, "Pacific Rod and Gun Club Open New Rifle Range," 1939, n.p. (available in Pacific Rod and Gun Club scrapbooks).

The year 1939 marked an even more significant milestone for the organization: in August, the PRGC hosted the National Skeet Championships, which Joe Springer called the “biggest shooting event ever held to date in the west.”⁴⁷ Indeed, the *New York Times* reported beforehand that “[a]ccording to the advance entries already received, the national skeet championships [...] will have the greatest turnout in the history of skeet.” Additionally, it was predicted that film actors Fred MacMurray and Gary Cooper would attend in order to “uphold the honor of the Hollywood shooters, and it is said that Mrs. Gary Cooper is going to offer good competition in the women’s events.”⁴⁸

Before the organization could bid for the tournament, it had to agree to expand its facilities in order to accommodate a high volume of participants and spectators. Eight fields were required, as well as a parking lot. According to founding president Joe Springer, “It took almost three years to lay the ground work, finally sending Hugh Richardson to Tulsa to complete arrangements and gain a favorable vote from the National Association.”⁴⁹ Richardson’s trip was supported by the San Francisco Convention and Tourist Bureau. After the PRGC was officially selected as host, the club had to make good on their promises. The existing fields and parking area were uneven and needed to be regarded. This responsibility fell to the city, who owned the land. The city, in turn, arranged for this task to be accomplished with assistance from the Works Progress Administration. Other facilities constructed prior to the National Skeet Championship included dressing rooms, platforms and tents for ammunition vendors, and, according to Springer, “real rest rooms with a Chinese maid in native costume, to add a little color[.]”⁵⁰

A photograph from this event shows several of the skeet fields on the grounds (**Figure 106**), at this time with wood boardwalks forming the semicircular arcs and shooting stations. Each field had an associated scoring shed, high house, and protection fence. A lunch house was located directly behind the field house, and the parking lot was in its current location alongside the shooting fields.



Figure 106. Grounds at the time of the 1939 National Skeet Championships.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

⁴⁷ Springer, “Early History.”

⁴⁸ Camp, “Wood, Field and Stream.”

⁴⁹ Springer, “Early History.”

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Lake Merced was opened to public fishing in 1939, as well. Joe Springer played an important role in the effort to stock the lake, having urged the California Division of Fish and Game to transfer thousands of black bass from the Sacramento River to Lake Merced. Trout were later added.⁵¹

The *Works Progress Administration Guide* to San Francisco, published in 1940, included a brief description of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds at that time. According to this source, the club was “housed in three wooden buildings made of six school houses purchased from the city.”⁵² No other information has been located to support this account, but the claim is plausible. Buildings located on the property by this time included the Club House and the Indoor Range. The Club House (**Figures 107 and 108**) is formed by two identically massed volumes laid in an L-plan; the indoor range is formed by three similar volumes placed end to end. The sixth building mentioned in the *WPA Guide* could refer to the groundkeeper’s cottage, which remains undated, or possibly the Lunch Room or another building altogether. A similarly scaled building that appears in one historic photograph was located north of the clubhouse and evidently used for social events, but no longer exists (**Figure 109**). The account that these buildings were patched together using existing school buildings is a potential explanation for their consistent scales and exterior materials, as well as curious design features such as the unmatched roof ridges of the Indoor Range.



Figure 107. Club House, c. 1930s.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club



Figure 108. Undated photograph of social event, with the ell of the Club House visible in the background.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club



Figure 109. Undated photograph of PRGC social event, c. 1940s-1950s.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

⁵¹ Ed Neal, “Angers’ Paradise in 2 Years,” n.p., (available in Pacific Rod and Gun Club scrapbooks).

⁵² Federal Writers Project, *San Francisco in the 1930s*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, 326.

World War II impinged on the PRGC's operations, as ammunition shortages curtailed shooting at the site. Club members were allowed only four boxes of ammunition per day. With proper planning, the club was occasionally able to pull off events that had been standard before the war. In 1943, the annual skeet and trap benefit shoot was still held. According to an article printed in the *New York Times*, "Dr. Alkalay organized a 'moochers' committee' at the club which solicited shells from members and friends so that entrants would have sufficient ammunition. A total of fifty cases was gathered and the shoot consequently will be staged on schedule."⁵³ By 1944, the shortage had worsened even more, and shooting was allowed only every other Sunday. In the place of shooting, the Rough Grouch Horseshoe Club installed its courses on the club grounds.

Although the wartime situation seriously limited the club's normal operations, members took on homefront duties. Joe Springer and Don Westwater were responsible for organizing and leading training sessions for Naval recruits en route to gunnery school. Springer estimated that thousands of men learned marksmanship at the club. Classes were available to other groups, such as the American Women's Voluntary Services (**Figure 110**). The PRGC was also responsible for acquiring skeet traps for the Fourth Air Force.⁵⁴



Figure 110. Members of the American Women's Voluntary Services at a rifle class at the PRGC, 1942
Source: San Francisco Public Library Digital Historical Photograph Collection

Following the war, the PRGC resumed standard operations. In 1948, the club raised its membership capacity to 225; even so, the waiting list was extensive. A newspaper profile of the club that year offered this description of its grounds: "You will see the big decoratively arched entrance to the club, with its graveled drive winding down among pleasant, old ranch house appearing buildings to the shooting areas themselves."⁵⁵ The shell house (now known as the Field House) was constructed this year, using wood repurposed from vendor platforms that had been used during the 1939 National Skeet Championship (**Figure 111**).⁵⁶

⁵³ Lincoln A. Werden, "Wood, Field & Stream," *New York Times*, August 18, 1943, 27.

⁵⁴ Springer, "Early History."

⁵⁵ "Sportsman's Club of the Week," 1948, n.p. (available in Pacific Rod and Gun Club scrapbooks).

⁵⁶ Springer, "Early History."



Figure 111. Original shell house prior to its northwestern addition, c. 1948.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

The following year marked the 15th anniversary of the PRGC's grounds on Lake Merced. The club constructed a new lunch room, as well as a northwestern addition on the shell house that had been built the previous year (**Figure 112**). The “trap layout”—believed to be in the location of the three trap fields immediately to the west of the existing skeet shooting fields—were also added to the PRGC grounds this year.⁵⁷ A historical wayside sign was in place by this time (**Figure 113**).

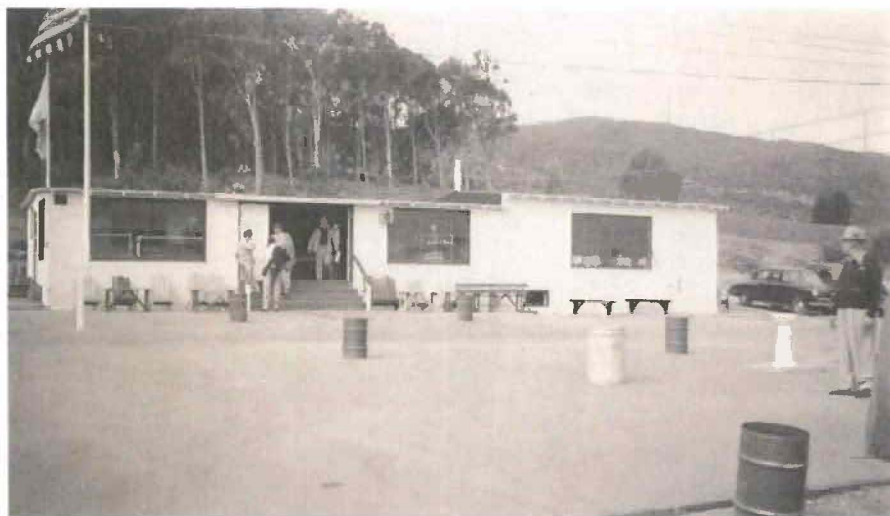


Figure 112. Primary façade of shell house in 1950, soon after its northwestern addition (higher gable) was constructed.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

⁵⁷ Ibid.



Figure 113. Historical wayside sign with original holder, to the rear of the Field house, c. 1950.
Source: Pacific Rod and Gun Club

By midcentury, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club was one of the pre-eminent sporting clubs in the region. The organization is believed to have been the only public shooting club within San Francisco at this time, and it was closely connected to other civic groups in San Francisco. Founding president Joe Springer wrote,

Ever since we have occupied these grounds we have made many improvements and permitted many organizations the free use of our facilities; for barbeques, picnics, meetings and many other functions, thereby creating many friends and much goodwill. Among them were Boy and Cub Scout organizations, sportsmen clubs, Legion posts, Shrine organizations, city departments, etc., all in the interest of public welfare.⁵⁸

Additionally, long-time PRGC member Ray Brooks has recalled shooting with a number of celebrity marksmen and markswomen who visited the club grounds during skeet's mid-twentieth-century heyday—among them Ernest Hemingway, Barbara Stanwyck, Clark Gable, and Rex Harrison.⁵⁹

Fewer details are available on the activities of the PRGC and development of its grounds during the second half of the twentieth century. No building permits have been located to date the construction of many features within the site, including the duck tower, garage, and other ancillary buildings located on the grounds. An aerial photograph dated 1965, however, illustrates the changes that had taken place on the PRGC grounds since the end of World War II. By this time, the axis of shooting fields alongside Lake Merced contained all fields that currently exist at the site. The trap shooting fields (currently Fields 1, 2, and 3) were in place at the west end of the grounds, and the Trap House had been constructed within the adjacent parking lot. The grounds' Restroom Building had also been built by this time across the parking lot from the westernmost skeet field. In addition, two further skeet fields (Fields 8 and 9) were in place at the east end of the property, separated by a protection fence and sharing a combined high and low house. Fields 4 and 5 had been altered by this date with

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ray Brooks, "The Glory Years of Skeet at Pacific Rod and Gun Club," accessed May 13, 2014, <http://prgc.net/our-famous-shooters/>.

concrete aprons that connected the base cord with the rear arc. A shadow located immediately behind Field 6 suggests that the present duck tower was in place by this year; the source of this shadow, however, cannot be confirmed from the photograph. While all skeet fields were equipped with high and low houses and were separated by protection fences, other skeet field support buildings that currently exist at the site do not appear in this photograph.⁶⁰

Based on visual inspection in the field, other buildings and small-scale features within the grounds appear to have been installed after the 1960s. These include exterior gun racks, wood benches alongside Fields 4-7, storage sheds and shipping containers, and the chain link fence that leads past the southwest boundary of the shooting fields. The precise dates of the current high houses, low houses, and trap houses have not been determined. Aerial photographs available in Google Earth indicate that the area of the parking lot east of the Field House was paved with asphalt in 2002 (Figure 114).



Figure 114. 2002 aerial photograph of the PRGC grounds, showing
Source: Google Earth

Following the 1960s, the broad operations of the PRGC have remained consistent with its mission during its early years. In addition to allowing members and the public to fire on its shooting fields, the organization runs a hunting education course. While the group's early emphasis on fishing has long been eclipsed by shooting, the PRGC is one of several organizations that collaborate in running a youth fishing program at Lake Merced.

Yet the organization's operations have had to adapt to new challenges during the last three decades. Environmental concerns guided policy changes and cleanup efforts near the PRGC grounds beginning in the 1980s, when over 100 tons of lead were removed from Lake Merced. In the mid-1990s, the SFPUC banned the use of lead shot at the PRGC, due to concerns about the

⁶⁰ Cartwright Aerial Surveys, Inc., *Bay Area Transportation Study Commission [Aerial Survey of the San Francisco Bay Area, California]* (Sacramento: Cartwright Aerial Surveys, Inc., 1965).

environmental effects of the substance on plants and wildlife. The use of biodegradable clay pigeons was also introduced.⁶¹ For over two decades following 1975, the club's rent to the city remained steady at \$300 per month. In 1998, however, this amount was increased approximately tenfold.⁶² After facing eviction from its 14-acre parcel in 2012, the PRGC was able to sign a two-year lease with the city.⁶³

CHRONOLOGY OF CONSTRUCTION

- 1928** Pacific Rod and Gun Club was founded in San Francisco.
- 1934** PRGC began leasing Lake Merced site; first two skeet fields and roadway were constructed and dedicated.
- 1937** Club House was constructed; original field house and lunch house were built around this time; earlier Napa River grounds were abandoned.
- 1938** Lake Merced flooded the PRGC facilities; buildings were moved to higher ground, and four new skeet fields were constructed; wood fence and entrance gate were in place by this time.
- 1939** Rifle Range was constructed; National Skeet Championships were hosted by PRGC; four additional skeet fields were constructed; parking lot was graded.
- 1948** The Field House, originally known as the shell house, was constructed from wood salvaged from platforms used during the 1939 National Skeet Championships.
- 1949** The northwest addition to the Field House, trap layout, and lunch room were constructed.
- 1965** Fields 1, 2, and 3 had been paved by this date; the Trap House, Restroom Building, Fields 8 and 9, and possibly the duck tower had been constructed; concrete aprons had been laid on Fields 4 and 5.

Numerous other changes have occurred within the PRGC grounds, and they remain undated because building permits for the site have not been located. The Groundkeeper's Cottage is consistent in its massing and materials with the Club House and Rifle Range, and therefore it appears to date to the 1930s. Historic photographs indicate that the wood fence, elaborate wood gate, and a fishing dock east of the Club House were in place by the late 1930s or 1940s; these elements were removed at undetermined dates. Other additions to the grounds appear to date after 1950. These include the removal of wood boardwalks from the shooting fields and addition of concrete surfaces; installation of the current high houses, low houses, and scoring buildings; and the construction of the garage. Smaller-scale changes to existing buildings include the addition of a porch and new windows on the Field House; north addition on the Indoor Range; new porches and additions on the Club House; small projections on the Groundkeeper's Cottage; and replacement windows on some buildings.

⁶¹ "Lead in Soil Stalls Filling of Lake Merced," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 4, 2005, B1.

⁶² "Gun Club in Crosshairs," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 20, 2008, B1.

⁶³ "Gun Club Gets Lease Deal, Can Stay Open for 2 More Years," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 7, 2012, C1.

VI. EVALUATION

CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The California Register of Historical Resources follows nearly identical guidelines to those used by the National Register, but identifies the Criteria for Evaluation numerically.⁶⁴

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria.

- *Criterion 1 (Events):* Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- *Criterion 2 (Persons):* Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- *Criterion 3 (Architecture):* Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- *Criterion 4 (Information Potential):* Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

The following section examines the eligibility of the PRGC grounds for individual listing as a designed historic landscape in the California Register.

Criterion 1 (Events)

The PRGC grounds appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register as a designed historic landscape under Criterion 1 (Events). The component buildings, shooting fields, and associated landscape features together form the only existing example of a historic gun club facility within San Francisco, and the property expresses a significant recreational culture that was prevalent regionally and nationally during the early twentieth century. The property is significant at the local level. The proposed period of significance for the PRGC grounds is 1934-1964. The beginning of this period corresponds to the year the club began operating its facilities on its current 14-acre site alongside Lake Merced. The end of the proposed period of significance is fifty years prior to the date of this evaluation, marking the generally accepted threshold for California Register eligibility in the absence of exceptional historic significance. This period of significance suggests that the PRGC has maintained its significant associations with recreation and the development of San Francisco's urban environment well past its initial years at its Lake Merced site. While the property does not meet the requirements for exceptional significance, the PRGC's continued sporting mission and use of its grounds have maintained the historic role of the organization within San Francisco.

⁶⁴ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistant Series No. 7, How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historic Resources* (Sacramento, CA: California Office of State Publishing, September 4, 2011) 11.

The PRGC has evolved into a significant social and recreational organization in the history of the city. While not the only shooting club or rod and gun club in San Francisco when it was founded in 1928, the PRGC grew rapidly and became one of the region's premier shooting facilities, as well as a recognizable gathering place for fishing and shooting enthusiasts within the city. The organization served many sportsmen and their families, offering opportunities to fraternize, hold community events, and advocate for natural conservation measures. The early conservation efforts of the club, related to its fishing mission, resulted in state law limiting the commercial fishing of striped bass. Club members were also closely involved in the campaign to stock Lake Merced for public fishing.

Indeed, the subject property is broadly associated with the development of Lake Merced from an underused urban hinterland to a significant natural and recreational resource within San Francisco. During the early twentieth century, as the SVWC began to sell and outlease its land bordering Lake Merced, southwestern San Francisco gained four golf courses within the span of two decades. The PRGC contributed to the recreational development of the lake, offering public shooting facilities that, like the golf courses, took advantage of the idyllic setting to convey its separation from denser areas of the surrounding city. Since it was founded, the PRGC has embodied the historic mission of sporting clubs in urban settings, as it has created opportunities for fishing and shooting in an environment where these activities would otherwise not be possible.

Criterion 2 (Persons)

The PRGC grounds do not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons). While members of the club had high profiles within the regional sporting community and were successful in local and national tournaments for casting and shooting, they had limited influence as individuals at the local, state, and national levels. Primo Livenais, a champion caster, and Jules Cuenin, "Rod and Gun" columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*, were among the most well-known members of the PRGC during its first decades; their individual achievements, however, are less important to the history of the PRGC than the full community of sportsmen and -women who used the grounds as a shared recreational resource. Therefore, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds do not rise to the level of significance necessary to qualify for listing in the California Register under this criterion.

Criterion 3 (Architecture)

The PRGC grounds, as a whole, do not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (Architecture). The buildings that stand on the property are consistent in scale and materials, and some share character-defining design features such as exposed rafter tails and wood-sash windows with ogee lugs. Still, it is not believed that any were designed by trained architects or landscape architects. The site does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction or represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

The analysis of the PRGC grounds for eligibility under Criterion 4 (Information Potential) is beyond the scope of this report, as this criterion is typically associated with archeological resources.

INTEGRITY

In order to qualify for listing in the California Register, a property must possess significance under one of the aforementioned criteria and have historic integrity. Historic integrity measures the property's ability to convey its historic significance. Integrity is not the same as condition. A resource can be in disrepair and still represent its period of significance. Alternatively, a resource can be in very good condition, but have been so heavily altered that it does not read as a historic building or landscape.

The process of determining integrity is similar for both the National Register and the California Register. The same seven variables or aspects that define integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—are used to evaluate a resource’s eligibility for listing in the California Register and the National Register. According to the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, these seven characteristics are defined as follows:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.

Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building/s.

Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.

Feeling is the property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds retain integrity of location, as the site has not been moved from its original location along the southwestern side of Lake Merced. Moreover, its component landscape features retain the spatial relationships to one another that they had during the period of significance.

The integrity of design is moderate. The PRGC grounds were developed incrementally during the 1930s and afterwards, from two skeet fields and supporting buildings to a complex of nine fields and numerous buildings that supported the social and recreational functions of the organization. Some features—such as the original field house, lunch house, and wood entrance gate—were constructed and removed within the period of significance. Other changes include porches and additions constructed on the buildings, particularly on the Field House (1949 addition and undated porch) and Club House (undated porch and front addition). Other smaller-scale changes have occurred within the landscape, as support buildings have been built and replaced, and as doors and windows have been altered or removed. Some historic vegetation patterns have also changed. However, the large-scale design of the site has remained consistent since the 1930s. The four primary skeet fields that existed at the site in 1938 are still used for the same purpose and retain their historic spatial relationships to the major buildings, circulation routes, and natural features (most importantly, Lake Merced) within the site.

The integrity of setting is moderate. The most significant component of the PRGC facilities’ setting is the larger landscape of Lake Merced and its surrounding areas. Much of South Lake is visible from the PRGC’s shooting fields and buildings, and the shores of the lake remain lined with trees and mostly free from obvious human development. Viewsheds from the site toward the lake remain

unobstructed. Residential neighborhoods southeast of the lake, including the towers of Parkmerced, are visible from the PRGC grounds, but these neighborhoods developed during the subject property's period of significance. The Lakewood Apartments, located across John Muir Drive from the subject property, appear imposing from the parking lot and Fields 1-7. According to the City of San Francisco's online property information map, these buildings were constructed in 1973. They are distracting but do not overwhelm the PRGC site's relationship with Lake Merced. Further research is required to learn if these buildings date to the identified period of significance.

The integrity of materials is moderate. Many historic materials remain in place throughout the landscape, particularly on prominent buildings such as the Field House, Indoor Range, and Groundkeeper's Cottage. Wood shiplap siding, wood-sash windows, and wood rafters are integral to the site's expression of its age and minimal design. Some buildings, however, have been altered without using the historic palette of materials. Most apparently, the Club House features large replacement vinyl-sash windows, while other replacement doors and windows are found on buildings throughout the property. These changes in materials are not so great as to detrimentally affect the property's integrity. Likewise, support buildings on the shooting fields feature materials such as T1-11 that are inconsistent with the site's historic materials. Additionally, the pathways of the shooting fields are currently paved concrete, while they were covered with wood boardwalks during the 1930s. The date of this change has not been determined. Regardless, the materials of the fields are less crucial to the integrity of the site than the continued function of the fields for their appropriate shooting disciplines.

The integrity of workmanship is moderate. The property's historic fabric shows workmanship appropriate to the first half of the twentieth century, including milled shiplap siding and wood-sash windows with ogee lugs. While more recent materials with modern manufacturing techniques have been introduced into the property, they do not diminish the overall impression of original construction.

The site retains high integrity of feeling. The intact collection of buildings on the property, the mostly historic material palette, and the naturalistic setting of Lake Merced all contribute to the sense that the PRGC grounds are somewhat isolated from the surrounding city. The longevity of the club and the decades-long use of its facilities are crucial intangible qualities that allow the site to convey its historical condition as home to an active sporting and social organization.

The site retains high integrity of association, supported by all other aspects of integrity. The continued use of the property by the PRGC, largely in line with the organization's original mission, maintains the property's direct connection to its historic functions and context. While the grounds have changed over time, the most important elements—the major programmatic buildings and most of the shooting fields—remain from the period of significance and still have their historic spatial and functional relationships. As with integrity of feeling, these relationships allow the property to continue to convey its associations with the social history of recreation in San Francisco and the human use of Lake Merced.

In conclusion, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds retain adequate integrity to convey its significance as an active sporting and social center in San Francisco, dating to the first half of the twentieth century.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

As outlined in the guidance provided by the National Park Service, the key factor in cultural landscapes is identifying those character-defining features that allow a site to convey its historic

identity. These characteristics “individually or collectively contribute to the landscape's physical appearance as they have evolved over time. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features, such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features, such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings, including fences, benches, lights and sculptural objects.”⁶⁵

The character-defining features of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds include, but are not limited to:

- Major programmatic buildings: Field House, Trap House, Club House, Groundkeeper's Cottage, Indoor Rifle Range;
- Historic exterior fabric of contributing buildings, including wood siding, exposed rafter tails, wood-sash windows, and wood doors;
- Lake Merced as an adjacent natural system;
- Spatial arrangement of nine shooting fields on axis parallel to the shore of Lake Merced;
- General sloping topography of the grounds toward Lake Merced, with level areas for shooting fields;
- The configuration of the fields themselves, in accordance with skeet and trap shooting disciplines;
- High houses, low houses, trap houses, and other support buildings that are sympathetic in scale to the similarly programmed buildings that originally stood on the property;
- Wood plank protection walls between skeet fields;
- Mature trees planted in the southern portion of the property;
- Commemorative markers dating to the period of significance.

POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The PRGC grounds and the whole of Lake Merced have the potential to be contributing resources within a potential historic district associated with the recreational use and development of the lake. Lake Merced's recreational history dates at least as far back as the second half of nineteenth century, but recreation became particularly pronounced after the turn of the twentieth century. At this time, areas surrounding the lake were owned by the Spring Valley Water Company and consequently remained largely undeveloped. As the SVWC leased and sold sections of its land between the 1900s and 1930s, Lake Merced became lined by a collection of major recreational landscapes (operated by both public and private entities) that either had programmatic relationships to the lake or took advantage of the site's naturalistic setting and scenic vistas. The various campaigns to develop the areas surrounding Lake Merced for recreational use have interconnected historical associations within a significant shared context related to the social and environmental history of San Francisco. The proposed boundaries of the potential historic district encompass all lakeshore areas: Lake Merced Boulevard on the east and north; Skyline Boulevard to the west; and John Muir Drive to the southwest. The period of significance for this potential district requires further research.

Inspection and evaluation of properties outside of the PRGC grounds was outside the scope of this report. Based on preliminary research completed for this document, however, the following properties were identified as appearing to be associated with the significant context of Lake Merced's recreational use. Further research and field survey are required to explain their historical development and evaluate them as component landscapes within a larger historic district. They may or may not be found to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Places:

- Four basins of Lake Merced: North Lake, East Lake, South Lake, and Impound Lake

⁶⁵ Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Brief 36: Planning Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*.

- Pacific Rod and Gun Club
- Lake Course of the Olympic Club
- Harding Park Golf Course
- Lake Merced Boat House

VII. DETERMINATION PROCESS

Outlined below are the determination processes for historic resources under CEQA. Based on the analysis in **Section VI** of this report, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds do constitute a potential historic resource.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) is state legislation (Pub. Res. Code §21000 et seq.), that provides for the development and maintenance of a high quality environment for the present-day and future through the identification of significant environmental effects.⁶⁶ CEQA applies to “projects” proposed to be undertaken or requiring approval from state or local government agencies. “Projects” are defined as “...activities which have the potential to have a physical impact on the environment and may include the enactment of zoning ordinances, the issuance of conditional use permits and the approval of tentative subdivision maps.”⁶⁷ Historic and cultural resources are considered to be part of the environment. In general, the lead agency must complete the environmental review process as required by CEQA.

According to CEQA, a “project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historic resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.”⁶⁸ Substantial adverse change is defined as: “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historic resource would be materially impaired.”⁶⁹ The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project “demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance” and that justify or account for its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in, the California Register.⁷⁰ Thus, a project may cause a substantial change in a historic resource but still not have a significant adverse effect on the environment as defined by CEQA, as long as the impact of the change on the historic resource is determined to be less-than-significant, negligible, neutral or even beneficial.

A building may qualify as a historic resource if it falls within at least one of four categories listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), which are defined as:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1 (g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

⁶⁶ State of California, California Environmental Quality Act, http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/summary.html.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b).

⁶⁹ CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b)(1).

⁷⁰ CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b)(2).

3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).
4. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Pub. Resources Code), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Pub. Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Pub. Resources Code A.sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.⁷¹

Based on the analysis in **Section VI**, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register as a designed historic landscape. Therefore, it qualifies as a historic resource under **Category 3** as defined by CEQA.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

As a certified local government and a frequent lead agency in CEQA determinations, the City and County of San Francisco has instituted guidelines for initiating CEQA review of historic resources. The San Francisco Planning Department's "CEQA Review Procedures for Historical Resources" incorporates the State's CEQA Guidelines into the City's existing regulatory framework.⁷² To facilitate the review process, the Planning Department has established the following categories to establish the baseline significance of historic properties based on their inclusion within cultural resource surveys and/or historic districts:

- **Category A – Historical Resources is divided into two sub-categories:**
 - **Category A.1 – Resources listed on or formally determined to be eligible for the California Register.** These properties will be evaluated as historical resources for purposes of CEQA. Only the removal of the property's status as listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources by the California Historic Resources Commission will preclude evaluation of the property as an historical resource under CEQA.
 - **Category A.2 – Adopted local registers, and properties that have been determined to appear or may become eligible, for the California Register.** These properties will be evaluated as historical resources for purposes of CEQA. Only a preponderance of the evidence demonstrating that the resource is not historically or culturally significant will preclude evaluation of the property as an historical resource. In the case of Category

⁷¹ Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.

⁷² San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 16: City and County of San Francisco Planning Department CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources* (October 8, 2004).

A.2 resources included in an adopted survey or local register, generally the “preponderance of the evidence” must consist of evidence that the appropriate decision-maker has determined that the resource should no longer be included in the adopted survey or register. Where there is substantiated and uncontroverted evidence of an error in professional judgment, of a clear mistake or that the property has been destroyed, this may also be considered a “preponderance of the evidence that the property is not an historical resource.”

- **Category B - Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review.** Properties that do not meet the criteria for listing in Categories A.1 or A.2, but for which the City has information indicating that further consultation and review will be required for evaluation whether a property is an historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.
- **Category C - Properties Determined Not To Be Historical Resources or Properties For Which The City Has No Information indicating that the Property is a Historical Resource.** Properties that have been affirmatively determined not to be historical resources, properties less than 50 years of age, and properties for which the City has no information.⁷³

Based on the analysis in **Section VI**, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds have been found to be an individual historic resource under **Category A.2 - Adopted local registers, and properties that have been determined to appear or may become eligible, for the California Register.** Therefore, the PRGC grounds are considered by the City and County of San Francisco to be a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA.

⁷³ San Francisco Planning Department, “San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 16 – CEQA and Historical Resources,” May 5, 2004, 3-4.

VIII. CONCLUSION

As a designed historic landscape, the Pacific Rod and Gun Club grounds appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources as an individual resource for its significant associations with recreational culture in San Francisco through the middle decades of the twentieth century. The property has been altered over time, in some cases considerably. Namely, additions have been constructed on contributing buildings, and historic elements of the landscape (for instance, windows and shooting field support buildings) and have been removed or replaced. These changes, however, have not detrimentally affected the property's integrity. The landscape of the PRGC grounds retains an adequate amount of historic landscape fabric to convey the site's significance as a longstanding sporting and social club on Lake Merced, which for decades has been a unique resource within the recreational culture of San Francisco. The historic materials of the contributing buildings, the arrangement of the shooting fields within the property, and the integral relationship of the site to the adjacent Lake Merced are still in place and function together to impart the sense of a historic and somewhat isolated recreational shooting facility. Therefore, the PRGC grounds appear to be a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA review.

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EXHIBIT C

Comment Letters

From: Dick Allen [<mailto:batteryrow@gmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 4:38 PM

To: Johnston, Timothy (CPC)

Cc: james storm; Richards Ashton; Ms. Diane Davis; Joe Mees; Joe Abrams; cycler@mac.com; Dick Allen

Subject: Pacific rod and Gun Club Case No.2013.1220E

Mr. Johnston,

Would the removal of 81 trees or more alter wind patterns on South Lake and would wind velocity be increased on South Lake?

Any increase in wind velocity would have a very negative impact on the rowing activities on South Lake.

Dick Allen
Dolphin Club

Batteryrow@gmailcom
415-407-1159

From: Morten [<mailto:msarawak@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 1:35 PM

To: Johnston, Timothy (CPC)

Cc: Ritchie, Steve (PUC); Nzewi, Obiajulu (PUC); Kehoe, Paula (PUC); Jerry Cadagan; Mondy Lariz; tim colen; Dick Allen; Dan Murphy; Dick Morten

Subject: Pacific Rod and Gun Club CASE NO. 2013.1220E

Mr Johnston,

I do not think at this time that the project should remove any trees unless they are *essential* to remediation. Tree removal should only occur when an approved land use plan is developed and only then when implications for habitat and wildlife, including bird nesting, are evaluated.

At no time in the Neg Dec should there be any hint or possible promise that the Pacific Rod and Gun Club has any rights or is grandfathered into returning to the restored site. The city cannot seem to reward the tenant, PRGC, for violating their 1930s lease, expanding beyond the lease 4 acre land footprint and adding a water footprint, contaminating the land and water, and costing the city tens of millions of dollars to remediate and restore the site.

Steve Ritchie has said many times that a thorough John Muir site planning process is required before any land use designations, PRGC, are made.

I am troubled that the structures on the PRGC site may not have received any permits for construction. Just because they are several decades old should not confer on them "historic" or "cultural" status what ever that means under the Planning Code. It defeats the purpose of the land use planning process to have rickety, old buildings that may have not been built to code receive any historic designation.

Lastly, many years ago the city's environmental unit utilized a Neg Dec to identify a limited number of issues that could be addressed through mitigation. This document is an EIR without alternatives analysis. It seems to violate the notion that a Neg Dec only focuses on limited issues in a brief format. It is now so long that volunteers are stressed to read it thoroughly. I am sure some issues have escaped me.

Dick Morten, San Francisco



July 31, 2014

Timothy Johnston
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission St., Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103 2479
Timothy.Johnston@sfgov.org

RE: Case No 2013.1220E Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project

Dear Mr. Johnston:

The Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS), representing about 6000 members in San Francisco and the East Bay, applauds the clean-up of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club (PRGC). We do have some concerns, but for the most part we concur with findings in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND).

FUGITIVE DUST

A.3 Project Purpose (p. 7) states there is a need to “reduce the potential for leaching of contaminants into Lake Merced.” This is our primary concern and we do not believe it is treated adequately in the MND. In section E.7, Air Quality (p. 84) in the discussion of fugitive dust and again in the section on fugitive dust on page 91, the document does not seem to address how contaminated dust will be reduced and contained on the project site and how that reduction will be monitored during the project. We are most concerned with dust that might enter the lake as a mixture of erosion and dust that could float over the silt screen fencing, or whatever the final erosion containment structure is, and settle on the water of Lake Merced. Planners need to specifically address impacts from contaminated dust on water quality, the potential hazard to boaters, waterbirds and aquatic wildlife. Though fish are no longer planted in South Lake Merced, there are still many people who fish for bottom feeding fish at the south end of the lake. Because that is where any such fugitive dust would end up, it would also seem necessary to establish monitoring stations to detect if that becomes a problem. It would seem prudent to have an emergency plan in place to deal with any significant amount of contaminated dust that enters the lake. We realize this is a unique project site, being adjacent to a major lake, so it is necessary to anticipate gaps in how problems like this are treated in more usual conditions. For example the requirement to sweep adjacent streets makes sense, but it does nothing to clear the dust from the edges of the lake. A plan needs to be devised to deal with that.

E.15 Hydrology and Water Quality (p. 150)

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality.

The MND fails to address the potential for fugitive dust polluting the lake. This is a potentially significant issue that arises from this project. The potential may be remote, but winds that come through Fort Funston at the Great Highway gap can be significant from time to time. We think it prudent to address this issue more thoroughly, and have a plan in place to reduce dust impacts on the waters of Lake Merced. Our primary concern is with impacts on wildlife, but one must remember that many rowers will be using the lake during the project’s time frame as well as

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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people using Harding Golf Course and those fishing near the concrete bridge. This issue should be addressed both in this section and in the air quality section of this document.

E.13 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (p. 120)

Approach to Analysis

It should be noted that this is an area of the Lake Merced shoreline for which there is little or no field work or available data related to birds. However there is much data available for the lake as a whole. The list of resources and agencies that could contribute to an analysis is inadequate and should include at least the following:

- 1) ebird.org: A huge amount of data for Lake Merced is currently available in eBird, consisting of accounts from numerous birders throughout the year.
 - 2) The “Annotated Atlas and Implication for the Conservation of Heron and Egret Nesting Colonies in the San Francisco Bay Area”, an Audubon Canyon Ranch publication, is available on line at <http://www.egret.org/atlas>
 - 3) The San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas from San Francisco Field Ornithologists should also be referenced. It can be found on line at [www.markeaton.org/sffo1/Breeding Ecology/San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas.pdf](http://www.markeaton.org/sffo1/Breeding%20Ecology/San%20Francisco%20Breeding%20Bird%20Atlas.pdf)
- Finally, the status of birds throughout the year in this region can be found in, “Birds of Northern California: An annotated Field List”, McCaskie, et. al., Golden Gate Audubon Society, Berkeley, CA, April 1988. Unfortunately it is out of print, but may be available through local libraries or through Amazon.

Native Scrub (p. 124)

Avian species that nest in coastal scrub do not include Fox Sparrow. Fox Sparrows are not known to nest in San Francisco County or this region of coastal California (San Francisco Breeding Bird Atlas and Birds of Northern California). They do use coastal scrub during the period of October through mid April when they are in this area. While California Towhees are permanent residents in San Francisco County and do breed in each of the 4 atlas quadrants that cover Lake Merced, it is highly unlikely they nest in the remnant native vegetation at the PRGC site. They would be more likely to breed in non native vegetation that dominates the edges of the project site.

Arroyo willow riparian scrub: Western Kingbird is an uncommon migrant in spring and fall. When found, they usually only remain for a day or two before continuing migration. Tropical Kingbird would be more expected at Lake Merced. A better choice for a flycatcher would be our resident Black Phoebe. They breed at the lake and are likely to nest at PRGC and to feed in the willow there. Townsend’s Warbler is a poor choice since it is most frequently associated with forested areas. Yellow Warbler would be a better choice since it is a species in trouble and though very rare in winter, one or two could be found at the lake. Last December, the Recreation and Parks Department destroyed their preferred habitat at Lake Merced. It remains to be seen if they over winter at that site again. Still, the mix of native willow and non native shrubs and trees prevalent at Lake Merced is attractive to this species. and they are very likely to utilize the edges of the project site during fall migration and perhaps during spring.

Special Status Species in the Project Area (p. 132)

Tricolored Blackbird should be added to the list of special status birds. They occur annually with the blackbird flock that spends part of the day at the northwest corner of the concrete bridge, perhaps .4 miles southeast of the project site. They have been noted at the Boathouse picnic area

and at the Sunset Circle as well. One was present at the concrete bridge on July 17, 2014. They can usually be found in that area between September and December.

We believe there is a flaw in the analysis of birds that may be impacted by this project. As stated earlier, GGAS is very concerned about the potential impacts of fugitive dust. In and of itself we do not see this project having a significant impact on waterbirds. But should fugitive dust escape the project site and land on the water the potential for a negative impacts increase. That is the context in which waterbirds should be addressed. Our primary concerns are with the following species: Pied-billed Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, American Coot, Ruddy Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron. Protection of the cove between the gun club site and the police shooting range as well as the lake's open water are critical to eliminate those potential impacts.

p. 139 A work exclusion zone should be placed around nests that may be built during the project. Monitoring and nest surveys should be done throughout the bird breeding season, nest sites should be marked and a minimum size exclusion zone should be established. As a rule of thumb, small birds build their nests, lay eggs, incubate them and raise their young in a matter of 4 to 6 weeks, so this shouldn't be an insurmountable problem. It is unlikely any birds will nest in the project site at ground level, so this is unlikely to pose a problem unless a Red-shouldered Hawk decides to nest in one of the remaining pines. They can remain on a nest for several months between the time they establish a nesting territory and eventually fledge their young. Properly scheduling tree work may help reduce that problem. As mentioned elsewhere in the MND, protection of nesting birds is afforded under the Federal Migratory Bird Treat Act and other legislation.

p. 141 Great Blue Heron should be added to the list of birds with a potential to nest in the remaining 7 pine trees. A pair established a nest in a pine adjacent to the dragon boat dock on North Lake Merced in 2014. They apparently fledged 2 of their 3 chicks. Utilizing a small exclusion zone should allow any such birds to nest with good chance of success. It should be noted that actually working under the nest would very likely result in the loss of the nest.

TREE REMOVAL

E.2 Aesthetics (pp 41-43) Long-term Effects on Scenic Vistas, Scenic Resources, or the Existing Visual Character or Quality

While GGAS agrees that native trees and shrubs should be planted at this site we question whether the screening effect can be achieved within 10 years as stated in Mitigation Measure M-AE-3. We believe that overlying an aesthetic requirement that the restored trees reach a level of maturity to screen the gun club within 10 years is arbitrary and inadequate in biological terms. The aesthetic requirement should be that the health of replacement trees should be assessed by a qualified biologist, arborist or forester, and if they are found to be healthy will not be replaced. The 10 year requirement to produce screening is clearly inconsistent with the goal to utilize native trees. Some of the screening may be achieved by including an understory of native shrubs that would enhance the appearance of the woodland areas.

If the 7 existing pines are not removed, the impact on wildlife would be less.. We recommend that planners develop a list of suitable and recommended plant species for this site and include it in this document. To that end, we suggest replacing black-wood acacia with red alder. That tree has a relatively short life span and it should be acknowledged that they are there not only to screen the site, but to provide attractive habitat for wildlife. An alder grove could be managed in such a way that new trees can be added, if they do not regenerate naturally, every 10 to 20 years. As older trees mature and die, they should be replaced, probably on a 10 to 20 year cycle. This is

basically the procedure adopted by the Recreation and Park Department for reforestation in Golden Gate Park. Other areas may better lend themselves to single species stands and should be developed as a coastal woodlands, much like we see in the Peninsula Watershed between Pilarcitos Dam and Stone Dam. Replacement species might include live oak, big leaf maple, California buckeye, California bay, madrone and others that would more approximate a native coastal woodland. We recommend against using Douglas fir because it grows much too tall for this site.

A schedule for tree removal needs to be developed. Tree removal should not take place between mid February and mid August. Should as many as 81 trees be removed, that would be a significant impact on tree nesting birds at Lake Merced. That impact needs to be reduced as much as possible. Timing the tree removal element of this project so all tree and shrub removal takes place prior to mid February would help assure birds do not nest within the project site. Replacing the woodlands at the earliest possible time would further reduce that impact. Another alternative might be to remove trees at one end or the other of the project site prior to the nesting season and remove the remaining trees at the other end of the site after the nesting season. There should be no need to remove trees during the nesting season if this is done properly.

Mitigation Measure M-AE-1 (p. 109, Screening Vegetation) should specify that no fewer than 81 trees will be used in the restoration to maintain 100% replacement. It should also specify that shrubs and other plants will be introduced to produce a woodland understory that is aesthetically attractive and biologically productive.

FUTURE SITE USE

We are particularly pleased that the site will be cleaned up to “the residential property standard” (p. 7) and thus leave the site open for unrestricted future use. However on the same page it is stated in reference to the PRGC, “activities would be suspended due to site closure during the approximately 57-week construction period.” That contradicts “unrestricted future use.” At various places in the MND reference is made to future uses of this site, but the only example of future use is for a gun club. Mitigation measures M-CP-1a and 1b (p.167) both require restoration of Skeet Fields 4 – 7. It is not clear why those installations should be restored unless there are actual plans for the return of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club. In fact, it would seem that if the site is not returned to it’s present use, those facilities would have to be removed immediately after they are installed. We suggest that this element of the project site restoration be postponed until after future site use is determined by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Neither should other elements of the restoration specific to gun club operations be implemented until after future site use is determined.

SITE RESTORATION

We were surprised to see that in reference to site restoration a great deal of attention was given to retreeing the site, hydro seeding it and such, but no attention was given to runoff following completion of the project. Regardless of future use we urge inclusion of a ground water recharge plan for this site. Simply using permeable paving, swales, water gardens and such would be an excellent means of reducing future runoff into the lake and into the sewage system while providing some recharge to the Westside Aquifer.

COYOTES

This doesn’t seem to fit anywhere else in this document. There is a possibility that coyotes may have a den on the edge of the project site. The southeast edge of the project site appears attractive for coyote denning. Prior to construction, the site should be surveyed for coyote activity and if a den is found it should be left undisturbed if pups are present. When the young

coyotes leave the den, the area could be worked on. There really aren't any other mitigation measures available. The reason we bring this up is because it is illegal in California to transport coyotes from one county to another. Given that, the only way to deal with an active den would be to kill the animals, and we object to that. The most reasonable way to deal with this issue seems to be treating a den much as an active bird nest is dealt with. Should the necessity arise, measures should be taken to assure workers stay out of contact with the coyotes, particularly they should not feed them, all food should be disposed of in a coyote resistant container that can be emptied several times each week, and the den area should be fenced off to both reduce impacts on the coyotes and to mark the den area. These measures should be implemented if coyotes are seen on the project site to prevent from becoming more habituated to humans.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. To reiterate, we are very supportive of efforts to clean-up the Pacific Rod and Gun Club pollution. We hope that ur suggestions will help improve the project and prevent unnecessary conflicts with other users of the area.

Very truly yours,

Dan Murphy
Golden Gate Audubon Society
Conservation Committee
murphsf@comcast.net

From: friends-of- [\[mailto:fog.sf@comcast.net\]](mailto:fog.sf@comcast.net)

Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2014 4:29 PM

To: Johnston, Timothy (CPC)

Subject: Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project

Dear Mr. Johnston,

On behalf of the wildlife of Lake Merced, thank you for finally starting the process of cleaning up this site.

All are looking forward to a quieter, cleaner, safer, and healthier place to live and raise their families.

Please add our organization to your email list for updates on this project.

Sincerely,

Friends of the Gulls (FOG)
San Francisco, CA

Frank H. (Bert) Swan. Ph.D.
Consulting Geologist
240 Laidley Street
San Francisco, CA 94131
bertswan3@gmail.com

July 18, 2014

San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Attention: Timothy Johnston [timothy.johnston@sfgov.org];
Sarah B. Jones

Subject: Comment on the City's intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration
for the Pacific Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project

The July 2011 “Supplemental Investigation and Health Risk Assessment Report,” which was prepared for the City by AMEC, Inc., found that there are “insufficient site specific data to determine that the contaminated soils do not do not pose a significant risk.” In the absence of the necessary site specific data AMEC had to make conservative assumptions regarding the toxicity levels, exposure rates and screening criteria in their ecological risk assessment. This approach is useful for identifying areas where the ecological risks are low, but it is likely to overestimate the actual impacts to human health. AMEC recommended additional studies to reduce the uncertainty in the calculated risk values. Because a very conservative approach was used, reducing the uncertainty would undoubtedly reduce the calculated risk values. The SFPUC has not followed their consultant's recommendations.

A simple test could provide the missing site specific information regarding the bioavailability PAH's (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) contained in the older asphalt-bearing targets. There is a large population of gofers at the gun club. The gofers live in direct contact with the broken target debris and and feed on worms, grubs and roots from the contaminated soil. Tissue and blood samples from the gun club gofers should be compared to samples from a similar off-site population of gofers (e.g., from Harding Park on the other side of Lake Merced). Biological tests were not made during previous investigations because no adverse impacts have been observed. The PAHs appear to be trapped in the clay targets (i.e.,the asphalt is nonvolatile and has low solubility in water). The gofer experiment could provide the site specific data needed to address the uncertainty in AMEC's Health Risk Assessment, potentially saving the rate payers millions of dollars.

The AMEC study does not identify the sources of the PAHs and lead in the soils. Implicit in their analysis is the assumption that they are all due to shooting, but this is not the case. John Muir Drive, which runs parallel to the northwest boundary of the gun club and the parking lots at the site are paved with asphalt. The use of leaded gasoline in the past, runoff from the asphalt pavement, tire- and brake-wear and unleaded-gas exhaust fumes associated with traffic along John Muir Drive account for the high lead and PAH concentrations found along the northwest boundary of the club in areas where no clay target debris was reported. None of these sources are considered in the AMEC Health Risk Assessment Report. How can the SFPUC develop a realistic health risk model without considering all the sources of contamination? More importantly, how can the SFPUC develop a credible cost-effective mitigation strategy without addressing the sources of the contamination? If asphalt is so hazardous, why isn't the SFPUC proposing to mitigate the more than six miles of asphalt-paved roads that lie within 600 feet of Lake Merced? If the SFPUC is correct in assuming the health risks associated with asphalt are unacceptably high, the proposed budget for clean up is totally inadequate. On the other hand, if the asphalt does not pose a significant risk the SFPUC is burdening their rate payers with a seventeen- million dollar cost that is unwarranted.

The AMEC report describes alternative methods to mitigate the health risks posed by the contaminated soils at the site, including methods that would be much less expensive than the soil remedial action project being proposed by the SFPUC. There has been no cost benefit analysis of the alternative methods. According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), projects like the one being proposed by the SFPUC require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) containing a cost benefit analysis of the alternative approaches for mitigating the hazards. The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration circumvents the CEQA/EIR requirement for a cost benefit analysis. of the alternative ways to mitigate the hazards.

I support the City's efforts to provide safe open spaces for recreation. However, I will be incensed if the city spends \$17,000,000 on a soil remediation project without first ensuring that it is based on appropriate environmental standards, adequate data, and a consideration of the costs versus the benefits associated alternative methods for mitigating the hazard. Please make sure that an EIR/cost benefit analysis is completed before proceeding with Sn Francisco Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project.

Sincerely,

Frank H. (Bert) Swan, Ph.D.
Consulting Geologist

From: Jeanine Mahl [<mailto:jeanine.l.mahl@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 10:23 AM
To: Johnston, Timothy (CPC)
Subject: Pacific Rod & Gun Club

Mr. Johnston,

I have just read both a letter to the Editor or the SF Examiner and to the Planning Department written by Dr. Frank Swan. They are attached for your convenience.

I wish to make it known that I strongly support Dr. Swan's position.

I am a life long resident, taxpayer, and voter in San Francisco, and also a past president of the Rod & Gun Club (the only woman president!) As such, I am concerned about the gun club's future.

I am appalled at the fact that the SFPUC has chosen to disregard the recommendations by AMEC, Inc. that more tests are needed. Do toxicity levels at the club really indicate a danger to anyone or anything?

As a taxpayer--and rate payer to the PUC--I am angered that they are planning to spend \$17,000,000 (yes, 17 million dollars) without listening to recommendations of their consultant's and without further environmental impact studies.

Please do not let the SFPUC continue with this project without further environmental impact studies and soil and animal testing.

Regards,
Jeanine L. Mahl

Subject: July 7th Cover Story – Gun club seeks magic bullet to stave off eviction

Laura Dudnick's recent article represents both sides of the Pacific Rod & Gun Club's ongoing battle to avoid eviction by their landlord, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. However, her article does not address some very important issues that should concern the San Francisco rate payers. Is the proposed clean up founded on adequate and technically sound scientific data? Is the the PUC's proposed seventeen-million dollar price tag reasonable ?

It is no secret that Steven Ritchie wants his legacy at the SFPUC to be that he closed the last public shooting range in San Francisco. To accomplish this he has ignored the recommendations of the city's environmental consultants and misrepresented the data presented in the July 2011 "Supplemental Investigation and Health Risk Assessment Report," which was prepared for the city by AMEC, Inc.

AMEC found that there are insufficient site specific data to determine that the contaminated soils do not do not pose a significant risk. In the absence of the necessary site specific data AMEC had to make conservative assumptions regarding the toxicity levels, exposure rates and screening criteria in their ecological risk assessment. This approach is useful for identifying areas where the ecological risks are low, but it is likely to overestimate the actual impacts to human health. AMEC recommended additional studies to reduce the uncertainty in the calculated risk values. Because a very conservative approach was used, reducing the uncertainty would undoubtedly reduce the calculated risk values.

A simple test could provide the missing site specific information regarding the bioavailability PAH's (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) contained in the older asphalt-bearing targets. There is a large population of gofers at the gun club. The gofers live in direct contact with the broken target debris and and feed on worms, grubs and roots from the contaminated soil. Tissue and blood samples from the gun club gofers should be compared to samples from a similar off-site population of gofers (e.g., from Harding Park on the other side of Lake Merced). Biological tests were not made during previous investigations because no adverse impacts have been observed. The PAHs appear to be trapped in the clay targets (i.e.,the asphalt is nonvolatile and has low solubility in water). The gofer experiment could provide the site specific data needed to address the uncertainty in AMEC's Health Risk Assessment, potentially saving the rate payers millions of dollars.

The AMEC study does not identify the sources of the PAHs and lead in the soils. Implicit in their analysis is the assumption that they are all due to shooting, but this is not the case. John Muir Drive, which runs parallel to the northwest boundary of the gun club and the parking lots at the site are paved with asphalt. The use of leaded

gasoline in the past, runoff from the asphalt pavement, tire and brake wear and unleaded-gas exhaust fumes associated with traffic along John Muir Drive account for the high lead and PAH concentrations found along the northwest boundary of the club in areas where no clay target debris was found. None of these sources are considered in the AMEC Health Risk Assessment Report. How can you develop a realistic health risk model without considering all the sources of contamination? More importantly, how can the SFPUC develop a credible cost-effective mitigation strategy without addressing the sources of the contamination? If asphalt is so hazardous, why isn't Mr. Ritchie proposing to mitigate the more than six miles of asphalt-paved roads that lie within 600 feet of Lake Merced? If Mr. Ritchie is correct in assuming the health risks associated with asphalt are unacceptably high, his proposed budget for clean up is totally inadequate. If he is wrong, he is burdening the rate payers with a seventeen-million dollar cost that is probably unwarranted.

The AMEC report describes alternative methods to mitigate the health risks posed by the contaminated soils at the site, including methods that would be much less expensive than the soil remedial action project being proposed by the SFPUC. There has been no cost benefit analysis of the alternative methods. According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) projects like the one being proposed by the SFPUC require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) containing a cost benefit analysis of the alternative approaches for mitigating the hazards. To circumvent the CEQA/EIR requirement for a cost benefit analysis the planning department has issued a 302 page Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration report. If there is no appeal before the July 25th deadline the project will proceed without ever having done a cost benefit analysis of the alternative ways to mitigate the hazards and without knowing whether or not the costs are really warranted.

Why won't Mr. Ritchie take a serious look at the sources of the pollution and why won't he consider alternative less expensive mitigation methods? If the city doesn't share responsibility with the gun club and the rate payers are saddled with the \$17,000,000 clean up costs, he "cannot think of any scenario that would allow the gun club back onto the site after the clean up is completed." Mr. Ritchie knows that his proposed project would not score well in a cost benefit analysis.

I support the city's efforts to provide safe open spaces for recreation. However, I will be incensed if the city spends \$17,000,000 on a soil remediation project without first ensuring that it is based on appropriate environmental standards, adequate data, and a consideration of the costs versus the benefits associated alternative methods for mitigating the hazard. Call the planning department and tell them that you do not support their proposed Preliminary Mitigated Declaration for the Pacific Rod and gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project.

From: Peter Griffith [<mailto:peteg415@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 4:47 PM
To: Johnston, Timothy (CPC)
Subject: Pacific Rod and Gun Club Action

Timothy Johnston
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr Johnston

Please make sure that an EIR/cost benefit analysis is completed before proceeding with San Francisco Rod and Gun Club Upland Soil Remedial Action Project.

Thank you

Peter Griffith
2550 Great Highway
San Francisco, CA 94116