



PARKSvoice



love your parks 

Fall 2006

INVESTING IN URBAN PARKS

A Letter from the Lodge

Yomi Agunbiade, General Manager, SF Recreation & Park Department

This past May, the National Recreation and Park Association, in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), City Parks Alliance (CPA), and Urban Park and Recreation Alliance (UPRA) hosted the inaugural Urban Park and Recreation Summit in Chicago. The summit was billed as, “a convocation of big-city directors, civic leaders and advocates to examine the state of urban parks and recreation in America and to adopt a national action agenda.” This gathering was necessitated by the realization that our urban parks are at risk due to a decline in investment, which has in turn diminished the benefits for which public parks were first envisioned. The summit gave our San Francisco delegation an opportunity to explore those benefits in greater detail and to commit to working together to educate policy makers and San Franciscans on the importance of investing in parks and recreational programs.

Some of our learning follows...

(continued on p. 2)

4 STARS FOR SFPT

SFPT Receives National Honor

San Francisco Parks Trust received the desirable 4-Star rating for “sound fiscal management” from Charity Navigator, America’s premier charity evaluator.

Receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that San Francisco Parks Trust excels, as compared to other charities in America, in managing funds for park improvement projects, community organizations and recreation activities. Charity Navigator rates organizations based on their efficiency of their day-to-day operations and their ability to sustain their programs and services over time. The rise in our rating is an exceptional feat, especially given the economic challenges many charities have had to face over the last year.

Please log onto www.sfpt.org, News & Media section to read the full report.

inside *Special Gift Offer p.5* **Fall Fundraiser tickets on sale p.7** *Partner Salute: Plant*SF p.11*

COVER STORY

(continued from p. 1)

As early as 1833, parks in England were considered essential “to promote the health and comfort of inhabitants” around them.¹ Parks and the urban landscape have been inseparable for 160 years since Sir Joseph Paxton designed the first public park to be created by a municipality. When Birkenhead Park opened on April 5, 1847, that dream was realized.² Birkenhead proved once and for all that parks and open spaces are a worthwhile investment, which pays back their communities in both tangible and intangible ways. Without the funds to build the dream, Paxton incorporated surrounding land into the park to be sold at an enhanced value for housing to help pay for the park.³

What the people in Birkenhead found out in 1847 is even more significant today. Our urban cities are struggling through economic downturns, family and business flight, safety concerns, health risks from sedentary lives and environmental pollution. Although urban parks and recreational programs cannot address all these issues, they are an essential tool for the improvement of the quality of life in an urban setting that can no longer be ignored.

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Many studies have shown that Americans live a more sedentary lifestyle than ever before. This sedentary lifestyle is estimated to contribute to up to 23 percent of all deaths from major chronic diseases. Obesity rates and the onset of Type 2 diabetes continue to grow in youth today, leading the CDC to pronounce that “a large preventable burden of morbidity, mortality, and health care costs currently exists...” The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) reports that although the data looks bleak, the evidence is clear that parks and recreation can combat that way of life. One study from NRPA shows that just improving access to parks can increase regular exercise by 25% a week.

Investing in our parks can help to reduce the \$1.7 trillion health care bill we are saddled with each year.

STIMULATING COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Every San Franciscan understands intuitively that our parks bring us together. Whether enjoying a festival in the sun at Dolores Park, playing with young ones at Julius Kahn, or gathering for dominoes at Joseph Lee Recreation Center, our parks promote community. America’s diversity is its strength; our urban parks

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San Francisco Parks Trust, formerly Friends of Recreation & Parks,
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and recreational programs nurture that strength and contribute to building and sustaining communities.⁵

Urban parks promote communities in a more tangible way as well. In his book *The Proximate Principle*, Dr. John L. Crompton, Distinguished Professor at Texas A&M, states, “before funding for Central Park was committed, Olmsted, using his Birkenhead Park knowledge, explained how the proximate principle would result in the park being self-financing.” In 1873, Olmsted was right to the tune of \$4.4 million, the value of the increase in property tax minus interest on the cost of the land and its improvements.⁶ More recent studies have concluded that parks have a positive impact of at least 20% on property values of adjacent properties.⁷ The NRPA reports that a survey of corporate CEOs showed “quality of life” the third most important factor in locating businesses.

Investing in parks leads to economic development and smart growth.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Parks protect our environment in many ways. A tree produces oxygen, reduces air pollution, and recycles water and controls soil erosion. Urban ‘greenways’ and ‘blueways’ buffer the impact of development and provide vital open space that act as safe, natural storage areas for storm water and provide valuable habitat corridors for wildlife.⁸ Research led by the U.S. Forest Service is providing monetary values for identified benefits of parks in environmental protection in order to quantify the economic value of urban parks and open spaces. With this research, it’s been estimated that one acre of wetlands generates \$150,000 in economic benefits.

Investment in parks will return an environmental and economic dividend for generations to come.

EDUCATING, PROTECTING, AND ENRICHING AMERICA’S YOUNG PEOPLE

As crime rates increase, victims and perpetrators are younger with each news report. Safety is becoming a top concern for parents. The days of walking to the nearest park as a 9-year-old and spending time with friends seem distant now. Structured recreational programs within one quarter mile of each child are crucial to reducing safety concerns. Whether playing basketball, learning tennis, learning about native plants and environmental stewardship, these programs increase a young person’s social and physical skills and keep them safe and off the streets.

Investing in parks and recreation provides for the physical, social, intellectual and emotional needs of our youth.

Urban parks have been guided by a set of principles and pillars held by the original creators and stewards — these should guide us still today.⁴

- *Urban parks and recreation promote health and wellness*
- *Urban parks and recreation stimulate community and economic development*
- *Urban parks protect the environment*
- *Urban parks educate, protect, and enrich America’s young people*

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

All the evidence presented at the summit was clear. Parks and recreation programs matter. They are an essential tool in combating the challenges of urban living. Urban parks promote health and wellness; stimulate community and economic development; and protect our environment. President Theodore Roosevelt had it right when he said, “It is an incalculable added pleasure to any one’s sum of happiness if he or she grows to know, even slightly and imperfectly, how to read and enjoy the wonder-book of nature.”

The parks we leave for future generations are a legacy that can’t be measured in dollars and cents. We challenge you to join our efforts to support our parks by becoming active in your local park and supporting San Francisco Parks Trust as they work to advocate for and educate all San Franciscans about our parks and programs.

To invest in our parks, is to invest in one another’s well being.

Yomi Agunbiade has served as General Manager for the San Francisco Recreation & Park Department since May 2005.

¹ <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/er/birkpark.htm>

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ NRPA: A national agenda for Urban Parks and Recreation in America

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *The Proximate Principle*

⁷ NRPA: A national agenda for Urban Parks and Recreation in America

⁸ *ibid.*



Did you know that the Mary B. Connelly Playground in the Koret Children's Quarter in Golden Gate Park is closed for renovation? The purpose of the renovation is to create a state-of-the-art play area that is safe, fun, and accessible. When it reopens, the Koret Children's Quarter will be ADA compliant, meet California's Safety Regulations for Playgrounds and showcase state-of-the-art play equipment. Your San Francisco Parks Trust is working with RPD and the Koret Foundation to reopen the playground in Spring 2007. The Koret Children's Quarter includes the Carrousel, Sharon Art Building and the Mary B. Connelly Playground. Learn more about the renovation at www.sfpt.org or parks.sfgov.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR love your parks 🌿

Love your parks. You've seen us on television. You've seen us on the sides of buses. You've seen us in your local shops.

Love your parks. It is a simple statement, but as is often the case, the simplest statements are the most powerful. The *Love your parks* campaign seeks to remind people of the important role that parks and open space play in our lives.

Parks afford us the opportunity to play, pause, reflect and celebrate nature. They are also an expression of our society's shared values. Parkland was a very intentional urban design element of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most notably with Frederick Law Olmstead, the expression of the natural world in an urban setting was seen as integral to building communities and connecting us as humans. And, as Yomi Agunbiade noted earlier in this issue, we are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of parks and open space in economic development and the health and well-being of our children.

For all of these reasons, we have an obligation to protect, preserve and enhance the city's parks, recreation programs and open space. San Francisco Parks Trust exists to empower people to do just that. Together, you and I promote citizen stewardship of parks through Park Partners, a program that offers financial services, grant administration and technical assistance to a growing number of community groups throughout the city. The work of two of our partners, the Friends of Alta Plaza and Plant*SF, are highlighted in this issue.

We connect people to places and each other by supporting recreation programs such as Project Jumpstart, Music in Parks and Project ReCreation. We hope to further connect people through our newly designed website and community calendar function. Please visit us at www.sfpt.org to let us know about events happening in your community.

Finally, with your support, we continue to attract people to celebrate the natural world by making the necessary capital improvements to our parks. As you've learned above, we're working with the Koret Foundation and the Recreation & Park Department on the Koret Children's Quarter, and we continue our work on the Japanese Tea Garden as we explore other capital needs in the city.

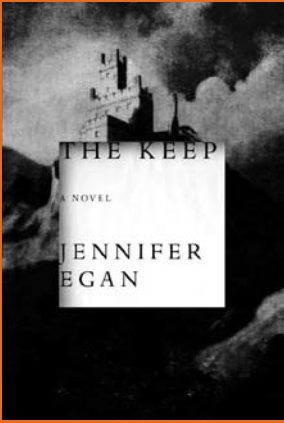
As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, it's important to recognize that together we have done a great deal to support parks, build community and enhance the quality of life in San Francisco. It is equally important to recognize that there is much more we can do.

San Francisco's most beautiful places belong to all of us. *Love your parks.*

Jay Banfield :: Executive Director



Jay hiking above Camp Mather



Special Invitation

SFPT and Books Inc. cordially invites Members to attend a special reading by author and National Book Award nominee, Jennifer Egan, who is touring for her new book, *The Keep*.

September 21, 2006 :: 6:30 to 9:00 pm

Reception with Ms. Egan (and book signing), 6:30 to 7:15 pm, Reading by Author, 7:30 pm

Location :: Books Inc.

3515 California Street, Laurel Village, San Francisco

Members will receive a 10% discount on all purchases and Books Inc. will donate 10% of the sales to SFPT. Light refreshments will be served. Space is limited.

Please RSVP by September 15th to Lori :: 415.750.5443 or email lori@sfpt.org

PARK VOICES

How do you love SF parks?



Jude Koski :: Executive Director, San Francisco Garden Resource Organization

San Francisco's parks and community gardens are our common ground where we gather with family and friends to celebrate life's most important milestones. We meet and have the opportunity for free access to these beautiful settings to garden and play sports, hear music and see performances, organize for social change, all contributing towards strengthening and building bridges in our communities. Visiting our city's parks and gardens is at the core of what makes San Francisco unique.



Ann Ziolkowski :: Operations, Conservatory of Flowers

I've worked for the past 12 years in the parks, formerly with the Chicago Park District lakefront region. Then I moved to San Francisco three years ago to be closer to my siblings. During one of my visits here about 10 years ago, I remember spending the day in Golden Gate Park. It's such an amazing park! Ironically, I ended up working in Golden Gate Park at the Conservatory of Flowers. I feel very fortunate to work at such an incredible historic institution in one of America's finest public parks.



Judy O'Brien :: Bookkeeper, San Francisco Parks Trust

As a young girl growing up in San Francisco, one of my fondest memories was spending Sundays at Sigmund Stern Grove. My family would snag tables with a barbeque pit in the upper meadow and spend the whole day there. We'd feast on hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixings. We'd play ball, Frisbee, work the crossword puzzle and play cards. And the best part was having the music float through the Grove while we played the day away.

MEMBERSHIP

SPECIAL GIFT FOR MEMBERS ONLY!

Upgrade your Membership to a Supporter (\$250) or higher level Membership and we will include as part of your benefits a copy of the new book from the Conservatory of Flowers, *Treasures of the Conservatory Flowers*, by Nina Sazevich.

Members who are already Supporter or higher level Members will be sent a copy of the book when they renew at the same level or upgrade their Membership, beginning September 1, 2006.



ARE YOU A VIP?

VIP Events at the Conservatory of Flowers for Supporting and Sustaining Members

When you renew or join as a Supporter or Sustainer, you will be invited to two VIP receptions during the year at the Conservatory of Flowers. These special events feature guided tours and the opportunity to see the wonderful fall and spring exhibits at the Conservatory.

Many thanks to our Members for your support!

PREPPING FOR MARINA GREEN Fall Fundraiser Host Committee



In May, over 100 guests gathered for a cocktail party graciously hosted by Lindsay and George Bolton of San Francisco. This event was in honor of San Francisco Parks Trust's 2006 Fall Fundraiser Host Committee.

As the guests enjoyed the wonderful views of San Francisco from the Bolton's home, they sipped on Diablo Grande wine and enjoyed delicious food catered by Richard Visconte Catering. As the evening drew to a close, the guests received San Francisco Parks Trust canvas tote bags donated by Nicola Miner and Robert Mailer Anderson. As the guests left for the evening, they were clearly excited about the work of San Francisco Parks Trust and eager to ensure that the 2006 Fall Fundraiser on Thursday, October 19, 2006 at Marina Green is a fantastic success!

Left: Lindsay Bolton, 2006 Host Committee Member and Meg Bertero, Co-Chair of the 2006 Fall Fundraiser Top Right: Lucy Hume Koukopolous and Nick Koukopolous, 2006 Host Committee Members Bottom Right: Lynn and Edward Poole, 2006 Host Committee Members

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MARINA GREEN 2006

San Francisco Parks Trust Fall Fundraiser

The 2006 San Francisco Parks Trust Fall Fundraiser is sure to be a bigger success than last year's event at Coit Tower and a party that you will not want to miss! This year, the SFPT Fall Fundraiser will be held at the West End of Marina Green on Thursday, October 19, 2006.

We encourage event attendees to join at the Patron level. Individual patron ticket prices begin at \$350, general admission tickets are \$250. Patrons will enjoy a number of fabulous benefits, including exciting new offerings unique to this year's event.

All Patrons will be invited to a special VIP reception beginning at 6 pm (general admission ticket holders will be admitted at 7 pm).

In addition, this fall, we are proud to offer an exclusive invitation to a private luncheon reception at the new Bloomingdale's location to Patrons that join at \$5,000 and above. For a complete listing of Patron benefits, please visit us online at www.sfpt.org, Love your parks, or call Patricia Ivancich at 415.750.5107. We hope to see you on October 19th!

COME OUT AND PLAY! New Alta Plaza Playground Unveiled

This May, Alta Plaza Playground reopened with an incredibly positive response! Families had been peering through the fencing awaiting the all-clear sign from the Department of Public Works. It is now a beautiful new playground with state-of-the-art play structures and elements, and a beautiful tile wall honoring the project donors separating distinct play areas for children.

This joint project between Friends of Alta Plaza Park, San Francisco Parks Trust and the City of San Francisco had been more than four years in the works. There were extensive planning sessions over playground design, the need for improved ADA accessibility, and fundraising.

This project includes three phases: I) renovation of the tennis courts, including making one a shared sport court; II) replacement of the playground; and, III) improvement of the horticultural design of the park.

Friends of Alta Plaza Park successfully raised \$1,500,000 from generous patrons. We are overjoyed to report that over 350 individuals and families donated funds towards the completion of Phases I and II! We are now embarking on Phase III, a new horticultural design of the park. A design competition was held with students from UC Berkeley's School of Landscape Design and selected features will be incorporated into the final plan.

Thank you to our partners and donors for making this possible! Please visit Alta Plaza and keep an eye open for further improvements.

To find this park, visit www.sfpt.org for a SF parks map.



WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU. YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

We extend our deepest thanks to our donors who have given their support through membership, our programs and events.

San Francisco Parks Trust thanks the following donors for their generous gifts received between March 2006 and May 2006 (*gifts of \$125 and above are listed*).

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SFPT Salutes KGO-TV ABC7

San Francisco Parks Trust would like to recognize KGO-TV ABC 7 for their support of our *Love your parks* visibility campaign. In May 2006, the San Francisco station developed our on-air television advertisements and will continue to run our *Love your parks* ads throughout the summer. Watch KGO-TV ABC7 to see our latest ads and to hear our tag line *San Francisco's most beautiful places belong to all of us—Love your parks.*

HANDS-ON PHILANTHROPY:

An interview with REI Outreach Specialist Megan Perkins



What is REI's environmental mission?

REI believes in building a lasting legacy of trails, rivers, and wild lands for people of all ages and experiences to enjoy. We promote responsible stewardship of our outdoor spaces and want to help protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

How did you become involved with San Francisco Parks Trust and San Francisco Recreation & Park Department?

I became involved after reading *ChronicleWatch* in 2004 that discussed how litter, invasive species and land development were threatening the habitat of the Mission Blue Butterfly (see cover photo) at Twin Peaks. Twin Peaks is located at the heart of

our City and is a beautiful area to walk in and has some of the best public views in San Francisco. As only one of three areas providing habitat to the endangered Mission Blue Butterfly, it is also being crowded out by non-native plants. REI wanted to get involved so we began working in partnership with Parks Trust and RPD. REI volunteers clean litter and remove various invasive plant species from the hillside. We've restored much of Twin Peaks' natural plant life, helping to create a healthier home for the butterfly to survive and a more pristine setting for people to enjoy.

What are other ways that REI is making a difference in the community?

Everyone is involved with service projects at REI. Our employees really have a passion for the outdoors and care deeply about the environment. Each store organizes a local environmental volunteer project dedicated to restoring and improving areas in which we enjoy outdoor recreation. REI recently donated \$1 million to local parks across the country. REI SF chose to give a grant to Twin Peaks Natural Areas. Every company in San Francisco can make a difference in the city by supporting their parks.

Get involved! Contact Jenifer Botch, Director of Corporate and Foundation Development at jenifer@sfpt.org.

Photo: SFPT's Jay Banfield participates in REI's Twin Peaks service day.

SAN FRANCISCO PARKS TRUST WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS AND CORPORATE DONORS

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DIABLO GRANDE Winery & Resort

In the heart of San Francisco's trendy SOMA district is an elegant wine tasting room, located at 669 Mission Street. The Wine Gallery opened its doors in 2004 and showcases the award winning wines from Diablo Grande and Isom Ranch Vineyards. San Francisco Parks Trust salutes one of our wine partners, Diablo Grande Winery, and encourages you to take a tour. For more information, please visit: www.diablogrande/winegallery.com



Join San Francisco Parks Trust as a Corporate Partner!

If you would like to learn more about how your company can make an investment in San Francisco's parks, or how your company can double or even triple your individual donation, please contact Jenifer Botch, Director of Corporate and Foundation Development :: jenifer@sfpt.org or 415.750.5109.

All Corporate Partners receive generous benefits, including recognition on our new webpage at www.sfpt.org, and click on Love your parks

SF PARKS TRUST PARTNER SALUTE

Plant*SF



After her home flooded twice in three months during heavy rainstorms, Jane Martin founded Plant*SF as a solution to the city's faulty sewer system. San Francisco has a combined sewer system, in which rain mixes with wastewater and is sent to treatment plants. In heavy storms the system can't handle the volume, and untreated runoff and wastewater flows straight into the Bay.

Plant*SF enables individuals to use an existing permit process to convert areas of the city's sidewalks to exposed earth gardens. Using permeable landscapes – soil, plants, rocks, trees – that permit the earth to breathe, rainwater is absorbed by the soil where it nourishes the plants as it replenishes the underlying aquifer. Plant*SF's first project was the Shotwell Greenway, where large portions of the sidewalks were replaced with permeable elements. The end result not only helped reduce storm loads on the combined city sewer system, but also greened and beautified this Mission street. Other projects have included greening the 16th Street and Mission Wells Fargo Bank fenceline, transforming the Guerrero/San Jose Blvd median into an oasis of drought tolerant plants and trees, and re-landscaping the Taraval Triangle in the Outer Sunset.

This month, DPW and the Mayor's Office announced that the new Sidewalk Landscaping Permit is now available to the public. Plant*SF encourages you to spread the word and put in an application! To learn more about Plant*SF and how you can to improve your neighborhood with sidewalk landscaping, visit www.plantsf.org, or contact Jane at info@plantSF.org.

PARK PARTNER DONORS — *Online donations are now available, visit Programs at www.sfpt.org*

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Alma's Alteration

CALENDAR Please visit us at www.sfpt.org to let us know about events happening in your community.

SEPTEMBER

Bernal Heights Outdoor Cinema

Saturday, September 2, 16, 30

Visit www.bhoutdoorcine.org for times and locations

Project ReCreation Volunteer Workday

Saturday, September 9 :: 10 am

Location :: Boeddeker Park, Eddy & Jones Streets

Please call 415.750.5110 to RSVP

Opera in the Park

Sunday, September 10 :: 1 pm

Location :: Sharon Meadow in Golden Gate Park

Bring the whole family for a free afternoon of music in the park.

Community Clean Team District 2

Saturday, September 16 :: 9 am

Volunteer in the Parks. Please call 415.552.9201 for details.

Members' Event at Books Inc.

Featuring local author Jennifer Egan

Thursday, September 21 :: 6:30 to 9 pm

Location :: Books Inc., Laurel Village, 3515 California Street, SF

Space is limited. (See page 5 for more details)

OCTOBER

Community Clean Team District 7

Saturday, October 28 :: 9 am

Volunteer in the Parks. Please call 415.552.9201 for details.

NOVEMBER

Community Clean Team District 4

Saturday, November 18 :: 9 am

Volunteer in the Parks. Please call 415.552.9201 for details.

[MARINA]

GREEN 2006

MARINA GREEN 2006

**San Francisco Parks Trust Fall Fundraiser
35th Anniversary Celebration**

Please join SFPT for this momentous occasion on Thursday, October 19, 2006 from 7:00 – 11:00 pm with a special VIP Patron Party starting at 6:00 pm.

The fundraiser will be held on the Marina Green in San Francisco.

General admission tickets are \$250

Patron individual tickets are \$350

Patron levels are \$700 - \$10,000

For more information or to purchase tickets please contact Patricia Ivancich at 415.750.5107, email development@sfpt.org or visit our website at www.sfpt.org

San Francisco Parks Trust is dedicated to providing leadership and support for San Francisco parks, recreation centers, and open spaces.



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