

5. Consultation and Coordination

The Alternatives described in Section 3 are the result of an extensive public participation process. Public involvement began in October 1995 at "The Greening of the Presidio." This Presidio-wide symposium focused on Mountain Lake issues and included representatives from the public, Golden Gate Audubon, Friends of Mountain Lake Park, California Native Plant Society, the Presidio Golf Course, and the city of San Francisco. Additional Mountain Lake public meetings occurred between 1995 and 1999, prior to the start of the formal planning process for Mountain Lake. This public input has informed the planning and development of the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan's Alternatives and Proposed Action.

5.1 PUBLIC CONCERNS AND ISSUES

The Alternatives and Proposed Action integrates responses and recommendations received from extensive consultation with groups, private citizens, neighbors to Mountain Lake, and federal, state, and local agencies. Public participation during the scoping phase included private citizens; neighborhood groups like Friends of Mountain Lake Park (FMLP), Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning (NAPP); institutions like the California Academy of Sciences, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of San Francisco; and non-profit organizations like the Golden Gate Audubon Society and the California Native Plant Society.

This section summarizes public concerns and issues that surfaced during the scoping period that took place in Spring 2000. In addition to the comments submitted at the March 8, 2000 public meeting, the public was encouraged to provide additional input throughout the month-long scoping period.

Many groups and individuals acknowledged the necessity of dredging Mountain Lake as a means to improve water quality. The public expressed divergent opinions regarding public access: some individuals and groups supported maintaining existing levels of public access areas around the perimeter of the lake, while others supported minimizing trails in fragile natural areas to the north and east of the lake. Most members of the public agreed that visual screening of Park Presidio Boulevard was important. There was universal agreement regarding the need for expanded lake protection efforts, including habitat enhancement. Several individuals did not support the removal of any trees as a part of the enhancement effort, while others supported the phased removal of trees for habitat enhancement purposes. Many individuals and groups expressed concern regarding the proposed project's visual impacts to the area, and expressed interest in using a phased approach to mitigate for visual impacts. Several neighbors and groups voiced concern regarding construction related impacts to public access, noise, and general disruption to the lake's visitation patterns.

5.1.1 COORDINATION WITH OHLONE/COSTANOAN TRIBAL GROUPS

Mountain Lake was likely seasonally inhabited by the native people of the San Francisco area, the Ohlone/Costanoans. Due to the potential for discovery of native archeological sites associated with early use of the site, coordination with Ohlone/Costanoan tribal groups and individuals was initiated during the public scoping process. Coordination with tribal groups and individuals would continue throughout the planning process, including during the development of the Archeological Management Assessment and Monitoring Program (AMA) for the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan. If a native site is discovered in conjunction with construction activities at Mountain Lake, construction work would cease and tribal groups would be consulted. The discovery of any human remains or associated mortuary items covered under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act would be treated in accordance with 43 CFR 10.4 (Inadvertent Discoveries). Work would be conducted in accordance with the programmatic agreement that constitutes the Section 106 compliance for the Presidio General Management Plan Amendment.

5.2 AGENCY CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

This Proposed Action and Alternatives reflect the Presidio Trust's request for early consultation with federal, state, and local authorities. Initial responses were received from the following authorities: Office of Historic Preservation; California Department of Transportation; United States Department of the Interior; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board; City and County of San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department; City and County of San Francisco Planning Department; San Francisco Public Transportation Department. Specific project elements were developed to reflect the regulatory requirements and concerns of those authorities that participated in early consultation. Ongoing consultation would occur throughout the planning and construction phases of the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan.

The following is a summary of agency comments received during the scoping period:

5.2.1 CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The agency determined that since the proposed alternative did not include any actions on lands within the City's jurisdiction, City approvals and/or CEQA review were not required.

5.2.2 CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

The Recreation and Park Department administers Mountain Lake Park, located to the south of the lake. This agency shared that Mountain Lake is a designated interpretive site for the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. The agency also questioned whether the lake bottom has been tested to confirm that the sediment does not contain hazardous substances.

The Plan treats the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail as a valuable recreational and historic resource. The trail is integrated into the overall trail/circulation plan for the Project Area, and interpretive signs would relay the de Anza trail's historic context to the public. The Presidio Trust Remediation Program is currently pursuing a Record of Decision (ROD) Amendment process to ensure that Mountain Lake bottom sediment is not contaminated. Initial consultant studies and U.S. Army recommendations suggest that the sediment does not exceed clean-up thresholds and would not require remedial action. A formal decision regarding this issue would be incorporated in the final ROD Amendment that is expected to be issued early Winter 2001. The outcome of this regulatory issue may affect the manner in which dredged lake bottom material is disposed of and/or used as part of the Mountain Lake Enhancement Project.

5.2.3 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS) DISTRICT 4

CALTRANS requested that the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan/EA address how the project may affect Park Presidio Boulevard during construction, whether there were anticipated long-term effects upon the facility, and the degree to which construction staging areas and construction easements were required in the vicinity of the facility.

The operation of Park Presidio Boulevard would not be affected during the project's construction phases, construction easements would not be necessary and staging areas would be located away from the CALTRANS facility. It is also anticipated that long-term maintenance activities would not affect operations of the CALTRANS facility.

5.2.4 U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), REGION IX

The EPA suggested that the deepening of Mountain Lake may require permits from the USCOE under Section 10 of the Clean Water Act, though it is unlikely that a Clean

Water Act Section 404 Permit would be required. The agency also suggested that visitor parking at Mountain Lake be analyzed, specifically with respect to the potential for increased runoff into the Project Area. The agency was also interested in the cumulative effects of the project with respect to overall visitor use of the Park. Of particular concern was the potential for increased air emissions and vehicle trips to the Park.

The Presidio Trust would seek all applicable permits for the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan construction process. Visitor parking and the effects of the plan on visitor use in the Park are assessed within this document.

5.2.5 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS)

The USFWS provided technical advisory comments that primarily addressed the need for clearly stated ecological goals and objectives. In the absence of specific ecological objectives and priorities, the agency believed it would be challenging to balance the competing interests of visitors and ecological restoration. The USFWS suggested that the project consider eradication of non-native fish populations, the re-introduction of California red-legged frogs, and the removal of non-native vegetation within the Project Area. The agency also urged the Presidio Trust to clearly evaluate the degree to which engineering is necessary to restore water quality and associated lake systems.

The Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan provides a framework of specific ecological and visitor use objectives, as embodied by the site plan for each Project Alternative. An overarching project goal guiding the formulation of Action Alternatives was to balance visitor use with the enhancement of lake and terrestrial ecological systems. Each of the concerns outlined by the USFWS are addressed within this document.

5.2.6 CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The agency requested that the Presidio Trust continue its process of completing its Section 106 responsibilities for the proposed project. The Presidio Trust would continue to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer throughout the planning and implementation phases of the proposed project, to ensure that Section 106 obligations are met.

5.2.7 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)

The NPS requested that the Presidio Trust assess the potential for surviving historic or archeological resources within the Project Area, given Mountain Lake's historic role as a water source. The agency also recommended monitoring and assessment of all ground disturbances, including lake silt removal activities. The NPS recommended that the Presidio Trust initiate early and sustained coordination with local Native American groups, as well as the City of San Francisco. Each of these issues are addressed within this document. Pursuant to interagency agreement, the NPS is considered a cooperating agency for the purposes of this NEPA analysis.