

**Board of the Presidio Trust Public Hearing**

**Vegetation Management Plan**

**Golden Gate Club, San Francisco**

**November 17, 1999**

Chairman Rosenblatt: Welcome. The Board of the Presidio Trust welcomes you and appreciates your coming out this morning. As you know, our topic for today is to have a presentation and to learn your thoughts and reactions to the draft of the Vegetation Management Plan for the Presidio. As you understand, in this case, when we talk about the Presidio, again, we are talking about what is known as both areas A & B, because the vegetation doesn't know where that political line is drawn. So it's all one big area, happily.

We have, before us, another very important item that the Board will take up before we begin with the Vegetation Management Plan. We have today the honor of being able to have the formal swearing in of two of our members who have been reappointed by President Clinton - Amy Meyer and Bill Reilly. The opportunity to welcome

our newest Board member, most recent appointment by the  
President - Jennifer Hernandez.

Just to remind you briefly about the details, if I could, about these  
individuals. Jennifer Hernandez is the partner in the law firm of  
Beverage and Diamond - a firm that specializes, as she does, in land  
use and environmental law. Jennifer serves also on the boards of the  
California League of Conservation Voters, the Sustainable  
Conservation Environmental Law Forum, and the San Francisco  
Legal Aid Society. She's also an active member of San Francisco  
La Raza Association.

Amy Meyer is fondly known by a lot of us - probably by everybody  
in this room - as the mother of the GGNRA. She's the founder of  
The People for GGNRA with Dr. Weyburn, and the founder of  
People for the Presidio. She's vice-chair of GGNRA Advisory  
Commission, and was recently awarded a lifetime achievement  
award by San Francisco Beautiful for her work in the parks in the  
City and in GGNRA.

Bill Reilly has had a distinguished career serving in public and private sectors. He's currently President and CEO of Aqua International Partners - which is a company devoted to private U.S. investment dedicated to water projects and companies in developing countries. Bill, prior to that, was the Paine visiting professor at Stanford and the administrator of the US EPA - a cabinet position. He was before that, president of the World Wildlife Fund, and served as the head of the U.S. delegation to the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

Bill and Amy, as you know have been directors of the Presidio Trust since our inception and Jennifer, we're happy to welcome as our newest member.

We are honored - very honored today - to have Chief Judge Marylin Patel, the Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California. She has most generously accepted our

invitation to come and administer the oath of office to these three.

Judge, thank you for coming.

Judge Patel:

While they're coming down, I will just say a couple of brief words.

It's my pleasure to be able to administer the oath to these three members of the Board. Also, to say that in reading over the bios of the members of the Board of the Trust, it's just a very, very impressive group of people. I think we're very, very fortunate to have such qualified - super qualified - people serving as public servants in this trust.

With that, do the following, please. Raise your right hand and then say, "I", and your own name, and then repeat the oath after me.

[Each repeats this oath in unison as she says it ]

I . . . (Jennifer Hernandez, Amy Meyer, Bill Reilly) . . . do solemnly swear, that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies foreign and domestic. That I will bear

true faith and allegiance to the same. That I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me, God.

Congratulations.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Judge Patel, thank you very much for joining us today. Again, congratulations to the three of you. And back to work.

The meeting that we are planning today will begin with a presentation by the staffs of the Presidio Trust and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, briefing us again on the essential content of the Vegetation Management Plan. As you know, summaries of the plan and the details of it, have been available for public review. There have been several public workshops. I expect that most of you have been at one or more of those workshops or have participated in review of that. The Board appreciates your taking the

time and the interest to come today and to talk to us about your views on the plan at its current state.

At the conclusion of the presentations, we will ask for your comments. There are speaker request cards--just outside? Back there. We would ask that you fill one out if you intend to speak.

At this point, we have about 20 or 25 people indicating they would like to speak. Could I get a quick show of hands of anybody else who expects that they're going to want to sign up that hasn't had a chance yet? All right. We should, then, be able to accomplish that in the time that we have available to us here. I would again ask you, as is the usual pattern, to contain your remarks within the 3 minute period so that everybody has an opportunity to express their views. We do have a timekeeper who will be here when the speakers begin so that you'll know and we'll know what that schedule is.

We also have somebody who is signing? Was signing? Do we have anybody in the audience who knows of any other individual here who needs signing? Apparently not. Okay, thank you.

All right, let's get into the presentations, please.

Jim Meadows: I'm Jim Meadows. I'm the Executive Director of the Presidio Trust. I'm going to make some brief remarks and then we're going to get right into the text of the plan.

We have two Board members absent today. Mr. Don Fisher is out of town on business. Mr. John Barry of the National Park Service, Department of Interior, sent a letter of regret because the appropriations bill is still under a study in Congress and was planned to either be passed today or be worked on today. He, at the last minute, had to call and change his plans - even though he had his bags packed and the tickets already in place to come.

He did send a letter which I will not read, by basically expresses just the desire and the congratulations on both the Park Service and the Trust in working together on this Vegetation Management Program and its importance to the Presidio.

I want to reiterate that I think all parties involved understand that this is a very unique park. The natural area comprises currently about 60% of the park and could go up as high as 2/3 of that total area by the time we're finished.

The Park Service and the Presidio Trust basically are working in partnership on this Vegetation Management Program, and both bring skills that we think are complements and will help make a better plan and better implementation.

What the Trust brings is basically resources - both financial resources and expertise resources to help with the National Park Service expertise, to make sure that the implementation occurs appropriately and as quickly as is prudent.

One of my personal people that I have a lot of admiration for certainly is here in spirit, but it was 100 years ago, and that's Major Jones who basically did the original layout. We owe a debt to Major Jones as far as what the park is today.

What the Vegetation Management Program has really fleshed out, and that is some very large questions that will continue to be discussed over a period of time. Those questions include the total visitor experience at the Presidio, the dynamic tension between the historic forest and the native plants; the access within the Presidio itself; and recreational aspects that have been put together.

We'll be telling you a little bit later about a charette that we conducted among professionals to try to bring more information to these questions, but the questions are still there.

I really think that's what I want to leave you with - which you'll hear more than once today - and that's basically that this plan is an

ongoing plan. It is a concept plan and an implementation plan; we're marrying the two ideas together. This is not the last time you'll be talking about this; this is not the last time we will be making adjustments to this plan. So the fact that the official public comment period ends tomorrow in no way means that the public participation process is not going to continue. As we have pilot projects, as we have implementation going forward, we will learn from these projects and we'll make adjustments as we go, and they'll be part of the public process.

Without any further comment, I'd like to, at this point, ask Mai-Liis Bartling to come up from the National Park Service to make some brief comments also from a Park Service perspective. Thank you.

Mai-Liis Bartling: Thank you, Jim. Good morning.

The National Park Service is pleased to be part of this cooperative project. This is an effort that was begun several years ago and we

now welcome the Trust as a partner who brings new energy, new ideas and financial resources to the effort.

The Plan pays attention to the Presidio's living systems. We think it's important to have a plan for how their health will be restored and maintained alongside all the other important things at the Presidio there are to do.

We're committed to working with the public's comments to get to a final plan that balances considerations. We think that natural and cultural resources can be sustained together, and in full consideration of human activities at the Presidio.

It's exciting to have the prospect of being able to implement a plan. So many plans are relegated to the shelf. To that, we're particularly pleased to be able to work with the Trust.

I think one measure of success here might be 100 years from now, if we look at a photo of San Francisco - an aerial photo - and we see

the Presidio as a living, green system the way we see it today, I think we'll all feel good about that.

With that, I'd like to introduce Nick Weeks, who is our park's landscape architect and is the project manager for the Vegetation Management Plan.

Nick Weeks: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen - member of the Board. Thank you for coming this morning. I think it's really appropriate and wonderful that we're considering the resource values of the Presidio along with land use and recreation and so forth as an integral part of our planning processes. As we go forward and the Park Service and the Trust go forward with dealing with area plans such as the main post and the trails plan, that we have good guidance and ideas and concepts for how we want to manage the vegetation in this wonderful place.

As was stated earlier, this has been a planning process that's gone on for a little bit. As a matter of fact, since so many different

changes have happened in the administration of the Presidio over the last 10 years - starting with base closure and then transitioning with the National Park Service's management for a period of time and the establishment of the Trust.

What people don't usually realize is that the planning process for at least a portion of the vegetation in the Presidio has been going on, starting with the Army, with the production of a plan, for the forest, in 1984. That was refined again and dealt with in greater detail with a plan in 1990, done by Jones and Stokes which took Professor Joe McBride's 1984 plan and did more inventory, more sophisticated sampling and literally relegated the Presidio's historic forest into a number of units with prescriptions of how to treat them.

Base closure obviously was happening at that time. They said, all right, this is our draft. Now, the Park Service can add their input. We started with Jones and Stokes again, did additional inventory and started this with several public scoping workshops early in the process and ultimately held them in the Fall of '97.

What those workshops were for, was to analyze and re-think and get concurrence on the objectives for the Presidio's vegetation that were in the general management plan amendment for the Presidio.

Basically, as I said before, in the Presidio, the Army was thinking of the vegetation just in terms of the forest - as we went through the process, we realized that it was a complete system. You couldn't separate the native plant material and the native communities with the landscape vegetation and the design elements. Together, with this historic forest, these were the reasons why this was a national historic landmark, and why it was on the National Register as such.

The nomination for that actually states that the landscape itself, and the buildings in the forest and within the system are part and parcel the reason for it being so significant and being such a wonderful feature.

We decided we were going to do a management plan in concept for the entire vegetation mosaic. Let me start with a couple slides here

just to talk about this and put it in context. These are meant for at night because they're 35 mm, so you'll have to sit with me here. Sit down in front.

I think we all understand the incredible promontory that the Presidio occupies in the junction at the Golden Gate of 16 major rivers in California. Because of that, the mosaic of plants and ecosystems that exist in this area is incredibly unique.

Obviously, when you look at the Presidio from any promontory or any area in the City, this incredible greensward sticks out at you. It's an absolute gem unprecedented. I think Central Park is somewhat similar, and parts of Golden Gate Park, but remember, the largest planting in Central Park is the ramble of 90 acres. We have a forest here of 300 acres of planted forest that was started in 1882 by Major Jones as his planting effort and continued up through the turn of the century into the '20s and into the '40s.

The majority of the forest, this plantation here, was put in before the turn of the century. By 1892, over 350,000 trees had been planted in the Presidio - by Army labor, citizens, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Arbor Day celebrations and so forth.

Today, that forest, as you see it here, and as illustrated in this wonderful characteristic shot, consists of approximately the main forest of about 70,000 trees. It is the signature of even-aged planting that gives the characteristic landscape its wonderful significance.

Throughout the Presidio, there are obviously three different major tree forms. The eucalyptus and the pine, the Monterey pine and the Monterey cypress, that Major Jones found and subsequent commanders and planters found were the ones that survived. As I said, it's ultimately 500,000 trees were planted. The ones that survived were these three, and that's the 70,000 grouping we have today.

It is such a significant and dynamic system. You see this is Lover's Lane and the eucalyptus grove on the way down from the Presidio gate entrance. The edges of plantings in rows in military formation of it, this is a unique plantation system. Many people don't realize that every single one of these trees was hand-planted. In these kind of groves where there's no regeneration, it is purely an artificial system.

I think what would be interesting, when we all adjourn, there's a great photograph to the right on the outside here, under the stairs, of this exact planting, taken from the corner of Lyon (probably) and Broadway, looking down at this plantation. It does look like a Christmas tree farm at that time, at the turn of the century.

Along with that forest, integral with it, is the landscape vegetation. This is the designed landscape such as the main post. There are significant plantings and trees within the main post. There's at least 120 acres of tree cover within landscaped vegetation within the Presidio.

This includes our housing area such as Colby Avenue here and the wonderful landscapes and landscape forms along this wonderful row of houses. It also includes such as Funston Avenue, and the rehabilitation of that group of homes. And, the roadsides too.

The forest and the tree cover, and the landscape zone consists of these roadsides and managing of the view sheds and hazard tree management along roads and providing the variety for driving experience and biking experience that we've come to expect.

Also things like the National Cemetery, where although this photo just shows the forest at the end of it, to the right of it, there's significant, wonderful specimen trees of Monterey cypress.

The golf course as well. The golf course has significant tree cover on it that was planted after the turn of the century as a separate item. It is landscape vegetation too.

Then there are remnant native plant communities. This one-- everyone's familiar with the dune community at Crissy Field. Now, we have our wonderful program of Grow Crissy Fields. As a matter of fact, I saw the logo on a Muni bus which was going by, which was really great.

The native plant communities aren't just coastal dune and dune scrub and serpentine grasslands. This is Lobos Creek, and a live oak tree and it's riparian oak woodland, which is exceedingly beautiful and healthy. Even under [story] through such as this older native elderberry in bloom. The native community is very diverse; it's not just what we think of as the upper Baker Beach area.

Of that mosaic that originally existed, this native community that we have built as the Presidio and that the Army has developed into, this is basically what it looked like. This is a coastal dune scrub community - which is in the prevailing winds as you can see it here. Here's another one.

This is upland grasslands, so you can see how it's divided. The various treed area what we call the riparian zones - watered areas, like where these blue areas are -- [Alpoland] Springs down into the lagoon here at Crissy Fields, Mountain Lake and along Lobos Creek. The oak woodland area was probably in this hollow here. Pretty certain this is the way it existed.

These are the same communities in the same color scheme that exist today. You can see they're severely reduced in scale from their original. This is the forest. Take a look at the larger maps when you go out, so you can get a better view what this is. I'll explain it here. The green is what the original forest was. The lighter red on it - like in the golf course - is basically later planting and the way it exists today. In some places, the two overlap; in other places, they don't. You can see how the forest has shifted over time.

Actually, the original intent that Major Jones had, which was to crown the ridges and leave the valleys open and make it look larger than it actually was, and ring the borders, is starting to get blurred. We're starting to lose that original intent that we would like to

maintain, which is to crown the ridges, show the Presidio, accentuate the topography.

So, how do we deal with this, with these three kinds of vegetation? We decided to do a zoning map that this was the major concept of this plan. This is a bridge plan. We call this a bridge between what our general guidelines for those three communities are in the general management plan, to more specific planning and action plans that Jim Meadows referred to, that are coming later.

The three types of vegetation - the landscape vegetation where everything is highly maintained. The trees are pruned, the hazards are reduced, the lawns are mowed, everything's watered. It's the landscape around your homes.

It's different than the maintenance requirements for the forest, where you're dealing with large blocks of vegetation and the individual isn't as important as its mosaic and its composite.

The native communities, which are much the same, but at this point, need to be much more diverse.

Given management considerations, what exists now, where the forest is now, in the direction to rehabilitate the historic forest as in the GNPA, and enhance native plant communities, and keep the cultural landscape values in the landscape vegetation zone that make it historic and help it qualify for the National Register.

We came up with a preliminary zoning map, which is in the summary document that is out in the front. This is the shot from it. It's also in the plan. You can see the dark green is the forest itself; the historic forest crowning these ridges - the ridge down at the Presidio entrance gate, the windbreak at Lobos Creek on the west side of Lincoln and coming across above the Trust maintenance facilities.

And, of course, all the yellow, which is surprisingly a large amount - over 50% of the Presidio is in landscape vegetation, including the golf course.

The remainder is zoned native plant communities, including you see in the new - we've got the new wetland down here, which is great.

The native plant expansion area and/or enhancement area at Inspiration Point, which has been basically the same proposal for many, many years to deal with rare and endangered serpentine grassland mosaic. Also providing an enhanced dune community in this area, that will make it more viable for the purposes of the endangered species that exist in that area such as the [lucingia] and the Presidio [clarkia].

Sharon, later, is going to talk a little about that. Basically what we come up with is a mosaic of about 50% of the vegetation was zoned in landscape vegetation in the Presidio. About 28% of it in native communities, and about 20% of it in the historic forest.

What have we done, or what are some of the treatments or ideas for this overall rehabilitation treatment? Remember, rehabilitation is the treatment that is given in the general management plan as all over kind of treatment for the Presidio. Which means it should preserve and protect the historic resources and/or qualities that exist and you can allow changes for contemporary use that fit in the new mission and/or regulations that you have to deal with today.

A classic example is a handicapped ramp put on, or an accessible ramp put on a historic building to satisfy the Americans with Disability Act requirement. That's a classic.

Another one is such as changing a roofing material that matches the old but is more sustainable and less maintenance-intensive than the old material.

In the landscape, it's changing lawns into a more drought-tolerant grass, such as here at the main post. This was a rehabilitation project that was done several years ago at the Montgomery Street

Barracks along the main post. The lawn was changed out into a more drought-tolerant grass, automatic sprinklers were put in to prevent having to drag hoses and waste water, and a new lower maintenance and more drought-tolerant foundation planting went in. It looks like it did; some things are a little different, but it looks like it did, and it keeps the historic integrity that existed, but it is much more sustainable.

In the native communities, you all know probably about our stored ship program and the great volunteer efforts that have been going on. This is the native plant nursery at Fort Scott. Here is a planting project - this is at the beginning of Inspiration Point planting. Each one of those is a plant to go in, and they're being laid out to cover that hillside.

It's a great opportunity for everyone in all communities to participate in something we want to expand on. As a matter of fact, in the forest itself, we'd love to be able to grow cultural vegetation and get

that program going to do the same thing to help renew the forest itself.

As to the forest, some of it . . . there is some regeneration. Here, you can see at the edge of a eucalyptus grove, you can see some seedlings coming up in an opening. There's not much of this.

Because it's so closely planted and so shaded, you don't normally get this. You'll see a little bit, when you go through the Presidio in the next few days, take a look at the under story. In some places, such as up near the World War II memorial, you'll see young pines and young cypress coming up underneath in some of the openings. That's great, and we want to see that. Other places, it's going to need some help.

Here's a cypress, an opening in the cypress. You can see some seedlings and young cypress trees starting to regenerate along the edges. As long as there's sunlight, and we get adequate soil conditions and some moisture, these three species will regenerate.

In the zoning map, I didn't point it out because you couldn't see them in red, but you'll be able to see them over here in this map. There are what we call signature stands of trees. When you see the Presidio, like the picture on the cover, and like the first picture I showed you in this presentation, is what we identify with the Presidio. Those, we want to expend their life as long into the future as possible. They're the signature in the Presidio.

One of them is the wonderful cypress grove at the five intersections, the five-street intersection at Lincoln and McDowell, going down to the Calvert Stables. I think you know which that one is.

The other one is at the Presidio Avenue gate. I showed you a picture of that, with the next to Lover's Lane.

Another one is this one here at Arguello, coming in by the golf course.

The fourth one is up at the intersection of Lincoln and Colby, just east of the World War II memorial - which consists of all three of the major species.

These are all easily seen by the driving public, by the bicyclists, by walkers and so forth, because they're a junction of areas. There are places where people come in contact with them. No matter where you go, if you go through the Presidio, you'll encounter at least one of these, which gives you the feeling of the way the Presidio always was.

So how do you deal with these? We are in the process of having some mortality in this forest. For example, I think you probably remember several years ago in December, we had a nasty storm the first week of December. In one night, 250 trees came down in the Presidio. It was noticeable to some people - like myself - who were much concerned, but other people saw maybe 1 or 2 trees. But 250 in one evening, that's pretty severe.

I think we're losing . . . I talked to our Trust Roads & Trails foreman this week, one or two trees a week. I believe that's what's quoted. You can think of anywhere from 50-100 trees being lost by natural attrition every year.

In an area . . . the plan, it's cornerstone, like I said, is a zoning map, but the plan as presented, talks about opportunistic management.

This means when these blow-downs occur, and when these problems occur, you use that as an opportunity to go in and replant.

We think in the future, in talking with Golden Gate Park - which was planted approximately a generation before us - that we're going to be faced, in the next few years, and according to the scientific evidence by Jones and Stokes, that we could lose upwards of 40% of our historic forest trees within 20 years, unless we take some proactive action.

If you take advantage of a blow-down, such as this in the back, and you start planting, and maybe remove several others in the next few years, and keep planting out. As you can see, as you plant out, you

will end up, in about 50 years - and it takes that long - a relatively even-aged stand of trees. That's how we would treat those signature stands. That's the suggestion of how to do it - there's a lot of other ways to do it.

In some areas, you may have an opportunity to plant a whole larger area, such as the Presidio Avenue Gate, where there was a large blow-down several years ago.

In other parts of the forest that lend themselves to it, we would try to diversify the ecology in that area, in that habitat, by when a blow-down happens, start planting with a variety of species, a variety of ages and a variety of age structures. So that, as the forest regenerates, as we start losing these trees, we replant it and make it more diverse for wildlife, for the purposes of sustainability. So that the bill doesn't come all at once. That's basically one of the problems we have now.

Another area of concern has always been . . . this is called the Pigmy Forest at the south end of the Presidio. When Major Jones' plan was put into effect, the city didn't really exist that close to the Presidio. It's built up to that area, and there are neighborhood concerns about views - and rightly so - and vegetation growing up within the world-class views. These have been pruned in the past, and it's a very expensive operation and also is very unhealthy for the trees.

What we would propose to do, is still to maintain a forest character, or wooded character, as to maintain its landmark status, but we would plant it out with a shorter growing species of tree. There's a variety of them that would work. We could try a shorter cypress, in this case. If that didn't work, make some openings, and try some live oaks which grow lower. So we would get this mosaic moving forward. In the end, we would have a full . . . this would be the ultimate height of the trees, and the view is maintained. We wouldn't have to do that [practice].

The last item is views - historic views and/or enhancing the views for the driving public. For us, it's enhancing the kind of element that Major Jones wanted. He emphasized views, and we're losing that. We would try to restore and enhance those views.

An obvious one here is Inspiration Point - which we've been working on for quite a while. Here's another one where Presidio Avenue comes down. There's a view out to the Bay, which is gone now.

Another major one is Robb Hill. Here's a simulation of what it looked like several years ago. I think it's almost grown up to that effect again.

This is Inspiration Point - what it would look like historically if the view were brought back to where the historic forest originally was.

That's the cornerstone of the plan. It's very conceptual; it gives ideas to start from. It has, like I said, three major zones. I think the

balance of what those zones are is the important thing we'd like to hear about. It's also an issue of how we treat that, and over what period of time.

Remember that this is a generation and generation thing. This is not something sealed in concrete. It will take as long for us to regenerate the Presidio and revitalize its vegetation as it's taken for it to evolve to this point. Thank you. Jane?

Jane Blackstone: Thanks, Nick. I'm Jane Blackstone, Deputy Director for Planning with Presidio Trust.

As Nick noted, the implementation of the Vegetation Management Plan is proposed to be a gradual and long-term process. It is implementation that is occurring in the context of a number of other planning efforts. Certainly trails planning is an important consideration as we move ahead with implementation to integrate trails planning and recreational planning with the implementation of the Vegetation Management Plan.

I would like to pitch that on December 1st, there is a trails planning workshop planned. I would encourage you to come. It's one of the early sessions at which we'll scope some of the issues to be studied as we move ahead with Presidio-wide trails planning. This is another joint project of the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service.

We also have a number of environmental remediation projects that will require a new cover where soils are removed to clear up landfills, for example. We do need to plant - we would like to plant with materials that are appropriate for a long-range management at the Presidio, rather than covering with something and then needing to take it out and cover again. The Vegetation Plan - provides some guidance for how that remediation program would work.

There are certainly site-specific restoration action plans - very detailed plans for the restoration of vegetation areas in the Presidio. Some of them are coordinated with our planning and leasing

activities, particularly in the designed landscape area. Some of these restoration programs will be associated with a deconstruction of buildings with opportunities that present themselves as Nick alluded to earlier.

At each stage of this, there will be opportunities for the public to become involved with these detailed plans.

There are some other issues that certainly integrate with this process. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has recovery plans for endangered species that we do need to coordinate with as we move ahead with vegetation restoration.

We also have, of course, our planning and leasing activities and. . .  
[technical problem] . . . Is it okay for me to keep talking? Okay.  
Thank you.

The Trust leasing efforts and ongoing detailed planning certainly will provide some additional meat on the bones of the Vegetation Management Plan.

Finally I would like to note the financial context of the Vegetation Management Plan. This is an expensive effort. The Trust, in constructing the financial management program to achieve financial self-sufficiency by the year 2013 has factored in the cost of vegetation management at the Presidio, about \$25M of capital costs. We're still working on a more detailed cost estimate for what this program might cost over the next 12 years . We do know that it could be anywhere from \$25-35M out of the total \$65M of infrastructure costs that the Trust needs to bear.

We need to find that money. It's important that we all bear in mind what the financial considerations are here. I want to assure you that the Trust has factored in the long-range management of the vegetation resources here at the Presidio.

I'd now like to introduce Sharon Farrell, who is an ecologist with the National Park Service, to talk a little bit about some of the proposed pilot projects that will give us some information to inform the long range implementation of the program.

Sharon Farrell: Good Morning. I'm going to take one second to play with technology and see if I can adjust this. Aha! It's good that I'm a plant person - I can still operate computers.

I'd like to take a few minutes to talk a little bit about our proposed implementation strategy. The Trust and the Park Service has been working together to determine how to approach implementation. As Nick described, there are three vegetation management zones. Each of those zones call for a series of different treatments, which would be appropriate to how to manage that vegetation type.

During our first phase of this proposed implementation strategy, we're looking to implement a series of small-scale pilot projects. These pilot projects will basically enable us to test out treatments

that we haven't used before. For example, in the Presidio, there are 12 native plant communities, each one of those requiring different types of treatments to ensure the health of those systems.

Same with the forests. There are definitely three different dominant tree species - eucalyptus, Monterey pine, Monterey cypress - all growing on different types of soil, whether it be serpentine or sand.

So part of this implementation strategy is really to adopt a pilot project phase, where we begin to explore all the different technical elements of doing those restoration efforts.

The goal within this project is to really involve you, the public. As you look around, this room is almost full, and we really believe it shows us . . . that's too loud? I'm sorry.

One of the things we want to ensure is we have an active public education program - that we involve the community both in stewardship efforts and also in the education of how we do these

treatments, where they're going to be, so you can be ensured what we're promoting and what we're doing is something that you're well educated upon.

We want to conduct a series of re-vegetation experiments, making sure that the plant material we put back in the ground as we convert different types survives and is appropriate. With that, we will conduct a series of monitoring programs to look at the half the wildlife, to look at the health of the forest stands, to look at the health of the native plant communities.

In addition, we'll be spending a lot of time continuing the gathering of baseline data. A lot of that has been begun through the Jones Institute . . . [tape ends]

[ End of Side A]

. . . some of the vegetation types under the natural areas programs - some of the treatments, excuse me, under the natural areas programs, will involve the conversion of exotic species -

[kaybiebie], pampas grass. Some areas where the forest has expanded beyond its historic boundaries - as Nick was describing. Here is, for example, at Robb Hill, is an area where the eucalyptus has expanded beyond the historic boundary. This would be an area we could potentially propose to do a pilot project.

Some of the most significant natural areas on the Presidio are on the serpentine bluffs. There's an incredible diversity of both plants and wildlife. Here, also, we'll be testing out a series of pilot projects. Again, they'll be very small-scale, where we'll begin to address the types of activities we will need to employ to converge disturbed areas to serpentine grasslands, serpentine chaparral. Also, in areas along the coastal front at Baker Beach as well.

What would these look like as far as in the natural areas? This gives you a brief ideas of the types of communities. As I said, there are 12 on the Presidio. You can see there's a wide range from tree cover . . . in a lot of the native plant communities there is tree cover involved

from the riparian woodland to serpentine grassland to the central dune scrub which you see along Baker Beach.

Part of the treatments for the forest that we're exploring - potentially in the pilot projects - is the diversification of areas of the forest, where it would be appropriate. In the areas, we would be looking - as you can see in the pictures of the Monterey cypress and eucalyptus span - they're somewhat limited under story in these areas.

We're looking to propose to diversity that under story, and also to introduce in some areas, a mid-story structure, which would hopefully have the promotion of wildlife habitat as well as diversify the plant species in these areas.

What will this look like potentially? I think those of you who have explored Golden Gate Park, you can see that there are areas where you have, for example, coast live oaks, buckeyes, madrones that are

currently growing within the canopies of the eucalyptus forest and the Monterey cypress and pine forests at Golden Gate Park.

Part of the objectives of this treatment is to hopefully reduce stand vulnerability - provide, as I said, a diversified structure, reduce the vulnerability to disease -- potentially fungus, wind throw.

This is part of a plan we're looking at maybe in buffer areas around between native plant communities and also in areas that support, for example, oak woodlands or riparian areas.

Other treatments within the forest areas? A typical forest management that you would see in other areas. Golden Gate Park has been instrumental in helping us understand the types of management practices they're having to employ to maintain the health of their forest. These management practices involve thinning, pruning, tree planting and ongoing maintenance.

Our pilot projects - as we develop them - will incorporate these concepts so you'll be able to see as well as - the Park and the Trust will be able to see - how effective these management practices are.

In closing, as far as our implementation strategy, we're hoping that it's going to be a successful strategy, that it is going to be based primarily on interagency collaboration - the Park and the Trust working together both bring a suite of resources.

It's going to build upon existing knowledge and successes. The Park Stewardship Program has been working on natural areas management for almost a decade now. There are a lot of other agencies who have been doing similar types of work, so we're going to build upon those successes and to work with our own program.

We want to ensure that we maximize our ability to create partnerships - especially with universities and colleges. As I said, we recognize the importance and value of public involvement in education. It's critical to any vegetation management on the

Presidio that we really feel it's very important to have a long-term stewardship program, so that the efforts we employ now, will be maintained into perpetuity.

Finally and probably equally important - if not more important - the Vegetation Management Plan will increase the biological diversity, enhance the wildlife habitat, and rehabilitate the historic forest and landscapes of the Presidio.

Jane Blackstone: The National Park Service and the Trust released the draft Vegetation Management Plan and its environmental assessment as a single document on July 1st. That opened a public comment period which ends tomorrow. Your comments today are being recorded, and will become part of the formal record on that environmental assessment. There is still an opportunity to submit your written comments as well. I encourage you to do that. A couple ways. Given that tomorrow is the close of the period, you may email them: [presidioveg@nps.gov](mailto:presidioveg@nps.gov). You can fax them to 561-4710. That goes to the National Park Service, the GGNRA Superintendent's Office.

You can certainly send them if they are postmarked by tomorrow, to the Presidio Vegetation Management Plan. There are copies of the Summary Document out on the front desk. There is a mailing address if you choose the snail mail approach.

The comments and letters that we've received to date, have been numerous - several hundred received to date. We certainly expect that as we near the close of the comment period, we will receive more.

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission has held a number of hearings on the plan, at which oral comment has been taken.

The comments, so far, have been very wide ranging. Certainly, as I'm sure we'll hear later in the public comment period here today, there is a very broad range of opinions - really the whole spectrum

from advocacy for more native plants areas, to advocacy for increased forested areas, and about everything in between.

What I'd like to do is introduce Jennifer Knauer, who's the Presidio Trust Landscape Architect, so that Jennifer can share with you the results of a one-day workshop that the Trust and National Park Service conducted, with a range of professionals from a number of disciplines, to get their opinions on the plan. It was a one-day workshop and it certainly doesn't represent a long period of study, but it does help to identify some of the issues that staff will address as we move ahead with analyzing all the comments that are received.

Jennifer?

Jennifer Knauer: Thanks, Jane.

To further inform the review period of the draft Vegetation Management Plan, the Presidio Trust invited 13 professionals from around the country for a day long Vegetation Management Plan charette, commonly known as a workshop.

These 13 charette participants provided professional, practical, scientific and academic perspectives in the fields of historic landscape preservation, landscape architecture, urban forestry and conservation biology. What follows is a summary of seven key points that emerged from this day-long charette.

To put this in perspective, it was very challenging to boil this day long of dialogue, debate, and technical presentations into seven points. I'd be happy to discuss these further at a later point.

(1) Participants universally supported the concept of zoning the Presidio into three landscape vegetation types - the historic designed landscape, native plant communities, and the historic forest.

(2) Participants agreed that the VMP needs to be put in context of an overall vision for the Presidio, and that all

proposed vegetation landscape zones should reflect this overarching vision.

(3) The draft VMP, vegetation management zoning map is inadequate, and requires additional analysis. The boundaries of proposed vegetation zones should be re-examined to reflect natural form and process, historic design intent, current and future land uses, as well as the overall vision for the Presidio.

(4) Questions were raised regarding the practicality of species diversification within historic tree stands. Visibility and public safety issues were identified as potential management issues associated with forest diversification. There was a concern that too much species diversification would impact the character of the historic forest stands as a contributing element to the national historic landmark status for the Presidio.

(5) An ongoing and engaging public involvement strategy is critical to ensure a successful multiphase VMP

implementation strategy. There was universal support for long-term site stewardship and volunteer programs associated with VMP implementation.

(6) It was suggested that the Trust and the National Park Service objectively assess the relative costs and benefits associated with the draft plan's vegetation prescriptions over time.

Specific considerations for this assessment could include water budgets, educational value, capital improvement costs, long-term maintenance costs, and other tangible and intangible values.

(7) Many of the MP implementation lessons can be learned from the Golden Gate Park experience, as well as other local and regional jurisdictions, actively engaged in urban forestry and habitat restoration.

What we do with this body of information is take it forward and integrate it with all the rest of the public comments that have been received during the public comment period that ends tomorrow.

Jane, if you could just relay the very next steps of the process.

Jane Blackstone: Great. Thanks. A few closing comments - what's coming up next.

The staffs of both the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service will analyze all the public comments that are received. We will respond with a report, and plan revisions if indicated.

Those revisions and the staff report are submitted through the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission, which is the hearing body for the environmental document that's prepared with the National Park Service as the lead agency.

The Trust Board and the National Park Service, then take the recommendation of the Advisory Commission and all of the public

comment and analysis that has been completed to date, and decide on adoption of a plan.

The implementation, as we noted earlier, really involves public input along the way. Things don't just stop with the adoption of the plan. All of these pilot projects do involve preparation of more detailed plans, ongoing public participation, and a feedback loop. We learn from those projects.

If a strategy doesn't achieve the desired effect, it really warrants going back to the plan and taking a look at whether we're on the right track or if adjustments need to be made. There really is this continuous feedback loop as we move ahead with the implementation of the finally adopted plan.

I just would like to note a couple of announcements on upcoming workshops. There are flyers out at the front table that you can pick up as you go. We do have a change of one of our regularly scheduled workshops. We typically have a planning workshop the

second Wednesday of every month. In December, we have changed the date to December 13. The subject of that workshop is Lettermen Design Guidelines. These are architectural design guidelines that will be applied to new construction within the 60 acre Letterman complex. I encourage you to come on December 13.

The other flyer to pick up is on the trails planning workshop scheduled for December 1. Obviously a very strong tie to this whole Vegetation Management Plan topic. Thanks very much.

The fax number for submitting comments is 561-4710.

The email address is [presidioveg@nps.gov](mailto:presidioveg@nps.gov).

Chairman Rosenblatt: If you haven't signed up and would like to address the Board, there are sign-up cards just outside.

If we have no more slides, could we raise these curtains? We can't sit in here and talk about vegetation and have it out on the other side of the curtain.

Unrelated to this item, I've just been reminded there was, at one point, planned to be a public workshop on the changes that are being adopted by the Board with respect to NPA process. That was earlier tentatively planned to be done during December. That item will be put off till after the first of the year, and we'll let you know when that gets rescheduled.

Any other housekeeping to be done today?

The first speaker will be Peter Mesey, and the next one Bill Shepard.

Third one after that to be Mike Marston. Go ahead, please.

Peter Mezey: Mr. President, members of the Board, Mr. Meadows. My name is Peter Mezey. I'm co-chair of the Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning - better known as NAPP. I'm here only to

familiarize those of you who are not familiar with NAPP of what our organization is and to introduce Bill Shepard.

NAPP is an association of 10 neighborhood associations that surround the Presidio. We think we represent about 100,000 residents of San Francisco - most closely bordering the Presidio. We meet monthly; we meet regularly; we work with the staff of the Presidio Trust, with the Park Service. They come to our meetings and we have many discussions with them and a very constructive relationship.

We have studied the Vegetation Management Plan with great care, and Bill Shepard has led that study. We have some significant concerns about it, and I will now let Bill Shepard, if it's consistent with your rules, take the balance of my time as well as his, to present our concerns.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Before you do that, let me ask, are you here to do signing? Let's see if anybody is here who needs it. Is there anybody here who knows

of anybody else in the audience that needs signing for this event?

Bill Shepard, please.

Bill Shepard: Good morning, and thank you for holding this public meeting so you could hear the comment from the neighbors if the Presidio.

I'm the President of the Lake Street Residents Association. I'd like to speak on their behalf later in the program.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Can we--

Bill Shepard: What's the problem?

Chairman Rosenblatt: You need to raise the mike. Can we get the mike . . . to get rid of the echo, if you need to shut down the mikes up here, that's okay. We can speak without the mikes from the table here if that's what the answer is. Let's try again. Thanks.

Bill Shepard: Okay. Good morning. Can you hear me now?

Chairman Rosenblatt: Yes.

Bill Shepard: Okay, thank you. I was saying I'd like to thank you for holding this public meeting to receive input from the neighbors of San Francisco to hear their comments about the draft management plan.

We've heard a great deal of selling of the plan from the staff, as we have for the last hour here today, and as we did at the Advisory Commission hearings. It's been difficult to make substantive input orally on this plan. Three minutes is going to be tough to get much substance in today. I'll try to do that.

Foremost concern of NAPP is that the plan not be adopted as a master plan which sets in stone rigid boundaries and standards that will dictate the future changes to the vegetation of the Presidio.

You have, to your right, on a board over there, Figure 3 from the draft plan. It shows the boundaries in very sharply drawn lines.

The historic forest will be reduced to 300 or less acres from what I understand to be about 370 acres today. Many, many trees will be eliminated. We're certainly in favor of native plants and the restoration - the development of native plants - but we're very concerned about the removal or elimination of trees as a result of this plan. We ask that you not adopt this plan as a master plan with specific boundaries and standards that dictate the future changes to the Presidio.

We urge that the plan be modified so it broadens the existing narrow definitions of native trees that the draft plan currently excludes. Important regional trees such as redwoods and Douglas fir and pines and cypress that would naturally have migrated to the area by now, are excluded by definition from the future of the Presidio.

We urge that the plan be modified to broaden the narrow definitions which create mutually exclusive zones. If the plan imposes anything, it should impose on the implementers of the plan, the

responsibility to find a way to make native plants compatible with the hallmarks of the Presidio for the past century, and that is the tall stature trees of the Presidio that we're looking at out the window today. The way the plan is presently set up, it makes those trees mutually exclusive to one area from the native plants, and in a very limited way at that.

In October - just last month - staff produced a proposed description chart that was distributed to NAPP and I hope was distributed to the Board of Directors. That chart is reflected by a board over here - if Craig could put that up - where Figure 3 is. It's very difficult to read from this range, but there is a light green category that represents all of the trees that are to be removed from the forest area.

I'm told my time is up. May I have another couple of minutes to finish my remarks, please?

Chairman Rosenblatt: Sure.

Bill Shepard: Thank you. On this chart - and I hope you will look at this in close detail. Because this shows virtually every Monterey pine stand in the Presidio will be eliminated. Every Monterey pine stand in the Presidio will be eliminated by this plan - with the exception of a narrow strip of pines above Baker Beach.

It shows that every single tree, other than a willow or an oak will be removed at Baker Beach between the south parking lot and Willow's Creek.

Chairman Rosenblatt: This is a map that was sent to us as an addendum in early October? If we could get another set of these sent to the Board in the next couple days, that would be helpful.

Bill Shepard: Mr. Rosenblatt, I was going to offer copies of a letter that the Lake Street Residents Association has submitted. It has a photo-reduced copy of that chart. If I could give them to you now, you could look at that.

Chairman Rosenblatt: In color?

Bill Shepard: It's in color. It is marked up - it is redacted with some lines drawn.  
Nothing's been removed.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Okay. Do we have copies of that?

Female voice: I've got a copy of it.

Female voice: Yes, I think we do. Yes, here it is.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Do you have a couple more? Bill, I don't have one, and Bill do you?

Bill Reilly: No, I don't have one. I'm looking at Mary's.

Chairman Rosenblatt: We need two more, I guess. Thanks.

[Background comments, cross-talk about the copies of the  
documents they have - not clearly intelligible]

Chairman Rosenblatt: What's the legend? The crosshatched - what's that?

Bill Shepard: You should ignore that for the comments right now. It's a proposal that's being made by the Lake Street Residents Association. As areas to save to set up forest quarters, rather than totally removing these trees.

What you're looking at . . . we heard from some staff person earlier that 100 years from now, we will be looking at the same Presidio as what we see today. In fact, you will not. If any of us were so lucky to live so long, we'll see a very different Presidio. They will see a Presidio like Figure 3, which has removed 70 acres of trees. We'll see a Presidio with very low stature trees and shrubs and plants, instead of the tall, grand-looking trees that we have today.

The elimination of these trees, by the way, will not occur abruptly as I understand it. I don't hear that there's a plan to clear-cut these trees. They'll be eliminated over time. But they're going to be

eliminated at a much faster timetable than the draft plan suggests and what we've heard from the staff. Because through passive management, these trees are coming down now. One storm wiped out 250 of them. This winter will wipe out more trees than any winter in history since Major Jones planted these trees, one might speculate.

The plan is to let disease and wind and old age remove these trees in a large part. A lot of them - particularly the western trees on the coast - will come down as a result of that. We're very concerned about that, because there's nothing that we're aware of, being done today, or has been done in the last 10 years to preserve these trees to replenish them. Trees are allowed to sit there with dead limbs on them instead of removing them.

The plan, to us, appears to ignore the aesthetic and environmental benefits of trees. We believe the Park Service needs to take another look at the document and modify it to preserve these benefits.

We also believe that the 1935 forests should not be defined as historic forests. It was the smallest forest that I've been able to research that existed in the Presidio at any time since these trees were planted. I don't think we should take the smallest forest. I don't think we should take land away from the native plants. I think every bit of open space that doesn't have trees on it in the Presidio should be developed as native plants.

But where we have plants, where we have trees today, those trees ought to be looked at carefully before taking them down. Maybe they should come down; maybe they should come down. Maybe many of them should come down - but they should be looked at carefully on a site by site process, after we've had some hindsight to see that the success of the native plant development in the treeless areas of the Presidio. Then, defer that decision until tomorrow and to the future, after you have that hindsight - rather than mandating through some bright line definitions like you see on Figure 3, that the future stewards of the Presidio may following a different direction than we would like to see. Thank you very much.

Chairman Rosenblatt: There are a number of people who are from the same organization, I think, as I read on these cards. So having given Mr. Shepherd an extra period of time to complete that statement, if some of you who have the same perspective and are from the same organization, could shorten your time period just by indicating that you are in agreement with his point, that would be appreciated, so we can get everybody in.

Okay, Michael Marston and Ron McGill.

Michael Marston: Mr. Chairman, and members of the Board. Can you hear me? This microphone sounds a little dead.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Yes. Can you get it a little closer to you, Mike?

Michael Marston: How's that?

Chairman Rosenblatt: That's good.

Michael Marston:        Might as well hold it.

I'm representing the neighborhoods for PHAN - the Presidio Heights Association of Neighbors. We have a Presidio committee that I'm chairman of. I want to recognize Margaret Moore, who has worked for many years on vegetation management - even before the creation of the Presidio Trust.

There is an ongoing concern where immediate neighbors from the south from the Presidio to Arguello - for not only the interests of our neighborhood, but the health of the Presidio -- both environmental and economic.

We have worked independently - we have submitted a paper; brief, two-page letter that I would like to give you after my brief presentation.

We have also worked cooperatively, but independently, with NAPP.

In general, we support strongly what NAPP has said.

We are in basic agreement with the plan, but have some serious reservations that I won't summarize now, in the interest of time. I think the key point is that the trees are really the signature of the Presidio. The Presidio is an urban park for the next century. Great urban parks around the world, when you think of them - Hyde Park in London comes to mind - have their image from their mature trees.

As has been stated in Dunbarton Oaks, in a suburb of Washington, D.C., a tree is a thing of great beauty that should only be taken down after much thought and careful consideration.

In closing I want to express the appreciation to your staff who have made information available to us in many ways - memos, reports, tours of the Presidio and also through many, many appearances at neighborhood meetings. We do encourage you to be very careful in what is really a dichotomy - a great park where you're removing the

mature trees. There is a rationale, but it has to be thought through carefully and incrementally and learning from each step as you go, with an open forum for public input. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: I'd like to make a suggestion. We now have about 45 speakers. That's going to make it difficult for us to get through within the time period. What I would like to suggest to you all is if we forgo the applause in between, that'll keep us moving.

Ron McGill: I'll be quick. Members of the Trust, I'm Ron McGill. I'm President of the Planning Association for the Richmond. Our 2,000 households have the longest border with the Presidio of any neighborhood in the city - from the Arguello gate, to the Pacific Ocean.

As far as the technical details, you can read that in the NAPP report, which PAR has adopted - pretty much in toto as its own.

But there are other items that concern the implementation and I'd like to mention them to you.

We strongly recommend that the VMP not be considered a complete master plan for the next 100+ years. To set specific recommendations without the guide of experience will be disastrous. There must be an understanding that site-specific plans are to be developed on a continuing basis, and serve as pilot projects, which may be expanded once experience has proven their worth.

There must be sequential implementation of these projects mandated in the VMP - not just talked about.

This process must take place in a public atmosphere, with input from all the concerned communities - environmental, ecological, of the effective neighbors, and PAR partners.

PAR considers the VMP to be an evolving document, not a final statement, concept map for policy. It must be extremely flexible,

dependent on experimentation and experience. It's a work-in-progress from which much has yet to be learned - a progression and certainly not a conclusion in itself.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Okay, Red Kernan, and then Andre Tolpegin, and then Michael Alexander.

Redmond Kernan: I'm speaking as an individual, although I do belong to NAPP and PAR and the Advisory Commission, and I'd offer these thoughts.

(1) I support the position of PAR, that this should be a document of guidance. And what is confusing, while Jim Meadows in his introduction and Jane Blackstone indicate how there will be implementation plans, the title of the board that Craig held up was "Prescriptions - the Vegetation Management Zoning". When you use words like "prescription", "zoning", "plan", they need definition. I would suggest that the plan must have, at the beginning of it, a definition of what the plan is. Is it a plan like a GNP that

must be followed? Is this guidance? Is it prescriptive? Is it information?

The second thing - where are the people? If you say native plants, does that mean people can't go there? You are coming up with a trail plan, but that needs to be on the table so you can see trails, picnic areas, camping areas.

I would point out it was a surprise to me that Robb Hill might be a pilot program. Robb Hill might be best if it were a grassy knoll with native plants - I'm not sure. But, it is where youth camp. It's used almost every other weekend, and people camp there and they like the treed atmosphere of it.

So you need to see where people are and how it fits with the vegetation that you would provide for them as well. I think this can be done by coming up with a 3-year plan for implementation, and considering this a vegetation management guidance. That needs to be carefully defined. How it fits with your EA or EIS process, I'm

not sure. Working out a process by which all of the information, trails, people, vegetation . . . native plants - does it mean grass? Does it mean oak? It means both. What will actually be put where you say native plant? Having a specific plan is essential. Thank you very much.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Andre Tolpegin - Michael Alexander and then Peter Winklestein.

Andre Tolpegin: Thank you. Does the work? Okay.

I am Andre Tolpegin. Like all the other speakers, unfortunately, I belong to PAR. I'm the secretary of the Board of NAPP, and I repeat and adopt from my personal viewpoint, all of the statements that have been made so far about our concern of the Vegetation Management Plan as it presently exists.

I would like to add that I am also President of the Seacliff Properties Association, consisting of roughly 100 households at the western edge of the Presidio. We are concerned that the plan as envisioned,

eliminating trees that provide us with beauty - visual beauty - with some protection from the wind, with a lot of protection from blowing sand, is going to be destroyed by a plan as currently envisioned that is going to gut the Lobos Creek Canyon in our neighborhood and for the next 25 years, we will be looking at sand dunes.

There is a statement in the proposed plan - that if you'll give me a second to get it, I left it at my chair - I want to read that particularly alarms me.

I would like to quote from the booklet that is distributed out front, and I ask all of you to read it. What doesn't make sense to me, as somebody who was born and raised in San Francisco, and has loved the forest and the trees that the Presidio has meant, this statement appears on page 6 of the plan, and it says:

“Several exciting restoration projects are already under way, including a community-based effort at Lobos Creek, in the

southwestern corner of the Presidio. Here, a living sand dune ecosystem was recreated on an abandoned, neglected site, restoring to San Francisco, fields of dunes that were once covered with . . . get this . . . wild flowers, shrubs, grasses and trees.”

Ladies and gentlemen, what’s wrong with wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees? That’s what concerns me. Let me, if I may have a moment more to give you an anecdote that actually occurred at the time of my initial involvement.

At the first meeting of the planning group with the Park Service, I was approached by an employee of the Park Service who told me that one of the native plants that they wanted to restore - hopefully, they’ve abandoned this plan - this was the honest to God truth, was poison oak.

Ladies and gentlemen, please keep the Presidio plan for vegetation within the reason. As the other speakers have suggested, let’s work on a project by project basis for the benefit not only for university

scholars and botanists, but from the standpoint of the neighbors of the Presidio. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Peter Winklestein? Sorry - Michael Alexander and then Peter Winklestein.

Michael Alexander: Good morning, Chairman Rosenblatt and members of the Board. I'm Michael Alexander. I'm speaking for the Sierra Club today.

Sierra Club strongly supports the Vegetation Management Plan as its broad outline and guideline of how the Presidio's vegetation and planted areas will be managed over the next 50-100 years. We also strongly support alternative four, which will maximize biological diversity and increase the biological health of the Presidio's vegetation.

We will comment in detail in writing tomorrow.

One of the Vegetation Management Plan's most important features is that it outlines an extended educational process. Through it, park staff and managers will learn how best to take care of the Presidio's vegetation, and the public will learn how a landscape changes over time to be more beautiful and healthier. The approach is to experiment, to learn, and then to implement, carefully.

Some of the initial changes were made on the park's boundary. As a result, some mistakes were made in areas that some of the Presidio's neighbors and strongest supporters view daily. It's their backyards.

Instead, pilot projects should be done in interior, less visible areas so that some of the concerns we've heard today are taken care of before implementation in highly visible areas takes place.

We have some specific comments. The landscape vegetation zone is too large as we will point out in our written comments - it needs to be reevaluated. The plan should include a goal to increase

contiguous open space so that you don't get chopped up, small areas of open space with intrusions of built areas.

The plan needs a landscape design, which it does not have. That landscape design should use vegetation - not just fences and signs - to guide the Presidio's visitors and users in the appropriate use of the national park.

So when you walk along the path, if there are endangered species, for example, to one side of the path, instead of just having a fence that blocks people from traipsing into the sensitive area and a sign telling them not to, instead, you can plant with low, but dense shrubbery that discourages people from walking into a sensitive area. That's just one example - there are many others.

Finally I want to thank the National Park Service for abandoning its previous plan which would have treated vegetation almost entirely as a historic artifact and moving to the present plan which balances history with environmental and biologic health.

Finally, I want to thank the Presidio Trust for making sure that there is money available to implement the plan so it is not just another wish list sitting on the shelf. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Peter Winklestein, then Ann Weinstock, and then Michele Stratton.

Peter Winklestein: Good morning, members of the Trust. I'm Peter Winklestein, and while I'm a member of PAR and support PAR's position as stated, I'm also a neighbor looking directly at the westernmost part of the Presidio.

In fact, driving over here this morning, I noticed a bulldozer removing a lot of the vegetation that the Presidio has been trying to restore in a native plant area, along El Camino.

So I want to emphasize pilot projects and proceeding carefully and dealing with maintenance problems. You all saw a photograph several times this morning of Lobos Creek. Except you didn't see

the creek because it was covered with watercress. There are maintenance problems that you need to deal with, with cost implications in how native plant areas can develop over time.

I urge you to work carefully and stress public input - which is not simply reporting to the public, but having a real dialogue with the public as you proceed. Thank you.

Ann Weinstock: My name is Ann Weinstock. I'm fortunate enough to be a member of the Lake Street Residents' Association, and also attending the NAPP meetings on a regular basis. I was involved in the comment letter that you've already received from NAPP.

But today, I'd like to talk to you as a neighbor, as a mother of two small children, and as a frequent runner and hiker through the park.

My three major concerns, the first one, with everyone else that's spoken already, I'm concerned about the loss of the trees. What I think makes sense characteristically, the Presidio are the lush pines.

I think that needs to be having an active re-planting program as we speak. I'm sort of surprised that we're waiting with all of this. I feel that with every tree that's coming down in a storm, they need at least one tree coming up to replace it.

My other concern with restoring the native plant communities is cutting off public access. I think that's one of the three parkwide objectives coming up for you, is increasing public access. I know they're working on a trail system, but as an example, the Lobos Creek Dunes project, if you're not walking on a recycled plastic boardwalk, you cannot be there. I'm concerned that 28-30% of the park is going to be committed to this.

My third concern is that this period of public comment has reached people who are fortunate enough to have gotten involved through NAPP or their neighborhood association, but in addition to that, the rest of San Franciscans that I think have a tremendous amount of concerns, are going to find out about this after the fact. I'm thinking in retrospect, that actually may cause more delays for implementing

the process, when San Franciscans do become aware of the extent of  
the change. That's it.

[End of Tape 1]

[Brief gap in recorded material ]

[Tape 2]

Michele Stratton: My name is Michele Stratton [PAR member]

[A few words lost in tape change]

. . . In fact, this view, to me, says it all. Looking at the bright blue  
water through the dark, green trees. As we walk from Baker Beach  
up to the Golden Gate Bridge on a weekly basis, we remark about  
which stands of trees that we're currently enjoying are slated for  
removal, and it is quite unsettling to be part of a vanishing  
landscape.

At the same time, the native plants that are contemplated this area are scrub, they're low. People have talked about the blowing sand and the wind. I think all of these things need to be looked at carefully.

More importantly, I think the concept of a hard line between the tree zone and the native plant zone needs to be re-looked at. It does tend to put people in one camp or the other. It is very unfortunate.

We're all in favor of wonderful landscapes and wonderful natural areas. But is it natural to say that a tree cannot escape from a zone.

In fact, that type of language is in the Vegetation Management Plan.

I suggest that we look at a more natural process where there is compatibility between the tree zones, the manmade landscape zones and the native plant zones. So that they're viewed as part and parcel of the same plan, and not three separate, distinct and incompatible pieces. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Next speaker is Herb Elliott, then Julie Cheever and Janet Wong.

Herb Elliott: My name is Herb Elliott. I live directly south of the Lobos Creek area in the western part of the Presidio. I've written to each of you members of the Board to express my objection to large-scale tree removal for two reasons.

One is the inadequate effective party input. And secondly, the poorly thought out - in my opinion - plans as it relates to visual and noise impact for the neighbors in the south.

I'm particularly concerned about the planned conversion "removal" of trees in the Lobos Creek corridor adjacent to the maintenance facility, and the Lincoln Boulevard, which will expose the neighbors to the south to noise and visual pollution. This degradation of the neighborhood properties is really unnecessary and we've already been through an awful lot with the sewer project.

I yield the balance of my time, if there is some, to Bill Shepard for further comment.

Chairman Rosenblatt: If you anticipate other people are going to do that, why don't we hold you until a little later, and you can gang it all up.

Bill Shepard: [I just have one comment.]

Chairman Rosenblatt: Sure, go ahead.

Bill Shepard: One minute?

The Lakeview Residents Association submitted a letter - I gave it to you this morning. There's an exhibit attached to it. It's intended to be a compromise in the interests of trees and native plants, to make trees and plants compatible, in a shared zone, rather than keeping them apart. I hope you'll take a look at that seriously, as well as the second suggestion there, to allow people friendly trail systems going through the forests.

The reason why I wanted to speak at this point is I wanted to extend an invitation to you, the members of the Board of Directors, to take a walk in the woods of the Presidio with me. I went on two tours presented by the staff and they were good tours. I learned a lot from them, but what they didn't show me was anything at all about this chart number - or this proposed prescription - and I doubt that you were shown that either.

I doubt that you walked through the trees that are going to be coming down. I doubt that you were told that the trees were coming down. I wasn't. I asked, and then I was told. I invite you to go on a walk - when it's convenient to your schedule - with the park staff present, so they can make sure I don't lead you astray or say something that's not true.

This is a very, very serious plan. It will reflect the legacy of this Board and the current staff of the Presidio as to what happens under this plan and what is adopted. I really welcome you to take me up

on this offer. Certain Mr. Meadows' office knows where to reach me if you're at all interested in doing that. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Julie Cheever? You can take it out of there and hold it. It'll be easier.

Julie Cheever: My name is Julie Cheever. I'm a resident of the Richmond district of San Francisco, and I'm also a member of the Presidio Restoration Advisory Board, but I'm speaking as an individual.

I support most of the plan, with one modification. By the way, I also commend the coordination of the planning of the environmental clean up with the vegetation planning which I know is already underway.

The parts of the plan I support include: maintaining the landscaped areas, and having the four historic groves - which seems to me to be a very good harmonization of the public's affection for the look of

the historic groves, and the challenge that the Park Service and Trust have of the aging, single-species forest.

I also support restoring and increasing the native plant areas. I think that both preserving the rare and endangered species on the Presidio and recreating expanding native plant areas of a significant size are appropriate and exciting undertakings for a national park.

I personally, especially value the restoration of the original live oak and willow riparian woodlands in areas such as the Nike [Swail], Lobos Creek, [Alpoland] Springs and Tennessee Hollow. I think these will be very beautiful when they are restored.

My concern is that moderation is needed in the removal of trees. I agree with many of the factors that people have previously mentioned during this meeting, in favor of keeping more trees.

However, I think these factors should be balanced against maintaining views and protecting and recreating native plant communities. And also, problems of the health of some of the trees.

During the review process of the plan, there has been a lot of reassurance that the plan is flexible and that it can proceed slowly and that it can learn from pilot projects. These reassurances are very welcome. But, the concern of some of us who have been studying the plan, is that the plan doesn't say all of that very specifically and definitively.

Some of us are concerned that 30 years from now, the spoken words may be evaporated, and what we'll be left with is the written wording of the plan.

So I strongly urge the plan be modified to state specifically that there is genuine flexibility about the number of trees that will be removed, and plans for public input into the site-specific plans.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Thank you. Janet Wong? And then Faye Burnstein.

Janet Wong: Members of the Trust, my name is Janet Wong. I'm speaking as a private citizen, and a resident of the Cow Hollow neighborhood adjoining the Presidio.

According to the plan that we have outside, an area nearly equal to that of the historic forest - that is 18% of the total Presidio - is classified as degraded area in the plan. This, in fact, contains thousands of trees, including a redwood grove, which are slated to be removed and replaced by low, native plantings, because the forest has expanded beyond their original planted areas, and as well that they have blocked some views.

While I believe there should be a place for native plantings, I think the highest priority should be the retention of forested areas, with replacement of elderly or unhealthy trees by similar young trees. We should not support removal of the trees, which although they were not originally found exactly in this spot, they're typical of local species and compatible with the landscape. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Faye Bernstein and then Pete Holloran, and then Burt Griddley.

Faye Bernstein: I just heard about this meeting last night, so I'm not really prepared. But one thing I did want to say, that when you look out - as everybody said - the Presidio means the trees to us. When I look at the map that's presented today, I don't believe that there should be more than 25% of the trees remaining. I believe this is in the way it has it has been defined.

I think it's because most of the forest has been left out in the definition of historic forest.

Pete Holloran: Good morning. My name is Pete Holloran, and I'm President of the Native California Plant Society. The comments that I'd like to read are those of the Native Plant Society and the Natural Resources and Defense Council, and the National Parks and Conservation Association.

The comments that you've heard this morning represent an unfortunate dichotomy between trees and native plants. I think when you look at the plan a little more closely, there will be thousands and thousands of trees left on the Presidio.

It's quite ironic that in the 1890s, public outcry from the immediate neighbors, was against the planting of trees, and there were many articles in the newspapers back then, because it blocked their views and destroyed their aesthetic experience.

We, therefore, offer enthusiastic support for the plan, and agree that the preferred alternative best meets the stated objectives. Our comments focus on two central issues: the vegetation treatments and the management zones.

Imagine the Presidio as an enormous blueberry pie, awaiting a knife that's going to divide it up into slices. The first one that comes right off are 765 acres of the historic buildings and their surrounding vegetation and all their trees, and the golf course.

The next slice is the 300 acres of the forest.

Go on down the list of all the other things where slices are eaten - that is the restored marsh and dunes at Crissy Field; the restored dunes of Lobos Creek; the already remnant native plant communities; and you're left with only 70 or so acres, scattered across all of the Presidio, where the park proposes to do its discretionary native plant restoration efforts. Some of these are clearly not sustainable. They are patches in the middle of Fort Scott and along [Entrance Street] terrace, that are more than a quarter mile from natural areas.

But, what if the slices were divided in a different order? There are compelling reasons to do so. The park has clear, legal responsibilities to protect resources, natural resources, and recover endangered species.

More than anything, endangered species require additional habitat and greater connectivity. To do so would shift the boundaries in only one major way. The southwest corner is the single best place to recover sensitive endangered species, would be restored to native plant communities, rather than as historic forest. We strongly support doing so.

The plan doesn't favor native plant communities at the expense of trees, despite claims to the contrary. It's true that around 70 acres of non-historic native tree stands will be converted. That will happen over many decades as trees die of old age.

The most important question is in another key. Once the aging trees in the Presidio come down, what shall we plant in their place? In some cases, that means native trees. We're particularly enthusiastic about the plan in this regard. The tree treatments are sensible and sustainable.

If I might have your indulgence, I have about 30 more seconds?

Chairman Rosenblatt: Sure.

Pete Holloran: If we must retain the historic forest not to be diversified as native shrubs and even trees to increase the [size of] habitat. And, we must single out the native plant restoration efforts for special praise. In just six years, the Park Services Stewardship Program has made substantial contributions. The numbers are staggering. It's staff and volunteers have planted more than 145,000 plants, millions of seeds across several dozen acres of the Presidio. In just six years, volunteers have contributed nearly 500,000 hours of labor to the natural resource project. Speaking conservatively, that's \$5M in donated labor.

With such a track record, the program run by the Park Service should play a leadership role in managing the area. It deserves additional support from the Presidio Trust.

A final word. Think about the incredible outpouring of goodwill in public access represented by those 500,000 volunteer hours when you listen to the complaints of a few dozen neighbors. Those volunteers are not able to be here today, because they're out working - including at our Wednesday morning work party over in Tennessee Hollow. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Jennifer Gridley, and then Phyllis Schrobsdorff.

Jennifer Gridley: Good morning. Can you hear me?

I'm Jennifer Gridley. I'm with the Cow Hollow Association. We are neighbors directly to the east of the Presidio.

I want to compliment the National Park Service and the Trust for working together to compile such a comprehensive document.

Cow Hollow is a member of the NAPP organization. We support the NAPP position on the Vegetation Management Plan.

I want to emphasize a couple of points. I promise to be brief.

Specifically, not adopting it as a master plan that would be inflexible in terms of managing specific stands of trees in the future, but that it remain a work-in-progress. Also that we try to maintain the current aesthetics that we all enjoy today.

My last point is really specific to Cow Hollow, which is the eucalyptus trees along Lyon Street. While I believe they're going to be replaced ultimately, in this plan, currently they are in really bad shape. They've gotten really tall and are blocking views of neighbors, and they're dropping branches quite often, which I think may become a safety issue. I wanted to address that specifically.

Finally, we look forward to working together to implement the plan.

Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Next speaker? Phyllis Schrobsdorff.

Phyllis Schrobsdorff: Good morning. My name is Phyllis Schrobsdorff. I'm one of those horrible neighbors that everybody's talking about. I've been going to the park for about 30, 40 years. I've raised my children there. I go to the Presidio about twice a day with my dog. I'm 60 years old. For me, it is tranquility, peace and everything.

I think what we're forgetting is that trees . . . the trees just give us peace and tranquility. I've seen when they've taken the trees down between the Arguello gate and the Presidio gate, what is now visible is brown hills that have no native plants, that are all trailed off with ropes. That's what they call the restoration.

In six years, I don't think the park has ever planted one tree. We are losing a tremendous amount of trees and I think it is absolutely terrible. Sorry, I'm nervous.

I also want to bring forward that you have not notified the public. Nobody has notified the public. The public that goes and walks

there near Mountain Lake Path, the people who jog there, the people near Julius [Kahn] - nobody knew about this. I found out accidentally about this two days ago, when somebody put something in my mailbox. I think you have an obligation to post everything in all of the neighborhoods where you're going to take trees down so that the public can really come.

The public that uses the park, not the volunteers who just are fanatic about planting these little things, but the public who uses it day in and day out. That's us and we haven't had a chance to be here and give a voice. Please don't murder the trees. Trees have a right to be alive, and they have a right to be.

I also want to bring out when you have trees, underneath the trees, everything is green. We don't have much water during the whole summer. When you look at the brown hills that they have created, they are brown 10 months of the year! With the trees, everything is wonderful all year. It's something that you can't replace.

Please don't kill the trees. They're being killed by everything else already, by the storms. If you don't replace them, 30, 40 years, it will be absolutely terrible.

Don't take this away from me. I've lived here for 30 years. The only reason why I live here is because of the Presidio and because of the trees. So keep the trees where they are, and keep the other native plants in the open area. Do not remove the trees.

I want to join Mr. Shepard. I think it's absolutely wonderful what he said. Take a walk. Go and see. Also, let the Park Service tell you how many trees they're taking down. You haven't heard one comment from anybody how many trees exactly are they murdering. You haven't heard that, have you? It's just we're going to sort of replace it. Make them tell you exactly how many hundreds of trees they're taking down. Thank you very much.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Marcia Smith-White, and then David Munro and Erin Higbee.

Marcia Smith-White: Chairman? Members of the Board. My name is Marcia-Smith-White. Unlike a lot of you, I actually live here, and I enjoy it. I think I speak for all the residents, that we feel honored and treasured to be here.

First of all, I do want to extend a welcome to Jennifer Hernandez - this is her first meeting. And it's--wherever she went.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Jennifer will be back. She has an obligation, in fact, she's making a speech which was scheduled a year ago, long before she knew this occasion was going to happen. But she'll be back.

Marcia Smith-White: Well, we're welcoming her. I speak for all the residents here in the park.

What I want to bring to the attention of this audience, first of all, this is a plan and it gives me great hope that we are all here and we're all talking about it.

I have lived here and I have dealt with the human resource, and that's the point I want to get across. I have worked with researchers that have come through and said, "You have a 30 year old rosemary plant. Protect it." I have hundred-year old eucalyptus trees behind my house. I'm worried that they'll fall on my house because their lifespan is 100 years.

I have been part of natural resources in planting things at Inspiration Point. But I know that this is the point that is most important - we must use the human resource here. We've heard about education; we've heard about involvement. We are the people who are directly involved with what goes on here within the park.

This is what I would like to bring to the attention of all of you. Working together brings us hope. Working together makes us conscious of what's going on. Working together, we can come to a plan that obviously is going to affect the entire future of this park. It's not just neighbors, it's residents - it's people who are making decisions.

I just want to thank you for making this opportunity available to all of us. Most of the residents either have small children, are working, or can't be here. So I'm thankful that I can represent them at this time. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: David Munro? And then Erin Higbee.

David Munro: Thank you. My name is David Munro, and I'm the Director of the Center for Habitat Restoration, based at City College of San Francisco.

I'd like to support the preferred alternative plan, put forward by the National Park Service for a number of reasons. San Francisco has lots of parks, but we have very little native habitat left. The preferred alternative would offer that.

We're all looking for the same thing here. We all love the Presidio, and I'm glad we're all here talking about it. I think we all love it for

different reasons, but mostly because it is a very beautiful place. The preferred alternative would still offer that. For anyone that thinks the aesthetics of the park are going to be compromised, I'd encourage you to go over to the Marin Headlands and have a look. It's a very, very beautiful place. As far as I'm concerned, it's as beautiful as anything on the planet, and that is primarily native habitat.

The preferred alternative would offer wildlife habit and increase the level of biodiversity. On behalf of my Center and myself as a neighbor of the Presidio, I'd like to support the preferred alternative. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Erin Higbee? Then Steve Ginsberg.

Erin Higbee: Hello, my name is Erin Higbee. I'm a San Francisco resident and a former Americorps member here in the Presidio. I have been a National Park Service volunteer for the past two years.

I work as an environmental educator leading school groups in restoration activities. I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan.

I support the plan's preferred alternative, and in particular, the integration of as many native trees as possible, with the reforestation efforts that will take place over the next decades.

As an Americorps, I was of part of the team of dedicated youth who were instrumental in the initial habitat restoration efforts at Crissy Field and throughout the Presidio. Through these efforts, I facilitated educational and recreational experiences for hundreds, if not thousands of youth of local volunteers.

In Americorps, I led high school students in hands-on learning, environmental education programs. The diverse population of students are bussed into the park from high schools all over the city. This park serves as an outdoor classroom. It complements the subject matter that is taught in science classes though hundreds of

students - most of whom are not previously aware of the existence of a national park in their own city.

The students participate in the seasonal cycle of restoration activities, and learn how to be good stewards of the land. Much of what they learn emphasizes how the health of an ecosystem is dependent upon a diverse native plant population.

The program also emphasizes that because this is a national park, it belongs to them - just as much as the people how are fortunate enough to live near it.

During the Vegetation Management Plan comment period, there's been issue raised around the reduction of access into natural areas. Perhaps this may be true to some degrees, but isn't it the responsibility of the national parks to conserve and preserve both natural and cultural resources?

I've experienced first hand that through the extensive restoration efforts, hundreds of people who would not typically experience national park settings, have been enabled to participate in meaningful experiences. This is as meaningful, and perhaps a more productive way to balance the issues of access, as more than 60% of the Presidio will still support full access to visitors beyond these natural areas.

Shouldn't it be more appropriate for the park to diversify the types of access in different areas? Examining those areas that are most sensitive and ensuring that they are productive from being loved to death.

Perhaps the Trust should consider having more contemplative recreational experiences, and access opportunities in the natural areas, such as bird watching, hiking and stewardship experiences.

Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Steve Ginsberg, to be followed by Brian Huse.

Steve Ginsberg: I have volunteered in the Presidio for three years, at many of the re-vegetation sites. The sites are a short walk from my inner-Richmond home. The experience has given me a sense of community I never had when I lived in New York or Los Angeles.

That community is multifaceted. First, it's the people. I have worked with many young adults who have gone from volunteers to full-time employees at the park. Others have gone to college or enrolled to study environmental sciences.

The re-vegetation program was the catalyst to choose a career where they will make a big social impact at their personal expense. My faith in young people has been restored here. Not all twenty-somethings are lusting the next IPO or BMW.

The community is also plants, trees and wildlife, and it is changing remarkably for the better. The Army was established here to repel any invader, but no battles were ever fought here. Without any

shots, the Presidio was successfully invaded by a host of non-native plants and trees that the military introduced over a century of ill-conceived landscaping.

These invaders diminished the military's legacy here, because they crippled the rich, native California flora and fauna, that unfortunately are either extirpated, endangered, or isolated in small pockets throughout the property. These plants, butterflies and birds should be showcased and fully restored in this magnificent meeting of ocean bluff and Golden Gate.

National parks are what's best about America. In that spirit and tradition, the Presidio should take its place with the other great parks across the country. The only way that will happen, is if it is managed with sensitivity to the land's biologic richness.

I encourage the Trust to entrust the NPS to manage its natural areas and not bring in teams of professional landscape artists. The

Presidio as manicured, corporate campus would make a travesty of the national park concept.

Look no further than Golden Gate Park. It's an example of how a once great park can be diminished by disinterested management, and starved for funds. The exotic ivy, ice plant and aquatic weeds are choking its grasslands, hillsides and lakes. Feral cats have decimated the California quail, our state bird. Homeless encampments make the park unsafe for visitors, and those who work in the park. Yet teams of landscapers plant pretty flowers in highly visible intersections choked at rush hour by automobiles. Let's not recreate that here. Thank you for your time.

Brian Huse: Mr. Chair, members of the Board, Mr. Meadows, good morning. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Brian Huse, and I direct the Pacific Region of the National Parks and Conservation Association.

As Mr. Holloran pointed out, NPCA strongly supports the preferred alternative of the Vegetation Management Plan for the Presidio.

We'll be submitting our comments along with Mr. Holloran in the National Resources Defense Council tomorrow.

One thing that's not been noted is that we believe this is an excellent plan, due in large part to the close working partnership between the Trust and the National Park Service. We are extremely satisfied to see the results of this close partnership and look forward to seeing more examples in the future.

Finally, I just want to say thank you for making yourselves available for these comments this morning.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Next speaker is Sasha Gennet, and then Elaine Daniels. Are they here?

Sasha Gennet: My name is Sasha Jeannette and I have been a volunteer with the National Park Service for more than two years. I'm also an ecologist and I trained at the Yale Forestry School.

Much of my volunteer time has been spent garnering native plants for park restoration efforts - including Crissy Fields - and monitoring the spread of invasive, exotic species within Mission Blue butterfly habitat and the park's southern lands.

Thank you for an opportunity to comment on this plan. I support strongly the plan's preferred alternative, and I highly recommend planting as many native tree species as possible within the Presidio's plantations as proposed under alternative number four.

My comments today focus on three areas: the vegetation management zones identified in Figure 3, the need to expand restoration efforts within an endangered species habitat, and the importance of having an National Park Service led, integrated, community-based stewardship program.

Figure 3 outlines the boundaries of each vegetation zone. As with most natural systems' management, it is imperative that the plan

provide for the highest degree of connectivity between plant communities, as well as the enhancement of natural processes wherever possible. The current connective corridors outlined for the natural areas in Figure 3, fails to fully connect the inland and coastal serpentine habitats, as well as limits the opportunity for creating adequate sand dune habitats. These goals can be met by converting the southwestern pine and cypress plantations to central dune scrub, and historic cypress and eucalyptus plantings currently grown on serpentine soils, to serpentine grasslands and chaparral communities.

While I recognize that this plan is built around blending the needs of each vegetation zone, I think it is important to create zoning that ensures the protection and enhancement of the remnant natural systems as its foundation. While they may be native to other areas of California, trees like redwoods and Douglas firs don't grow on serpentine and dune habitats.

To this foundation, the balance of acreage of the historic forest and landscaped areas should be added. Historically, these landscape

types were added over the past 200 years as the Presidio's landscape changed, and have subsequently adapted, and in many cases, overrun the natural environment.

Functional native ecosystems will further the NPS and the Trust efforts to create sustainable landscape and meet your legal responsibilities under the Organic Act, and the Endangered Species Act to protect natural resources and recover threatened and endangered species.

These systems will enhance leisure bioregional effort to restore and protect remnant native communities, as well as will require reduced costs to maintain over time. Through their restoration, [these systems] will enable the Presidio to continue to set standards for community-based stewardship programs nationally and internationally.

During this public process, I have heard arguments that the current endangered species populations are adequate, and that there is no

need for expansion of the natural areas. I feel this statement is made with grave error. If this were the case, they would not be endangered.

The Presidio supports 12 rare and endangered species and of the 300+ native species that were identified by early botanizers in the Presidio, more than 30% are no longer found here. Without dedicated restoration efforts within the natural areas, the number of species lost would continue to rise.

Mainly, I would last like to comment on something else close to my heart - my volunteer experience in the park. Over the past two years, I've worked with hundreds of youth and volunteers of all ages and ethnicities. The stewardship program provides opportunities for these and many other individuals and San Francisco residents to reconnect with their environment as well as contribute to park management goals. I urge you not to forget these people. Their contribution should definitely be weighed. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Elaine Daniels? Deborah Edelman?

Elaine Daniels: Good morning, everyone, and thank you for hearing me, Board. The crowd is dwindling, but you're still here.

I represent no one. But I do represent usage. I've been living by the Presidio and using it for almost 70 years, and future usage because my children and grandchildren also live by the Presidio, and I believe will carry on the tradition.

I believe that this is a resource that is invaluable and everyone that's interested in it is to be commended. But, I have heard suggestions that I would like to reinforce. That is, careful, careful, implementation of this plan.

I also happen to have talked to five neighbors who couldn't be here, so I suppose I may represent the silent majority, those of us who don't read all the flyers, but we do vote. We did get to vote on

[Weary] housing. I know that you're not bound by it, but you have listened to it.

One of these neighbors called because she heard last minute. She called from New York. She couldn't be here, but she lives right on the Lobos Creek implemented area that has been denuded of trees. The plants have been laid down, but they failed. So they're going to be reseeded again, or have been reseeded again. Meanwhile, she has a marvelous view of about five acres of concrete, with the housing of the administration or something. Some entity is in there. She gets to look at that. Now, she's wondering if more trees are cut down, does she get a view of [Weary] housing.

I really appreciate the fact that many people are concerned, and we all have our own agenda. But please, please do this slowly. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Deborah Edelman, then Susan Vanneman.

Deborah Edelman: Hi. Can you hear me? My name is Deborah Edelman. I'm an ecologist and an environmental planner. I've worked for the park and also volunteered for many years, but I'm speaking here for myself as an individual.

I'm speaking to support the preferred alternative. Many people have talked about the need for a slow, balanced approach. I feel this alternative reflects a slow, careful approach.

In particular, I'd like to talk about the need for native and natural communities. The Presidio is part of the National Park Service which has a mandate to protect cultural resources, natural resources, and recover threatened and endangered species habitat.

I support the diversification of the plantations and the conversion of selective non-native tree stands to native communities, such as oak woodlands and riparian woodlands. I know many people have spoken about being upset about removing trees.

It seems anti-intuitive that removing a tree would enhance habitat, and even enhance aesthetic values, but in fact, that is the case when you're talking about trees such as eucalyptus which have a very dire effect both on public safety and on native plant habitats, which would be replaced by oak woodlands, coast live oaks, which are beautiful, slow-growing trees. They might not come up in our lifetime to the height that would be seen by the people who live nearby. But I think it's important that we take a long-term approach to this. This is something we are preserving for perpetuity. Our individual lives are only a very small part of that.

I also really regret that so many of the neighbors who were upset by this left, because I feel like it really reduces the opportunity for dialogue. A lot of the things that have been said could address some of the concerns, and I think there should be a dialogue rather than people stating what they have to say and leaving.

I want to also address quickly, issues of stewardship and long term maintenance of the sites. I think it's important whatever plans are

implemented include long term planning for maintenance and re-vegetation.

I've studied a number of projects throughout the state, vegetation management projects. The ones consistently that fail are those that do not have long term funding for maintenance, that do not have strong education programs, and that do not have careful stewardships. So, it is important, in order to make these programs succeed, that there is funding for stewardship programs and for maintenance in the long term, and long term in ecological context is 20, 30 years. Or longer. In perpetuity.

Again, I'm speaking in favor of the preferred alternative, and I encourage you to include the long term in your plans.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Susan Vanneman to be followed by Maya Ranl Khosla.

Susan Vanneman: Mr. Chairman, and members of the Board, I'm Susan Vanneman. I've been a resident of the Richmond for 20 years. I am a member

of PAR and Friends of Mountain Lake Park. I'm here today, to represent myself, my family and some of my friends.

As a member of Friends of Mountain Lake Park, my family and I, as volunteers years ago, were involved in the development of a long range reforestation and vegetation plan for that park. That was supervised by Professor Joe McBride at the time. This was a very open and interactive process.

My friends and I and family are very active users of the Presidio. Walking, hiking, biking, jogging, picnicking, and essentially enjoying the beauty of this park. The Presidio, as we have known it, with its trees and vegetation, plays an important part of our living experience.

Before a radical change is made - and I see that as removal of large number of trees - I would suggest to you, the Board, a further review and debate of the proposed Vegetation Management Plan issues.

Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Maya Ranl Khosla? Help me with that. Sorry.

Maya Khosla: Hello, my name is Maya Khosla, and I'm currently an independent environmental consultant and toxicologist, working for organizations like Levine-Fricke, Ricon. I'm also just finishing a writer-in-residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts. Thank you for the chance for letting me speak today.

I spent this past summer working on dune restoration and long term monitoring at the native plant restoration sites here at the Presidio. Which brings me to the aesthetics of diverse plant communities, for which I think there's great cultural appreciation centered in several different cultures.

I also live here. Starting out, I didn't have much of an appreciation for the landscape level processes that are native here, and I wasn't looking carefully. But, participation in the landscape and living here, taking part in the restoration work over the seasons, has

brought me to regard the few precious natural area here as a source of constant renewal. They're personal, full of the particularities of seasonality and succession.

I have friends that must go back east to witness the Fall there. Here in the Bay Area, Fall pulses less in the trees and more in the return of Monarch butterflies, ladybugs, and the late mating of anise hummingbirds who, luckily for people like me, permanent residents like us in California.

So the landscape level processes are also imprinted in several cultural traditions. To name one, several stories point in the direction of sacred festivals, like Day of the Dead, being timed and color-matched with the exact - and I mean exact - timing of the arrival of Monarch butterflies here in San Francisco and south of here. Even if we don't share that particular history, all we need is a few extra moments, and perhaps an education on these tough, well-evolved and therefore, wise cycles of the natural, to really relish this last of San Francisco's natural habitats of the Presidio.

Please, let's not be reductionist in describing native habitats in one color.

Living here, close to the cycles of mark heather, coyote brush, dune knotweed - not to mention others like the endangered San Francisco lucingia - I recognize that the subtleties of their colors and texture belong to this place. Have belonged here longer than we have - long enough to be a very natural and cultural context. The plants that are not just beautiful but stunning when you take the time to appreciate them, are configured amply to the specifics of weather and microgeography of dunescapes and serpentinescapes.

Listening at the correct distance to hear poppy seeds pop and hummingbirds chisel away at the silence, it makes me want to summarize this all in one mouthful. Thank you. But I can't. You're just going to have to experience it for yourself.

I want to summarize by saying I fully support the Presidio Park's Stewards Program, Division of Natural Resources in the decisions they've made to restore native plant communities. I support alternatives for the VMP for increasing native tree diversity, and to add to and replace tree species in the historic forest management zone. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Let me urge you again . . . we're going to run out of time. Please, if you're willing, forego the applause. We can keep it moving faster.

Tracey Elsey? Peter Brastow? It would be helpful, too, as I'm calling the second name, if that person could come up and be ready to speak right after the other speaker, that would help us. Thank you.

Tracey Elsey: Hi, my name is Tracey Elsey. I am a volunteer here. I just moved out here from New York. I studied wildlife biology in school. That's what my training has been.

I strongly support alternative forestation management plan.

My first experience in the Presidio was met with mixed feelings. Walking through this historic forest, I noticed there wasn't much under story or ground cover for species growing underneath, and therefore there weren't a lot of insects, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, as well as birds that are part of the healthy forest ecosystem.

Therefore, I strongly support plants for a diversified native forest, where many wildlife species have specially adapted to native vegetation will be able to thrive in the multi-layered, multi-aged native forest. Not simply managing for endangered species, but managing for a diverse ecology and native plant ecosystem, as well as wildlife.

I'd also like to mention the importance of habitats corridors. Unbroken habitat corridors, along which wildlife can move, feed and rest, creating suitable living conditions for wildlife in an urban

area, is hugely significant. As well as constantly managing. I think we all understand how detrimental it is to just go ahead with management actions and then not follow up on our management.

Through my volunteer experiences, I have become extremely aware of invasive non-native species, such as cape ivy, pampas grass, [air heart], etc. These species take over diverse native plant communities. I would like to ask the Trust not to lose sight of the need to control and remove these species before they spread further.

I'd also like to ask the Trust what your commitment will be to this effort and how you will weigh such resource management issues.

[End of Side A of Tape 2]

Peter Brastow: [Abrupt beginning] . . . [federal] restoration program since 1994 at its inception. I'm going to bow to my spiritual colleagues that have spoken previously, and not comment on many of the misstatements that were made earlier, because I'd like to be very positive today.

I'm just going to read the final paragraph of my written comments which I will submit tomorrow - or actually, I submitted last night via email.

The Presidio is a sublime opportunity. It is a spectacular national park in the second most densely populated city in America. We must seize this opportunity to teach each and every San Franciscan about the beauty and importance of nature. This park is a place for the people of the United States, and especially the people of San Francisco. It is not simply an ex-military base whose management has changed. The Presidio is a latent, outdoor classroom that is just now beginning to emerge as an ecological podium for the community of San Francisco. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Laurens Garlington? William Kales?

Laurens Garlington: My name is Laurens Garlington. I live in the Seacliff area, and have for the last 36 years.

I think we need to get a few definitions correct. I understand that this is to be a park, not a wilderness area. It's an urban park. My definition of a park is an arrangement of plants, animals and water selected for beauty within the constraints of cost.

Concerning native plants. There are no native plants. That's junk science. There are only plants that have been here for various lengths of time. Do you become native by being here 100 years, 1000 years, 10,000 years. None of the plants were created here. They were brought in somehow.

So-called native plants must not be subsidized at the expense of more beautiful, equally cost-effective, so-called exotics. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: William Kales, and then Toby Hardieboys.

William Kales: I wonder if I could just give you a copy of my letter, and I'll read briefly from it.

My name is William Kales. I've been a resident of the Cow Hollow area for the last 29 years. I'm also a member of NAPP. I'm also on the Advisory Board of the Cow Hollow Association. I'm also a member of the SF-SPCA and have been chairman of that organization as well.

I am speaking just as an individual. I want to review the comments that I sent to you. I'll read as quickly as I can.

In response to your request for comments, on the Vegetation Management Plan for the Presidio and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, I urge you to apply the mandate from Congress, stated. Congress stated that the GGNRA was to be - and this is right from the Congressional Record - "a new, national, urban recreation area, which will concentrate on serving the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan region." Its objective was to expand to the maximum extent possible, the outdoor recreation opportunities available in this region.

Your Vegetation Management Plan reduces rather than maximizes recreation areas of the Presidio.

Native plant communities. Your plan already protects habits for rare and endangered plant species, and will create new native plant communities, thereby limiting public access and reducing outdoor recreational acreage.

Degraded areas. Your plan reduces to zero the 255 areas of arbitrarily designated degraded areas, part of which is currently forest. Much of this so-called degraded forest has trails enjoyed by walkers, bicycle riders and picnicking families, i.e. the recreating public. Other less tamed degraded areas provide lovely walks for people with dogs.

Housing. Your Vegetation Management Plan calls for demolishing - not deconstructing, demolishing - housing at Weary and the Tennessee Valley riparian corridor.

In summary - I'll just summarize - that your plan will reduce by 50% the acreage that's available for recreational usage. Basically, there are 1,485 acres in the Presidio. Of these, 585 are currently available for recreation. That'll be reduced to only 315 acres.

To summarize, I urge you to increase the size of the forest where the public has good recreational access, reduce the size of the native plant communities with their limited public recreational access, and re-evaluate the plans that demolish over 710 units of low-cost housing presently in use within the Presidio. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Go ahead, please.

Toby Hardieboys: Good morning. We're here at the end of the millennium. It's 1999, and I see the impact - I think everybody can see the impact - that humans have had on the environment over the last 1-200 years.

I think everybody knows about the increase in the extinction rates of certain species of plants and animals around the world. In San Francisco, as you said, the Mission Blue butterfly is one of these species which is heading towards extinction.

I think it's very obvious how important it is to keep the environments in their natural state, and I think this is a wonderful opportunity for San Francisco to return the Presidio to its natural habitat, which is coastal chaparral and grasslands.

I just want to remind people how beautiful the chaparral is. People talk about the trees, and losing the trees and the visual aspect of that. But coastal chaparral is very unique. It's the only place in America it's found. It's similar to the Mediterranean, and it's very beautiful.

I actually do volunteer work out at Milagro Ridge seven hours a week. I go up there and it's really beautiful being up there. Some people could perhaps could out there and see what exactly the chaparral looks like. It's unique. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Mike Pearlmutter? Seth Holmes?

Mike Pearlmutter: Hi. My name is Mike Pearlmutter. I worked for a year with the Presidio Americorps Restoration Program. I live in the Presidio and I was highly involved with ecological restoration efforts on Crissy Field and throughout the Presidio in general.

I support the Vegetation Management alternative that the National Park Service has put forth, and I would support the diversification of forests with native tree and shrub species.

While some people might feel that native plant restoration devalues trees, it's been my experience that I've actually planted trees and shrubs with restoration efforts. I've planted oaks and willows and other trees native to the area. So trees are a very important aspect of restoration.

I'm also concerned that areas such as Tennessee Hollow and Lobos Creek and Mountain Lake be enhanced and restored. There are more than 10 wetland features on the Presidio, and these are critical to insects and birds and algae.

Finally, I would like to recommend that community stewardship programs continue under the direction of the National Park Service, since it's their mandate to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources. While the Trust's interests lie with making the Presidio economically self-sufficient, it seems intuitive that the National Park Service continue to lead stewardship activities. I'm not saying that these activities aren't economically valuable - as a matter of fact, they enhance the value of the Presidio. But, if these activities were switched to the direction of the Trust, the Trust might compromise protecting natural resources as a means of saving money. Thanks.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Seth Holmes? And then Holly Simonds?

Seth Holmes: Howdy, I'm Seth Holmes. Thanks for taking the time to listen to us. I'm a UCSF medical student. I live in San Francisco, and actually live in the Presidio. I'm also an ecologist by training and primarily I represent myself obviously, but I think I also represent the other almost 200 UCSF students who were not able to get out of their responsibilities at the medical center this morning.

I have a few main points. One, I support - and I believe most of my classmates support - the preferred alternative.

Second, I think it's very important for us to increase the number, the size of native communities on Figure 3. It seems ridiculous to me that the landscaping area is 51% and the native community is only 21%, when it's a national park.

My third point is that I support the increase of native tree species in the tree stands.

Finally, regarding some of the access issues that people have brought up, I think it's most important for us to consider sustainable access. Not just public access that allows us to do what we want to do and see the most beautiful part of the park, but that allows these plant communities to persist for future generations and into the future.

A couple of my reasons for these points. (1) I think all of us enjoy going out into nature. I want to stress the word "nature." I think it's important for us to realize that nature needs to be natural, and native plants, I think, native communities and native habitats make it natural. I think it's dangerous for us to decide ourselves what is most natural and most beautiful and not let nature do that itself.

I think we need to put high importance on the endangered species, endangered habitats, and the corridors that would allow those species to persist.

In summary, the preferred alternative is the best of all the ones listed I believe. We need to increase the amount of native communities on Figure 3, and we need to still consider increasing the number of native trees species in the tree stands. Thanks.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Holly Simonds? And then Cathy Miranker.

Holly Simonds: Hi. I'm here . . . I'm a Director of Education First, and I studied ecology at Princeton University. I discussed this management decision with my colleagues at Yale Forestry School and Stanford Biology.

After reading the amendment, I discovered a few things I think that are not right for the ecology of the park - which people have mentioned today - so I will not go into that deeply.

First of all, cutting down trees which causes a public health problem. When you cut down 70 acres of trees, you are cutting down natural, beautiful air cleaners. In the city, they have days set aside for save

the air. To save the air, you do not cut down trees. Every tree you cut down, you're going to be causing health problems in children in this area and any other area you cut down trees.

So people have mentioned the beauty, but there's also a huge health impact. By cutting down non-native trees - which as someone commented - is silly, because the trees here are now native. They're here now, so why cut them down.

Also the park, as you can see, is pretty beautiful. To spend \$25M on cutting it down, I think is against your policy of raising \$36M by 2013. The goal of raising \$36M on a national park would be greatly helped if you cut back on the 25 million you commented on today. If you cut back on the consultant, on the landscape architect, on the cutting down of trees, you could reduce the spending. Therefore, people would not be angry when you rent the space in the historic buildings to big businesses to create \$36M.

Because I noticed outside the policemen, and I think there's a sense of fear in your committee, because you know that the public is angry. Now, we're angry because this is a national park, and to cut it down and to landscape it and spend \$25M in hiring people to do that, is against a park. We're trying to create educational environments. To rent out the space to big businesses, you cut back on the amount of education that can be in the park. If you cannot rent the space to educational spaces and organizations because of the \$25M you're spending to cut down trees, then maybe you should re-evaluate that system.

I don't mean this to be an attack - I mean it as a suggestion.

Because people are upset. I think to cut down on that anger, you should cut back on the \$25M and do it for health reasons, and because people want the trees - whether they're native or not.

Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Cathy Miranker. And then Ann Thomas.

Cathy Miranker: I'm Cathy Miranker. I'm speaking as a Richmond district resident, and as someone who hikes through the Presidio almost daily. I'm concerned largely about the removal of trees under the proposal, but also several other areas.

I respect the Trust's concern for historical integrity, and its focus on what you call signature stands of trees in the plan. I also think it's laudable that you looked to original intent as a guide for your plans, but to me, the ad hoc and accidental growth in the Presidio has a tremendous value as well. The distinction between the historic forest that's ringed in red, and the merely nicely wooded areas is a bit artificial.

The Presidio's plain old woods, however they got there, are lovely. As your one-day workshop participants up there, there is a need to respect natural form and process. Even if they don't meet historic or native criteria, I think all the Presidio's trees are worthy of care and preservation and diversification. We would be impoverished if they were to fall prey to wholesale removal.

The plan, as it now stands, proposes alternations that I think are too concentrated on certain areas, and will produce too abrupt a change in appearance too quickly.

Having said that, however, I also favor native plant communities and I simply think there could be a more sensitive balance in the plan between your attention to restored plantings and to the care of trees. So I hope you will consider perhaps an alternative that is not yet in the plan, as something adopt as guidance for the future of the Presidio. Thanks.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Ann Thomas?

Ann Thomas: Hi, my name is Ann Thomas. I have lived in San Francisco for many years. For the past 5 years, I have been in the fog of Seattle, and now I'm recently back in San Francisco.

For years, I was here hiking and biking. I'm a member of the Native Plant Society of Washington and California. I've been involved in many restoration projects in Washington, and am now a steward here in the park.

I'm not upset by this plan. In fact, I think it's very exciting. I would like to say that I do support restoration of native plant communities, species diversification and biodiversity wherever it's possible.

I think thousands of people in this city drive a long way in terrible traffic to get to the types of environments that are considered to be restored here. I think once they're restored here - I know they look ugly to start with - once they're restored here, people will love them, and they'll be right here.

I would like to support the removal and the diversification of the again, single species forest. I look forward to additions of other types of forests and trees - oak forests, buckeyes, riparian shrubs and other such native trees here. As far as I'm concerned, the eucalyptus

trees could not disappear fast enough. I don't see why we couldn't do that fast.

It looks to me in the plan that there are plenty of trees going to be left here. You have the forest area, and then you have the landscape vegetation area, which I'm not sure, but it appears to me that there are probably going to be a lot of trees in that area as well.

I would like to support the use of native trees in that landscape vegetation area as well. Thank you.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Geoff Motlow?

That completes the public sign-up that I have. I would guess there are questions and comments that the Board may have. But before we do that, I just wanted to repeat what you all know, which is the purpose in the agenda for this meeting was to have a refresher presentation of the plan, but mostly for us to have the opportunity to get input from you all. We appreciate that. There was never a plan

or an intent that the Board actually take any action. As you know the process, that wouldn't be appropriate.

In that context, did you want to . . .

Jim Meadows: As Toby mentioned, there is no intent to reach conclusions. Nor is there any specific intent to respond directly. But, a couple of points have come up that I think both the Trust and the Park Service would support.

That is, first of all, there have been no approved pilot programs as yet under this Vegetation Management program. That's part of the further process. As part and parcel of that, there is no plan in place - there are no plans - for wholesale cutting of trees or wholesale cutting back of native plants for that area.

Basically, these are thoughts under study. These are proposals under study. There's been some flyers floating around that the plan is in place to cut hundreds or thousands of trees. I want to reiterate that is

not an approved plan, that is not a conceived plan, that this not something we're moving forward on. The whole idea of a pilot plan process would be you would start small as was suggested today. You might consider interior locations and you would graduate out from there, with whichever way we go.

What has come out today is this dynamic tension between plants and trees. I think more than one person has offered the suggestion that we ought to try to find a creative solution that puts those two concepts more closely together.

That's the only comment that I wanted to make as far as there's nothing happening that is . . . basically precedent that is going to be happening in the very near future.

Mary Murphy: I'd like to add to that. I think there's more than a tension between plants and trees. There's also the issue of public access. The reason why we're having this is, as that everyone understands this is part of the public comment period. It's supposed to be an iterative process.

We have read those submissions that have been given to us already, and we'll read the ones that come in, and we listen to the comments.

This the purpose - this is a dialogue amongst the community, and we can hear that there are competing interests that have to be taken into consideration. Because it goes to the heart of the issue. What does it mean to be a national park, most particularly in the setting in which we find ourselves? So we welcome the comments of the community.

This is the whole process. Having a dialogue is to hear that people have competing points of view and to actually try to come up with a plan that provides guidance for the future, that is formed by a consensus of a vision of what we are about in this place.

I guess I'd also like to emphasize that this is a partnership between the Park Service and the Trust. Sometimes today, I've heard people say, well, thanks for the money, Trust - or whatever. We're so worried about you having to make money, Trust.

The fact that this is an expensive process, and it's one to which we're committed, along with all the other infrastructure processes, that we have to care for as part of the Presidio Trust charge. We're not just roads, we're not just sewers - even though sewers are, I know, very exciting and sensational. We are the Vegetation Management Plan as well, because this is a park, and it is our first charge to provide a park environment. It is our mission as a national park. This is tremendously important to us.

It's very interesting for me, as a Board member, to hear from so many members of the community. I personally very much appreciate the depths of study that people have brought to this from divergent points of view. It's very informative to me, and I am heartened to see that people have spent so much time because they have that level of interest in it. I think that bodes very well for the future of this park, because it's the volunteers and the members of the community that are interested in its future that will ensure its lasting success.

Amy Meyer:

I am very gratified to have heard the range of comments that were made. I'd like to go back to something that was said early on.

Jennifer Knauer spoke of the charette that was held here about this plan. The charette added dimension to the plan. I was a Board member who had a chance to participate in this. There were a couple of things that came out in the course of that charette which she summarized.

One of them that she brought forward was the idea that the Vegetation Management Plan provides an overall vision, but the charette participants suggested that the overall vision needed to be more clearly stated. Some of the tension we're feeling between the native plant people and the tree people is because that vision is still not fully crystallized.

What we are in is a process. One of the things one has to understand when you're dealing with living things is that there will be change. Because trees are young, and they get older. Eventually

they become either dangerous or bare, and they die, and they have to be replaced. Their replacement sometimes comes earlier than you would want, for reasons that have to do with the total effect of an area - what will happen? You take out some trees; the others will fall over in a windstorm.

What we're trying to learn, and our pilot projects will eventually allow us to learn, is how do we manage change? How do we control it? So we can keep what is valued? What all of you do value here now - how can we keep and enhance what you value?

One of the things that was brought up - again, in Jennifer's comments, was the vegetation zoning map. People have questioned that zoning map. The people who were here at the charette also questioned it and said it needs to be re-examined; it needs to be studied further. Not because it's bad or wrong, but because there may be more depth and dimension that can be added in that map that again would make it clear why one choice has to be made or another.

As Mary has pointed out, the ongoing public involvement is particularly important. It is the question Red Kernan brought up. Do native plants mean no people? Or, is it more a matter of how do people relate to whether it's forest, native plants or landscaped area?

So we want to be involved with the people use here. It's both the happy users and the stewards that make all the knowledge that came out in the room today.

I want you to think of a plan; I want you to think of an evolving document. We're going to be learning all the way along. We have this interrelationship which I heard - there were these separations that Mary picked out of . . . the separation between the park and administered areas and the trust administered areas is so very much a time when we must think of a whole - the whole Presidio. Habitat doesn't have any boundaries. Species of plants, insects, birds, animals don't look at the boundaries that Congress put on a map. We do have a very tight interrelationship.

I look forward to seeing a plan that evolves. The pilot projects will teach us things. This is something that over time, you're going to have a lot of input into. But I see it as a document with vision and then flexibility. Thanks.

Bill Reilly: I have sat through a lot of public hearings in my time, and I must say this has been one of the most specifically substantive and congenial that I have seen. Also a very, very helpful and illuminating.

I had read the Vegetation Management Plan - thought that I understood it. I guess I have to confess if we're committing to a \$25M plan here, I had not quite focused on that number and will want to inquire more into that as the basis of what I've heard.

I would also say that in a national park, particularly one in an urban area, we - you all, obviously have the obligation to mix a number of values and concerns. Those involve the preservation of the cultural and natural environment here, the promotion and improvement of

public access and recreation, and the creation of an environment that's congenial to its surroundings, including to its neighbors.

I just, to react to - the sense that we're required or suggested that we're making a choice between native plants and trees, is not something I'm very comfortable with. I would simply say that if - as one of the commentators suggested - the consequence of moving forward with this plan is to accept that some significant area of the park would be inaccessible, or unattractive, unaesthetic for I think it was said, during our lifetime, even, I'm not prepared to go along with that. I think that is a burden larger than one can justify in a settled urban area which surrounds us.

So the burden to me would be very heavy on anyone who would propose to reduce or restrict for any substantial period of time, public access to large parts of this park.

In connection with that, I would also say I think that, in thinking about forest succession, we ought to try to do it in a way where

we're actively managing the forest. We ought to try to ensure that the succession is attractive from day one. We're in a position, I think, to not to have to wait while trees grow up or are stunted. And certainly if public access is restricted during that period, we can take some steps I think, to intervene and to bring in larger trees if that's what is necessary to replace those that fall down.

I think we can mix a number of these values and satisfy many of the concerns. We can certainly enhance the natural areas of the park, but we are not, in the end, dealing with a wilderness here. We're dealing with a place that is expected to accommodate a lot of people and to do it sustainably, with respect for the marvelous natural environment which we have the privilege to steward.

Chairman Rosenblatt: In that material that we received before - in the letters and in the report on the charette and then in the testimony today. I've seen some of it reflected in the last few minutes of comments by other Board members - but there are a few others that I would like to comment on that I felt were important.

One of them actually doesn't have anything to do with the plan.

There's a recurring comment that a number of people made that seemed to suggest that there was some question about whether the stewardship program, and the volunteer programs were in some question. Or whether there might be some jeopardy about those. I'm not aware of that - not from anybody. In fact, to the contrary.

Everybody I've talked to in the Natural Park Service, GGNRA, everybody I've talked to in the Presidio Trust, reaffirms the huge value that has in terms of its contribution to the park, and in terms of the value that it provides for the individuals who are willing to volunteer in that. So that one is a no worry. Everyone is in strong support, and the resources will continue to be provided, perhaps even enhanced, for those programs.

Let me talk about the questions that I have about both this proposed plan and the process we're working on.

At some point, I think we need to look at the concepts of pilot programs as we've talked about them. I would agree with Bill, that I think we need to move closer to a concept that as replanting occurs, the assumption that what goes in is mature enough to be attractive in terms of the aesthetic values as well as the habitat values. We at least ought to look at what that means when we're looking at how the programs work, and what the cost of those may be.

I think we ought to consider doing a site tour again. We did one. We sure, I think, have a whole greatly expanded issue of what the issues are now, and we ought to look again at the forested areas that have been talked about as a concern. We ought to look at the native plant areas - both those that are proposed and those that exist. So that we get a clear understanding of what's talked about and what the values are.

I don't remember, but we ought to look at the question again, or you need to point out to us clearly where the data . . . have we done any

wind studies? Do we know what the impacts of the wind changes would be from the proposals in different parts of the Presidio and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

We have talked about . . . we've made reference to the trail planning efforts. As we've come to understand the work of the charette and our own planning efforts, it's clear - I think it's clear - that indeed, this plan needs to be done as an integrated piece with the trail planning efforts. We need to address recreational planning in the whole Presidio. We need to tie that in with what we know about where the housing is and where the patterns of people's movements are going to be, and where we want to try to direct that. I think that has a reciprocal benefit for the users as well as for the areas we're talking about for the areas we're talking about for where native plants will happen and where reforestation is planning.

I worry that... Just as we have clearly talked about the need to integrate our environmental remediation planning with the Vegetation Management Plan, I think we need to integrate the trail

planning and the recreation planning with this Vegetation Management Plan.

Whatever we decide to do... Or however it unfolds is a better way to say it - there is a clear concern, I think, expressed today about people not understanding exactly what the native plant areas or the reforested areas might look like. The photographs you were able to give us and the photo simulations are a very good start about that. We probably should revisit some of that.

I think in addition to these, [unintelligible] take us places. It doesn't necessarily have to be just in the Presidio, but take us places down in the Headlands or down on the Peninsula or elsewhere where you think it's good education for us to understand what might this look like 5 years from now, 10 years from now. That would be helpful.

I think that would give us a sense of both the issue of how will it look as well as what is the appropriate access for people's use as well as the protection of the resource.

I don't know that it goes in this plan, but it certainly would be better if we could iterate for people what we anticipate the process will be after a plan is adopted. How are we actually going to involve . . . I'm not saying we need to commit to it - because it evolves. But at least if we could be more definitive with people so they understand what happens when we start on a pilot project or when we start on an area. What will their opportunity be for involvement review? It's sort of like the individual permit review within a broader zoning plan, if you will. Hopefully a little better way to describe it.

But that's the issue, and I think that would help allay the concerns people have about pull mall anything - "clear cutting" or whatever those words were that were used out there.

The last issue, I think, is the question of the evolution of the planted areas. "Migration," I guess is the word - for the forests or the native plant areas. We understand, from the work you've shown us, how

the forests have migrated, or grown beyond what their original historic boundaries were.

I'm wondering if we now have the tools to be able to say, all right, when we re-do an area, or reforest an area, or maybe plant preservation in an area or enhancement in an area, or particularly when we deal with the most sensitive of the listed species - what happens when the wind blows? What happens when they migrate - relative to what we would expect 10, 15, 20, 30 years from now, would be the use patterns.

Can we anticipate in a way that will help us understand and maybe help everybody who will be addressing this now and in the future, what the evolution is likely to be? It may not change what we do, but it'll certainly change people's understanding of what we're trying to do and why.

Having said all of that, those are my questions added to the other questions. We've talked, clearly, about the end of the comment

period coming up at the end of today or tomorrow. We need everybody's comments by then. I don't want to extend. Because our staffs need the input the you're prepared to give, in addition to whatever you've given or others you know have maybe given.

What I would like to do, though, is open the question or think about depending on the nature and extent of comments that you've seen when it's all compiled, whether we are ready to, in fact, close the public comment period in the most technical sense of [NEPA] and the plan itself.

There are, in my mind, some very, very substantive questions that have been raised. Depending on what answers we are able to provide, we need to think about whether it's appropriate to have yet another round of public review and response on that before we move to certification of an environmental document and a record decision on that.

Those are the only comments I have.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Were there any others that you want to make, [Jim], or . . .

[Jim]: [Unintelligible - not near microphone]. Perhaps a generation or  
[inaudible]

[Chairman Rosenblatt]: The charette was basically - and these are not people with a particular bias, but bringing in experts in both native plants, bringing in experts in forestry areas, bringing in experts in landscaping - both from a theoretician standpoint, from an education standpoint. One of the charette participants was the forestry person for the Golden Gate Park, who's been dealing with this issue for 20 years longer than we have at the Presidio.

People from all over the country - including Yale, east coast/west coast institutions, local institutions. It was a one-day seminar to basically ground truth out to the basic concepts for the Vegetation Management Program, get their ideas and add that to the comment

period and the type of comments that both the Trust and the Park Service were receiving. That's where we go from here.

Mary Murphy: I actually, know, the origin of the word [Jim], the word "charette" - at least according to an architectural friend of mine. It's a French word and I think it's c-h-a-r-r-e-t-t-e?

Male voice: One 'r'.

Mary Murphy: One 'r'. According to this one architectural friend of mine, in France, when the architectural students were getting ready to submit their plans - their drawings for a project that was due - the cart would come around and the cart would pick up the plans. Except, the students were of, course, not finished, so they would sit on the cart drawing their architectural plans as they were being gathered up. That's where it literally comes from is from this cart for charette. It's I guess, like a lot of things - valet parking or something - we've just used it . . . it's become a generic word for a workshop where

people brainstorm and actually come up with plans and work together.

When you're in an architectural meeting , a lot of times when you use the tissue paper and start redrawing, that would be an example of a charette, I presume.

Female voice: [Unintelligible voice from the audience].

Chairman Rosenblatt: Hold it, hold it. Let's not reiterate. Thank you, though.

We need to draw this to a close. Any other comments from our staff? Or questions of us or anything?

Male voice: No.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Anything more?

Male voice: No, sir.

Chairman Rosenblatt: Any last comments? Again, thank you to the staffs of both organizations for again, a very high quality piece of work and an ongoing one. Thank you all for coming.

[End of meeting - end of recorded material]