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Environmental groups appeal SF plan to redevelop money-losing Sharp Park Golf Course

Endangered San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog threatened by development

SAN FRANCISCO, CA and PACIFICA, CA – Today a coalition of environmental groups filed an [appeal](#) of a plan to redevelop Sharp Park Golf Course. The Recreation and Park and Planning Commissions recently approved the project that is one part of a citywide Natural Resources Management Plan.

“In 2009 the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department [promised in writing](#) that a controversial proposal to redevelop Sharp Park Golf Course would never be inserted into the Natural Resources Management Plan,” said Brent Plater of Wild Equity. “The Department broke this promise, and in the process broke the law and any pretense of honest, open governance of our parks.”

Sharp Park Golf Course, owned by San Francisco and located in Pacifica, is habitat for the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake and California Red-legged frog. [Scientists](#) at various institutions, including Cal Academy of Sciences and San Francisco State University, have criticized the golf course as threatening rare and dwindling habitat for the endangered species.

“It’s a shame that the golf course redevelopment is part of an otherwise sound plan,” said Arthur Feinstein of the Sierra Club’s San Francisco Bay Chapter. “We support other elements of the Natural Resources Management Plan, so we’re asking the Board of Supervisors to take out the golf course redevelopment, and let the rest of the plan go forward.”

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), which joined today’s appeal, issued the following statement: “We’re simply asking the City to make good on their promise to conduct a complete, separate environmental review of any changes to the Sharp Park golf course,” stated Neal Desai of NPCA. “Raising fairways and moving holes may improve playability but scientists warn it will harm species. San Francisco shouldn’t jam an unrelated golf course development into a natural areas plan.”

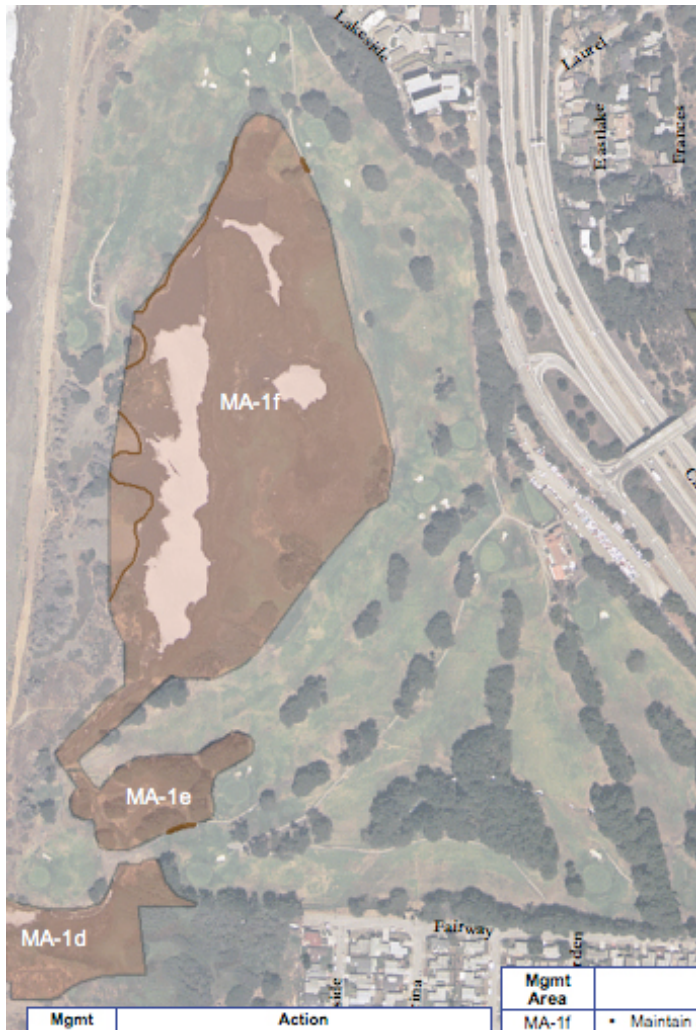
Back in 2011, the Board of Supervisors [voted](#) to turn Sharp Park Golf Course over to the National Park Service. However, Mayor Ed Lee, a golf enthusiast, [vetoed](#) the decision.

“New records show that Sharp Park Golf Course lost more than [\\$600,000](#) in 2014/15 alone,” says Plater. “At a time when the Mayor is asking departments to cut budgets, it’s irresponsible to pour millions of taxpayer dollars into a golf course that loses money year after year. We have five other public golf courses in San Francisco that are more popular and accessible to residents. And unlike Sharp Park Golf Course, they don’t harm endangered species.”

Many golf courses have [closed](#) in recent years because of the declining popularity of the sport.

[Other groups](#) that oppose the golf course redevelopment include Golden Gate Audubon, Sequoia Audubon, Surfrider Foundation San Francisco Chapter, SAVE THE FROGS!, and SF League of Conservation Voters.

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2006 Natural Resources Management Plan for Sharp Park. The original plan’s management boundary (depicted by areas shaded in brown) was limited to the natural lagoon at Sharp Park. No modifications to the golf course were proposed. Environmental groups unanimously supported this plan.



2016 Natural Resources Management Plan for Sharp Park. After no public hearings, the plan significantly changed for Sharp Park. The boundary has been expanded to include the golf course. The plan now includes raising several fairways to “reduce flooding,” moving holes, and modifying hole lengths. Scientists warn this plan threatens one of the last remaining habitats for the endangered species.