

Green Party Questionnaire.

Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for the Park District Board?

I am running for the Board of Directors to elevate the awareness of Parks, Recreation, Conservation, Preservation, Open Space, Trails and Play.

To that end, I seek the Ward 2 seat to support the efforts to protect the beautiful landscapes, watershed and wildlife. I am committed to helping protect natural resources and providing responsible public access to these important natural areas. For me, this includes protecting wildlife and open space areas in our urban communities. I am also passionate about ensuring that Ward 2's diverse residents are engaged in the decision making process and continue to be well represented, to further their understanding of these valued environmental resources. As the former Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Oakland and Former Superintendent in the City and County of San Francisco, I have the skills to communicate with and to access these communities. I am passionate and committed to ensuring that communities of color have the same abilities to enjoy and be exposed to the outdoors and services provided by East Bay Regional Parks that enhance the lives of others. I think it is critical build the next generation of young environmentalist and naturalists. If we fail to introduce and engage our children and youth now the interests to sustain, protect and invest will be lost.

Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to proactively lead by placing new ideas on the agenda for consideration and development. What are some specific ideas you intend to pursue if elected? What do you believe are the main priorities for the Park District Board?

Allow me to start with the **new idea** that I would like to share with the board and will implement in the near future once elected. This project includes extending a conversation with our various community groups and the local school districts regarding the importance of our wildlife and open space areas while providing needed outdoor recreation experiences to our children and youth. I am very concerned about the lack of opportunities our inner-city youth about the importance of our natural resources. I often wonder who will be responsible for continuing to the protect our valuable resources if these youngsters are not aware of the value. My idea is to work with the school districts so that every 5th grader can have the opportunity to experience an overnight camping event as part of their graduation curriculum, and that High School students from the service organizations shall serve as counselors with the proper screening. This would be

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done by creating a memorandum of understanding with the school district that would secure the commitment.

Implementing a program as such serves two purposes. 1). We attract the attention of children at an early age that can still be influenced by nature. 2). The school districts would plant a seed of long term stewardship and an environmental responsibility. I like to think of this as a “train the trainer” young naturalist program with real life hands-on experience. I believe there is outside funding opportunities that the Regional Foundation can pursue from local corporations, state grants and the private sector in partnership with the School Districts.

The **Main Priority of the East Bay Regional Parks Board** is to represent their residents. This includes actively seeking opinions on key priority/policy issues that the Board can address to make real, positive change. I support the Vision Statement as part of the Board's Master Plan. This Vision Statement establishes a priority to protect natural resources.

The Board's role is to advance the Master Plan goals, support expanded land acquisition to protect critical habitat, manage parkland in a sensitive environmental manner, provide appropriate public programs and to provide the public with access where feasible. I also support expanded outreach of the Board’s environmental goals to the public. Finally, it is critical to continue to successfully manage the finances of the park district, which is the largest regional park system in the USA. Fiscal responsibility will continue to advance the Master Plan Goals.

Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of EBRPD Director.

I have dedicated my professional work to parks, recreation, preservation, conservation, open space, trails and play with emphasis in serving diverse and vulnerable communities. I have demonstrated strong leadership as a steward of our natural resources in providing programs and services that meet the needs and demands of any given community.

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I began my 40 years of service in Parks and Recreation in Redlands, California with stops along the way in San Bernardino, Long Beach, City and County of San Francisco, and East Palo Alto before joining the City of Oakland as the Director of Parks and Recreation in 2004.

I began my position as the Director of Oakland Parks & Recreation over eleven years ago. As the first female Director in the more than 100-year history, I believed my purpose was to expose, empower, engage and excite others about our natural spaces and create quality of life in our community. During my tenure, I managed a staff of nearly 1400 full and part-time employees and park assets including 2,500 acres of open space (140 parks); 28 recreation, community and interpretive centers; 14 community gardens; 44 outdoor tennis courts, three golf courses; 53 athletic fields and five swimming pools. I also oversaw the development of the East Oakland Sports Complex, and the management of several regional areas to include: Joaquin Miller Park, Lake Merritt, the Dunsmuir-Hellman Historic Estate, during my tenure I supported several conservation efforts on park land to ensure equity in our programs and service managed by Oakland Parks and Recreation. As Superintendent of the Southern Division of the City and County of San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, I managed 3Com Stadium, Golden Gate Park, McLaren Park and the Conservatory of Flowers where I was instrumental in the Save the America's Treasures Initiative, in addition to local neighborhood parks and recreation facilities. My forty years of experience in parks and recreations have given me a strong background in recreation/park development with particular emphasis on connecting with diverse and underserved communities. Although retired, I remain a strong voice of commitment and dedication to work, constantly advocating and conveying the message of the value of parks, recreation, conservation, preservation, open space and play

Recreation and Conservation -- What balance do you favor between recreational access/development and protection of wildlife, creeks, and lands?

This is a very interesting question... One is not favored over the other-I believe access is very important to ensure future stewardship and protection, because you cannot create interest and passion for the outdoors unless people get to experience it. However, it is without a doubt in my mind that as a society we have encroached upon the natural habitat far too much. Over 90% of the total acres of the East Bay Regional Park District is in natural open space protection. I

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believe the East bay Regional Parks purpose is clear, their mission is profound: “ *The East Bay Park District preserves a rich heritage of natural and cultural resources and provides open space, trails, safe and healthful recreation and environmental education. An environmental ethic guides the District in all of its activities.* The expectation of the users is that the District stay on course with the intent where it makes reasonable and responsible sense.

The advantage of the EBRP being in two counties that runs through over 33 cities is that the balance can and should be shared with the local municipalities. Local cities should carry the weight and expectation of active recreation while the district remains passive in areas that is appropriate.

Vegetation Management

a. What do you think the EBPRD policy regarding the use of pesticides / herbicides on park district property should be and why? How would you propose to modify current park district policies?

District Policy on pest/herbicide use: Great and challenging dilemma that the Park District has tried to balance the need for Vegetation Management by protecting native plants and encouraging their growth while thinning highly flammable nonnative pines and eucalyptus. I realize this is an important and sensitive issue.

I have heard and I am learning a lot about the vegetation concerns on this campaign trail. The risk of wildfires and the need to retain native plant diversity from the onslaught of nonnative plants is real. A great deal of this effort can be accomplished with hand crews from various Conservation Corp programs, volunteer work days like we did in the city of Oakland. I support non pesticide uses whenever possible, this includes a carefully managed goat grazing program, until we are able to come up with the proper means and funding to remove all the non native trees and plants. I do support limited pest/herbicide use as a spot effort on certain stumps to prevent sprouting of additional non native trees. One of the ideas I intend to really look into is the plan that phases the removal over time in an effective way to replaces nonnative plants like eucalyptus with native plant communities that existed before the eucalyptus sprouted, as what has already occurred in the Claremont Canyon. I have looked into this and at the present time it

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is cost prohibitive. I am interested in having a more in-depth look at the overall cost and seeking outside funding to assist in the implementation and removal of the nonnative trees.. What I am clear about is that we cannot afford to not take action.

b. What approaches do you support for managing eucalyptus and other non-native or high-fire-risk species on park district property?

Eucalyptus non native: As the former Director of Oakland Parks and Recreation I have been engaged to a certain degree in regards to the vegetation management. I understand that there are many challenges as it relates to the management of eucalyptus. There is nothing new about the discussion. I agree that thinning highly flammable pines and eucalyptus is not the sole answer and it is not one that everyone agrees with. As you all know eucalyptus are highly flammable given their high oil content and their capacity to shed duff (bark) in large contents on the forest floor. When cut down, they simply sprout numerous new limbs, thus densely packing an area with more eucalyptus. This was clearly demonstrated when the City of Oakland cut eucalyptus trees near Highway 24. They re-sprouted and now there is a more dense eucalyptus forest than there ever was. I know this is a problem and has been a concern for years. However, until there is adequate funding to address this complex issue and a solid plan that will resolve the issue as a whole, my stance is to remove the high fire risk trees that are in close proximity to houses and communities. The District priority in this instance should be to save lives and property and wildlife. The District should also limit the margins of these trees so that they are not allowed to quickly expand, and the District should also take out the single-plant sprouts in native plant areas that don't have other eucalyptus.

Grazing Program -- There are concerns that the District's grazing program does not provide the oversight to meet the District's own goals of enhancing botanic and biotic diversity, reduced erosion and improved water quality. What steps would you take to meet these goals? What is the 'optimum level' of grazing compatible with both biotic diversity and recreational uses of the parks?

I have looked into the grazing concerns and have consulted with a few environmental professionals on the subject. A good start would be to revisit current policy to ensure that the

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District is up to date with the best practices. If managed properly, without overgrazing, cattle can provide basic vegetation management that would not be feasible for the District to attempt to manage with manpower alone.

I would like to spend some time with the groups on both sides of this issue, to gain a better understanding of the expectation of the users and the challenges the District may be faced with as to why the goals are not perceived as being met. I understand that the Board established a Natural Resource Committee to provide such oversight. I am not certain that this committee has sufficiently reviewed the current program to ensure that we are using the most updated policies' and options available. I would work to ensure that this Board Committee provides such oversight and that full reports are made from this Committee to the Board in public meetings that are scheduled when the community can attend.

Steps to meet biodiversity goals: Biodiversity requires significant land corridors for wildlife habitat, protection of natural water shed areas, and careful planning for public access where appropriate. I would advocate for these principles as we consider implementing environmental maintenance policies and land acquisition and planning policies.

Optimum Level of grazing compatible with Biotic/Rec Use: Grazing is used for fire suppression by reducing fuel load of the plants. If grazing was not utilized, then plants like coyote brush would naturally invade into grassland areas, increasing fuel loads. Therefore, it is an important planning consideration to understand where, how much and how often grazing should occur. I was on the Briones trail this past weekend and noticed the posting regarding cattle grazing, as a walker I realized how it can be threatening to park users, as cattle can be aggressive if disturbed. So all these goals need to be balanced, when considering grazing and they are site specific as to their application. There really is not a simple ratio formula to use. There are so many factors and certainly I would have to leave it up to the experts on both spectrums to provide me with the latest and greatest best practice and scientific support that would provide guidance to ensure the Districts goals were being met.

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Dog Leash Law - What do you believe the EBRPD's policy should be regarding a leash law for dogs on district lands? Please explain your answer, including the issue of compatibility of off-leash dogs and park wildlife.

From my research and study of leashed dogs especially when I was the director for the city of Oakland was to work towards the balance. I found that the District has the most liberal dog policy in the Bay Area. However, there are areas where either no dogs (Round Valley) or leashed dogs may be most appropriate. I believe that in heavily used urban areas a dog leash law makes sense. In some designated areas like Point Isabel there is a long history of dogs off leash and it seems to work well at that sight for most of the users. I also know that there are others who strongly oppose the leash laws.

My concern about unleashed dogs is the potential negative impact to wildlife. Great care needs to be considered when planning rules for dog use in sensitive habitat areas. I would support a study along with park and trail users to determine the best application of a leash dog policy. The reality of any policies as we faced in Oakland is the capacity to enforce leash dog practices. This is one of the areas where I would engage the users and the neighboring cities in community meetings to review the current policy and provide the platform to revisit the policy and spaces, and collaboratively build a consensus as to how do we meet the need. I have learned in this profession that the users just want their needs met, it does not matter who owns the space, there just needs to be space to accommodate the need that offers quality of life.

Altamont Wind Turbines -- EBRPD owns land at Altamont Pass that includes a wind farm. How would you attempt to reduce bird kills at the turbines on the district's land and help solve the larger problem of bird kills by the turbines Altamont?

Thank you for this question, you are helping me to understand the multiple challenges of the District. While I am on a learning curve and attempting to understand the complexities of the District, I must admit this particular question is one that is difficult for me to provide a concrete solution. I have been in conversation with individuals from the Audubon Society because I really would like to hear from them on what they would feel is a viable solution.

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What I have learned is the Park District has been in the lead in studying the effects of wind turbines on bird life. EBRPD's former stewardship manager Dr. Doug Bell performed studies on the effect of turbines on bird life and was well published. Since those studies the wind turbine industry has replaced old models with new ones that are less impactful to birds but may be worse for other wildlife (bats for example). The Park District has acquired land in the Altamont area and added properties with wind turbines, which at least allows the District to control the future use (the properties were purchased with existing leases for such uses). I think the long term interest especially with our solar panels being installed at Shadow Cliffs, the Park District should consider removing the turbines when the lease operations expire.

Public Participation -- Though EBRPD spends millions of dollars annually on its public relations department it continues to receive criticism for being out-of-touch with supportive grassroots organizations and activists that are occasionally critical of District policies and operations. What policies would you help implement to foster communication and inclusiveness with those that have much to contribute?

I have heard and understand that the District has not been as inclusive, engaging and transparent as they could be. I believe in total community engagement, I believe that ongoing dialog is critical in building trust and open lines of communication are essential. A few of the ideas that I am exploring include:

- 1) Having the meetings streamed live
- 2) Alternating the location of the meeting on quarterly basis
- 3) Reviewing the time of the meetings

I fully support the District's efforts to establish an Environmental Roundtable to have greater communications with various environmental groups. I think this can be a successful model but few are really aware of its work, to that end it goes back to providing education and bring forth awareness of the roundtable. With the growing concerns, parkland and users it is imperative that there is a platform to be heard before a crisis arises.

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For Ward 2, I am going to follow the same pattern that I have used throughout my career and that is community focus groups. I think it is imperative to know what is working and what is not so that we can work as a team to improve and to meet the expectations as much as possible.

Expansion and Development -- Should EBRPD focus its efforts on continuing to expand its land holding to protect open space from future development, or should it focus on just doing a good job of maintaining its current parklands?

The Park District should focus on both expansion and maintenance. One should not diminish the other as both are priorities. Opportunities for expansion are in a finite area of the East Bay and at some point those opportunities will be gone forever (actually in some areas of the East Bay they are already gone). Maintenance of the properties is important to care for native biodiversity and appropriate public access. If the park district is not ready to maintain property for public access, I support purchasing the property and placing it in a Land Bank status (no public access until planning is complete and maintenance funds are sufficient). But we cannot afford not to acquire the land. There will be nothing later that we could afford and nothing left for the generations to come... the purpose and role of the District as described by the Olmsted Brothers and Ansel F. Hall in 1930” “ *The need is a vital one... The charm of the region as a place in which to live will depend largely upon natural conditions that are destined to disappear unless properly protected for the public in general*” it is the responsibility of the District to do both.

Balance of Mountain Bikers and Equestrians -- Historically, mountain bikers are neglected and given the short end of the stick in conflicts with equestrians on trails. What will you do to promote mountain biking in the parks so that these users actually feel welcome and are given the maximum amount of trail usage possible?

Great question and certainly a concern for many as I have been hearing on this campaign journey. I have been spending a lot of time on the trails, with dog users, the equestrian community, walkers and will soon be taking a bike ride with Mike Udkow, who is a member of the Bicycle Trails Coalition of the East Bay, which is the oldest mountain bike advocacy groups in the United States. Their work has contributed to the success of great educational programs and serves as a model for advocacy groups seeking ways to coexist with hiker's and equestrians. I know of his work from serving as the Director in Oakland, where I had the opportunity to watch

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his collaboration efforts with the Joaquin Miller Working Group. My purpose for joining him is to get a first hand experience of the challenges of the multiuse from the lens of mountain bikers.

Again, to my understanding and learning about the multi-use trails are wider than single-track trails. They are under a "Share the Path" philosophy. This means that hikers, bikers and equestrians all share the multi-use trail.

However, just as more cities are increasing housing development, the District must look at ways to address the growing number of individuals that are interested in riding, walking, running and enjoying the trails. The trails need to be wide enough to provide for such uses without intimidating or crowding out others. For me safety is the main concern and education is a priority. I believe the current trails were actually ranch roads, prior to being incorporated into the Park System.

Again, this is one of the areas that the District should be proactive in working with the cities to leverage funding and projects to meet the growing needs. It should not be the sole responsibility of the East Bay Regional Park to ensure there is access to trails especially if they are developing into natural resource areas such as ridges, canyons and along existing trails and creeks. I think the timing is perfect to have ongoing dialog with the developers to ensure that they create trails that will connect with the existing trails within their design where appropriate.

As the number of mountain bikers increases, access to the trails should also. I don't think that things should remain the same because it has always been done that way. I want to look at the demand, where is there a strong need that needs to be met without displacing another group. As we acquire more land the discussion must be how are we going to adjust to the needs.

I would certainly support a study that involved the multiuse users along with the planning team to review and determined that such additional trails were warranted for mountain bikers.

I know there are use conflicts between these two groups, my plan is to again provide a platform for communication and dialog. They must co-exist in many areas for the time being., I prefer for

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it to be in a cordial manner verses a hostile and us vs them mentality. The District's Trail Safety Patrol can provide a great deal of help to this effort, this is a volunteer group under supervision of Public Safety. They are provided with training and radios. There are units for hiking, biking and horseback. The trail safety patrol only provides interpretation of rules, and communication of safety related encounters.

12. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you?

Partial list.

Lieutenant Governor Galvin Newsom, Mayor Libby Schaaf of Oakland, John Sutter, who is retiring and would be the incumbent... Beverly Lane, Ayn Wieskamp, Doug Siden, Whitney Dotson all of who serves on the Board of Director East Bay Regional Park Pat O'Brien F Chair Political Action Committee, California Recreation and Park Society and Retired General Manager, East Bay Regional Park District, The East Bay Regional Park Public Safety Association, Vice Mayor Annie Campbell Washington, President Lynette McElhaney, President Pro Tem Larry Reid, Commissioner and Chair of Oakland Parks and Recreation Barry Miller, Commissioner Cyril Manning of Oakland Parks and Recreation, (for affiliation purposes only also with Save the Bay), Former Mayor and Assembly member Elihu Harris, Former Assembly member and Deputy Mayor Sandre Swanson, Former Mayor and Congressmen Ron Dellums, John Bliss- President of Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation (affiliation purposes only) Mike Anderson Vice Mayor of Lafayette, Victoria Salinas-Former Chief Resilience Officer for City of Oakland, Chief Teresa Reed, (Oakland Fire Department), Barbara Parker-(Oakland City Attorney), Robert "Bob" Brauer Former director of intergovernmental affairs, Kiran Bawa- Former Budget Director, Ann Woodell (Founder of Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation), Tom Guerino, (PG&E) Andrew Johnson, (member of the Sierra Club) William (Bill) Patterson, (EBMUD), Eric Sippel, (soccer advocate) John Handy (Musician), Robert Wilkins (Executive Director YMCA). Steve Harker (Touchstone Golf), Ed Fitzpatrick (Lexus Coliseum), Allen Hollie, (AC Transient) Daniel Swafford-, (Montclair Village Association) Lynn Hiden, (Commissioner of Circulation Lafayette), Judy Garvens, Former Mayor city of Lafayette, Donn Walklet, (Lafayette Open Space Group) Erling & Patricia Horn, (Lafayette), (Ken & Kristi Hertel) Fran Sticha (Former Parks, Trails & Recreation Commissioner.), Tom Chastain (Planning Commissioner for the City of Lafayette) Esperanza Epallana (Former Director for

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Oakland Food Policy Council), David Ralston (Adjunct Professor at Merritt College Environmental Studies Program, Bay Area Air Quality Management District), Wade Crowfoot (Deputy Cabinet Secretary at Office of California and former West Coast Director for Environmental Defense Fund); Alex Wolk (Climate Adaptation consultant), Paul Carp (First Fuel) Joe Ovick Former Superintendent of Lafayette schools Dr. Roy Wilson Executive Director - Martin Luther King (Affiliation purposes only) Dr. Karen Bohlke Director, Martin Luther King Program (Affiliation purposes only) Saundra Andrews Board Member Martin Luther King (Affiliation purposes only) Retired City Manager and Executive Director ABAG Henry Gardener Former City Administrator and professor Dan Lindheim, Former Director County Health Dept. Arnold Perkins

Campaign Funding -- How much money do you currently have for this race? How much money do you plan to raise? Where will the money come from? Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).

I have raised \$35,000 to date, and ideally I would like to raise \$52,000. Majority of the funding has come from family, friends and fundraisers. I anticipate on hosting a few larger fundraisers and I am working hard to gain endorsements from organizations that are like minded and value the profession of parks, recreation, conservation, preservation, open space, trails and play... I will not accept money from organizations that are not environmentally sensitive and responsible, I will not accept money from organization that do not value our babies, children or youth.

14. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

When I retired from the City of Oakland, as the Director of Parks and Recreation-I left with a mission to elevate the awareness and value of parks and recreation, conservation, preservation, open space, trails and play. I had no idea that John Sutter would be retiring this year and that he would ask me to succeed him. I am proud of John's work and I am honored to have the opportunity to continue the work he has started. I had an interest in the seat 20 years ago when I first arrived in Oakland... Due to my work in the City and County of San Francisco as the Superintendent of Recreation I realized the timing was not right to do justice to the seat. I now have the time, I have passion, the energy and the commitment to protect our natural resources, to ensure access to our trails, shorelines and parks and more importantly I will be able to expose,

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enlighten, empower, encourage, engage and allow others to experience the beautiful landscape in their back yard.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you my vision and thank you for helping me to learn more about the District... I hope I have sparked your interest enough to support my efforts to tell the story of the value of the District and to make the necessary adjustments to continue the great work and enhance its mission to be a well managed system of open space parkland in the counties they are charged to serve.

Thank you for your consideration and endorsement.

Audree V. Jones-Taylor

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