

# San Mateo County Times

## Report on Pacifica golf course delayed until October

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PACIFICA -- The ongoing saga of Sharp Park Golf Course will play out a little longer.

San Francisco's Recreation and Park Department said last week that it needs until late October to complete a planning report weighing three alternatives that would help the city comply with environmental protection laws. The report was supposed to be released by the end of August.

There are three areas of analysis that require more thorough investigation: sea-wall stability, impacts of sea-level rise over the next 20 years, and a process known as mitigation banking, according to Dawn Kamalanathan, the department's director of planning.

Maintenance of the park, which is situated in Pacifica but owned and managed by San Francisco, is killing endangered San Francisco garter snakes and federally threatened California red-legged frogs in the wetlands near its fairway, according to an environmental group that threatened to sue the city last year for neglecting to protect the species.

The Center for Biological Diversity says mowing the greens and pumping a pond on the course are directly killing the snakes and frogs, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

In response, San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi ordered the Recreation and Park Department to look at getting rid of the golf course altogether, reducing it to nine holes, or keeping it the same while trying to protect the species in other ways.

One of those options, mitigation banking, involves buying credits to preserve a natural aquatic resource area to offset "unavoidable wetland impacts" from development projects, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Jeff Miller, a conservation advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity, said mitigation credits can be worthwhile, but not if they allow those who use them to harm an endangered species elsewhere.

"It's a mixed bag," Miller said. "It really would depend on how it would be structured and what projects qualified for mitigation."

Golfers, too, have been keeping a watchful eye on the city's plans for Sharp Park, ardently opposing options that would alter their oceanfront playground, originally imagined by world-renowned course designer Alister MacKenzie.

Pacifica officials are thinking about filing to get landmark status for the golf course, which could disrupt restoration plans.

Mirkarimi has said he wouldn't advise it, however, since it would make the course vulnerable to a takings lawsuit by San Francisco.

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