ADDENDUM to SFDOG Public Comment on GGNRA DEIS

May 27, 2011

The following transcript from the April 11, 2011 hearing of the Land Use Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors is included in the SFDOG Public Comment on the GGNRA DEIS for a new Dog Management Plan. The transcript is provided to educate GGNRA staff and comment reviewers about the social community of dog walkers that exists at GGNRA sites that currently allow off-leash dog walking, and to educate them about the benefits to dog walkers that this recreational activity provides. It is not intended to be considered as a submission of a public comment on the DEIS from the individuals who spoke at the hearing. Because impacts on social community and on people who walk their dogs were not considered in the DEIS, this information will help address that lack of information for GGNRA staff and reviewers.

City & County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Land Use and Economic Development Committee Meeting

April 11, 2011

Transcript of Agenda Items 4 & 5

Present: Supervisors Eric Mar (Committee Chair), Malia Cohen, Scott Wiener

Clerk: Alisa Somera

CLERK ALISA SOMERA:

Item number 4: hearing on the effects of Golden Gate National Recreation Area's draft Off-Leash Dog Policy.

Item number 5: resolution opposing the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's Preferred Alternatives for Dog Management.

COMMITTEE CHAIR ERIC MAR:

And Supervisor Scott Wiener has called for this hearing.

SUPERVISOR SCOTT WIENER:

Thank you, Chairman Mar. And I want to thank everyone both in the chamber today as well as in the overflow room, for taking the time to be here today and to take time away from your busy schedules and your jobs and your families and your lives to be here for this issue. I know that it's not convenient to come to City Hall in the middle of the day, so thank you.

We have limited public space in San Francisco and a lot of different uses of those spaces [time bell chimes]. Am I done? Okay, now we can go home. [laughter]

Anytime we have a discussion about how we utilize our limited public spaces, those discussions are controversial and result in passionate views on the subject. But we owe it to the people of San Francisco to engage in these important discussions. Many San Franciscans have dogs. Dogs need outdoor space for exercise, for recreation, and dog owners need access to outdoor space with their dogs. We've seen in San Francisco city parks the conflicts that sometimes occur between those with dogs and those without dogs, in terms of the allocation of our public spaces. Each of my colleagues, I am quite confident, has personal experience with these kinds of discussions and disputes.

One of the things that lessens the tension in our city parks is the existence of GGNRA. GGNRA is beautiful. It is one of the true gems of this city, and the National Park Service should be commended for doing such a stellar job in maintaining it as a beautiful and attractive place.

Now we all know – whatever one's opinion – that over the past number of decades San Franciscans have relied on parts of GGNRA to walk their dogs both on leash and off leash. Whatever one's view is on the GGNRA proposal, I think that we can all agree that the proposal will have an impact on the ability of dog owners to access these lands in the ways they've been accustomed to doing so.

I, I have serious concerns about the GGNRA proposal, which is why I called for this hearing and why I introduced a resolution. I'm concerned about its impact on the ability of dog owners to bring their dogs to great open spaces for

recreation, and I'm concerned about the impact on our city parks if dogs lose access – whether in part or in whole – to GGNRA.

Now I also believe that we can have a GGNRA that values and cares for its natural heritage – for plants, for wildlife, for natural terrain – and that also allows for full recreational access for people and for dogs. In other words, we do not need to view this as an either/or. This needs to be a situation where everyone wins.

So we are going to, this is really a two-part hearing. The first part will focus on the GGNRA proposal, and after that is done, we will then talk about the possible regulation and permitting of commercial dog walkers in city parks.

So, before we proceed, if any of my colleagues have any remarks? Great. So before we get to public comment, we do have a few presentations from different perspectives, so that we can set the tone and get everything out on the table before the public comments. And first of all, I really want to thank GGNRA – Frank Dean and Howard Levitt – for, for coming today. I very much appreciate that, you taking the time. I'm glad the federal government didn't shut down, at least for now. And I, I just want to say thank you to you. And with that, we're going to start with the GGNRA. And you'll have five to ten minutes to present whatever you'd like to present about the plan. So thank you. Mr. Dean.

FRANK DEAN, SUPERINTENDENT, GGNRA:

Good afternoon. Thank you, Supervisors, for the opportunity to come before you. My name is Frank Dean and I am the Superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. And I appreciate the opportunity to come and speak today and hopefully bring a little bit of clarity to the issue, which I know is very controversial. And I think that, I should say at the outset that I am also a dog owner. My dog's name is Ranger, of course. And so I understand and appreciate this issue from a couple of perspectives.

Just a little bit of context. I'm not sure if you guys are seeing the slides, but this, we'll try this. There we go.

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area is a National Park Service area, it's a national area. It was established in 1972 to protect the natural, scenic, and cultural values and the recreational resources in the park. And again, the second paragraph [referring to slide] shows that it was set up for public use and enjoyment. So we have the recreational aspect, and then further down in the paragraph, it talks about protecting the park in its natural setting, protecting it from development and uses that would destroy it.

So our challenge is really a balance – it's protecting resources and balancing the use. This is a shot of Crissy Field. We have a – we're skipping slides here, but we have a variety of uses here that we, that we provide to the public, and it's, it's quite varied in, in our constituency – all types of activities, not merely dog walking or hiking or, or, or fishing or, or jogging – it's all kinds of users. We need to go back.

So, just a bit of context of how we got here and where we're going. Again, the park was set up in 1972 and back then the default rule for dogs and pets was the national rule that we have in the National Park Service under the Code of Federal Regulations, and that is that pets need to be on a leash where they're allowed by the park management.

In 1979, in response to increased use of the park and, and requests from the dog walking community, there was a, a policy was set up by our Advisory Commission at the time that was comprised of citizens that were appointed by the President, to set up a voice-control policy in certain areas of the park – not all areas, but some areas. We learned later that that really had no basis in law, even though it was adopted. It was, it was an idea at the time to try to attempt to accommodate some use and protect the park in other ways.

Since that time the park has, has grown in popularity. The, the number of dogs, the number of people that come to the park has significantly increased. Things have changed. We've also restored Crissy Field. At the time the park policy was set up in 1979, Crissy Field was a, an abandoned air strip.

We also have had other forces that have come to bear on the park. We had the Endangered Species Act, which, in 1979, although the act existed, we did not know we had endangered Snowy Plovers and some other species that

were residing in the park and using the park. So we had to set off certain areas of Fort Funston and Crissy Field to protect, and Ocean Beach, to protect those areas. That was the first time that we actually started to have some conflict with some of our users, when we started to restrict uses at certain times of the year.

2000-2005 we had several lawsuits, which sort of, about dogs being off leash. People were cited and they brought them to court, and then it sort of led to an understanding that there would be a need for a more formal rule making because of the controversy, the conflicts, the degradation of the resource, and then just general safety of our visitors.

We started to look at working with the various constituents in 2006 under a Negotiated Rulemaking process, and that lasted about a year and a half. It was a lot of good work, a lot of dedicated service by, by our citizens and users of the park, but it did not end in any kind of consensus as to how we should go forward. So fast forward to now, and we've decided to proceed with an environmental impact statement, which we have currently out in draft, which is the subject of today's discussion.

The purpose of all this really is to provide again some kind of balance in employee and visitor safety, reduce user conflicts, and to maintain the resources and values for the future.

Again, this is a balance, not a ban. It's often described as a ban on dogs. It's not at all. It's actually going to be different, if it's proposed, if the proposed plan is adopted. But it's not a ban. It will be different. It will be some changes – some restrictions, perhaps – but it's not an outright ban. Dog walking would remain a welcome park activity. There'll be seven proposed off-leash areas, five of them in San Francisco – large portions of Crissy Field, Ocean Beach, and Fort Funston will remain open for off-leash use. A mile of Ocean Beach, half of Fort Funston beach, half of the Crissy Field airfield, and the entire central beach of Crissy Field would all remain open to off-leash dogs. There'll be 20 areas in the city that would remain open for dogs on a leash, and the plan provides for a variety of experiences, including for visitors that prefer not to interact with a dog, and it ultimately protects critical species and habitats.

We've often, over the years, worked with San Francisco on many issues, and this plan is no different. We plan to work with the city. This plan actually addresses impacts on city parklands. We could look at that. We're willing to work with the city officials and staff to see how we can, we can address your concerns and questions about that. And we look forward to that. We're working on many fronts with San Francisco right now, with the America's Cup and Sharp Park, to name just a few.

So, where do we go from here – we need to hear from the public in a, in a really constructive and substantive way. To say that you're opposed to the plan or just don't like it is, is fine, but it's not helpful to shaping the plan. None of our plans ever look the same in the end as they did at the beginning, so we do listen, we're very open to constructive feedback. We need to hear from everyone, all groups, and all comments will be carefully reviewed and the final plan will respond to substantive comments. And ultimately the plan will be wise and appropriate for a national park area that it is.

We believe that this unique park can have a unique rule on dog use. This plan reflects years of hard work by hundreds of people, and its success will require everyone pulling together. So with that, I'm available for questions or however you'd like to run the rest...

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. I do have a few questions. You, you just – I was happy to hear that you just talked about how GGNRA would be working with the city. So, will, will GGNRA be effectively negotiating with the city in order to take into account the needs of San Francisco and its residents. In other words, apart from San Francisco, say, submitting a public comment, will there actually be a collaborative process to shape the plan going forward?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

We can certainly have discussions with the city. I wouldn't characterize it as negotiating. We have a NEPA process, environmental review process, underway that, we have alternatives on the table. But again, constructive

comments from the public and working with city officials – we're all ears. We, we certainly, if, if there are certain things that need to be tweaked to make this work on the ground, we, we, we're open to that.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Right. I think, as I understand it, the White House has instructed that under NEPA, federal agencies are to work with local officials. Is that, am I correct about that?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yes, I mean, we, we do, but it's, it's – I'm not quite sure how you're characterizing it, but yes, we will work with you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Right.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

We're all, we're all ears.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay, and, but apart from all ears, I mean is there...

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

We can't come up with another alternative mid-stream here, so if, if, you know, we just can't develop it today or the next few weeks and then put it out there for review. We have to take the comments on what we have on the table, and then that will then inform and perhaps a new alternative will evolve from that.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

So, for example, perhaps sticking with the current management plan but working with the city to improve enforcement – would that be a possibility?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well, I, I don't believe the current, the status quo is sustainable, if it was working, we wouldn't be here today or talking about possible changes, so, are you asking for some sort of a delay, or, or.more time, or..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

No, what I'm talking about, what the end result might be, because obviously there is disagreement about whether the current situation is, is working. I understand there's a perspective that says it's not, but there's also a perspective that says that it, perhaps with some smaller changes or changes to enforcement to ensure good behavior, that it could be a workable solution, instead of the rather significant change that the Preferred Alternative proposes.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well, I guess, it gets into how significant the changes you, you're suggesting, but I, I mean, we don't believe in our professional judgment that the current situation is tenable or sustainable and that it's not working. We, we do see visitor conflicts, we see degradation of resource, we see people that are not welcome – they, they tell us they don't feel like they can go to certain areas of the park – so, how we steer that use, accommodating dogs in some way in the same areas – whether it be some fencing or, or better signage or some enforcement, as you suggest – in working with the city on, on, on the lands that they manage as well, I mean we're certainly open to, to any of those options.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Now, does – I know we've spoken before and I believe we're in agreement that GGNRA is not your typical national park, that it is an urban recreational area. Is that, is that your take as well?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well, it's a national park in an urban area, so it's, it's still that.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

_____. And do you…

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

It is a national, it's a national recreation area, technically. We get that.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

But it is, but it is, but it is a national park area, and, and it's, I mean it is a park of the national park system. It's not, it's not a, in some ways, it's not any less or any different than Yosemite or any other national park as far as the policies that we have to adhere to.

[talking within audience]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

If I, if I can just ask members of the public – I understand a lot of us have very strong views about this, but under our rules, we ask people to refrain from speaking or applauding or booing or hissing or anything else – we want to show respect. GGNRA did not have to come today. We don't have subpoena power. They're here to, to have a conversation.

Would, would you agree that recreational use is an important part of what GGNRA is, in terms of, it's in its name, it was in the Enabling Legislation.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Absolutely. It's one or our core, core principles.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay. And would you – in terms of setting up how GGNRA is used, do, do you think it's important to take into account the needs of San Francisco, of its residents, of the people who are actually going to be using the facilities?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yes, it's, that's also one of our, our core tenets, is that we would accommodate the users that come to the park, whether they be from San Francisco or Marin or from Rhode Island – it's, it's a national area.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Now, in the DEIS it states that you did, the GG, GGNRA did consider the potential impacts on San Francisco, the Preferred Alternate, and that there would not be any significant impacts? Am I right about that?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

That's correct. That's what the document states.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay, and what did GGNRA do to come to the conclusion that there would be no significant impacts of the Preferred Alternative on San Francisco?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well, it was not an exhaustive study; I will concede that. But basically we looked at the existing levels of use in city parks by dogs and users, and we looked at what we are proposing – realizing again that it's not a ban, we're, we're, we're shifting people around within the existing parks that we manage, we're not banning them, to concentrate or focus the use in certain zones and to steer them away from other areas that might be more sensitive. We in the end did not believe that there would be significant impact on, on the adjacent parklands, whether they be city of San Francisco or San Mateo or Marin.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Was there any numerical analysis..

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

No, no there was not.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay. And I don't know if this has, if anyone's mentioned this to you, but during the tsunami warning, Ocean Beach and Fort Funston I think were shut down as a precautionary safety measure. And I wasn't there personally, but I've been informed that Stern Grove had just, was basically overrun with dogs that day. And it's presumably that there may have been a causal connection there, was – one happened right after the other. Were you aware, was, were you aware of that?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

I've heard that story as well, and, and and assuming that maybe for the moment, the example that there was a connection – it, it wouldn't be exactly as we would propose under this plan because under the plan a mile of Ocean Beach would still be open to dogs off leash, at Fort Funston the uplands would be open – certain areas, of course – and the Fort Funston beach. So the tsunami, you know, situation was a bit different than – everything was shut down on the coast, which is not what we're proposing at all in this plan.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Now, speaking of which, there is a – I forget what it's called – the compliance-based escalation?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yes.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

What's, what's the phrase?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Compliance-based management.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Yeah. So, my understanding is that if, if there isn't 75% compliance at least, then it will go to the next most restrictive..

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Correct.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

..which would be no more off-leash.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well, whatever zone it was in – if it was a leashed area, it would go to perhaps no dogs, if it was, if it was an off-leash area, it would go to a leashed area.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

And, so at that point there would be no more off-leash dogs permitted in GGNRA?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well, in that particular zone, wherever, wherever it would be – the seven zones or, the 21 areas that we studied – they were all looked at specifically, so..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

And then, the next step is if there would not be 75% or higher compliance, could it then go to a ban on dogs in that particular area?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Potentially, yes, if it was a, if it was a leashed area that, that was problematic, it would, the next level would be no dogs.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

So if this plan is approved, we could in the future have a situation where parts or potentially all of GGNRA would be totally off limits to dogs.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

That would be a worst-case scenario, but we don't anticipate that, given the level of compliance we're asking for – we're asking for 75%, which is like a C-. We're trying to be as flexible as we can, as reasonable as we can. And again, we would, before we did any changes, we would be stepping up our education, our signage and our enforcement to try and advise people that there's a, there might be change in the offing, let's get back in, in, into the good column.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

And how is the compliance gonna be measured? Because one could imagine a number of different ways that could lead to a lot of different results.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

We would, we would have a, a third party, institution develop the criteria and the, the, the system. We have not developed that yet, but it would be third party developed and peer-reviewed. And it would be very transparent. The public would understand, it would be posted on the website as well as, I envision, posting on the website the progress – how, how are things going out there in each area?

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Has this been tried anywhere else in the park system that you are aware of?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

They've tried it in, in different forms. Adaptive management is a, is a tool that we use, often resource-based. Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina is currently looking at something similar where they have off-road vehicle use on the beach, for example.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

How about with dogs?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

No, I'm not familiar with a dog example at the moment, no.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

So it would be fair to say that it's perhaps difficult to predict what level of compliance there will be?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Well we, we actually do have some sense of, from some of our wildlife observers that are watching the plovers – they, they do see dog walkers and they do make, you know, occasional notations – so we do sense, have a sense of how things are going at Crissy Field now. But we believe with education and cooperation that we can get there.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

And then finally, in terms of the overall, of the overall incidents that are reported in GGNRA from any cause – the percentage that are attributable to dogs – I think from about five years ago, there were statistics that about 7% were attributable to dogs?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

I'm not familiar with that number, but I'm I'm not.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yeah.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Do you, do you know if there's any more, any current data about what percentage..

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

We've, we've had a lot of Freedom of Information requests for data, so I know we're crunching some numbers now, and I do know that as a percentage, it's interesting because when you compare it with – the analogy has been made, with people, people-related incidents and dog-related incidents – given the one slide I showed, where we've had various litigation and confusion and no clarity about what the rules are – the, the level of enforcement has been up and down because there's been different direction given to our field rangers and staff about what is the current goal or what is the mission or what is the priority. There is obviously officer discretion as well – you know, if you have a, a dog off leash or a dog problem versus something more serious going on, you know, the officer is going to go with the more serious case. So it's hard to sort of use that as a, as a measure. But we, we are going to share the statistics as soon as we can, and we had to redact a lot of the names and so forth, but we are gonna be posting that on our website.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

And will that be posted before the rule making is completed?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yes, yeah, yeah, I think some of it's already up there, but more to come.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay, thank you. Those are all the questions I have.

SUPERVISOR MAR:

Actually Superintendent Dean, I just had acouple of questions about Ocean Beach. And could you walk us through the, what is a Snowy Plover area – so the Western Snowy Plover, one of the federally threatened species – and then also just let us know what, what data do you have of, reports of dogs injuring the snowy plovers and in general kind of, again, the rationale for balance, as you call it, with the critical habitat and the sensitive species.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Okay. Snowy Plover is a shorebird that, that frequents Ocean Beach about 10 months of the year. It is also at Crissy Field. But at Ocean Beach, the area where the birds are is between stairwell 21, which is in the middle of Golden Gate Park, on the western end, down to Sloat Avenue, Boulevard, roughly, so that area is permanently, not permanently but currently closed 10 months of the year while the birds are present. We do have observers that, that, that monitor the birds occasionally. It's, it's not as robust as we would have in the future. And what they observe are birds being flushed by dogs that are running through the area off leash or jogging along. So, you know, I could, I could provide more information if, if needed, but again it's, it's against the law to disturb wildlife – that's one of the rules that we have in all of our national park areas, so..

SUPERVISOR MAR:

And I guess the proposed plan would reduce, or actually the plan would create a seasonal leash restriction from July 1 to May 15? That would be the proposal? Is that, is that right?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

I think it's actually, we were proposing to go to 12 months at Ocean Beach.

SUPERVISOR MAR:

So it's extending it a full year.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yes, again, it's one of those things where it's confusing to people – you know, am I in the right month or not? And so, 10 months versus 12 – that was one where we decided to just keep the area from the Cliff House down to stairwell 21 as a, is a permanent off-leash area and then 10, 12-month closure on the area south.

SUPERVISOR MAR:

And then back to the Snowy Plover. I would be interested in the Audubon Society and the other groups' information, but the SPCA and others are reporting that there, there are no official reports of a dog injuring or killing a Plover in the GGNRA. Is that correct?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

I'm not aware that that's a factual statement, but I, I mean, I know that the birds have been disturbed by, by dogs on both Crissy and Ocean Beach, and they're an endangered, they're protected by the Endangered Species Act, which is a federal law that trumps our, our dog policy, quite frankly, at the local level, the park level.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Supervisor Cohen, do you have any? Okay, thank you.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Thank you.
SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Next we are going to hear from the Recreation and Parks Department. Ms. Ballard? Thank you.

SARAH BALLARD, DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PUBLIC AFFAIRS, RECREATION & PARK DEPARTMENT:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. Sarah Ballard, Director of Policy and Public Affairs for the Recreation & Parks Department. I'm here today to give you some information on our off-leash dog areas and briefly discuss some of the impacts that we expect if this, the proposed management plan of the GGNRA goes into effect.

Like the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, our job as a recreation and parks department is to be good stewards of the land, and we, too, have some sensitive natural areas and endangered species on our properties. And also, like the GGNRA, our job is to balance multiple users' needs to recreate and enjoy nature. So we absolutely understand where they're coming from and what they're, what they're trying to achieve.

Our commission – I think you all have a copy of this map – our commission has approved 28 dog play areas or DPAs, as we call them, throughout our system. And each one of these was discussed and agreed upon through a, a lengthy process through our DAC – our Dog Advisory Council – and brought to our commission and approved there. And each one of the, the dog play areas is supposed to have essentially a Friends group that stewards the dog play area – makes sure there are bags there, kind of does informal enforcement, and generally creates a sense of community around the dog play area so that the rules are enforced. In all honesty, we've had sort of mixed results with that plan, but that was the approach when these dog play areas were, were formalized by our commission.

It is important to note that while we do have defined dog play areas, we do have the problem of people using areas that are not for off-leash use. As Supervisor Cohen knows, we just had this issue in her district of folks using an

athletic field for off-leash dog use and causing some significant impacts on the field. So we, we do struggle to, to enforce our off-leash rules.

This is a, just a brief list of the – which you can't see, I apologize [laughs] – of the 28 off-leash dog areas. You'll see that they're spread pretty much throughout the city. That was obviously one of the considerations, is that people have easy access to locations.

And then I've included in here a map – and I frankly probably should have overlaid both of them – but a map of where the GGNRA's proposed changes are to be and where the restrictions would be. It's important to note that, again, like the GGNRA, we have many of the same challenges. Over 80% of our dog play areas that I identified in the last slide are also near sensitive natural habitat.

So, that said, while we do have a lot that we – a lot of concern that we share with the GGNRA, we do have some significant concerns about this plan, and I will just take you through those briefly.

Most importantly, I think, the study does not adequately speak to impact on lands outside of the jurisdiction of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. As a department, we think that is problematic. It stands to reason that if you restrict access in a certain area of the city to dogs, they will necessarily go somewhere else, and it's our view that that somewhere else will be our parks, and will cause an additional maintenance burden and enforcement burden for the city. And as Supervisor Wiener mentioned, we had some anecdotal evidence of that with the tsunami closure of, of Ocean Beach last month.

The EIS – the, the environmental study of the proposed management plan – also references limiting the number of dogs that professional dog walkers are allowed to have with them at any time, and floats the idea of creating a permit program or training for dog walkers. The city does not currently have either of those, either of those things in place. And while they are ideas that, that have been discussed at a variety of points in time at our commission and elsewhere, it could be problematic if there were – for, for residents and citizens – if there are different rules in different jurisdictions. And so it is our hope that as a part of this, presents an opportunity for the department and the city to work, to continue to work collaboratively with the GGNRA to make any of those proposals as seamless as, as possible.

And lastly, as Supervisor Wiener just spoke about, the 75% compliance language presents some significant concerns for us in that if they do, if the areas do continue to progress into, from on leash, from off leash to on leash to eventually no dogs, I can imagine that the burden on the city properties would be even more significant.

I think our, our, our largest concern is at this point we don't have empirical data or a good way to help you as policy makers evaluate impacts on, on city land because the document didn't really study where – their document didn't really study where the users are coming from, how often, how often they frequent the place, and as I said, the particular location, and as I said earlier, where they might go instead if, if the certain area that they tend to frequent is not available.

So that's a brief wrap-up of our concerns and I'm available for any questions.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Thank you. Hi Sarah.

SARAH BALLARD:

Hi.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Okay, I was curious to know if, if you guys have – you being RPD and the GGNRA – have had any kind of a conversation about, to address your concerns.

SARAH BALLARD:

We have. We have met with the GGNRA – twice?

FRANK DEAN:

Yes.

SARAH BALLARD:

Twice about some of the concerns that we have.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

And were your concerns addressed? Did they answer them? Did they acknowledge them?

SARAH BALLARD:

I would – yes, yes. We have a, a long partnership and a history of working really well together. We share borders on a, on a variety of properties. I think the, the question for the city now becomes the process by which concerns are addressed and how, how we are comfortable with when and how they're addressed. I would, I can let the superintendent answer that question, but I, I think he's pretty clear on what our department, what the concerns from our department are.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Oh thank you, sure.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

What was the question?

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

So the question, to just repeat it again, was – I was curious to know if you had an opportunity to sit down with Rec & Park to talk, to discuss with, to discuss the addressing of their concerns – concerns like impact on lands that are outside of your proscribed area.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

We, we did. And once, when the plan, we did speak to the city Park & Rec Manager and General Manager and his professional staff a few times, and most recently when the plan was about to be released, we did walk them through it. And we did talk about the, there was a concern that they raised at that point about potential impacts on city parks. At this point, you know, we don't have a lot of data and – nor do they – but it's somewhat speculative as well to say there's gonna be an impact. We don't know that, nor do they. But as I said before, we're willing to work with the city and our colleagues and try and, and sort that out.

You know, again, we're not banning dogs, we're still allowing them and we're just sort of putting them in different places or fewer places, but it, you know, Phil Ginsburg has told me as well that some of the dog parks are under-utilized, so I mean, I don't know if that's true, but it seems like there is some flexibility here and I think the city has rules in place, leash laws in place that we're now just trying to do ourselves, so it seems a bit awkward that, you know, we're being asked not to enforce rules that we have in other national parks, in other national park areas, and the city has those same rules, but we're not, we're being asked to stand down and not do that and manage our own properties.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Ms. Ballard – in terms of the issues that have been discussed, are, is Rec & Park, are Rec & Park and GGNRA in agreement on those issues or is it an ongoing discussion?

SARAH BALLARD:

I would, I guess I would say it's an ongoing discussion. We've had productive conversations around the idea of, as I mentioned, commercial dog walkers and the number of permits and the number of dogs they might have, that it probably makes sense for the city and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to do something jointly. I think we continue to maintain that if this plan is implemented, there will be impacts on city parks, and remain concerned that their environmental document does not study and quantify those.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR MAR:

Yeah, Ms. Ballard, I was just going to ask you, that, let's see, it looks like the GGNRA plan would pretty much create off, eliminate off-leash dog areas in Lands End and Baker Beach, and the map that you gave us has the red areas, so it impacts a small part of my district, District 1, and Supervisor – I guess it would be Mark Farrell's district – the area that's along the Presidio, and I'm just looking at our map also of the existing Recreation & Park off-leash areas in the city. And I know that the GGNRA says that we have 30 off-leash dog parks and that we have more off-leash dog parks than LA, Boston, Chicago, Miami, Denver, and Sacramento combined, but still I could see the, the dangers of having more people in Mountain Lake Park, so that the, there's very few off-leash dog areas in the western side of the city; besides the two Stern Grove areas that you mentioned, there's only a couple in Golden Gate Park on the western edge, on Fulton and Lincoln, and then there seems to be one near the northwestern edge of San Francisco State near Lake Merced, but I'm just wondering, what do you think would be the impact on those west side areas with the proposal to eliminate off-leash dog areas in Baker Beach and Lands End.

SARAH BALLARD:

That is probably the most significant area of concern, and I think you've identified possible impacts correctly in that Mountain Lake Park, the dog training area in Golden Gate Park, as well as Lake Merced could be heavily impacted.

I think the other thing that's worth noting, that we may want to look at, is from an environmental perspective: if users can no longer walk to locations near their house and they're actually getting in their car to drive to a location, to an off-leash dog area across the city or one that they, you know, a larger one – McLaren Park has our largest off-leash dog area in our system. And if someone's driving across the city to utilize those, those spaces, then there's also an environmental impact there that's worth noting.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next we will hear from Rebecca Katz, the Director of Animal Care and Control.

REBECCA KATZ, DIRECTOR, SAN FRANCISCO ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Rebecca Katz and I am the Director of San Francisco Animal Care and Control, your city's open door shelter.

You will hear a great deal of testimony today about what may be lacking in the National Park Service's draft Dog Management Environmental Impact Statement. You have and will continue to hear more about the prospective

impacts on our city parks and the impacts on users of the GGNRA property. But I'd like to take this opportunity to address our concerns – ACC's concerns – about this plan as it relates to animal welfare more specifically.

ACC is responsible for stray and unwanted domestic animals and finding them new homes, but we also provide rescue and facilitate wildlife rehabilitation for sick, injured, and orphaned animals throughout San Francisco. Accordingly, we are an advocate for dogs and off-leash play as well as for other animal welfare issues, including coexistence with local wildlife.

The National Park Service's Dog Management Plan for the GGNRA notes that the plan is designed to ensure the protection of natural, cultural, and recreational resources on that land. The primary supporters of that plan share our concerns about the impact on native wildlife. But the issue has come forward to the Board of Supervisors and other elected officials as a matter of choosing the side of dogs or that of natural resources – either/or.

ACC does not view this as an either/or situation. We share the advocates' concerns about wildlife and other environmental impact. However, the EIS document presented by the National Park Service does not clearly demonstrate that the presence of off-leash dogs is the sole or even the primary cause of damage to native species. The EIS document lacks foundation or analysis about the cause of any impact. The mere fact of off-leash dogs being present does not lead to an automatic conclusion that those dogs have impacted an area that is also frequented by people without dogs or by people with dogs on leash, horses, hang gliders, the Park Service rangers' ATVs, or other predatory wildlife.

The National Park Service's conclusion that restrictions and a compliance-based enforcement that could ultimately lead to an outright ban on dogs being allowed on GGNRA property does not contemplate the urban environment in which those lands sit or the interests of the people of San Francisco and the Bay Area.

Moreover, the Preferred Alternative is overly restrictive, given that the National Park Service has not taken intermediate steps to educate the public and users about what is required for coexistence. In fact, most of that has been done by local dog organizations interested in preserving their access to off-leash areas.

It seems that the National Park Service has not considered various options at their disposal prior to implementing restrictions. For example, they could implement an adaptive management plan that might include signs, timed use, fencing, enforcement of laws or rules similar to our local pooper scooper laws, licensing laws, or permitting options.

We have met with the GGNRA Superintendent, Frank Dean, and Director of Communications Howard Levitt from the National Park Service to discuss our concerns. And of course, we share their concerns about visitor and employee safety, wildlife protection, and maintaining resources for future generations. We would like to work with them on solutions that would allow for more flexibility and coming up with a plan that addresses the needs of San Francisco residents, both human and non-human. Unfortunately, up to this point they have not seemed receptive to suggestions for compromise within the draft plan. Peaceful coexistence requires understanding and movement from both sides and is the only way that a city like San Francisco, with such diverse interests, can seek solutions to our challenges.

Without a firm commitment from the National Park Service to consider the concerns of San Francisco stakeholders, on behalf of San Francisco Animal Care and Control, I feel compelled to oppose the Dog Management Plan as presented, which dramatically changes the nature of the current and intended use of GGNRA land.

And I am available for questions as well.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Any questions for Ms. Katz? Great. Thank you very much, Ms. Katz.

REBECCA KATZ:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

We also have representatives from the Port of San Francisco. Ms. Bach?

CAROL BACH, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGER, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Carol Bach. I am an environmental manager in the Port's Planning and Development Division. And I came today primarily to be here in case there were any questions specific to Port parks and open spaces, but I'd like to offer that, some information – that because of the nature and location of Port parks and open spaces, most of them are not significantly used by off-leash dogs or even to a significant extent by on-leash dogs. The exceptions – there are two exceptions – Warm Water Cove and Heron's Head Park, where there is more use of those areas by dog owners. And of those, only Heron's Head Park, which is on our southern waterfront, just adjacent to the former Hunter's Point power plant – only Heron's Head Park is governed by a policy prohibiting off-leash dog use, although with expansion of the park and construction of improvements, we are going to be this summer constructing an off-leash dog play area just outside of the current boundaries of Heron's Head Park.

Unlike Rec & Park, as I mentioned, our parks and open spaces tend not to be close to sensitive habitats. They're pretty urban areas, for the most part. Again, Heron's Head Park is the significant exception to that. But like Rec & Park we struggle with enforcement of the dogs-on-leash policy.

So, that's what I wanted to advise you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Okay, next we will hear from Michael Lynes from the Golden Gate Audubon Society, who I believe is representing a, a coalition of environmental groups with an interest in this subject.

MICHAEL LYNES, CONSERVATION DIRECTOR, GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY:

Thank you. So my name is Michael Lynes, I'm the Conservation Director with the Golden Gate Audubon Society, and I'm here to speak on behalf of several members of our coalition, which include the Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club, Nature in the City, Wild Equity, the California Native Plant Society, San Francisco Tomorrow, and the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters.

I want to start by providing a little bit of perspective of where we're coming at from this, on this issue. I think very often people who have asked for more on leash or more regulation and dog management have been characterized as being anti-dog. And that's really not the case. Our members, our staff people own dogs, love dogs, care about their welfare. These are people that dedicate significant portions of their time in order to make the world a better and safer place for animals and habitats. And they're concerned about the humane treatment of all animals – that includes pets *and* wildlife.

And also, when we're coming at this – someone asked about whether there were direct impacts, for example, if the dogs were chasing after and killing a particular bird. And the reports that we have on those are fairly anecdotal. I think Carol Bach actually could probably provide an example of one of those, where a Great Blue Heron was recently probably mauled at Heron's Head, but no one saw it. And someone – whoever found that dead bird, which had what looked like teeth marks in it – draped it over the sign that said Wildlife Protection Area. So for those of us that advocate for wildlife in the city – this is the kind of environment that we often deal with.

And I don't have any slides today, but I do have a picture – I don't know if you can focus in on that – this is that sign at, on Ocean Beach at the Bank Swallow colony, which someone put bags of dog feces on and hung it on, and it's kind of emblematic – this is not the majority of dog owners, they don't behave this way, but we very often see, even for example in Crissy Field, where there are signs and a fence, people walking around that, and two-thirds of them continue to keep their dogs off leash despite that there's a, that there's a sign asking them to do so and warning them that the Snowy Plovers are present.

So we are working in an environment where wildlife and their habitats are treated like disposable goods, and that's often the case for the environment in general in our society, especially when their, when their protection is an inconvenience to us. Many of these wildlife species and their habitats are in decline, significant declines; others exist in a very precarious balance. And we note that the GGNRA is a very important area for wildlife and habitats in the Bay Area. The GGNRA protects more federally listed species than any other park unit in the national park system and more than Yosemite, Yellowstone, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon parks combined. And we also know that once these species are gone, they're usually gone for good.

While dogs in San Francisco have owners that love and care for them and we place great value on them as a community, wildlife are under the guardianship of all of us. And even though we do not take time, we don't take them home, we don't give them names, we believe that they still should be, deserve an integrity of their life. They should be able to live without significant harassment and disturbance.

The current dog management status quo is inhumane, and it's not sustainable from a management point of view for the Park Service, and it's not fair to the community.

This brings me to specific points that I want to make about the Dog Management Plan in general.

I'll say first, many in our coalition don't believe that it goes far enough to protect wildlife, their habitats, and other park users. And I want to underscore that this is also – it's not just about birds, it's not just about certain plants, it's about the experience that other park users that perhaps don't want to interact with dogs, or maybe they're neutral on the issue, but they find their park experience negatively affected, especially by off-leash dogs.

We believe that the unfenced off-leash areas that are proposed are inadequate, that they should be fenced and well marked so that dog owners know where to, where off-leash recreation is appropriate and where it's not. We've noticed, for example, at Stern Grove, where that off-leash area is not well enclosed, that non-compliance, there's a lot more dogs outside of the supposed area than there are when they're fenced. We think a clear line will help people comply. And we also think that the plan probably underestimates the impacts that dog-related recreation has on the overall ecosystem and on other park users.

We've received many reports from our members and from community members about how dog-related recreation has stopped them from visiting places like Fort Funston, and they've enjoyed the park overall less because of negative experiences. Many have reported being charged or being bitten. There are many, many reports. Matter of fact, in the packet that I gave you, which this is the cover of, is a petition written in 2005 asking the Park Service for greater leash regulations, and in that you'll find just an example of many of the documented instances of dogs biting people or negative interactions with the, with, between dogs and people in the park. So this is a real problem and should not be just swept under the rug.

I would ask, I would say that despite its flaws, we believe that the proposed plan is a significant first step towards making the park more manageable in a sustainable way. We remind you that the park is there not only for our generation, for current recreational uses, but for future generations, and this is something that the biologists and the experts at the Park Service have decided they need to come up with a management rule that makes it sustainable not only for now but for future generations. It's a very comprehensive DEIS, while I think it could be improved, but there are many – I would encourage the supervisors to read it independently and provide their own review. Don't just listen to my talking points, don't listen to others' talking points – to provide an independent review of it and look at related studies, and ask yourself and ask me, ask everybody else hard questions about your conclusions, so that you can come up with a good policy before you pass any resolution.

Frankly, one of the issues that we have with Supervisor Wiener's resolution was that it was drafted before any hearing on this matter. And it doesn't seem like an adequate fact finding occurred. And so we're concerned that the other supervisors will take that up without conducting that review themselves.

So I would like to just point out some of the examples – I think some of the speakers have already spoken to this, but some of the problems we have with the resolution, and this goes to some of the issues about impacts on parks in the city. First, the plan does not eliminate dogs, dog-related recreation in the GGNRA. It is the largest accommodation

of dogs into any national park unit in the country. In most places, dogs would be prohibited or where they would be allowed, it would be on a leash in a paved area in a park. Here they will be able to go everywhere -- all but one trail in San Francisco, leashed dogs will be allowed.

Second, the 75% compliance requirement is any – if, if anything, we think it is too low. It builds into this system an acceptance of one-quarter of a, of failure. We know that non-compliance breeds more non-compliance. We don't think that that's acceptable and we think it keeps a persistent environment of, that's a danger to wildlife, park employees, park users, wildlife, and habitats.

And we also note that there has to be some degree of accountability and self-regulation within the community itself. This has been an ongoing problem, but we have not seen compliance with existing leash laws either in the GGNRA or in San Francisco city parks, as the representative of RPD indicated – we don't see any self-regulation really occurring in improving compliance.

There are, we don't see any evidence that the plan will lead to more behavioral problems for dogs, let alone euthanasia for dogs. This is a very legitimate concern, and we understand that, *but* the GGNRA plan allows for very large off-leash areas, extensive on-leash areas. You have at least 28 if not more off-leash areas in San Francisco with more being planned. Those will be, those provide, the responsible dog owners will have adequate opportunities to socialize and exercise their dogs. If this plan, and the existing areas in San Francisco are not enough, we have – and there's so much more than any other city – we have to ask, how much is enough?

Finally, we don't see any evidence that San Francisco parks will be unduly impacted by the policy. Many San Francisco dog areas are underutilized, and dogs are welcome in most city parks, where off-leash recreation is tolerated despite being against the law.

I want to say one last thing about appropriate recreation – whether this is a recreation area or a national park, or however you want to term that. What the Park Service must do in balancing all these is decide what's appropriate recreation and what's not, and that recreation which is allowed, what are appropriate limits there. An example is that Fort Funston used to be used for off-road motorized vehicles, and that's no longer the case because it's an inappropriate use. We all accept certain restrictions in order to protect the common good when we use the parks. This plan is a step in trying to have an appropriate regulation of an allowed recreational opportunity in the park.

So that's all the comments I have now. I would encourage the supervisors to do a thorough study of this before passing any resolution. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Are there any questions?

SUPERVISOR MAR:

Yeah, I did have one. Mr. Lynes, I think Sally Stephens from SFDOG has a, a posting from January where she's questioning the, the data on the dangers to the Snowy Plovers, and she cites a 2006 study by Forrest and Cassady and then also a GGNRA November 1996 report that's called the "Western Snowy Plover (A Federally Threatened Species)," and she's saying even those reports really acknowledge that there's, there's not a danger or there's not the data there that, that documents that there is a danger to the Snowy Plover, but I was just wondering if you could respond to that.

MICHAEL LYNES:

Sure. I think that that is certainly Sally's perspective and it's not a surprising one. I think it's an interpretation of the data that are out there. But I would, I would say that if you look at the studies – and you can look at some of the studies provided in this, and if you ask the park biologists or people that have studied this, including Daphne Hatch, who is the one who authored the 1996 [report], they will tell you that the Plovers, or that off-leash dogs have been recognized as a persistent threat to Snowy Plovers *and* to other wildlife. Matter of fact there's a quote – you know, I'm sorry, I didn't have it handy, but there's a quote in this about recognizing that off-leash dogs were one of the

primary, primary sources of disturbance and risk for Snowy Plovers in, at Ocean Beach. We also know that they probably at one time nested there. They probably don't now because of the heavy recreational use.

SUPERVISOR MAR:

Okay.

MICHAEL LYNES:

Thank you for your time.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay. We have two more informational speakers before, and then we'll get to public comment. Next I want to invite up Ken Weiner – no relation [laughs] – he spells it wrong, too [audience laughter], who came down today from Seattle. Mr. Weiner is a partner at KL, K&L Gates and is the founding chair of the environmental land use and natural resources west coast practice of that firm. He is the former Deputy Director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and is gonna talk to us about the DEIS and NEPA.

KEN WEINER:

Thank you. I represent Crissy Field Dog Group, which is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership and off-leash dog walking in GGNRA. Crissy Field Dog Group participates with SF SPCA and other community and recreational groups in Eco-Dog, a coalition of groups that advocate for responsible dog guardianship and environmental stewardship. And paralleling Michael's remarks, many of our members are also members of many of the groups he mentioned as they enjoy GGNRA now and hopefully for the future because of its natural values.

Our focus and the focus of our remarks is to try to depolarize issues and find ways to support GGNRA's mission to preserve natural and recreational values and scenic and cultural values unimpaired for current and future generations. And I, I'd like to, first we'd like to acknowledge the effort that GGNRA has put into this and the excellent introduction by Superintendent Dean at this hearing. These are difficult public lands management issues.

We think the city's and GGNRA's charters can help guide us. You all know San Francisco's charter – it begins with a home rule goal, to "improve the quality of urban life." GGNRA was born from the simple logical premise that open space is vital to the San Francisco metropolitan area, that it's an essential ingredient to the quality and design of our urban environment. GGRNA, GGNRA was established by Congress in 1972 to meet the recognized need for urban recreation and for open space as the San Francisco metropolitan area was growing and becoming increasingly developed.

The Park Service will tell you that it has to manage all units of the national park system consistently with its Organic Act to protect natural resources from impairment. This is accurate. And it's also accurate that it has to manage each unit consistently with the Congressional Charter for that unit – in this case, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

President Nixon's message to Congress in February 1972 proposing the creation of GGNRA stated "This proposal would encompass a number of existing parks, military reservations and private lands to provide a full range of recreational experiences."

Now when people like to cite legislative history, I like to go back to original sources. And when I was working on the President's 1977 environmental message and program, I happened upon, in John Erlichman's files, a copy of the original transmittal of the proposal for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area legislation to Congress. So this is from February '72, about 40 years ago. And in that transmittal, the Secretary of the Interior explained that while state and local governments have provided some open space, "the potential for park and recreational development of a much greater acreage should be realized in order to meet the demonstrated need for recreation space" and a variety of outdoor recreation uses.

I point this out because someone told you that the local parks are enough and that the purpose of GGNRA is to provide just natural areas. Clearly that was not part of the original proposal and intent for GGNRA. That original intent identified needs, noting for example that on the south side of the Golden Gate, this heavily used urban parkland, including Fort Mason, Gas House Cove, Crissy Field and Marine Green, Marina Green, and Congress's intent was stated in the 1972 bill reports for the legislation, that GGN, GGNRA "will ensure its continuity as open space for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations of city dwellers."

Well, dog walking is well known and recognized by Congress as part of this use and enjoyment. In describing part of the area in the city, the Senate *and* House reports both commented that the proposed area "will satisfy the interests of those who choose to fly kites, sunbathe, walk their dogs, or just idly watch action along the bay." The official legislative history notes, "The legislation will if enacted capitalize on the availability of this important unequaled resource in the San Francisco region by establishing a new national *urban* recreation area, which will concentrate on serving the outdoor needs – [that is], which will concentrate on serving the outdoor recreational needs of the people of the metropolitan area. As an urban recreation area it must relate to the desires and interests of the people, but it must at the same time, as has been said, be managed in a manner which will protect it for future generations."

These were also the city's understandings in transferring land to the GGNRA. As you may know, GGNRA has a mission statement which states the mission of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is the preservation, unimpaired, of the natural and cultural resources and scenic and recreational values of the park for present and future generations to enjoy. And that is all we ask.

So in looking at alternatives, I'd like to just make a couple observations to share with you our conclusion that the draft EIS doesn't provide a solid technical basis for dismissing the No Action alternative when many areas under the current policy are working. And let me make a, just a simple clarification, which is – the No Action Alternative does not mean do nothing, it's a, it means implement the current management plan. The current management plan calls for education, outreach, enforcement. It doesn't say do nothing, and, and that's important in thinking about the No Action alternative as not being a continuation of the status quo, but whether or not the status quo can be improved by doing better under the parks, under the Park Service's National Recreation Area plan.

You may know that the plan is being developed in the context of a larger update to the GGNRA management plan, so this is not just about dogs. If the current Preferred Alternative is adopted, based on the type of analysis in the draft EIS, it will reflect a larger direction on curtailment of recreational uses in the Recreation Area.

An EIS is required to examine the human environment. The federal NEPA rules define the human environment as "The human environment shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment." You know in your own CEQA documents, and in other NEPA documents in which the city has been involved, that it's typical to have a recreational section that looks at recreation impacts. This draft EIS has no detailed analysis of adverse impacts to recreation in the affected area, including indirect impacts and related mitigation measures.

In thinking of this definition, GGNRA's own legislative history and your own charter and their charter, one of the most remarkable statements in this draft EIS is "The quality of urban areas is not a significant factor in determining a dog management plan." As a Land Use Committee, you know better than most a good environmental design, just as you were hearing in recent presentations this afternoon, can solve many controversies that seem intractable, including how open space parks and trails are designed. But this is dismissed as not relevant in the proposed plan.

We don't disagree with the objective of clear rules and signs, of better compliance and of fewer conflicts, but the severe restrictions in the Preferred Alternative, though not a ban, are not yet balanced. In short, GGNRA has more work to do to examine all reasonable alternatives as required by NEPA, and we hope that you will encourage them to do just that.

So in conclusion, I'd like to emphasize that we really do appreciate the outreach by GGNRA at a series of public meetings on its plan and EIS. Those took a lot of organization and staff time, and regardless of whether people like the format of the meetings, there were a lot of thoughtful comments and suggestions that were made, and GGNRA

staff say they are listening with an open mind. And we hope that's true because the draft plan and EIS *didn't* reflect a lot of the comments made in the scoping process earlier, and some of the comments – thoughtful, non-ideological comments at these meetings – were citizens asking about how the compliance-based program would work, how it would be measured, whether it's truly an adaptive management program, whether it will really involve reaching out for education and teaching people, as was suggested earlier by the superintendent, before tickets are issued.

Neighborhood residents suggested where separate access paths to a beach for dogs and people could easily resolve a longstanding problem area at Fort Funston and be designed to restore native species at the same time and blend into the natural environment. And people have suggested areas where they could walk their dogs just on leash, not even off leash, on a ridge top. Or in one of the most visited areas – Crissy Field – I heard people wondering why a former airfield would become off limits and suggest better ideas than closing 75% of the shoreline habitat, the shoreline area right now, even though it would be possible to protect the Snowy Plover habitat without compromising that.

So this isn't about environmental development, it's about meeting two environmental needs – natural areas and recreation in an urban area, as ACC has said, and the Board of Supervisors hasn't been reluctant in the past to stand up for the needs and rights of its residents in the GGNRA. Some of you recall your December 2001 resolution when park management changes to the rules didn't adequately engage the community. Well this time, GGNRA *is* using the NEPA process to seek the comments of San Francisco and its citizens, and we appreciate their efforts, and we know it's not easy.

For the quality of the city, the quality of the environment, the quality of the neighborhoods and in short for the quality of urban life, as it says in the San Francisco charter, we ask you to ask GGNRA to take a hard look at the urban environment and become a partner with you and with us to improve its proposed plans so that both natural and recreational resources are preserved.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay, thank you, Mr. Weiner. [applause]. Okay, and then finally, before we ask for a response from GGNRA, we'll hear from Sally Stephens, who is the President of the Animal Control and Welfare Commission here in San Francisco. Commissioner.

SALLY STEPHENS, CHAIR, ANIMAL CONTROL AND WELFARE COMMISSION, AND CHAIR, SFDOG:

Hi, thank you. Yes, as you said, I am the Chair of SFDOG, also the Chair of the Animal Control and Welfare Commission.

I'd like to say just real briefly, one comment is that in all the discussion about endangered species, there is no federally designated critical habitat anywhere in the GGNRA, especially for the Plovers or any of the other – especially in San Francisco.

I think that there's literally thousands of people who walk every day in the GGNRA with their dogs, and it's probably the most diverse group of park users that you're ever gonna see. You have kids, seniors, gay, straight, disabled, every race, ethnicity, every social and economic class. We are environmentalists. We enjoy being out in open space with our dogs, as people have done for, for thousands of years. And we actually embody the Park Service's recently announced Healthy Parks Healthy People campaign, yet they want to force us out.

At all the sites in GGNRA where dogs have been walked off leash legally – and this was determined by two courts, that the '79 Pet Policy was a legal management [coughs] (excuse me), management tool. For decades vibrant social communities have grown and flourished. This is the human environment that Ken Weiner was mentioning just a minute ago. We see the same people the same time, whether it's rainy, foggy, windy, no matter what, and even on those rare sunny days in San Francisco. Friendships are forged and nourished, and in a city the size of San Francisco, community such as this is a precious resource. It should be encouraged, yet again this plan will essentially destroy those communities.

We've only ever been able to walk dogs off leash on 1% of the GGNRA land. That's important to remember – 1% -- yet they now want to cut that by 90%. In San Francisco city limits, it's about 75% that they're cutting. It's Marin they're cutting more, in San Mateo there are basically no off leash [areas] whatsoever.

Normally when you make such a dramatic cut, you need really compelling reasons. And if you actually read through the 2400-page DEIS, there's nothing there, they're not there. There's, it's full of impacts that could happen or might happen but very little evidence that any of these potential impacts actually have occurred. And believe me, they've been looking for them. And they don't see them.

If you read the DEIS and look at the reports it cites, it cites, and actually read the reports, you see that dogs have very little negative impact on the natural resources in the GGNRA, that dogs disturb wildlife less than people do, and that dogs pose no threat to the survival of the Snowy Plover. There's no safety issue in the GGNRA with regards to dogs. And as mentioned, people are involved in and cause 98% of the serious incidents that the GGNRA law enforcement data report. Dogs are only 2%. If there were these huge amounts of, of dog bites that people portray it as being, it would be in those reports. And it's not.

What are things that are *not* in the DEIS? There's no study of the impacts on city parks. They basically say well because there'll be some small area open for dogs at Fort Funston or Ocean Beach or Crissy Field, people won't go into the city parks. But the reality is that people *will* go into the city parks because those areas will become congested even in the GGNRA; when you force everybody into a smaller area, you're gonna get congestion. People are gonna move into city parks. And the city parks cannot handle that; they're much smaller. There's only 43 acres total of off-leash space in San Francisco city parks. And of that acreage, the Rec & Park's Natural Areas Program is calling for a reduction of 15%, so when the Natural Areas Program plan comes out in, sometime this year, we're gonna see a proposed reduction of off leash in city parks as well. It's gonna be, you know, it's compounding.

And just to give you a, a sense of that this isn't just dogs, the Coalition of San Francisco Neighborhoods at its March meeting took a position opposing the Preferred Alternative because it didn't look at the impact on city parks. And I think the fact that tsunami Friday happened right before that probably had an impact.

There's no study – as, as Mr. Weiner said – there's no study on the impact on the human environment, social communities, human health, all those impacts. We know for sure, there's many studies come out that people that walk with a dog get more exercise than people that walk alone and that they actually lose more weight than people who walk either alone or with other people.

There's no study on the impacts of city animal shelters and on dog behavior. At the Commission in March, last month, we heard testimony from dog behavior experts and rescue groups that such a significant loss of off-leash access and the resulting overcrowding of city parks will lead to an increase in problem behaviors in dogs. To a person, well known dog behavior experts say that off-leash exercise creates better behaved dogs. Issues such as dog bites and aggression are far less common in San Francisco than nationwide, largely because there is so much off-leash access. Dogs are far more likely to display aggressive behavior towards other people and dogs when they're on leash.

To quote Trish King from the Marin Humane Society, "It is very likely that behavior problems will increase dramatically if the amount of space dogs can use is reduced. This in turn may lead to the relinquishment of more dogs to animal shelters. The number one reason that dogs are relinquished, turned in to shelters, is because of behavior problems."

To quote Ian Dunbar, internationally known dog behaviorist, "There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that restricting off-leash areas for dogs will be a social, public health, and legal disaster for parks and cities." And I have given you copies – oh, actually I didn't give them to you [laughs], I am now – copies of the statements from various experts on dog behaviors. And these are basically nationally known experts. This isn't just, you know, some person just randomly thinking, this is people who's made their living out of studying animals and dogs.

Increasing the number of surrenders to shelters is a significant impact on the city. It's city resources at the shelter. We have tried to have a no-kill philosophy in the city, that any potentially adoptable animal is not euthanized at city

shelters, but the more – if you put more of them in to the shelters, it's likely some will fall through the cracks. That's, that has a significant impact on the city, and we don't want that.

The Commission voted 5 to 2 to recommend that the Board oppose the Preferred Alternative because it didn't look at these impacts on dog behaviors.

So why is there all these calls to restrict off leash. It's basically an extreme view of what an urban recreation area or an urban park should be. It's sort of like the idea that, it's like a museum where you look at things through, you know, from behind glass, glass walls or where things are all roped off, and you're, you're stuck on a boardwalk with a sign that says Do Not Enter, Do Not Go Here. It's a look-but-do-not-touch idea. We feel that urban recreation areas are for active recreation – that's the reason it was created and that's what they should be for. In this densely urban Bay Area, our urban recreation areas are our backyards and our sandlot, sandboxes. The people who created the GGNRA understood; that's why there's so much in all the enabling legislation and the, and the hearings about preserving recreational open space.

We feel, as the creators did, that this is about sharing space, that people, dogs, and nature have coexisted in the GGNRA for decades and we want to see that continue to go for decades to come.

This is not a pristine wilderness. It's located within the city limits of a city of 800,000 people. Fort Funston has a missile silo under the parking lot. These are not pristine wilderness. Yet we're being told it has to be managed as if it, as if it was.

During Negotiated Rulemaking we were told by Barbara Goodyear, U.S. Attorney who advised the GGNRA in legal issues, that all units of the National Park Service have discretion in how they manage their units. For example, you can walk a, have a dog off leash in national preserves as long as they're hunting and killing animals. You don't manage Yosemite Valley with the expectation that people will have a solitary wilderness experience. Therefore, the assumption is, or, continuing that, is you don't manage the GGNRA with the expectation that people will have a solitary wilderness experience, yet that's what they're trying to do.

The, the – we want to continue to share that 1% of GGNRA land on which we've ever walked our dogs off leash, and we basically want to keep the R in the GGNRA. I think that, that Superintendent Dean's comment – we don't have a lot of data – is telling because they're making radical changes in use of this area – the GGNRA areas – without having done the data and the work that they need to know whether or not they truly need to do one. They can't even give you statistics to tell you how many people are visiting the GGNRA any day, that sort of information – how many have dogs, how many don't. Those are the types of things that should've been looked at before they even came up with this DEIS.

If you have any additional questions, I'm happy to answer them.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Any questions? Thank you, Ms., Commissioner. And then, before we get to public comment, if GGNRA would like to respond to anything? If – you have the option now to do so. It's you're, it's, it's your decision. Okay, thank you.

Okay, we'll now go to public comment. So for those who are, you can, if anyone else has cards, you can bring them up to Ms. Somera here, who will hand them to me.

For those who have not done public comment before, here's how we do it. Everyone will have 2 minutes. You do not have to take the full 2 minutes [laughter]. We have a, I have a lot of people signed up and that's great. You can take the full minutes, the full 2 minutes, but you don't have to, and if you want to say I agree with what so-and-so says, that's perfectly fine as well. At, with, when you have 30 seconds left, there will be a very soft bell that goes off, and at the end of your 2 minutes, there will be a very loud bell that goes off, and that is your cue to, to finish up your remarks.

I'm going to call – and again, I want to remind people, we please request no applauding, no booing, no hissing, nothing, just good old talking. And I'm going to call up about 10 people at a time. If you're in the overflow room and you hear your name, just come on down, and then you can line up. And I would just ask that when you come up, say what your name is and then when the person ahead of you finishes, just come right up right away, you don't have to wait for me to call you so we can not have big gaps between people.

So we'll start with the following people, and I also apologize for butchering people's names, which I will do: Sandra Hazanow, Laurie Routhier, Lisa Kueukdogerh, Pam Hemphill, who is also a commissioner on the Animal Control and Welfare Commission, Jan Blum, Arthur Feinstein, Feinstein from the Sierra Club, Amy Meyer, Mayer, Neil Desai, Cheryl Traverse, Vicki Tiernan, Andy Moore, and Carol Arnold. So, Ms. Hazanow.

SANDRA HAZANOW, DVM:

Thank you, Supervisors, for this opportunity. I am Sandra Hazanow. I'm a veterinarian and I'm the President of the San Francisco Veterinary Medical Association. I come here today as an individual and not as a representative of the organization because I have not been given permission from the organization to speak on their behalf. We didn't actually bring it up.

If you can bear with me, I kinda want to take this issue to, to something that Sally had just mentioned. And it's about the behavioral perspective. In my 20 years as a veterinarian in San Francisco and surrounding communities, I've noticed an interesting thing: I think it's a pattern that's associated with socialization – the dogs in San Francisco that I treat have to be muzzled *far* fewer times during regular routine handling than the dogs in surrounding communities. I think this, this lends itself to, clearly to an understanding that the dogs are much better socialized, more trusting of people, and thus less aggressive. They're less fearful of routine handling and much more amenable to living as happy healthy animals within our communities.

Interestingly, I was thinking about this on my way over – even within the city I've noticed some differences, and those areas very close to the Presidio, where I practiced for 10 years – the dogs there are super friendly, they all go to the park, they all go to Presidio, they all go to Crissy Field. And where I currently practice – not so much. Many of the dogs are little bit restricted, their behaviors are a little more restrained, and they are cautious. So, so even for like the happy-go-lucky hound, leash restriction can actually cause problems. Many of these dogs can develop a problem that was mentioned, called barrier frustration, and dogs that don't have the opportunity to behave as normally as they would if they're [bell] roaming freely..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

SANDRA HAZANOW:

Anyway, so in summary I think that the proposal to restrict the – that's 30 seconds, right? [referring to bell]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

No, that was the 2 minutes, yeah.

SANDRA HAZANOW:

Okay, sorry. I thought that was the soft one. I apologize.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Yeah, so, thank you very much. Next speaker.

LAURIE ROUTHIER:

Hi, good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Laurie Routhier and I am the director of the animal shelter at the San Francisco SPCA and additionally have served, served for years on our city's Dog Advisory Committee and the Negotiated Rulemaking committee for dog management.

And I would like to say thank you – thank you for working to improve the GGNRA's proposed plan so that it both protects the natural resources *and* the recreational values of our city. Their plan is overly restrictive and it represents a major departure from the established balanced use of parklands that's prevailed for over 40 years. There's really plenty of space for balancing the needs of a diverse populace and with good park trails and, park management and trail management, the diversity of experiences can be preserved.

By vastly off-leashing [laughs] – off leashing! I'm sorry. By vastly reducing off-leash recreation in the GGNRA, that'll have a negative impact on tens of thousands of dog guardians and of course, as has been mentioned, also the behavioral health of dogs. We know that people and dogs really have the, get the same benefits from playing outside and exercising. And in my position at the shelter and as a former dog trainer, I know how vital it is that dogs get off-leash play.

It's been mentioned, and I think it's particularly important to recognize that currently less than 1% of the GGNRA's lands are available for off-leash activity, and this would reduce it even further. And with 76,000 acres being discussed, there's plenty of space for us to find a balance. And really neighborliness is a lot more effective than, you know, setting up battle lines. I think that we have a lot of opportunity to educate our community, put up some better signage and fencing and so forth to reach the goals.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

LISA KUEUKDOGERH:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Lisa Kuekdogerh. I am disabled and I do not have a dog. Last year I had to undergo grueling medical treatments. I am weak and even coming here to comment is an effort. I am grateful for getting the chance to speak.

For both my mental and physical health, I made a point to visit Fort Funston when I could. I knew getting out of my social isolation was essential. I knew watching dogs play would bring me joy. I knew encountering the occasional extraverted dog would give me the chance to pet a dog and get a few face licks.

My medical team told me I had to start walking as often as I was able. Given my physical state and being a woman, I wanted to be safe. Fort Funston with its open air format and the natural comings and goings of people and off-leash dogs was the perfect match.

After not showing up at the Fort for a few days, a voice called out to me: How ya doing? Haven't seen you lately. I was surprised and had no idea who was talking to me. She was a professional dog walker. I quickly learned there was a vibrant social community at the Fort and that I was welcomed into it. She continued to keep tabs on me, and does to this day. She has driven me to doctors' appointments and surgeries. She has become a vital part of my social support network.

I have never encountered a more cohesive, caring, and self-policing community. I have met other disabled and senior folks who visit Fort Funston, and for many of the same reasons I do. One woman told me she knows if she collapses on the trail due to her health condition, as happened to her once before, she and her dog will be taken care of by the people there.

Finding this community has been essential to my well being, and I don't want to see it disappear. This is the Fort Funston I have come to know and I wanted you to know about it, too.

Thank you for your time.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much.

JAN BLUM:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Jan Blum and I would like to tell you that GGNRA is part of the National Park Service, and their mission is to conserve scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife, and to provide for the enjoyment and leave them unimpaired for future generations.

GGNRA is well worth conserving. It's home to about 130 national historic landmarks, cultural landscapes, and archeological sites. It is also part of the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve, one of about 300 such places in the entire world. This diverse species in these reserves represent resources, which at the end of the day help humans – like us – at the top of the food chain, continue to live on the planet.

GGNRA is home to over 1200 species of plants and animals, 33 of which are endangered or rare, and this is more than any other national park in the entire continental United States. It is a very special place.

It serves as an economic engine. It attracts over 13 million visitors per year to San Francisco, who spend lots of money in our city. And all this income generates back to San Francisco City and County as the GGNRA is not there as a profit entity. It is my understanding that about 60% of all the budgeted income comes from tourist dollars, so these are not to be sneezed at.

GGNRA is proposing some simple regulations to help them meet their mission while serving a growing population and providing a positive visitor experience for everyone. GGNRA's proposal could hurt San Francisco if our own city continues to fail to grapple with the estimated 90% of unlicensed dogs in the city. It fails to collect [bell] 2 to 5 million dollars in licensing fees..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

JAN BLUM:

..or fails to enforce regulations. Thank you.
SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Hi.

ARTHUR FEINSTEIN:

Hi Supervisors. I'm Arthur Feinstein. I'm chair of the Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club and Conservation Chair of the San Francisco group of the Sierra Club.

And you've been told that there's no problem with off-leash dog walking on, in the beaches and in GGNRA because there's no impact, so I, I want to just ask you to make a logical leap from what I tell you to seeing how that impact is happening on our beaches.

This is a recent issue of the National Wildlife Federation, where they're talking about the impacts of loss of wetlands and other habitats for birds, and in particular talking about shore birds. These are usually small little things – 2 ounces to, even the big ones are like 4 ounces – they're real small in weight, but they're large, they travel – the longest one travels 7000 miles in 8 days non-stop, non-feeding. This is 6 ounces. Where does all that energy and food come from – 8 days not feeding.

Well, they do something that's very miraculous. They actually absorb their digestive tract so that at the end of the day, when they land, say, in San Francisco on Ocean Beach, which is where some of these migratory birds – lots of them – come down, they have lost their digestive system, and the first thing they do is they start feeding on soft tissue things like worms and things like that in the mud, so that they can start rebuilding, with the protein from those critters, their digestive systems.

If they are stressed and have to move a lot, they die. They don't die right in front of you, but they die later on down the road because they will not have a chance to build their digestive system to start building back the systems and food energies that they need.

So – do dogs have an impact off leash? All of us have been on the beach and seen dogs rush after these flocks of shorebirds on the shore and the birds fly off, it's a great sight, it's very exciting to see these flocks of shorebirds fly back and forth as the dogs chase them. That's an impact. And it's one that actually [bell[results in death for many of those birds down the road. So when you say here that there's no impact, please consider this.

Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

AMY MEYER:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. I'm Amy Meyer. I'm the Chair of People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area. I served on the Advisory Commission that in 1979 helped to put that dog regulation as it exists today, the condition today. And I was on the Recreation & Park Commission for 12 years in the '70s and '80s.

This park did not have the usual studies that are done before a park is made. This park was a political park in the sense that Phil Burton, the Sierra Club – and I was working with the Sierra Club – decided that we needed to get the park and we better get it now, so those studies weren't done. And that's why, in 1979, a lot of, a lot wasn't known about the park. And so the Commission said it would be okay to have this broad off-leash, these broad off-leash areas. And so that's partly how this came about. We've learned a great deal since 1979. The population has increased, the pressure on these parklands has increased.

I would also go back when the park was started in '72. Among other things that happened were the removal of motorcycles from Fort Funston and from the Marin Headlands, the removal of hunting from Rodeo Lagoon in Marin, and the removal of sand mining by the Recreation & Park Department on Ocean Beach. All those things were not consonant with having a national park.

It's not just the endangered species. It's also the ecological relations of all the species to each other and the composition of the various small areas of species and habitat and wildlife that exist in this park because a lot of the land here has been developed, so they're fractured areas. Specifically, though, when we come to the idea of an urban recreation area, I will tell you that Philip Burton took [bell] ____out of the park, so..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you, ma'am.

AMY MEYER:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you for coming, and thank you for your work. Hi.

CHERYL TRAVERSE:

Hi. My name is Cheryl Traverse and I'm here representing senior citizens who own dogs. And I went to Fort Funston yesterday and just kinda took a little snapshot of what was going on. This was a Sunday, nice day in the park. [referring to slide] Here's my vicious Schnauzer. You'll notice most of the people are walking *on* the path. There's not many people off the path at all.

Here's another view. You see most of the people walking on the paths, not off the path. Here's a place down near the Snowy Plovers. Notice that the fences are not up and active. There are no signs warning you not to go off the path. But still, most of the people are on the path, all the way up to the top of the hill here.

This is how we recreate when we have dogs. And when we're seniors, we need the 40 minutes of work to get us down to the, to the bottom and back, to live a long healthy life.
Here's another view that'll give you an idea.

So I just wanted to say that, you know, if it's not broken, don't fix it. I mean, where is the data that this is wrong and not good? There's nothing here going on that would be impactful to the, to the environment. There aren't even signs and fences. I've been doing this for 25 years, walking over here. They took the fences down saying this is a habitat – that's gone now, I think because of the sewer project – the, the, the pipe that's being built there. All the fences and the don't go here, don't go there.

So I just wanted to educate people on what recreating with a dog is, and that, the fact that, you know, it doesn't look very dangerous to me.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

CAROL ARNOLD:

Good afternoon. My name is Carol Arnold, I'm a third generation San Franciscan, a long-time environmentalist with membership in Defenders of Wildlife and the Nature Conservancy among other groups.

I'm now retired, but my entire career was devoted to conservation and restoration of California's natural resources. I also served on the GGNRA Negotiated Rulemaking Committee and the Natural Areas Plan in regard to – the city's Natural Area Plan, in regard to dog policy.

I'm here to voice my opposition to the Preferred Alternative to, of the GGNRA's EIS on this proposed Dog Management Plan.

It's been my experience working in conservation for many years that dense urban areas like San Francisco are *not* where cash-strapped resource agencies should be devoting most of their limited resources. We all know that people in all their diversity and pursuing all their various activities, recreational or otherwise, impact the natural environment – wherever they are.

Because of this, agencies should focus their efforts on making the urban environment as enjoyable a place to live for as many people as possible in order to avoid the much greater impact that occurs when residents, feeling the pinch of restrictions, flee to the suburbs or rural areas, where natural habitats are significantly more intact and therefore more vulnerable.

GGNRA's proposal will leave a miniscule one-tenth of 1% of lands managed by them available to off-leash dog walkers. This is not only in direct violation of the 1979 Dog Policy in effect when the city-owned lands were transferred to GGNRA, but is blatantly unfair and will create a huge enforcement problem for the city when numerous dog owners arrive to walk their dogs in city parks.

I urge you to do the right thing and vote to approve the resolution before you today. And thank you so much for allowing this *true* public hearing, which was denied to us by the GGNRA.

Thanks.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

VICKI TIERNAN:

Good afternoon, Supervisors, and thank you so much for this hearing. My name is Vicki Tiernan and I just wanted to speak a little bit about the history over the last 10 years.

In 2001 the Citizens Advisory Commission sat poised to, to eliminate the, the 1979 Pet Policy entirely. The Pet Policy was derived as a result of extensive public hearings. It was not just decided upon by the, the Commission from thin air. The, over 1000 people showed up to protest that, including 9 of 11 of your predecessors on the Board.

The vote was not taken that, that night, but subsequently the Park Service announced that the '79 Pet Policy had never been valid, and they started putting up leash signs in the places where off-leash dogs had, had traditionally been allowed.

This went on – people were getting tickets just for having their dogs off leash in the, in the legal areas, until 3 people fought their tickets and a District Court judge ruled that in fact the 1979 Pet Policy was a legal policy and is the operative policy.

I'm talking about all of this to point out that there's a pattern here: there's very strong motivation on the part of the Park Service to eliminate dog walking entirely in the GGNRA.

There was also a push within Congress, to get Congress to actually remove the word Recreation from the title of the park and call it the Golden Gate National Parks, ostensibly for fund-raising purposes, but if you do a little research you'll find that the Parks Conservancy does a whole lot better already with fund raising than other areas.

I urge to take a, the strongest possible stand against the Park Service's actions on this.

Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

ANDREW MOORE:

Thank you. My name is Andrew Moore, and I want to thank you for having this hearing. Thank you.

I have lived in Bernal Heights area of San Francisco for over 35 years. I am a senior, having recently retired from my career as a building contractor. I am a passionate environmentalist and also a dog owner. I have always enjoyed the fact that San Francisco is considered a dog-friendly city. For all the years I have lived here, I have hiked with my dog at least twice a day. This is my primary form of recreation and I enjoy it immensely.

The GGNRA now proposes to cut back areas open for dog walking even more than they already are. I strongly object to the Preferred Alternative of their Dog Management Plan and just as strongly request that you support the resolution before you today.

One other thing that I'd like to say – this is not Yellowstone. This is not Wrangell-St. Elias in Alaska. This is 49 square miles of highly dense urban area with small park area attached to it.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

NEAL DESAI:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Neal Desai. I'm delivering these comments on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association. We are the nation's only organization focused on protecting and enhancing the national parks across the country. We have an office here in San Francisco.

To assist your offices in making some informed decisions regarding this management plan, we first request that you actually spend time with our organizations and other user groups. There are a variety of user groups, as Superintendent Dean listed out on his second or third slide.

It's easy to get sucked in the hyperbole of this controversial issue, but we suggest working through the process, providing substantive comments – provide site-specific comments. There is an entry way to echo and relay your constituent concerns, but by denying the Park Service ability to enforce regulations, it's, it is, there's no law, no order, it's unsustainable for the humans that visit, for the wildlife that call this place home.

For example, at Crissy Field, 67% of the dog walkers at Crissy Field wildlife protection area fail to put their dogs on leashes, and if we are talking about human impacts, Guide Dogs Users, Inc. in 2005, they wrote a letter, according to a 2003 survey, 89% of dog guide handlers reported incidents of interference from unleashed dogs, placing these visually impaired individuals in serious danger. I say this not to, I say this just to educate you all on, there's a diversity of constituents and users here, and wildlife. I think that's all we, something we all need to consider. Rec & Park acknowledges that there are problems. Question is, are we going to prevent the Park Service from being able to carry out and implement their mission?

GGNRA, it may have the national recreation nomenclature – that was part of the National Parks to the People movement that started in the early 1970s. The key word is National Parks to the People. It wasn't to bring a city park experience or a county park experience or even a state park experience.

Indeed, the GGNRA is a national wildlife refuge, home to more endangered species, like you heard before, than Yellowstone, Yosemite, Sequoia, Kings Canyon combined. It *is* a treasured repository. The museum collection has almost 5 million items, the second highest in the National Park Service. So it is a treasured natural and cultural resource.

So in this context, we are actually trying to – not we, but the National Park Service is trying to accommodate, not ban, accommodate dogs – leashed and not leashed. That doesn't happen in any other of the 394 units. We're talking about urban [bell] parks within an urban setting, San Francisco. So I'd like..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

NEAL DESAI:

..to just say, let's please allow the Park Service to do their job and help them.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much.

And actually before you start, if I could just call the next series, so people can line up, and then I'll let you begin.

MALE SPEAKER:

Yes, sir.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Lee Anderson, Victoria Lansdown, Jan Scott, Anne DuFrane, I believe, Lisa – oh no, I called her already – Donald Kieselhorst, Natalie Tondelli, Emiliana Puyana, Justin Hanzel-Durbin, Jeff Cerf or Surf [ph], Carrie Bergheres [ph], George Paphitis, Susan Ott, Linda Litehiser, and Betty Bortin. Thank you, sir.

MALE SPEAKER:

Thank you, Scott. I appreciate that a great deal. I'd like to thank all, all three of our Supervisors, our fine and very professional Supervisors, for, for being here today. I think this is a, the details have yet to, to be known, I, but I do believe that the DEIS report itself, as Eric, as Supervisor Mar relayed to us earlier, showed that within a 12-month period there had been no attacks by dogs on Snowy Plovers in that area in question at the GGNRA.

Taxation without representation. Where is the representation? I mean, I mean, how low will we go in taxing people who live in this area and wasting, squandering our tourist, our tourist dollars here in the city. I mean, the pickens is slim right now, and I can tell you, if we continue to go at the city coffers in this manner, there won't be much left.

We have a, a menacing dog statute already on the books in San Francisco County and City. The signs are already posted at the beach. It's, I believe it's a matter of enforcement. And if people don't want to obey the law here in San Francisco, they will be cited and they will be advised. I believe this is a no-brainer and that the, that the point is largely moot.

I'd like to thank everyone for coming and remind the folks back at home that on the Internet you can go to parkplanning.small n small p small s.gov/projecthome – one word, projecthome – .cfm dot dot dot.

Thank you very much, everyone at home. I love you. And do not vote for this charade. Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Commissioner Hemphill. Do you want to – oh, we'll go to the next person, okay.

PHILIP GERRIE:

Wait – my name is Philip Gerrie and I'm also a Commissioner.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Yeah hi, how are you.

PHILIP GERRIE:

And we thought that we'd do the 2 minutes or 2, all 4 minutes all together, because we've prepared the presentation? Is that alright?

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Sure, that's fine.

PHILIP GERRIE:

Okay, great. So, good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Philip Gerrie. This is Pam Hemphill. We are both commissioners on the Animal Control and Welfare Commission. At the commission meeting in March, we heard speakers and public comment about how limiting the off-leash areas [that] are on federal parklands would lead to inadequate exercise and behavior problems for dogs.

Commissioner Hemphill and I decided to visit and photograph the dog play areas in, the DPAs, in the city, to see for ourselves. We came to the project with no preconceptions. We had, we both had been dog owners and present, but presently do not have dogs.

I also wanted to mention – it's not in my script here – that 3 years ago I had been doing a petition at Fort Funston for a state proposition, and part of it was to ask the, each, one that signed it, what county they are from. And less than half were from San Francisco. So the usage of Fort Funston is, from that, from just randomly asking people to sign – so that's the only study that I know of, just who the dog walkers are there.

PAM HEMPHILL:

_____to be up here? Okay. It's gonna be a little hard. Has plenty of space for dogs. Oh, okay, sorry. Has plenty of space for dogs. The bad news is that it's underutilized and that it's poorly distributed. There are 30-plus San Francisco Rec & Park properties for exercising dogs, and these are often underutilized and sometimes empty. I'm, we're gonna show some slides. We went to all these areas and took photographs, and so as Philip continues to talk, I will run through these slides. And we did not find many dogs.

PHILIP GERRIE:

_____has over, as we mentioned before, over 30 – is that working? Oh you've got to do one or the other, okay. San Francisco has over 30 DPAs in the 22 parks, with over

SUPERVISOR MAR:

If you could mention the time of day you were there as well?

PHILIP GERRIE:

Oh yes, we, we were very consistent in being there from 2:00 to 4:00 every day, to be consistent. It wasn't just one.

PAM HEMPHILL:

During the week.

PHILIP GERRIE:

During the week. So, so there's 22 parks that have over 30 dog play areas.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

If, if folks could refrain from conversation. Thank you.

PHILIP GERRIE:

Again, this is just things – we came with an open mind, just wanted to see what was available. There was._____ gonna be overcrowding, so we wanted to see for ourselves. According to my count, there's over 120 acres of off-leash area in San Francisco parks -- more acres, as has been mentioned before, of, in Seattle, Boston, Miami, and Chicago combined – different cities ____, but a lot of acres.

We found acres of parkland that were designated for off-leash dogs empty. We believe the best DPAs were the ones that were, that were fenced, the more recent ones, with a double gate. Dog walkers in the fenced areas respected that only inside were dogs allowed off leash. Most DPAs were only marked as off leash with signs placed high off the ground. Many people allow their dogs to run off leash outside of the off-leash areas because, as was, they told, everyone does it. And it's not enforced.

We noted that other singular use areas, such as tennis, baseball, and child play areas, were always fenced and defined. We think the DPAs in the city should also be fenced in [bell]

MALE VOICE:

_____4 minutes? Whichever.

PAM HEMPHILL:

If I can just..

PHILIP GERRIE:

Yeah, yeah, we have time, Yeah, ____switch it over.

PAM HEMPHILL:

My question is, my question is why aren't San Francisco's dog owners using Park & Rec facilities here in San Francisco as much as they are using the GGNRA lands. Why are the SF facilities so empty? We had no idea what we would find.

We have a distribution problem. New dog park area, dog play areas are coming at Beale Street and at Heron's Head. We have no duty to provide space for out-of-county residents. Our taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for that. And we'd really like you to investigate the distribution issue before you draw any conclusions. I think this could really be looked at farther.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

I have a question for you –

SUPERVISOR WIENER::

Supervisor Cohen?

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

When you say distribution issues, what, what, distribution of information? Distribution of …

PAM HEMPHILL:

It seems that the dogs are not in our dog facilities in the city. We went to all of them, and they're very empty. And so I think that GGNRA is very popular, it's a beautiful place, but that's a problem because we have a lot of empty areas that are not being used. And people don't need to drive to the GGNRA. They could go locally.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much.

PAM HEMPHILL:

Sure.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Next speaker? You can just come on up, yeah.

MALE SPEAKER:

Hi, my name is – thank you, Supervisors, for putting this together. We really appreciate that. I'm a long-term San Francisco resident. I've been here for 30 years. I'm a third time property owner here and a first-time dog owner for about the last 6 years.

And I'm really concerned about limiting the amount of space that we get at GGNRA. I take my dog, my service dog, Molly, with me virtually everywhere I go. I have, I do two trips a day, usually to Dolores Park or maybe one trip to Dolores Park and then to Baker Beach or to Ocean Beach or to Fort Funston. And those are some of her favorite playtimes, and the times when she gets the most exercise and the most fun. And my tax dollars are at stake here. That's part of what I pay taxes for here in San Francisco. And believe me, I pay a lot.

And that's all I have to say. Thanks very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. I just want to acknowledge that Supervisor David Campos has joined us. Welcome, Supervisor. Next speaker.

JAN SCOTT:

Hello, my name is, is Jan Scott and I live in the Sunset District, and I've been taking my dogs and children to Ocean Beach and Fort Funston beaches before the GGNRA was even involved in the situation. Three to four times per week for the past 30 years I've jogged on the beaches with my various dogs. This is my most important recreation and probably most days my most pleasurable activity.

I'd like to use some time to address the question of the ACC Commissioners about why people go to the GGNRA instead of using our, our city parks. And from, my particular reason is that our city parks for the most part are fairly small. They're little areas, maybe at the most a quarter or a half a mile long, so it's difficult to get a long jog in, in those areas, unless you just want to just run around in a circle, whereas the GGNRA has long places where you can go for a long distance. So that's my reason for it.

To continue with what I prepared here – those of you who visit Ocean Beach and Fort Funston probably know that it's really foggy and windy about 90% of the time and it's usually used by primarily dog walkers – people with their dogs – especially Fort Funston, and then a smattering of other types of walkers and joggers, fishermen, surfers, people like that.

My concern is, is that when we have to leave and go to the city parks, the, Fort Funston will be empty. And so we'll have the opposite problem as they were describing, where we have these big empty beaches and then just a mile or two away we have crowded parks. And in my opinion, that is just a really ridiculous use of resources.

So I really urge you to pass this proposal and I [bell] hope you will come up with a more wholistic approach. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker?

EMILIANA PUYANA:

Hi, thank you for taking my comment. My name is Emiliana Puyana. The proposed changes to the GGNRA would affect my life at many different levels – first, at a personal level, I will no longer have a place to adequately exercise with my dogs. At a business level, my dog walking business would be severely affected and my livelihood would be in great danger. As a responsible member of the San Francisco community, I am deeply concerned about the proposed changes. I don't even want to imagine [what] my day-to-day life would look, would look like if I don't have the ability to go to the park and exercise with my dogs.

I think it's important to mention that we are talking about 1% of the GGNRA. It's a very small sacrifice to make that ensure that, to ensure that thousands of people and their dogs have a safe place to exercise.

We have a responsibility to our dogs. We need to provide adequate space for them to exercise. We also, however, have a responsibility to preserving the natural part, the natural parts in the national parks. That being said, I believe that we can come up with a better solution, one that serves everyone.

The gentleman from the GGNRA mentioned that the remaining off-leash areas would be large. That is simply not true. The Preferred Alternative leaves very, very small areas for us to walk our dogs. If you take into account the number of dogs that, that frequent places like Fort Funston on any given day and the area that they're gonna allow for off-leash areas, once you put that large number of dogs – hundreds of them – at any given time into these small areas, the incidents, the incidents related with dogs and people and dog on dogs, are bound to go up, there's just no other way to look at it.

With regards to the Snowy Plovers, you know, I, I have seen dogs chasing them at the beach and they do fly away, but I will say for me, I am a runner and I go for [bell] _____on Ocean Beach, and when I run by the beach, the birds also take off.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

NATALIE TONDELLI:

Hi. My name is Natalie Tondelli and I wanted to say a few things. I'm pro-environment, pro-dog, and pro-human. As a professional dog trainer and dog walker I've utilized, valued, and respected the current GGNRA off-leash areas for the past 7 years. I cannot stress the importance of combating dog behavioral issues by exercise, socialization, and exposure that only off-leash play can give.

By adopting the policy, it is inevitable that the congestion on the trails will end in the elimination of off-leash recreation for all dogs, based on the compliance ruling.

It is baffling that in a time of severe budget crisis, we are pouring so much money, time and effort into an inflated proposal that seems to be based on a lack of scientific evidence. The GGNRA proposal takes no account of the human impact in these areas, like running, people's garbage, cigarette butts, the impact of other animals, and even just the smell and threat of humans to other small animals. Or the erosion of soils.

All responsible dog owners and dog professionals are in favor of permitting dog walking off leash and collecting revenues and fees. We need to have a balanced and fair proposal for San Francisco city parks as well as the GGNRA. The already tiny 1% of legal off-leash areas in GGNRA is to encompass everyone and their activities.

Thanks.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

ANNE DUFRANE:

My name is Anne DuFrane. I live here in the city, over off the Embarcadero, just off the Embarcadero, and I would -- I'll introduce my dog, Franklin, a service dog, who is with me.

I would like to concede my time to Carol Kucera. We've shared our views extensively and she can speak much better to all issues than I can. Thank you very much.

JUDY KUCERA:

We just met. My name is Judy Kucera, and I'm further down on your list. I'm a recent dog owner. We got a rescue dog, who is 18 months old – my husband and I – a year and a half ago, and it was a revelation to me to see how much was available to us as elderly dog owners with our young dog.

Primary to that was the socialization, which occurred taking our dog to Fort Funston, where she was able to interact with dogs and people, and thanks to a lot of training both from ourselves and our friend, Ruth Jensen, who is a dog walker here in a city, and a certain amount of dog training from Bob Gutierrez down on the peninsula, she's turned into a wonderful, calm, social animal. Not that she wasn't pretty good to begin with.

Anyone who's been in Central Park in New York in the spring recognizes what happens when you confine too many dogs in too small an area. The smell of urine is overwhelming as that snow melts. And my fear about San Francisco, where my dog and my husband and I have roamed in city parks and in the GGNRA, is that by, by having such a drastic reduction of open space available for off-leash dog walking, you're going to be creating terrible problems because my understanding is, there are at least 100,000 dogs in this city.

The positive effect of having dogs in, or at Fort Funston are that I have never seen a homeless encampment, which I have seen in other parts of the city, and I've seen my dog playing with the ravens, whom I hear are attacking Bank Swallows – I heard that from the GGNRA ecologist – as they peak their little heads out of the nest.

So the GGNRA has a huge number of problems, and I think this is the least of their worries. And I really think that the Board of Supervisors has done a wonderful job in stepping in and stepping up to the plate. [bell] Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

JUSTIN HANZEL-DURBIN:

Hello, my name is Justin Hanzel-Durbin. I'm a San Francisco resident out in the Sunset. I'm also an environmental engineer. And I just wanted to thank you guys for giving us this opportunity to actually speak about this. Public, public comment wasn't really being taken in a forum like this at the other meetings.

I've taken a pretty broad look at this document, in more of a scientific look, as far as environmental impact statements go, and I find it totally deficient in scientific data. I don't see the normal scientific data that's in these sort of reports. There's not very many studies that are actually in the document or, there's no baseline from what I can tell that was taken by the National Park Service here, to truly gauge where we're at.

You know, if, if they were going to enforce the laws and the regulations that are currently in place, then I think we'd have a totally different starting point from what we're looking at in this report. And I think until they actually enforce the rules that are in place, then we shouldn't even have this report.

So I'd truly encourage you guys to pass this resolution. Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

BETTY BORTIN:

Good afternoon. Betty Bortin. I don't really have an opinion whether off leash or on leash as I, as I have a well behaved dog who's run with me off leash for years and gone horseback riding afterwards on the beach. However, the San Francisco Police Department has a Vicious and Dangerous Animal Unit, as you know, and even though I suffered on July 27 a dog attack that left me in need of surgery and my horse with open wounds, I was neither able to avail myself of this unit and have a hearing, nor was I even able to be provided with information of whether that dog had a rabies shot, given the fact that my horse had open wounds.

And the owner of the dog was, was in sight of the whole thing, did nothing, didn't call his dog, and thinking he didn't realize the gravity of the situation, I rode my horse up to the area where he was, knowing the dog would follow, and he still did nothing after I asked him. I tried to slide off my horse, but at this time the dog was biting front to back, front to back. My horse started spinning and my horse fell, and 1000 pounds fell on me, which ended up in surgery.

The attack – so, the bottom line is, here I am, is, I, I love dogs, I love my dog off leash, but if there's no ramifications and I, if I can't even turn to a unit that's established to deal with this or to turn to city officials to find out if they have rabies [bell] because of the jurisdictional issues, something is wrong.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

LINDA LITEHISER:

Hello, Supervisors. Thank you for having this hearing. My name is Linda Litehiser.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Can I ask you, ma'am, if I could just call more names.

LINDA LITEHISER:

Yes, sure, sure.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

My apologies for interrupting you. The following should line up: Reid Reichhardt, Kathy Mok-Reichardt, Andrea Buffa – who I think may have spoken already – Samir Ghosh, Angela Gardner, Linda Gulandis [ph], Steven Krefting, Ilana Minkoff, Judith Kowena [ph], Jean Kind, Joan House, Willa Hegerty, Renée Pittin, Amber Westbrook, and Becky Evans. Thank you, I really appreciate it.

LINDA LITEHISER:

Thank you. Thank you, Supervisors, for having this hearing. I'm Linda Litehiser. I'm a 42-year resident of San Francisco. I'm also a home owner, a dog owner, and an active advocate for our city parks. I'm also very supportive

of environmental issues and have been all my life, but I'm very worried about the proposed, proposal by the GGNRA to limit dog use in the park.

I'm here to speak on behalf of my family – my husband, my children, my grandchildren. I want to stress that dog play – off-leash and on-leash activities – are very much a multi-generational activity. It's what binds families, it's what brings us to our parks in many cases. It certainly is in mine.

I also wanted you to know that we proudly show off San Francisco's dog play areas and the GGNRA areas to our out-of-town guests. People are just amazed that we have this ability in our city to show this kind of recreation as, as such a wonderful, happy family and, you know, recreational activity. They just don't see it in other parts of the country.

It is such a beautiful thing when you go into the parks and you see families – people of all ages, all cultures – mingling together, with their dogs, dogs of every stripe. It's, it's a wonderful thing.

I also wanted to just stress what other people have said. Golden Gate National Recreation Area is a unique *urban* park. It's the urban area that we want to combine with all these other recreational activities, so we need this for our people, for our sanity, and for our health.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker, please. And if the speakers want to all move up a little more? That'd be great. Thank you.

GEORGE PAPHITIS:

Hello, my name is George Paphitis. I'm a 30-year resident of San Francisco and as we all know, the GGNRA controls virtually all our access to the waterfront of the, of the city, so I'm very concerned when 90% of the 1% of the lands allotted to off-leash area, is being restricted. And I figure that this is hardly a balanced approach. And I would strongly support your resolution, Mr. Wiener, for a re-examination because I don't think the data is there to support such restrictions and I think it should go back to the, the cooking pot and come up with a better solution.

And that's all I have to say. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. And before we have the next speaker, I just want to, Supervisor Campos wanted me to convey that he has serious concerns about the GGNRA proposal. He's not allowed to come up here because he and Supervisor Cohen constitute a quorum of the Public Safety Committee and that could be a Brown Act violation, but he did want me to convey that.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Sorry.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Next speaker.

MALE SPEAKER:

I'm a research scientist actually in San Francisco. I spend a lot of my time in the lab. They don't let me out often. Now that I am out, I'm shocked and appalled at what the, some of the people in uniform behind me call the science. Using and abusing data is appalling. I think that's how this country gets in trouble, that's how we got into Iraq –

weapons of mass destruction, woo! [laughter] And I, I just fear that now we're looking at dog of mass destruction – if you believe these people, they say that dogs kill birds, dogs injure people, dogs do all sorts of horrible things, and they've admitted at the same time there's no data for that. So I think we should take this entire plan, throw it out, let's look at some real data.

Maybe we'll find something else that, that helps our birds even more – maybe that dogs are helping the birds by scaring away the cats. After all, I think there's probably more scientific data that shows that cats do indeed attack birds. We don't have any data that shows that dogs attack birds except for anecdotal data with no witnesses.

I do think it's time that the federal government maybe stop using and abusing scientific research. I have a lot of confidence in the woman who was here earlier from Rec & Park. It sounds like people from San Francisco really know how to manage things in San Francisco. Maybe we let Rec & Park take over Crissy Beach and Ocean Beach; I think we, we'd all be a little more satisfied with, with local presence and see how they would do it. If in fact there are such grave problems with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, maybe it's time for some change after all.

Thank you.

ANDREA BUFFA:

Hi, my name is Andrea Buffa. I live in the Sunnyside neighborhood of San Francisco. I'm a long-time peace and justice activist and also an environmental activist. I've worked on climate change and green jobs and renewable energy for about a decade.

Samir is going to help me with the slide show because lots of folks sent us pictures of people recreating with their dogs in the GGNRA and it's such a diversity of people, I think it's amazing to see. Let me just forward it.

But I just want to speak to why we should pass a resolution. First, I think we need to make the GGNRA take our concerns more seriously. It's not like our resolution is going to stop them from moving forward. They are moving forward. But I get, I'm afraid that they think we can do our rallies and submit our comments and then they can just keep going, but if the city goes no, this is not okay, they'll take that more seriously. I think we need to get the city officially involved in the NEPA process by formally submitting a comment.

I think that you passing a resolution will help our federal, federal representatives to get involved. The GGNRA is part of the National Park Service, which is a federal entity, but if we can go to them and say look, the city of San Francisco is taking this very seriously, we need you to take it seriously as well.

I also think we should pass a resolution to acknowledge our community and the impact that this gonna have on our community, to reject the idea that it's dogs versus the environment and to insist that there's another way and we're San Francisco and we can figure out what that way is. I think we need a resolution because we need to tell the GGNRA that you can't just slap together a bunch of data and then make a recommendation that isn't actually supported by the data. That's not okay.

And I think we also need to tell them that it's not okay to put forward an environmental impact statement that doesn't provide data on the impact on city parks.

Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

ILANA MINKOFF:

Hi. My name is Ilana Minkoff and this is my service animal, Lucy. Until 4 years ago, honestly, I really didn't like dogs. I've lived in the city for 11 years and my solution was to go to places where there weren't dogs. It wasn't that hard to find – there's plenty of it.

I had a change of heart 4 years ago when I got very, very ill and started developing panic attacks as a result of my illness, and my friend's dog was what saved me from these panic attacks; on a regular basis at all hours of the day and night, she'd come over and her dog would sit with me and just lick me and lick my face and make me feel better.

And so I decided, as I was starting to get to a point where I needed to get out the house more, that I would get a dog. And I'll tell you, this has been the best addition to my life. I have not had one panic attack since I've had her.

One of the reasons that, one of the ways that I am able to have her with me all day is that every day we get up and we go run around off leash for at least 45 minutes. We go to Ocean Beach and we go to Crissy Field, sometimes in the morning, sometimes during lunch. We prefer to go to the beach because the dog parks are too overcrowded at lunch time.

2:00 to 4:00 PM, which is when they showed the pictures, is when the dog walkers are taking the dogs *back* home after their lunch time walks [laughter]. If you go to the dog parks between 11:00 and 2:00, it's sometimes so crowded, it's not comfortable. We go to Douglas, we go to Corona Heights, we go to a lot of places, and I'm telling you, it is just packed. Those pictures are totally accurate for 2:00 to 4:00 PM, but not for the rest of the day, which is why we choose, choose to go to the beach, so she can run up and down the beach, get her energy out, and do this for the rest of the day. She's been sitting in here for over 2 hours, calm. She's a little dog – they have a lot of energy.

At any rate, I am also curious to know – it's been said many times today – that our city has more acreage than any other city, for dogs – how many more dogs do we have than all these other cities combined as well? That would be my big question, so if you could please research this issue thoroughly and support the resolution to oppose the GGNRA, both Lucy and I would really appreciate it.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

WILLA HEGERTY:

My name is Willa Hegerty. I am a dog owner and I am 13 years old. I joined this, I'm commenting because I think this is an important issue that should be discussed by young people.

My dog and I visit Fort Funston at least 4 times a week. If you take away these places, there will be nowhere else to go. There will be chaos at neighborhood parks and, and [there] are other ways to help the environment.

The Western Snowy Plover needs protection, but there are other ways to protect the, the species. Certain areas should be put aside for their habitat, and I acknowledge that there should be certain rules put in place.

They say they need to, the GGNRA says they need to protect the areas for future generations, but Fort Funston holds clean-ups frequently and I pick up my dog's feces and I help the environment. Why should I be punished?

They say "The plan is to improve visitor and employee safety and reduce user, user conflicts." I predict, with research to back up my prediction, that dogs will be aggressive and have behavior issues. Dogs will not be socialized. This will increase user conflicts and there will be more accidents in the GGNRA.

It affects me because I will not get enough exercise, my dog will become unhealthy and will not be socialized, my community will be, will be overcrowded. The Bay Area, in the Bay Area one in three houses holds a pet. Where would these pets go?

And the DEIS is full of things that *could* happen. They don't have any proof these statements are true, so I suggest the next time the GGNRA wants to put out a draft plan, they do their homework before.

Thank you. [laughter/applause]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

That's a hard act to follow. [laughter] However, I want you to imagine this scenario: you're buried under a rubble of a, of an attached building or an avalanche. Everyone has forgotten about you. Suddenly you hear a whimper or you feel a cold, soft nose. What would do for that animal who came to your, to your aid?

I just want to read you a list of some of the things that dogs do for us: Canine Corps, police dogs, service dogs, search and rescue, avalanche dog, cadaver dogs – and must I remind you that they were the unspoken heroes of 911 – drug dogs, TFA, cancer detection, seizure detection, dogs to read to. Dogs have changed human beings' lives. *We* domesticated them; *we* must take care of them. Dogs need to run free and be dogs. And that's why we need to have a large area.

All life came from the sea. That's why I like to take my dog to Fort Funston. I feel rejuvenated by the salt air, by the, by the people and the wonderful dogs around me. I get exercise. I wouldn't go there if it weren't for my dog.

And I also want to point something, a couple of other things out to you. First of all, I want to point out that we have rules called no age discrimination and the ADA. The rules that let us walk our dogs in Fort Funston say that we may walk our dogs off leash only at the beach. I don't know about the rest of you, but I had a knee operation 10 years ago. I can't get down that sliding path to the beach. That's discrimination. There are seniors who meet every morning at Fort Funston. They can't get down to the beach. Let us mingle with everybody else, enjoy the bluffs where no one else will be, there aren't Snowy Plovers nesting on those bluffs at Fort Funston. And I'd like [bell] _____that if dogs have to be restrained, let's restrain children. [laughter]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

STEVEN KREFTING:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Steven Krefting. I'm here representing the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters.

The GGNRA is a stellar national park, one that would be a national park whether or not this urban area was next to it. It contains, in addition to spectacular scenery, more rare, endangered, and threatened species than any other national park in the mainland United States. This proposed park policy is unprecedented in the national park system in its welcoming of dog activity and in particular its welcome of off-leash dog activity. Many of us have concerns that it does not go far enough in protecting important park habitat. It is already a huge compromise.

One principle agreed to by all the parties in the Negotiated Rulemaking process, which I participated in for, I think, 2½ years, was that visitors who wanted to have a dog-free experience in the park had that right. That was agreed upon by all parties in the experience. The plan prepared now would not allow such an experience in nearly every park of the GGNRA in San Francisco.

To those who claim that there is no impact from current dog activity, the time is still in many people's memory when Fort Funston hosted significant populations of brush rabbits and California quail. I challenge you to find a single one of them there today.

The GGNRA is a precious resource we are lucky enough to live next to, but the current level of off-leash activity prevents its enjoyment by many other visitors and is causing unsustainable damage to the park habitats. [bell] Future generations will not be able to enjoy the park we enjoy today unless that, this stuff is brought under control.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

SAMIR GHOSH:

Hi, my name is Samir Ghosh, I'm a San Francisco resident, District 8 resident. Thank you very much. I wholeheartedly support Supervisor Wiener's resolution opposing the NPS proposed GGNRA dog plan, and I don't know how you listen to all these comments. Thank you very much. In spirit of minimizing repetition, I support Sally Stephens' comments wholeheartedly as well.

A couple of things I will reiterate – that dogs are not off leash because they are well behaved, they are well behaved because they are off leash. This issue is not about dog right side versus Snowy Plover rights. This is about dog *owner* rights. One-third of San Francisco households have dogs. Limiting to tiny dog parks is a back-of-the-bus segregation, in my opinion. Dog owners' own recreation is limited by the limits on the, on their own dogs. I don't have time to do both – take my dog to a dog park and then go do my own exercise somewhere else.

And then – 1% again I know has been said, as far as the GGNRA parks for off leash; I think it's worth stating again. I don't understand why Snowy Plover proponents don't suggest that we take another 1% of the GGNRA, GGNRA parks and allocate them to non-humans. Their recreation is, is, you know, they're supporting their own recreation.

And also I'll state that dog owners are not against wildlife. On the contrary, I think pet owners are far more connected to and empathetic to animals than non pet owners, because of their connection to their pets.

NPS also does have the, the authority to manage different than Yellowstone, they have their section clause, clause 7 that allows them to do that. I also question NPS motives when they're using, continue to use Golden Gate National Park as the name instead of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which was declined in 2008.

One other quick thing is that dogs, the Dog Plan's No Action option is misleading; it in fact still includes the compliance management, which would potentially lead to a total ban. They do not, and it's also one-directional – they offer no way to go backwards to get additional rights; once you lose the rights, there's no way to get them back. [bell]

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

MALE SPEAKER:

A year ago I adopted a dog, who turned out to have some serious behavior problems, including, including severe anxiety. I thought I may have to give her up. I was informed by professional trainers that vigorous exercise and socialization were important keys to resolving such issues in dogs. Sure enough, places like Fort Funston and other off-leash areas have been an integral part of her recovery and transformation into a well behaved member of the community.

Last I heard, San Francisco has more dogs than children and for many, their well being and their owners' sanity depends on the GGNRA parklands. I understand that some people are afraid of dogs, but it hardly seems that the way to encourage enjoyment of outdoor parks and appreciation of nature is through segregation of animals or by relocating them to the more urban San Francisco neighborhood parks. But that's what the GGNR, GGNRA seems to want. They're using the Snowy Plover, but even the Fish and Wildlife Service has not listed Ocean Beach as a critical habitat for those birds.

GGNRA has an obvious federal agenda, agenda that completely disregards the city and people of San Francisco, not to mention the dogs.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. And before we get to the next speaker, let me call some more names: Sheila Mahoney, Philip Gerrie – oh, he spoke already – David Anderson, Eric Nees [ph], Gloria Stein, Kimberly Thompson, Arnita Bowman, Nancy Stafford, William Carlin, Nancy Wuerfel, Paul Monti, Bob Planthold, Cindy Landell [ph], I believe, Lisa Vittori, Keith McAllister, Mara Armanini [ph], and Dr. Suzanne Valente. Go ahead.

RENĒE PITTIN:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. My name is Renée Pittin, and I'd like to say something about the health aspects of recreation.

In my own case, my doctor has advised me, required me to exercise, and in particular to walk. I did try walking on my own and I found it both excruciatingly boring and like a forced march.

Fortunately I have a dog, so I do walk, especially at Fort Funston. Sometimes the weather is terrible, but Fort Funston is always awesome in both the contemporary and the traditional meanings of the term. And there is community there, both of those walking dogs and of those who don't have dogs and come there in order to see the dogs.

So in terms of both physical and mental well being, this small, less than 1%, off-leash area is a very important component of our lives.

By maintaining and optimally expanding off leash in the GGNRA, the federal government has a chance to be at the cutting edge of its *own* Healthy Parks Healthy People program, enhancing opportunities for people to exercise with their off-leash dogs. Unfortunately they are going in the totally wrong direction.

The city here has an opportunity to remind the GGNRA of the traditional uses of this tiny area and of the consequences to the residents of the city of this severe truncation of off-leash areas in the GGNRA.

Thank you very much for this hearing. Thank you for your resolution. And thank you for the opportunity – finally – to speak.

KATHY MOK-REICHARDT:

Good afternoon. My name is Kathy Mok-Reichardt and I have been a resident of San Francisco for almost seven years. During this period of time I have never recreated in any of the GGNRA lands where off-leash dog walking is allowed until I adopted a dog.

As a rescue dog owner, I am extremely grateful for the 1% available parklands where I can exercise my dog off leash. Like many other rescue dogs, my dog came into my life with problems that I later found out only adequate exercise could, could solve. And having a previously abused dog, I am very thankful for Fort Funston, Ocean Beach, and Crissy Field, for they are places where my dog has found her confidence, has finally come to feel safe and even liked in a society with people that previously betrayed her trust.

Walking a mixed-breed dog with exceptionally high energy 3 hours a day around city blocks and city parks on leash is not comparable to the 30-minute off-leash time she gets at the GGRA, GGNRA lands. It would be detrimental to my dog's well being and rehabilitation progress if off-leash dog walking is banned in these areas.

When I recreate on GGNRA lands with my dog, I always pick up after her as well as other people's trash, such as sandwich wraps, soda cans, cigarette butts, to name a few. I don't – I wish I could speak for all dog owners, but I don't want to make the same mistake the GGNRA made by making generalizations of all dog due to, all dogs due to a handful of irresponsible dog owners. It's no different from attempting to limit the number of cars because of a minority of reckless drivers causing trouble on the road.

A proposal over 2000 pages with so little data to answer the questions raised by even our supervisors, is unreasonable to the extreme, and I urge the Board of Supervisors to take these into consideration when voting on the resolution.

Thank you.

JOAN HOUSE:

Hi, my name is Joan House. I've lived in the city for 35 years. I've own a dog for 49 years, and I love this city. And in the big picture, it's the land of the nuts and fruits [laughter] and what I love about that is, we're educated and we vote. And I appreciate the, Super Dean for being here from the GGNRA.

And one thing that really stood out in the delivery was – if the bird gets 10 months out of the year, that's a good thing. So why not give them 12. We can count. We can keep a steady, you know, calendar of what months to not harass or harangue the little Plover. I love those little Plovers. They're really really great. When I first moved here, I let my dog chase them, then I realized I didn't like that behavior, so for the last 35 years, my dogs don't chase birds. But, to stick him on a leash and to put him in a city park with, the overcrowding would be horrendous. It would make the dogs behave criminally and it would make the owners behave criminally. [laughter]. And it would just have so much stress on the parks that it would be ridiculous. It's not well thought out.

But if the dog, if the bird has 10 months, give it 12. It seems to be the power grab and the land grab of the federal government. Don't like it, don't appreciate it. Own dogs, vote.

Thank you for the hearing and thanks for letting us speak.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker – or singer

WALTER PAULSON:

[Sung to the tune of "Fun, Fun, Fun" by the Beach Boys]:

Well, the dog's running free like you want your best friend to be now [laughter]

You forgot all about now the dog ha-as its needs now

And he's running real fast and he's running real fast as he can noooowww

And the dog will have fun, fun, fun at Fort Funston unless you take the off-leash dog law awa-ay.

And the dog will have fun, fun, fun at Fort Funston if, unless you take the Fort Funston dog leash away.

And the dog will have fuuunn at Fort Funston unless you take the off law leash law awa-ay.

[sung to another tune]:

And then you can jump for your dog, jumpin' if you want to feel the freedom of your dog.

Jump, jump for the dog.

Tell me now if you want your dog to be happy and freeee, then juuuump for your dog

Jump in if you want to feel good kisses from your dog now.

Juuump for your dog today.

[laughter and applause]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

SHEILA MAHONEY:

My name is Sheila Mahoney and fortunately for you, I won't sing today. [laughter] But I'm a 40-year resident of San Francisco and I am a senior. Since 1989 my husband and I have walked our dogs at Fort Funston almost every single day we didn't have to work.
And I suggest that you visit Fort Funston yourself, to judge what's going, what's going on there.

I'm also a long-time volunteer with the, with the San Francisco SPCA Animal Assisted Therapy program. I have taken my dogs to hospitals, rehab units, and psych wards, so I well know that dogs can help to heal the body and the spirit. And I consider watching the dogs playing and running at Fort Funston – my own personal animal-assisted therapy, open air session.

Frankly, if we didn't have dogs, we'd spend our time at home reading the New Yorker [laughter] instead of getting our 2-mile walk. I find it ironic that the National Park Service is pushing the Healthy Parks Healthy People program when they're cutting the 1% of the GGNRA lands now available, when they really should be expanding the area for off-leash areas.

When we started walking in '89, there weren't that many people out there. I, I'd say there's probably 20, 40 times as many people walking. We need more space, not less.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Next speaker.

PAUL MONTI:

Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Paul Monti and I am a fourth generation San Franciscan. Thank you. I'm not paid to be here, and I've been at Ocean Beach all my life. I played at Playland. I fished off Seal Rocks with my, with my father before the National Park Service took over and blew up the causeway that we used to get out there. I played in the caves along the old Sutro Baths ruin before they took over and put bricks and walls up to keep people from playing in the caves. You know, and now I go up to, to Fort Funston and it's covered with concrete, it's covered with iceplant, which is an invasive species. Almost all of the trees there are eucalyptus, which are from Australia. And it's still a wonderful, beautiful place to be. I, I absolutely love it.

Oftentimes I take a look at the, at the landscape and everybody out there and I just say to myself hm, well, let me remove everybody from the landscape who doesn't have a dog out here. And I'll do that and all of a sudden the landscape is completely empty. There's nobody there. And, you know, I'm wondering if that's how they want it to be.

Oftentimes I also go to the beach – I live at 48th and Noriega, which is across the street from the beach. And you know, they're worried about the Snowy Plovers being stressed. There's no proof of all these allegations about them

dying in mid-flight from being stressed or, you know, all this other stuff, but I'm wondering, if they're so stressed, why they ride motorcycles up and down the beach? Why they have ATVs with cops on them riding up and down the beach? Why they have 4-wheel-drives, cars, bulldozers moving sand around on the beach. Snowy Plovers have never nested there. I don't think that they're stressed any more than seagulls or pigeons or anything else for that matter, but again, I'm, I'm, you know, I'm not an expert. [bell] Is that it? [laughter]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Hi.

LUANNE STRONG:

Hi, my name is Luanne Strong _____. I've been a San Francisco resident for 19 years and live in _____Hill. And I, for the past couple of years, about twice a week, I cross town on the Muni and pick up trash at Ocean Beach. And while I'm there I've been hurt and surprised that San Francisco of all places, that dogs allowed to chase wild birds. It doesn't seem to be consistent with San Francisco values for a few reasons. Like, San Francisco values environmental sustainability, and these birds, they need to be safe in this habitat for reasons people before me have said much better than I can at this time. And there's, I mean there's even laws about it, but laws aside, San Francisco should be, the people encouraging, you know, ecological complexity and resilience. And I have seen dogs chasing Plovers, and I know what Plovers look like, on the back of the beach, and I did, I have seen dogs flushing Plovers. I never report that to anybody.

And San Francisco also values being cruelty-free, and it seems like we're sending our children the message that allowing dogs to chase wild birds for no reason other than just the pure fun of it, which I've seen, you know, is okay. And I'm not sure that's a message we want to send to our children.

And, you know, and as far as equal access to public spaces, I was talking to a friend I saw on the 76 bus the other day, and he likes to go to nature, he doesn't like to be where dogs are, and he didn't even know about this whole regulation thing. And he's going to write the GGNRA from what he told me. And he, you know, he was really supporting the whole idea of this.

And yeah, I was looking and even, even though _____complain of dogs, you know, _____disturb the wildlife and other users, there's so many dogs total that _____significant. And I've noticed in other places, I've looked at this one other, other California place, cities with open beaches, and most, they seem to have like balances where some dogs allowed in a few places, but they're not, they have rules for professional dog walkers. [bell] That should be here, too.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

STEVE HOOKER:

Hi, my name is Steve Hooker. I'm taking Angela Gardner's position because she had to leave – not as a representative of ProDog, though I am a member. I am professional dog walker or winged monkey, depending on how you want to look at it.

A couple of things: GGNRA says that the current situation is, is not sustainable. It's been in place since 1979. We have the most beautiful thing in the city at Fort Funston. I have people from all over the world look at my Facebook page and the pictures of Fort Funston and what goes on out there, and they say why can't we have this here in Sweden? Why can't we have this here in all these other countries? It's just not true. They can sustain it.

One more thing: as a walker, I have to say this. It may not be their problem, but it is the city's problem. We have a gigantic industry in this area and in the city that is seriously threatened by this. You're gonna have hundreds of

people unable to work. You're gonna have thousands of dogs unable to go out anymore. It's gonna be a big deal in all the ways that they've already told you about.

Thank you very much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Hi.

ARNITA BOWMAN:

Hello, I'm Arnita Bowman and I'm an auditor with over 15 years experience. I was formerly with a major public accounting firm and was a senior IT auditor for the City of San Francisco audit. This environmental impact study and plan is overwhelming and misleading to the public.

As an example, the National Park Service claims that our dogs are a public safety risk, even though there is virtually no impact on safety in their small incident counts or even – sorry – their small incident counts aren't even supported by the real GGNRA data. The actual GGNR data shows that about 1% of the public safety risks are actually related to dogs. This is in contrast to the 14% of Bay Area people that actively enjoy the parks with their dogs, often on a daily basis. For the subset of bite attack incidents, in looking at the actual data, most are relatively insignificant incidents related to scratches, bumps, or no injuries at all, and few require any medical attention.

I'm new to this cause and I have to say, I'm shocked by the deliberate delays by the GGNRA in providing real data to citizens. Initially I submitted a Freedom of Information Act request and the Park Service quickly responded. Then delays started when I was clear that I was a strong environmentalist and was pro-dog. It took 2 months and a Department of Interior appeal and the threat to go to court before the National Park Service provided a simple download of an access database with the Golden Gate, or with the GGNRA law enforcement data.

They are doing the same thing with my three other requests for real data related to the GGNRA and the hypothetical adverse impacts on, that are claimed in the report.

I have to say, I strongly agree with the environmentalists that we need to look at evidence but disagree that bad National Park policy, bad National Park Service policy should be the primary justification for this plan.

For over 30 years the dogs have been an integral and active part of recreation in the GGNRA, so changes need to be based on real facts and not all [bell] _____.

Thank you.

KEITH MCALLISTER:

Good evening, Supervisors. My name is Keith McAllister.

Let's talk about wildlife for a minute. Dogs have *no* impact on the Bank Swallows at Fort Funston. The GGNRA draft Dog Management Plan claims that dogs at Fort Funston "dig at or collapse burrows, flush birds from nests and cause active sloughing and landslides." In fact there is *no* evidence that dogs have any of these impacts.

The GGNRA monitors from 2000 to 2006 observed very few dogs in the closed area around the Bank Swallow colony. That's all the evidence there is – the presence of a few dogs. Digging, flushing, and landslides are listed in the monitoring report as potential impacts, not observed events. From potential impacts, the GGNRA leaps through continuing impact in the DEIS. Note that still no one has seen a dog collapse a Bank Swallow burrow, flush a swallow or cause a landslide in the Bank Swallow colony. It is significant that these impacts have not been observed. People have been out there looking for them.

A GGNRA researcher closely monitored the Bank Swallow colony in 1994 and '95 and wrote an official report. She observed that there were dogs present and noted that they did not disturb the swallows. She also listed a number of things that GGNRA should do to protect the Bank Swallow colony, but doesn't mention the dogs.

Speculation of what *might* happen, which runs counter to years of experience with what actually *does* happen is not science.

And I might add to a previous speaker – the brush rabbits are still at Fort Funston, and although the quail are not, the quail are no longer at the Arboretum either, and the Arboretum is fenced with no dogs at all, but the fact that the quail are gone cannot be blamed on dogs here unless science means to you what it means to our friends in the local environmental community.

Thank you.

SUZANNE VALENTE:

Hi, I'm Dr. Suzanne Valente from Ocean Beach DOG. Thanks for hearing from us.

In 2006, when the GGNRA announced their intent to do this DEIS in the Federal Register, I filed a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the data, documents, and/or staff report which substantiated their claim of controversy over the Dog Policy, compromised visitor and employee safety, and resource degradation, which justified this current DEIS.

The GGNRA's response merely stated – the staff report and other documents you seek do not exist at this time. So, we're not crazy, there *is* no data behind the DEIS. But there is a predetermined outcome – to remove all off-leash recreation. In 2007 now NPS Director Jon Jarvis me – I would rather give up those GGNRA properties than have dogs running loose on them.

The scientific studies in this DEIS were designed to support the GGNRA's predetermined outcome. The choice of Golden Gate Audubon Director Michael Lynes to perform the DEIS Plover study confirms this bias. I think he spoke here today. Golden Gate Audubon has been on record for years in opposition to dogs being allowed off leash in the GGNRA. The DEIS Plover study deliberately misleads the reader about the GGNRA's legal obligations to protect the Plover. Ocean Beach and Crissy Field are not designated as critical habitat by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Legally, the GGNRA is obligated only to prevent the harassment or taking of the Plover within its boundaries, none of which were observed in this study. So to justify their predetermined outcome, the study instead relied upon arbitrary inadvertent disturbances, which could be as minor as the bird lifting its head or standing up.

This DEIS failed to mention the 2007 joint UC Berkeley-GGNRA Warren study that concluded Plovers feeding was not negatively impacted by the recreational activities of humans and dogs. All of the scientific data in the DEIS is equally compromised and must be disregarded. Skewing a scientific study to reach a predetermined outcome is unconscionable.

Thank you. Oh, and can I leave you this?

NANCY STAFFORD:

Hi, my name is Nancy Stafford and I'm a professional dog walker for 20 years. I'm out in the parks every day – numerous parks across the city. And there is definitely an increase in the use of parks. Whenever there's been discussions over the past 10 years since the Dog Advisory Committee – in fact, since Amos Brown discussed this – there's always been a demand for more off-leash areas and not less.

So I don't know how they – I mean, I guess you could go into an off day and not see very many dogs, but that's extremely unusual. They are heavily used and we need more spaces. In the evenings and in the mornings, they're overcrowded.

The other point I want to make is a study that was done about the Plovers that studied over 5700 dogs, of which only 6% actively chased birds – well this was a study on all birds, but – and of which only 19 chased the Plovers; that's out of 5700 dogs. I don't think 19 is a significant impact.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Okay, ladies and gentlemen: it is 4:46 and I have to use the rest room, so we need to take a 5-minute break and we will begin, we'll go back to public comment and we'll start with this gentleman over here, okay?

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Five minutes.

FEMALE VOICE:

Supervisor Mar?

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

He had, he had a meeting he had to tend to.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Supervisor Mar had to go, yeah.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

But don't worry, we still have a quorum here..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Still a quorum, yeah.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

..so we can still handle the business. Okay? So just 5 minutes. Wait a minute, listen up – it's 4:46. Okay? Thank you.

[break]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay, next speaker.

FEMALE VOICE:

Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER:

For decades I've been going to the local residential parks with my dog, with my dogs for recreation, hiking, and relaxation, and then insidiously and abruptly, the fact that we're about to lose it based on environmental allegations that haven't been fairly studied, proven, or peer-reviewed, basically a 2000-page, 10-pound allegation. But I want to

thank our Supervisors for having this hearing – thank you so much – to address these unjustified draconian restrictions.

I wanted to thank and encourage the supportive representatives that I think are helping us, including Mark Leno, Jackie Speier, and Leland Yee, and Dianne, and Senator Dianne Feinstein, who recently interviewed in the same kind of misuse of science and allegation to, to serve a preconceived agenda of shutting down a, a local oyster farm.

I wanted to also thank and draw attention to KGO and the host Michael Walcoff, to publicize and resist the cases of this misuse in science to deprive local owner, dog owners of our parks and beaches.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. And let me just call the final list of people before you go: Stephen Golub, I believe, John Jankowsky [ph], Lindsay Kefauver, Jill Inderdohnen, Courtney Durbin, Bruce Engel, Frank Triska, John Keating, Russ Kahn [ph], Susan Adams, Sandra Shuhert, Barbara Oplinger, Sky Kral, Ruben Garcia, Robin Buckley, and Dina Khait, and then Jose Maldonado. Thank you.

NANCY WUERFEL:

Good afternoon, my name is Nancy Wuerfel. I support Supervisor Wiener's resolution opposing the GGNRA Preferred Alternative.

I have served for 9 years on the Park, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee. I care about our parks. The work by the National Park Service to evaluate the ripple effects of changing the Dog Policy on city, city parks is not finished. The draft EIS report fails to consider that San Francisco is one city with multiple owners of open spaces within our 49 square miles. One owner cannot make use policy changes without affecting the other owners of open spaces. The alternatives proposed by the Park Service for their land unfairly impact the city's stewardship of *our* land by crowding more people back into our urban parks for off-leash recreation.

More people using parks means more traffic and parking problems around those parks offering off-leash areas. More use of these areas means more maintenance. More maintenance means more money. The proposed GGNRA restrictions are not even the end of the squeeze play. With their stealth provision to further limit off-leash areas in an unappealable unilateral decision that these new restrictions are not being complied with to their satisfaction, the National Park Service can progressively remove permission in the future for off-leash dog areas to exist on their land. Then what do you think will be the result of this continuing strife? Supervisors, the public will be demanding that you fix this mess.

I do not own a dog, but I will be impacted because of the increased use of my park by people from all over the city looking to exercise their dogs. Before the federal government is, is allowed to further restrict off-leash use on their land, they must be made to declare what will be the impacts on the city, who innocently gave up much of our coastline to them.

Please require fair and honest disclosures. The Park Service is playing for keeps, the changes are forever, act [bell]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

BILL CARLIN:

Supervisor Cohen, Supervisor Wiener, thank you for having this meeting. My name is Bill Carlin.

You heard a lot of testimony today pro and con about the DEIS, which, even from the testimony of Superintendent Dean, was deficient in its methods of formulation and its results. And far as the arguments from the people opposed

to off-leash dog recreation, I think they're epitomizing the view of the – or in the testimony of the representative from the Audubon Society that said that a Blue Heron might or might not have been killed by a dog at Heron's Head Park, might or might not have dog, have teeth marks on it, but nobody knows, so nobody can tell, so that's a good reason to cut back on off-leash recreation in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Relative to the letter which the group of so-called putative environmental organizations sent to you, I had an email, which, part of it said – moreover, we do not understand why some members of the Board expect the GGNRA to maintain what has been widely recognized as an unmanageable and dangerous status quo in the national parklands.

Major writing and rewriting of history here. First of all, it is not a national park, it is a national recreation area, and since, for the past 21 years the 1979 Dog Policy has provided a manageable and safe method of off-leash recreation in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The GGNRA is never – is never was, and is not a national park, it is a recreation area.

The DEIS is deficient, it needs more work and should not be implemented without more study. Please support the resolution. Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. And one quick thing I want to note – this has been an amazing turnout. We, our plan – the second part of this hearing has to do with the regulation of commercial dog walkers and what we were gonna do is after this is over, go back and then broach that subject. We're, I don't think, we're not gonna have – we probably have another half hour to an hour of this aspect of the hearing, so I don't think we're gonna have time to do that today because we're going to lose a quorum.

And so, what we'll do is, we'll finish all the public comment on the GGNRA. If there's anyone here – and we'll continue the remainder of the hearing and have public comment at a subsequent hearing on that. If there's anyone here today who wants to talk about regulation of commercial dog walkers, please do so. But we will have the actual hearing on that later and you'll have another opportunity if you so choose. But I don't want to make people have to come back, and we're, we're, we would be happy to hear any input on that.

So, next speaker.

BOB PLANTHOLD:

I'm Bob Planthold, and I came to suggest that this hearing is premature and any action, positive action, is also premature because the outreach to departments is incomplete. It has been neglectful; it is biased. You take a look at the list of city agencies to whom this was referred. Who was left out? The Mayor's Office on Disability. Why is that relevant? Nobody here from any of the city departments, from any of the advocacy groups, from any of the, nobody mentioned the problems for guide dogs. And there is information in the public record that GGNRA has, a file from 2005, a letter that I'm gonna quote from – A significant challenge faced by our graduates is off-leash dogs. 89% of the graduates had guide dogs interfered with by off-leash dogs. 42% of the graduates have had their guide dogs attacked by off-leash dogs. We—meaning the Guide Dogs – recommend that our graduates avoid any place where off-leash dogs are known to roam. It may create areas where our grads will be excluded from entering.

They sought a seat on the committee of several years ago to discuss whether off-leash areas are appropriate at all. The point simply is – there's inadequate consultation. People are left out of this. You need to think about better communication, better input. Since 1979, the laws have changed. The ADA's in effect. We didn't hear how that's applicable to protecting a $40,000 or $50,000 investment. When a guide dog's injured, the human person also is immobilized. That's a problem you're not addressing, you're just blanket accepting that dogs or pets, dogs are comfort [bell]___service, but ignoring service dogs, Guide Dogs for the Blind.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

LINDSAY KEFAUVER:

Hello Supervisors, good evening, Supervisor Cohen and Supervisor Wiener. Thank you so much for this hearing and for this resolution. Sorry. I would like, like to address what Superintendent Dean calls the compliance-based management, that Supervisor Wiener addressed earlier in his comments.

I'm very concerned about this. This compliance-based management is really in reality the poison pill of their Preferred Alternative. I'm very, I hear from Superintendent Dean that they're gonna use a third party to handle this. I'm very concerned about who this third party will be—you know, are they gonna have surveillance cameras, are they gonna have volunteers, is it gonna be staff? I'm just, I'm very concerned about the fairness of it and I don't trust that it will be fair.

Regardless of which alternative is chosen, this poison pill means that within a few years, claims of non-compliance, whether real or not, will result in automatic changes, that dogs will be banned everywhere in the GGNRA. We dog guardians are contributing citizens of the United States. We are not outlaws. The National Park Service should be ashamed of even proposing such a scheme. As bad as the GGNRA's Preferred Alternative is, the poison pill makes it totally unacceptable and I think the city has every right to send a resolution restricting what the GGNRA can do, and I please, I ask you please to not let this happen.

Thank you so much.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

FEMALE VOICE:

I need to..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Yeah, take your time. We can just have other speakers go first? If you're gonna set up, yeah.

FEMALE VOICE:

Oh sure. All I need to know is how I make a _____.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay.

JILL INDERDOHNEN:

Hi, my name is Jill Inderdohnen. I want to thank you for the hearing. Pass the resolution and allow us our 1% please. Thank you.

FEMALE VOICE:

Wow.

[laughter/applause]

LISA VITTORI:

How do I make this a full screen is what I'm trying to figure out.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

IT will take care of that.

LISA VITTORI:

Whoop. And I apologize for – okay. Should I wait for – no? [referring to slide projector] Is it, is it..

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

There you go.

LISA VITTORI:

Okay. This is the slide show that Andrea played a little while ago, but I wanted to point out several things. My name is Lisa Vittori, by the way, and I've been organizing a lot of this because I used to work for the National Park Service and I think that they're lying. And I think they're biased, and I'm really sad about it because people have had to choose sides.

So I just wanted to show you a bunch of slides that are about joy. We *are* the people who are using the parks. Who do they want to reserve it for?

So kids – kids are afraid of dogs. Here we are [referring to slides]. People of color are afraid of dogs. This is what – these are counter – this is just Sunday. This is Sunday. Any day we could have seen this. This is a family. People need places with, for their kids and their dogs. This is an elderly person, okay? On Sunday afternoon, okay? With a cane. Okay, I keep hearing that kids are afraid of dogs, people with disabilities, people of color, blah blah blah. You know, I think it's a lie. And that's one of the things that I want you to pay attention to.

This is a small dog group. It's a community that comes out – I don't know if it's monthly or weekly. This is, this is all of them. These are the people who are using – who are we saving this beach for if not this public?

This is a group of kids from a school. They're probably not allowed to touch this dog – because I work in schools – but I'll tell you that they probably fought for the prime position next to that dog.

She says she's been walking in the GGNRA for 80 years, okay? She's obviously more than 80 years old. Okay? A person with a dog; I don't know if she's a teenager or young adult, but look at the expression of joy.

This man is, this is Muir Beach – because this isn't just San Francisco, this is also Montara, this is Muir Beach, this is all – it's a regional problem. He said – I've been coming here for 40 years, I've never seen a problem. Okay?

This is Angela Gardner, the pro dog walker with her out-of-control dogs [laughter]. Another set of dangerous dogs right here [laughter]. Now this woman is getting active exercise. Okay? A child, okay? Playing with her dog. Watch this – okay, I don't know which beach that is.

Another kid with their dog. This is what it's like. This is Crissy Field at the inlet that they want to keep us from being at. This inlet is full of kids and dogs every sunny day. Okay? Elderly people. Now I want to point out this one – this is [bell] Where, what happened to my 2 minutes? Oh my God. [laughter]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much.

LISA VITTORI:

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Hi.

COURTNEY GUNTER-DURBIN:

Hi. My name is Courtney Gunter-Durbin. I own a dog training and dog walking business in San Francisco and I also sit on the Board of Friends of Animal Care and Control here.

I'm extremely concerned about the impact the GGNRA plan could have on local dogs and their owners. As a trainer, I can't overstate the importance of appropriate off-leash exercise for dogs to prevent behavior problems. Leashing, restricting and confining dogs to fenced areas will create more conflict, not less. Dogs who feel restrained and overcrowded are more likely to display reactive and aggressive behaviors.

I personally was present at Stern Grove the day of the tsunami warning and in fact had to break up a dog fight there that day. I have no doubt that the overcrowded conditions and the lack of personal space and the frustration the dogs were experiencing was a big factor in that fight.

It's also really important to make a distinction of what *is* appropriate exercise for dogs. All dog play areas are not equal, so comparing Fort Funston to the fenced-in dog run at Golden Gate Park is really apples to oranges. Some of the play areas that are underutilized are underutilized for good reason. They offer inadequate space or environment for appropriate exercise and they don't offer any exercise outlet for the owners, who also want to be out there exercising with their dogs.

So we need true open spaces for off-leash dogs under voice control to be able to take a real walk.

Thank you so much for hearing us today.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you for coming. Next speaker.

SKY KRAL:

Hello, my name is Sky Kral and I'm a Bernal Heights resident, and therefore I live in David Campos's district, he's my Supervisor, and I walk his dog, Winston. [laughter] He's a fabulous bulldog and he's not overweight, he's 6 years old and very fit because he's been going out with me since he was a puppy.

Winston and I and about 5 or 6 of our canine friends, we go to various San Francisco parks and sometimes to Fort Funston. I have never seen an empty park. I usually walk between 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM. They came right after the dog walkers started taking the dogs home, I believe, to ever find an empty park in San Francisco. At 5:00 the dog owners start coming home from work and then they take their dogs out. It's often very crowded there.

If I go to a small park, some of the dog, enclosed dog play areas are no larger than the size of this room or possibly twice as big as this room. And once you have one or two dog walkers, you're fine in there, but if a third or fourth dog walker comes in – as they will if Fort Funston is shut down – it is chaos, there are fights, there are problems, there are parking issues. All sorts of problems develop.

Another park that I like to use is McLaren Park. It's fabulous. It is the largest off-leash dog area in San Francisco city, this area. There has been a proposed take-over of some of the, the *only* regulated off-leash dog area in that park by the Frisbee golf club. And they are trying to overlay their golf club Frisbee course on the off-leash dog area. They also have a poison pill in their reg, in their rules about it, that if there is conflict, dogs will have to leave the area. Put a dog and a Frisbee together – there could be a conflict. [laughter] So, and so another poison pill, and they have not yet gotten permission, though I have seen them already start to level some of the land, put up posts, drop concrete, and it is not even already, it is not permitted yet. [bell]

Thank you.

FRANK TRISKA:

Hello, my name is Frank Triska. I live in Noe Valley. As we all know, Ocean Beach is a rather narrow strip of sand. When you look to the west there's the whole rest of the world. When you look to the east, you look at the homes of 800,000 people crammed into 49 square miles. Yet we heard today, in the first presentation, that as a, relative to national park policy, there's no real difference between Yosemite and Playland at the beach. If the presence of 800,000 people next to a beach is of no consequence, then I'm not surprised that we have a problem.

My major use of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is to run our dog at Fort Funston. Before we had a dog, we had a small child who is now grown up, and we used to go to the beach near Taraval. And my son would get sticks with his friends and run up and down the dunes, swinging his swords and yelling and hootin' and hollering and having a generally good time. I know now that that was probably more damaging to Snowy Plover habitat than anything my dog would ever do. But if we're not going to leash the children, and we are, we're not gonna leash the dogs, then probably a better solution is to identify the really critical habitats and place, fence them off and then free the beasts and the children.

Thank you. [applause]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER:

Thank you for having this hearing today and I, in case I marked my card wrong – I'm a little jet-lagged – I am *for* the resolution.

I am the proud owner or owned by a 12-year-old black Lab named Otis, who is in incredibly good shape for an older dog. The reason he is in the good health that he is in is because he goes out with a dog walking group, Pawsitive Tails, 3 times a week to Fort Funston, and often goes to either Crissy or Fort Funston with me on the weekends.

Let's not pretend that the dog parks in San Francisco are equivalent to the experience you have taking your dog to Crissy Field or to Fort Funston. They are not. Some of the San Francisco parks are great, I don't mean to diss them. Some of them are glorified dog runs. They smell bad, they're small, and these are not appropriate ways to, for me to get exercise and for my dog to get exercise.

I'm very concerned about the 75% compliance, as are many people. I see it as equivalent to, you know, if 10 people run a red light, then you close off the intersection and tell everybody to walk. I think we need better enforcement for people who are violating than we currently have. I think there are ways to make the status quo work with better enforcement, better fencing for these protected areas, clearer signage and education.

One other concern I have that I just wanted to mention is that part of the Fort Funston plan has us getting our dogs down to the beach on leash. I would like, and I would challenge anyone in the GGNRA to take an enthusiastic water dog who's anxious to get to the beach, and try to get down that steep slope with them on leash.

Let's see. I believe that's all I have to say. Also, I am in support of the dog walkers, there are plenty of professional, well [bell]_____ walking groups out there who will be impacted as small businesses if this goes through.

Thank you.

SUSAN ADAMS:

Hi, my name is Susan Adams and I'm a resident of San Francisco as well as a native. And I've been taking my dog for over 30 years to Fort Funston for exercise. And I have to say that I have not experienced one serious problem in all those 30 years, and you would think that in all that time I would have, I would have seen – except I was around the time a man stabbed a dog, but I didn't think that was the dog's fault, that was a, a human problem.

It seems to me, listening to all the environmental organizations that came forward this afternoon – it seems incredibly disingenuous to me that they would single out dogs as the sole or the primary cause of disturbance of the environment without considering human events like Fleet Week, when hundreds of people go to Crissy Fields and trample the Plover habitat without any restriction or guidance from GGNRA. Or what about the Turkey Trot, where 1,500 people ran down Ocean Beach, right through all the Plover area and again, that, that was encouraged by GGNRA. And then, what about – can you – how does this work? Turn it over? [referring to slide projector]

I don't know if you can, if you can see that well. GGNRA themselves plowed over a, a section of Ocean Beach in 2007 that was the Snowy Plover habitat area. *That's* why the Snowy Plover isn't, isn't residing at Ocean Beach anymore, because they did it in, in order to prevent erosion. This is all on-line. You can see pictures, and I'll probably email you some more.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Next speaker.

ROBIN BUCKLEY:

Hi. My name is Robin Buckley, I'm a fourth generation native San Franciscan. My parents still live out on 39th Avenue where I grew up.

And being out by the beach, I used to go Fort Funston as a child to play Army with some of the neighbor kids. This was when it was still a military installation, but you could go out around the edges. Now I go out there on the weekends and I can, you know, hardly walk through, I mean there's so many people out there walking their dogs. And we need more space, not less space.

This was supposed to be, in, when, the city gave the property to the GGNRA with the stipulation that it would remain, we'd be able to use this property as we have traditionally. Traditionally I have used it to walk, but primarily to walk dogs. I've had several dogs over the years and I hate using dog parks. Dog park, I walk around in a circle because the dog park isn't very big. So, you just end up going around in a circle on a path.

I'd much rather have an experience walking along the beach. I don't necessarily – right now we go down to the legal end of the beach, down by Sloat. There's a, a area that's less than a block long. When it's high tide, you can't even walk there. And that's what they've given us. They've given us this little tiny area to walk in, and I'm disgusted. Thank you. [laughter]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

JOHN KEATING:

Hi, I'm John Keating. Thank you, Supervisors. I've been following the GGNRA management issues for about a decade now, since I arrived at the coastal bluffs to find that the Park Service had closed the only really good disabled access trail in the Bay Area without any concern or contact with the public beforehand, and then subsequently watched as they closed down the only large sand dune that children could play on in the Bay Area while completely ignoring public comment they received on that.

I want to thank the GGNRA – Superintendent Dean, Howard Levitt, Sherwin Smith, and the others who are behind us who's involved in this process, for being here. I want to thank them for their public service. And I think this is the highest public service, when you listen to the public *and* in a public hearing.

I think that goes to the central issue of what's going on here, and make no mistake about it, the change in process by the GGNRA fundamentally changes the way it deals with the people and with the city. And what they have done – well let me first say, I agree with many of the comments about the technical deficiencies of the NEPA process. When there is an analysis presented for impact review, it ought to be scientifically sound and not read as an advocacy piece rather than an impartial presentation. And there is that risk in this process; it's been identified by the courts before as a process where the Park Service wishes to railroad through such changes.

Going to this current process – what is fundamentally different, that impacts the city and the people, is a change from the mandate and goal to listen to the public's interest, concerns, desires, [bell] to change, to do a technical back room analysis.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Next speaker.

RUBEN GARCIA:

Hello Supervisors. My name is Ruben Garcia and I'm a SEIU union organizer. How're you doing. Thank you very much for having this hearing. I just want to echo the, the previous speaker. This is the hearing that the GGNRA didn't have. They didn't want to face a public upset about what they were doing, and that's why they created that kind of like, like a easy, easy for them process when you go and you talk to one of them, and they don't care what you say, nobody's listening to you; there's no record. There's a record of this, and I think that's the way they should conduct their business.

So anyway, so we're talking about 1% of the total GGNRA. And I'm a lifelong environmentalist. Believe me, I, I, I used to be part of the Sierra Club inner city outings. We used to take San Francisco kids to the beach because a lot, believe it or not, a lot of our kids in the Mission and the Bayview, they never make it to the beach, they never make it to Fort Funston. So we used to take kids from there to the, to the beach or to Yosemite, whatever.

I also have a letter here from over 50 businesses that are related to dog ownership, and they are protesting. I want to introduce this into the record. They are protesting the GGNRA policy that they're trying to impose. I, I, I went through the, through the draft that they have. I, I was trying to find the evidence of some, of some situation. I just couldn't do it. So I truly believe that this is a process that they have developed to really wait us out, where in 5 years or 7 years, we won't be able to go to Fort Funston or any of these places.

So I urge you to introduce these resolutions as a way to bring them back to the negotiations table. This is a city. This is, and I'm, really feel sorry about them. They probably used to work at Yosemite or one of those beautiful parks, and then they, they got transferred to the city, [laughter] where they live, where now they're running a park with over a million and a half people next to them. And there, and it's very hard to adjust to that, and I understand that. But they have to understand that this is a recreation area. This is an area where we have [bell] to bargain, we have to understand each other.

Thank you very much. [applause]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much.

BRUCE WOLFE:

Good afternoon, Supervisors. Thank you very much for introducing this resolution and for having this hearing. It's our only opportunity to be able to be heard.

My name is Bruce Wolfe. I'm President of DogPAC here in San Francisco. And I just want to say, your, Supervisor Wiener, your opening questions to the GGNRA about whether this has been done anywhere else in the country with regards to dogs just lends itself, to me, to be that it's one big huge experiment – that we don't know what's gonna, the outcome is gonna be, we don't know how enforcement is gonna go. There's, we already know from, even from the environmental groups' own admission, there hasn't been very good enforcement as it is, with the current areas that are protected.

I also want to say that I did, I, I am a person with a disability. I'm also a disability advocate, and, along with my colleague, Bob Planthold, who spoke earlier. I do want to say that I did contact many disability organizations, one of which is Disability Rights Advocates, who has now a lawsuit which is possibly going class action against the GGNRA for ineffectively making the GGNRA – all of the GGNRA – accessible to people with disabilities. And this has, you know, been an ongoing case since 2008.

Also, nobody had mentioned, with regards to the science, what's happening at Drake's Bay. And I think that needs to also be part of the discussion here.

GGNRA butts up against the City and County of San Francisco, which you know you don't have control or jurisdiction over since the transfer, and essentially leaves San Francisco landlocked, without any access or control over its future of its coastline.

I'm a person with a disability, as I mentioned. I have a service dog that I adopted from the SFPC, SPCA. He's 14 years old now. Why? Because he's able to have those large open expanses to be able to run. And to be 14 years old and to be an, almost a 90-pound German shepherd [bell] is quite a feat.

So I support the resolution. Thank you very much.

JOSE MALDONADO:

My name is Jose Maldonado. I am a young athlete, and I think dog off leash in parks help people exercise more, stay healthy, and I think we need more parks like this instead of taking off. I know, I don't know the, the ___purposes of this, where who thinks that we don't know, but seriously I think people enjoy so much, as well as my girlfriend, family and friends, and new people that we meet and dogs that we interact with. So I think this is a very beautiful thing to have. Please do not take it away.

DINA KHAIT:

Hello, my name is Dina Khait and I'm here as a dog lover, owner, advocate, current volunteer for Rocket Dog Rescue, and nursing student. And I want to say that we have a family dog who's 13 years old and as long as I remember, we've always taken her to Ocean Beach and Fort Funston, and it's just some of the greatest times that I know that me and my friends and my family have had, especially after you're, you know, stressed with school and work, you just, you don't want to go to a little tiny city park that's gonna be overcrowded. You want to have a nice, beautiful area with mountains and beaches and very friendly dogs.

I haven't, I walk there several times a week – 3, 4 times a week – and I never see dogs doing anything except playing with each other.

You know, okay, we can, they say that we can have the dogs on leash, but everybody knows that dogs cannot have the same exercise on leash as off leash. And obviously there are many people that are not physically capable of, you know, running as fast as their dog [laughter]. Obviously for many reasons – physical condition, you know age, disability, whatever the issue may be – but that doesn't mean that their dog shouldn't have the right to be healthy and get socialized with other dogs.

I've fostered over 25 dogs with Rocket Dog Rescue and each one of those dogs I have taken to Fort Funston. So, I oppose the plan.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Hi.

ALLISON MORGER:

I know it's been a long day for everybody, so I'll kind of keep this short. My name is Allison Morger. I am a dog walker and trainer in the City of San Francisco for the past 13 years. I also own a pet store in the West Portal area. And there's a couple of points that I don't know if people have made enough.

Every day at Fort Funston, I'm there every day, and I pick up a couple of bags – big bags of trash from the beach. This trash isn't left by my dogs. Cigarette butts not left by my dogs, left by human beings.

I've also rescued several seabirds that have been caught in the line of fishermen that are allowed to walk on the beach, cut their lines and leave their hooks. And I don't see any regulations and signs for them, but that seems to be perfectly reasonable. I've rushed several seabirds down to Peninsula Humane Society who have been caught in those lines.

The other thing is that when you take the dogs out of an area – for instance, John McLaren, and I walk there often too, it's a beautiful park – on the weekends it's not safe. I tell my clients don't go if the dog walkers aren't there, because there's tons of gang violence. Because when you have dogs in an area, you're not gonna have homeless encampments and you're not gonna have a bunch of gang violence and people that are possibly up to no good in that area. So, taking the dogs out of Fort Funston is gonna open up a huge number of problems that I don't think anyone has really looked at the monetary thing of, of policing those areas from those types of things happening.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Hi.

BARBARA OPLINGER:

Hi, I'm Barbara Oplinger and against my better judgment I'm up here speaking [laughs]. But I do want to make two points and one is that I, I'm against the GGNRA's proposals, their report, their plans because it's blatantly discriminating against dog owners. If, if we can't go to these areas, we, we have a responsibility for our dogs and we can't go to the areas that are being blocked off.

And the other thing is that as a frequent visitor to, to Crissy Field, I have noticed that when, when the park put a more substantial fence around the Plover area, it actually helped greatly to prevent people from coming through the areas. So, all they need to do is make provisions like that to help and to not discriminate against dog owners.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you very much. Hi. Come on up.

JANET SLISMAN:

Hi, my name is Janet Slisman and I'm a professional dog walker in San Francisco. I'm, I've been in business now for about 3 years and my reason for going into the business was because there were so many different problems with dog walkers that I felt like I could really make a difference. And so I started my business using, I have six crates inside of a van, so each dog has its own crate with bedding, and it's safe. And I only take 6 dogs at a time. I have a first aid kit and I'm certified in first aid. All the things that, that dog walkers should be doing.

And I just feel that because I've been doing this for 3 years, I've kind of like been the trial person that does 6 dogs work – the number of dogs you take out. And what I feel is, is because the, because the, the employment in the city and the economic environment have been so bad, that it makes our business very unpredictable. And so I have customers that are trying to cut back on their, on their dog walking costs, and so they will call me at the last minute and say can you please take my dog, you know, so at any given moment, even though I say I have a limit of 6 and I have a list of 6 dogs, I may have another customer add in another dog. So the reality of it is, is if you, if you use the, the amount at 8 dogs, it makes it a lot easier for us to be able to sneak in a dog extra every day if I, if we have to. And so that makes it easier for our businesses to be run.

The second thing that I wanted to talk about was the fact that in the proposal, they are [bell] Is that the?

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

You can finish your sentence.

JANET SLISMAN:

Okay. They were saying that we, that we have to keep our dogs on leash as we get out of the vans, and that's really difficult because the people that employ, or who hire me are people are, who have very difficult dogs, and so, you know, taking 6 dogs down the beach off leash is really a very difficult thing to do.

Thank you.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. Okay, is there any further public comment? Okay, hearing none, public comment is closed. Thank you all so much for coming out. Now, Superintendent, would you like to say anything?

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

I'll be brief. This is, the hour's late. Thank you for, for the hearing today. I, I was, we were all taking notes and, and I think it was informative for us. We've listened carefully.

As today's comments show, I think this is a difficult and challenging issue for us all. We are the second most national park area [sic] in the country, 14 million people, and we realize that a large part of that is because we live next to 6 million people who come here many times during the week.

I'm not gonna get into rebuttals or disputing some of the things we've heard today, but I, I will say that, you know, we do manage – one thing I did want to point out – we do manage 80,000 acres -- that's what, that's within the park – but only manage directly 14,000. But it seems like a lot of the areas that we're focusing on and that we studied for the plan is the same small percentage, sort of the prime real estate where everybody wants to go – the beach areas and some of the more popular areas like Crissy Field. So we understand that. And, and that's part of the challenge that we all face.

We will continue to work with the city as we go forward. And at the end of the day this will be a plan that attempts to balance the recreational needs and, and also protect resources. And we'll be deeply informed by the great input we've heard.

I also wanted to mention that through the previous meetings that we had – the public meetings – we have over 180 pages of flipcharts that are being translated and, and put into informing us in our, in our plan as we go forward, and will be incorporated as public documents in the final plan.

In the end, though, this will be the most friendly national recreation area in the country as far as dogs – whatever, whatever form it takes, whatever the final details, it's gonna be the most friendly national recreation area in the nation.

We, we take our recreation mission very seriously and this means that we have to balance and consider the needs of all users.

So thank you again and just a reminder to everyone – we have been taking notes, as I said, but continue to comment, you know, substantively through our website so that we can account for all the comments.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Thank you. I appreciate that and if I may just ask: so going forward, will GGNRA, will you be in a position, in terms of interacting with the city representatives, not, not simply to listen, which of course is a good thing, but in addition to engage in, in an active dialogue in terms, because I think you heard today and you've heard before what the concerns are, but in actively dialoging with the city departments to try to address those concerns.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

Yes we are, and we're happy to work with Sarah and, and Phil Ginsburg and the professionals there at, or at the Board of Supervisors. I mean there is, there is a, legalities here, that we're in the middle of this process, there's some things we, we can't necessarily, you know, totally abrogate, but we are willing to work with you and engage with you and, and help shape the plan.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Okay, thank you. I appreciate that.

SUPERINTENDENT DEAN:

You're welcome.

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Yes?

[inaudible question from audience]

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

No, we're, no we're gonna, we're postponing the hearing on, the aspect of the hearing on the regulation of commercial dog walkers.

FEMALE VOICE:

Do you have enough people?

SUPERVISOR WIENER:

Yes, we have a quorum. Yes. Two out of three is a quorum. So, first of all I want to thank everyone for coming out today and especially GGNRA for not only coming out but sitting here and listening and actively engaging. We appreciate that. This is a, I know it's a difficult issue. Like I said at the beginning, any time you're talking about our scarce public spaces and all the different users, it's difficult, but I think that you, I think that today we heard a lot of different perspectives and good perspectives from San Franciscans, in terms of the needs of the people of this city.

So I am going to move that we continue item 4 to the call of the chair? And that we forward item 5 as a committee report.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

Okay, recommended. Madam clerk, are there any other matters?

CLERK ALISA SOMERA:

No, there are no further items tonight.

SUPERVISOR COHEN:

All right. Thank you very much. That's it.

[applause]