



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### City Bows to Pressure for Environmental Review of Controversial Soccer Field Plan

Golden Gate Audubon and fourteen environmental and community groups cite potential harm to wildlife in their call for environmental review

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San Francisco, California

Late Friday, April 30, 2010 the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department called for an Environmental Impact Report for their proposed Beach Chalet athletic fields project. This action followed the California Environmental Quality Act appeal filed two days earlier by Golden Gate Audubon and fourteen environmental and grassroots community groups alleging that the Recreation & Park Department improperly side-stepped environmental laws in order to develop artificial turf playfields at the Beach Chalet in Golden Gate Park.

“The City of San Francisco planned to tear out grass fields, install plastic grass and install 60-foot light towers without an environmental review. Golden Gate Audubon and our environmental and community partners challenged the City’s decision because the community deserves a fair and open look at the long-term impact this development will have on the park. It is unfortunate that non-profits and the public had to spend time and money to push for this report which was obviously needed from the start.” said Mark Welther, Golden Gate Audubon’s Executive Director.

The Environmental Impact Report will document the project proposal and will identify alternatives and steps to mitigate environmental impacts to the park.

The project proposes tripling the use of the Beach Chalet soccer fields, an increase of 9,582 hours per year, which will increase traffic and garbage which attracts non-native rodent and predator populations. Today grass fields provide foraging habitat for a variety of hawks, owls, thrushes, blackbirds, sparrows, gulls, warblers, mammals and butterflies.

The installation of 60’ tall stadium lights, planned to be on until 10:00 pm nightly, will also affect wildlife and change the character of this part of Golden Gate Park.

Environmental review will provide information on the many questions raised by the community regarding the impact of the materials used in the synthetic turf and the impacts to groundwater.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society has been working since 1917 to promote the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats in the San Francisco Bay Area. We work to connect Bay Area residents with their local wild spaces and develop respect and appreciation for native wildlife and plants.**

**Contact Info:** Mike Lynes, Conservation Director Golden Gate Audubon Society,  
(510) 853-6551, [mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org), <http://www.goldengateaudubon.org>