

Resolution to the City Council of Oakland  
from the Friends of Sausal Creek Board of Directors  
DESIGNATING RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREAS AND  
PREPARING A MASTER PLAN FOR JOAQUIN MILLER PARK

WHEREAS, in June 1996, the City Council adopted the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Element<sup>1</sup> of the Oakland General Plan addressing the management of open land, natural resources, and parks in Oakland; and

WHEREAS, the OSCAR Element called for the preparation and adoption of a Master Plan for Joaquin Miller Park to delineate conservation areas and activity areas, protect creeks and natural habitat, reduce fire hazards, and mark and maintain trails<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the North Hills parks were specifically acquired to preserve environmentally sensitive land, and the OSCAR Element called for designating **280-acres** of Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) within Joaquin Miller Park to preserve soil, protect creeks and woodlands, safeguard native plants and animals, promote groundwater recharge manage vegetation; limiting human activities to hiking, nature study, and bird watching; and formulating standardized mitigation measures for reversing damage to sensitive habitats<sup>3</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland designated as “Sensitive Natural Communities” the Coast redwood and California bay laurel forests in the Oakland Hills, and the OSCAR Element called for mapping and protecting native plant communities (i.e., oak woodlands, redwood forests, native perennial grasslands, and riparian woodlands); and safeguarding rare, threatened, and endangered species<sup>4</sup>.

WHEREAS, Joaquin Miller Park supports **270 native plant species**, and over **50%** of these plants are considered “species of concern” and at risk of local extinction (extirpation) due to human activities; the Park’s flora includes the Pallid manzanita, a shrub State-listed as “endangered”, and federally-listed as “threatened”<sup>5</sup>.

WHEREAS, Joaquin Miller Park supports **82 bird species** (both resident and migratory), and **13** of these species are considered “rare”<sup>6</sup>, and populations of **special status wildlife species** such as the Alameda whipsnake and Dusky-footed woodrat who can be harmed by human activities that damage the forest floor<sup>7</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Joaquin Miller Park comprises the headwaters of Sausal Creek is essential to the survival of the resident Rainbow trout population; a rare inhabitant of California’s urban creeks, and one vulnerable to multiple stressors including soil erosion and sedimentation originating in the Park<sup>8</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the OSCAR Element called for well designed and maintained trails whereby the City minimizes environmental impacts (to creeks, trees, and soils); ensures the compatibility of different activities with the natural environment, historic resources, and

surrounding community; involves the local community in the alignment and design of trails, and considers the needs of multiple users<sup>9</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the OSCAR Element called for the development of new funding sources, an emphasis on fee-supported and market-responsive services, and the potential for higher fees to be charged to non-residents<sup>10</sup>; and

WHEREAS, mountain biking in Joaquin Miller Park has exploded in popularity since 1996, and social media is attracting large numbers of non-resident riders from across Northern California who do not contribute revenue for Park stewardship; and, in the absence of land-use planning and applicable municipal codes, mountain biking (including e-bikes) has become a dominant recreational activity at the Park, further contributing to the degradation of trails, the redwood forest, aquatic resources, and assemblages of rare plants<sup>11</sup>; and

WHEREAS, serious damage has been documented to soils, creeks, and plant at Joaquin Miller Park in four reports dated **2000**, **2010**, and **2021**<sup>12</sup>; and the City has not implemented the objectives, policies, and actions specified in the OSCAR Element to protect cultural and environmental resources from damage; and

WHEREAS, Friends of Sausal Creek is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1996; and its mission is to restore, maintain, and protect the Sausal Creek Watershed by engaging the community in environmental stewardship, and collaboration with agencies and non-governmental organizations to benefit the local ecosystem; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: Friends of Sausal Creek urges the City Council to direct the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development (Department) to: (1) prepare a comprehensive Master Plan for Joaquin Miller Park, (2) respond to our request by **01 January 2023** regarding a workplan and timeline for the process, and (3) engage with scientists, conservation groups, and community stakeholders to demarcate the boundaries of permanent Resource Conservation Areas across **280 acres** as specified in the approved OSCAR Element; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: Friends of Sausal Creek urges the City Council to direct the Department, and the Parks Recreation and Advisory Commission, with the full participation of all park users, to: (1) prohibit further intensification of mountain biking activities at the Park through improved regulations, enforcement, education, and engagement with the mountain bike community; (2) study and implement a fee-based permit system for mountain bike riders; and (3) prohibit organized, competitive mountain bike race events as activities that are incompatible with the City's rationale for acquiring parkland in the North Hills, and for the sake of equity across all user groups.

Approved by Members of the Board, Friends of Sausal Creek, September 2022: Dunn, Keer, Jacobs, Leidy, Stenger, Vendlinski, and Welch.

ATTEST: Original signed by *Beth Keer 10/17/22*

Beth Keer, President, Board of Directors

## ENDNOTES

**1.**

Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Element of the Oakland General Plan (June 1996)  
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/download-the-open-space-conservation-and-recreation-oscar-element>.

**2.**

ACTION OS-1.1.2: WILDLAND PARK MASTER PLANS (page 2-11);  
ACTION REC-1.5.2: PREPARATION OF PARK MASTER PLANS (Page 4-33); and page 5-39.

**3.**

OBJECTIVE OS-1: RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREAS (page 2-9);  
POLICY OS-1.1: WILDLAND PARKS (page 2-9);  
ACTION OS-1.1.1: RESOURCE CONSERVATION DESIGNATIONS FOR PUBLIC LAND (page 2-11);  
OBJECTIVE CO-1: SOIL CONSERVATION (page 3-2);  
POLICY CO-5.1: PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER RECHARGE (page 3-15);  
OBJECTIVE CO-7: PROTECTION OF NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES (page 3-33);  
ACTION CO-7.1.2: DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDIZED MITIGATION MEASURES (page 3-35);  
POLICY REC-2.3: ENVIRONMENTALLY-SENSITIVE DESIGN (page 4-35);  
POLICY REC-7.4: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH (page 4-58); and  
pages 4-8, 4-43, and 5-38.

**4.**

Draft Vegetation Management Plan; Draft Environmental Impact Report (November 2020); pages 3.4-8 - 3.4-9; [https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/OVMP\\_DEIR\\_Section-3.4\\_120720\\_ADA.pdf](https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/OVMP_DEIR_Section-3.4_120720_ADA.pdf)  
POLICY CO-7.1: PROTECTION OF NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES (page 3-33);  
ACTION CO-7.1.1: NATIVE PLANT MAPPING (page 3-35); and  
POLICY CO-9.1: HABITAT PROTECTION (Page 3-40).

**5.**

Plants of the Sausal Creek Watershed and Joaquin Miller Park Rarity, Populations, Locations, Risks (09/01/2020)  
[https://www.sausalcreek.org/\\_files/ugd/fbe72e\\_bf1541036cdf48458fc149898f324b7f.pdf](https://www.sausalcreek.org/_files/ugd/fbe72e_bf1541036cdf48458fc149898f324b7f.pdf)  
Species Profile: Pallid manzanita: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants/Endangered/Arctostaphylos-pallida>

**6.**

Birds of the Sausal Creek Watershed - 76 species counted (April 2016)  
[http://www.documents.sausalcreek.org/Birding\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.documents.sausalcreek.org/Birding_Brochure.pdf)  
Bird List for Joaquin Miller Park updated to 82 species in October 2022 by Gwen Rino (unpublished).

**7.**

Draft Vegetation Management Plan; Draft EIR (November 2020); pages 3.4-37 - 3.4-39.  
Species Profile: Alameda whipsnake: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5524>  
Species Profile: Dusky-footed woodrat: <https://friendsofedgeewood.org/dusky-footed-woodrat>

**8.**

Conservation and Management Plan for Sausal Creek Wild Rainbow Trout (July 2020)  
[https://www.sausalcreek.org/\\_files/ugd/fbe72e\\_d3f35440d80a456ba585b9249da4e032.pdf](https://www.sausalcreek.org/_files/ugd/fbe72e_d3f35440d80a456ba585b9249da4e032.pdf)

**9.**

POLICY OS-5.3: TRAIL DESIGN PRINCIPLES (page 2-39)  
OBJECTIVE REC-2: PARK DESIGN AND COMPATIBILITY OF USES (page 4-34).

**10.**

OBJECTIVE REC-10: FUNDING (page 4-69)

POLICY REC-10.8: FEE-SUPPORTED. MARKET-RESPONSIVE SERVICE EMPHASIS (page 4-75)

NOTES ON MOUNTAIN BIKING CULTURE AND RULES OF THE TRAIL.

**11.**

JOAQUIN MILLER PARK ENDURO 2022; <https://jmpenduro.com>

*Mountain Biking at Joaquin Miller Park (Trail Guide)*; Alex Chamberlin 02/16/2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syIM7UXdL34>

[Riding the day of a rainstorm on super-super-saturated trail]

4:35-6:25 promoting and riding an illegal “rogue” trail off of the Big Trees Trail, but frustrated by branches placed by conservationists.

{1:00-1:30 riding the same trail in ~2012 where severe damage to the redwood forest is on full display:

<http://www.pinkbike.com/video/244494/>}

9:10-9:30 riding up Orchard Trail where a gully has formed and is delivering large volumes of sediment into Orchard Creek; a tributary to Fern Ravine Creek.

11:10-11:35 passing hikers at hide speed; widening trails by riding on the margins to “stay out of the wet”.

12:25-12:55 encouraging riders to destroy the Cinderella Trail as “cutting that (switchback) is kinda fun; test your skills a little bit”.

*Joaquin miller park, mountain biking in the OAKLAND HILLS*; OfficialJonnyt 12/26/17

<https://youtu.be/j8GPuSBzvFc>

0:50 first near collision with hikers referenced

10:45-11:00 second near collision with different hikers appears on video; “OfficialJonnyt” warns the hikers that this is a “very dangerous” place for them to be.

Mountain Bike Trails In...Oakland? Joaquin Miller Park; Bearded4Glory 01/03/22

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbdMXft\\_O6c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbdMXft_O6c)

[Riding at high speeds in super-saturated conditions]

*The Culture of Mountain Biking Has Gone Astray*

Adventure Journal; Mike Curiak; 2018

<https://www.adventure-journal.com/2018/05/culture-mountain-biking-gone-astray/>

**Preliminary results from a survey of Park users conducted by Friends of Joaquin Miller Park:** On 06/06/22, Julie Mills reported that a “huge percentage” of respondents were mountain bikers due to a major outreach campaign by the Bike Trails Council East Bay (BTCEB), and those users were strong advocates for using the Park for mountain biking. JMP is a destination park for mountain biking for enthusiasts from cities across the Bay Area, Central Valley, and Foothills; including: Arnold (Calaveras County), Elk Grove (Sacramento County), Fair Oaks (Sacramento County), Grass Valley (Nevada County), Livermore (Alameda County), Manteca (San Joaquin County), Marin County, Redway (Humboldt County), San Jose (Santa Clara County), Santa Cruz County, and Tracy (San Joaquin County).

**12.**

*An Assessment of Trails, Watercourses, Soils, and Redwood Forest Health in Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland, California, with Recommendations for Management* (2000)

[http://www.documents.sausalcreek.org/Lettis\\_jmp\\_report\\_full.pdf](http://www.documents.sausalcreek.org/Lettis_jmp_report_full.pdf)

*Fern Ravine Restoration Plan* (2010)

[http://www.documents.sausalcreek.org/Fern\\_Ravine\\_Restoration\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.documents.sausalcreek.org/Fern_Ravine_Restoration_Plan.pdf)

*Proposed Split-rail Fencing Project at Joaquin Miller Park to Conserve Soil, Wetlands, Rainbow Trout, and Rare Plants*; Friends of Sausal Creek ([PRAC – 14 July 2021 Item 7b](#)).

Presentation to Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission about Environmental Conditions at Joaquin Miller Park; Megan Palsa ([PRAC – 08/11/2021-Item 7D](#))