

6.24 DOROTHY ERSKINE PARK

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Dorothy Erskine Park is located near the southern end of Glen Canyon Park at the intersection of Baden Street and Martha Avenue (Figure 1-1). This mostly forested Natural Area is approximately 1.5 acres in size (Figure 6.24-1). Most of the remnant plant areas and important wildlife habitats are associated with the grassland and mixed exotic forests on the steep north-facing slopes, which are inaccessible because of a safety fence at the top of the slope. There is one main trail and access route through the Natural Area that appears to be in relatively good condition. This small Natural Area offers outstanding City views, recreational opportunities, a diverse native grassland and scrub habitats, and urban forest areas.

GEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY, AND TRAILS

This Natural Area is underlain by Franciscan chert bedrock. Most of the chert is buried under slope debris and is mapped as “thin rocky soil over bedrock” (Figure 6.24-2). The chert is exposed in a scarp along the north and east edges of the northeast corner of the Natural Area (mapped as “chert outcrop”), along the gravel road extending east from Martha Street, and at the top of the hill where there is a very thin debris cover. Shallow soil slips form most of the bedrock slope along the northern boundary of the Natural Area.

There is no surface water at the site. Drainage of the area is by overland flow. Some rainfall probably percolates into fissures in the rock, but most of the rainfall is absorbed by the vegetation. Natural runoff-formed furrows on the slopes are not eroded extensively because there is substantial ground cover.

A network of primary and secondary trails exists in the southern portion of the Natural Area. Some small earthen trails have developed in the central area, but much of the terrain is too steep for casual access. Near the top of the Natural Area, foot traffic has worn parts of the trails and areas around the benches through the thin soil to the underlying bedrock.

VEGETATION

Only four vegetation series were mapped at this Natural Area (Table 6.24-1; Figure 6.24-3). The majority of the site was mapped as blue gum (0.52 acres) and mixed exotic forest (0.86 acres). Under partial eucalyptus canopy on the Natural Areas northeast corner is a rich remnant grassland area. A very small Italian ryegrass grassland (0.09 acres) persists at Dorothy Erskine Park. The remaining 0.01 acres are mapped as developed. The vegetation series within this Natural Area are all dominated by invasive species. No sensitive plants have been reported from Dorothy Erskine Park.

WILDLIFE

Birds

The bird species expected to occur here are those typically found in eucalyptus forests (Appendix Table C-4). In San Francisco this includes species such as American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), and dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*). Red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) have been reported nesting in the trees at this Natural Area and red-shouldered hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) have also been observed here. Both of these are considered sensitive species. Of the other birds considered sensitive for this plan, four have been reported from this Natural Area (Table 6.24-2). Lesser goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*) and purple finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) likely use the grassland as foraging habitat. Red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) is a winter resident. Wilson's warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) has also been reported from this Natural Area. No important bird habitat has been designated for this Natural Area.

Mammals/Reptiles/Amphibians/Invertebrates

Common vertebrate species are likely to use Dorothy Erskine Park. It is expected that small mammals such as the house mouse (*Mus musculus*), black rat (*Rattus rattus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) may use the area. California slender salamanders (*Batrachoseps attenuatus*) likely occur in the duff on the forest floor. The grasslands of this Natural Area are probably too small to support suitable habitat or host species for sensitive butterflies.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

Three Management Areas (MAs) have been designated at Dorothy Erskine Park (Figure 6.24-4). The MA-1 areas include remnant grassland and wildflower habitats. MA-2 areas contain remnant scrub habitat and provide a buffer to the MA-1 areas. The remaining urban forests of this Natural Area have been designated as MA-3 areas. The following text presents issues and recommended management actions by Management Area.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several conservation and recreation-related issues have been identified for Dorothy Erskine Park. Recommendations developed for each of these issues will guide restoration, enhancement, and maintenance work. In the following discussion, system-wide issues and recommendations (GR-1 for example; see Chapter 5) that apply to the entire Natural Area are presented first, followed by site-specific issues and recommendations. Site-specific recommendations are keyed to the Management Area in which they should occur.

Site Improvements – Implementation of management recommendations at Dorothy Erskine Park would not change significantly the overall look of the Natural Area and would result in:

- enhanced grassland and scrub plant communities;
- enhanced wildlife habitat;
- improved and more structurally diverse urban forest habitat for wildlife; and
- improved public access on designated trails.

Implementation of the following recommendations will result in a structurally diverse mosaic of coastal scrub, grassland, and urban forest. This ecotone will be similar in structure to, although smaller than, the forest edge on the eastern slope of Mount Davidson (Section 6.2). As vegetation develops complexity along the edge of the forest it will provide abundant habitat for a variety of birds, small mammals, and native plant species.

Vegetation

Issues relating to vegetation management at Dorothy Erskine Park involve the protection of sensitive habitats typically through the control of invasive plants (GR-1) and management of sensitive species and vegetation series of limited distribution (GR-2). Issues relating to the general safety of visitors and surrounding homes, fire hazards posed by vegetation and trees, and illicit activities must be considered during management of the Natural Areas (GR-13).

Management of the urban forests at Dorothy Erskine Park will follow the general urban forest management practices (GR-15). In addition to these general recommendations, the following site-specific issues should be addressed.

Issue DP-1: The grassland habitat at Dorothy Erskine Park is at risk of disappearing due to habitat loss and invasive species.

Recommendation DP-1a: To protect the existing grassland habitat, contain and reduce herbaceous and woody invasive plants such as Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), wild mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), and annual grasses in all MA-1 and MA-2 areas. Additionally, these species should be contained and reduced within the understory of the urban forest in MA-3a. Prevent invasive tree species from becoming established within MA-1 and MA-2 areas to help preserve and enhance existing grasslands.

Recommendation DP-1b: In order to enhance the grassland and wildflower community, removal of some eucalyptus trees is necessary. Approximately 14 of an approximate overall stand of 120 trees in Dorothy Erskine Park would be removed from in MA-1 and MA-2 areas. This includes 5 in MA-1a, 5 in MA-2a, and 4 from near the fence in MA-2b (Figure 6.24-4) (Appendix F). Not all trees in MA-2 areas will be removed. Some large individuals will remain in order to minimize large-scale disturbance and disruption to

wildlife and to promote a gradual conversion to scrub-grassland mosaic habitats. However, eucalyptus seedlings and saplings will not be allowed to establish in MA-1 and MA-2 areas. The short- and long-term impacts of tree removal are discussed in Appendix F. The urban forests in MA-3a will be managed as per GR-15.

Recommendation DP-1c: In all MA-1 and MA-2 areas where invasive plants have been removed, revegetate using appropriate native plants that will maintain and enhance the existing grassland and scrub communities. Using diversity, cover, and density targets generated from reference sites within and around San Francisco, plant native scrub and grassland species (see Appendix B). Native oak trees will be installed in MA-2a near the urban forest edge (MA-2a) to replace eucalyptus.

Recommendation DP-1d: In order to prevent the countywide extinction of sensitive plant species, consider reintroducing silk tassel bush (*Garrya elliptica*) (MA-2b).

Wildlife

Wildlife issues at Dorothy Erskine Park focus on habitat, food sources, and shelter. Vegetation management during the breeding season can impact nesting birds (GR-4); however, vegetation management also can provide materials to create artificial habitat for ground-dwelling birds, small mammals, and reptiles (GR-9). Finally, reduction in predation pressures will benefit all animals within the Natural Area (GR-7). Enhancement of the urban forest, including increasing diversity and structure, will benefit wildlife. Implementation of recommendations in DP-1 above will diversify and improve habitat for native wildlife, especially birds. Implementation of the general recommendation will enhance the wildlife habitat present.

Issue DP-2: Red-tailed hawks are reported nesting at Dorothy Erskine Park. These birds probably obtain the bulk of their prey within the grasslands of nearby Glen Canyon Park. Tree removal at Dorothy Erskine Park could affect this species if the nesting tree is removed, the nest is exposed to more wind or sun, or removal activities disrupt perching, roosting, or cause nest abandonment.

Recommendation DP-2a: Prior to any tree removal, the site shall be surveyed for nests. If a nest is found, tree removal shall not occur within 500 feet of the nest. This action would apply to all Management Areas at Dorothy Erskine Park.

Soils, Erosion, and Public Use

Most of the erosion issues at Dorothy Erskine Park relate to the trail system and public use. This plan proposes to improve and maintain 414 feet of trail and retain an additional 357 feet of unimproved trail. No trails are proposed for closure. A fence in this location prevents Natural Area visitors from falling. The issue of erosion and habitat impacts related to social trails that

may develop is addressed through implementation of GR-11 and GR-12. Interpretive signs regarding the ecosystem of Dorothy Erskine Park should also be considered (GR-14).

Table 6.24-1. Vegetation series mapped at Dorothy Erskine Park.

	Vegetation Series	Total Acreage
Forest	blue gum forest	0.52
	mixed exotic forest	0.86
	Subtotal	1.38
Grassland	italian ryegrass grassland	0.09
Other	developed	0.01
Grand Total		1.47

Table 6.24-2. Sensitive species presently and historically known to occur at Dorothy Erskine

Species	Common Name	Status Federal, State, CNPS, Local	Local Significance
Vertebrates			
<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	Lesser Goldfinch	SLC	Presently occurs
<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	Purple Finch	SLC	Presently occurs
<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	Red-breasted Nuthatch	SLC	Winter resident
<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Red-shouldered Hawk	SLC	Presently occurs
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Red-tailed Hawk	SLC	Presently breeds
<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Wilson's Warbler	SLC	Presently occurs
Plants			
<i>No sensitive plant species have been reported from Dorothy Erskine Park</i>			

Status Key:

- Federal Status**
- FE** Endangered. Species in danger of extinction throughout all or significant portion of its range
 - FT** Threatened. Species likely to become endangered within foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
 - FPE** Proposed for listing as endangered.
 - FC** Candidate for listing as endangered. Candidate information now available indicates that listing may be appropriate with supporting data currently on file.
 - FSC** Species of Concern. Former Category 2 Candidate for listing as endangered.
 - FPD** Proposed de-listing.

California State Status

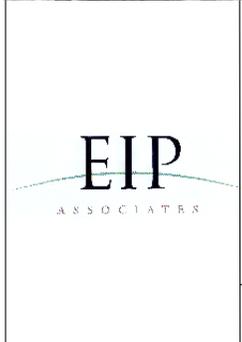
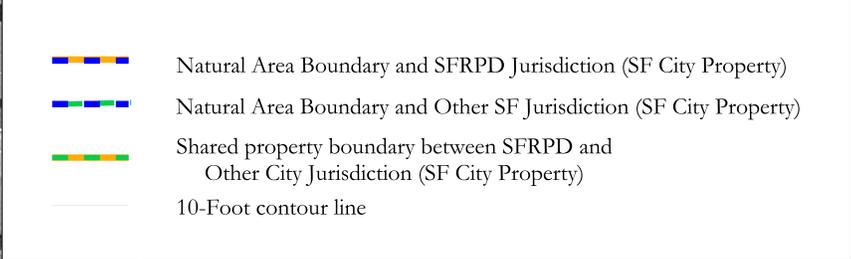
- SE** Endangered. Species whose continued existence in California is jeopardized.
- ST** Threatened. Species, although not presently threatened with extinction, that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.
- SSC** Species of Concern.
- SFP** State Fully Protected under Sections 3511 and 4700 of the Fish and Game Code.
- Sens** Considered a sensitive species by the California Department of Forestry.

California Native Plant Society

- 1A** Plants presumed extinct in California
- 1B** Plants that are rare or endangered in California and elsewhere.
- 2** Plants that are endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.
- 3** Plants about which more information is needed.
- 4** Plants of limited distribution (a watch list).
- LS** Locally Significant.

Golden Gate Audubon Society

- SLC** Species of Local Concern



Source: Aerial photography San Francisco Department of Public Works, 2002, Orthophoto - San Francisco - 1-foot resolution, 2001; property boundary data derived by San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) 2005 from data provided by San Francisco Department of Telecommunications and Information Services, 2002; natural area boundary data created by San Francisco State University Institute for GISc from information provided by RPD's Natural Areas Program (NAP), 2005; contour lines provided by San Francisco Department of Conservation; all data are California State Plane Zone III, NAD 83.

Created by Debra Dwyer, San Francisco State University Institute for GISc October 13, 2005.

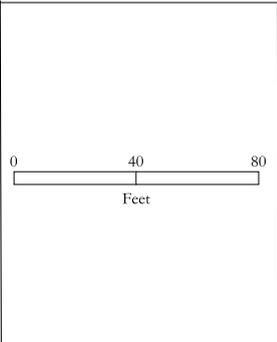
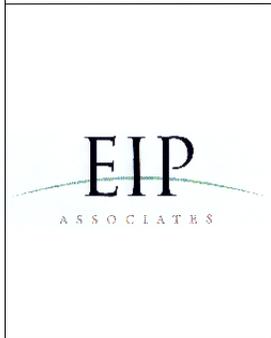


FIGURE 6.24 - 1
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, AND NATURAL AREAS
 Dorothy Erskine
 Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan
 San Francisco, California



Source: Soils and land features data collected by EIP Associates, 2005; trails and vegetation data collected by San Francisco Recreation and Park Department Natural Areas Program (NAP), 2005; vegetation data collected by NAP, 2005; data layers digitized by San Francisco State University Institute for GISc (SFSU IGIS), 2005; natural area boundary created by SFSU IGIS using data determined by NAP, 2005; streets data excerpted from ArcView StreetMap 2000 Data, copyright 1998-2000, Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI).

Created by D. Dwyer, San Francisco State University Institute for GISc, May 30, 2005, revised December 10, 2005.

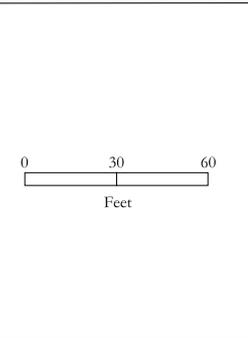
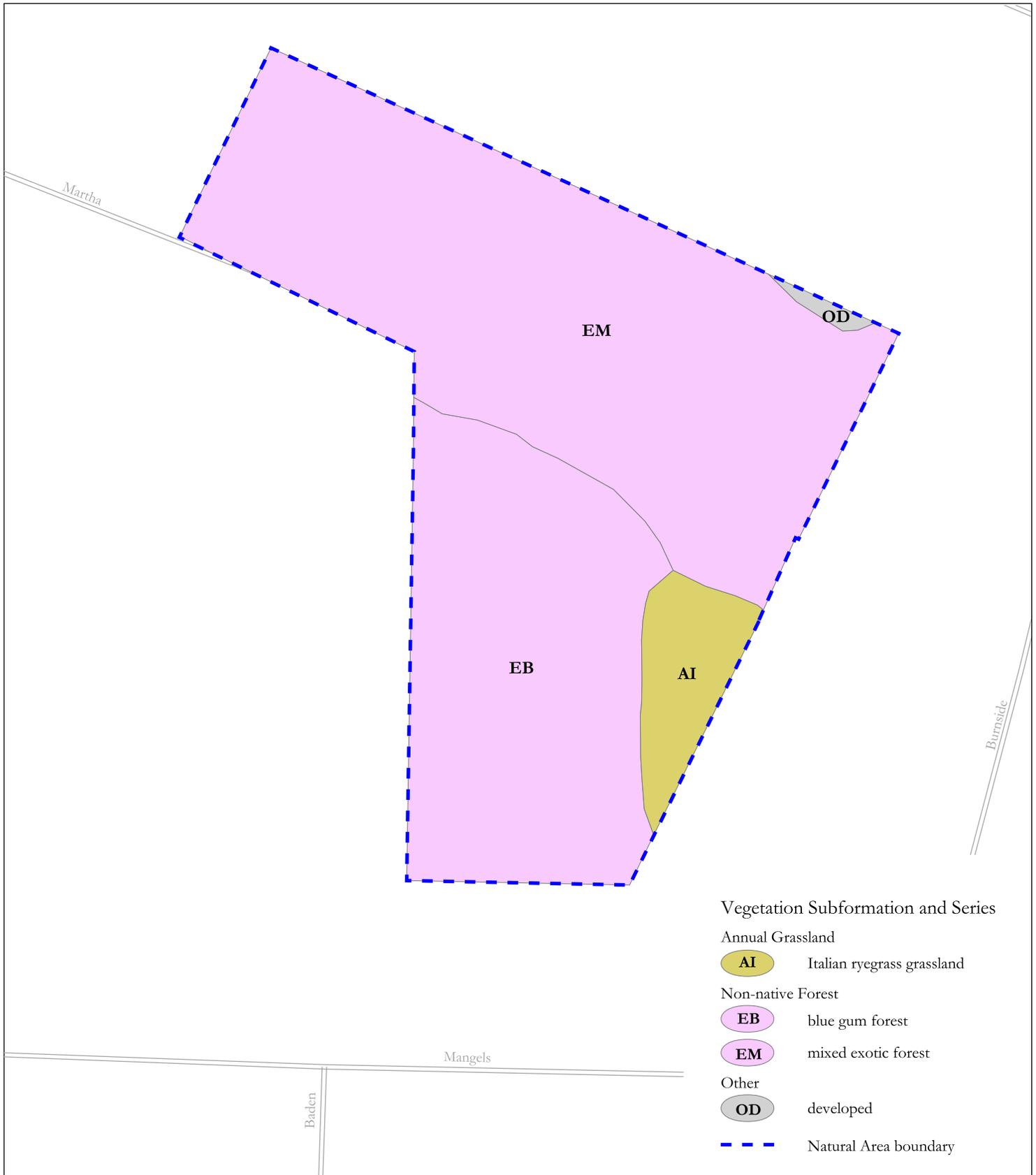


FIGURE 6.24 - 2
SOILS, LAND FEATURES, AND TRAILS
Dorothy Erskine
 Significant Natural Resource Areas
 Management Plan
 San Francisco, California



Source: Vegetation data collected by San Francisco Department of Recreation and Parks Natural Areas Program (NAP), San Francisco State University Biology Department and EIP Associates, 1999-2000; data layers digitized by Geotopo, Inc., 2000; edited and corrected by San Francisco State Institute for GISc (SFSUGIS), 2000-2002; natural area boundary created by SFSUGIS from data provided by NAP, 2005; streets data excerpted from ArcView StreetMap 2000 data, copyright 1998-2000, Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc (ESRI).

Created by D. Dwyer, San Francisco State University Institute for GISc, June 5, 2005.

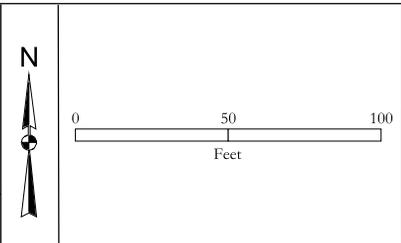


FIGURE 6.24 - 3
VEGETATION
Dorothy Erskine
Significant Natural Resource Areas
Management Plan
San Francisco, California

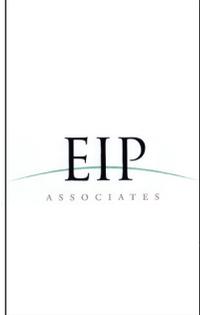




Mgmt Area	Action
MA-1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove 5 invasive trees Maintain grassland
MA-2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove approximately 5 invasive trees Maintain and enhance grassland-scrub-oak woodland mosaic
MA-2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove 4 invasive trees Maintain and enhance native scrub Reintroduce sensitive plants Maintain existing fence for safety
MA-3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance urban forest Maintain existing fence for safety

- Natural Area Wide Management Actions**
- Reduce and contain herbaceous and woody weeds
 - No invasive tree removal unless specified above
 - Prevent recruitment of invasive trees unless specified above
 - Total trails to remain: 771 linear-feet
 - Provide access on designated trails only
 - Social trails subject to closure
 - Total invasive trees to remove: 14; Total invasive trees to remain: 86
 - Implement erosion control as required (GR-12)
 - Implement wildlife enhancements as appropriate

Management Areas		Trails	
	management area 1		primary
	management area 2		secondary
	management area 3		



Source: Management areas and trails data collected by San Francisco Department of Recreation and Park Natural Areas Program (NAP), 2005; trails data digitized by San Francisco State University Institute for GISc (SFSU IGIS), 2005; streets data excerpted from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), Inc.'s Street-Map 2000 data copyright ESRI 1998-2001; aerial photography San Francisco Department of Public Works, 2002, Orthophoto - San Francisco - 1-foot resolution - 2001; all data are in California State Plane Zone III projection, NAD 1983; map produced using ArcGIS 9.0 software by ESRI.

Map created May 28, 2005 by Debra Dwyer, San Francisco State University, Institute for Geographic Information Science; revised August 23, 2005.

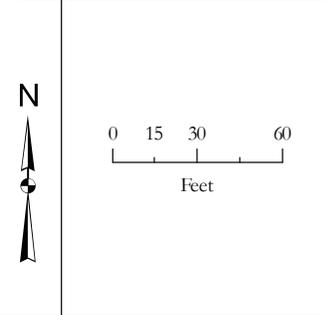


FIGURE 6.24 - 4
MANAGEMENT AREAS AND TRAIL PLAN
 Dorothy Erskine
 Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan
 San Francisco, California