

From: [Denise D Anne](#)  
To: [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#)  
Subject: ISLAND OF PLASTIC DEBRIS  
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2017 10:40:30 PM

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**For all Environment Commissioners.**

## **ISLAND OF PLASTIC DEBRIS**

**By Denise D'Anne**

**May 17, 2017**

**It seems we are compromising our very existence by offering plastic bags at grocery store despite Proposition 67 banning plastic bags in California. Now we are saying if the bag is heavy duty plastic it is acceptable. I still see plastic bags floating around in the city and headed for our sewers.**

**A recent report jut came out that there in a tiny British uninhabited island in the Pacific that has 38 million pieces of plastic rubbish on its beaches. This is in addition to the millions of plastics in our oceans killing sea life and poisoning our waters.**

**Why is our society so suicidal?**

**<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/16/tiny-pacific-island-has-38-million-pieces-plastic-rubbish-beaches/>**

**From:** [SF Forest](#)  
**To:** [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#)  
**Subject:** SF Forest Alliance Comments on revised Biodiversity Resolution  
**Date:** Friday, May 19, 2017 12:29:27 PM

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Dear Anthony,

Please send our comments below to the Commissioners on the Commission for the Environment.

We'd like to note that we had very little time to do this; we received the updated resolution only yesterday, giving us barely time to read, draft comments and discuss them before sending this letter.

Many thanks for all your help,

Rupa

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Dear Commissioners,

Here are the San Francisco Forest Alliance comments on the revised biodiversity resolution.

Page 1-4

The resolution conflates biodiversity with "natural heritage". Biodiversity would place value on all species. Instead, this document promotes action only to aid the survival of species that were present in San Francisco at some particular historical moment. Species that arrived later are targeted for control or eradication.

This document needs to recognize that all species contribute to biodiversity, that the addition of new species is inevitable, that all "new" species are not damaging to legacy species and that some new species are incredibly beneficial, trees in particular.

Page 1-14

The resolution separates parks and natural areas. In fact, most of our natural areas are parks, and for some neighborhoods, their primary parks are natural areas. For social justice, those parklands should not be converted into restricted access nature preserves. This document should lay out a position on this issue.

This document should not separate "parks" from "natural areas" since for many of us, natural areas are our parks.

Page 2-17

The Climate Action Goals of 0-50-100-roots are inadequate. It states that San Francisco's tree cover is declining but only suggests action regarding street trees. It completely ignores the trees on other public lands controlled by RPD and PUC both inside and outside the City.

Page 5-4

San Francisco's "natural heritage" does not include forests. This document needs to come to grips with this fact. What is more important, expanding legacy grasslands or retaining trees and adding new trees? For global warming/greenhouse gas emissions, it is critical that we retain all living trees and plant as many new trees as we can. Removing trees and replacing them with grass and shrubs produces large GHG emissions and reduces future carbon sequestration.

Page 5-15

Indigenous San Francisco ecosystems are not capable of sequestering significant amounts of carbon, conserving water, preventing flooding or improving air quality. Trees can do these things, but few trees are indigenous to San Francisco and those that are never grew in profusion.

Page 6-7

This draft seems to endorse the use of toxic herbicides. Much of the use of these chemicals is to attempt to control plants that arrived in San Francisco after 1800. The precautionary principle should be applied here. Is it really necessary? Is there any data to show the risk is offset by a positive result?

Page 6-22 and 7-1

The Urban Forest Plan only addresses street trees. There are many more trees on lands controlled by RPD and PUC. Why does this resolution ignore them?

We thank you for your time and consideration,

San Francisco Forest Alliance  
(A 501(c)4 organization)

**From:** [Tom Borden](#)  
**To:** [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#); [Rodriguez, Guillermo \(ENV\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Draft San Francisco Biodiversity Policy  
**Date:** Saturday, May 20, 2017 8:59:54 PM

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Anthony and Guillermo,

Would you please pass this email on to the Commissioners prior to the May 23 meeting of the Commission?

Thank you,

Tom Borden

Department of Environment Commissioners,

I hope you will give the draft San Francisco Biodiversity Policy a careful read. It purports to aid in the fight against global warming, but instead promotes policies that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. It seeks to prevent plantings of "invasive" trees. (page 3-20) Yet maintaining and planting the non-native trees that grow well in San Francisco is one of the key things we can do to increase carbon sequestration. Cutting down these "weeds" produces large emissions of methane and carbon dioxide.

Rather than have San Francisco take a leadership position in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this policy would have the City make itself "climate -protected" (page 5-17). This does not mean doing our share to reduce climate change. It does not mean protecting urban infrastructure from rising sea level. It means that humans should use herbicides and other means to intervene on behalf of indigenous species that cannot survive the changing environment. The goal is to "mitigate climate change impacts to rare species and communities", not contribute to reducing climate change. (page 5-5)

The document claims to promote urban forests. (page 5-4) However, San Francisco's Climate Action Goals of 0-50-100-ROOTS (page 2-17) and the efforts of the Urban Forestry Council (page 7-7) only address street trees. None of this addresses the vast number of trees on lands managed by RPD and PUC. Why doesn't this policy advocate for the maintenance and expansion of those forests?

The document claims that indigenous ecosystems can, "sequester carbon, conserve water, prevent flooding, manage pests, and improve air quality." (page 5-15) Let's be honest, the native dunes, grasslands and scrub have extremely limited capability to conserve water and near zero ability to sequester carbon or improve air quality. Large trees can do those things, but they are not indigenous to the City and are not promoted by this policy.

The document advocates for the use of herbicides. (page 6-7) This is nothing to be proud of. The IPM program gives RPD and PUC land managers the freedom to spray Tier 1 herbicides in parks and watersheds to exterminate any plants they choose. We do not want pesticides in our

parks or in our watersheds. It seems the precautionary principle does not apply here.

San Francisco talks the talk, but it also needs to walk the walk. To do our part in the fight against global warming, we need to protect our large trees and plant as many fast growing trees as we can. The Department of Environment should be tracking the size and number of trees that die or are removed in the City and on City controlled lands. It should be advocating for the rapid replacement of those trees.

This policy should make a real effort to address San Francisco greenhouse gas emissions and balance the protection of indigenous species against the benefits of non-native species.

Tom Borden

**From:** [Anastasia Glikshtern](#)  
**To:** [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#); [Rodriguez, Guillermo \(ENV\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Raphael, Deborah \(ENV\)](#)  
**Subject:** Biodiversity Resolution  
**Date:** Friday, May 19, 2017 7:37:24 PM  
**Attachments:** [biodiversity\\_5-7-2017\\_letter\\_env\\_comm.docx](#)

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Comment on item 7c: Approval of Resolution File 2017-04-COE regarding citywide biodiversity goals and the Department of the Environment's role in protecting San Francisco's natural heritage.

Dear Commissioners,

"Natural heritage" is not "biodiversity", "biodiversity" is not "natural heritage." All species contribute to biodiversity, not only those which allegedly were present in the area at specific, arbitrarily selected point in time. There is evolution. As the climate changes the species which were present in the area cannot survive there anymore and move further to the north or higher up the mountains. The new species which take their place are often very beneficial to the environment. Trees - not grasslands of yesteryear - are especially important in densely populated urban areas.

This resolution is just another one - among others referenced in the document - designed to codify the superiority of "native" plants and wildlife, destruction of our forests in the name of "native restorations," and to put the "biodiversity" green-wash on the use of the most toxic herbicides which are damaging to public health and to the environment.

Sadly, none of the very valid suggestions that SF Forest Alliance provided to the Policy Committee were incorporated into this resolution.

I'm attaching the 5-7-2017 SFFA letter to the Policy Committee regarding this resolution for the reference. Line numbers and pages no longer apply - but the spirit does.

Below are notes on miscellaneous things in the new text of the resolution.

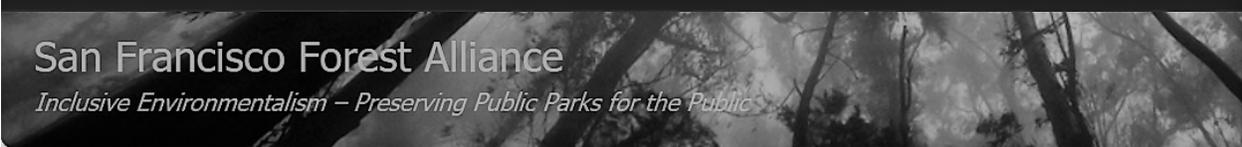
- "Natural" areas ARE parks. They are our neighborhood parks - not "native" plant museums.
- Why do terms "indigenous ecosystems, "indigenous plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians" mean something which allegedly was in the area about 250 years ago - and not 500, 1,000, or a million years ago?
- Contributing to global warming by cutting down - instead of protecting - trees will have a detrimental effect on biodiversity "non-native" tree foes profess to care so much about. It is said that deforestation adds more atmospheric CO2 than the sum total of cars and trucks on the world's roads.
- San Francisco's Climate Action Goals somehow ignore the proposed killing of 18,500 trees and only consider street trees "as integral to local climate mitigation and adaptation." It is worth noting, though, that the city also chops down street trees right and left. On Masonic & Geary intersection all trees are killed (saw it this Thursday). The Sloat median is denuded as well.
- Contrary to numerous testimonies by people involved in Cities Connecting Children to

Nature, children can be taught about nature, without "natural" areas being sprayed with herbicides. Children are much better off being far away from herbicides. In September of 2015 the American Academy of Pediatrics had concluded in it's meta study that "exposure to herbicides was associated with a slightly higher risk of childhood cancers in general... A significant increase in risk of leukemia was also associated with herbicide exposure."

- Wildlife and pollinators can be supported by many plants, not necessarily from other "Mediterranean climates," non necessarily "non-invasive." As an example, the population of endangered California Clapper Rail has declined by 50% during the period of "invasive"/"non-native" Spartina eradication efforts from 2005 to 2011. Poor birds cannot read and don't know that "non-native" or "invasive" plants are bad for them.
- I was present when the amazing Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights was adopted and remember having questions about it - what purpose does it serve? Is the right to climb a tree a legal vehicle to restrict overprotective grandparents, who might forbid the climbing? Does the right to ride a bicycle mean that the city would give bicycles to or have them available for children whose parents cannot afford or wouldn't want to buy one?
- The Natural Resources Management Plan has been approved in 2016 despite being anti-environmental, despite being overwhelmingly opposed by the people who would be most impacted by it's implementation, despite of estimated cost of \$5,400,000 a year for 20 years (as per Legislative Analyst, 2007). It's EIR was certified despite being bias, inaccurate, and incomplete.
- To sequester carbon you need trees - not grasslands, to prevent flooding you need trees, to improve air quality you need trees - not grasslands.
- Use of most toxic herbicides in parks and on the watershed is not "environmentally healthy and protective." Spraying of Roundup (Glyhosate), Garlon (triclopyr) and other (potentially equally harmful) poisons in public spaces contaminate soil & water - it cannot possibly be healthy. The "Reduced Risk Pesticide List" is a strange name. The risk is reduced compared to what? Humanitarian disaster in Argentina caused by spraying glyphosate on GMO crops?

Thank you for reading - if you are reading it,

Anastasia Glikshtern



# San Francisco Forest Alliance

*Inclusive Environmentalism – Preserving Public Parks for the Public*

*sfforestnews@gmail.com*

May 7, 2017

## Comments on Item 5, May 8th Policy Committee Meeting

Dear Commissioners,

San Francisco Forest Alliance holds that:

- Global warming is accelerating, climate change is real, and all efforts should be extended to slow it down;
- Our window for avoiding catastrophic climate change is rapidly closing, and we will not solve the climate crisis without a massive increase in the protection of forests around the world, including in our own backyard;
- Pesticides are much more toxic and cause much more harm to the environment and to public health than people realize - due to the efforts by manufacturers to conceal this fact and corruption within the EPA (recently brought to fore once again);
- All wildlife, not just rare species, deserves protection.

Therefore we ask to change the Resolution adopting citywide biodiversity goals and articulating the role of the Department of the Environment in protecting San Francisco's natural heritage as follows:

Please add after line 14 on page 1:

WHEREAS, forests cover 31% of the world's land surface but are home to 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity; and,

Please add after line 22 on page 1:

WHEREAS, our window for avoiding catastrophic climate change is rapidly closing, and we will not solve the climate crisis without a massive increase in the protection of forests around the world, including in our own backyard; and,

WHEREAS, saplings planted today will take years to sequester as much carbon as existing mature trees,

Please add after line 15 on page 2:

WHEREAS, vegetation treated with systemic pesticides kills pollinators, and herbicides adversely affect pollinators' ability to find food and reproduce; and,

Please add on line 21, page 3:

,and ensure that habitat of existing wildlife of the city is protected;

SFFA considers that "promote, cultivate and restore nature" is oxymoronic, since nature is what is natural, not artificially cultivated. Therefore, please, on lines 4 and 5, page 4 replace:

Empower people and partnerships to promote, cultivate, and restore nature in every neighborhood;  
with:

Empower people and partnerships in every neighborhood to protect the natural environment, emphasizing dangers of herbicides and awareness of climate change;

Please add on line 5, page 4:

protect and preserve existing ecosystems, especially forests and trees;

Please add on line 2, page 5:  
prevent deforestation, make maximum effort to preserve existing trees, and establish a register for all trees greater than 15' removed from public lands;

On line 4, page 5:  
please replace "practices;" with "practices that are safe for human and environmental health, therefore prohibiting the application of toxicity category I and toxicity category II non-organic herbicides;"

Please add on line 6, page 5:  
prohibit planting of trees and other vegetation treated with systemic herbicides by the city, and conduct an education outreach to the city residents on the subject;

San Francisco Forest Alliance also holds that, despite of certification by the Planning Commission, the Environmental Impact Report for Natural Resources Management Plan is inadequate, inaccurate, and not objective, and the Plan is, in fact, very damaging to our natural environment.

Therefore we ask that the reference to that Plan and its EIR (lines 16 through 18 on page 2) be deleted from the Resolution.

Sincerely,

*San Francisco Forest Alliance*

**From:** [Anastasia Glikshtern](#)  
**To:** [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#); [Rodriguez, Guillermo \(ENV\)](#)  
**Subject:** Treasure Island  
**Date:** Sunday, May 21, 2017 11:26:18 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

I think Treasure Island Development Authority was mentioned at the last meeting as a shining example of good environmental practices (I might be wrong.)

Attaching a link to a post about it - please take a moment to look at the photos:

<https://sfforest.org/?s=treasure+island>

It's from last year.

Just last week the trees on Masonic and Geary were all killed - half for moving traffic lanes, half to give more work to tree cutting/tree planting companies. Saw it last Thursday.

Drove on Sloat the same Thursday - the median looks awful too - don't know what was the reason for cutting down so many trees there.

War on trees in San Francisco?

Sincerely,  
Anastasia Glikshtern



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The Examiner



**From:** [jan blum](#)  
**To:** [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#)  
**Subject:** Msy 23 DOE Commission Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, May 22, 2017 12:37:11 PM

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RE: Biodiversity Goals Resolution and their Implementation Goals

Dear Commissioners:

I regret my inability to attend the meeting on May 23rd but have a commitment to attend a meeting concerning a new public park which will be constructed at the nexus of Bay/Hyde/Chestnut and Francisco/Larkin Streets; the site of the defunct Francisco Reservoir. [www.FranciscoPark.org](http://www.FranciscoPark.org).

I wholly support the Resolution and the biodiverse goals set forth as many of us involved with the building of Francisco Park share those very same goals including:

- conserving our natural heritage as a top priority
- protecting existing biodiversity and extending its volume to the best of our ability
- partnering with multiple city agencies on aligned goals
- helping build an understanding and appreciation in the community for the priceless biodiversity that surrounds us in our neighborhoods and throughout the City.

Thank you,  
Jan Blum  
District 2 San Francisco, CA



Senior Research Fellow, Natural Capital,  
GEES, (School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Science),  
The University of Birmingham,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Helping make Birmingham a cleaner, greener, smarter City.**

For more information on the Birmingham Natural Capital Planning Tool see:-  
<http://www.rics.org/uk/knowledge/research/research-reports/natural-capital-tool-planning/>

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**From:** [Dee Seligman](#)  
**To:** [Raphael, Deborah \(ENV\)](#); [Valdez, Anthony \(ENV\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: tonight's biodiversity resolution  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2017 10:48:05 AM  
**Attachments:** [Biodiversity\\_Art Shapiro\\_summary.docx](#)  
[species diversity\\_eucs and oak woodlands.pptx](#)  
[Biodiversity\\_Art Shapiro.docx](#)

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Dear Director Raphael and Commissioners,

I write this with limited hope that you will read and digest three attachments about biodiversity, but with my unfailing optimism that even one among you might read them before you vote on the biodiversity resolution. As Commissioners, you are not expected to be scientists; yet before you is a resolution that assumes scientific understanding without which you can't meaningfully make decisions.

1. In short, **this resolution lacks a nuanced scientific definition of biodiversity**. It assumes biodiversity means counting the number of species and sub-species. How can you vote on something if you don't even understand what the basic concept means? Attached is a summary of an email I received from Dr. Arthur Shapiro, UC Davis, Distinguished Professor of Evolution and Ecology who says: "biodiversity is a goddamned buzzword" and explains why. I've also included my summary of his lengthy email.
2. The resolution assumes that species diversity depends upon having native plant habitats [*"the City's open spaces, natural areas, and native habitats support hundreds of species of indigenous plants and birds, untold diversity of insects, as well as native mammals, reptiles and amphibians...."*] **That assumption is inaccurate!** Even so-called monocultures, like a eucalyptus forest, has extraordinary diversity. Dr. Joe McBride's 1990 study in Tilden Park, comparing species diversity in eucalyptus forests with oak woodlands shows that eucalyptus forests have **MORE** diversity than oak woodlands, but less than riparian woodlands.

Please require the resolution includes a more nuanced scientific definition and an acknowledgement that diversity exists in both native [which is not the same as "natural"] and in introduced areas. Otherwise, you are flying in the face of science.

Sincerely,

Dee Seligman

Art Shapiro: “**Biodiversity is a goddam buzzword that means whatever you want it to mean.**”

2 things ecologists are interested in:

1. The raw NUMBER OF SPECIES in a defined area or system (what many of us call "species richness") is a useful number.
2. HOW INDIVIDUALS ARE DIVIDED AMONG SPECIES, that is, the distribution of commonness and rarity among species.
3. The Shannon Formula (abbreviated H or H') is for a MEASURE OF "SPECIES DIVERSITY." It incorporated the number of species (richness) and the numbers of individuals of each species into one number, called *equitability*.
4. Using genetics, now “biodiversity” encompasses *geographically-based differences in population genetics*. It is used to protect subspecies.
  - a. ***Gamma diversity* is diversity at a large spatial scale.**
  - b. ***Beta diversity* is a measure of how much the biota of different localities within a region differ among themselves, i.e. how quickly species composition "turns over" in space. This is actually a VERY useful approach. The Bay Area has phenomenally high beta diversity in almost everything.**

# **The History, Ecology and Future of Eucalyptus Plantations in the Bay Area (Note: excerpted slides on biodiversity from his presentation )**

Joe R. McBride

Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning

and

Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management

University of California

Berkeley, CA

# Comparison of Species composition of Eucalyptus with Oak Woodland

(Tilden Park – 1990)

## Eucalyptus Plantation

Number of Families = 21

Number of Genera = 34

Number of Species = 38

Native to California = 24

Introduced to California = 14

## Oak Woodland

Number of Families = 16

Number of Genera = 19

Number of Species = 19

Native to California = 14

Introduced to California = 5

# Plant Species Richness in Eucalyptus Plantations and Oak Woodlands

<u>Location</u>	<u>Habitat</u>	<u>Vegetation Type</u>	<u>Number of Species</u>
Tilden Park <sup>1</sup>	Upland	Eucalyptus	21
		Oak Woodland	12
Tilden Park <sup>2</sup>	Upland	Eucalyptus	38
		Oak Woodland	21
Murray Park <sup>3</sup>	Riparian	Eucalyptus	34
		Riparian Woodland	58

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1 = Jewell Lake (Contra Costa County); 2 = Golf Course Road (Contra Costa County); 3 = San Mateo County, near Half Moon Bay

Arthur Shapiro to me March 25 2014 email on Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a goddam buzzword that means whatever you want it to mean--I hate it. The following is from our introductory biology textbook, "Life: The Science of Biology," 10th edition, Sadava et al., p. 1229 (yes, I said 1229; it weighs as much as an unabridged dictionary):

"The term BIODIVERSITY, a contraction of 'biological diversity,' has multiple definitions. We may speak of biodiversity as the degree of genetic variation within a species....Biodiversity can also be defined in terms of species richness in a particular community. At a larger scale, biodiversity also embraces ecosystem diversity--particularly the complex interactions within and between ecosystems....One conspicuous manifestation of biodiversity loss is species extinction..."

The glossary in the back of the book defines "biodiversity hot spot" (itself ambiguous, embracing both numbers of species and amount of endemism), but NOT "biodiversity" itself. I can see why. See why I hate the word? I really use it only to mock it--even in introductory classes.

Here is a very brief background tutorial. Feel free to pass it on to anyone interested in such stuff. *The raw NUMBER OF SPECIES in a defined area or system* (what many of us call "species richness") is a useful number. But ecologists are also interested in *HOW INDIVIDUALS ARE DIVIDED AMONG SPECIES, that is, the distribution of commonness and rarity among species.*

It was discovered about a century ago (initially by a Danish plant ecologist named Christen Raunkiaer, one of my few intellectual heroes) that there was a statistical regularity to this; this led to a series of mathematical treatments of large data sets, such as from collections of moths attracted to light traps, or field counts of plants in plots studied by vegetation ecologists, trying to understand why there should be such regularities. The models focused on whether the statistical distributions implied interspecific interaction (competition, "niche or resource pre-emption"). They thus had the potential to shed light on whether or not communities were "real," as I discussed yesterday. My old mentor MacArthur was one of the participants in these exercises. In the 60s ecologists discovered something called the Shannon-Weaver or Shannon-Wiener formula (both Weaver and Wiener had a hand in it; Shannon was Claude Shannon, an applied mathematician at Bell Labs, who developed it as a concise way of quantifying the information content of a message--this was military communications work, made public in 1949 with the publication of Shannon's book creating the new field of Information Theory). I think Robert MacA's brother, who was a physicist, told him about it.

Anyway, that formula, abbreviated H or H', was quickly adopted as a *MEASURE OF "SPECIES DIVERSITY."* It incorporated the number of species (richness) and the numbers of individuals of each species into one number. The latter component was called "equitability." It was used to characterize and compare communities, faunas, floras and whole biota, particularly in the context of the nearly-ubiquitous "latitudinal gradient in species diversity," which basically means that for most but not all kinds of organisms, there are a lot more species, genera or whatever in the tropics than outside the tropics.

Are you still with me?

The Shannon formula opened the door to "everything" diversity. Maybe we should call it "diversity abuse." My old friend Bob Ricklefs, a former MacA. student, for example invented "*aspect diversity.*" He tried to classify the wing patterns of moths into a limited number of themes and then studied their relative abundance in different moth faunas--finding, unsurprisingly, that there were more themes in the tropics!

I'm not sure when the *within-species genetic angle* crept in. It may be linked with the passage of the Endangered Species Act, which protects subspecies as well as species, along with an undefined something called a "distinct population segment," which was invented by Congress in its infinite wisdom and handed to the Fish and Wildlife Service to figure out. (Congress did that to provide a handle to protect WITHIN THE U.S. species that are rare here, but not outside the U.S. No biological difference, just a line on the map. Got that?

Oy and vey.

Subspecies are whatever a taxonomist says they are; there is no biological concept of the subspecies. Once they were protectable, though, there was a scramble to find SOME objective criterion for protection. Molecular genetics was still in its infancy in the 70s, but was quickly seized on for this purpose. Now, with cheap, easy DNA sequencing, it has really come into its own. So now "biodiversity" encompasses *geographically-based differences in population genetics*. But, alas, as such studies proliferated, we quickly learned that--contrary to the conventional wisdom--most taxonomic subspecies are NOT incipient species, and in fact you have the full spectrum from things that look totally different but are genomically very similar, to things that look identical but are wildly different.

R.H.Whittaker invented *alpha, beta and gamma species diversity*. Alpha diversity is diversity at the local level. Gamma diversity is diversity at a large spatial scale. Beta diversity is a measure of how much the biota of different localities within a region differ among themselves, i.e. how quickly species composition "turns over" in space. This is actually a VERY useful approach. The Bay Area has phenomenally high beta diversity in almost everything. The more you know, the less clear it all gets. Right?

The attached article may or may not be edifying. I also attach the lecture notes for four relevant lectures when I teach our core Ecology course, 101. I realize this may be wretched excess, but I have this thing about not giving people half-assed explanations when the whole ass is available! Best.

PS You are welcome to quote me that biodiversity is a goddam buzzword!

PROPOSITION E:

San Francisco's  
Tree Maintenance  
Initiative  
Explained



street.sf



[sfpublicworks.org/trees](http://sfpublicworks.org/trees)



## What is Proposition E?

Prop. E was a measure on the November 8, 2016 San Francisco ballot regarding responsibility for maintaining street trees and surrounding sidewalks. Voters were asked if the City should amend the City Charter to transfer responsibility from property owners to the City for maintaining trees on sidewalks adjacent to their property, as well for repairing sidewalks damaged by the trees. The City would pay for this by setting aside \$19 million per year from its General Fund, adjusted annually based on City revenues. Prop E passed with almost 80% of the voters' support.

## Now that Prop. E has passed, when will my tree be pruned?

The City officially takes responsibility of street trees beginning July 1, 2017. We will start with the worst first! The City is currently assessing the data from a recently completed street tree census. The pruning of street trees will be prioritized based on safety considerations, to correct structural flaws and to gain necessary clearances for overhead wires, traffic signs and signals, adjacent buildings and traffic flow. This is expected to take several years. Routine pruning of street trees is anticipated to begin in 2020.

## Where does the funding come from?

Prop. E establishes a \$19 million annual set-aside in the City's General Fund.

## Under Prop. E, will my taxes go up?

No. There are no new taxes as a direct result of Prop. E.

## If I want to continue to prune my tree, can I opt out?

Yes. As long as you're caring for your tree according to City standards, you can opt out.

## How often will my tree be pruned?

Trees will be pruned on a three- to five-year pruning cycle, based on the species and needs of each individual tree. A pruning schedule will be posted at [sfpublicworks.org/trees](http://sfpublicworks.org/trees) in July 2018.

## Will I still be responsible for my sidewalk?

Yes and no. Property owners still will be responsible for sidewalk damage that is not caused by trees, but the City will be responsible for any tree-related sidewalk damage.

## Is the City going to do all the work with City staff?

No. It is anticipated that about half the work will be performed by certified arborist and cement-work contractors.

## Does Prop. E. pay for tree planting, too?

No. Funding established by Prop. E only covers tree and sidewalk maintenance. However, Public Works will continue to work with outside partners, including Friends of the Urban Forest, to ensure that replacement trees are planted and the City can grow the street tree population by 50 percent.

## How will we know how the funding is being spent?

Prop. E requires that Public Works provides an annual report on how the funding is spent and what work is completed.

## Do I still need a permit to plant a tree?

Yes. You will still need a permit to plant a tree in the public right of way.

## Do I need a permit to remove a tree?

If the tree is in poor health or structurally unsound, the City will remove the tree after following the public notification process. If you wish to remove a tree for another reason, you can apply for a permit to remove the tree and go through the City's tree-removal permitting process.

## What if I see someone damaging a tree?

You can call 311 or if you feel the tree is being severely damaged call police non-emergency at (415) 553-0123.

## Where can I get more information?

For more information about street trees in general, contact San Francisco Public Works Bureau of Urban Forestry at (415) 554-6700 or [sfpublicworks.org/trees](http://sfpublicworks.org/trees)



Want to learn more about the trees near your residence or business? Check out the new Urban Forest Map for information about a specific tree's type, size, condition and measurable benefits to the environment.

[urbanforestmap.org](http://urbanforestmap.org)

# 9 Planetary boundaries

