For The Future Coalition

Public Safety, Public Health, Urban Nature & Healthy Play

May 5, 2026

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RE: Letter in support of Urban Forestry Council Resolution NO. 002-26-UFC

Dear Urban Forestry Council,

Thank you for the wonderful work the San Francisco Urban Forestry Council leads to conserve, care for and steward the urban forest in San Francisco. We are also grateful for the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's heroic management of more than 230 parks, playgrounds, and open spaces.

We are writing in support of Resolution NO. 002-26-UFC and protecting the historic resources at Crocker Amazon in McLaren Park. In particular, we support the following:

1. Protection and expert care of the mature heritage trees in Crocker Amazon that are healthy California native plants and forming valuable urban tree canopy

2. Renovation of the baseball and softball fields with modern natural grass infrastructure to improve play while safeguarding public health

Improved Public Health

McLaren Park is an important equity zone in the city. The evergreen mature heritage trees at Crocker Amazon including Monterey Cypress are improving public health in the southern part of San Francisco known for higher temperatures and higher air pollution.

The heritage trees at Crocker Amazon purify the air, provide oxygen to breathe, lower surface temperatures, give people shade and sun protection, deliver important windbreaks, absorb stormwater, stop erosion, prevent flooding and landslides, lower violence, calm traffic, mitigate noise pollution, and improve people's physical and mental health in an equity zone.

Urban Heat Island Mitigation

Extreme heat has arrived in San Francisco. For example, during the 2017 Labor Day weekend, San Francisco experienced multiple days of triple digits. Air temperatures hit 106, the highest ever recorded in San Francisco. According to the San Francisco Chronicle and a City report, "Calls to 911 increased by 51%, while hospitalizations were up 15%." S.F.'s Chief Resilience Officer Brian Strong stated, "That really put a lot of stress on our infrastructure, on our communities and on our systems … it was something we had never seen before."

In March 2026, extreme heat struck again. A heat dome hovered over the Bay Area for almost a month. This led to the hottest March ever recorded at the National Weather Service's site in San Francisco in 150 years.

Extreme heat kills, and mature urban forests cool temperatures and save lives. Protecting the heritage tree canopy at Crocker Amazon will reduce the urban heat island effect and improve public health.

Higher Air Quality

Crocker Amazon in McLaren Park is located in an Air Pollutant Exposure Zone. This is an area with elevated pollutant concentrations due to its proximity to air pollution emissions sources including freeways. This burden of particulate pollution elevates cancer risks. The neighborhoods surrounding McLaren Park are low-canopy, underserved census tracts with poor tree equity compared to the northern parts of San Francisco.

Many of the people who utilize Crocker Amazon on a regular basis are Sensitive Receptors. These are people that are particularly susceptible to illness from environmental pollution, such as the elderly, children, people with asthma, and persons engaged in strenuous exercise.

According to the National Park Service, trees improve air quality by "directly removing pollutants from the air. Urban forests can remove multiple tons of ozone, gaseous air pollution, and particulate matter each year either through direct uptake of gasses or temporarily intercepting airborne particles."

Removing the mature tree canopy at Crocker Amazon would significantly harm air quality and public health in an Air Pollutant Exposure Zone with Sensitive Receptors. Retaining and caring for the healthy mature trees at Crocker Amazon would mitigate air pollution and help to create clean air to breathe in southern San Francisco.

The U.S. Forest Service published a landmark paper in 2018 on the value of heritage trees entitled "Tree compensation rates: Compensating for the loss of future tree values" by David Nowak. This report states that "Large healthy trees provide abundant leaf area that remove air pollution, sequester carbon, intercept water, shade surfaces, cool the air, absorb ultraviolet radiation, provide food for wildlife, provide aesthetics and deliver multiple other benefits."

The large-scale removal of the historic 100-year-old urban tree canopy at Crocker Amazon would create significant negative impacts that would be impossible to reverse and compensate for in a reasonable time period. It would also substantially harm vulnerable people and nature.

Preserving the urban forest at Crocker Amazon would protect all of the human health benefits this green infrastructure is providing to an environmental justice community and all San Franciscans.

Historic Resource

The urban forest and natural grass fields at Crocker Amazon constitute a significant historic resource in San Francisco worthy of preservation.

McLaren Park is historically significant due to its association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s and the New Deal era. The WPA laid out the fields and planted the trees in McLaren Park to help fulfill John McLaren's dream of a large park in the southern part of San Francisco.

The creation of McLaren Park is tied to John McLaren, a person of historical significance in San Francisco. Noted San Francisco journalist J. Lawrence Toole described John McLaren in the following way in 1943 regarding McLaren Park:

"For years and years and years," he'd tell you, "I'd hoped to see a fine big park in the Mission. Not a landscaped and garden park like this [Golden Gate Park], but a park with noble trees to cut off the wind, and wide lawns and fields and commons with swimming pools and playfields, where all the folk of the Mission and their children could play close to their own homes."

The heritage urban forest at Crocker Amazon retains sufficient aspects of integrity to convey its historic significance. Many of these heritage trees are still standing and delivering the windbreaks that John McLaren knew the park needed to be a positive experience for residents.

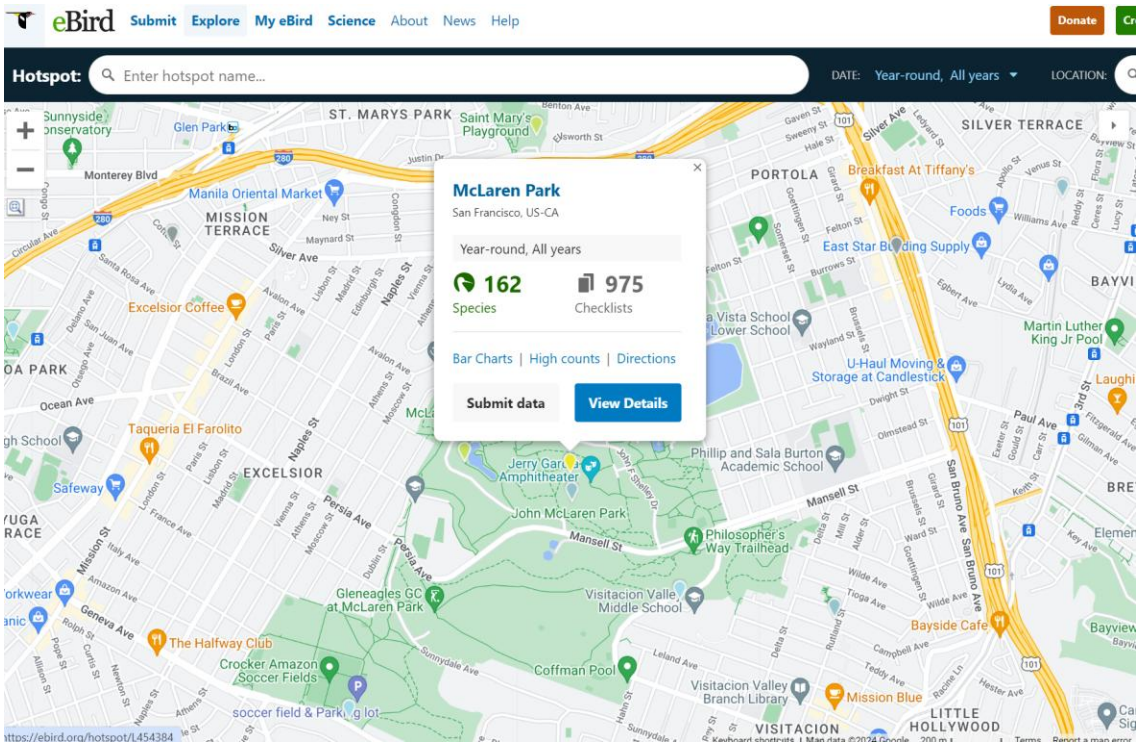
Habitat for Nature

Monterey Cypress trees and Monterey Cypress Woodlands provide a significant home for nature in San Francisco including Great Horned Owls, Red-shouldered Hawks, Great Blue Herons, monarch butterflies, Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, Western red bats (a Species of Special Concern) and more. The Monterey Cypress and other mature trees are the nesting habitat for many Bird Species of Local Concern.

These rare, threatened California native trees are biodiversity themselves, and they provide habitat for biodiversity and urban nature. The arboreal assets in Crocker Amazon also help to form a green corridor for resident and migratory birds, mammals, and wildlife in San Francisco.

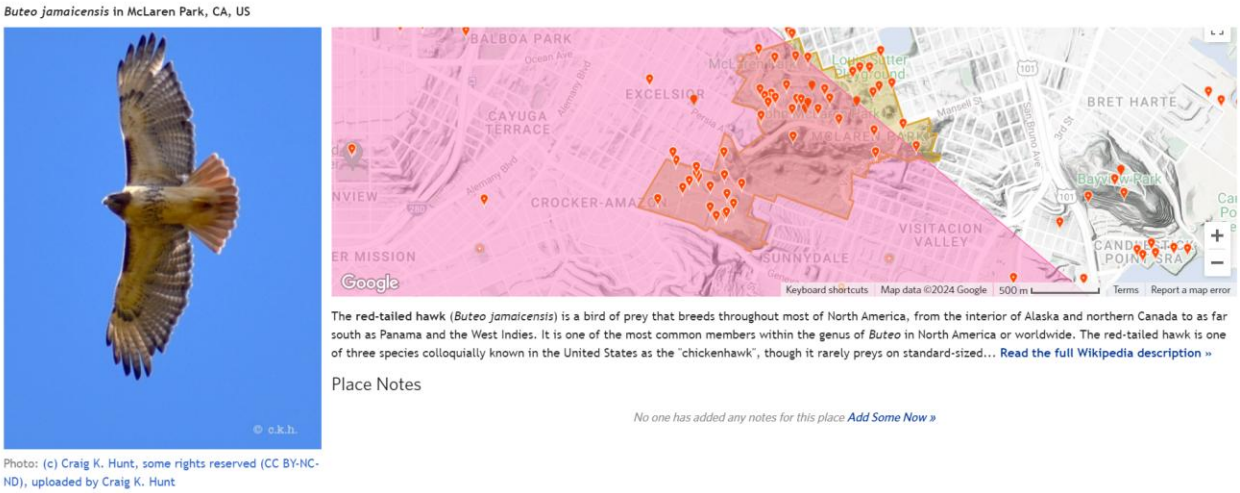
Over 160 species of birds reside in and visit McLaren Park according to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird.

162 Types of Birds Found in McLaren Park

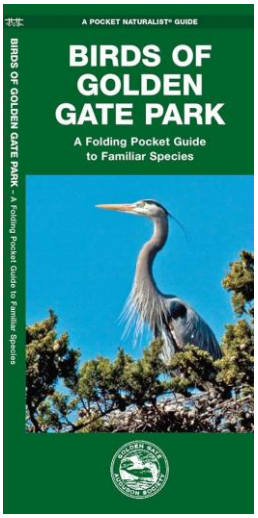


Many tree-nesting birds rely on the urban forest at Crocker Amazon for habitat. Below is an example from eBird for the Red-tailed Hawk in McLaren Park.

Red-Tailed Hawks



The Golden Gate Bird Alliance recognizes the importance of Monterey Cypress trees for bird habitat as seen on the cover of their pocket guide to birds in Golden Gate Park.



Great Blue Heron Nest in Monterey Cypress Tree in San Francisco

Preserving the healthy mature tree canopy at Crocker Amazon would protect important wildlife habitat and green corridors in San Francisco.

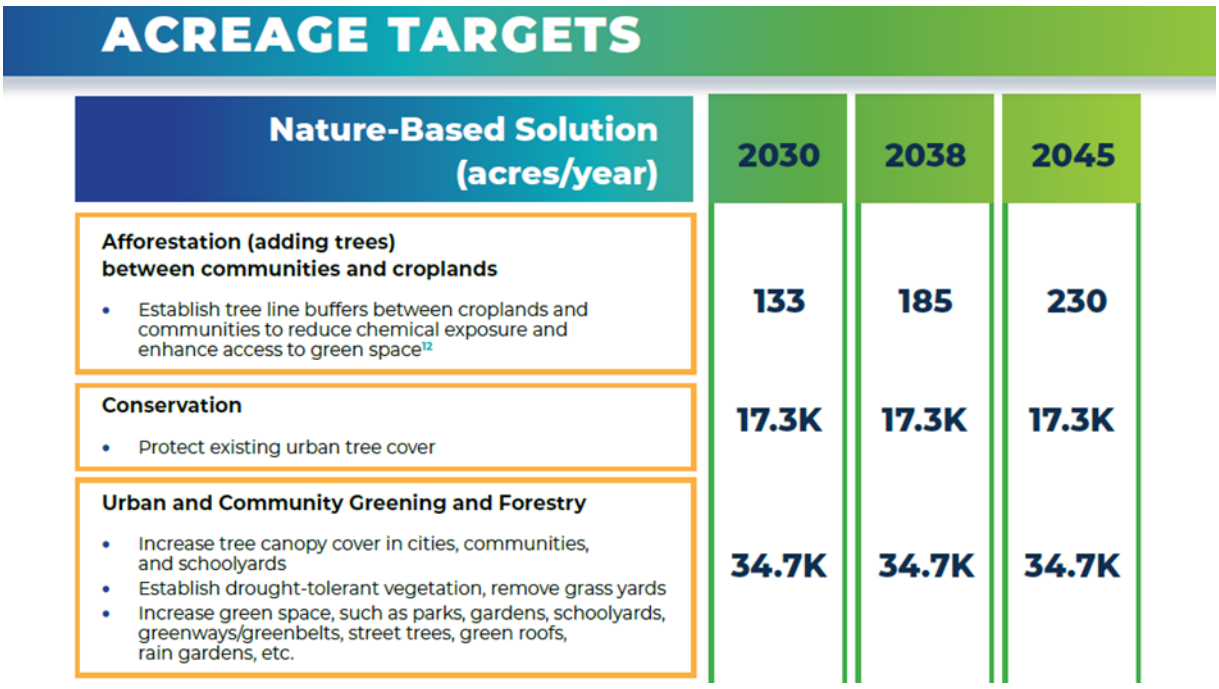
Fulfills California Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets

The Natural Resources Agency in California led by Secretary Wade Crowfoot released state targets in 2024 for nature-based solutions that help to achieve California's climate goals. This was required by Assembly Bill 1757.

These California Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets include numbers for:

1. Conservation: Protect existing urban tree cover in cities
2. Conservation of conifer forests
3. Increase tree canopy cover
4. Increase large canopied, drought-tolerant trees meaningful to the community

California Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets



Protecting at least the 101 Monterey Cypress rare trees, 10 Coast Live Oaks, 5 Coast Redwoods, and 4 Torrey Pine rare trees at Crocker Amazon that are in Moderate to Excellent condition would help California meet its nature-based solutions climate targets in the category of Conservation: Protect existing urban tree cover. It would also help San Francisco meet its Climate Action Plan through avoided carbon emissions and ongoing carbon removal.

Protecting the best specimens of the Monterey Pine rare heritage trees at Crocker Amazon would also help to achieve these state and city-wide climate goals. In addition, half of the Toyons and half of the Crabapple trees appear to be in a condition worthy of preservation.

It is recommended to protect at least these trees described above while simultaneously monitoring and properly pruning trees where needed to enhance the longevity of these historic natural resources and advance public safety.

Climate Champions

Trees are the original carbon removal technology. Large trees both store the most total carbon and remove the most carbon per year. By keeping the healthy heritage trees in Crocker Amazon standing, San Francisco and California would receive a double climate benefit: 1) avoided carbon emissions and 2) ongoing carbon removal of residual emissions. Cutting these trees down would deliver a double climate negative: 1) carbon emissions from the tree felling and 2) the loss of future carbon sequestration.

The longer a tree lives, the more carbon it removes and stores per year. It is an exponential growth curve. Height might level off, but biomass and carbon continue to grow exponentially. This was shown by the US Geological Survey study of over 673,000 trees representing 403 tree species in forests around the world. The trees that add the most carbon per year are the biggest ones across the board.

Trees provide both Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, the latter through urban cooling and more. Tree planting is helpful for fighting climate change. Equally important for safe weather in the future is conserving and protecting the healthy mature tree canopy that a city already has.

According to a 2023 report by the Forests in Cities Network, "All trees provide benefits, but forested natural areas provide some benefits at higher rates per area than landscaped greenspaces, which is particularly important for marginalized communities which are expected to bear the brunt of climate change impacts. For example, forests do a better job at cooling and cleaning the air — including offsetting carbon emissions — and the bigger the forest, the greater the effect."

The 689,000 trees in San Francisco are storing over 5 million mtCO2e of carbon dioxide including their roots per the California Air Resources Board U.S. Forest Projects Protocol. While this is an unlikely event, cutting down all of these trees would release 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and compromise San Francisco's climate leadership and future carbon sequestration. Protecting and caring for the heritage trees in Crocker Amazon would help San Francisco be a leader in the area of nature-based climate solutions at the state and global level.

Rare, Threatened California Native Plants

67% of the trees assessed at Crocker Amazon are California native plants. **61%** of the trees assessed at Crocker Amazon are rare, threatened California native plants.

Crocker Amazon contains many rare, threatened California endemic trees that are providing significant urban canopy cover in San Francisco: 164 Monterey Cypress, 21 Monterey Pines, and 4 Torrey Pines for a total of 189 trees.

The Monterey Cypress trees are Critically Imperiled and are under increasing extinction pressure in Pebble Beach and nearby towns as developments by hedge fund billionaires from New York continue to decimate these iconic rare trees. A new loophole was created recently by the land use lawyers of billionaires who are building trophy mansions in the historic Monterey Cypress forest in Pebble Beach. The new law enables the billionaires to cut down trees as long as they "enhance the habitat."

Unfortunately, this loophole is translating into pulling a few weeds while cutting down healthy old-growth Monterey Cypress trees. Significant collateral damage is also occurring as heritage trees are harmed during demolition and construction. Holes are emerging in the forest, and this rare species is now severely threatened. The situation in Pebble Beach shows how the protection of individual trees can be a vital part of the conservation and survival of a rare species.

Tree Extinction Crisis

The world is facing a tree extinction crisis. More than 1 in 3 tree species are at risk of extinction according to the IUCN Red List. The preservation of heritage tree canopy in Crocker Amazon can help as a solution to this global tree extinction crisis.

Long Tree Lifespan

In terms of lifespan, the Monterey Cypress can live 200 - 400 years per the Point Lobos Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service. The Monterey Pine has a lifespan of 100 – 150 years.

It is odd that the 2021 and 2026 Hortscience Arborist Reports say that Monterey Cypress trees with larger diameters at breast height are "over-mature." The 2021 report said that any tree with a diameter of 36 or more inches was "over-mature." This is misinformed.

The heritage Monterey Cypress trees in McLaren Park were planted in the 1930s. They are approximately 100 years old. They can live for another 100 years at least. If a Monterey Cypress tree were 350-400 years old, then it might be over-mature. However, the Monterey Cypress trees at Crocker Amazon are 100 years old, mostly healthy with dark green canopy, and in their prime

of life. The tree canopy is providing significant benefits to people and nature. With proper care and pruning, these arboreal assets can able to continue to add value to San Francisco.

Significant Trees

90% of the Monterey Cypress trees in Crocker Amazon are Significant trees in that they have a diameter at breast height of 12 – 93 inches. 86% of the Monterey Pine are Significant trees as they have a diameter at breast height of 12 – 63 inches.

The average diameter of the Monterey Cypress trees is 33 inches. The average diameter of the Monterey Pine trees is 34 inches. The average diameter of the Coast Redwood trees is 38 inches.

The trees at Crocker Amazon form a mostly healthy, mature historic urban forest in San Francisco that can endure and continue to deliver benefits if protected and cared for.

Wildfire Resilience

The Monterey Cypress is a fire-resistant tree with a high moisture content that increases the wildfire resilience of San Francisco. The Coast Redwood and Coast Live Oak are also exceptional fire-resistant trees that contain a tannin in their bark which is a natural flame retardant.

The trees with the largest trunks and highest canopies are the most fire-resistant of all. A thick layer of bark in large-diameter trees like those in Crocker Amazon protects the trees and the surrounding community from high heat in the case of fire.

Positive Traits of Monterey Cypress Trees

The Monterey Cypress tree has positive traits that make it appropriate and suitable for the climate of San Francisco.

- Fire-resistant tree
- Evergreen
- Wind-resistant tree
- Can tolerate a lean well
- Powerful windbreak
- Drought-tolerant tree
- Grows in sandy soil
- Needs fire to regenerate in a significant way
- Slow-growing conifer
- Cannot grow from a stump
- Provides critical wildlife habitat

According to the Yerba Buena Island Habitat Management Plan on page 52, “Monterey cypress trees on the Island are mostly large trees and are not included in the eucalyptus reduction strategy because of their different life history characteristics and limited potential to spread naturally.”

Proper Pruning Reduces Risk by up to 50%

Proper pruning of mature trees is highly effective at reducing risk and increasing public safety.

Per the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), best practice pruning techniques like end-weight reduction can reduce risk and branch failure by 25% to 50%. Young trees can tolerate more aggressive pruning than mature trees. Best Practice pruning standards by ISA recommend that no more than 25% of the crown should be removed, and less for mature trees.

End-weight reduction is a skilled pruning technique that reduces weight on horizontal tree branches while maintaining the overall shape of the tree. Per the Morton Arboretum, branch failure is a common concern of urban forest managers. End-weight reduction is a key risk-mitigation treatment that reduces risk and elevates public safety.

An investigation of the trees at Crocker Amazon via the two Hortscience arborist reports and via ground-truthing has yielded the observation that many mature trees at Crocker Amazon are healthy with dark green canopy and could benefit from proper pruning.

The 2026 Hortscience arborist report contains 50 references to “history of previous branch failures” and uses this as a reason to lower tree ratings. In many cases, these trees needed to be pruned properly via end-weight reduction and other skills tailored to mature trees. This would have helped to prevent these branch failures. The Monterey Cypress is a tree that especially benefits from end-weight reduction. This helps to alleviate the force of gravity on its branches and reduces risk. San Francisco has an opportunity to steward its mature historic tree canopy into the future via skilled tree pruning and care.

The 2026 Hortscience arborist report lists 9 instances of dead branches and uses this trait to lower tree ratings. Sporadic dead branches can be common in mature trees including the Coast Redwood. This can indicate that the tree needs proper pruning to remove the dead branches. This is a common practice of arborists who care for heritage trees.

The 2026 Hortscience arborist report describes 10 Monterey Cypress trees with codominant trunks and uses this to lower tree ratings. Codominant trunks occur in healthy urban forests. Putting a cable between the trunks is a common fix for an otherwise healthy tree with codominant trunks. Employing cables and braces in select cases would enable San Francisco to preserve its historic urban forest and value for people and nature.

We note that the improper pruning of trees can damage heritage trees and harm public safety. Excess crown reduction and delimbing can destabilize mature trees and increase risks. It is recommended to utilize arborists and tree contractors where possible who are experienced with mature tree care and preservation.

An arborist report related to a construction project usually suggests Risk Mitigation Treatments for trees to be preserved that could benefit from proper pruning, a cable or otherwise. This is important to reduce risk and safeguard public safety. Suggested treatments are missing at the present time. The arborist report states on page 14 that "the Consulting Arborist will provide pruning specifications prior to site demolition." This would be an important step if renovation of any type proceeds at Crocker Amazon. It would ensure that best practices for the pruning of mature trees are followed, and it would help to sustain the quality of the natural resources.

In summary, the proper pruning of the healthy historic trees at Crocker Amazon would strengthen the quality of the existing parks and facilities in southern San Francisco.

Healthy Trees

Per the 2026 Hortscience arborist report, at least 62% of the Monterey Cypress at the Crocker Amazon Park Athletic Fields are in Moderate – Excellent condition. This number could be higher as described below. Overall, these conifer trees are a healthy urban forest in San Francisco.

Per the International Society of Arboriculture, Fair is the most common rating in any healthy forest. It means that a tree has moderate vigor and should be retained, monitored and properly pruned if needed. We note that Hortscience always uses a rating system for San Francisco that is biased against the trees by double stacking the Poor category.

The 2026 arborist report rates 19 trees in Crocker Amazon as Excellent, but it fails to mention this in the written report. On page 2 the arborist writes, "Overall, 74 trees were in good condition, 115 were in fair condition, 119 were in poor condition." In reality, 19 trees were in Excellent condition and 55 were in Good condition.

The trees in Crocker Amazon were first assessed by Hortscience in October 2021. This was during the drought of 2020 – 2021. Per the lead forester of the Presidio, crown dieback is a tree survival strategy during a drought. Once the rain begins to fall, the crowns fill back in. The 2021 arborist stated that **91%** of the Monterey Cypress were in Moderate to Excellent condition. It is helpful that Hortscience sent out a new arborist to Crocker Amazon as many of the trees labeled poor in 2021 are healthier now with fuller crowns.

Therefore, it is surprising to see the 2026 arborist label a greater percent of trees as poor. Delving into the tree comments reveals what happened in many cases. The new arborist downgraded 22 Monterey Cypress trees for having a "previous history of branch failures." The arborist corroborates this on page 4 by writing, "Factors that contributed to a lower condition rating included a history of previous branch failure."

This grading system reflects a possible lack of knowledge about Monterey Cypress trees. Healthy Monterey Cypress trees can develop branches that benefit from proper pruning. If a mature tree is never pruned, select branches can become heavy. Per the International Society of Arboriculture, pruning via end-weight reduction, while keeping the overall shape of the tree, decreases the risk of branch failure. If the 22 Monterey Cypress trees are updated from poor to fair, then at least **75%** of the Monterey Cypress trees in Crocker Amazon are in Moderate – Excellent condition and are candidates for preservation.

100% of the Coast Live Oaks were rated in Moderate to Excellent condition and should be preserved. 100% of the Coast Redwoods and Torrey Pines were all rated Excellent and are strong candidates for preservation.

Need for Tree Protection Zones

The 2026 Hortscience arborist report on page 13 recommends the use of Tree Protection Zones to protect trees from construction impacts at Crocker Amazon. We support this recommendation.

During the recent McLaren Park Trails Improvement Project, the contractor Arborist Now failed to use Tree Protection Zones as recommended by the Hortscience arborist report for that project.

Construction projects are complex, and they can cause more damage to a landscape than originally planned. Materials have to be stored, demolition occurs, heavy equipment travels throughout the construction area and more. Collateral damage happens.

Tree Protection Zones safeguard a city's valuable natural resources from harm and destruction. They lessen potential negative impacts and provide helpful signals to contractors. Ultimately, Tree Protection Zones help to preserve valuable urban tree canopy for the future.

Trees are Relatively Low Risk

The 2026 arborist report states, "The City of San Francisco Recreation and Park Department may abate risk for trees ranked 9 or greater. No trees received a risk rating of 9 or higher."

> Risk rankings ranged from 3 to 8 (see **Attachments**). Under a normal management regime, trees with the highest ranking would be abated first, followed in order of decreasing ratings. The City of San Francisco Recreation and Park Department may abate risk for trees ranked 9 or greater. No trees received a risk rating of 9 or higher.

Source: Hortscience Arborist Report 2026, page 14

Here is the risk distribution for the trees assessed at Crocker Amazon in December 2025.

Risk	Trees	Percent
3	68	22%
4	46	15%
5	93	30%
6	86	28%
7	13	4%
8	3	1%
9	0	0%
10	0	0%
11	0	0%
12	0	0%
Total	309	100%

Below is the table of tree risk scores and their definitions. The lowest risk score is 3, and the highest risk score is 12.

Overall Risk Rating and Action Thresholds

The Overall Risk Rating and Action Thresholds

Risk Rating	*Risk Category*	*Interpretation and Implications*
3	Low 1	Insignificant - no concern at all.
4	Low 2	Insignificant - very minor issues.
5	Low 3	Insignificant - minor issues not of concern for many years yet.
6	Moderate 1	Some issues but nothing that is likely to cause any problems for another 10 years or more.
7	Moderate 2	Well defined issues - retain and monitor. Not expected to be a problem for at least another 5 - 10 years.
8	Moderate 3	Well defined issues - retain and monitor. Not expected to be a problem for at least another 1 - 5 years.
9	High 1	The assessed issues have now become very clear. The tree can still reasonably be retained as it is not likely to fall apart right away, but it must now be monitored annually. At this stage it may be reasonable for the risk manager/owner to hold public education sessions to inform people of the issues and prepare them for the reality that part or the entire tree has to be removed.
10	High 2	The assessed issues have now become very clear. The probability of failure is now getting serious, or the target rating and/or site context have changed such that mitigation measures should now be on a schedule with a clearly defined timeline for action. There may still be time to inform the public of the work being planned, but there is not enough time to protracted discussion about whether or not there are alternative options available.
11	High 3	The tree, or a part of it has reached a stage where it could fail at any time. **Action to mitigate the risk is required within weeks rather than months**. By this stage there is not time to hold public meetings to discuss the issue. Risk reduction is a clearly defined issue and although the owner may wish to inform the public of the planned work, he/she should get on with it to avoid clearly foreseeable liabilities.
12	Extreme	This tree, or a part of it, is in the process of failing. **Immediate action is required.** All other, less significant tree work should be suspended, and roads or work areas should be closed off, until the risk issues have been mitigated. This might be as simple as removing the critical part, drastically reducing overall tree height, or taking the tree down and cordoning off the area until final clean up, or complete removal can be accomplished. The immediate action required is to ensure that the clearly identified risk of harm is eliminated. For areas hit by severe storms, where many extreme risk trees can occur, drastic pruning and/or partial tree removals, followed by barriers to contain traffic, would be an acceptable first stage of risk reduction. There is no time to inform people or worry about public concerns. Clearly defined safety issues preclude further discussion.

67% of the trees received a low risk rating of 3 to 5 per the 2026 arborist report.

One can see that no trees assessed at Crocker Amazon received a risk rating of 9 or above.

If San Francisco were to follow the Hortscience arborist report purely based on risk and hazard levels, it would preserve all of the trees at Crocker Amazon. We state this with the caveat that the mature trees would ideally be pruned properly where needed. Crocker Amazon has areas of high use, and it is important to protect public safety.

Only 3 trees received a risk rating of 8. For these trees, one could retain, monitor and properly prune them as they are not expected to be a problem for at least another 1 – 5 years. It is recommended to re-evaluate Monterey Cypress Tree 567 with a DBH of 46 inches because it received a condition rating of Good and a High Suitability for Preservation score.

Only 4% or 13 trees received a risk rating of 7. For these trees, it is recommended to retain, monitor and properly prune them as they are not expected to be a problem for at least another 5 – 10 years.

28% of the trees received a risk rating of 6. For these trees, it is recommended to retain, monitor and properly prune them as they are not expected to be a problem for at least another 10 years or more. These trees are valuable natural resources for San Francisco.

For all of the trees with risk levels of 6 and above, best management practice pruning techniques can be applied where appropriate to improve structure and mitigate risk. This would lower the risk of branch failure by 25% to 50% and safeguard public safety at Crocker Amazon.

Important Windbreaks Enable Play

High winds of 15 mph to 20+ mph blow frequently in McLaren Park, as anyone who has spent time there knows. The wind is so strong that it can blow items out of one's hands. It can blow a ball in the wrong direction. Mature trees provide powerful windbreaks and protect the public from high wind forces.

John McLaren selected tall evergreen coastal trees like the Monterey Cypress to serve as windbreaks in McLaren Park and enable a high-quality recreational space for residents.

The Monterey Cypress is a hardy, wind-resistant, and fire-resistant tree with a lifespan of 200+ years. If the rare trees in Crocker Amazon are cut down, it will increase wind speeds and create a significant negative impact on players and games at the field. Retaining the rare mature trees at Crocker Amazon, and properly pruning them where needed, enables high-quality play and helps San Francisco meet its public recreation goals. It also protects the public from wind hazards.

Wind Resistance of Monterey Cypress Trees

As a wind-adapted coastal tree from the nearby Monterey Peninsula, the Monterey Cypress can tolerate high winds and a lean well. If a Monterey Cypress develops a lean in response to consistent winds, the tree can grow a canopy with a horizontal Bonsai-like shape to create structural strength and balance. This is often observed in trees right along the coast.

The 2026 Hortscience arborist report uses the words “slight lean,” “leans slightly” or “lean” to describe 15 of the 164 Monterey Cypress at Crocker Amazon. This represents 9% of the Monterey Cypress trees assessed. The presence of a lean was used to downgrade the rating of these trees. This is uninformed as the Monterey Cypress can tolerate a lean well.

It is important for public safety to remove truly hazardous trees with risks levels of 9+ that cannot be risk-mitigated and to properly prune trees in a frequently-used place. It is helpful to retain and care for healthy mature urban tree canopy to protect its benefits for people and nature.

Preserving Urban Forest Stability

The Recreation & Park Department has stated that when they remove a mature tree in an urban forest, the other trees around it seem to become more likely to fail. This is a situation known as windthrow.

Trees grow up in an urban forest in response to the sun, wind, and other trees they are exposed to. Over-thinning healthy trees in a mature forest can leave the remaining trees vulnerable to new wind forces they have never experienced. This can lead to a higher probability of failure and associated risks to public safety.

In an open space with high wind forces like McLaren Park, over-thinning a mature urban forest can increase potential windthrow hazards and result in significant negative wind impacts. Per the lead forester of the Presidio, the best time to thin a forest is when it is young if possible. Thinning a young forest is encouraged to set it up for success in the future.

Protecting and properly pruning the rare heritage trees in Crocker Amazon would help to preserve the stability of this urban forest, safeguard the public from windthrow, and improve public safety and public health.

Missing Trees

An estimated 28 trees are missing in the 2026 Hortscience arborist report that were described in the 2021 arborist report. The missing trees include rare Monterey Cypress and Monterey Pine trees that had large diameters and were in a condition worthy of retaining. Three Coast Redwood trees are also absent. A select number of these missing trees are shown below.

No.	Species	DBH in 2021 (inches)
428	Monterey Cypress	19
425	Monterey Cypress	33
438	Monterey Cypress	34
480	Monterey Cypress	45
431	Monterey Cypress	46
562	Monterey Pine	29
424	Monterey Pine	30
477	Monterey Pine	30
475	Monterey Pine	31
422	Monterey Pine	32
423	Monterey Pine	38
564	Monterey Pine	65
412	Coast redwood	11
413	Coast redwood	12
465	Coast redwood	16

Data Anomalies in Arborist Report

There are a few data anomalies and inconsistencies in the 2026 Hortscience arborist report. It appears that some tree numbers may have gotten switched and more as explained below. Where these anomalies created large discrepancies, these select trees were omitted in certain calculations to deliver data integrity.

Switched Trees

Trees 486 and 487 are potentially switched in the two Hortscience arborist reports.

2021 Arborist Report:

Tree 486	Blue Gum	DBH 69
Tree 487	Monterey Cypress	DBH 51

2026 Arborist Report:

Tree 486	Monterey Cypress	DBH 50
Tree 487	Blue Gum	DBH 70

Trees 483 and 484 are also inconsistent across the two arborist reports. The trunk size of Tree 483 is shown as having decreased from 34 to 17 inches, which is improbable as it was not a multi-stemmed tree. The DBH of Tree 484 is shown as having decreased from 50 to 34 inches, which again is improbable. For the purposes of the Change in Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) calculation, these trees were omitted.

Tree	Species	Change in Diameter 2021 to 2026
483	Monterey Cypress	34 to 17
484	Monterey Cypress	50 to 34

Tree 489 is misrepresented in one of the two arborist reports. It is listed as a Monterey Pine with a DBH of 25 inches in the 2021 report. It is listed as a Monterey Cypress with a DBH of 51 in the 2026 report.

For the purposes of the Change in DBH calculation, the analysis omits Monterey Cypress Trees 430 and 481 because they were represented as having DBH increases of 13 and 17 inches respectively over the 5 years, which seems improbable.

Preventing Significant Negative Impacts

We support resolution NO. 002-26-UFC because it would prevent numerous significant negative effects on humans and the environment

The large-scale removal of mature healthy heritage trees and replacing the natural grass fields with synthetic plastic turf at Crocker Amazon would create new significant negative environmental impacts in the areas of:

- Historic & Cultural Resources
- Wind
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Hydrology | Water Quality
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Geology, Soils and Landslides
- Aesthetics | Scenic Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Environmental Justice & Equity
- Mandatory Findings of Significance including Cumulative Impacts

The new significant negative impacts on people and the environment would be difficult to mitigate adequately in part due to the age, historical relevance, public health benefits, and expected future lifespan of the heritage mature tree canopy at Crocker Amazon.

Gratitude for Gifts & Support for Alternatives

The SF Giants and the Say Hey Foundation are to be commended for their generous gifts to the City of San Francisco for parks and recreation. The SF Giants are also known leaders in sustainability.

At Oracle Park, the Giants have one of the best natural grass fields in the entire league. Their expertise in installing and maintaining natural grass fields in a world-class way could help to create a high-quality renovated natural grass field at Crocker Amazon and deliver tremendous value to the community.

We support the creation of revised Crocker Amazon improvement plans that would:

1. Preserve as much of the healthy mature historic tree canopy as possible via preservation, proper pruning, and tree protection zones if construction occurs

2. Leverage the Giants' world-class expertise in natural grass fields to renovate the baseball and softball fields using modern natural grass infrastructure techniques

This would improve the play and recreational assets at Crocker Amazon, protect residents from hazardous chemicals, and preserve this historically-significant cultural landscape of civic, aesthetic and ecological value. There is an opportunity to be champions for people and nature.

Alignment with Strategic Plan Objectives

Protecting at least the Monterey Cypress, Torrey Pine, Coast Redwood, Coast Live Oak, and healthiest Monterey Pine trees at Crocker Amazon and properly pruning them where needed would help San Francisco achieve many of the goals in the Recreation & Park Department's Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan

Strategy 1:

Inspire Public Space: Keep today's parks safe, clean and fun; promote our parks' historic and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow.

Objective 1.2 Strengthen the quality of existing Parks & Facilities

Objective 1.4 Preserve and celebrate historic and cultural resources

Strategy 2:

Inspire Play: Promote active living, well-being, and community for San Francisco's diverse and growing population

Objective 2.2 Strengthen and promote the safety, health, and well-being of San Francisco's youth and seniors

Strategy 4:

Inspire Stewardship: Protect and enhance San Francisco's precious natural resources through conservation, education and sustainable land/facility management practices

Objective 4.1 Conserve and strengthen natural resources

Retaining and properly pruning the healthy mature urban tree canopy at Crocker Amazon would achieve the following:

- Strengthen the quality of McLaren Park
- Preserve a historic resource
- Increase public safety
- Promote human health in an equity zone via clean air and urban cooling
- Advance active living by enabling play and recreation in a high wind area
- Conserve and fortify rare threatened California native trees and the wildlife that depend upon them
- Protect valuable green infrastructure benefits
- Connect people to urban nature

In conclusion, we support the Urban Forestry Council Resolution NO. 002-26-UFC and a redesign at Crocker Amazon that preserves historic urban tree canopy and incorporates natural grass fields. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

For The Future Coalition

Public Safety, Public Health, Urban Nature & Healthy Play