6.6 BROOKS PARK AND LAKEVIEW/ASHTON MINI PARK

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park (also informally known as Orizaba Rocks) are located in southwestern San Francisco in the Merced Heights and Ingleside Heights neighborhoods (Figure 1-1). Brooks Park, which fronts on Shields Street between Victoria and Vernon Streets, is a 3.5-acre park of which 2 acres is a Natural Area. Like so many small open spaces within the City, nearby Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park is a rocky outcrop at the dead ends of city streets; Ashton and Orizaba Avenues and Lakeview and Shields Streets in this case. The Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park is a 0.5-acre Natural Area. Both of these Natural Areas contain grasslands (Figure 6.6-1). Although relatively small, both of these Natural Areas have values that include important habitat for native plant and animal species, outstanding City views, an extensive trail system, and suitable habitat for a variety of plant and animal species.

GEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY, AND TRAILS

Brooks Park

Brooks Park is a rock knoll approximately 75 feet high near the top of a 500-foot-high east-west bedrock ridge between Junipero Serra Boulevard and San Jose Avenue. The ground surface in the park consists of a thin layer of sandy soil (mostly less than 1 foot deep) overlying Franciscan sandstone (Figure 6.6-2). There are numerous sandstone exposures throughout the park. The rock is dark gray in its fresh condition (rarely seen), but weathers readily to a yellowish brown or yellowish gray rubbly surface. It forms a residual soil that is difficult to distinguish from the slope debris that accumulates on bedrock hillsides as a product of exposure to rain and wind. Portions of the eastern and western ends of the park contain accumulations of slope debris and sandy soil several feet thick, whereas the central portion of the park contains only a few inches to 1 foot of soil over the bedrock. Small amounts of fill have been placed near the edges of the southwestern corner adjacent to existing buildings.

Prominent land features in Brooks Park include a soil slip in the southwest corner and old quarried areas in the northwest and southeast corners. Soil slips occur when the weight of a soil mass (usually saturated and lubricated by water) exceeds the strength of the bond between the soil and the underlying bedrock. The soil slip on the west-facing slope of Brooks Park moved only a few feet downslope. The center of the slipped area has been restored by plantings, but the outline of the slip remains visible as an arc of shallow breaks in the slope of the hill around the top of the slipped area. The trail system in the park is earthen; 884 feet of primary and secondary trails are projected to remain but 456 feet of social trails are subject to closure. The trails are in good condition, except as noted in the remainder of this discussion. An earth trail crossing the face of the soil slip is in generally good condition. However, the trail has eroded into a 1-foot channel except for several yards near the top of the slip.

The old quarry walls in the northwest corner of Brooks Park are adjacent to the backs of developed lots on Shields and Vernon Streets. Franciscan sandstone bedrock is exposed in the quarry walls facing the houses. In the park, a bedrock bench forms the top of the quarry wall and is surmounted by a knob of the same sandstone. Because this area of the trail is on bedrock, it is not eroding.

The quarried area in the southeast corner of Brooks Park consists of a curved southeast-facing wall and the adjacent quarry floor. Franciscan sandstone bedrock is exposed in the quarry wall. The quarry floor has been graded and paved with asphalt for use as a playing field. Numerous earthen trails lead to the lower (south) end of the quarry wall from the western portion of the park and from the adjacent school grounds to the southwest. Some erosion is evident along the steeper portions of the trails and where digging has occurred.

Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park

Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park is situated on top of a Franciscan sandstone knob along the east-west bedrock ridge between Junipero Serra Boulevard and San Jose Avenue (Figure 6.6-2). The park is on the highest point on the ridge, although it is less than 25 feet above the surrounding streets. The ground surface at the north side of the park consists of a thin layer of sandy soil (mostly less than 1 foot deep) overlying the bedrock. The central portion of the park is a large, peaked outcrop.

The bedrock at Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park is the same as the bedrock at Brooks Park: dark gray in its fresh condition (rarely seen), and weathering readily to a yellowish brown or yellowish gray rubbly surface. The residual soil formed by weathering is difficult to distinguish from the slope debris that accumulates on bedrock hillsides as a product of exposure to rain and wind.

Approximately 650 feet of earthen trails lead around and across the outcrop in the center of Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park. The trails in this Natural Area are classified as either primary or secondary; no trails within this area are subject to closure. Generally, the trails are in good condition because they are on bedrock. The trails in the southeast corner of the park and along the southern boundary are eroding because of intense foot and bicycle traffic.

VEGETATION

Based on aerial photo interpretation and ground-truthing, the vegetation of Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park was classified into 10 series (Table 6.6-1; Figure 6.6-3). These series are within six sub-formations: approximately 59 percent of the area is grassland; 12 percent is forest; 8 percent is mosaic; 7 percent is scrub; 2 percent is other herbaceous; and 12 percent is classified as “other” (developed and rock outcroppings).

Grassland, Mosaic, and Other Herbaceous

The grasslands dominate the landscape at these two areas. Italian ryegrass grassland accounts for 1.13 acres at Brooks Park. In addition, there is approximately 0.21 acres of mosaic Italian ryegrass/poison oak habitat in the northern portion of the Brooks Park Natural Area. The four grassland series combine to account for over 60 percent of the total habitat at Brooks Park. Iceplant herbaceous series constitutes approximately 0.05 acres of Brooks Park. The two series dominated by native vegetation within this Natural Area are the Italian ryegrass/poison oak mosaic and a small patch of purple needlegrass prairie (0.01 acres). Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park is similar to Brooks Park in that the primary vegetation series is a grassland, ripgut brome grassland (0.31 acres). A small area, less than 0.005 acres, of osoberry scrub can also be found at Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park.

Sensitive Plant Species

A small population of farewell-to-spring (*Clarkia rubicunda*) can be found growing on the rocky outcroppings in the southwest corner of the Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park. None of the other species designated as sensitive for this management plan have been recently observed within Brooks Park. The California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) does not report the occurrence of any sensitive plant species at either of these two Natural Areas (CNDDB 2005).

WILDLIFE

Birds

The multi-storied complex habitat of the area provides suitable foraging and roosting habitat for a variety of species. The scrub habitats provide excellent nesting areas for smaller birds (passerines). The small areas of mixed non-native urban forest are likely to be too small to provide suitable nesting habitat for raptors.

The CNDDB does not report the occurrence of any special-status species of birds from Brooks Park or Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park (CNDDB 2005) and no important bird habitats have been delineated for either of these Natural Areas. However, two species that are considered locally sensitive have been reported from Brooks Park (Table 6.6-2). Lesser goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*) is known to occur within the grassland and scrub mosaic. The only sensitive species known to breed is pygmy nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*).

Mammals, Reptiles, and Amphibians

To date, no surveys have been conducted at the Brooks Park or Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park for mammals, reptiles or amphibians. The CNDDB does not report the occurrence of any sensitive species within the area (CNDDB 2005). However, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD) staff have found an arboreal salamander (*Aneides lugubris*) within the Natural Area. Other common small mammals and reptiles such as the pocket gopher (*Thomomys*

bottae) and western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) are expected to use these Natural Areas. Larger mammals such as raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*) and Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) are typical of urbanized parks in general and are expected to occur within Brooks Park or Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

As mentioned above, grasslands dominate these Natural Areas and the relative quality of the grasslands define MA-1, MA-2, and MA-3 areas (Figure 6.6-5). Two grassland areas at Brooks Park and one area at Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park have been mapped as MA-1. The grasslands surrounding these MA-1 areas have been designated as MA-2 to provide a buffer between the MA-1 and the MA-3 areas. The MA-3 areas are on the periphery in both parks and represent the least sensitive grassland areas.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following discussion, system-wide issues and recommendations (GR-1 for example; see Chapter 5) that apply to the entire Natural Area at Brooks Park or Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park are presented first within each topical area, followed by site-specific issues and recommendations. Site-specific recommendations are keyed to the Management Area in which they should occur (Figure 6.6-5). To differentiate between Management Areas at Brooks Park and those at Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park the following abbreviations are used: Brook Park is BP and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park is LA.

Site Improvements – Implementation of management recommendations at Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park would not change significantly the overall look of the parks and would result in:

- maintenance and enhancement of native grassland and dune scrub habitat;
- improved habitat for resident and migratory birds;
- increased public access on an improved designated trails system; and
- increased educational opportunities associated with native plant demonstration gardens.

Restoration of the grassland and rocky areas at Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park will enhance sensitive plant habitat and may result in increased populations of sensitive plant species. Habitat for resident and migratory birds will improve as the dune scrub vegetation is restored. Eventually these areas may resemble the rocky outcroppings of Rock Outcrop or the native grasslands of Bayview Hill.

Vegetation

Vegetation management at Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park involves the protection of sensitive species and habitats, typically through the control of invasive species and

management of sensitive species. There are extensive stands of invasive species found within these Natural Areas. Control and reduction of this vegetation (GR-1 and GR-3) is necessary before restoration and re-introduction of sensitive species of native habitat can successfully occur (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).

Issue BP-1: The grasslands at both Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park are threatened by the presence of invasive vegetation such as Cape ivy, Bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-caprae*, wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*), sheep sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), ehrharta grass (*Ehrharta erecta*), etc. that occur throughout these two Natural Areas. Native and sensitive species (purple needlegrass prairie) are at risk of diminishing or being extirpated in these areas due to the large amounts of invasive vegetation.

Recommendation BP-1a: Populations of invasive woody and herbaceous plants such as radish, ehrharta grass, Bermuda buttercup, sheep sorrel, and mustard (*Brassica* sp.) shall be reduced and contained in all MA-1 and MA-2 areas.

Recommendation BP-1b: In order to preserve the grasslands at Brooks Park, remove three cypress trees in MA-1a; the remaining 17 pines will not be removed. Further establishment of invasive trees will be prevented in all areas of Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park except BP-3a.

Recommendation BP-1c: Areas where invasive species have been removed shall be revegetated using appropriate native plants. Existing grasslands will be enhanced and diversified as appropriate (MA-1 and MA-2 areas at both parks). In addition, the MA-2a area in Brooks Park and other borders between MA-3 forested areas and MA-2 areas shall be developed into a mixed oak scrub community to create a buffer between the nearby invasive forests and the grassland. Similarly, a buffer will be created within the MA-1a area where it borders MA-3 forested area to protect this habitat from invasive species. Areas MA-2b at Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park shall be slowly converted from grassland into coastal scrub communities. Maintain a tree-grassland mosaic in BP MA-3a. These actions will also benefit wildlife. Using diversity, cover, and density targets generated from reference sites within and around San Francisco, plant native grassland and scrub species into appropriate areas as described above (see Appendix B). Both of these parks provide opportunities for entry way design gardens. Plant palettes may be modified to favor showy perennials in BP MA-2b and LV MA-2a.

Recommendation BP-1d: Consider the augmentation of sensitive species such as farewell-to-spring at MA-1a at Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park. This species may be introduced within suitable locations at Brooks Park.

Wildlife

While no wildlife-specific issues are noted for these Natural Areas, implementation of system-wide recommendations that relate to native vegetation enhancement in BP-1, vegetation management and nesting birds (GR-4), predation (GR-7), and installation of host plants for native insects (GR-10) would all serve to enhance the wildlife habitat at Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park.

Soils, Erosion, and Public Use

Erosion control measures in these Natural Areas are closely associated with weed control and understory replacement issues (Issue BP-1). There appears little need for structural erosion control measures if these recommendations are followed. There are 884 feet of primary and secondary trails in Brooks Park and 651 feet in Lakeview/Ashton Park. Social trails are only found at Brooks Park where they are 456 feet long. If necessary, measures contained within GR-11 should be sufficient to control social trails as they arise. Installation and maintenance of signage within these two Natural Areas, especially as restoration activities occur, will help educate park users (GR-14).

Table 6.6-1. Vegetation series mapped within the Natural Areas at Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park (a.k.a. Orizaba Rocks).

	Vegetation Series	Brooks Park	Lakeview/Ashton	Total Acreage
Forest	mixed exotic forest	**0.30**		**0.30**
Scrub	coyote brush scrub *	0.18		0.18
	osoberry scrub *		0.00	0.00
	Subtotal	**0.18**	**0.00**	**0.18**
Grassland	Italian ryegrass grassland	1.13		1.13
	purple needlegrass prairie *	0.01		0.01
	ripgut brome grassland		0.31	0.31
	Subtotal	**1.14**	**0.31**	**1.46**
Mosaic	Italian ryegrass/poison oak mosaic *	**0.21**		**0.21**
Other Herbaceous	iceplant herbaceous	**0.05**		**0.05**
Other	developed	0.00		0.00
	rock outcrop	0.11	0.18	0.29
	Subtotal	**0.11**	**0.18**	**0.29**
Grand Total		**2.00**	**0.50**	**2.50**

* Indicates vegetation type is dominated by native species.
Shaded entries indicate coverage of less than 0.005 acres.

Table 6.6-2. Sensitive species known to occur at Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park.

Species	Common Name	Status Federal, State, CNPS	Occurrance Status
ANIMALS			
Carduelis psaltria	Lesser Goldfinch	LS	Presently occurs
Sitta pygmaea	Pygmy Nuthatch	LS	Presently breeds
No sensitive plant species are known from either of these Natural Areas.			

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 forseeable 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

LS Locally Significant.

EIP ASSOCIATES

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, May 6, 2002, revised June 10, 2005.

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FIGURE 6.6 - 1

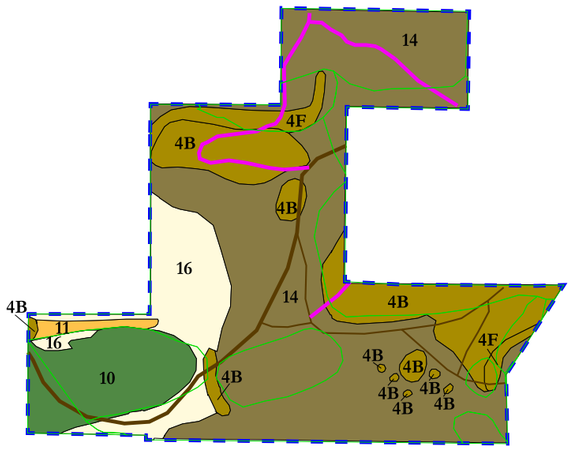
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, AND NATURAL AREAS

Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park

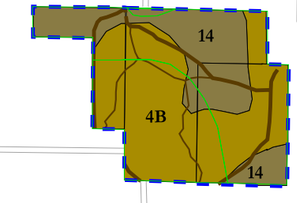
Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan

San Francisco, California

Vernon
Arch
Ramsell
Victoria
Head
Bright
Orizaba
Ashton
Lakeview
Shields
Thrift



Brooks Park



Lakeview/Ashton
Mini Park

Soils, Land Features, and Trails

- 4B — sandstone
- 4F — old quarry face
- 10 — soil slip/earth flow
- 11 — fill slope
- 14 — thin rocky soils over bedrock
- 16 — sandy soil
- primary earthen trail
- secondary earthen trail
- closed trail
- Natural Area boundary
- vegetation series boundary

EIP ASSOCIATES

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

Map layout created March 1, 2002, revised December 10, 2005 by D. Dwyer of the San Francisco State University Institute for GISc.

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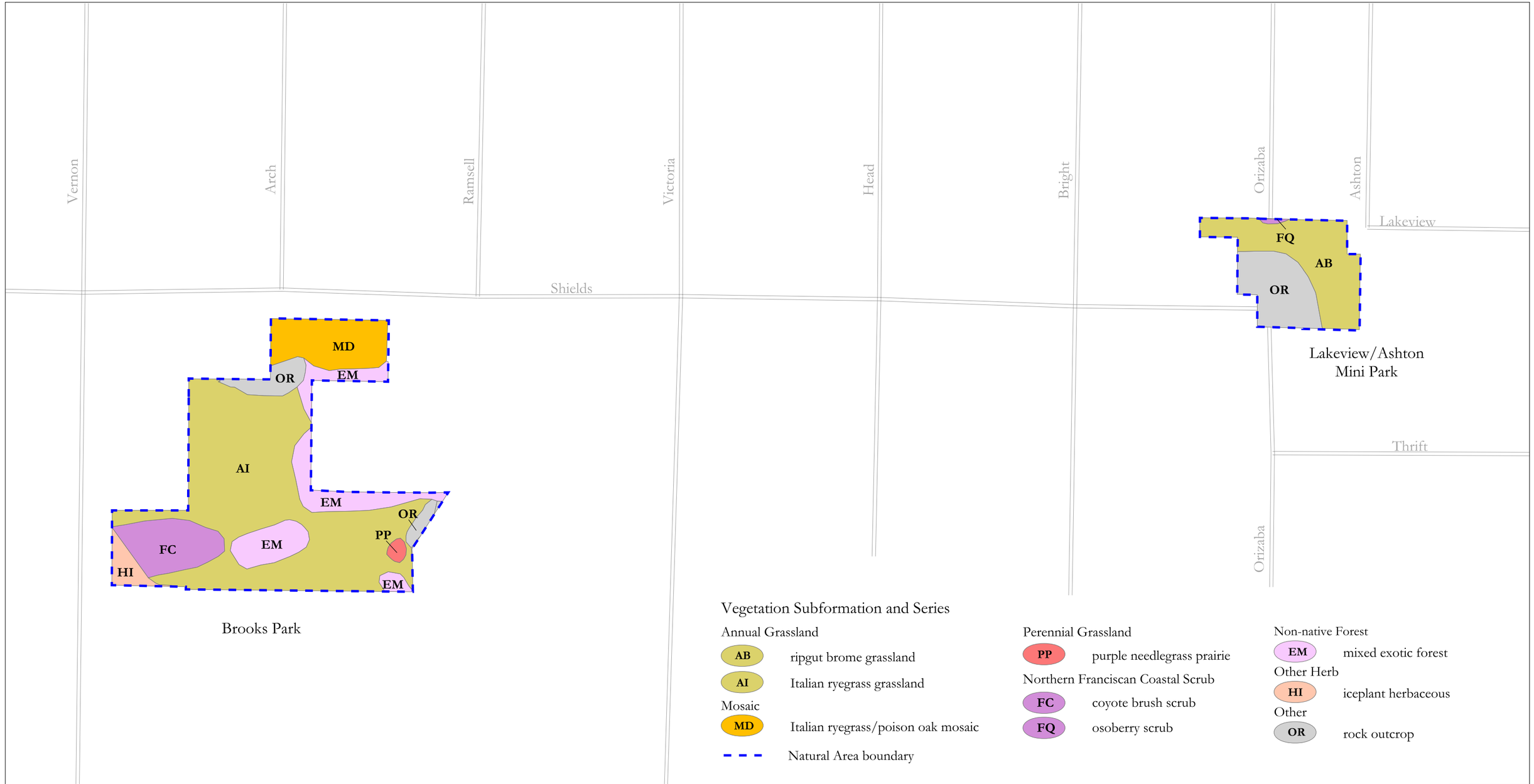
FIGURE 6.6 - 2

SOILS, LAND FEATURES, AND TRAILS

Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini park

Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan

San Francisco, California



EIP ASSOCIATES

Source: Vegetation data digitized by Geotopo, Inc. from data collected by San Francisco Recreation and Park Department Natural Areas Program (NAP), EIP Associates, and San Francisco State University Department of Biology, 1999-2000; vegetation shapefile edited by San Francisco State University Institute for GISc, 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 March 1, 2002, revised October 13, 2005 by D. Dwyer, San Francisco State University, Institute for GISc.

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FIGURE 6.6 - 3
VEGETATION
Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park
Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan
San Francisco, California

EIP ASSOCIATES

Source: Sensitive species data collected by San Francisco Department of Recreation and Park Natural Areas Program (NAP), 2001-2005; vegetation data collected by NAP, San Francisco State University Biology Department, and EIP Associates, 1999-2000; vegetation layer digitized by Geotopo, Inc., 1999 - 2000; edited and corrected by San Francisco State University Institute for GISc (SFSUGIS), 2000; natural area boundary created by SFSUGIS from data determined by NAP, 2005; streets data excerpted from ArcView StreetMap 2000 data, copyright Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.(ESRI), 1998-2000.

Created by Debra Dwyer of San Francisco State University Institute for GISc March 1, 2001, revised June 7, 2005.

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FIGURE 6.6 - 4

SENSITIVE SPECIES AND IMPORTANT BIRD HABITAT

Brooks Park and Lakeview / Ashton Mini Park

Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan

San Francisco, California

Mgmt Area	Action
MA-1a	• Remove 3 invasive trees • Maintain diverse native grassland
MA-2a	• Maintain and enhance oak-scrub mosaic
MA-2b	• Maintain and enhance dune scrub • Reintroduce sensitive plants
MA-2c	• Maintain and enhance grassland
MA-3a	• Maintain cypress-grassland mosaic with scattered oaks • Allow important nectar/larval/seed invasive plants to persist for wildlife
MA-3b	• Maintain and enhance grassland • Allow important nectar/larval/seed invasive plants to persist for wildlife

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: 884 linear-feet
- Provide access on designated trails only
- Social trails subject to closure
- Total invasive trees to remove: 3; Total invasive trees to remain: 17
- Implement erosion control as required (GR-12)
- Implement wildlife enhancements as appropriate

Mgmt Area	Action
LV MA-1a	• Maintain grassland • Augment sensitive plant populations
LV MA-2a	• Maintain and enhance diverse native grassland
LV MA-2b	• Maintain and enhance coastal scrub
LV MA-2c	• Maintain and enhance a landscaped native scrub
LV MA-3a	• Maintain and enhance grassland-coastal scrub mosaic • Allow important nectar/larval/seed invasive plants to persist for wildlife

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: 651 linear-feet
- Provide access on designated trails only
- Social trails subject to closure
- Total invasive trees to re move: 0; Total invasive trees to remain: 0
- Implement erosion control as required (GR-12)
- Implement wildlife enhancements as appropriate

EIP ASSOCIATES

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 StreetMap 2000 data copyright ESRI 1998-2001; aerial photography San Francisco Department of Public Works, 2002, Orthophoto - San Francisco - 1 Foot Resolution - 2001: City of San Francisco Department of Public Works, San Francisco; all data are in California State Plane Zone III projection, NAD 1983; map produced using ArcGIS 9.0 software by ESRI.

Map created May 30, 2005 by Debra Dwyer, San Francisco State University, Institute for Geographic Information Science; revised August 23, 2005.

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FIGURE 6.6 - 5
MANAGEMENT AREAS AND TRAIL PLAN
Brooks Park and Lakeview/Ashton Mini Park
Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan
San Francisco, California