



Summer, 1997

Since its creation in the 1930's when the highway was built on bayfill, the landscape at Aquatic Park has been shaped by the efforts of concerned citizens. Regular communication with both City Council and city staff have meant that close attention has been paid to the park's special needs. Volunteer labor has always been a key component; the historic cypress trees on the west side were planted by friends of the park. The park owes its continued existence, in fact, to Florence Minard and the Friends of Aquatic Park, who in 1963 convinced the City Council to reject a proposal to fill the lagoons for creation of a business park.

The last few years have seen approval of a flurry of new projects for the park, to be built within the next year or two.

- **Living Wall:** Federal transportation funds for mitigating the effects of widening I-80 will pay for California's first living noise barrier. It will be a terraced structure planted with native vegetation built between the freeway and the park. The height will be 10.5 feet above the highway roadbed, sufficient to reduce noise levels on the park's west side by 60%. As part of the project, it is expected that West Bolivar Drive will be relandscaped into a winding pedestrian trail, much like on the park's east side.

- **PERS:** With \$1.5 million of a windfall refund to the city from the state public employees retirement system, Council designated capital improvement projects throughout the city's parks. Aquatic Park was allocated \$10,000 for 3 drinking fountains, \$20,000 for repairs to the pathway on the east side, and \$55,000 for a new rest room near the park's eastern entryway.

- **Bike Bridge:** Federal transportation money is also being used to construct a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the freeway just south of University Avenue. It will at last provide Berkeley residents with safe access to the Berkeley Marina, César Chávez Park, and the Bay Trail. It will also form a vital link between Aquatic Park and the new Eastshore State Park to be developed along our waterfront. The bridge's eastern entryway will be a dramatic pedestrian plaza located at the north end of the main lagoon, near the foot of Addison Street, which will also undergo landscaping improvements.

- **Play Areas:** Columbus Neighbors for Aquatic Park were successful in the highly competitive bidding for Community Development Block Grants and \$180,000 was awarded to build both a totlot and a play structure for older children. Bayer will also contribute \$35,000 from its Aquatic Park mitigation fund. Site selection is under way.

- **Onramp Relocation:** An additional federal transportation grant is being used to move the Bay Street freeway onramp that bisects the two smaller ponds to a location just south of the radio station. The current ramp will then be relandscaped into a pedestrian trail with lookouts over the main shorebird feeding and roosting area.

• **Planting Grant:** \$50,000 in state money will be used to plant native vegetation along the shoreline of the middle pond. It will be matched by \$50,000 in money or in-kind services by the city.

• **Habitat Management Plan:** To guarantee that the landscape gardeners' maintenance practices are sensitive to the needs of the park's waterfowl and other wildlife, Council has requested preparation of a habitat management plan for the entire park. This plan will serve as the basis for future planting projects and will assist in the likelihood of receiving grants for implementation of the plan.

• **Water Quality:** While a recent study has shown that the water at the park is not chemically polluted, it has become steadily degraded due to inadequate tidal flushing action. The increasing prevalence of algal blooms indicate that the hydraulic structures are badly in need of repair and regular maintenance. Council has directed the City Manager to have staff enter discussions with Caltrans so that the series of 8 tidal tubes designed to keep the lagoons linked with the bay will again operate at full capacity.

• **KBLX Purchase:** The final privately-owned piece of the park – and its true biological heart – is the southern half of the radio tower pond and the associated upland habitat. It has long been a dream of the city and park users to acquire the property and add it to the park as a nature preserve. To this end the city has had the property appraised and is investigating strategies for financing its purchase.

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Don't forget that the annual park cleanup is just around the corner! Generously supported every year by Bayer, this year's event will take place the morning of Saturday, September 20th.  
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## *Friends of Aquatic Park Membership*

\$1\_\_ \$15\_\_ \$45\_\_ \$100\_\_ Other\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests \_\_\_\_\_

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Check for **Friends of Aquatic Park** –  
Send to Mary Cardwell at 1210  
Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709  
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*Our deepest gratitude to those members who over the past years have contributed so selflessly to the park – both monetarily as well as of their time and talent. By working together, we can guarantee the continued improvement of the jewel of Berkeley's parks.*

Ideas? Want to learn more?  
Call Mark Liolios at 549-0818.

*See you in the park!*