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Review of Richard A. Walker, *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area* (University of Washington Press, 2007).

Historians of the conservation and environmental movements have traced the battles to establish national parks and preserve wilderness areas in federal lands, composed biographies of prominent figures from John Muir to Rachel Carson and David Brower, and given us organizational histories of such major national groups as the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and Earthjustice, as well as international groups like Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund.

What we've lacked are histories of local and regional environmental efforts over the long term. True, we in the North Bay are fortunate to have Dr. Marty Griffin's study, *Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast*, part history and part memoir, covering the battles for Richardson Bay, Bolinas Lagoon, Tomales Bay, Point Reyes, and the Russian River. But we have not had comprehensive surveys of the century and more of efforts to maintain parks, beaches and open space within a major urban area.

Richard A. Walker, professor of geography at UC-Berkeley, has taken up the challenge of documenting the full range of conservation politics in our region with his new book, *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area*, published by the University of Washington Press.

Walker begins with the Sierra Club founders, who made the Bay Area an early center of environmental awareness. He tells the stories of wealthy landowner and Congressman William Kent, who helped save Muir Woods and Mt. Tamalpais as parks, and the elite Save the Redwoods League, which over the last ninety years has purchased and preserved \$100 million worth of prime stands of redwood forest along the North Coast. He continues with the post-New Deal growth of the state park system, fueled by tideland and offshore oil revenues.

County and regional parks have become an important part of the urban "greensward" in the Bay Area. The East Bay Regional Parks District, from the Berkeley-Oakland hills to Mt. Diablo, became the largest urban park district in the United States under the able direction of Republican conservationist William Penn Mott. Saving the San Francisco Bay and the Pacific coast required numerous battles, from preserving Angel Island, Point Reyes, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to the establishment of the California Coastal Commission; Walker covers each in a few paragraphs.

Protecting open space from the developer's bulldozer has been a continuing challenge. Walker details how such growth control measures as green belts, urban boundaries, and regional planning have struggled against suburban sprawl. Petaluma's action in 1972 limiting growth of annual additional housing units was a landmark. Open space districts

and land trusts have become important tools using public and private funds to preserve crucial parcels when they become available for sale.

In a chapter on Napa and Sonoma Counties, Walker tackles the issues of agriculture and water, covering the expansion of the grape growing and winemaking industries and their positive and negative impacts on the countryside. The Sea Ranch controversy gave rise to Californians Organized to Acquire Access to State Tidelands (COAAST). Local activists Bill Kortum, Chuck Rinehart, Dick Day and Joan Vilms all appear in the narrative, as do the first progressive Sonoma County supervisors – Helen Rudee, Eric Koenigshofer, Helen Putnam, and Ernie Carpenter – open to a moderate green agenda. Walker applauds the Sonoma Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, established in 1990, as the first in the U.S. to be funded by a sales tax.

In his final two chapters, Walker reviews the problems of water pollution and toxic wastes, and outlines the mass movements and organizations that have emerged to combat them. Advocates of environmental justice for communities of color have challenged traditional conservation groups to move beyond their privileged perspectives. Carl Anthony of Urban Habitat is one of the early Bay Area leaders of the movement profiled by Walker.

Not surprisingly, Walker sees the future of environmentalism requiring new alliances of traditional conservation groups like the Sierra Club with the labor movement and expanding communities of Latinos, Asians, and African Americans in California. In this regard, he views Sonoma County's Accountable Development Coalition as a possible model for the next stages of urban environmentalism.

Walker's book offers a fresh perspective on the historic range of environmental activities in the Bay Area, and his optimistic spirit should encourage all activists.