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## *How to Start Landscaping... in a Bay-Friendly Way*

KAMALA BENNETT, SUSTAINABLE LIVING DESIGNS



A conventional landscape is transitioned to a Bay-Friendly landscape.

Conventional landscape



Lawn sheet mulched in place



One year later

**S**an Francisco Bay Area residents, business owners and policy makers are already thinking about the connection between their landscapes and the environment and they want to make a difference. Yet Bay-Friendly landscaping practices require skill and expertise. Communicate your expertise to earn new clients and strengthen your existing customer loyalty, then expand to include more practices, marketing yourself as a Bay-Friendly landscaper.

**STEP 1: Start with the Bay-Friendly practices that you already do... and explain the benefits to your clients.**

**STEP 2: Plan to offer more Bay-Friendly landscaping practices**

**STEP 3: Market “Bay-Friendly Landscaping Packages”**

**STEP 4: Integrate Bay-Friendly into Green Building**

**STEP 5: Start your Bay-Friendly Reference Library**

## **STEP 1:**

**Start with the Bay-Friendly practices that you already do...and explain the benefits to your clients.**

The best strategy for offering Bay-Friendly landscaping to your clients is to **start by identifying those practices that you already do.**

Then: train yourself and your staff on the benefits. Learn how these practices can protect your client’s health or that of the environment, save landfill space, provide wildlife habitat or increase the value of their property.

**Communicate your skills and the benefits of Bay-Friendly landscaping to your customers or potential new customers.** Feel free to share the information in these guidelines with them. Let them know you can help them landscape in an environmentally friendly manner with these Bay-Friendly services. Emphasize that many of these services can save them money. Detail your skill in providing these benefits in periodic quality control reports mailed to your clients. Be sure to include the benefits to your customer such as lower water bills and increased property value.

**Include the practices and their benefits in your contracts.** You may even want to request that your clients sign an agreement on the goals of their Bay-Friendly Landscape program.



*“Once clients see you’re doing a good job,*

*you can educate them about landscaping to have a low impact on the environment.”*

— Katrine Benninger, Katrine Benninger Landscape Design, Oakland



Landscape professionals learn how to sheet-mulch.

PHOTO: CINDY NELSON

## STEP 2:

### Plan to offer more Bay-Friendly landscaping practices

The ideal Bay-Friendly landscape is designed, constructed and maintained with most, if not all, the practices listed in this guide. It is a holistic, integrated approach that yields the most benefits to your clients, your business, the environment and our community. It is more likely, though, that you will need to evolve towards that goal rather than instantly switch over.

#### Sit down with your staff and ask yourselves:

- Do we currently offer more practices from one principle than others? Why?
- What other Bay-Friendly practices from the *Menu of Best Practices* (pages 10-11) might our clients also value?
- What additional practices would be relatively easy to learn about and implement in the near future?

#### Consider how to adopt more of the practices over time:

- Under the principle(s) at which your company is already strong, (such as *Conserve Water*) what would it take to offer all or most of the practices?
- What additional practices can you offer in the next fiscal year, or the next 2 years?
- What training do you need to offer more Bay-Friendly services?
- Design professionals: ask that the landscapes you design be maintained in accordance with the *Bay-Friendly Landscape Guidelines* by firms with Bay-Friendly Qualified Landscape Maintenance Professionals on staff. You can find these qualified professionals at:  
[www.BayFriendlyCoalition.org/QPdirectory.php](http://www.BayFriendlyCoalition.org/QPdirectory.php)



#### Survey Says...

Almost 50% of single-family households that employ a professional landscaper would pay more for a service that uses environmentally-friendly practices.

*“An ecologically-based planting design is inherently complex. The maintenance needs to change over time. A trained maintenance presence is needed.”*

— Michael Thilgen, Landscape Architect and Contractor,  
Four Dimensions Landscape Company, Oakland



PHOTO: RICHARD ROLLINS



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

#### Guide your Clients through a Transition Period

Transitioning a landscape that has been managed with few chemical inputs and some additions of organic amendments to a Bay-Friendly landscaping maintenance program can be a relatively simple and short process. Landscapes that have been intensively treated with pesticides, over-watered and over-fertilized will require greater skill and time to transition.

- Let your customers know that it may take 2 years or more to make the change, that it will require skill, frequent monitoring and increased communication, and that their expenses could be greater during that period.
- Agree upon an acceptable period and include this in your contract.
- Start by assessing the soil and testing drainage.

## STEP 3:

### Market Bay-Friendly Landscaping Packages

Another important question to ask yourself as you expand your Bay-Friendly services is how to market them to your clients. Here are some suggestions for Bay-Friendly Landscaping Packages that could be developed to both respond to and encourage customer demand:

#### Bay-Friendly Lawn Care Program

Lawns continue to be a part of our culture. But maybe it is time to rethink what we mean by a lawn. Bay-Friendly landscaping emphasizes that high input lawns are not included solely for their looks. Small functional lawns — those that are used for play and relaxation - can be managed to minimize environmental impacts and provide your clients with a safer lawn by including:

- Grasscycling
- Aerating, then topdressing with compost
- Phasing out the scheduled application of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides
- Feeding with compost or other natural or slow release fertilizers after analysis or demonstrated need
- Integrated pest management that includes:
  - Hand pulling weeds
  - Use of natural herbicides
  - Use of beneficial nematodes
  - Use of compost tea for disease management and nutrient cycling
- State of the art irrigation management to prevent over watering

#### Bay-Friendly Wildlife Gardening

Specializing in designing, constructing or maintaining wildlife gardens is another opportunity for your business to grow and flourish. Develop expertise in the following practices and offer them to new and existing clients:

- Survey flora and fauna
- Learn about local, natural plant communities and use them as models
- Conserve or restore natural areas
- Diversify and include many California native plant species
- Provide water and shelter
- Eliminate the use of pesticides

#### Bay-Friendly Soil Health Care Program

Soil is the foundation of a healthy, beautiful landscape. Offer the following practices:

- Assessing the soil and testing drainage
- Removing and storing topsoil during construction
- Protecting soil from compaction and erosion
- Amending the soil with compost
- Mulching regularly
- Feeding soils naturally with compost or compost tea
- Avoiding synthetic fertilizers
- Minimizing chemicals with a goal of eliminating them altogether



*“Ecological design has a lot to do with how we present it to the client. It’s in our hands. We need to describe our work in language that appeals to people, that they can relate to and sign on to.”*

— Rebecca Coffman, Landscape Architect, Berkeley



#### Survey Says...

More than 50% of single-family households with yards or gardens are interested in creating habitat for birds and pollinators.



## Amending the soil with compost may be one of your easiest selling points:

Compost pays for itself over the long term as you and your clients benefit from:

- Bringing life to the soil
  - Reduces the need for fertilizers
  - Improves plant resistance to disease
  - Reduces need for pesticides
  - Degrades pollutants
- Healthier plants with an improved appearance
  - Increased customer satisfaction
- Faster planting in amended soils
- Reducing plant loss
  - Fewer callbacks
  - Improved profits
- Increasing water holding capacity
  - Irrigation costs are cut by as much as 50%
  - Reduced water bills for customer
  - Decreased stormwater runoff
- Paying back the cost of amending soil in 5-7 years
- Protecting the environment and the health of their families.

ADAPTED FROM: *FIELD GUIDE TO COMPOST USE*, US COMPOSTING COUNCIL AND SOILS FOR SALMON: *A LANDSCAPERS GUIDE TO BUILDING HEALTHY SOILS AND STREAMS*, 2000.

*“Landscapes need to become ‘sustainable’ or the industry will suffer economically. We need to move the industry, the public and public policy to improve our environments.”*

SOURCE: TOM ASH, *LANDSCAPE WATER USE: WHAT TO KNOW & WHAT TO DO NOW*, ECO-LANDSCAPING: *PROFITING FROM A GREEN FUTURE*, 2004.

## STEP 4:

### Integrate Bay-Friendly into Green Building

GreenPoint Rated is a residential rating program for single and multifamily new construction projects in California. It is administered by Build It Green and designed to provide a credible yet accessible entry point into green building and to guide home builders to achieve increasingly higher levels of performance. GreenPoint Rated is based on the *Build It Green Building Guidelines*, originally developed in Alameda County and later adopted by local governments throughout California. GreenPoint Rated for remodeling and existing homes is expected to be completed by the end of 2007 and like the program for single and multifamily homes, will be integrated with Bay-Friendly Landscaping for use in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information, visit [www.builditgreen.org](http://www.builditgreen.org).

Nationally, the US Green Building Council has developed a rating system that specifies ‘green’ standards for commercial, multifamily and civic buildings. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) is a voluntary program for rating the environmental impacts and sustainability of both new and existing building projects. Certification is awarded at different levels, based on the number of points earned. Go to [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) for more information.

Also under development, through a partnership between the American Society of Landscape Architects, US Green Building Council and the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center is the Sustainable Sites Initiative to develop national, voluntary standards for sustainable land development and management. Visit [www.sustainable-sites.org](http://www.sustainable-sites.org) for updates on their progress.



PHOTO: RICHARD ROLLINS



## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### **Bringing Bay-Friendly Landscaping to Public Sector Projects**

There are some important differences in the way public landscapes are designed, constructed, and maintained. A good first step for successfully implementing Bay-Friendly landscaping in public projects is starting with the coordinated involvement of city planners, landscape architects, landscape contractors, and landscape maintenance professionals. If there is a building also being planned, bring a team together to discuss Bay-Friendly goals at the conceptual design phase for the building — including the professionals responsible for both designing and maintaining the landscape.

Here are some additional tips for making the transition to Bay-Friendly in public landscaping projects more successful:

- Identify the key people, again involved in the project, initially and for the long term — and organize a Bay-Friendly landscape team that includes the city planner, arborist, landscape architect or designer, landscape contractor, and the landscape maintenance staff.
- Have the key people, again including maintenance staff, complete an initial *Bay-Friendly Scorecard for Commercial and Civic Landscapes* no later than the design and development phase, to define the Bay-Friendly landscape goals for the project.
- Include language in the RFP & RFQ that clearly states that the landscape will be designed to Bay-Friendly landscape standards as per the *Bay-Friendly Scorecard*.
- Include language in the construction bid documents that clearly states that the landscape will be built as per the final *Bay-Friendly Scorecard*.
- Create a Bay-Friendly landscape maintenance task list, or use the *Bay-Friendly Landscaping Model Maintenance Specifications* as a reference document to the maintenance contract.
- Provide educational signage describing the Bay-Friendly features of the landscape and their benefit to the public.

## STEP 5:

### **Start your Bay-Friendly Reference Library with these titles:**

Beidleman, Linda and Eugene N. Kozloff, *Plants of the San Francisco Bay Region*, University of California Press, 2003.

Bornstein, Carol, David Fross and Bart O'Brien, *California Native Plants for the Garden*, Cachuma Press, 2005.

Bossard, Carla, John Randall and Marc Hoshovsky, *Invasive Plants of California Wildlands*, University of California Press, 2000.

East Bay Municipal Utility District, *Plants and Landscapes for Summer Dry Climates of the San Francisco Bay Region*, [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com), May 2004.

Flint, Mary Louise, *Pests of Landscape Trees & Shrubs*, University of California Press, 1994 (Revised edition due in January 2004).

Flint, Mary Louise and Steve Dreistadt, *Natural Enemies Handbook: The Illustrated Guide to Biological Pest Control*, University of California Press, 1998.

Francis, Mark and Andreas Reimann, *The California Landscape Garden: Ecology, Culture and Design*, University of California Press, 1999.

Gilmer, Maureen, *California Wildfire Landscaping*, Taylor Publishing Company, 1994.

Lowry, Judith Lerner, *Gardening With a Wild Heart: Restoring California's Native Landscapes at Home*, University of California Press, 1999.

Schmidt, Marjorie G., *Growing California Native Plants*, University of California Press, 1980.

Thompson, J. William and Kim Sorvig, *Sustainable Landscape Construction: A Guide to Green Building Outdoors*, Island Press, 2000.

University of California Cooperative Extension, *A Guide to Estimating Irrigation Water Needs of Landscape Plantings in California*, [www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/wucols00.pdf](http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/wucols00.pdf), 2000.

Wasowski, Andy and Sally Wasowski, *The Landscaping Revolution: Garden with Mother Nature, Not Against Her*, Contemporary Books, 2000.

# Resources

## Introduction

- The EPA GreenScapes Alliance, unites government and industry into a powerful force for the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste materials in large landscapes. Learn more about GreenScapes, or become a participant in the GreenScapes Alliance at: [www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/green](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/green)
- Low Impact Development (LID) is a more environmentally-sensitive approach to developing land and managing stormwater runoff. Many jurisdictions are incorporating LID techniques to help protect their waters and natural resources. Learn more at [www.lowimpactdevelopment.org](http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org)



## Landscape Locally

- Soil surveys can be found at your local library or by contacting the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Look for contact information at [www.baysavers.org](http://www.baysavers.org)
- Contact soil and compost testing laboratories:
  - ABC Organics at [www.abconorganics.com](http://www.abconorganics.com)
  - A&L Western Agricultural Labs at [www.al-labs-west.com](http://www.al-labs-west.com)
  - Harmony Farm Supply & Nursery at [www.harmonyfarm.com](http://www.harmonyfarm.com)
  - Peaceful Valley Farm Supply: [www.groworganic.com](http://www.groworganic.com)
  - Soil Control Lab at [www.controllabs.com](http://www.controllabs.com)
  - Soil Foodweb at [www.soilfoodweb.com](http://www.soilfoodweb.com)
  - Soil & Plant Lab at [www.soilandplantlaboratory.com](http://www.soilandplantlaboratory.com)
- Fire Prevention: Options for Managing Fire Fuel Load can be found at the California Forest Stewardship website: <http://ceres.ca.gov/foreststeward/html/fuelsoption.html>
- The City of Oakland offers Recommendations for Ecologically Sensitive Fire Abatement at [www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/docs/fire.doc](http://www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/docs/fire.doc)

## Landscape for Less to the Landfill



- Invasive plant species websites: [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org) and <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu> and [www.invasivespecies.org](http://www.invasivespecies.org)
- ANSI A300-(Part 1)-2001: *Tree Care Operations*, can be purchased from [www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org)
- For more information on using goats for controlling weeds and creating firebreaks, contact: [www.goatsrus.com](http://www.goatsrus.com) or [www.thegoatworks.net](http://www.thegoatworks.net) or [www.goatgrazers.com](http://www.goatgrazers.com)
- To find or offer salvaged materials, visit CalRecycle's website at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/CalMAX/> or MarinMax Materials Exchange at [www.marinmax.org](http://www.marinmax.org).
- To purchase salvaged materials contact the businesses listed in the *Bay-Friendly Landscaping Guide to Recycled Content and Salvaged Materials*, [www.bayfriendlycoalition.org/](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.org/)

## Nurture the Soil



- Guidelines on creating and implementing a Soil Management Plan can be downloaded from Western Washington at [www.puyallup.wsu.edu](http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu)
- For listings of compost and mulch producers visit the CalRecycle website: [www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organic](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organic)
- CalRecycle also provides specifications for using compost. Go to <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/> to download *Compost Use for Landscape and Environmental Enhancement*
- The US Composting Council describes its Standard Testing Assurance program for ensuring quality compost at [www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)
- Rolls of recycled cardboard can be purchased for sheet mulching from [www.northbaypaper.com](http://www.northbaypaper.com) or Monahan Paper, (510) 835-4670
- Info on compost tea is available from: [www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org) or [www.composttea.org](http://www.composttea.org) or [www.soilfoodweb.com](http://www.soilfoodweb.com)
- For information and equipment to brew compost tea contact: EPM, Inc., [www.composttea.com](http://www.composttea.com), *Growing Solutions*, [www.growingsolutions.com](http://www.growingsolutions.com), or *SoilSoup*, [www.soilsoup.com](http://www.soilsoup.com) or [www.soilfoodweb.com](http://www.soilfoodweb.com)

## Conserve Water



- The California Department of Water Resources has information on water supply and demand, at [www.waterplan.water.ca.gov](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov)
- California Urban Water Agencies offer information on water conservation, including costs at [www.cuwa.org](http://www.cuwa.org)
- The California Urban Water Conservation Council offers a variety of services and information, including product news and technical resources at [www.cuwcc.org](http://www.cuwcc.org)
- *Graywater Guide: Using Graywater in Your Home Landscape* is at [www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/graywater\\_guide\\_book.pdf](http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/graywater_guide_book.pdf)
- The Irrigation Training & Research Center at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo offers Irrigation Auditor and Landscape Water Budget classes. Information at [www.itrc.org](http://www.itrc.org)
- Information on the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) is at [www.cimis.water.ca.gov](http://www.cimis.water.ca.gov)
- Local water districts often offer information on water conservation or landscape audits or audit/water budget training. Contact your water supplier or check the following websites for some SF Bay Area water districts:
  - Alameda County Water District: [www.acwd.org](http://www.acwd.org)
  - Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency: [www.baswca.org](http://www.baswca.org)
  - Cal Water Service: [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com)
  - Coastside County Water District: [www.coastsidewater.org](http://www.coastsidewater.org)
  - Contra Costa County Water District: [www.ccwater.com](http://www.ccwater.com)
  - Dublin-San Ramon Water district: [www.dsrd.com](http://www.dsrd.com)

- EBMUD: [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com)
- Marin Municipal Water District: [www.marinwater.org](http://www.marinwater.org)
- North Coast County Water District: [www.nccwd.com](http://www.nccwd.com)
- San Mateo County: [www.midpeninsulawaste.org](http://www.midpeninsulawaste.org) or [www.coastsidewater.org](http://www.coastsidewater.org)
- Santa Clara Valley Water District: [www.valleywater.org](http://www.valleywater.org)
- Zone 7 Water Agency: [www.zone7water.com](http://www.zone7water.com)

## Conserve Energy



- PG&E website, which includes information on planting trees to reduce energy consumption: [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com)
- The Center for Urban Forest Research of the USDA Forest Service offers free fact sheets on maximizing the benefits of the urban forest, as well as many reports on their costs and benefits. Visit <http://cufr.ucdavis.edu>
- The International Dark Sky Association has a list of approved light fixtures at [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)

## Protect Water & Air Quality



- Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program provides landscaping tips and resources for preventing runoff/stormwater runoff and pollution. Visit their website: [www.cleanwaterprogram.com](http://www.cleanwaterprogram.com)
- You can learn more about the EPA Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program by visiting: [www.pesp.org](http://www.pesp.org)
- Bio-Integral Resource Center (BIRC) offers the IPM Practitioner and Common Sense Pest Control Quarterly. Visit [www.birc.org](http://www.birc.org)
- Environmentally-friendly pest management solutions for hundreds of pests of garden and landscape plants, including an interactive guide for healthy lawns, is available from the UC Statewide IPM Program, [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)
- Seattle Green Gardening program offers free Pro IPM Fact Sheets at [www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/proipm/default.htm](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/proipm/default.htm)
- A Porous Pavement fact sheet is at [www.epa.gov/owmitnet/mtb/porouspa.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/owmitnet/mtb/porouspa.pdf); information is also available from the Concrete Promotion Council of Northern California at [www.cpcnc.org](http://www.cpcnc.org)
- For information on pesticides, water quality, and less toxic alternatives, visit [www.ourwaterourworld.org](http://www.ourwaterourworld.org)
- Lawn Fact Sheet for least toxic approaches to lawn care visit [www.ourwaterourworld.org/factsheets.cfm](http://www.ourwaterourworld.org/factsheets.cfm)
- To look up impacts of active ingredients in pesticides visit [www.pesticideinfo.org](http://www.pesticideinfo.org)
- Information on the hazards of lawn chemicals are at [www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns)

## Create & Protect Wildlife Habitat



- California native plants are described at [www.calflora.org](http://www.calflora.org)
- East Bay Native Plant Society ([www.ebcnps.org](http://www.ebcnps.org)) is a good resource for information on local native plant species
- An updated list of native plant nurseries is at [www.cnps.org/links/native\\_plant\\_nurseries.htm](http://www.cnps.org/links/native_plant_nurseries.htm)
- Information on California Oaks is available from the California Oak Foundation at [www.californiaoaks.org](http://www.californiaoaks.org)
- California Native Grasslands Association ([www.cnga.org](http://www.cnga.org)) is an excellent resource for landscaping with native grasses
- Wildlife Habitat Council ([www.wildlifehc.org](http://www.wildlifehc.org)) provides information on how landscapes can provide habitat
- To foster wildlife habitat for pest control visit [www.hungryowl.com](http://www.hungryowl.com) and [www.californiabats.com](http://www.californiabats.com)
- Learn about an organic approach to pest control in landscapes from the *Standards for Organic Land Care: Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes*, from the Northeast Organic Farming Association, [www.nofamass.org](http://www.nofamass.org)

## Bay-Friendly Landscape Professional Training Opportunities

Residents and local municipalities are becoming aware of the benefits of Bay-Friendly landscaping and the need for trained and experienced Bay-Friendly landscape professionals.

Gain a competitive edge by becoming an expert in Bay-Friendly landscaping.

- **For landscape maintenance professionals**  
Enroll in the 7-week Bay-Friendly Landscape Maintenance Training and Qualification Program.
- **For landscape design and construction professionals**  
For both the public and private sectors, the Bay-Friendly Coalition offers a 24-hour Bay-Friendly Design Training and Qualification program.

Upon the successful completion of each class and its final exam, participants will be able to market their expertise and services as Qualified Landscape Professionals.

Go to [www.BayFriendlyCoalition.org/QPdirectory.php](http://www.BayFriendlyCoalition.org/QPdirectory.php) for more information.



## About the Bay-Friendly Coalition

The Bay-Friendly Landscaping & Gardening Coalition is a California nonprofit organization that promotes sustainable landscaping and gardening practices in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Bay-Friendly Coalition encourages behavior change through a watershed approach that reduces waste and pollution, conserves natural resources and creates vibrant landscapes and gardens. The Coalition's programs, publications and other resources provide home gardeners, landscape professionals and local governments with the inspiration and skills to create beautiful, healthy and environmentally sound landscapes and gardens.

### Programs & Publications for Home Gardeners

- *Bay-Friendly Gardening Guide*
- Annual garden tour
- Bay-Friendly nursery talks
- Online directory of Bay-Friendly Qualified Professionals
- Videos and fact sheets on how to *Lose Your Lawn the Bay-Friendly Way*
- And more

### Programs & Publications for Landscape Professionals and Local Governments

- *Bay-Friendly Guidelines for Landscape Professionals*
- Bay-Friendly Training & Qualification programs for landscape design and landscape maintenance
- Bay-Friendly Rated Landscapes, a voluntary rating system
- Online directory of Bay-Friendly Qualified Professionals
- Plant lists and model specifications
- Guides to grasscycling, using mulch, and using recycled-content and salvaged materials
- And more



Comprehensive guides for using mulch, using recycled content and salvaged materials in landscape projects, and recycling grass clippings are available at

[www.bayfriendlycoalition.org](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.org).

**Visit our website: [www.bayfriendlycoalition.org](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.org)**

