**Lake Merced Watershed**

The Lake Merced watershed lies atop the Westside Basin, the largest groundwater basin on the San Francisco Peninsula. Groundwater levels in this basin have declined due to groundwater pumping in northern San Mateo County. The City of San Francisco is working with our partner agencies in northern San Mateo County to manage the groundwater basin with multiple objectives: to maintain water levels in Lake Merced, to develop the groundwater as a municipal water supply for San Francisco, and to operate an extensive groundwater monitoring program that will allow sustainable operation of the groundwater basin. Current recycled water projects created in conjunction with Daly City have allowed reductions in groundwater pumping for landscape irrigation, and future recycled water projects being planned by SFPUC will continue that trend.

**Lake Merced Flora, 1920’s**

The Lake Merced Basin was historically known for its natural beauty and its profusion of wildflowers, as the writer below attests:

“For when you have visited this glowing field of the most exquisite harmony of colors and most delicate perfumes, you will feel doubly repaid, and will agree with students of botany that there is nothing finer about the Bay.”

-San Francisco Chronicle, April 13, 1902

Today, the park surrounding Lake Merced is home to eleven sensitive plant species. It also provides a valuable waypoint for thousands of migratory birds traveling on the Pacific Flyway.

**Current Projects**

In 2011, the Parkmerced long range development plan was approved by the City. The 20-year revitalization effort sets a high bar on sustainability for the improvements, including housing, transportation, amenities, and open space.

San Francisco State University (SFSU) received a community challenge grant from the SFPUC and City to replace lawn with a bioswale that manages rainwater from the adjacent Science Building’s roof.

The SFPUC is planning the Holloway Green Street project to help reduce stormwater entering the combined sewer system with bioretention bulbouts and permeable paving.

**Lake Merced, 1868**

Lake Merced is the largest open water-wetland complex between Pescadero and Point Reyes. It was historically fed by five creeks and the underlying aquifer, with periodic connections to the Pacific Ocean. From the 1870s to 1932 the lake was used for municipal water supply. Today it is considered a non-potable, emergency water supply and is managed primarily for recreation and natural habitat.

Although Lake Merced’s water levels have fluctuated through time; by the 1960s the water level had dropped significantly; this was attributed to a multi-year drought, groundwater pumping, and stormwater diversions away from the lake. The SFPUC and other stakeholders have worked to restore lake levels. Water levels have increased due to a series of normal rainfall years and reduced groundwater pumping in the vicinity of the lake.

**Westwood Park, 1926**

Westwood Park was primarily built in the 1920s and 1930s as “a model home community for the family of average means.” Many of the streets are curvilinear and designed to take advantage of the neighborhoods views.

**Park Merced, 1954**

Completed in the 1950s, Park Merced is a planned neighborhood of high-rise towers and low-rise garden apartments. It is one of the largest apartment block neighborhoods west of the Mississippi. It was designed to be a self-contained city within a city with its own courts, shopping, and plenty of room for gardens, parks, and recreational grounds. It is currently undergoing redevelopment.

**SFSU Science Corridor Bioswale**

The Lake Merced Basin is home to two of the city’s largest college campuses, San Francisco State University and the main campus of City College of San Francisco. Both colleges recently completed major planning processes which will significantly direct future growth.