



2007 State of the Lake Report

**Lake Merced Task Force
July 2007**



The mission of the Lake Merced Task Force (LMTF) is to work with community groups and local and state governments to implement programs, policies, and practices that will restore, enhance, and maintain the natural, educational, and recreational resources of Lake Merced.

In pursuant of this mission, the Steering Committee has the responsibility to report on the state of Lake Merced. The Steering Committee is formed from representatives of all other committees and members-at-large, and provides a proactive coordinating role and acts as the conduit for the exchange of information to and from the LMTF. The following report includes information on the current condition of the lake as well as work completed, underway, and future plans by the task force and other stakeholders.

The LMTF has been committed to improving the lake and the surrounding lands. We have provided significant leadership resulting in the current effort to advise and monitor the Lake Merced Watershed Plan, and will continue to work together to find creative ways to save this precious and irreplaceable natural resource.

Additional information and resources can be found at the LMTF web site: <http://www.lmtf.org/>

Lake Merced Water Level:

- For weekly updates of lake level, please click the following link: http://sfwater.org/custom/scada/lake_merced.cfm/MSC_ID/60/MTO_ID/55/MC_ID/7
- Lake level - highest level in last 20 years due to 2 wet winters, reductions in ground water pumping, recycled water at golf courses, and small amount of storm water from Daly City
- Water levels are up to the maximum allowed by the interim lake plan and impacts to shoreline vegetation are beginning to show. Ongoing studies and monitoring will assess vegetation changes over the next year to inform the plan for ongoing lake levels and adaptive management.
- Approximately 1 foot/year increase (four feet over the last four years 2002-2006)
- 5 ½ billion gallons banked since 2002 for droughts
- Significant reduction in groundwater pumping from supplemental water supply to Cal Water and San Bruno and is allowing aquifer to rise
- Habitats are moving up hill but adapting well; Bull rush still growing
- Will examine Impound Lake level compared to South Lake
- Will investigate status of fence structure on Lake Merced Blvd.

Lake Merced Watershed Plan:

http://sfwater.org/detail.cfm/MC_ID/20/MSC_ID/179/MTO_ID/310/C_ID/3388/Keyword/lake%20merced

- The Lake Merced Watershed Plan will provide the SFPUC with a comprehensive set of strategies to sustain the health of the Lake Merced Watershed, while providing maximum recreational and educational opportunities to the community.
- A 2-year proposal for watershed master plan looking to year 2030 (January 2007 - January 2009)
- Four Areas to be examined: Land Use and Facilities, Recreation, Natural Areas, and Transportation (land use and recreation will be examined first)
- SFPUC contracted with Wallace, Roberts, & Todd - October, 2006
- Steve Hammond will be Principal Investigator with Jim Stickley as project director
- Environmental Science Associates - Natural resource & watershed planning; environmental analyses

- Sherwood Design Engineers - Hydrology, watershed planning engineering
- Nelson/Nygaard - Transportation and parking
- Watershed is defined by SFPUC ownership (approximately 600 acres adjacent to LM – bordered by surrounding roadways)
- Animal migration issue asked to be addressed by master plan
- Immediate timeline
 - Data collection and review (January)
 - Site reconnaissance (January)
 - Existing factors report (February)
 - Stakeholder focus group meeting (March)
 - Preliminary land use goals, objectives & program elements (March)
 - Committee Meeting #2 (April)
- Community meetings
 - http://sfwater.org/detail.cfm/MC_ID/20/MSC_ID/179/MTO_ID/310/C_ID/3388/Keyword/lake%20merced%20watershed%20plan
 - On March 7, 2007, at the Trocadero Club House at Stern Grove, the SFPUC hosted a meeting regarding the Lake Merced Watershed Plan. The following are the materials presented at this community meeting. Included is the meeting PowerPoint presentation, as well as the presentation boards and maps.
 - Tuesday, April 24, 2007; 6:30-8:30pm; South Sunset Playground

Lake Merced Projects:

- \$885,768 total secured funds for Lake Merced planning/projects (\$740,000.00 from SFPUC and the remaining monies from the revenue bond) has been earmarked, but no decision on spending/projects. Money is allowed to rollover.
- Natural Areas:
 - http://www.parks.sfgov.org/wcm_recpark/Capital/ProjectStatus/LakeMercedNA.pdf
- Fish Study
 - Michael McGowan presented a PowerPoint presentation on April 11, 2007 at the LMTF general meeting and presented the following findings:
 - Draft final report being reviewed by LMTF, SFRPD, SFPUC and will be released and posted on the LMTF website in July.
 - Recommendations include better access to shoreline, more trout and bass, bait & tackle shop, re-introduce Sacramento Perch (native fish used for mosquito abatement), and others detailed in fish study report
 - According to the creel survey anglers from 22 zip codes fish at the Lake including San Jose
- Traffic Light at Herbst and Skyline Blvd.
 - The California Department of Transportation designed the light and began the process of implementation.
 - Responsibility was passed to the City Department of Parking and Transportation, and is currently being evaluated.
- Trail and Overlook Project
 - http://www.parks.sfgov.org/wcm_recpark/Capital/ProjectStatus/LakeMercedOT.pdf
 - Design firm (MPA); Trail construction (Dreico Construction)
 - Grant funding ended June 1st, 2007 (\$145,860)
 - Recreation & Park will be placing benches and signage in late 2007
 - Overlook will be constructed by Recreation & Park in August 2007 w/City money
 - Grading and paving of trail to Cypress Point was completed in January 2007

Ground Water:

http://sfwater.org/Project.cfm/PRJ_ID/161

http://sfwater.org/mto_main.cfm/MC_ID/13/MSC_ID/165/MTO_ID/285

- Test well proposed to be located near Lake Merced Pump Station
- North Westside basin municipal groundwater wells (six) to supplement City water supply and provide emergency treated water. New pipelines will feed three reservoirs

- This effort in addition to recycled water is an attempt to save 10,000,000 gallons of water a day and reduce dependency on imported water
- Groundwater project NW Basin Watershed Plan constructed one of several test wells near Lake Merced pump station 400-450ft. deep to test productivity flow of aquifer and influence of well on Lake Merced water level

Sunset Swales Parking Lot Storm Water Retrofit:

<http://sfwater.org/Files/Reports/SunsetSwalesProjectSummary5-10-07.pdf>

- Parking lot will capture and treat storm water before entering Lake Merced
- Water will be channeled through drought and inundation resistant vegetation
- Approximately 138 parking spots have been lined
- Goals of retrofit include:
 - Enhance the parkland qualities of the areas surrounding the Lake Merced watershed by converting impervious paved surfaces into pervious, vegetated areas
 - Test bio-climatically appropriate plantings for storm water management in San Francisco
 - Design new vegetated areas as a demonstration project for storm water Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Create an attractive, garden setting for a San Francisco Arts Commission statue of Juan Bautista de Anza.

Recycled Water:

http://sfwater.org/detail.cfm/MC_ID/13/MSC_ID/165/MTO_ID/290/C_ID/2920

- Focus on West side and supplementing water to Zoo, Lincoln Park, SFSU, Golden Gate Park, Park Merced, and golf courses.
- Location of storage tank and recycling treatment facility with reverse osmosis is being explored with the current Boathouse footprint being preferred from an engineering standpoint. Further exploration and community input is scheduled.
- Encouraged to tour the pilot/demonstration treatment technology at Oceanside water plant (event details to be e-mailed to LMTF)
- Responses to Boathouse location:
 - Approximate 15,000 sq. ft. needed for facility and additional space needed for a 1.8 million gallon storage tank (100 x 100ft.)
 - Meeting in early May 2007 to address other locations, design, and what should stay/be moved in terms of recreation, concessions, boathouse, etc.
 - Request for list of rejected sites
 - Aesthetics (scale of tank; visual impact, size of facility)
 - Multi-use of facility in addition to recycled water treatment facility
 - No more capital improvements on Lake
 - Alternative sites (PRGC, Police Range, armory, zoo parking lot)
 - Other issues include tsunami, water rate increase, weight stability (7,220 tons)

Lake Merced Boathouse:

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD) was planning to release an RFP for the renovation and operation of the Lake Merced Boathouse in 2006. Currently, there will be no RFP from SFRPD due to a possible management shift with San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the priority of the watershed plan. During 2006, San Francisco State University and CalTrout explored separate and joint proposals for responding the Boathouse RFP. Below are highlights:

- San Francisco State University (SFSU)
 - Interested in renovating and operating an environmental/recreational/community center at the Lake Merced Boathouse that is consistent with the Stewardship Plan and that will be a LEED certified "green" building
 - An information gathering workshop was hosted by HOK architects on Tuesday, August 8th, 2007 and was announced at the prior LMTF meeting
 - Exploring potential partnership with CalTrout
 - No commitment or formal support has been communicated by the University President

- CalTrout
 - Interested in providing an environmental/recreational/community center consistent with the stewardship plan to the community
 - Initial concept design completed and will follow LEED certified “green” building guidelines
- San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD)
 - SFRP and SFPUC discussed the Lake Merced Boathouse RFP and the Lake Merced Watershed plan in September 2006, and agreed not to release an RFP until the issue is examined.
 - The Recreation Commission unanimously agreed that recreation should be the priority operation of the boathouse

Vista Grande Watershed Plan:

The Vista Grande Watershed includes approximately 2.5 square miles in Daly City and San Mateo County and the Vista Grande Canal and tunnel in San Francisco. The northern border of the watershed is in San Francisco, adjacent to Lake Merced and includes the Vista Grande Canal and Tunnel near John Muir Drive. The Western border of the watershed is the Pacific Ocean. A large drainage area that includes much of Daly City and a portion of unincorporated San Mateo County characterizes the watershed. Storm flows from Daly City drain into the Vista Grande Watershed, entering the Vista Grande Canal and Tunnel before being discharged through an outfall on Ocean Beach near Fort Funston.

- RMC completed watershed plan including flooding, land use, diversion of water flow to ocean via tunnel realignment (more cost effective than injection wells putting water back into aquifer)
- Injection wells solution will not solve flooding issues
- storm water runoff and water retention resulting from development issues, and constructive wetlands will be examined
- 114-165 million dollars with construction beginning year 2012 complex task with multiple projects in conjunction with the Sanitation District
- RFPs will be released in November with a contract in late January looking for engineers to develop only a design plan
- The Vista Grande Watershed final report is on the City’s website:
<http://www.ci.daly-city.ca.us/>

SFSU Master plan:

www.sfsu/masterplan.org

- 6-phase plan

▪ Phase 1: Defining the Vision	November 2005 - February 2006
▪ Phase 2: Campus Design Concepts	January - March 2006
▪ Phase 3: Refinement of Preferred Concept	March - June 2006
▪ Phase 4: Draft Master Plan Report	June - September 2006
▪ Phase 5: Final Master Plan Report	October - December 2006
▪ Phase 6: Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	February - December 2006
- 60-day EIR public review period
February - April 2007
- Planning for 5,000 additional students
- Focus will be on connections to open space and community
- Fill in gaps of hydrology, ecology, transportation, community access, etc.
- 2020 plan opening corridor between 19th Ave. and Lake Merced Blvd. including restoration of creek, trail system, bicycle networks, and recreation facilities/fields as part of an overall storm water management project

Parkmerced Development:

- Bert Polacci, Property manager and Chris Colwick, Community Relations
- Built in late 40s and completed in 1952 by Met Life Insurance (four owners)
- Approx. \$100,000 million in renovation projects (painting, infrastructure, etc.)
- Created community outreach (Chris Colwick) began 2006
- Approximately 30 meetings yielded four themes (open space/recreation facilities, retail, access in & out/transit, for sale housing)

- Initial concepts by end of fall 2007
- Will monitor and consider other master plans (SFSU, Lake Merced, etc.)
- 115-acre existing site (currently 3000+ units)
- Will set up meeting/focus group with LMTF
- Bert Polacci (property manager) and Chris Colwick (community relations) presented basic information regarding Parkmerced
- Increase density over a 20-25 year phased development
- EIR process will begin at the end of 2007
- 115 acres (30 acres sold to SFSU, Mission Developers, and Summerhill Homes)
- 6,000 - 7,000 residents - 93% occupancy rate (19-20% SFSU students)
- Exploring rental and for-sale units
- Neighborhood meetings during 2007 are addressing traffic, parking, transit, housing, open space, retail, pedestrian access, and community amenities.
- New owners of Parkmerced have an overall vision, but no immediate plans
- General Growth company purchased Stonestown Galleria

Resolutions:

- Introduced resolution to develop management plan of Lake Merced and associated land tract facilities to foster Lake Merced stewardship; both commissions (SFRPD and SFPUC) to forward a plan to city by end of June 2007 (legislation to modify resolution 104035)
- LMTF unanimously passed a resolution on management responsibility reversal from SFRPD to SFPUC http://www.lmtf.org/documents/LakeMercedTaskForceResolution_amended.pdf

Ongoing Issues

- Feeding of birds and cats is an issue at LM although feeding birds is allowed at this regional park
- Off-Leash Dog areas:
 - Parks over 35 acres in size (Lake Merced) are considered regional parks and can contain soft barriers such as posts or field markers to delineate approved off-leash areas. Surface materials in these areas will be governed by existing conditions such as turf in meadows, grasslands, and pathways. Off-leash use in these areas does not preclude other recreational uses. The public can use them at its discretion.
- Location of proposed recycled water plant

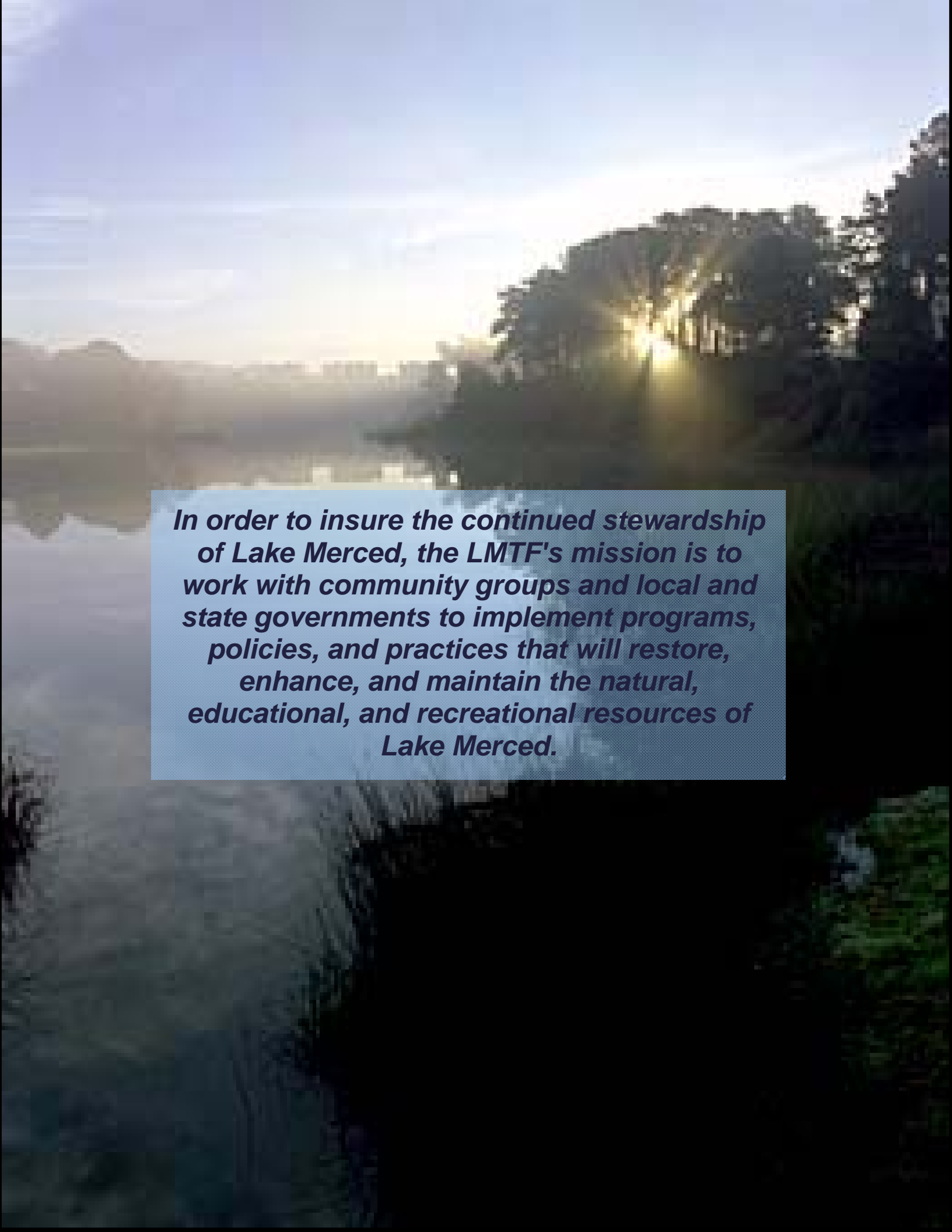
2006-2007 Events:

Lake Merced has been host to numerous recreation, education, and environmental events. From regattas, dragon boat races, and community sailing to elementary, middle, and high school environmental education programs, Lake Merced has been a well received venue for a multitude of programs, activities, and events. Below are a sample of a few events:

- <http://www.lakemerced.org/>
- Trout day June 24, 2006
- Turkey shoot at PRGC November 10-12, 2006
- Easter Egg Hunt at PRGC April 8, 2007
- Earth Day at SF Zoo April 22, 2007
- 2007 Trout Day September 2, 2007

2006-2007 Steering Committee

Mondy Lariz, Chair
 Tim Colen, Vice Chair
 Erik Rosegard, Secretary
 Mona Cereghino, Treasurer
 Dee Dee Workman, at large
 Lisa Wayne, at large
 Suzanne Gautier, at large

A scenic view of Lake Merced at sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. A large, dark tree stands on the right side of the frame, partially obscuring the sun. In the distance, a building is visible on the left side of the lake. The water is calm, reflecting the light from the sky.

In order to insure the continued stewardship of Lake Merced, the LMTF's mission is to work with community groups and local and state governments to implement programs, policies, and practices that will restore, enhance, and maintain the natural, educational, and recreational resources of Lake Merced.