San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail

Site Description for

Albany Beach

Location, Ownership, and Management: Albany Beach is located on the Albany shoreline in northwestern Alameda County in the city limits of Albany. The beach is located at the base of the Albany Peninsula, with the Golden Gate Fields racetrack to the east, Buchanan Street and the Albany Mudflats Ecological Reserve/State Marine Park (SMP) to the north, and San Francisco Bay and City of Albany lands to the west. Albany Beach is part of McLaughlin Eastshore State Park and is managed by the East Bay Regional Park District.

Contact Name: Takei, Kevin

Contact Phone: (510) 544-2321

Contact E-mail: ktakei@ebparks.org

Southern beach entrance	Albany Beach	Northern beach entrance

Facility Description: Albany Beach is a launch and destination for paddlers and boardsailors, providing a convenient launching point for exploration of the Eastshore State Park shoreline to the north and south. The beach does not have a ramp, boarding pier, or floating dock, but the beach is suitable for lighter watercraft, such as kayaks, canoes, and stand up paddleboards. Boaters may want to bring "boat wheels" (small boat dolly) to help get their boats and boards from the parking lot to the beach, because some of the parking is quite a distance from the beach. Boardsailing is concentrated in the southern portion of the beach and boardsailors will often use the existing Golden Gate Fields dirt parking area for equipment rigging.

The East Bay Regional Parks District and City of Albany provide a variety of shoreside facilities, including an ADA portable restroom, trails, bike racks, and parking. The primary parking area is located on Buchanan Street, which provides 40 spaces, including two van accessible ADA spaces. Parking along Buchanan Street is free and 2-hour limited. Park hours are from 5 am – 10 pm.

Additional parking is typically allowed in the Golden Gate Fields parking lot adjacet to the east of the Beach, which is accessed from Gilman Street to the south.

Site Overview Map

Regional Overview Map

Other Identifying or General Information:

Site ID: A1 In WT Plan: Yes Existing or Planned: Existing Ownership: Public County: Alameda Geo-Region: Albany/Berkeley/Emeryville SF Bay Plan Region: Central Bay North Launch or Destination: Launch	Home of a Club: No Used by a Program that Assists Persons with Disabilities: No Appreciated for Windy Conditions: Yes Near Food or Drink: No
Proximity to Other Sites: Point Isabel Regional Shoreline is located approximately 1.3 miles north of Albany Beach. To the south, the Berkeley Marina and Small Boat Launch are 1.8 and 2.5 miles away, respectively.	

Description of Launch/Landing:

Beach: Yes Fixed Dock/Pier Launch/Landing: No Float: No Transfer/Launch Assistance System: No Gangway: No Boat/Trailer Ramp: No Mudflats Affect Site Usability: No	Beach Wheelchair Available: No Stair Water Entry: No Firm-Surface Beach Crossing: No Fee for Launch or Parking: No Water Entry Path: No

Albany Beach is a sandy beach backed by low dunes. The beach faces west and can get windy in the afternoons, particularly during summer months. The site is most utilized by kayakers under calm conditions and kiteboarders when the winds are up.

Site Appears to be Suitable For:

Kayak: Yes	Canoe: Yes
Windsurfer: Yes	Outrigger Canoe: No
Kiteboard: Yes	Sculling: No
Whaleboat: No	Rowboat/Dinghy: No
Stand Up Paddleboard: Yes	Dragonboat: No

Transportation and Parking:

General Spaces (number): 40 ADA Parking Spaces (number): 2 ADA Parking Description: Two existing van accessible spaces located closest to the beach. Duration (hours): 2 Overnight Parking Allowed: No Loading/Unloading Area: No	Bay Trail: Yes Public Transportation: No transit lines currently run to Albany Beach - the nearest bus stop is approximately 1.3 miles east. The Bay Trail runs through Albany Beach and the Albany Beach Restoration and Public Access Project will complete an important link that will connect existing Bay Trail segments in Berkeley to the south and Richmond to the north.
 Current Albany Beach parking has 40 spaces and is 2 hour limited.	 *An upcoming project (discuss below) will provide 20 additional spaces that are not time limited.*

Path of Travel:

Distance to Launch from Parking Area (feet): 500
Distance to Launch from ADA Parking (feet): 500
Distance to Launch from ADA Restrooms (feet): 460
Distance from ADA Restrooms to ADA Parking (feet): 40
Path of Travel Exists: Partial

Path of Travel Description: The path of travel consists of an asphalt path from parking area and bathroom to edge of sand dunes. There is no accessible path to the edge of water.

There is a paved path of travel from the two ADA spaces along Buchanan Street to the top of the dunes at the northern entrance to the beach. The Alabany Beach Habitat Restoration and Public Access Project (discuss below) will provide accessibility mats in two locations to provide firm surface beach crossings. Construction is scheduled for 2018.

Overnight Accommodations:

Hotel: No	Hostel: No	Ship: No	Camping: No	Other: No

Other Site Amenities:

Total Restrooms: 1 Total ADA Restrooms: 1 Restroom Description: One portable restroom (not in good condition). Benches: Yes	Boat Washing: No Rigging/Staging Area: No Picnic Tables: No BBQ: No Boat Storage: No
 ADA portable restroom	 *San Francisco Bay Trail on the Albany Bulb*

Additional Notes Related to Accessibility:

Numerous upland facilities, including parking, trails, and a portable restroom, are accessible. There are two ADA spaces with a paved path of travel that runs to the top of the dune. Access across the beach is not currently accessible.

Additional Notes on Use of Site (Boating and Non-Boating) and Existing and Planned Management:

Albany Beach is popular with kayakers and paddle boarders when conditions are calm. Frequent winds and the wide beach combine to make Albany Beach one of a few kiteboarding launches in the East Bay. Boardsailors typically launch from southern portion of the beach and utilize the Golden Gate Fields parking area for rigging equipment.

Safety and Security, including Parking:

Due to the popularity of Albany Beach with dog walkers and beach-goers, extreme caution needs to be utilized when kiteboarding from this site. Winds tend to be on-shore, which pushes boardsailors back towards shore in cases of equipment failure or inexperience. No shipping lanes occur in the immediate vicinity of the shoreline.

Wildlife and Habitat Considerations:

Albany Beach and adjacent shoreline is fairly urban, with disturbed onshore habitat occuring in the immediate vicinity. Albany Beach is one of the few examples of a sandy beach– dune complex in the Central Bay. It is a recently formed beach that has established over the past 60 years due to the orientation of the landfill on the south Albany Neck that has captured and accumulated wave-driven drifts of bay sand. Existing use of Albany Beach is high and it is not anticipated that additional use by Water Trail users would substantially increase overall site visitation.

The Albany Mudflats Ecological Reserve / State Marine Park, an important feeding ground for a variety of shorebirds and waterfowl, is located north of the Albany Bulb, an approximately 1.2 mile paddle from the Beach. Paddling in the Albany Mudflats Ecological Reserve / State Marine Park is prohibited (Title 14, CCR, Section 632 (b) (60)). Due to the distance around the Albany Bulb and frequent muddy conditions, it is not anticipated that visitation to the Albany Mudflats would increase. Emeryville Cresent State Marine Reserve is located approximately 3.8 miles to the south. The Albany Mudflats and Emeryville Crescent are extremely shallow and large mudflats are exposed at low tides. Birds foraging in the mudflats would not be affected by boaters, as boaters would not be able to paddle in these areas at low tide. Increased signage encouraging boaters to be aware of tides and the potential for getting stranded in the mud would reduce potential for boaters to affect these habitats.

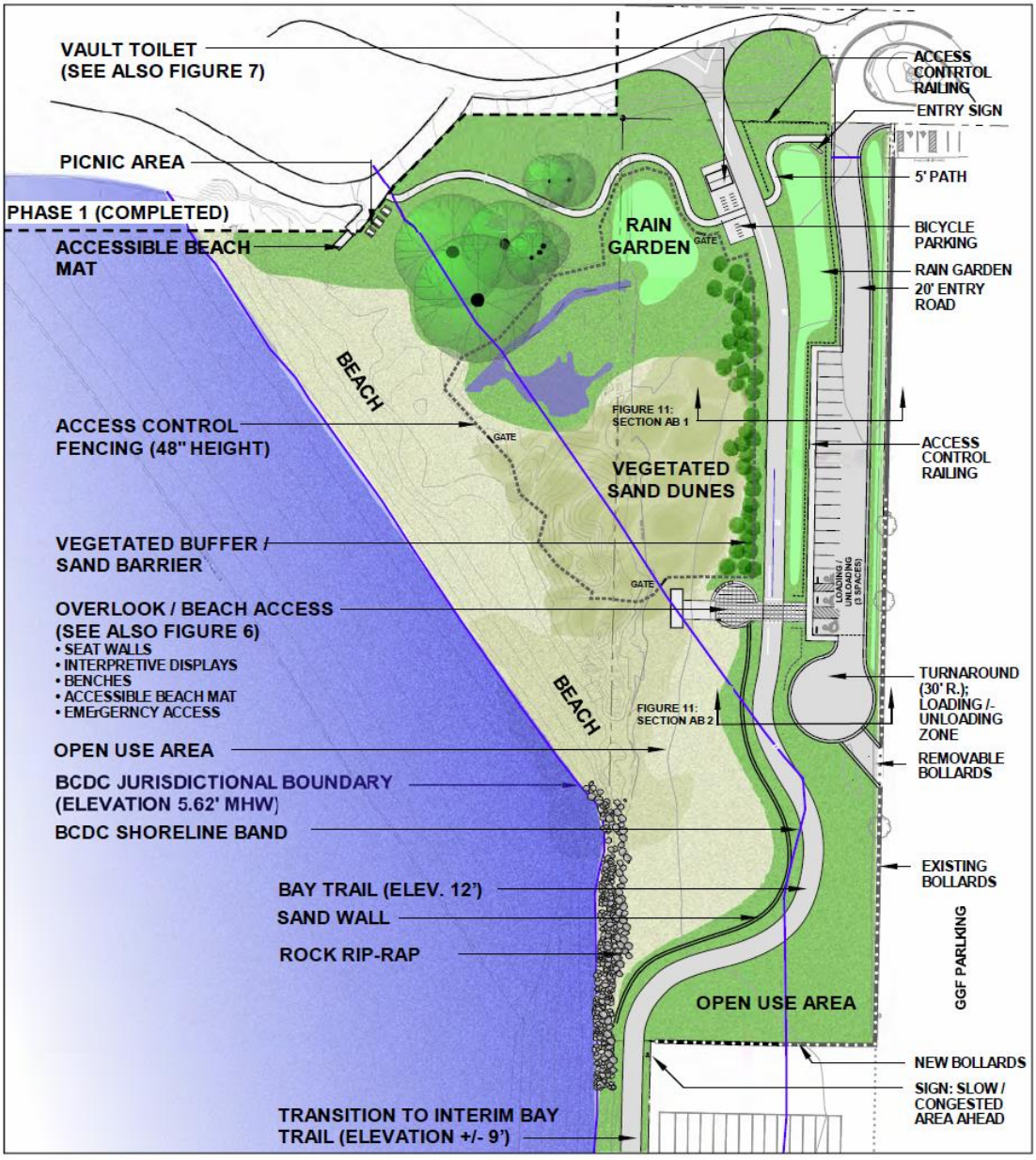
In addition, Brooks Island is approximately two miles of the site. Brooks Island contains 18 species of nesting birds, including herons, gulls, and terns, and is a secondary harbor seal haulout site. Signage will inform paddlers that entering the Albany Mudflats and landing on most of Brooks Island is prohibited.

Other Existing or Anticipated Water Trail-Related Issues and Opportunities:

The East Bay Regional Park District is in the final design stages of the ***Alabany Beach Habitat Restoration and Public Access Project***, which is planned for construction in 2018. The project includes a variety of amenities that will enhance access to non-motorized small boats:

- Parking near the beach that is not time restricted
- Loading/unloading area in the turn-around with direct access to an open use area (potential rigging area among other uses)
- Expanded beach area for rigging / staging of small watercraft
- Vault ADA restrooms
- Accessibility mats in 2 locations to provide firm surface beach crossing
- Access for City of Albany emergency response (beach and water)

Additional details about the project can be found at: ebparks.org/about/planning#albany



Education, Outreach, and Stewardship, Including Signage:

The Water Trail educational sign includes information about safety precautions, not landing in sensitive habitats, how to boat responsibly near wildlife, and buffer distances from sensitive species. More detailed information about boater safety is found on the Water Trail website and in the Water Trail brochure.

Accessibility of Sites within the Albany/Berkeley/Emeryville Geo-Region:

There are six Water Trail sites identified within this geo-region: Albany Beach, Berkeley Marina Ramp, Berkeley Marina Small Boat Launch, Point Emery, Shorebird Park, and Emeryville City Marina. The experiences that are available in the Albany/Berkeley/Emeryville Geo-Region are predominantly urban, but provide a variety of different facilities including beach launches, docks, and ramps.

Several sites within this geo-region provide accessible features, including Albany Beach, the Berkeley Marina Ramp, the Berkeley Marina Small Boat Launch, and the Emeryville Marina but none are currently considered broadly accessible. The Albany Beach Restoration and Public Access Project will provide two ADA compliant access locations across the sandy beach and reduce the path of travel distance from ADA parking to the beach. Removable sand mats will provide ADA access further westward onto the soft beach sands. In addition, Berkeley Marina Small Boat Launch will provide a broadly accessible site upon completion of scheduled improvements in 2018. These improvements include a new ADA restroom, improved path of travel, paving/repaving the parking area, and adding an accessible gangway to the existing low-freeboard dock.

Summary of Environmental Review
based on the
San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan Final Environmental Impact Report

Albany Beach
June 2, 2017

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
Recreation References: WT DREIR, pp. 3-32 to 3-37.	Albany Beach and the Albany Bulb are a developed park with high levels of existing public use. Although informal parking allowed on Golden Gate Fields property will be lost, parking developed as part of the Albany Beach Habitat Restoration and Public Access Project should have sufficient capacity to accommodate potential increased levels of use associated with the Water Trail.	Regarding recreational conflicts, Water Trail users may submit comments to Water Trail staff through the website if they witness or experience recreational conflict at any designated site. In spite of the current heavy use, no user conflicts have been observed or recorded.
Navigational and Personal Safety References: WT DREIR pp. 3-38 to 3-51, and Figures 3.4.2-1 and 3.4.2-2.	Small boat users should be aware of winds and currents. No major shipping channels occur in the immediate vicinity of Albany Beach.	The Water Trail educational sign provides information related to navigational and personal boating safety.
Aesthetics References: WT DREIR pp. 3-56 to 3-68.	Albany Beach is considered an urban launch, characterized by the developed beach park adjacent to the Golden Gate Fields complex.	The Water Trail will require the inclusion of a Water Trail identification sign at the two primary access locations along the beach. A “sign program” will be developed with the East Bay Regional Parks Department to ensure that the I.D. sign and additional educational sign do not result in sign clutter at the site.

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
Biology- Vegetation References: WT DREIR pp. 3-69 to 3-92 and Table 3.7.2-1 and Table 3.7.2-2.	The shoreline adjacent to Albany Beach is reinforced with riprap and is generally developed. Tidal mudflats occur within Albany Mudflats to the north of the Albany Bulb.	Boating in the Albany Mudflats is prohibited to protect foraging bird species and boaters should keep recommended distances from sensitive habitats. Preventing the inadvertent spread of exotic, invasive plant species is important at all launch sites. The WT educational sign and website ask WT users to help prevent the spread of invasive species by rinsing boats and equipment immediately after use.
Biology – Birds *References: WT FEIR text and map*	Due to the developed nature of the region, there are limited active nesting areas in the vicinity of the site. The Albany Mudflats and Emeryville Crescent are extremely shallow and large mudflats are exposed at low tides. The Albany Mudflats Ecological Reserve / State Marine Park and Emeryville Crescent, important feeding grounds for a variety of shorebirds and waterfowl, are located within four miles of the site. Paddling in the Albany Mudflats Ecological Reserve / State Marine Park is prohibited (Title 14, CCR, Section 632 (b) (60)). Brooks Island is also within four miles of the site. Brooks Island contains 18 species of nesting birds, including herons, gulls, and terns.	The WT educational sign includes information about how to paddle responsibly around wildlife and to maintain a buffer distance from nesting birds. The WT website and brochure include more detailed information about not disturbing birds. Visitation to nearby sensitive shorelines is not anticipated to substantially increase given that Albany Beach is used primarily by kite boarders who seek the open waters of the Bay and paddlers who would get stranded in the mud. Birds foraging in the mudflats would not be affected by boaters, as boaters would not be able to paddle in these areas at low tide. Increased signage encouraging boaters to be aware of tides and the potential for getting stranded in the mud would reduce potential for boaters to affect these habitats.
Biology – Rafting Waterfowl References: WT DREIR pp. 3-93 to 3-131 and Table 3.8.2-1, Figure 3.8.2-1.	This site provides access to areas where rafting waterfowl congregate.	Disturbance of rafting waterfowl is not addressed in existing signs on site but is highlighted in the Water Trail educational sign, brochure, and website.

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
Biology – Ridgway's rail and California black rail and high tide refugia References: WT DREIR pp. 3-93 to 3-131 and Figure 3.8.2-2	Ridgway's rail and black rail depend on habitat that does not exist at or in the immediate vicinity of Albany Beach.	Signage is needed to emphasize the importance of not entering marshes, keeping a 50-foot buffer from rail habitat (not entering channels less than 100-feet wide), importance of staying clear of high-tide refugia, and that landing in marshes and on levees is prohibited. The Water Trail educational sign and brochure include this information.
Biology –Western Snowy Plover References: WT DREIR pp. 3-93 to 3-131 and Figure 3.8.2-3	Snowy plovers may forage on Albany Beach; however, nesting in San Francisco Bay is associated with emergent or dry salt pond beds, or sometimes levee roads. These habitats are not found in the vicinity of Albany Beach.	The Water Trail educational sign and brochure include bird avoidance information.
Biology – Harbor Seals References: WT DREIR pp. 3-132 to 3-156, Figure 3.9.2-1, and Tables 3.9.2-1, 3.9.2-2, 3.9.5-1, and 3.9.5-2	A secondary haul-out site is located on Brooks Island, within four miles of this site.	The WT educational sign, brochure, and website all advise boaters not to land at haul-out sites and to always stay at least 330' away from hauled-out harbor seals and at least 500' away from March to July when seals are pupping.
Cultural Resources	WT-related construction is anticipated to occur in 2018. Disturbance would occur within Albany Beach and the adjacent Golden Gate Fields parking area No ground disturbance is proposed and no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated to occur. NMSB users are not allowed to land in adjacent wetland habitat, where they could potentially disturb cultural artifacts.	Appropriate cultural resource analysis has occurred through the permit and CEQA process. The WT website includes information about avoiding disturbance to cultural artifacts.
Hydrology	Proposed construction would require implementation of appropriate erosion control and stormwater management measures. Paving of the parking area could reduce sediment run-off into the Bay during storm events.	Implementation of appropriate erosion control measures would ensure changes to hydrology would not significantly affect water quality. Appropriate erosion control measures will be required in the construction contract and by permit.

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
Transportation, Circulation, and Parking	Parking during weekends can become congested. Improvements to Albany Beach will provide 20 additional parking spaces, which will help accommodate any increase in use that may result from improved facilities.	Increased use by non-motorized small boat users is not expected to be great enough to overwhelm parking.

San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail

www.sfbaywatertrail.org

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WATER TRAIL

Albany and Keller Beach Water Trail Sites

- Designated Water Trail Site
- Potential Water Trail Site
- 4 Mile Buffer (from Potential Sites)
- Shipping Channel
- Active Heronry
- Pelican Roost
- Primary or secondary harbor seal haul out site
- Ridgway's/Black Rail

N 0 1.7 Miles

CA Harbor Seal data from Water Trail FEIR. Ridgway's and black rail, Western snowy plover, and heronry data generated from 2015 California Natural DiversityDatabase

(5/1/2017)

Path: K:\GIS\WaterTrail2015_WaterTrail_Maps\Albany_Keller_Jun2017Designations.mxd