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San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail

Site Designation & Grant Program Handbook



June 12, 2015

To All Interested Parties



The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail) Program is pleased to present the *Site Designation and Grant Program Handbook* for consideration by the small-boating community, launch site owners/managers, and everyone else interested in the future of the Water Trail. We have written this Handbook to provide useful information and recommendations for interested parties when considering joining the Water Trail and/or applying for a Water Trail grant. Water Trail staff is committed to working with all parties to advance the planning for and implementation of the Water Trail throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and would like you to consider the following:

- With the help of our partners at each site, we will build on the Water Trail's comprehensive plans, programs, and partnerships to achieve a world-class recreational resource for the benefit of residents and visitors throughout the San Francisco Bay Area for decades to come.
- Each designated site will allow non-motorized small boat users to enjoy the historic, scenic, cultural, and environmental richness of San Francisco Bay and its nearby tributary waters.
- The Water Trail's network of sites will encourage people to exercise and explore San Francisco Bay in different boat types such as kayaks, sailboards, dragon boats, and stand-up paddleboards.
- The Water Trail will promote safe and responsible use of the Bay while protecting and increasing appreciation of its environmental resources through education and strategic planning.

We hope that this Handbook objectively presents the Water Trail Program and its benefits and serves as a useful reference for parties considering site designation or applying for a Water Trail grant. We look forward to realizing the continued development of the Water Trail and improved access to San Francisco Bay.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dick Wayman".

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1.0 Introduction to the Water Trail

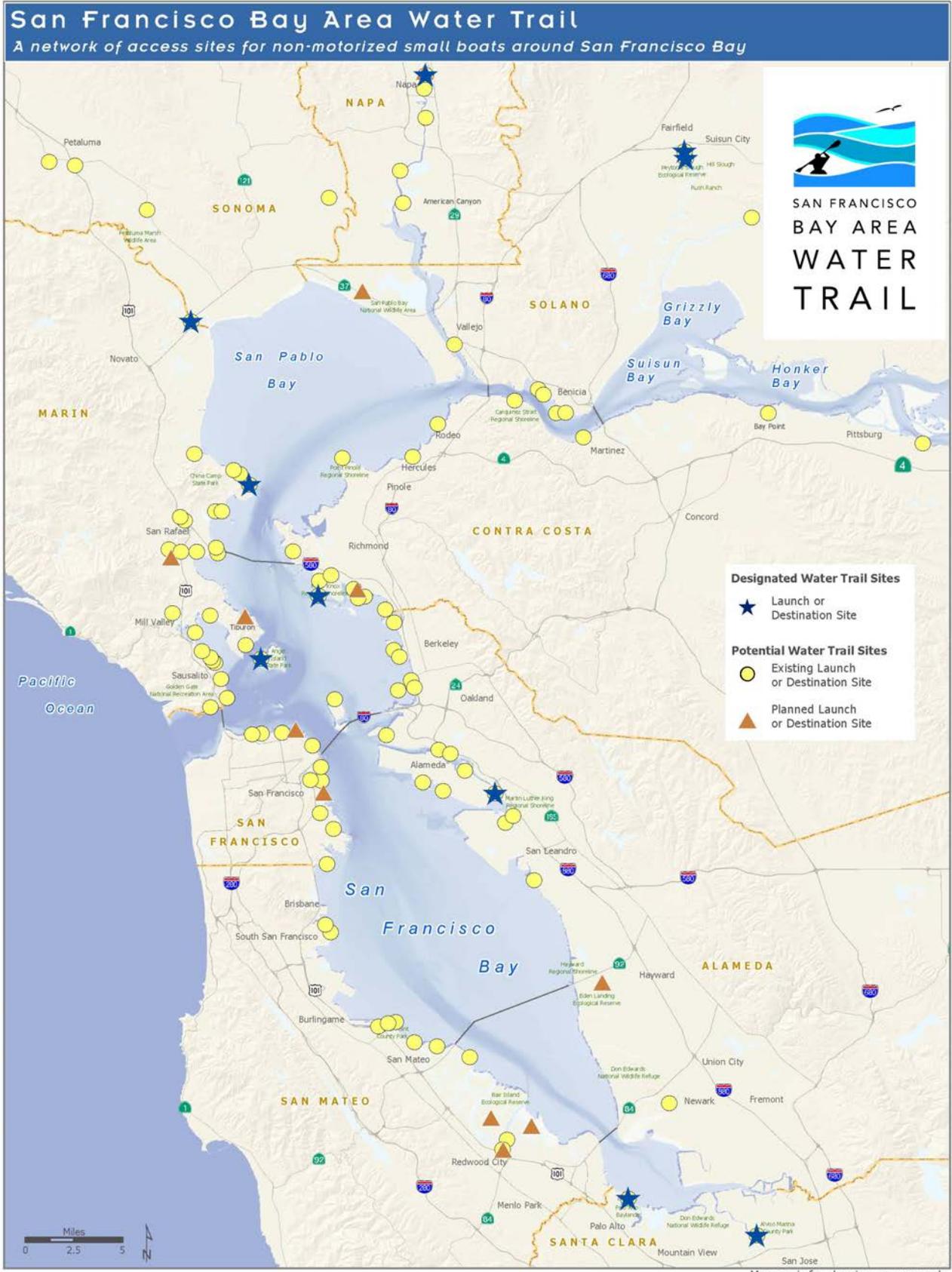


The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail) is a growing network of designated launching and landing sites, or “trailheads,” around San Francisco Bay. Each trailhead enables non-motorized small boat users to enjoy the historic, scenic, cultural, and environmental richness of San Francisco Bay and its nearby tributary waters. The Water Trail promotes safe and responsible use of the Bay while protecting and increasing appreciation of its environmental resources through education and strategic planning. The Water Trail’s network of sites encourages people to explore the Bay in different boat types (such as kayaks, sailboards, dragon boats, and stand up paddleboards) and in a variety of settings through single- and multi-day trips. Potentially, more than 100 existing marinas, waterfront parks, and other publicly accessible sites will become part of the Water Trail (see map on following page).

The vision of the Water Trail Program began with Bay Access, a non-profit group working to ensure future access for non-motorized small boat users on the Bay. This vision became law in 2005 with the passage of the Water Trail Act by the California Legislature. Today, this regional, nine-county program is being implemented under the leadership of the State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) in close collaboration with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the Division of Boating and Waterways (Cal Boating), plus an advisory committee representing a broad range of interests and expertise. With the help of our partners at each site, we are building on the Water Trail’s comprehensive plans, programs, and partnerships to achieve a world-class recreational resource for the benefit of local residents and visitors to the Bay Area for decades to come.



The Water Trail Program is intended to promote the national and statewide importance of recreation on the San Francisco Bay, including creation of a world-class Water Trail and access system. By promoting safe access, education, and stewardship, the Water Trail can enhance user experience and appreciation for the natural and cultural resources of the Bay.



1.1 Purpose of the Water Trail Program

The competing pressures of increased non-motorized small boat use and ongoing development in the Bay Area stimulated the need for a planned and coordinated approach to improved access to Bay Area waters. Natural processes and a lack of funding to pay for repairs have resulted in the deterioration of many access facilities, which threatens the closure or loss of existing water access locations over time. The Water Trail Program provides a regional, overarching strategy to enhance the quality, diversity, and accessibility of opportunities for outdoor recreation around the Bay. The Program advocates for improved public access through education, outreach, coordination, and funding for facility enhancements.



With the potential for more than 100 sites, the Water Trail will greatly improve public access to and along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

1.2 Implementation Principles

Site designation within the Water Trail Program requires its staff and advisors to address a range of principles that fall within four categories:

- Non-motorized small boating **access** onto the Bay
- Wildlife and habitat **resource protection**
- Personal and navigational **safety** and security
- **Education**, outreach, and stewardship

The Water Trail Program has a website and brochure with information about facilities at designated trailheads, safe and environmentally sound boating practices, and Bay wildlife habitats. Each designated Water Trail site is supplied with an identification and education sign, whose key content focuses on safe and environmentally responsible boating (the Water Trail Ethic). Signs include site-specific identification of nearby resources and navigational safety issues.

1.3 Water Trail Planning and Outreach

Extensive research, coordination, and outreach are behind the Water Trail's creation and development. Continued development of the Water Trail builds on several key documents that were prepared with input and oversight from a wide variety of experts and stakeholders. These key documents are briefly described below:

- **The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Act (Assembly Bill 1296, Statutes of 2005, Hancock).** *Enabling legislation for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.*
- **Enhanced San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan (December 2011).** *A guide to trail implementation for the agencies and organizations that will develop and manage Water Trail access points and programs. Recommended policies and procedures in the Plan define how the Water Trail will take shape over time by guiding trail planning, development, and management on organizational, programmatic, and trailhead-specific levels.*
- **San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (March 2011).** *Programmatic California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis for implementation of the Water Trail Program. Includes discussion of potential impacts, thresholds, and mitigation measures developed in coordination with resource agencies, and responses to public comments.*
- **Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP, March 2011).** *Mitigation and reporting requirements for the Water Trail Program that resulted from the EIR analysis. Includes measures for issues ranging from signage requirements to wildlife buffers and consultation procedures.*
- **Water Trail Education, Outreach and Stewardship Program (December 2011).** *Blueprint for education, outreach, and stewardship activities presented in three broad themes: promotion of personal and navigational safety; creation of a comprehensive education program to increase environmental education and interpretation and to support access to the Water Trail for all interested users; and development of a Water Trail Ethic emphasizing safe, low-impact boating practices and stewardship of the Bay.*
- **Issues and Recommendations for Improved Accessibility (April 2013).** *Analysis and recommendations to maximize and prioritize accessibility for Bay Area sites while balancing environmental considerations.*
- **San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Accessibility Plan (January 2015).** *Provides region-specific guidance focused on improving the accessibility of launching and landing sites for persons with disabilities using non-motorized small boats. It provides guidance for site owners and for the Water Trail implementation and designation process.*

All documents can be found online at
www.sfbaywatertrail.org

Public Outreach. Extensive public outreach has occurred and is ongoing as a core component of the Water Trail Program. Outreach includes presentations at government meetings, public forums, hosting events, conferences, meetings with interested parties (e.g., boating clubs), and partnering with educators, outfitters, businesses, agencies, and organizations. Outreach to people and organizations that are already connected with paddleboaters and boardsailors is an efficient way to reach a broad audience of trail users – including tourists and novice boaters – and this outreach can foster support for the trail among businesses and agencies. The Water Trail Program provides educational materials to these groups to enhance public understanding about safety, sensitive species, habitats, and appropriate measures to avoid or minimize potential harm.



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA
WATER TRAIL
sfbaywatertrail.org



Coastal
Conservancy

Be aware of...

- Tides, winds and currents — avoid getting stuck in the mud or being too tired to get back to shore
- Ferry routes and shipping channels — use caution and stay clear of larger boats
- Cold water temperatures — wear insulating gear and a personal flotation device, and be prepared for emergencies
- Seasonal hunting in specific locations around the Bay, generally October–January. For information, visit www.wildlife.ca.gov

Enjoy viewing wildlife and help protect it

- Prevent the spread of invasive species by rinsing off equipment
- Do not land in marshes, on levees, or at seal haul-out sites
- Keep your distance from birds and harbor seals
- Avoid paddling directly at wildlife



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Wildlife Buffer Distances

Species	Feet	Meters
California Brown Pelican <i>Roosts on docks</i>	200	50
Pacific Harbor Seal <i>August–February</i>	300	100
Pacific Harbor Seal <i>Pupping Season: March–July</i>	500	150
Herons & Egrets <i>Nest in trees</i>	700	200
Rafting Waterfowl <i>Rest in open waters</i>	800	250
California Clapper Rail <i>Lives/nests in tidal marshes</i>	100	25
Western Burrowing Owl <i>Nests in grasslands</i>	100	25
Western Snowy Plover <i>Nests on salt pans</i>	100	25

To protect sensitive species, maintain these recommended distances from wildlife.
100 feet = six sea kayaks

***Inset 1.** Public outreach, including the use of signs (above), is a core component of the Water Trail program. Water Trail staff has worked closely with resource agencies and interested parties to convey meaningful information to engage and educate the public about safety and wildlife protection.*

*San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail
Site Designation & Grant Application Handbook*

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1.4 Key Benefits

The Water Trail Program enhances public access, encourages education, expands accessibility, and promotes regional planning and cooperation. These benefits are detailed below.

Key Benefits of the Water Trail

Enhanced Access

- **Creates** a coordinated set of access locations allowing for single-point, multiple-point, and multi-day excursions
- **Improves** existing boat launch facilities and promotes more overnight facilities, including camping, along the shoreline for small boat users
- **Promotes** placement of enhanced facilities and any new access locations in areas where they would provide the greatest recreational benefit and avoid or minimize adverse impacts to wildlife, habitats, and agricultural operations
- **Plans** for increased small boat use associated with regional population growth and changes in population demographics

Education

- **Promotes** safe boating practices for non-motorized small boat users
- **Reduces impacts** to sensitive wildlife and habitat and other resources through education of boaters
- **Distributes high-quality information** regarding small boat access facilities through the development of educational and outreach materials, including a website, maps, brochures, and, in the future, a guidebook
- **Fosters stewardship** of the Bay and of trailhead facilities

Expanded Accessibility

- **Provides grants** or help improve ADA accessibility of existing sites
- **Increases opportunities** to recreate close to home and use public transportation rather than private vehicles (e.g., through the addition of boat storage facilities)
- **Streamlines planning** and implementation of high priority site enhancements through the programmatic Water Trail Final Environmental Impact Report developed under the California Environmental Quality Act
- **Expands connections** with other regional trail systems (such as the San Francisco Bay Trail) to include the waters of the Bay

Promotion of Regional Planning and Cooperation

- **Reduces conflicts** among recreational users of launch sites through planning and facility design
- **Develops design guidelines** for non-motorized small boat facilities that address the shoreline topography of San Francisco Bay and serve users with physical disabilities
- **Provides funding** and publicity for Water Trail sites and fosters the **economic growth** of site-related businesses (e.g., boat storage facilities, rental concessions, and nearby restaurants and hotels)

2.0 Site Designation: How to Join the Water Trail

2.1 Introduction

The Water Trail will enhance access to the shoreline and waters of the San Francisco Bay, from Santa Clara County in the south to the upper reaches of the Napa River in the north, and dozens of sites in between. By improving access, providing education, and encouraging improved facilities through grants and public support, the Water Trail has the potential to become a major recreational resource for the more than seven million residents of the greater Bay Area, as well as boosting tourism and recreational opportunities for visitors.

The Water Trail is a voluntary program, so ultimately its success will be dependent on the participation and enthusiasm of site owners and managers that choose to join the Water Trail. In order to streamline the site designation process and encourage participation, the manner and order in which sites are considered eligible, and a step-by-step description of the designation process, are detailed below. All required site designation forms and templates, as described below, are provided in **Appendix A**.

2.2 Criteria for Eligible Sites

The criteria for a site to be eligible to join the Water Trail are not intended to be onerous or prohibitive. Establishing basic requirements for a site to be eligible ensures that the Water Trail Program focusses resources on sites that currently (or are prepared to) provide responsible public access to the waters of San Francisco Bay. Therefore, eligible sites are locations that have existing access infrastructure and management in place, ranging from full-service marinas to shoreline ramps in public parks. The Water Trail Enhanced Access Plan has identified more than 135 sites that are potentially eligible for inclusion in the Water Trail. Owners or managers of sites not listed in the Plan are encouraged to consult Water Trail staff regarding site eligibility. Required and preferred eligibility criteria are provided below.



With completion of the planning described in Section 1, the Water Trail Program is looking forward to rapidly expanding the network of designated sites to join designated sites like Alviso Marina County Park in Santa Clara County.

Criteria for Site Designation

Required Criteria

- Site owner/manager wants to join the Water Trail.
- Water Trail-related facilities are open to the public, or will be made so.
- Site has launch facilities or launch areas that can be used by non-motorized small boats (NMSBs).
- Site owner/manager is willing to have a Water Trail sign installed and maintained at the site.
- Site is located within the jurisdictional area of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.
- Launch site itself does not clearly impact wildlife or sensitive habitats, or interfere with private property rights or agricultural operations.
- Launch site does not clearly pose a health or safety risk to site users (e.g., from water quality problems).
- If enhancement is needed, Best Management Practices are followed, and sea level rise, climate change, and aesthetic considerations are part of site facility design.

Preferred Criteria

- Site owner/manager is ready to engage site-related staff in the process of site designation.
- Site has adequate parking, can accommodate some additional site users, and allows site users to park for enough hours to be able to spend the day on the water.
- Site is already heavily used by NMSBs.
- Site has restroom(s).
- If site is not currently accessible to a broad range of NMSB users, it can be made accessible.
- Site is reachable by public transportation.
- Kayaking/paddling/group sports classes and/or training are available at site
- Boat storage is available on site or could be added to site
- If major enhancement is needed, matching funds are provided by site owner or other funding sources that will leverage Water Trail funding.
- Provides overnight accommodation that may be used by, or is specifically for, NMSB users (e.g., if in a hostel, there is a place to store the boat or board)
- Provides boat washing facilities
- Water Trail site designation is supported by an adopted local or regional plan.
- Site owner/manager is supportive of the strategies in the Enhanced Water Trail Plan and is willing and able to carry out any necessary mitigation measures from the Water Trail Final Environmental Impact Report that apply to the site and are not otherwise already being carried out.

2.3 ADA Accessibility Criteria

One of the primary goals of the Water Trail Program is to help meet the needs of persons with disabilities who wish to participate in non-motorized small boat recreation on San Francisco Bay. As the Water Trail grows it is addressing how to provide meaningful access to its benefits to persons with disabilities, including reasonable modifications and accommodations. In order to guide the Program to improve access for persons with disabilities, while serving the needs of all Water Trail users, a team of staff and accessibility consultants developed the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Accessibility Plan.



The Water Trail Program as a whole must be ADA-accessible, as guided through the Accessibility Plan. Accessibility of individual sites will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, both on the merits of each site and in relation to other sites in the Program.

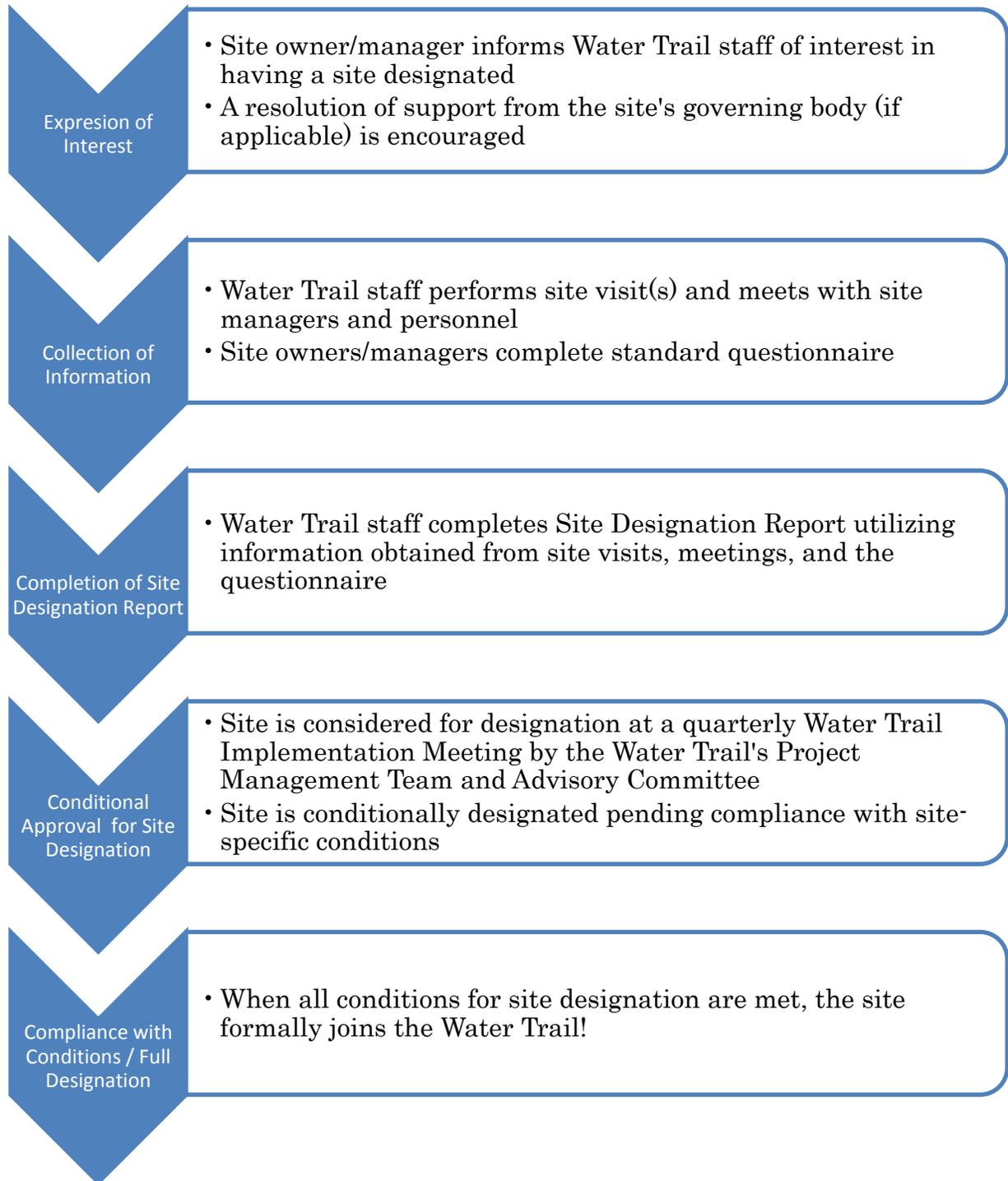
The large number of possible combinations of boat types and launch facilities around San Francisco Bay required a wide-ranging evaluation of access needs and options. The Accessibility Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the primary types of non-motorized small boats and launch facilities and describes what is needed to ensure the program provides broad accessibility. To achieve meaningful access, the Accessibility Plan summarizes key features at designated or potential Water Trail sites grouped into “geo-regions” around San Francisco Bay.¹ Water Trail management recognizes that even the most accessible sites are unlikely to be accessible to all persons with disabilities, but the Water Trail Program is committed to at least one broadly accessible site per geo-region.

The Accessibility Plan was prepared for use by site owners/managers, the Water Trail Project Management Team and Advisory Committee members, and interested members of the public. Because the Water Trail Program does not own any sites, the program can neither require site owners to make specific improvements at any sites nor dictate the timing of any such improvements. The Program will use the data and information in the Accessibility Plan to make educated decisions about where to focus resources and will work with site owners and operators to encourage and support improved accessibility. Although full conformance with ADA standards is not an eligibility requirement for a site to join the Water Trail, the Water Trail Program seeks to work collaboratively with site owners/managers to identify and pursue opportunities to improve non-motorized small boat accessibility throughout the Bay Area.

¹ Geo-regions were developed to roughly correspond to the “home range” of many boaters, with the concept that people should not have to travel too far from home to reach an accessible site.

2.4 Summary of Site Designation Process

If a site meets all of the required criteria, it can move forward with the site designation process. Water Trail staff will complete the bulk of work required for designation of a site in order to minimize the obligations of site owners/managers. The site designation process comprises five key steps, described below:



2.4.1 Expression of Interest

Potential Water Trail site owners/managers inform Water Trail staff of their interest in joining the trail, or Water Trail staff contacts potential Water Trail site owners/managers and asks if they would be interested in having their site be considered for designation. Water Trail staff or site staff may need to work initially with a governing board overseeing the site, such as a city council, to be sure there is interest on all levels in site designation. Obtaining resolutions of support from governing boards is encouraged.

2.4.2 Collection of Information

Water Trail staff visits the site (probably several times), meets all relevant site personnel, and collects information about the site by working closely with site owners/managers and other relevant personnel, organizations, or agencies. Additional information is obtained from existing documents related to the site. A standard questionnaire is provided to the site owner/manager to obtain further background about a site with information that may not be readily accessible elsewhere (e.g., use counts and incident reports). Timely completion of the questionnaire by site owners/managers is important for designation to move forward.

2.4.3 Site Description Report

Collected information is synthesized by Water Trail staff into a standard report format with photos and maps, called a “Site Description Report.” This Report summarizes information including location, site facilities (including accessibility features) and current maintenance, type of launch or landing infrastructure, types of boats that typically use the site, a review of vicinity habitat and wildlife, and recommendations for any needed improvements. In addition, a “Sign Plan” is developed with the site owner/manager. These reports and plans include a review by Water Trail staff of any potential impacts to resources that could be caused by designation of the site into the Water Trail network, as described in the Water Trail Final Environmental Impact Report. Collection of information and completion of the Site Description Report require approximately six weeks. All reports are shared with and reviewed by the site owner/manager prior to being made publicly available.

2.4.4 Conditional Approval for Site Designation

Designation decisions are made by the Project Management Team, whose members are representatives of the State Coastal Conservancy, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the Division of Boating and Waterways (a part of the State Department of Parks and Recreation). Information in the Site Description Report is taken to the Project Management Team and a broad-based Advisory Committee at a Water Trail Implementation Meeting. At the meeting, the Project Management Team will make a decision about conditional designation upon hearing recommendations of the Advisory Committee, staff, and members of the public. Water Trail Implementation Meetings are held quarterly and are open to the public.

All site designations include the condition to install a Water Trail sign (including logo and Water Trail website address), which identifies the site as part of the Water Trail, and an education sign (refer to **Inset 1**, page 1-5). There may be other conditions as well, depending on the site. For example, if Water Trail staff, the Project Management Team, or Advisory Committee find that designation of the site could result in significant environmental effects under CEQA, appropriate mitigation measures from the Water Trail FEIR (or other CEQA documents for the site) will be identified before the site is conditionally designated.

Since the Water Trail program is non-regulatory, it does not require permits. There may be circumstances, however, in which a site owner will need to amend an existing permit or apply for new permits, based on the requirements of regional, state, or federal regulatory agencies. Some sites may need to request an amendment to an existing permit from BCDC in order to install the Water Trail sign. The Water Trail program would generally pay the small administrative fee for the BCDC sign permit, if funding is available.

2.4.5 Final Site Designation

All site designations are initially conditional – conditions for full designation can range from installation of required signage to more comprehensive environmental compliance requirements. Water Trail staff will work closely with site owners/managers to meet any conditions. Once the sign has been installed and other site-specific conditions have been met, designation is complete and the site is included in the Water Trail network.

After designation is complete, Water Trail staff will stay in touch with site owners at least annually to learn if there have been any notable changes at the site. Once a site is designated it will remain a designated Water Trail site unless basic criteria for inclusion in the Water Trail are no longer met and the site owner or manager is not able or willing to take measures to remedy the particular issue. Site owners/managers may also voluntarily withdraw from the Water Trail.



Potential Water Trail destination site at Angel Island State Park.



Potential Water Trail launch site at the Berkeley Marina.

2.5 Frequently Asked Questions

A. How much time and effort is required for site designation?

The level of effort for owners/managers will vary, depending on whether they need to get on a docket to present the idea of designation to a governing or legislative body, if they are applying for grant funds at the same time, if they are planning some construction activities to enhance the site, and so on. Water Trail staff tries to alleviate the burden on owners/managers by developing the Site Description Report, reviewing the site under the Water Trail FEIR, taking photographs as needed, making maps as needed, and making a presentation to the governing body of the owner/manager if requested. Water Trail staff presents the project at a Water Trail Implementation Meeting, but does ask that a representative of the site owner/manager be present at the public meeting where designation decisions are made.

B. What is the cost associated with site designation?

There is no fee associated with requesting designation, being designated, or remaining a designated Water Trail site. The cost of materials that are prepared for the public meeting, the cost of the Water Trail identification sign, and the cost of an administrative permit amendment from BCDC (if needed for the sign) are borne by the Water Trail program, pending available funding. The site owner/manager is responsible for the costs of managing and maintaining the site, but these are not costs imposed by the Water Trail.

C. Does the site owner need to complete a CEQA- or NEPA-compliant document in order to be designated?

The State Coastal Conservancy led the development of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Final Environmental Impact Report (Water Trail FEIR) and certified it in March 2011 in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This programmatic EIR is comprehensive in its approach to anticipating the potential impacts that could result from Water Trail-induced non-motorized small boat use on the San Francisco Bay. This programmatic approach avoided segmenting CEQA for a clearly regional program and provides for streamlined designations for site owners. In most cases, site owners who need to comply with CEQA should be able to rely on the analysis and findings of the Water Trail FEIR. The Water Trail FEIR considered the reasonable worst-case impacts that could occur at any site and provides for mitigation as feasible at the programmatic level.

Additional CEQA review would be limited to any new effects that were not covered in the Water Trail FEIR, any new mitigation measures beyond those required by the Water Trail FEIR for those effects, or any effect that is more severe than anticipated and assessed in the Water Trail FEIR. For example, if new facilities are proposed for construction, additional site-specific CEQA review may be required; however, the lead agency under CEQA for the site may be able to tier site-specific projects off the Water Trail FEIR. Water Trail staff would work closely with site owners to ensure CEQA compliance.

If an agency tiers off the Water Trail FEIR or uses a separate CEQA document to evaluate the effects of a proposed project, Coastal Conservancy staff will need to ask the Conservancy board to make findings on that CEQA document. For sites that may rely solely on the Water Trail FEIR, this additional step is not needed. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is not required by the Water Trail program.

D. Are there any grant funds available for Water Trail sites?

Yes. Both public agencies and non-profit organizations may apply. Eligible applicants are limited to those whose sites are designated, conditionally designated, or in the process of being considered for designation. In the latter case, the Project Management Team will make a conditional designation decision prior to a decision about the award of grant funds. The Grant Program is described in greater detail in **Section 3**.



The Water Trail is expanding recreational opportunities for people to enjoy San Francisco Bay while encouraging appreciation of the Bay environment and fostering a community of stewards throughout the Bay Area. The Water Trail program promotes use of designated sites and provides online information about site features.

3.0 Grant Program

3.1 Introduction

The Water Trail Grant Program is supporting recreational access to San Francisco Bay and its nearby tributary waters by awarding grants to improve facilities at existing boat launch sites. Examples of improvements that may be funded include those that would make sites more accessible or convenient to boaters, provide overnight camping facilities for small boat users, or provide boat-storage facilities.

The Water Trail Grant Program is funded by the State Coastal Conservancy and administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments. The Water Trail Grant Program current grant cycle administers approximately **\$500,000** to be awarded for eligible projects. There are no established minimum or maximum grant amounts. The size of an award will be based on project needs, benefits, and competing demands for existing funding. Projects must be completed and all invoices submitted with any needed supporting documents by **February 28, 2017**.

Criteria for grant eligibility and a step-by-step description of the grant process are detailed below. Necessary forms and additional details are provided in **Appendix B**.



The Water Trail Grant Program provides funding for projects that help improve facilities and encourage access to San Francisco Bay and nearby waters for all types of non-motorized small boat users.

Grant application documents can be found online at
<http://sfbaywatertrail.org/site-owners/grant-program/>

3.2 Criteria for Grant Eligibility

The Water Trail Grant Program is intended to fund projects that improve the public's use of launching and landing sites while ensuring that facilities and grant-funded project improvements are consistent with providing a high-quality recreational experience, protecting environmental resources at the site and in surrounding areas, and preserving the safety of water users. Eligible applicants, types of sites, and types of improvements are described below.

3.2.1 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are government agencies (federal, state, local, and special districts) and nonprofit organizations existing under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and having purposes that are consistent with the Coastal Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, Division 21, commencing at Section 31000).

3.2.2 Eligible Sites

Owners and managers of sites that are, or are proposed to become, part of the Water Trail network are eligible to apply for grant funds. Sites must be designated or conditionally designated prior to a grant award decision, although prospective applicants are encouraged to apply for grant funds while they are completing the site-designation process. Site designation does not equal a grant award, but is a separate process.

Criteria for Eligible Grant-Funded Projects

Primary Criteria Considered

- Project readiness for construction or implementation
- Community support for the project
- Consistency with local policies, plans, and priorities
- CEQA complete or nearly complete
- Funded improvements meet state and federal disability laws, if applicable
- Consistency with the strategies of the Enhanced Water Trail Plan goals and strategies (determined in coordination with Water Trail staff)
- Consideration of sea level rise and climate change vulnerability

Preferred Criteria

- Matching funds and/or in-kind services
- Project meets local and regional boating needs
- Serves disadvantaged community
- Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions
- Sustainable design or materials

3.2.3 Eligible Activities

The project type and design of improvements proposed for grant funding should match the site conditions (e.g., shoreline morphology, habitats, predominant wind and wave conditions, other uses of the site) and the needs of likely trail users. Improvements proposed for grant funding should achieve a variety of objectives:

- Increasing the quality of boaters' experiences;
- Preserving the character of the site setting;
- Ensuring that access is available to a broad spectrum of trail users;
- Avoiding uses of the site that are incompatible with safe boating, wildlife, habitat and water quality protection; and,
- Reducing or avoiding user conflicts.

CEQA and permitting costs are not eligible for grant funding. Planning activities are not eligible for funding at this time, but may be eligible during future funding cycles.

Examples of Projects Eligible for Grant Funding

- Improved access and usability for persons with disabilities
- Creation of on-site boat storage (short-term or long-term storage)
- Creation of other boater amenities such as showers, boat wash, drinking fountains
- Creation of new launch facilities or improvements/repairs to existing launch facilities
- Creation of new parking and/or restrooms or improvements/repairs to existing parking and restrooms
- Creation of new camping facilities or improvements to existing camping facilities for boaters



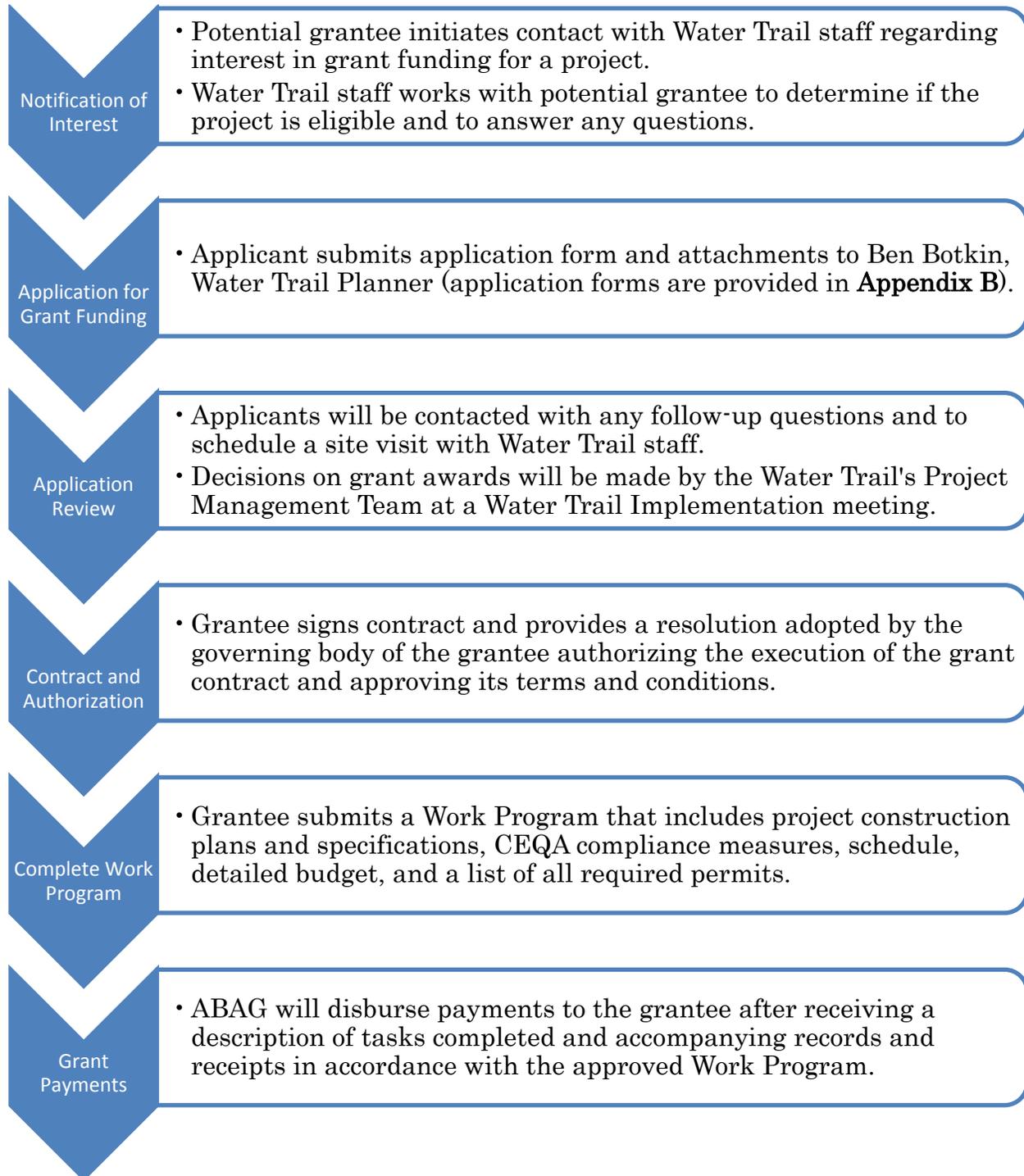
Projects that enhance accessibility are eligible for grant funding. When properly designed and maintained, beach mats can improve accessibility across sandy beaches to the water, such as this one at Crissy Field in San Francisco.



On-site boat storage, such as this kayak storage facility at Mission Creek, encourages access by reducing barriers associated with transportation of small boats to the waters of the Bay. Providing boat storage at Water Trail sites is encouraged and is an eligible type of project for use of grant funds.

3.3 Summary of Grant Program Process

The first step towards receiving a grant is reaching out to ABAG Water Trail staff to determine if a proposed project is consistent with the goals and intent of the Water Trail Grant Program. If a project meets all of the required criteria, it can move forward in the grant process. The grant program process comprises six key steps, described below.



3.4 Grant Contact Information

For questions about the grant program please contact:

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