



**San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail
Implementation Meeting #1
September 15, 2011**

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Project Management Team (PMT): Ann Buell, Steve Watanabe, Joe LaClair, Ellen Miramontes, Laura Thompson, Sara Polgar

Advisory Committee (AC): Jonathon Goldman, Penny Wells, Thomas Boone, Cecily Harris, Brian Wiese, Barbara Salzman, Jill Demers, Bill Curry

Stakeholder Group: Kathi Borgmann, James Bernard

Meeting Facilitator: Ariel Ambruster (from Center for Collaborative Policy)

Not in Attendance (AC): Richard Skaff, Ted Warburton, John Krause, Cheryl Essex, Lynn Cullivan, Ted Choi, Jennifer Heroux

Trailhead Designation Process (Led by Ann Buell)

1. Process begins with interest from site owners/managers of sites that are open to public (or have potential for public use)
2. Water Trail (WT) Staff gathers information on site, working with site owners/managers, AC, and other experts; goes through environmental checklist.
3. Staff prepares Site Description.
4. For High Opportunity Sites (HOS), Site Description should be sufficient (to make signage and designate), assuming there are no issues that need to be addressed (some issues may have developed since WT Plan was written).
5. Issues needing to be addressed are described in Trailhead Plan, developed (as is the case for Site Description) with site owner/manager, AC members, other experts.

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6. Meeting of AC/PMT/Stakeholder Group to discuss (e.g. identify needed changes, improvements), AC recommend/not recommend for designation. Can conditionally designate sites (once certain steps taken).
7. Designation (conditional) by PMT.
8. Required agency approvals or other conditions met.

Ann: Initially, want to “welcome” sites into the Trail that are easier/do not require a long process.

Barbara: What is process for finding out about sites you are considering? Ann: Will send materials by email directly to AC members as early as possible. (No later than 10 days before a meeting.)

Joe: When can we get list of possible sites under consideration before next meeting? Ann: Next meeting expected to be in early November (depends on Doodle poll-AC/PMT availability). Hope to get a list of sites under consideration for the first designation meeting to folks a month in advance (i.e. early October).

Kathi: Once sites identified, how long until they become “active”? Ann: Varies widely depending on the site (for example, a site that will be enhanced may receive grant funding, which will entail a grant agreement, designs, permits, and so forth; other sites may become “active” as soon as a sign is installed).

Brian: Need to think about -- from applicants’ point of view -- why we would want to have a site on the Water Trail. Ann: Prominence; money for improvements/planning; economic benefits; educational benefits to improve how non-motorized small boat (NMSB) users act on the Bay, including improving personal/navigational safety and reducing rescues, for example.

Cecily: Will there be a contract that park district/department/etc. has to sign, and could this take extra time? Ann: WT does not foresee asking managers to enter into a contract. But if a municipality requires this, or if there are grant-funded improvements, there would be a contract or agreement. Laura: Bay Trail enters into agreement with local entity for maintenance.

Joe: Bay Trail went through process of gaining acceptance by incorporation into General Plans. WT may want to encourage local governments to incorporate the trail into their plans. Will help us avoid “getting out ahead” of local entity in making land use designations. Barbara: Will you be developing standard language for signs or language that could be modified as needed for specific sites? Laura: A number of different signs might be needed at sites (e.g. logo; information signs). We’ll be having consultants to help develop these. Ann: They will be created to work for the individual site.

Barbara: How will site managers know about environmental checklist? Ann: Staff will be completing that in coordination with site managers, experts, AC.

Barbara: Monitoring & enforcement is not addressed. Ann: It will depend on site. Specific monitoring plans would be developed for specific sites that require that. Education ,Outreach, and Stewardship Program includes stewardship plan that will also help.

Jonathon: Every owner and manager should have an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan (meaning prioritized plans for creating accessibility). The Water Trail should find out about these plans.

Jonathon: I believe that the law requires that all of these sites be accessible. Philosophically approach this as “all sites should be accessible” and then address the caveats that may not make this possible. (Understanding that many sites cannot be made accessible.) Ann: Plan says this: “all sites should be universally accessible,” and thus that is a guiding principle to be carried out where feasible.

Charter (Led by Ariel Ambruster)

Philosophy: 1. Communicating issues that you bring. 2. Listening and learning about issues that others communicate. 3. Thinking and working together creatively to address these issues to move the trail forward.

Ann: Stakeholder group – includes additional experts that the AC/PMT can rely on for help in understanding issues and developing solutions for specific sites. AC has commitment and follow through on Water Trail (i.e. all sites).

Brian: Had questions about individual or agency financial conflicts of interest for members of AC (second bullet under Conflict of Interest section). The AC is not deciding on site designation and the PMT is also making funding decisions, so where is the conflict? Ann: It is true that funding decisions for site improvements need to be made by funding agencies, such as Cal Boating and the Conservancy. Instead of saying “...will abstain from participating in the decision-making process on that item” it should say “...will abstain from voting on recommendations on that item” in those cases where some kind of conflict of interest has been identified.

Joe: Need list of sites a month in advance, but maybe not site descriptions (too much for staff to get the report that early.) Barbara: Advisory Committee members should let (WT) staff know as soon as possible about concerns about sites.

Barbara: Key expected outcomes (4th bullet): Concerned about potential for adverse impacts on wildlife. Charter needs to be clear that outcome is about “avoiding” or “significantly minimizing” adverse impacts to habitats and species (as opposed to language about increased stewardship of trailheads). Ann: Will add language about avoiding impacts to the outcome about stewardship and can define what “resources” are. Joe: May also want to look to the Water Trail Act for language.

Ann: We want to bring Charter to completion/conclusion at next meeting. Will collect any further comments on Charter through Oct. 6. Will then distribute revised Charter to AC prior to next meeting to allow time for AC to review that revised version.

Trailhead Designation Meeting Logistics: Envisioning four meetings per year. Want to be designating as many sites as possible as efficiently as possible.

Scheduling: Make the meetings at 10 a.m. to help folks miss traffic. Morning is better. Stick with 3 hours.

Day of the week: Standing day each meeting time is best. Send Ann your un/availability with notes either on the Doodle poll that Ann will create and send out or in a separate email. Ann will send out the approximate timeframes for next meetings (i.e., for 2012) in addition to setting the date/time/place for our next meeting this fall.

Location: BCDC in Francisco? ABAG by Lake Merritt BART Station in Oakland? Yerba Buena Island and Coast Guard Island have rooms that Tom can access (free parking!) Stick with the Conservancy? What about holding meetings near where the sites are being designated? Jill: Underserved communities will have tough time getting to meetings if the location is not nearby.

Teleconferencing and webinar will be an option for future meetings. Ann will need to post the address of any PMT member who would be calling in or otherwise accessing the meeting remotely (as required under the Bagley-Keene Act). For now we will plan on meeting at the Conservancy.

Ellen: Offered carpooling (in BCDC state car) to Yerba Buena Island. Jill: The AC and/or Stakeholder Group could also carpool to any of the meetings.

If AC members cannot make a meeting: The PMT asks that AC Members fully brief their Alternates and send comments to Ann ahead of implementation meetings if neither the Member nor the Alternate is going to attend. That way, their views can not only be heard, but also discussed by the whole group.

Education, Outreach and Stewardship Program (led by Laura Thompson)

Penny: Eliminate the term “personal watercraft” since this means “jet skis.”

Themes

Penny: Under Theme 3, bullet point about launch and land only at designated sites needs to be clarified because there are non-WT sites that are available for landing and launching. Joe: May need to expand the “where you’re not supposed to land” language.

Jill: Buffers list is way too confusing. Recommends setting 250m buffer as a consistent standard. Penny: On the water in a kayak, you can’t see a bird at 250m. Barbara: I realize that it’s difficult, but the issue is protecting species on the Bay and we need to figure it out.

Cecily: Convert to “feet.” I know length of my boat, for example – maybe use judgeable distances (e.g. boat lengths; football field lengths). Barbara: The issue with seals is when they are hauled out. Rafting birds are in known areas (not every day, but generally). Joe: Many sites that are environmentally sensitive are already improved for NMSB use, so through WT designation, we want to improve the situation at the site if possible to reduce impacts on sensitive habitats/species. This info about sensitivity of different species is helpful in determining information for specific sites. Can’t really just apply 250m buffer across the board. Also, the scientific literature did not suggest that buffer for all species. Have to take into consideration the conditions/circumstances at the site and plan carefully. Ann: The list of buffers in the Education, Outreach, and Stewardship (EO&S) program are not going to be on every sign. Site-specific signage development will be important. Barbara: We need to make best effort to make sure that the birds are not affected. If we do not have monitoring going on, we won’t be able to know what’s being affected. When and how will monitoring occur? I had hoped for funding to cover it, and enforcement – we need a discussion on existing, planned and needed enforcement. Joe: We should agendize Monitoring & Enforcement for future thorough discussion. Recognizing the challenges facing site managers, the Education, Outreach, and Stewardship program should focus on “Leave No Trace,” seeing that as the most effective way to minimize. Kathi: Just looked at literature on water impacts on rafting birds. Could summarize this for group. There is science on distances, but using these on water and on land (for that matter) is virtually impossible, so we have to take a look at sites where we know we have sensitive species and plan accordingly. Jonathon: There is fairly strong enforcement presence on water (Dept. of Fish and Game, U.S. Coast Guard) – need education component for these agencies/organizations to make sure that they are aware of behaviors to intervene about. Barbara: Actually not strong presence (outside of Sausalito).

Cecily: Personal safety themes: Expand on these in the Education, Outreach, and Stewardship program. Lots of overlap in these themes – clarify this language to avoid overlap. Brian: Take a class before you paddle *or boardsail*. Need language that addresses not only boardsailors, but also dragon boats. “Get some instruction.” Need to work on how we refer to WT users... Language to describe WT users: Submit suggestions to Ann.

Penny: In this intervening time while sites are slowly being improved...we should provide info about accessibility at sites (e.g. Site is fully accessible except for bathrooms).

James: For some people, doing the entire trail becomes an objective (described how some people set out to visit every site of the Maine Island Trail Association). Spacing of trailheads and ratings of difficulty becomes really important. Conflicts in usages at trailheads should be considered more deeply.

Tools

Brian: Add site-specific tide tables to brochures (e.g. for Redwood City, you add x time), and visuals at the site.

Cecily: Annual assessment: Once there is the family of sites will there be an annual assessment of the site by staff? Sites may change and there can be vandalism, so this would be good to do. Think of Coastwalk's role for Coastal Trail. James: Maybe Bay Access can fill this role for WT? Jill: Same annual assessment role for ensuring protections to wildlife and habitats.

Barbara: Change in language on page 6: If near sensitive habitats, signage WILL include...Jill: Take an "if...then" approach.

Penny: Apps would be useful for smart phones. Cecily: Also QR (Quick Response) codes (a bar matrix you can read on "smart phones" with appropriate software) on signage.

Brian: For large agency that has interpretive program, is intention that there would be funding for interpretive signage? Ann: Yes and we recognize that you have your own look (at East Bay Regional Park District) and we would not impose a new look (except for our logo). Brian: Also need to coordinate on the many signs at a site to avoid sign clutter.

Penny: Comment on "rating" system (under Optional Tools): the Bay any day of year can go from Class 1 to Class 6. So, beware of rating system because it could serve as invitation to be sued. Cecily: Maybe not rating a segment of the trail, but maybe "qualitative segment descriptions." James: Could refer to lengths of time that a segment can take (e.g. showing variance).

Stewardship

Laura: The Plan includes a wide variety of resources in its suggested definition of Stewardship. Added the missing word so it reads "...defined as caring for and **having** responsibility toward resources, whether those resources are..."

Other Education, Outreach, and Stewardship Topics:

Penny: Stand-up paddleboards are fastest growing user group and need to be addressed here.

Jonathon: Partnerships offer opportunity to reach out to disabled persons who may not already be involved in boating and important to do because these are potential users who can derail projects. This is a benefit of transition plans – if there is a plan, it indicates the site is important to the disabled community.

Jill: Would be good to acknowledge in the Charter and Education, Outreach, and Stewardship Program that these are living docs that can/will be revised as program progresses. [The Charter includes a section on Amendments. - Ann]

Barbara: Does enforcement and monitoring go into this document? Ann: Suggest language.

Barbara: For enforcement, would be good to know how enforcement entities will be engaged/brought in during site planning. Joe: Also need to consider education/engaging in

general with existing enforcement entities. Can include enforcement regulations/codes on our signs to further educate users (i.e. integrating enforcement into messaging of trail.)
Monitoring and enforcement needs integrating into trailhead planning. Need to be careful not to overload the Education, Outreach, and Stewardship program with enforcement inappropriately. Some of the enforcement integration needs to occur with development of site description and trailhead plan.

Barbara: Will comments/revisions be brought back to us on this program? Ann: Yes.