

San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail
Water Trail Implementation Meeting #2
November 30, 2011

Discussion of Sign Plans for Designated Water Trail Trailheads
And
Suggested Content and Conditions for Tidewater Boating Center

Introduction

Upon official designation into the Water Trail network, each potential trailhead (site) will install a Water Trail sign with essential information for people intending to land or launch a non-motorized, small boat (or sailboard or paddle board) from the site. As of the date of this public meeting (Nov. 30, 2011), the “look” of the Water Trail sign has not yet been determined. It will be determined over the next few months. The Water Trail Planner, Galli Basson, recently hired by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) under a grant from the Coastal Conservancy, will be in charge of this important component of Water Trail education. She will begin work on December 5 and will also be managing the Water Trail education, outreach, and stewardship program; the development of the Water Trail logo, website, brochure, and map, and site-specific enhancement grants to designated sites.

Conditional Trailhead Designation

The Project Management Team (PMT) for the Water Trail makes decisions about the designation of sites at public meetings, such as this. All decisions to designate will be conditioned on the installation of a Water Trail sign and logo. There may be other conditions as well, but all sites will need to meet this condition.

Other pre-designation conditions that will apply to all designated sites are spelled out in the programmatic Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Water Trail. The easiest reference document for the timing of compliance with mitigation measures may be found in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan of the FEIR.

Pre-conditions that apply to the designation of all sites are summarized here:

- The Water Trail website is established and has a comment form. The new San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail website is: www.sfbaywatertrail.org. A simple comment form has been created and can be found at this site. The website will be monitored by the Water Trail Planner or other Water Trail Staff.
- The Internet address for the Water Trail website is on the site Water Trail sign.
- A Water Trail brochure with certain required information has been created and disseminated.
- A Water Trail sign has been installed at the site.

The Water Trail Planner will complete the development of the Water Trail website, while also developing the brochure and logo. These items are expected to be complete or nearly complete by our next meeting (date not set, but quarterly meetings are anticipated in 2012).

Sign Plan for Tidewater Boating Center

As explained above, the look and exact language for a sign for Tidewater Boating Center cannot be presented on November 30, but suggested content areas for incorporation into the Water Trail sign at this site are presented here for discussion as part of the site designation process.

Even before considering what should be put into the sign at any site, and in particular at Tidewater Boating Center, we need to also consider a sign's limitations and what would be better put into other outreach media. A brief outline of the main forms of media for the Water Trail follows:

Education and Outreach Materials – What Belongs in a Sign as Opposed to other Media

As discussed in the Education, Outreach, and Stewardship Program for the Water Trail (under Tools), a variety of outreach materials will be developed to reach non-motorized small boat (or board) users. All media carry out Water Trail strategies as well as various mitigation measures. To consider when evaluating a site-specific Sign Plan:

Sign – Need to adhere to research findings on most effective means of communicating with public and influencing behavior. Cannot be too big or wordy. Must focus on key issues. Should not create sign clutter. Should be recognized as Water Trail sign.

Brochure – Much more room for text, room for photos and even maps, and more easily updated than signs. May be distributed in a variety of ways and places. Can be regional or site-specific.

Website – Highly flexible. May easily be changed with updated photos, text, and maps, plus may instantly link readers to additional websites or resources. Will include comment form. Can be made highly interactive with the inclusion of social media links.

Map – Maps will be incorporated into brochure(s) and website, but can also be produced to stand alone and contain other relevant information.

Naturalists, Excursion Leaders, Docents – In-person information dispersion is highly flexible and can be as specific to certain sites as appropriate.

Guidebook – This is the least flexible, most expensive option, but the Water Trail program intends to develop a guidebook in the future when there is a large enough body of designated sites to merit it.

Suggested Water Trail Sign Content: General and at Tidewater Boating Center

Wildlife and Habitat:

- All Sites Should Consider: Wildlife species of concern and buffer distances; sensitive habitat of concern; advisability of boat and equipment rinsing; seasonal closures in the vicinity, if any.
- For Tidewater, pertinent topics include Clapper rail (San Leandro Bay) and rafting waterfowl (at tip of Bay Farm Island). (A boat rinsing area can be provided without having to include it in the sign.)

Navigational and Personal Safety:

- All Sites Should Consider: Advise boaters about tides, currents, rapid weather changes, potential for stranding, commercial shipping channels, ferry routes, or even hunting season and locations.
- For Tidewater, most pertinent topics include tides, currents, stranding.

Water Trail website address:

All sites need the Water Trail website address, where there is a form that can be used to report various incidents, including observations about user conflicts, disturbance to habitat or wildlife, navigational or personal boating incidents, or other comments.

For Discussion:

- 1) Are there other key concepts that should be included in a standard Water Trail sign, and can a “standard sign” be made flexible at the same time?
- 2) How can interpretive content be provided on site, without sign clutter or reader fatigue?
- 3) What if standard content is already present in another sign at the site?

Suggested Conditions of Designation for Tidewater Boating Center:

- 1) Installation of Water Trail sign and logo. The content of the sign will have been presented and discussed with the Advisory Committee before designation is finalized.
- 2) Development of Water Trail brochure and Water Trail website. The brochure and/or website content will have been presented and discussed with the Advisory Committee before designation is finalized.
- 3) Establishment of a way for boaters to rinse off boats and equipment in an area where rinse water will not flow directly into the Estuary.