



San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail
Site Description for
Black Point Boat Launch



Location, Ownership, and Management: Black Point Boat Launch is on Harbor Drive under the Highway 37 bridge spanning the mouth of the Petaluma River, in Novato, Marin County. The site is managed by Marin County Parks, and owned by CalTrans, State Lands Commission, and Marin County Parks.

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Boat ramp and pier (2013)	Path of travel and launch (2015)	View up Petaluma River (2015)

Facility Description: The boarding pier (high-freeboard dock) and boat launch ramp are in good condition, having been renovated in 2007. Various accessibility improvements were made at the same time. There are accessible restrooms with running water, soap, and hand driers; two hoses for boat rinsing; and ample (paid) parking for cars and boat trailers near the launch and in a larger parking lot across the road. There is a gently sloped path of travel leading from two trailer-size accessible parking spaces down to the boarding pier. There are also picnic tables, bike racks, and a fish-cleaning station.

This site is used by many different boat types. Non-motorized small boats (NMSBs) observed at the site include kayaks, stand up paddleboards, canoes, and outrigger canoes.




Other boat types include powerboats, sailboats, and “Moose” boats (built across the river and designed for military/government on-water patrol and rescue).

Other Identifying or General Information:

<p>Site ID: <u>M47</u></p> <p>In WT Plan: <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Existing or Planned: <u>Existing</u></p> <p>Ownership: <u>Public</u></p> <p>County: <u>Marin</u></p> <p>Geo-Region: <u>Petaluma River</u></p> <p>SF Bay Plan Region: <u>San Pablo Bay</u></p> <p>Launch or Destination: <u>Launch</u></p> <p>Proximity to Other Sites: This site is about 12 miles south of the Petaluma Marina and about 9 miles north of Bull Head Flat. The sites in closest proximity are Lakeville Marina to the north and Buck's Landing to the south.</p>	<p>Used by a Program that Assists Persons with Disabilities: <u>No</u></p> <p>Appreciated for Windy Conditions: <u>No</u></p> <p>Near Food or Drink: <u>No</u></p> <p>Home of a Club: <u>Yes, Northern California Kayak Anglers. Also, an outrigger club is thought to use the launch site seasonally (Ohana Wa'a Outrigger Canoe Club).</u></p>
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Description of Launch/Landing:

<p>Fixed Dock/Pier Launch/Landing: <u>No</u></p> <p>Float: <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Freeboard Level: <u>High (9" and above)</u></p> <p>Transfer/Launch Assistance System: <u>No</u></p> <p>Gangway: <u>No</u></p> <p>Gangway Length (feet): N/A</p> <p>Gangway Width (inches): N/A</p> <p>Gangway Slope Description: N/A</p> <p>Boat/Trailer Ramp: <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Mudflats Affect Site Usability: <u>No</u></p> <p>Stair Water Entry: <u>No</u></p> <p>Beach: <u>No</u></p> <p>Beach Wheelchair Available: <u>N/A</u></p> <p>Firm-Surface Beach Crossing: <u>N/A</u></p> <p>Fee for Launch or Parking: <u>Yes, \$5.00 for parking</u></p>	<p>Restrictions: The park is open from sunrise to sunset daily.</p> <p>Water Entry Path: <u>No</u></p>  <p>Launch ramp at zero tide</p>
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Site Appears to be Suitable For:

Kayak: <u>Yes</u> Windsurfer: <u>No</u> Kiteboard: <u>No</u> Whaleboat: <u>Yes</u> Stand Up Paddleboard: <u>Yes</u>	Canoe: <u>Yes</u> Outrigger Canoe: <u>Yes</u> Sculling: <u>No</u> Rowboat/Dinghy: <u>Yes</u> Dragonboat: <u>No</u>
Notes: Boaters head toward the Petaluma River or out into San Pablo Bay. Management has noticed an increase in stand-up paddlers.	

Transportation and Parking:

General Spaces (number): 1-25

ADA Parking Spaces (number): 2



ADA Parking Description: 1 space is van accessible, both are good for trailers

Duration (hours): Park facility hours are sunrise to sunset. No overnight parking is allowed and Marin County Parks passes are for day use only. There is a \$5 fee for parking onsite, using credit card or cash. The parking receipt says it is good until 11:59 p.m., but park closes at sunset .

Overnight Parking Possibly Allowed: No

Parking near the launch:



Loading/Unloading Area: Yes

Bay Trail: Not currently, but the planned alignment is on Sears Point Road (Hwy 37)

Public Transportation: None

The large parking lot across the street:



Path of Travel:

Distance to Launch from Parking Area (feet): 175

Distance to Launch from ADA Parking (feet): 150

Distance to Launch from ADA

Restrooms (feet): 232

Distance from ADA Restrooms to ADA Parking (feet): 250

Path of Travel Exists: Yes

Path of Travel Description: Concrete, gentle slope

**Other Site Amenities:**

Total Restrooms (counted per outside entrance doors): 2

Total ADA Restrooms: 2

Restroom Description: One male and one female restroom with flush toilets. Both are accessible.



Boat Washing: Yes

BBQ: No

Boat Storage: No

Rigging/Staging Area: No

Picnic Tables: Yes

Benches: Yes

Overnight Accommodations:

Hotel: <u>No</u>	Hostel: <u>No</u>	Ship: <u>No</u>	Camping: <u>No</u>	Other: <u>No</u>
Accommodations Description:				

Additional Notes Related to Accessibility:

Access at this site appears to be quite good, although the only options for water entry are from the boat ramp or high-freeboard boarding pier. The path of travel, restroom, and parking appear to be well designed and maintained.

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

The parking fee machine gives a rough estimate of the number of site users. The estimated number is about 7,000 per year. Powerboats are the most frequently used boat type at this site. Marin County Parks management would be willing to conduct randomized surveys of site use several times per year.

Seasonal use can vary greatly depending on fishing conditions (when fish are running or not), and many people fish from shore without launching a boat. Hunting season for waterfowl affects patronage, as does weather. Typically, weekends and holidays are busier than weekdays.

There is no staff on site, but there is regular trash service, restroom cleaning, and routine site maintenance that occurs 3-4 times per week. Additional facilities maintenance is performed at non-routine intervals, seasonally and as needed.

There are no plans for facility changes in the next five years. Management would consider adding some additional features that would make the site more accessible to NMSB users with disabilities if feasible and if the features did not impact any sensitive habitat.

Safety and Security, including Parking:

Large barges go by the site regularly, to and from the Petaluma Turning Basin. The locations of the nearby shipping lane and hunting areas are pictured in the GIS map.

There are some car break-ins and vandalism at the site. Other issues include graffiti, illegal dumping, stolen property, iron ranger theft, and illegal fires.

If a boater gets stranded or there is an on-water emergency, the US Coast Guard, Marin County Sheriff, and/or Marin County Fire Department can be called.

Wildlife and Habitat Considerations:

The State Department of Fish and Wildlife patrols this site and the hunting and fishing activities near this site on a regular basis. There is a public information kiosk on site where Marin County Parks would be willing to post information related to stewardship and on-water environmental requirements (laws) if provided by Water Trail staff.

Education, Outreach, and Stewardship, Including Signage:



Stewardship activities are periodically organized at this site. On Feb. 8, 2015, for example, a volunteer site clean-up day was planned. Work involved removing French broom from the hillside above the boat launch, improving the central landscaped area of the park, and picking up litter to improve park aesthetics and improve the marine environment. (Photos in this report were taken shortly before this clean-up.)

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

No known conflicts among site users.

Accessibility of Sites within the Petaluma River Geo-Region (See *Water Trail Accessibility Plan* for more maps and a discussion of geo-regions):

There are four potential Water Trail sites within this geo-region: Petaluma Turning Basin, Petaluma Marina, Lakeville Marina (Papa's Taverna), and Black Point Boat Launch. There are no beaches, and currently no low-float docks or transfer systems within this group of sites.

At the Petaluma Turning Basin, a non-profit organization (Petaluma Small Craft Center) is fundraising to add a low-float dock and boating concession facility to the existing high-freeboard dock. That location should eventually provide broadly accessible NMSB access for the public (an obstructing flag pole will need to be removed from the path of travel). The Petaluma Marina has a boat launch ramp, as does the Lakeville Marina. The future of the Lakeville Marina as a public launch site is unknown. Black Point Boat Launch is currently a broadly accessible boat launch site for those NMSB types and individuals who use high-freeboard docks or boat launch ramps to enter and/or launch their watercraft.

The experiences that are available within the Petaluma Geo-Region include both rural and urban environments, wildlife viewing, river or Bay paddling, and participation in events and festivals in Petaluma, where there are also restaurants and overnight accommodations. To the south of Black Point Boat Launch in the Marin/West San Pablo Geo-Region, there are wetlands and beaches.

Sites in this geo-region are relatively far apart (see image below), as are the closest sites in

adjacent geo-regions. Black Point Boat Launch is about equi-distant from Cullinan Ranch in the Napa River Geo-Region and Bucks Landing in the Marin/West San Pablo Geo-Region. Cullinan Ranch, however, is not reachable directly from the waters of San Pablo Bay because of Highway 37. Privately owned Bucks Landing, to the south, is picturesque (rustic) and may be purchased and renovated for better access in the future, but for now would not be considered very accessible. As noted, the future of Lakeville Marina is unknown.

Black Point Boat Launch is strategically located along the San Pablo Bay shoreline. Without it, the distance between northern Marin County Geo-Region sites and sites up the Petaluma River is too great for most people in NMSBs to travel. A resting point and restroom at this location are beneficial both for personal safety and for the environment. It would therefore be desirable if Black Point Boat Launch had some kind of transfer system or low-float dock to help persons with disabilities either embark or disembark at the site. That being said, for many NMSB users with disabilities, the site is already broadly accessible.



Petaluma Geo-Region from Google Earth

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

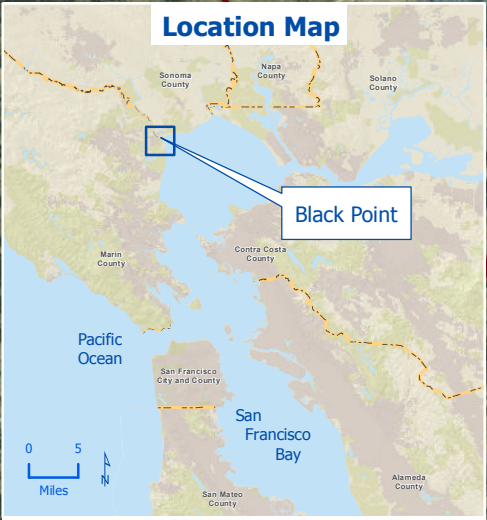
**Black Point Boat Launch
March 6, 2015**

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
<p>Recreation References: WT DREIR, pp. 3-32 to 3-37.</p>	<p>Black Point Boat Launch has one boat ramp and boarding pier (high-freeboard).</p> <p>Hunting is allowed in the vicinity both on San Pablo Bay and in the Petaluma River. Hunting is subject to seasonal and day-of-the-week restrictions.</p> <p>No recreational conflicts have been identified at the site.</p>	<p>Water Trail users may submit comments to Water Trail staff through the website if they witness or experience recreational conflict at any designated site. The Water Trail educational sign includes warnings about seasonal hunting in the Bay (Oct – Jan) and includes the State Fish and Wildlife website for specific information.</p>
<p>Navigational and Personal Safety References: WT DREIR pp. 3-38 to 3-51, and Figures 3.4.2-1 and 3.4.2-2.</p>	<p>The site is popular with motorized boaters and anglers. NMSB users should be aware of tides and currents and how to navigate near other vessels. There is an Army Corps of Engineers authorized navigation channel leading from San Pablo Bay up the Petaluma River. The portion from San Pablo Bay to the mouth of the Petaluma River (“Petaluma Across the Flats”) is 200 feet wide and 8 feet deep at MLLW. The remainder is 100 feet wide and 8 feet deep and extends north of the Turning Basin to a location approximately in line with the north end of Water Street, and the corner of Copeland and Madison Streets.</p>	<p>The Water Trail educational sign provides safety information related to navigational and personal boating safety.</p>

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
<p>Aesthetics References: WT DREIR pp. 3-56 to 3-68.</p>	<p>No changes are proposed to the facilities at the site; an existing sign display board has space to add Water Trail - related information.</p>	<p>The Water Trail will require the inclusion of Water Trail signs at the site. WT Staff will coordinate with Marin County Parks to ensure that the signs do not result in “sign clutter” at the site.</p>
<p>Biology-Vegetation References: WT DREIR pp. 3-69 to 3-92 and Table 3.7.2-1 and Table 3.7.2-2.</p>	<p>There is marsh habitat surrounding the launch. Marsh habitat is also found on both banks of the Petaluma River and within four miles south and east along the edge of San Pablo Bay.</p> <p>The site has an excellent boat washing area, and existing signage encourages boat washing.</p>	<p>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 and by not landing in marshes or on levees. Marin County Parks will be asked to refresh the boat washing information because it is faded and hard to read.</p>
<p>Biology – Birds References: WT FEIR text and map</p>	<p>There are four active heron or egret rookeries located within four miles of the site.</p>	<p>The WT educational sign includes information about how to paddle responsibly around wildlife and what buffer distance to maintain from nesting herons and egrets. The WT website and brochure include more detailed information about not disturbing nesting birds or entering marsh habitat.</p>
<p>Biology – Rafting Waterfowl References: WT DREIR pp. 3-93 to 3-131 and Table 3.8.2-1, Figure 3.8.2-1.</p>	<p>This site provides access to areas where rafting waterfowl may congregate.</p>	<p>Avoiding disturbance of rafting waterfowl is addressed in the Water Trail educational sign, brochure, and website.</p>

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
<p>Biology – Ridgway's rail (formerly California clapper rail) and California black rail and high tide refugia References: WT DREIR pp. 3-93 to 3-131 and Figure 3.8.2-2 Personal Communication with CDFW</p>	<p>Suitable habitat for California black rail and Ridgway's rail is present in close proximity to the site; however, the high marsh habitat at the site is only a narrow strip, and marsh habitat in the immediate vicinity of the site is currently subject to disturbance from anglers and home owners living adjacent to the marsh (homeowners to the south all have docks accessed by a boardwalk across the marsh).</p>	<p>Signage is needed to emphasize the importance of keeping a 50-foot buffer from rail habitat (not entering channels less than 100 feet wide), of staying clear of high-tide refugia, and that landing in marshes and on levees is prohibited. The Water Trail educational sign, brochure, and website include this information.</p>
<p>Biology –Western snowy plover and California least tern References: WT DREIR pp. 3-93 to 3-131 and Figures 3.8.2-3, Personal Communication with CDFW</p>	<p>There is no suitable nesting habitat for these species in the immediate vicinity of the launch site. There are no known nesting sites for snowy plovers within 4 miles of this site.</p> <p>California Least Tern are present at Sonoma Baylands.</p>	<p>The WT educational sign includes information about how to paddle responsibly around wildlife, what buffer distance to maintain from nesting birds, and to avoid entering marsh habitat. The WT website and brochure include more detailed information about not disturbing nesting birds or entering marsh habitat.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>The secondary harbor seal haul-out site at Tubbs Island is within four miles of this site.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
<p>Biology – Other Species References: WT DREIR pp. 3-132 to 3-156 San Francisco Estuary Institute Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Data</p>	<p>Salt marsh harvest mice are found throughout the marshes in the North Bay. Marsh habitat surrounds the launch site and is present along the shoreline of Petaluma River and the edges of San Pablo Bay. Salt marsh harvest mice must be assumed to be present within four miles of this site. Trapping programs have documented extensive presence of salt marsh harvest mice throughout the marshes in the 4-mile radius around this launch site.</p>	<p>Boaters are advised through the WT brochure and website to not disembark in any undesignated areas or trample sensitive habitats, including marshes. The WT educational sign emphasizes that boaters should not land in marshes or on levees.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>	<p>No WT-related construction is planned at this time. NMSB users are not allowed to land in adjacent wetland habitat, potentially disturbing cultural artifacts.</p>	<p>The WT website includes information about avoiding disturbance to cultural artifacts.</p>
<p>Hydrology</p>	<p>No WT-related construction is planned at this time.</p>	
<p>Transportation, Circulation, and Parking</p>	<p>The site has a large parking lot that can accommodate users with trailers. There is a loading zone to drop off and pick up gear.</p>	<p>Increased use by non-motorized small boat users is not expected to be great enough to overwhelm parking.</p>



SAN FRANCISCO
BAY AREA
WATER
TRAIL

Black
Point

- Potential Water Trail Site
- 4 Mile Buffer (from Black Point)

- CA Least Tern
- Primary or secondary harbor seal haul out site

- Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse
- Active Heronry

- Shipping Channel
- Potential Hunting Area

CA Harbor Seal data from Water Trail FEIR.
CA Clapper rail data generalized from
2011 California Natural Diversity Database and
2012 Spartina Report. Heronry data from Audubon
Canyon Ranch 6/12. Shipping Channel from SF
Harbor Safety Committee brochure.

