

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
August 22, 2019

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WATER TRAIL BLOCK GRANT #2**

Project No. 19-015-01  
Project Manager: Avra Heller

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$600,000 (six hundred thousand dollars) to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to develop and implement various projects for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.

**LOCATION:** San Francisco Bay, its shoreline, and tributaries within the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's jurisdiction (Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Solano, Napa, and Contra Costa Counties)

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** San Francisco Bay Program

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**EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Project Pictures](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Staff Recommendation – San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Block Grant #1, March 17, 2011](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)
- Exhibit 5: [March 22, 2011 Water Trail Final Environmental Impact Report Notice of Determination](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to develop and implement various projects for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail, directly or through subgrants, throughout the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties."

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A work plan for the project as a whole, including schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.
4. Prior to commencement of work on, disbursement of funds for, or entering into any contract or subgrant agreement for any specific project, ABAG shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy with respect to that project:
  - a. A work plan, budget and schedule.
  - b. The names and qualifications of any contractors ABAG intends to retain to complete the project.
  - c. The proposed agreement with any subgrantee to whom ABAG intends to award grant funds to undertake the project.
  - d. Documentation that all permits and approvals for the project work have been obtained.
  - e. Documentation that ABAG has entered into agreements sufficient to implement, operate, and maintain the project.
  - f. Documentation that ABAG has entered into agreements sufficient to protect the public interest in the project.
5. In developing and implementing Water Trail projects, ABAG shall ensure compliance with all applicable mitigation and monitoring measures for the project that are identified in the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), and the associated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, certified by the Conservancy on March 22, 2011, (Notice of Determination attached as Exhibit 5) and in any permits, approvals or additional environmental documentation required for the project.
6. For any project that is not exempt from requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), ABAG shall not commit to undertake or fund the project until the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Project Management Team (“PMT”) (comprised of staff of the Conservancy, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, ABAG, and State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways), has determined that the project requires no further environmental documentation beyond the FEIR under CEQA, or if additional environmental documentation is required, until the appropriate public agency has undertaken the additional documentation required under CEQA and the Conservancy reviewed and considered the additional documentation and has authorized use of Conservancy funding for such project.

7. ABAG shall ensure that Conservancy funding is acknowledged through the inclusion of the Conservancy logo, in a manner approved by the Conservancy's Executive Officer, in signs installed at project sites and in all media produced and managed under this grant.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The Conservancy filed a Notice of Determination for the Water Trail on March 22, 2011 (Exhibit 5) following the Coastal Conservancy's certification the FEIR. There have been no project changes or changes in circumstances or new information since that date that trigger the need for additional CEQA review of the project pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15162. No further action under CEQA is necessary."

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**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends that the Conservancy disburse up to \$600,000 (six hundred thousand dollars) to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to develop and implement, either directly or through subgrants, various projects for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail. The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail) is a network of launching and landing sites, or "trailheads," that allow people to enter the Bay in non-motorized small boats (NMSBs) and that provide public facilities to support NMSB users. The Water Trail allows the public to enjoy the richness of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area through single and multiple-day trips on the Bay.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Program is designed to enhance safety, stewardship, and access to the San Francisco Bay for non-motorized small boaters by improving facilities at boat launching and landing sites, engaging the community and current user groups, and fostering collaboration among agencies, the public, and other stakeholders.

This second Water Trail Block Grant would provide continued Conservancy support for planning and implementation of the Water Trail. The Water Trail Block Grant will fund ABAG's subgrants to public entities and nonprofit organizations for planning for and construction of/or

improvements to existing sites, as well as ABAG's management tasks associated with the administration of the Water Trail subgrants. For the purposes of this project, NMSBs are defined as any type of paddle or rowing vessel (e.g., kayak, dragon boat, rowboat, whale boat, scull, outrigger canoe) or sailboard (windsurf board or kiteboard). The Water Trail is intended to promote safe and responsible use of the Bay, while protecting and increasing appreciation of its environmental and cultural resources through education and strategic access to the Bay. The Water Trail has the potential to enhance Bay Area communities' connections to the Bay and to create new linkages to existing shoreline open space and other regional trails. This authorization will specifically focus on designation of and improvements to water trail launch sites that provide direct benefit to Severely Disadvantaged Communities.

ABAG's Water Trail staff will continue to work with its partners on the Water Trail's decision-making body, the Project Management Team (PMT), which is made up of staff from the Conservancy, ABAG, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, as well as the Advisory Committee, to advance the goals of the Water Trail Program. ABAG staff will continue to establish working relationships with landowners that manage launch/landing sites and entities that provide affordable on-water recreation in order to advance site designation. ABAG staff will also make presentations to decision-making bodies, perform visit sites, and assist with other trail management and site designation tasks.

The Water Trail Block Grant will go to support ABAG staff and the Project Management Team in soliciting, reviewing, and managing site-specific subgrants for planning and/or construction of Water Trail site facilities. ABAG will manage the overall budget for subgrants throughout the term of the Coastal Conservancy grant. Once ABAG has selected subgrantees and Conservancy staff has approved their respective site-specific work programs in writing, ABAG will finalize contracts, provide written evidence to the Conservancy that all conditions precedent have been met, review RFPs, approve construction plans and sign plans, verify mitigation and monitoring program consistency and manage all aspects of the contract to project completion and dedication. Mitigation for potential impacts on recreation, navigational safety, and biological resources, will be addressed on a site-by site basis with information and signage being tailored to address each sites' specific hazards or species of concern. All Water Trail signage and public information include information related to boat and gear washing, buffer distances from wildlife, and identification of sensitive areas such as seal-haul outs, or seasonal nesting areas. These elements will be identified and incorporated into outreach and education, ongoing website updates, all aspects of the site designation process, site enhancement projects (grant agreements), signage and other products.

This grant program fills a key funding and regional coordination/public access planning gap by encouraging NMSB facility enhancements. The Water Trail has made significant progress in recent years, and additional funding is needed to continue to build on the program's strong foundation. The Water Trail Grant Program has been key to this success by funding access improvements and encouraging participation among shoreline jurisdictions and stakeholders.

Few other sources of grant funding exist for NMSB facility enhancements, and none are as effective in enhancing strategic water access across the San Francisco Bay Area. Prior to the Water Trail, NMSB access to the Bay was provided solely on a site-by-site basis by a variety of site owners and operators, both public and private. If approved, this next round of Water Trail grant funding should be able to support planning for and installation of improvements at 3-5 Water Trail sites throughout the Bay. Subgrants provided by this authorization will specifically be spent on Water Trail sites that are less than a mile from communities which have been identified as Severely Disadvantaged. Providing access within a mile from SDAC communities will benefit them by expanding their ability to access the Water Trail from a site adjacent to their community. Many of the sites listed below either already have existing community-oriented boating education and safety programming or are in the process of developing such programs.

Several existing Water Trail site improvement that were funded by the first Water Trail Block are within one mile of a severely disadvantaged community (SDAC) and there are significant upcoming opportunities to enhance water access in and around additional SDACs throughout the Bay Area. Launch sites serving SDACs identified in the 2011 Enhanced Water Trail Plan that this grant funding could potentially support include a kayak launch adjacent to Candlestick Point State Recreation Area's new campgrounds serving community members from San Francisco Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhoods; various potential waterfront access points around the City of Vallejo, the Redwood City Municipal marina, Suisun City Marina, and Doolittle Drive Boat Launch at Oakland's Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline. Additional funding could also help to improve the accessibility of facilities for people with disabilities per the [2015 San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Accessibility Plan](#), which provides guidance on ADA best practices for NMSB facilities.

As described above, ABAG staff play a critical role in Water Trail site designation by establishing working relationships with landowners who manage launch/landing sites and entities that provide affordable on-water recreation. ABAG staff work with interested site owners to develop designation documentation and present the site to the Water Trail's PMT and Advisory Committee and the Water Trail's quarterly public implementation meetings. The trailhead designation process has been established through the Water Trail's Implementation Charter, which defines the decision-making process and power of the PMT, the Advisory Committee, which is made up of a variety of stakeholders as defined in the 2005 Water Trail Act including environmental organizations, commercial NMSB operators, ADA experts, National Parks, the Coast Guard, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, State Parks, and many others. The designation process is similar for all sites but is simpler for sites that pose no potential significant environmental effects. After a site owner/manager expresses interest in joining the Water Trail, staff (ideally the Lead Water Trail Planner from ABAG, if grant funding is authorized) works with the owner/manager to create a Site Description and creates an environmental checklist based on the Water Trail FEIR to see if the site is truly an high opportunity site and only needs signage under the Water Trail FEIR. These documents are presented to the PMT, AC, and the public at least 10 days before every public meeting. During

the meeting the Advisory Committee gives comments on the proposed site, and the PMT then considers conditional designation. Sites that only need signage and are otherwise consistent with the Enhanced Water Trail Plan, will be officially designated as a Water Trail Site once signage is created and installed. Sites with proposed improvements are conditionally designated until the improvement project is completed at which point signage is installed, and the site becomes an officially designated Water Trail site. The Water Trail PMT has conditionally designated 45 trailhead launch sites to date.

If, after the development of a site description the PMT and advisory committee find, through use of the environmental checklist, that designation of the site may result in significant environmental effects, a more detailed Trailhead Plan will be developed and appropriate mitigation measures from the Water Trail FEIR (or a CEQA document tiered off of the Water Trail FEIR, or another existing certified FEIR or Mitigated Negative Declaration for the site in question) will be identified before the site is designated. In any case, when the environmental checklist for the site indicates that designation of the site involves new significant environmental effects or effects substantially greater in magnitude than previously considered by the FEIR or requires feasible mitigation measures not already identified in the FEIR, ABAG and Conservancy staff will work with the site manager to develop the required additional CEQA environmental documentation, and to obtain Conservancy authorization to designate the site.

Prior to the establishment of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Program, there was no overall planning body ensuring that access sites are provided at optimal locations in terms of boater safety, environmental protection, or distance between sites. Natural deterioration and a lack of funding to pay for repairs may lead to the loss of existing NMSB access locations over time. Without an overarching program to help find funding to replace or improve deteriorating sites, additional access sites may be lost. With Conservancy funding support, ABAG has been able to assign one full-time staff member, the Water Trail Lead Planner, to implement its Water Trail Program. This staff member is known to partners throughout the Bay and provides a critical service to the NMSB user community of the San Francisco Bay. ABAG regularly receives inquiries about grant funding, indicating a demand for funding well-beyond what is available through current sources. This second Water Trail Block Grant will ensure that that role continued to be filled, and that the Water Trail Grant Program will be able to provide grant funding to improve access to Bay waters for all Bay Area residents and visitors.

With more than 2.7 million people living within two miles of the Bay shoreline, the Water Trail has the potential to provide a unique and significant recreational opportunity close to home for many, and within a short drive for millions more. As outdoor recreation continues to grow in popularity, the Water Trail offers a space to get away from crowded landside trails and parks and to experience the Bay in a way that encourages a deeper connection. High cost and a lack of experience currently form barriers to participation in water recreation that can be prohibitive for many community members. Breaking down these barriers is key challenge the Water Trail is working to address to ensure that people of all backgrounds and incomes are welcome.

**Site Description:** The Water Trail Plan's primary project area is within BCDC's jurisdictional area in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area:

Potential Water Trail trailheads are located in a variety of settings, ranging from highly developed, to less developed, to natural areas. Highly developed areas include commercial, industrial, or residential complexes. There are two major airports (San Francisco and Oakland) and several smaller ones along the shore of the Bay (including those in Hayward, San Carlos, Novato, Napa, and Palo Alto). Major ports include Oakland, San Francisco, Richmond, Petaluma, Benicia, and Redwood City. Major refineries and heavy industrial complexes include those on the shorelines of the Carquinez Strait, southeastern portions of San Pablo Bay, and South San Francisco Bay. There are also multiple wastewater treatment plants that discharge treated effluent to the Bay. Development near the Bay's edge also includes clusters of commercial buildings and urban, suburban, and semi-rural residences in many locations.

Less developed and relatively more natural areas around the Bay include national wildlife refuges; local, regional, state, and federal parks, reserves, wildlife areas, and recreation areas; former landfill sites; portions of former military bases undergoing conversion to non-military uses; private undeveloped lands; and agricultural lands (primarily in the North Bay). In addition, salt pond complexes around the perimeter of South San Francisco Bay and Redwood City and along the Napa River are mostly undeveloped and provide important habitat for birds. (See Exhibit 1.)

**Grantee Qualifications:** ABAG is a regional planning agency for the nine counties and 101 cities and towns of the San Francisco Bay Area. All of these jurisdictions are voluntary members of ABAG, which represents the population of the entire region. ABAG's mission is to strengthen cooperation and coordination among local governments. In doing so, ABAG addresses social, environmental, and economic issues that transcend local borders. The Association of Bay Area Governments, or ABAG, is the comprehensive regional planning agency and council of governments for the nine counties and 101 cities and towns of the San Francisco Bay region.

ABAG staff have served as the lead implementation agency for the Water Trail since 2011, as described in the [Enhanced Water Trail Plan](#), and in accordance with the Coastal Conservancy's March 17, 2011 Board Authorization (Exhibit 3). ABAG staff has the expertise and relationships with partners to continue this work, which will continue to include the production of high-quality planning documents, stakeholder outreach, and management of grants. Funding for staff would be allocated consistent with the previous Conservancy block grant awards to ABAG.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission, or MTC, is the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. In 2017, ABAG and MTC entered into a Contract for Services under which MTC assumed staff functions for ABAG, and ABAG employees transitioned to MTC employees. The consolidated MTC staff serves both the MTC and ABAG governing boards.

The Water Trail Grant Program eligibility criteria were developed in close consultation with Conservancy staff and the program would continue to be implemented consistent with approved practices. This approach has been thoroughly vetted by Conservancy staff and has a track record of successful project implementation with funds being matched at a ratio of nearly four to one. ABAG has been successfully implementing the Water Trail since 2011 and is prepared to continue this work under a new authorization. ABAG has one full-time staff and two part-time dedicated staff with a record of success in implementing the Water Trail over the past eight years.

**Project History:** The Water Trail program began with grassroots organizing by long-time NMSB enthusiasts concerned about the deterioration of launching and landing facilities and lack of comprehensive information for people seeking to experience on-water recreation.

The Water Trail project was initiated through the efforts of Bay Access, Inc., a non-profit organization with support of the National Park Service. Assembly Bill 1296 (Hancock) - the Water Trail Act – was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in September 2005 and integrated into the enabling legislation of the Conservancy in Sections 31162(a), and 31163(d)(1) through (6) of Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code (see “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” and “Consistency with San Francisco Bay Plan,” below).

After the legislation was passed, BCDC led the development of the Water Trail Plan. Conservancy staff then took the lead on compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and completed the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). In 2011, the Conservancy authorized the first Water Trail Block Grant to ABAG to implement the Water Trail and has authorized two subsequent augmentations due to ABAG’s successful management of the Water Trail Program and associated Conservancy grants. (See Grantee Qualifications above for more details.)

Over the past 14+ years of extensive planning, public outreach, and agency partnerships, the Water Trail has become a Bay Area-wide force to strategically enhance boating facilities, accessibility, safety, education, and stewardship of the waters of San Francisco Bay – the Bay Area’s largest open space. Past projects funded under this program include: completion of a new world-class windsurf and kayak launch at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline, an ADA beach access path in Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline, and low-freeboard docks and boat storage in Antioch. (See Exhibit 2 for photos of sites developed with support from the previous Water Trail grant funds.) Water Trail Grant Program funds previously authorized by the Conservancy were used also for project planning, major project construction, and minor projects that all significantly enhanced water access for people with disabilities. For example, Water Trail grants facilitated completion of ADA water-access paths at Point Isabel Regional Shoreline and at Miller Knox Regional Shoreline as well as a mobi-mat at McNears Beach County Park.

Examples of the program’s outreach and education accomplishments are impressive, as evidenced by strong partnerships with government agencies and recreation groups, an updated



website ([sfbaywatertrail.org](http://sfbaywatertrail.org)), interpretive maps, design guidelines, a sign program, presentations at national and state conferences, and positive publicity about the Water Trail.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>
Other Project Collaborators (estimated)	<b>\$1,200,000</b>
<b>Projected Project Total</b>	<b>\$1,800,000</b>

It is anticipated that the Conservancy’s funding under this authorization will come from the fiscal year 2018/2019 appropriation to the Conservancy from the “California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018” (Prop 68, Public Resources Code Division 45, Chapters 1-13, Sections 80000-80173), in particular Chapter 9, which allocates funds for projects that enhance and protect coast and ocean resources including projects that are consistent with the purposes of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program and projects that are consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation generally (Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. (Pub. Res. Code sections 80120(c) & (d)). As defined by Proposition 68, the term “protection” includes actions that will improve access to public open-space areas and actions to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property and natural, cultural, and historic resources. (Section 80002(l)).The Water Trail is consistent with the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program and will improve public access to, and enjoyment of, San Francisco Bay.

The proposed project is consistent with the funding guidelines for expenditure of Proposition 68 adopted by the Conservancy on December 6, 2018 (Guidelines). (See Pub. Res. Code section 80010). As described in the Guidelines, Proposition 68 requires that at least 15% of the total funds available under Chapter 9 be used for projects that serve severely disadvantaged communities (SDACs), defined as a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average. (Section 8008(a)(2)). Under the Guidelines, “serving” an SDAC means the project is located within an SDAC, located within a mile of an SDAC, or is not located in an SDAC but provides other benefits to an SDAC. For this project, approximately \$450,000 will be used to support planning and construction of Water Trail sites that will be within or, within a mile of, SDACs, which will assist the Conservancy in meeting the funding goal.

This project is further consistent with Proposition 68 because it is expected to leverage funds from other sources. Expected match funding will come on a project-by-project basis. Some potential funding sources are: the East Bay Regional Park Districts’ Measure WW funding, Division of Boating and Waterways grants, and site owner fundraising. NMSB launch site improvements funded by the Water Trail Block Grant #1 successfully leveraged match funding at a 4:1 ratio.

MTC has committed \$51,600 in in-kind staff time on this project. ABAG is expected to continue to provide valuable services, such as public outreach expertise, relational database development and management, map creation and modification, and website development and management. Further in-kind services will be provided by the PMT members for the Water Trail throughout the life of the project. The Advisory Committee to the PMT will provide their expertise at quarterly meetings on a volunteer basis. In addition to funding listed above, State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways brings to the project the technical expertise of staff engineers and boating facilities experts who will help to ensure Water Trail projects that are consistent with Division of Boating and Waterways' criteria. Funds (of federal origin) from Division of Boating and Waterways' Recreational Boating Safety program may be especially valuable to the project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165, regarding San Francisco Bay Area projects.

Consistent with Section 31162(a), this project will improve public access to and around the bay through completion and operation of the Water Trail, which coincides in many locations with the Bay Trail system, is consistent with locally and regionally adopted master plans and general plans, will preserve and enhance existing facilities, and help provide the public with other related facilities, such as staging areas and campgrounds. Consistent with Section 31163(c), this project is 1) supported by regional plans, as reflected in the Enhanced San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan, adopted in 2011, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) Master Plan Map, adopted in 2013, and the San Francisco Bay Plan (see below), 2) is multijurisdictional, serving the nine counties of the Bay Area, and is identified as a Priority Conservation Area within ABAG's Priority Conservation Area Plan, 3) can be implemented in a timely way, 4) the Water Trail serves as a regional constituency by promoting safe boating and respect for wildlife, habitat, and cultural features throughout the Bay, and 5) will include in-kind contributions from other entities for the current grant authorization request. Other leveraged funds are expected to be applied toward the Water Trail during and beyond this grant period, from Division of Boating and Waterways, EBRPD (Measure WW), and site owners.

Consistent with Section 31163(d)(1) the Conservancy is leading the funding and development of projects implementing the Enhanced Water Trail Plan through providing grant funding to ABAG for project implementation. As also directed by Section 31163(d)(5), Conservancy staff included specific Water Trail metrics in the Conservancy's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#)**

**GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

The Water Trail is a key component of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan Goal 13 to "improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs in and around San Francisco Bay..."

The proposed project is consistent with **Goal 13, Objective J** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which seeks to add 25 additional NMSB launch sites designated into the Water Trail by 2022. To date, the Water Trail Program has conditionally designated 45 sites.

Designating an additional 25 sites over the next four years will require significant effort to encourage participation from facility managers that may have been hesitant to participate in the past. Ensuring that there is funding for enhancing new or marginal sites to make them eligible for official designation will be a critical part of this effort.

The proposed project is consistent with **Goal 13, Objective K** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which seeks to enhance 10 designated Water Trail sites, in that ABAG's Water Trail Grant Program has played a critical role in enhancing water access facilities around the bay, and encouraging voluntary participation among municipalities.

Consistent with **Goal 13, Objective L**, Future Water Trail Grant Program funding would continue to go towards projects that prioritize accessibility and thereby expand opportunities for access to the San Francisco Bay for people with disabilities. Enhancing an additional 10 sites in the next four years will continue to require significant staff time and a robust Water Trail Grant Program to achieve Conservancy Strategic Plan objectives.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S  
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:**
  - a. San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Act (enacted in 2005 by the California Legislature and signed into law by the Governor) which established the Water Trail

and specifically mandated that the Conservancy coordinate and implement the completion of and improvements for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.

- b. CA Climate Adaptation Strategy/Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk Plan (California Natural Resources Agency, July 2014) which includes policies relating to the State ensuring public access to coastal areas and providing recreational resources. The Water Trail serves a variety of NMSB water-oriented users. The project will improve the public's safety and knowledge of how to appropriately engage with wildlife and sensitive ecosystems, through its ongoing outreach and education, particularly through the information on the Water Trail website and on Water Trail designation signage at designated launch sites. The Water Trail grant program will serve to enhance NMSB launch locations and provide accessible opportunities for Bay Area citizens and visitors to enjoy healthful recreation and access to the bay.
  - c. California at 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report Plan (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, November 2015) specifies that agencies shall "incorporate climate change into all planning and investment." The project incorporates sea level rise and climate change into the design of the improvements. See "sea level rise vulnerability" section below.
4. **Support of the public:** The California State Legislature supported the vision of the Water Trail when it passed the Water Trail Act (AB 1296), which notes that "Water-oriented recreational uses are an integral element of the recreational opportunities that span the San Francisco Bay Area and add to the community vitality and quality of life that citizens of the region enjoy." The Water Trail enjoys widespread and growing recognition and support among State, regional, and local governments, stakeholders, advocacy groups and the public. Resolutions of Support for the Water Trail have been passed by more than 20 jurisdictions and agencies that participate in the Water Trail. The Water Trail also has strong support from a variety of boating clubs and organizations, including Bay Area Sea Kayakers, Environmental Traveling Companions, and the San Francisco Boardsailing Association. This project received letters of support from San Mateo County Supervisor, David Pine, the City of Antioch, East Bay Regional Park District, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, Bay Area Sea Kayakers, Environmental Traveling Companions, the Petaluma Small Craft Center, and the San Francisco Boardsailing Association (see Exhibit 3).
5. **Location:** San Francisco Bay and the shoreline and some tributary streams of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties.
6. **Need:** The Water Trail program has generated enthusiasm and support around the Bay, raising awareness of safety and environmental issues, accessibility needs, and the many opportunities for recreation on the water. The proposed project provides benefits that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented, as there is current momentum built

from the work supported by the previous Conservancy grants. Without the proposed Conservancy funding and the assistance of ABAG in implementing the project, the implementation of the Water Trail would be significantly delayed. Water Trail Staff has significant experience and expertise that could also be lost if Conservancy funding for staff time were not provided. Additionally, numerous projects seeking funding may not be able to move forward, such as shoreline access in the City of Vallejo, improvements to beach access at Point Molate Beach Park, and providing a low-freeboard dock at the Suisun City Marina. Many of these projects are within or close to an SDAC.

7. **Greater-than-local interest:** The Water Trail adds a new dimension to the system of regional trails in the Bay Area that offers the public a unique connection to San Francisco Bay. This unique regional trail is enhancing Bay Area communities' connections to the Bay and creating new linkages to existing shoreline open spaces and other regional trails. The Water Trail's regional network of public landing and launching sites for non-motorized small boats enhances public support for water-oriented recreation on the Bay, including via an informative website ([sfbaywatertrail.org](http://sfbaywatertrail.org)) and map sets that inform residents and visitors about the opportunities for access to the Bay in all nine Bay Area counties.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The launching and landing facilities that support the Water Trail are susceptible to sea level rise. The BCDC Climate Change Report has concluded that 14 percent of waterfront parks will be vulnerable to sea level rise by mid-century. The degree of vulnerability of the Water Trail sites within these parks and elsewhere will vary depending on the design of actual launch facilities (in some cases, launches are beaches). When new Water Trail facilities are built, they can be designed to cope with sea level rise changes by designing docks and piers that can be raised or moved inland, as appropriate to the specific situation. Even now, gangways and docks are sometimes removed from shoreline locations during the winter months to guard against damage from storms. Associated parking, camping, concessions, restroom, or other facilities at Water Trail sites are already typically located away from the water's edge for a variety of reasons, thus decreasing their vulnerability to sea level rise. Helping jurisdictions adapt existing facilities and plan for sea level rise during project design will continue to be an important aspect of Water Trail planning and outreach.

#### **Additional Criteria**

9. **Urgency:** The public educational program that will be implemented along with Water Trail site designation and enhancement, is expected to reduce inadvertent impacts of non-motorized small boat users on sensitive habitat and wildlife along with boating incidents that could otherwise be prevented through education and awareness. This educational program includes the publication and sharing of information on the Water Trail's updated website - [sfbaywatertrail.org](http://sfbaywatertrail.org) - distribution of water trail maps, installation of signage at designated Water Trail sites, and public outreach at quarterly public meetings, as well as other public events.

10. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Conflict resolution:** There are currently occasional conflicts between non-motorized small boat users and other high priority uses of shoreline areas. The regional and collaborative nature of the Water Trail project is expected to help resolve such issues when they arise.
12. **Innovation:** The Water Trail program via its grant program is supportive of innovative NMSB launch and access facilities. Through the previous block grant the Water Trail developed new regionally significant design tools and planning documents including the [2015 San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Accessibility Plan](#), and the recently released [2019 San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Design Guidelines](#).
13. **Readiness:** Roles and responsibilities for project implementation were developed during project planning, both with ABAG and the many other project collaborators. ABAG is excited to continue to lead the implementation of this project immediately, and to continue to be able to provide NSMB boating infrastructure grants around the San Francisco Bay and its tributaries.
14. **Cooperation:** The Water Trail project relies heavily on the voluntary cooperation of public agency staff and private individuals who serve on the Project Management Team as well as the Advisory Committee. The Water Trail also works closely with a wide variety of public access NMSB launch site managers and stewards ranging from public marinas, to non-profits organized around environmental education and water-access.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:**

This project is wholly consistent with the San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) adopted by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in 1969, as amended, and reprinted in 2008.

The most pertinent sections are found in the “Recreation” and “Public Access” sections of “Part IV, Development of the Bay and Shoreline: Findings and Policies” and “Part VI, Bay Plan Maps.” The Water Trail plan carries out the following policies.

#### **Excerpts from Policies Concerning Recreation on and Around the Bay:**

##### **Policies:**

- 1) Diverse and accessible water-oriented recreational facilities, such as marinas, launch ramps, beaches, and fishing piers, should be provided to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population, and should be well distributed around the Bay and improved to accommodate a broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels. Periodic assessments of water-oriented recreational needs that forecast demand into the future and reflect changing recreational preferences should be made to ensure that sufficient, appropriate water-oriented recreational facilities are provided around the Bay. Because there is no

practical estimate of the acreage needed on the shoreline of the Bay, waterfront parks should be provided wherever possible.

3) Recreational facilities, such as waterfront parks, trails, marinas, live-aboard boats, non-motorized small boat access, fishing piers, launching lanes, and beaches, should be encouraged and allowed by the Commission, provided they are located, improved and managed consistent with the following standards:

a. **General.** Recreational facilities should:

(1) Be well distributed around the shores of the Bay to the extent consistent with the more specific criteria below. Any concentrations of facilities should be as close to major population centers as is feasible;

(2) Not pre-empt land or water area needed for other priority uses, but efforts should be made to integrate recreation into such facilities to the extent that they are compatible;

(3) Be feasible from an engineering viewpoint; and

(4) Be consistent with the public access policies that address wildlife compatibility and disturbance. In addition:

(5) Different types of compatible public and commercial recreation facilities should be clustered to the extent feasible to permit joint use of ancillary facilities and provide a greater range of choices for users;

(6) Sites, features or facilities within designated waterfront parks that provide optimal conditions for specific water-oriented recreational uses should be preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced for those uses, consistent with natural and cultural resource preservation;

(7) Access to marinas, launch ramps, beaches, fishing piers, and other recreational facilities should be clearly posted with signs and easily available from parking reserved for the public or from public streets or trails....

b. **Marinas.** (1) Marinas should be allowed at any suitable site on the Bay... (2) Fill should be permitted for marina facilities that must be in or over the Bay...(4) In addition, marinas should include public amenities, such as viewing areas, restrooms, public mooring docks or floats and moorages for transient

recreational boaters, non-motorized small boat launching facilities, public parking; substantial physical and visual access; and maintenance for all facilities.

e. **Non-Motorized Small Boats.**

(1) Where practicable, access facilities for non-motorized small boats should be incorporated into waterfront parks, marinas, launching ramps and beaches, especially near popular waterfront destinations.

(2) Access points should be located, improved and managed to avoid significant adverse effects on wildlife and their habitats, should not interfere with commercial navigation, or security and exclusion zones or pose a danger to recreational boaters from commercial shipping operations, and should provide for diverse, water-accessible overnight accommodations, including camping, where acceptable to park operators.

(3) Sufficient, convenient parking that accommodates expected use should be provided at sites improved for launching non-motorized small boats. Where feasible, overnight parking should be provided.

(4) Site improvements, such as landing and launching facilities, restrooms, rigging areas, equipment storage and concessions, and educational programs that address navigational safety, security, and wildlife compatibility and disturbance should be provided, consistent with use of the site.

(5) Facilities for boating organizations that provide training and stewardship, operate concessions, provide storage or boathouses should be allowed in recreational facilities where appropriate.

(6) Design standards for non-motorized small boat launching access should be developed to guide the improvement of these facilities. Launching facilities should be accessible and designed to ensure that boaters can easily launch their



watercraft. Facilities should be durable to minimize maintenance and replacement cost.

- 4) To assure optimum use of the Bay for recreation, the following facilities should be encouraged in waterfront parks and wildlife refuges:
  - a. **In waterfront parks.**
    - (1) Where possible, parks should provide some camping facilities accessible only by boat and docking and picnic facilities for boaters.
    - (3) Where shoreline open space includes areas used for hunting waterbirds, public areas for launching non-motorized small boats should be provided so long as they do not result in overuse of the hunting area.
    - (4) Public launching facilities for a variety of boats and other water-oriented recreational craft, such as kayaks, canoes and sailboards, should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.
- 8) Signs and other information regarding shipping lanes, ferry routes, U.S. Coast Guard rules for navigation, such as U.S. Coast Guard Rule 9, weather, tide, current and wind hazards, the location of habitat and wildlife areas that should be avoided, and safety guidelines for smaller recreational craft, should be provided at marinas, boat ramps, launch areas, personal watercraft and recreational vessel rental establishments and other recreational watercraft use areas.

#### **Excerpts from Policies Concerning Public Access to the Bay:**

##### **Policies:**

- 3) Public access to some natural areas should be provided to permit study and enjoyment of these areas. However, some wildlife are sensitive to human intrusion. For this reason, projects in such areas should be carefully evaluated in consultation with appropriate agencies to determine the appropriate location and type of access to be provided.
- 4) Public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife. To the extent necessary to understand the potential effects of public access on wildlife, information on the species and habitats of a proposed project site should be provided, and the likely human use of the access area analyzed. In determining the potential for significant adverse effects (such as impacts on endangered species, impacts on breeding and foraging areas, or fragmentation of wildlife corridors), site specific information provided by the project applicant, the best available scientific evidence, and expert advice should be used. In addition, the determination of significant adverse effects may also be considered within a regional context. Siting, design and management strategies should be employed to avoid or minimize adverse effects on

wildlife, informed by the advisory principles in the Public Access Design Guidelines. If significant adverse effects cannot be avoided or reduced to a level below significance through siting, design and management strategies, then in lieu public access should be provided, consistent with the project and providing public access benefits equivalent to those that would have been achieved from on-site access. Where appropriate, effects of public access on wildlife should be monitored over time to determine whether revisions of management strategies are needed.

**Bay Plan Maps 1 – 7:**

Bay Plan Maps 1-7, as amended in 2006, contain added language recognizing the Water Trail and calling for small boat landing facilities at more than 25 specific sites.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

At the Conservancy's March 17, 2011 Board Meeting, the Coastal Conservancy certified the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). The Conservancy filed a notice of determination on March 22, 2011 (Exhibit 5). The FEIR addresses the Bay Area Water Trail generally.

The proposed authorization grants funds to ABAG to undertake projects and to provide subgrants to other entities for projects that will help complete the Bay Area Water Trail. Some proposed projects will be within the scope of the FEIR; however, some projects will have elements that are beyond the scope of the FEIR. Prior to committing to undertake or subgrant funds to a project, ABAG staff and the PMT will consider whether each proposed project is within the scope of the FEIR, whether it is exempt from CEQA, or whether it requires additional documentation under CEQA. If a proposed project is within the scope of the FEIR, no further action under CEQA is necessary. If a proposed project is exempt from CEQA, Conservancy staff can authorize use of these grant funds pursuant to the Executive Officer's delegated authority to make exemption determinations. If a proposed project requires additional documentation under CEQA, the appropriate public agency will complete any additional documentation required under CEQA. ABAG will not commit to undertake or fund any project requiring additional environmental review until the additional CEQA documents have been reviewed by the Conservancy and the Conservancy has authorized the funding.