
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) provides a summary overview of the project environmental analysis, impacts and mitigation measures. For additional detail regarding specific issues, please consult the appropriate sub-section of **Section 3.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures**.

INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail, or WT) would formalize a network of access sites, or “trailheads,” that allow people in small, non-motorized boats, such as kayaks, canoes, sailboards, and dragon boats, to safely enjoy the historic, scenic, and environmental richness of San Francisco Bay through single and multiple-day trips on the Bay. The Water Trail would bring education about personal boating, navigational safety, and appropriate boating behavior near sensitive wildlife species and shoreline habitat to the boating public through a variety of means. The large majority of the 112 trailheads proposed for the network already exist and are used by the public. They are located along the shoreline of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties.

The WT was authorized by the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Act (Water Trail Act), signed into law in September 2005. The Act directed the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), in coordination with other agencies and organizations, to conduct a public process to develop the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan (WT Plan), and assigned the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) as the lead agency for implementing the Plan. The development of the WT Plan was led by BCDC, with the active participation of a broad-based steering committee, stakeholders, and experts on specific topics. All background reports, meeting notes, and the final draft Plan itself are posted on BCDC’s website at www.bcdc.ca.gov.

The SCC is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This document is a Programmatic EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168) in that it analyzes the potential regional and cumulative effects of implementing the WT Plan rather than analyzing the impacts of any particular site-specific project. This EIR identifies mitigation strategies and measures applicable to general types of potential impacts that may occur from implementation of the Water Trail Plan, including possible trailhead enhancements or the development of new access sites. This approach allows for efficient tiering of subsequent project-level CEQA documents. More detail on the CEQA review process is provided in **Chapter 1.0, Introduction**.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The WT Plan (September 2007) includes trailhead development and management strategies, organizational structure and responsibilities, trailhead designation processes, and guidance on trail planning and program development. The Plan’s trailhead development and management strategies promote boater outreach and education; appropriate trailhead location, and improvement design; and maintenance and operation plans. It is a guide to trail implementation for agencies and organizations that will

develop and manage the WT program as well as for site owners and managers interested in becoming part of the WT and other stakeholders from around the region.

Of the 112 potential “Backbone Sites” identified in the Water Trail Plan, a subset of 57 were identified as “High Opportunity Sites,” meaning that they need little more than educational signage to meet the criteria for inclusion in the Water Trail program. Additional access sites may be considered for addition to the WT in the future, as appropriate, following the same evaluation procedures as for the sites identified in the Water Trail Plan. Access site improvements may range from signage only to development of entirely new access sites. Typical facility improvements may include, as examples, new docks, ramps, boat storage facilities, parking improvements, and restrooms. Official inclusion of access sites into the Water Trail program (“trailhead designation”) would be accomplished through evaluation of site characteristics and management (“Site Descriptions” for High Opportunity Sites and more elaborate “Trailhead Plans” for all other sites) for each site and decisions would be made at public meetings.

Details about implementation of the project are in **Chapter 2.0, Project Description**.

ALTERNATIVES

The project also considers the following two alternatives.

- **Revised High Opportunity Sites (HOS) Only:** The Revised HOS-Only alternative includes a revised list of 47 HOS sites based on the analyses presented in this EIR. Under this alternative, only sites with minimal improvement needs and no significant management issues would be included in implementation of the Plan. Management strategies would not be changed compared with the Project.
- **No Project:** The No Project alternative assumes continued public use of existing sites without any educational/public outreach programs or support for site improvements.

Alternatives Considered and Rejected. Other potential alternatives, such as site-closure alternatives and alternatives that were limited to certain regions of the Bay were considered and rejected as being infeasible. The Water Trail program is non-regulatory and has no power to direct site owners to close their sites. A program limited to certain regions of the Bay and not others is contrary to the mandate of the Water Trail Act to enact the Water Trail in the nine-county Bay Area throughout the jurisdictional area of BCDC.

Environmentally Superior Alternative. The Revised HOS-Only alternative was determined to be the Environmentally Superior Alternative, but would meet fewer of the project’s goals and objectives than the Proposed Project, and not provide the Bay-wide benefits of the Proposed Project.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The EIR identified potentially significant impacts on: recreation; public services and navigation; aesthetics; biological resources; cultural resources; hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use planning; and traffic, circulation and parking. Mitigation measures identified in the EIR would reduce all of these impacts to a less than

significant level. The Proposed Project would not result in any significant irreversible impacts. The Project's contribution to cumulative impacts and growth inducement also would be less than significant.

Table ES-1 presents a summary of project impacts. The level of significance of each environmental impact is indicated after the application of the mitigation measure(s) identified in the EIR. For detailed discussions of all project impacts and mitigation measures, the reader is referred to topical environmental analysis in **Section 3.0** of this DEIR.

The EIR includes mitigation measures for all potentially significant impacts. Sites meeting HOS criteria generally have less than significant impacts and therefore would not require mitigation. Applicability of mitigation measures to specific non-HOS sites would need to be evaluated at the time that a Trailhead Plan is prepared for that site. Therefore, most mitigation measures identified in this EIR are dependent on the degree of development proposed in the Trailhead Plan, the potential for that development to substantially increase use of a site, the location of a site in relation to sensitive wildlife species and habitat, and the results of the CEQA review of the Trailhead Plan with respect to the impact for which the mitigation is proposed.

Table ES-1: Summary of Potential Impacts and Levels of Significance	
Potential Project Impact	Level of Significance
Recreation	
Impact 3.1-1. Increased Use of Existing Sites or Other Recreational Sites Causing Accelerated Physical Deterioration of the Facility or Substantial Unplanned Expansion	Less than Significant
Impact 3.1-2. Increased Use of WT Sites by Motorized Boats from Implementation of the WT Program	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.1-3. Conflict with, and Preclusion of Existing Recreation Activities due to Facility Improvements and Use of WT Sites	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Public Services and Navigational Safety	
Impact 3.2-1. Need for New Facilities or Substantial Increase in Demand for Public Services	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.2-2. Substantial Expansion of Local Agency Capacity for Sites Designated for Overnight Use or Unacceptable Increase in Service Ratios, Response Times or Other Public Service Performance Objectives	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.2-3. Increased Risk of Incidents Including Accidents Involving Loss of Life, or Collisions between Recreational Water Users and Other Boats, and Groundings	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Aesthetics	
Impact 3.3-1: Degradation of the Existing Visual Quality of a WT Site or its Surroundings	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.3-2: Degradation of a Scenic Vista or View from an Eligible State Scenic Highway	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Biological Resources	
Impact 3.4-1. Wetland Habitat Impacts due to Construction, Repair, Rehabilitation, or Maintenance of Trailheads	Potentially Significant but Mitigable

Table ES-1: Summary of Potential Impacts and Levels of Significance	
Potential Project Impact	Level of Significance
Impact 3.4-2. Wetland Habitat Impacts due to Increased Trampling of Wetland Shoreline Vegetation and Soil	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-3. Impacts to Special-status Wetland Plant Species	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-4. Spread of Non-native Invasive Plants	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-5. Impacts on Special-status Animals of Bayland Marshes	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-6 Disturbance of Rafting Waterbirds from Roosting and Foraging Habitat	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-7 Disturbance of Ardeiid and Shorebird Roosting and Foraging Habitat	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-8 Disturbance of Ardeids and Shorebird Nesting Habitat	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-9 Disturbance of Rails and Other Marsh Bird Nesting Habitat	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-10 Disturbance of Rails and Other Marsh Birds from Roosting, Foraging, and Nesting Habitat due to Construction Activities at Launch Sites	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-11. Disturbance of Western Burrowing Owls from Nesting Habitat due to Increased Watercraft Traffic and Facility Construction	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-12. Disturbance to Harbor Seals due to Construction/Improvements at WT Sites	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-13. Disturbance to Harbor Seals due to Increased Use of Waters Near New or Existing WT sites	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.4-14. Avoidance or Abandonment of Traditional Harbor Seal Haul-out Sites, due to Cumulative Impacts of Increased Use of San Francisco Bay Waters by Non-powered Watercraft	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Cultural Resources	
Impact 3.5-1: Disturbance to Prehistoric Archaeological Deposits during Improvements to Bay Access and/or Development of Infrastructure	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Hazardous Materials	
Impact 3.6-1. Exposure of Workers to, or Release of, Contaminated Soil or Groundwater from Soil Excavation	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Hydrology and Water Quality	
Impact 3.7-1. Local Degradation of Water Quality due to Construction Activities	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.7-2. Degradation of Water Quality due to Runoff from Launch Facilities	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.7-3. Increased Littering in the Bay	Less than Significant
Impact 3.7-4: Placement of Structures within 100-Year Flood Zones that could Impede or Redirect Flows	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Land Use Planning	
Impact 3.8-1: Conflict with the BCDC Bay Plan	Less than Significant
Impact 3.8-2: Conflict with Federal, State, or Local Land Use Plans and Policies	Less than Significant
Impact 3.8-3: Incompatibility with Adjacent or Nearby Land Uses	Potentially Significant but Mitigable

Table ES-1: Summary of Potential Impacts and Levels of Significance	
Potential Project Impact	Level of Significance
Transportation, Circulation and Parking	
Impact 3.9-1. Degradation in Levels of Service on Access Roadways	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.9-2. Inadequate Parking at New WT Site	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.9-3. Inadequate Emergency Vehicle Access	Potentially Significant but Mitigable
Impact 3.9-4. Hazards Due to Unsafe Access Roadways	Potentially Significant but Mitigable