
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This executive summary provides an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail, or WT) Plan, including the environmental analysis, impacts and mitigation measures. Detailed information regarding the proposed WT Project and potential issues associated with implementation of the WT is provided in Chapters 1 through 5 of this DEIR.

ES.1 INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail, or WT) strives to create 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 majority of the 112 trailheads proposed for designation as part of 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 or Conservancy) to be 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 WT 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 DEIR 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. A DEIR was previously issued for this project on June 12, 2008 and a total of 24 agencies, organizations and individuals provided comments. Those comments were considered in the development of this recirculated DEIR. More detail on the CEQA review process is provided in Chapter 1, Introduction, and Chapter 2, Project Description.

ES.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail project would implement the Water Trail Plan through a trailhead designation process designed to support improved and safer non-motorized small boat access to San Francisco Bay, and protection of environmental resources through careful

consideration of potential impacts related to implementation of the Plan. The WT Plan (BCDC 2007b) includes trailhead development and management strategies, organizational structure and responsibilities, a trailhead designation process, 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 facility design; and maintenance and operation plans. The WT Plan 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 would need little more than educational signage to meet the criteria for inclusion in the Water Trail Project. Additional access sites may be considered for designation 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 Project ("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. The implementation process for the project is described in detail in Chapter 2, Project Description.

The analysis of potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the WT Plan is based on the increase in non-motorized small boat use that could be caused by the Water Trail. To accomplish this first step in the analysis, the potential increase in non-motorized small use needs to be defined. The analysis begins with an examination of existing levels and future increases that would be expected to occur without implementation of the Water Trail (i.e., the non-WT-related growth), and then assesses the elements of the WT that could lead to additional (incremental, WT-induced) growth in NMSB use. The analysis then evaluates the various potential impacts that might be associated with WT-induced growth.

Existing levels of non-motorized small boat use are estimated based on data collected by the California Department of Boating and Waterways in 2006 and 2007 (Cal Boating 2009). Likewise, estimates of the growth of non-motorized small boat use absent the Water Trail are based on the Cal Boating 2009 study. There are neither published estimates (e.g., from local studies or surveys), nor other sources of data to estimate the increment of future growth in non-motorized small boat use on San Francisco Bay that might be attributable solely to the Water Trail. Based on input from recreational experts, this unknown increment is expected to be very small in relation to non-WT-induced growth. This conclusion is based on the challenges of boating on San Francisco Bay (weather, currents, tides, water temperature), the interest of most access site owners/managers in maintaining or improving their sites regardless of the WT (50% of the Backbone Sites are within waterfront parks, for example), the publicity for non-motorized boating on the Bay that already exists, the opportunities for non-motorized boat rentals that already exist, the interest of Bay Area boat owners in recreating on water bodies outside the Bay Area (lakes, rivers, coastline), combined with the already predicted increase in non-motorized

small boat use regardless of the WT. An annual growth rate in the use of non-motorized small boats by people in the San Francisco Bay Region of 3.84% per year is predicted absent the Water Trail (Cal Boating 2009).

The number of participant-days¹ for non-motorized small boat use by individuals residing in the San Francisco Bay Area Region, as defined by Cal Boating (2009), and not including inflatable rafts, is estimated to be 6.2 million in 2010, based on 5.3 million participant days in 2006 and an estimated total of 174,000 non-motorized small boats owned by people from this region in 2006.² The number of motorized boats owned by residents of the San Francisco Region (Cal Boating 2002) has been roughly equal to the number of non-motorized small boats owned in the region and used in the region over the past 10 years.

ES.3 ALTERNATIVES

The DEIR considers the following three alternatives to the Project.

- **Alternative 1 — No Project:** The No Project alternative assumes continued public use of existing sites without any educational/public outreach programs or support for site improvements other than what already exists.
- **Alternative 2 — High Opportunity Sites (HOS) Only:** The HOS Only Alternative would include only the sites that meet HOS criteria. (While the number of sites meeting HOS criteria is not known with certainty, 57 sites were preliminarily identified as HOSs in the WT Plan.) Under this alternative, only sites with minimal improvement needs and no significant management issues would be included in implementation of the Plan. All mitigation measures applicable to the Project would also be incorporated into the HOS Only Alternative to the extent they would apply to this subset of sites.
- **Alternative 3 — Enhanced Water Trail Plan Alternative:** The Enhanced Water Trail Plan Alternative includes four additional strategies to further reduce potential impacts associated with implementation of the WT. Under this alternative the existing WT Plan (BCDC 2007b) would be modified to incorporate four additional strategies: Strategy 25, Comprehensive Education Program; Strategy 26, Navigational Safety; Strategy 27, Boatwashing Facilities; and Strategy 28, GHG Best Management Practices for Construction, Trailhead Operation, and WT Program. All mitigation measures applicable to the Project would also be incorporated into the Enhanced WT Plan.

Alternatives Considered and Rejected. Other potential alternatives, including site closure, no major new facility development, carbon-neutral, or limited geographic region alternatives, were considered and rejected as being infeasible for reasons discussed in Chapter 5, Alternatives to the Project. The most broadly applicable reasons for their rejection are the non-regulatory nature of the WT project and the directive of the WT Act to serve the entire nine-county Bay Area.

¹ Participant-days are the number of days a boat owner uses his or her boat. A boat owner using a boat three days per year would have three participant-days; a boat owner using a boat 30 days per year would have 30 participant days. The average non-motorized small boat use rate is 24 days per year statewide (Cal Boating 2009).

² This number excludes inflatables, which are used only on interior lakes and rivers, and make up 41.5% of non-motorized boats owned by California residents.

Environmentally Superior Alternative. The Enhanced Water Trail Plan Alternative was determined to be the Environmentally Superior Alternative.

ES.4 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS

The DEIR identified potentially significant impacts on: recreation; navigation; aesthetics; biological resources; cultural resources; hydrology and water quality; and traffic, circulation and parking. Mitigation measures identified in the DEIR would reduce all of these impacts to a less than significant level. The Project would not result in any significant irreversible effects. The Project's contribution to cumulative impacts and growth inducement also would be less than significant.

Table ES-1 presents a summary of potential project impacts. The level of significance of each environmental impact is listed both before and after the application of the mitigation measure(s) identified in this DEIR. For detailed discussions of all project impacts and mitigation measures, please refer to the environmental analysis in Chapter 3 of this DEIR.

This DEIR provides mitigation measures for all potentially significant impacts, including the project's potential contribution to cumulatively significant impacts. Mitigation measures may apply to regional impacts (i.e., impacts associated with the implementation of the WT as a whole) or site-specific impacts. Potential regional impacts will be mitigated through activities undertaken by site owners and managers, and/or as part of the trailhead designation process. Potential site-specific impacts will be mitigated for each site individually. The need to implement the mitigation measures identified in this DEIR is dependent on the degree and type of development proposed for the site, the potential for that development or publicity to substantially increase use of a site, and the location of a site in relation to sensitive wildlife species and habitat and/or potential safety concerns.

Sites meeting HOS criteria have less than significant impacts and therefore would require little or no site-specific mitigation. The applicability of the various site-specific mitigation measures to individual sites would be evaluated during the trailhead designation process. Because site conditions may have changed since the original classification of potential WT access sites into HOSs and non-HOSs was made, all sites will undergo a preliminary environmental screening as part of the trailhead designation process. The environmental review would consider available CEQA documentation for the site, and would use the environmental effects checklist included as a preliminary draft in Appendix E of this document. Although the mitigation measures included in this document are expected to be adequate for the great majority of potential WT sites, site-specific CEQA review would identify the need for any other mitigation measures that may not be included in this document.

TABLE ES-1. SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact Number	Impact Name	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Name	Significance After Mitigation
Rec-1	Regional Effects on Recreation	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rec-2	Increased Use of Existing Sites or Other Recreational Sites Causing Accelerated Physical Deterioration of the Facility or Substantial Unplanned Expansion	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rec-3	Increased Use of WT Sites by Motorized Boats from Implementation of the WT Program	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rec-4	Conflict with, and Preclusion of, Existing Recreation Activities Due to Facility Improvements and Use of WT Sites, or Increased Boating	PS	Rec-M4A	Web-Based Comment Form	LTS
			Rec-M4B	Conduct Recreational Use Evaluations and Develop/Implement Adaptive Management Recommendations if User Conflicts Occur	
			Rec-M4C	Safety Signage	
Nav-1	Increased Risk of Incidents Including Accidents Involving Loss of Life, or Collisions between NMSB Users and Other Boats	PS	Nav-M1A	Develop and Implement Safety Signage	LTS
			Nav-M1B	Sponsor WT Training and Education Programs	
			Nav-M1C	Design of WT Sites near Commercial Shipping and Ferry Terminals	
			Nav-M1D	Planning of Wildlife Buffer Zones	
Nav-2	Increased Risk of Incidents Due to Changes in Facilities or New Sites	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Impact Number	Impact Name	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Name	Significance After Mitigation
PS-1	Need for New Facilities or Substantial Increase in Demand for Public Services	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
PS-2	Substantial Expansion of Public Service Needs for Sites Designated for Overnight Use or Unacceptable Increase in Service Ratios, Response Times or Other Public Service Performance Objectives	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aesth-1	Degradation of Visual Quality of a WT Site or Its Surroundings	PS	Aesth-M1	Include Visual Characteristics and Site Relationships in Design Guidelines and Trailhead Plans	LTS
Aesth-2	Degradation of a Scenic Vista or View from an Eligible State Scenic Highway	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bio-1	Spread of Non-Native Invasive Plants	PS	Bio-M1	Conduct Education and Spread-Reduction Efforts	LTS
Bio-2	Wetland Habitat Impacts Due to Construction, Repair, Rehabilitation, or Maintenance of Trailheads	PS	Bio-M2	Conduct Surveys, Adopt Avoidance Measures, and Instigate Compensatory Mitigation	LTS
Bio-3	Wetland Habitat Impacts Due to Increased Trampling of Wetland Shoreline Vegetation and Soil	PS	Bio-M3	Establish Trailhead Restrictions, Public Education, Surveys, and Signage	LTS
Bio-4	Impacts to Special-Status Wetland Plant Species	PS	Bio-M4	Conduct Surveys, Adopt Avoidance Measures, and Instigate Compensatory Mitigation	LTS

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Impact Number	Impact Name	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Name	Significance After Mitigation
Bio-5	Disturbance of Rafting Waterfowl from Roosting and Foraging Habitat	PS	Bio-M5	Avoid Disturbance of Rafting Waterfowl from Roosting or Foraging Habitat	LTS
Bio-6	Disturbance of Wading Bird, Shorebird, and Brown Pelican Roosting and Foraging Habitat	PS	Bio-M6	Avoid Disturbance of California Brown Pelicans From Roosting and Foraging Habitat	LTS
Bio-7	Disturbance of Bird Nesting Habitat	PS	Bio-M7	Avoid Disturbance of Bird Nesting Habitat	LTS
Bio-8	Disturbance of California Clapper Rails and California Black Rails	PS	Bio-M8	Avoid Disturbance of California Clapper Rails and California Black Rails	LTS
Bio-9	Disturbance of Non-Listed Marsh Birds	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bio-10	Potential Incidental Take of Sensitive Species	PS	Bio-M5 through Bio-M8	See Mitigation Names for Bio-M5 through Bio-M8, above	LTS
Bio-11	Disturbance of California Clapper Rails and California Black Rails due to Construction Activities at Launch Sites	PS	Bio-M11	Avoid Disturbance of California Clapper Rails and California Black Rails due to Construction Activities at Launch Sites	LTS
Bio-12	Regional Impacts on Special-Status Small Mammals of Bayland Marshes	PS	Bio-M12, Bio-M3, and Bio-M4	Undertake Avoidance Measures	LTS
Bio-13	Regional Impacts on Northwest Pond Turtles	PS	Bio-M12	Undertake Avoidance Measures	LTS

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Impact Number	Impact Name	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Name	Significance After Mitigation
Bio-14	Disturbance to Harbor Seals Due to Increased NMSB Presence Near Haul-Out Sites	PS	Bio-M14A	Review Improvements at Certain Sites and Implement Education and Outreach--Educate NMSB Users in Vicinity of Pupping Sites	LTS
			Bio-M14B	Review Improvements at Certain Sites and Implement Education and Outreach--Buffer Zone Signage and Other Markers	
Bio-15	Avoidance or Abandonment of Traditional Harbor Seal Haul-out Sites Due to Increased NMSB Use	PS	Bio-M15	Seasonal Closures, Monitoring and Adaptive Management	LTS
Bio-16	Construction and Trailhead Impacts on Special-Status Animals of Bayland Marshes	PS	Bio-M15, Bio-M2 and Bio-M3	Undertake Waste Management, Predator Control, and Basking Impact Minimization (see above for Bio-M2 and Bio-M3)	LTS
Bio-17	Disturbance to Harbor Seals Due to Construction	PS	Bio-M17	Provide Mitigation for Disturbance to Harbor Seals Due to Construction/Improvements at WT Sites	LTS
Cult-1	Disturbance to Prehistoric Archaeological Deposits During Use of the Water Trail	PS	Cult-M1	Include Protection of Cultural Resources in Education and Outreach Efforts	LTS

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Impact Number	Impact Name	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Name	Significance After Mitigation
Cult-2	Disturbance to Prehistoric Archaeological Deposits During Facility Improvements and/or Use of the Water Trail	PS	Cult-M2A	Undertake Expanded Archival Research and Field Investigations to Provide Information About Potential Prehistoric Archaeological Deposits	
			Cult-M2B	Protect Prehistoric Archaeological Remains in Adjacent Areas	LTS
Haz-1	Exposure of Workers, the Public, or Wildlife to Contaminated Soil or Groundwater from Soil Excavation	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hyd-1	Local Degradation of Water Quality Due to Construction Activities	PS	Hyd-M1	Employ Construction Best Management Practices	LTS
Hyd-2:	Degradation of Water Quality due to Runoff from Trailheads	PS	Hyd-M2	Implement Stormwater Best Management Practices	LTS
Hyd-3	Degradation of Water Quality due to Improper Sanitation	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hyd-4	Increased Littering in the Bay	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hyd-5	Placement of Structures Within 100-Year Flood Zones that Could Impede or Redirect Flows	PS	Hyd-M5	Design All New Permanent Structures to Address Potential Flood Hazards	LTS
LUP-1	Conflict with Federal, State, or Local Land Use Plans and Policies	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
LUP-2	Incompatibility with Adjacent or Nearby Land Uses	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Impact Number	Impact Name	Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Number	Mitigation Name	Significance After Mitigation
TPC-1	Degradation in Levels of Service on Access Roadways	PS	TPC-M1	Undertake Traffic Assessment Prior to Designation of New or Enhanced WT Sites	
TPC-2	Inadequate Parking at New or Improved WT Trailheads	PS	TPC-M2	Undertake Parking Study Prior to Development of New or Enhanced WT Sites	LTS
TPC-3	Inadequate Emergency Vehicle Access	PS	TPC-M3	Evaluate Emergency Vehicle Access at New WT Sites and Sites with Substantial Improvements	LTS
TPC-4	Hazards Due to Unsafe Access Roadways	PS	TPC-M4	Evaluate Plans for New WT Sites to Determine Safety for Vehicle Access	LTS
GHG-1	Increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions Attributable to the Implementation of the Water Trail	LTS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notes: LTS Less than significant N/A Not applicable PS Potentially Significant					