



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
1 Marshlands Road  
Fremont, California 94555



1 November 2017

Re: Westpoint Harbor

To: Marc A. Zeppetello  
Chief Counsel  
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission  
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600  
San Francisco, CA 94102

We are writing this letter with regards to the Westpoint Harbor as a response to information requests from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. The Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established in 1974 to preserve the natural resources of the San Francisco Bay. Refuge lands are found in close proximity to the Westpoint Harbor property. The habitat in areas of the Refuge adjacent to the Harbor provides protection for waterfowl, waterbirds and shorebirds, and is important to recovery efforts for endangered species such as the Ridgeway's Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.

For the last fifteen years the Refuge has worked intermittently with management at Westpoint Harbor to ensure that the natural resources in the adjacent Refuge habitat are protected. This included initial comment letters in 2001 about the proposed Westpoint harbor project and subsequent meetings/communication about how to best address our natural resource concerns. Many of the basic concerns about potential for disturbance to Refuge lands and the wildlife in them remain the same fifteen years later.

Most important is our concern about human/pet impacts to Greco Island and the sensitive habitat and endangered species that are found there. At no time should individuals or pets get out of their watercraft and walk in the marsh, on berms or levees, or on boardwalks, the only exception being during waterfowl hunting season for the retrieval of downed waterfowl. We reassert the need to place and maintain appropriate buoys/signage (fitted with perch deterrents) to inform the public about the sensitive habitat on Greco Island, the fact that the area is closed, and that trespass is not allowed. Mr. Sanders from the Marina has recently expressed a willingness to work with us on signage around Greco Island to that effect. We look forward to working with him to identify locations for buoys/signs to be installed, and the Refuge is willing provide appropriate signage. We also reaffirm the need for appropriate educational signage to be located and maintained in the area of the Marina to educate the public about the closure of refuge lands and the reasons for this action. Mr. Sanders has worked with our staff on this issue in the past and we want to continue providing our technical assistance and guidance on this topic.

A secondary concern is the provision of roost and nesting sites for avian predators of shorebirds and waterbirds. We often provide public comment during comment periods for proposed projects that signage and plantings along the edges of the proposed developments adjacent to sloughs, ponds, and marsh areas be kept to a minimum or be fitted with perch deterrents. As we stated in our 2001 letter, “trees and other potential roosting/nesting structures should be placed well back from tidal areas.”

Lastly, we reaffirm that the effort to establish and enforce a “no wake zone” in Westpoint slough, to ensure that boats do not cause increased erosion to Greco Island via wave action that occurs during transit of the slough, remains important to prevent loss of this sensitive habitat.

The Refuge appreciates the efforts of all parties to ensure that impacts to Refuge lands and protected species are minimized. The Refuge looks forward to working with all parties to ensure that these natural resources are adequately protected. Thank you for your consideration and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (510) 792-0222 ext 125 or email [jared\\_underwood@fws.gov](mailto:jared_underwood@fws.gov).

Sincerely,



Jared G. Underwood  
Refuge Manager  
Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge