

April 5, 2006

TO: San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Steering Committee
FROM: Sara Polgar, Water Trail Project Manager (415/352-3645 sarap@bcdc.ca.gov)
SUBJECT: Charter of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Steering Committee

Introduction

BCDC, the California Coastal Conservancy, the Bay Trail Project and other agencies and organizations are planning a San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail (Water Trail) that will serve non-motorized small boats. The project staff is leading meetings of the Water Trail Steering Committee, a group representing the diverse stakeholders affected by the trail. The Steering Committee advises staff on policies and guidelines for implementation of the Water Trail. In preparation for these meetings, the project staff created a draft Charter for the Steering Committee that describes the stakeholder process and participants' roles and responsibilities. Committee members reviewed, discussed and made changes to the draft Charter during the first Steering Committee meeting (February 1, 2006). Staff incorporated these comments, and the Steering Committee adopted the revised Charter at its meeting on April 5, 2006.

Charter

Purpose and Goals of the Committee. The purpose of the Water Trail Steering Committee is to engage diverse stakeholder groups to:

1. Refine the vision and goals for the Water Trail.
2. Generate guidance on policies, criteria and guidelines for the location, design, operation and maintenance of the Water Trail that support the objectives set in the Water Trail legislation.
3. Build broad support for the Water Trail among participants and initiate partnerships among agencies and organizations that will support development of the trail.

Mission. Provide advice to the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Project staff to develop policies and guidelines for implementation of the Water Trail.



Background. California Assembly Bill 1296 established the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail as a project supported by the state. This legislation directs the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in cooperation with the California Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy), Association of Bay Area Governments Bay Trail Project (Bay Trail) and others to develop a plan for the Water Trail. Water Trail staff will lead a collaborative, public planning process to define policies, criteria and guidelines for appropriate trail location, design, operation and maintenance. The plan must:

1. Identify sensitive wildlife areas where access should be managed or prohibited and
2. Describe an organizational structure and procedures for Water Trail management and operation that advances navigational safety, protects wildlife and fosters environmental stewardship.

The Water Trail staff will submit a final report containing recommendations on these elements to the state legislature in early 2008.

Stakeholder Participation. Interested stakeholders will be invited to participate in the Steering Committee, a body with formal membership, or to focus on specific issues in Water Trail Workshops.

1. **Steering Committee.** The Steering Committee is the core group of stakeholders who participate in the entire Water Trail planning process. The Steering Committee will have a set membership although interested parties and members of the public may attend and participate in Steering Committee meetings. The Steering Committee will ensure consistent stakeholder involvement on a comprehensive approach to Water Trail implementation.

The committee includes representatives from the non-motorized small boating (NMSB) community; shoreline resource planning, management and ownership; Bay Area navigational safety and security; wildlife protection; and environmental stewardship. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Steering Committee Representation

Perspectives	Groups	Individual representatives
Bay Area non-motorized small boating (NMSB) community	Bay Access Inc.	Penny Wells
	Bay Area Sea Kayakers	Cecily Harris
	Western Sea Kayakers	Jim McGrath
	Other NMSB activities	Jim McGrath (windsurfing)
	Bay Area NMSB industry	Ted Choi (CityKayak)
Shoreline resource planning, management and ownership	San Francisco Bay Trail Project	Laura Thompson
	Bay Area Open Space Council	Cecily Harris
	East Bay Regional Parks Dist.	Brian Wiese
	California Department of Boating and Waterways	Mike Ammon
Bay Area navigational safety and security	Harbor Safety Committee	Margot Brown
Wildlife protection	Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge	Arthur Feinstein
	Marin Audubon Society	Barbara Salzman
	San Francisco Bay Joint Venture	Beth Huning
Environmental stewardship	Save the Bay	Marilyn Latta / Jessica Parsons

2. **Water Trail Workshops.** In cooperation with the Steering Committee, staff will organize Water Trail Workshops when a specific topic could benefit from a focused discussion and guidance from interested parties in addition to input from Steering Committee members. Workshops will likely include issue experts and stakeholders who have perspectives or experience on the topic at hand. Staff will use these discussions in developing the final plan. Steering Committee members and the general public will be able to participate.
3. **Issue Experts and Other Stakeholder Involvement.** Other stakeholders and technical experts will participate as needed throughout the planning process. When appropriate, invited experts would likely present or speak early on to inform discussions. Issues experts might also guide staff on developing Water Trail policy. Water Trail staff will work with the Steering Committee to identify these issue experts and other interested stakeholders.
4. **Observers and the Public.** All Steering Committee and Water Trail Workshops are open to the public, and interested citizens are welcome to participate in discussion.

Decision Making. The Committee will make decisions by consensus, meaning that all members either fully support or can “live with” a decision or policy direction and believe that their constituents can as well. Consensus does not mean one hundred percent agreement on every issue, but rather, support for moving forward with guidance as a whole. In striving to reach consensus, the Steering Committee considers the interests and concerns of all members as well as other relevant perspectives. They strive to develop creative proposals and recommendations that address the interests of all stakeholders.

However, if after full exploration and discussion of an issue, one hundred percent support for the guidance as a whole is not feasible, the project manager and the facilitator would consult with or make a proposal to the group about how to resolve the outstanding issue(s). In cases where dissension persists, the Water Trail staff will document the Committee’s majority and minority policy guidance in a briefing paper on that topic. With the final report, the staff will prepare an addendum that summarizes the remaining areas of disagreement.

The facilitator and project manager will announce discussion topics in the agenda that the Steering Committee receives before the meeting. If unable to attend the meeting, a member can notify the project manager that a pre-selected alternate is attending in his/her place or call the project manager to weigh in on a decision. If a Steering Committee member fails to attend the meeting or notify the project manager as described above, s/he would respect the decisions as reached by the group in his/her absence.

Products and Deliverables. The final deliverable of the entire Steering Committee is a compilation of briefing papers on policy guidance provided by the Steering Committee. The briefing papers must accurately reflect the outcome of the discussions, the level of stakeholder support expressed, the stakeholder rationale, and, if applicable, the minority position or recommendations. The Water Trail project manager will write these briefing papers.

The compilation of briefing papers on the policy guidance will not be the final report submitted to the state legislature. The Water Trail project manager will prepare the final report for the state legislature after the stakeholder process. The final report will reflect Steering Committee decisions, and encompass additional recommendations developed by Water Trail staff. The BCDC, Coastal Conservancy Board and Bay Trail Project Board will hold public hearings on the final report. During the hearings, the public, including Steering Committee members, will have opportunities to voice their perspectives on the Water Trail.

Content for the Stakeholder Process. The timeline for the overall Water Trail planning work is set by the availability of staff resources for project management through July 2007 and the final report due date (early 2008) established in the Water Trail legislation. To complete the planning work within these constraints, Water Trail staff plans to hold six or seven Steering Committee meetings between January 2006 and March 2007. (Table 2.)

Table 2. Steering Committee Meeting Timeline

Meeting 1 February 1, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review plan for stakeholder process, participants' roles, and meeting plans • Identify Water Trail issues that need to be addressed, and prioritize list • Refine Water Trail vision and goals
Meetings 2-6 March 2006 - February 2007 (every other month)	<p>Potential topics/issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities, environmental issues, safety and security, stewardship, trailhead siting
Meeting 7 March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete discussion of remaining issues • Review compilation of briefing papers
Presentation of Policy Guidance June 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of final report to the Steering Committee

At the initial meeting, the Steering Committee will identify and prioritize the issues and topics that it will take up over the course of its meetings and work with Water Trail staff to identify additional experts and stakeholders to involve in issue-specific Water Trail Workshops.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Steering Committee.** Steering Committee members agree to:
 - a. Arrive at each meeting fully prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda. Preparation includes reviewing meeting summaries, technical information and briefings on draft policy guidance distributed in advance of each meeting.
 - b. Present constituent members' views on the issues being discussed and be willing to engage in respectful, constructive dialogue with other members of the group.
 - c. Develop a problem-solving approach in which they consider the interests and viewpoints of all group members in addition to their own.
 - d. Keep constituencies informed about the deliberations and actively seek their constituents' input.
2. **Water Trail Staff.** The BCDC, the Conservancy, and the Bay Trail Project have allocated staff time as well as other resources to the stakeholder process.
 - a. **Project Manager, Sara Polgar (BCDC).** The project manager will act as meeting convener and content specialist for the stakeholder process. She will take care of meeting scheduling, logistics and noticing, as well as preparing and distributing background information and analyses (as necessary) prior to meetings. She will prepare maps, presentations and background information for the group to function effectively.

During meetings, the project manager will answer questions from stakeholders about issues relating to the Water Trail. Following meetings, she will prepare and distribute a summary that describes the key meeting outcomes. When questions arise that need to be answered before moving ahead with discussions on an issue, the project manager is responsible for investigating and reporting back to the group at the following meeting. In addition to the meeting summaries, the project manager will prepare the briefing papers that describe Steering Committee policy guidance.

Throughout the stakeholder process, the project manager will coordinate with the other Water Trail staff, the facilitator and Steering Committee members on the tasks and products necessary to ensure a successful completion of this effort.

- b. **Ann Buell (Conservancy), Patrycja Bossak (Bay Trail Project) and Joe LaClair (BCDC).** Ann, Patrycja and Joe will work with Sara to secure resources for the stakeholder process. They will attend the stakeholder meetings and be available to address agency policy and technical issues.

Facilitation Staff

1. **Gina Bartlett (Center for Collaborative Policy).** The facilitator will work with the project manager and Steering Committee to plan and design each meeting to ensure that the overall project goals are achieved. She will facilitate the meetings to help keep the group focused and encourage full participation from all members. The facilitator will identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement and assist in building consensus among members. The facilitator will also communicate with stakeholders confidentially to understand issues and concerns and to guide the group toward agreement. The facilitator will also review meeting summaries and briefing papers to make sure they reflect stakeholder agreements and perspectives. Finally, the facilitator will advocate for a fair, effective, and credible process, but remain impartial with respect to the outcome of the deliberations.
2. **Tim Corrigan (Conservancy).** Tim is the note-taker for the stakeholder meetings.

How Meetings Will be Conducted. Meeting participants agree to discussion guidelines to support a constructive dialogue and problem solving environment. The Steering Committee and the facilitator can cooperatively revise these guidelines when necessary to support the continued success of the process.

1. Assume good will: Participants will work under the assumption that all Steering Committee members are participating in good faith.
2. Everyone participates: For the Committee to be successful, all members must agree to participate, voice bold ideas, and take responsibility to express their interests. Members must also agree to attend meetings whenever possible to ensure that decisions reached by the Steering Committee represent all interests related to the Water Trail issues at hand.
3. Agree on transparency/disclosure: Everyone needs good information in this process. Participants will provide pertinent information to the group. Tentative or sensitive data should be respected as such.
4. Listen and openly discuss issues with others – Committee members do not have to agree: Participants may hear something that they do not agree with or find “silly” or “wrong.” Remember, though, that the purpose of the Steering Committee is to share ideas and to think “outside of the box.” All ideas have value in this setting. The goal is to achieve understanding.

Agendas. The facilitator and project manager will develop the agenda in consultation with the Steering Committee members who will provide feedback at the end of each meeting.

Meeting Summaries. The Water Trail project manager will prepare concise meeting summaries, in consultation with the facilitator and meeting note-taker, to document Steering Committee progress, agreements and action items.

Communication with Media, Constituents and Decision Makers

1. **Media.** Steering Committee members will refer media inquiries to the project manager and reserve freedom to express their own opinions to media representatives. They should be careful to present only their own views and not those of other participants of the stakeholder meetings. The temptation to discuss someone else's statements or position should be avoided.
2. **Constituents.** Members are asked to keep their constituents informed about the process and to bring constituents' views into the discussion. At project milestones, Steering Committee members will provide briefings to constituent organizations and report back to the Committee, as appropriate, the outcomes of those briefings.
3. **Decision Makers.** The project manager will present progress reports during the stakeholder process and the final report to the BCDC Commission and the Conservancy's Board. Timing for these updates will coincide with milestones in the project and time availability on the Commission and Board agendas.