

**San Francisco Bay Trail  
Steering Committee Meeting  
ABAG Metro Center  
April 13, 2000**

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 1:40 PM

**Attendance**

Steering Committee:

Chair: Rick Parmer  
Brian Wiese  
Joan Cardellino  
Leo DuBose  
Stana Hearne  
Joe LaClair  
Julie Bondurant

Staff:

Janet McBride  
Ceil Scandone  
Laura Thompson

**Adoption of Agenda and Minutes**

Hearne moved adoption of agenda; LaClair seconded. Adopted unanimously.  
Cardellino moved adoption of minutes; Wiese seconded. Adopted unanimously.

**Announcements by Board**

- LaClair- Gave an update on the progress of BCDC's S.F. Bay Public Access and Wildlife Compatibility Project. Of the 350 surveys sent to land management agencies throughout the country, 60 have been received - deadline is 4/14/00. The project database will allow for queries identifying trends in responses to the questions.
- Cardellino- Gave an update on Proposition 12 status. Bonds will be sold within fiscal year 2001. The Conservancy will begin the funding process for projects in July, with payout expected July 2001.
- Parmer- Gave an update on H.R. 701, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). The proposal would automatically set aside revenues from oil and gas leases to provide \$2.4 billion in annual funding for conservation programs. If passed, money from this program could filter to the Bay Trail Project since \$1 billion has been set aside for coastal programs.

**Announcements by Staff**

McBride-

1. Update on the budget process in Sacramento. Senator Figueroa has initiated a \$34 million member's request for Bay Trail funding spread over a period of 10 years. In the Assembly, Shelley, Torlakson, Migden and Corbett have also submitted

member's requests for the same amount. If successful, it could avoid going to Conference Committee.

A Committee discussion followed and covered the following:

The question was raised whether the language of the member requests restricts trail planning and construction to grant rounds programs. Committee members agreed that if State funding allowed the Bay Trail Project to plan and develop strategically, it would create a more deliberate process of allocating funds to specific sections and priority areas of the trail rather than to ready projects only. Committee members expressed an interest in pursuing a new approach that would result in fewer restrictions and a more proactive approach towards Bay Trail development. A model to use for this strategic development approach is the Michigan Coastal Development Program. Chair Parmer suggested the formation of a strategic planning working group that would involve the upper levels of ABAG to plan for how to engage agencies.

2. Update on Berkeley Bay Trail development. The segment between Buchanan and Gilman has been paved, but is not officially open yet. Staff has heard that Caltrans is planning an official opening in late summer. This segment has a protective cyclone fence with solid slats and the height blocks the trail user's view in some areas.

LaClair and Wiese pointed out that the original design for this segment included a series of 4" x 8" windows in the fence as necessary buffer from the adjacent marsh. In addition, maintenance is the responsibility of Caltrans unless they decide to dedicate it to another agency.

3. Information on the trail gap in Berkeley between Ashby and Virginia. The construction schedule calls for completion one year from now, barring unforeseen problems.
4. Update on staff's use of GIS to focus in on specific areas of the trail. An example of a map sent to Torlakson's office was shown to Committee.

### **Regional Development Program Update**

McBride provided an update on the RDP process. There are nine projects that will be taken to the Coastal Conservancy Board for final authorization on April 27, 2000. The nine projects total \$1.2 million in appropriations.

LaClair, Cardellino, Hearne and DuBose, in addition to Barbara Palacios from the CCC, made up the full RDP project Review Panel. The panel trimmed some of the projects and in some cases asked for increased trail and bridge widths.

Three additional projects are not quite ready for funding allocation. These projects are waiting for environmental clearance or completion of design work. The Review Panel had funding amounts in mind for these projects, but will reconsider

these decisions in the Fall. The RDP grant applications totaled \$2.9 million with \$2.25 million available for dispersal.

Staff has presented overviews of the RDP process to both the ABAG Executive Board and the Regional Planning Committee. Staff envisions Figueroa sending a letter summarizing the funded projects to the Bay Area delegation. An example is found in the packet.

A discussion of this topic followed: LaClair commended staff on quick and thorough responses to the Panel's requests for information during the decision process. Later this summer or early October, staff and the review panel will decide whether the remaining RDP projects, Oakland, Millbrae, Milpitas and American Canyon, are ready for funding allocation. If not, the choices are to initiate another grant round for the remaining \$1 million or consider developing a strategic planning approach identifying gaps and critical links. Questioning how much leniency is allowed by the contract with the Conservancy, Chair Parmer suggested looking at the budget language, and if allowed, consider at the next Steering Committee or Board meeting. Bondurant questioned how the strategic approach would affect staff capabilities and work levels. The new approach could add a tremendous amount of work to an already busy staff. Consider continuing the partnership already established between the Bay Trail and the Coastal Conservancy. Chair Parmer recommended that staff develop a summary of these key issues. If the Bay Trail Project receives money from the state, what is the consequence to staff and at what readiness stage are the difficult trail gaps. ABAG and Conservancy decision makers should be informed by looking at the next three years and how the Bay Trail role may change focusing on: (1) the political climate, (2) the type of work needed on more difficult segments, and (3) who is involved. In the meantime, it was suggested to have the Steering Committee comment on the language of the member's request and forward to staff.

### **Next Board Meeting**

A draft version of the Board meeting program was distributed at the meeting. Two days - May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup> - had been identified as possible Board meeting dates. General consensus was that May 17<sup>th</sup> was more convenient for most Steering Committee members. Three items are proposed for the business meeting agenda: (1) RDP update, (2) report by Jana of preliminary data collected through the Wildlife & Public Access Study, and (3) a discussion panel of macro trends affecting trail development. The business meeting will be followed by a tour of the Crissy Field restoration. Feedback from the Committee suggested no more than five panel members including someone representing trails from a national perspective. It was agreed that Holly Van Houten from NPS could fill this role. Final panel suggested by Committee: Charlie Willard as moderator, and panelists including Laura Cohen, Patrick Miller, Holly Van Houten and Marge Kolar. A suggestion for a future Board meeting was raised: A panel could focus on the challenges of providing trail access in an urban area exploring how density relates to trail development.

## **Wildlife & Public Access Study**

A memo from Jana Sokale was provided to Committee members summarizing the scientific rationale for extending the project. Staff reported that the researchers are very pleased with the quality of the data and proposed extending the data collection period for an additional year. The reasoning for an extension of the study includes: additional data is valuable to other research organizations, reduces the likelihood of challenges to the study, provides more data queries and filters out seasonal sensitivities. The cost estimate for an additional year of field research is \$100,000. This amount would need to be raised, in increments if necessary, by the end of June. Staff reported that the project has talented and enthusiastic volunteer observers that are prepared to continue with the project if extended. The statistical analysis phase will cost \$30,000 but will not occur until the data collection phase is complete. This study is important to the Bay Trail Project by keeping us involved as a key player in the debate. It was agreed that it would be desirable to have Jana Sokale take the lead on the grant writing and fundraising elements.

A concern was raised that since only summary data on species abundance and diversity have been recorded, there may be some difficulty in getting additional support from funders without knowing something about the results. It was decided that one way to address concerns of potential funders is to have Jana Sokale provide a short report and presentation covering the details of the preliminary findings. Raising funds for statistical analysis at the same time as funds are raised for an additional year of field research may also address concerns and improve chances that funders will continue financial support of the project. The goal is to raise \$130,000.

Hearne moved to authorize expenditure for fundraising (time and materials not to exceed \$5,000) for the second phase of field work and statistical analysis for the Wildlife & Public Access Study, LaClair seconded. Unanimously approved.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.