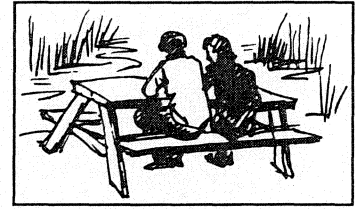


BAY POINT REGIONAL SHORELINE LAND USE PLAN



East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
P.O. Box 5381
Oakland, California 94605
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III. LAND USE PLAN



The 1997 Park District *Master Plan* designates the Bay Point parkland as a Regional Shoreline, with the goals of providing recreational and educational opportunities and preserving the natural resources and views offered by the site. The existing marsh and tidal channels on the site represent the significant natural features of the site, and the Land Use Plan (LUP) proposes to manage and protect these resources, which provide habitat for a variety of special-status wildlife. The LUP also proposes to provide public access to several existing trails and upland areas that will offer recreational and educational opportunities in the marsh and the waters of Suisun Bay. The LUP establishes "Land Use Designations" or "Units" (Figure 5) that will establish protected areas for significant natural resources and guide the development of the public access and recreation facilities.

A. Land Use Zones

Natural Unit

The purpose of designating a Natural Unit is "to preserve and enhance natural habitat" in which are found "lower intensity recreational activities," such as hiking, plant and wildlife study, educational pursuits, and contemplation (EBRPD *Master Plan* 1997, p. 52). Approximately 44 acres of marshlands and seasonal ponds at Bay Point Regional Shoreline (or 86% of the 51-acre property) would be designated as a Natural Unit. This includes those areas of the parkland that have been identified as tidal marsh or wetlands (LSA, February 2000) and some areas of dry upland that would be suitable for development as trails and a marsh overlook within the Natural Unit.

Recreation/Staging Unit

The purpose of designating a Recreation/Staging Unit is to provide areas of "more intensive public recreational use and that are of sufficient size to support the necessary parking, utilities, and infrastructure needed for such use" which may contain, for example: restrooms, picnic areas, interpretive facilities, shelters, aquatic facilities, and other similar uses (EBRPD *Master Plan* 1997, p. 52). Approximately seven (7) acres of upland at Bay Point Regional Shoreline (or 14% of the 51-acre property) would be designated as a Recreation/Staging Unit. The following recommendations of the LUP are goals which will be implemented as funds are budgeted in the capital improvement phase of parkland development.

B. Public Access and Circulation

Parking

The Recreation/Staging Unit should provide adequate parking for the proposed recreational activities and school groups. The Unit has a large, level, bare area that was used by a former landowner for storage of trucks and equipment. The site now contains a variety of discarded debris, including large metal floats, a cargo container and other items that will need to be removed from the site.

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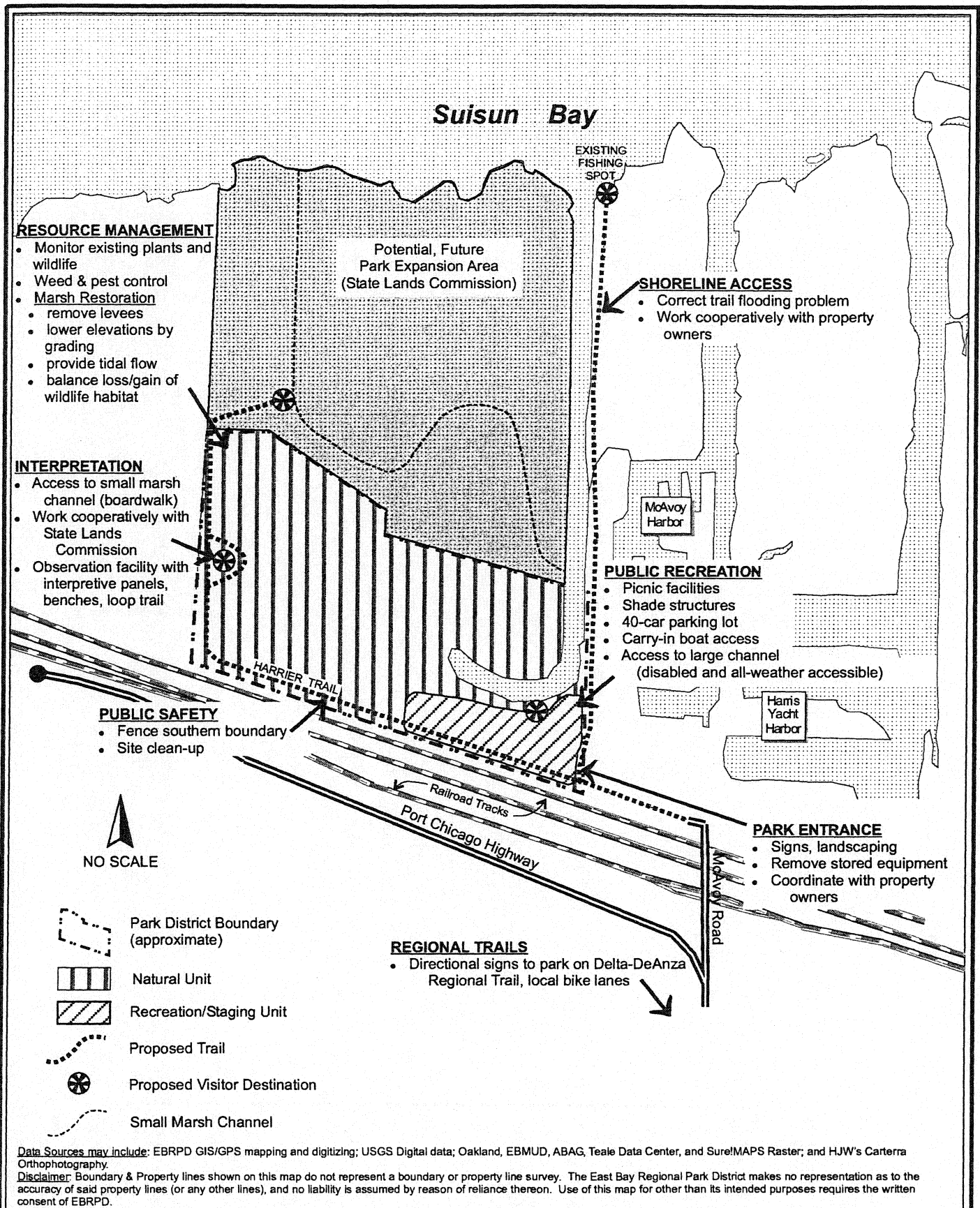


Figure 5
LAND USE PLAN MAP
 Bay Point Regional Shoreline

Recommendation

- Provide parking for up to 40 vehicles with space for a bus turn-around.

Trails

Trail access at the site will focus on improving existing access routes and providing walk-in access to the water.

Recommendations

- Use the existing, unimproved perimeter service road as a multi-use trail (the “Harrier Trail”) and park service road (see Figure 5). The existing roads are currently in moderate to bad condition, and have not received regular maintenance. They are overgrown, rough and rutted, and will need grading and improvements for reliable access. The multi-use trails would provide access for hikers and bicyclists, as well as maintenance, fire and emergency vehicles. Alignments shown on Figure 5 are schematic and will need to be confirmed in the field.
- Provide improvements to the existing public access shoreline trail located on the neighboring property to the east. This trail varies in width, but is typically less than 5-10 feet wide. It provides access to a bare spot of ground located at the mouth of the J-shaped channel. It is a popular fishing spot for local anglers, and reportedly gets frequent use by people of all ages. Unfortunately, the north end of the trail is at low elevation and becomes very muddy due to tidal action. Improvements could include a boardwalk, raising the elevation of the trail with fill, or other similar improvements. These improvements will require the cooperation of the adjacent property owner.
- Develop trail access to the bank of the J-shaped channel near the proposed staging area. Clear away some of the tules and develop a small area of the channel bank to allow direct, disabled accessible, all-weather access to the water, for activities such as birdwatching, environmental education classes, etc.
- Develop a boardwalk trail with access to one of the small marsh channels at the northwest side of the property. This access is needed because the J-shaped channel is steadily silting in, and it is anticipated an alternative channel access will eventually be needed for environmental education. This trail may cross the State Lands Commission marshland, and would require the approval of that agency before it would be developed.
- Develop an attractive and visible park entrance along the existing access road at the southeast corner of the parkland. This 500-foot trail between McAvoy Road and the Park District property line is a public access easement, on privately owned land. The landowners have expressed willingness to clean up equipment that has been stored here and to allow the Park District to install an entry sign, landscaping and other appropriate improvements to enhance the park entrance.

- Provide signs on the Delta-DeAnza Regional Trail to direct park users to Bay Point Regional Shoreline, from the intersection of Willow Pass Road and Port Chicago Highway (see Figure 2). A striped bike lane currently runs along the shoulder of Port Chicago Highway from Willow Pass Road north to Pacifica Avenue.

Interpretive and Recreation Facilities

Interpretive and recreation facilities will focus on providing access for low intensity, recreational and access opportunities, that are compatible with the preservation of marsh habitat.

Recommendations

- Develop shade structures, picnic tables, barbecues, drinking fountains, and restroom facilities within the Recreation/Staging Unit to provide informal picnicking and a meeting place for interpretive hikes, school groups, bird watching trips, etc. Municipal lines for electrical and sewer service and a potable well are available at the southeast corner of the Recreation/Staging Unit. Develop these utilities to serve the Recreation/Staging unit, if feasible.
- Cooperate with local schools and community groups to conduct environmental education classes and community service projects at the parkland. Local schools could include Rio Vista Elementary School, Shore Acres Elementary School, Riverview Middle School, Bel Air Elementary School, and other schools in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District.
- Provide interpretive signs and panels at the staging area, along trails, and at a marsh overlook site on the west side of the parkland (see Figure 5). The overlook site is currently the only high point on the property and would provide a good location for a small facility that could include benches, a shade shelter, viewing blinds, interpretive panels, and/or brochures. Potential topics for interpretation are the site history, the marsh, its wildlife, and the proposed efforts to restore it.
- Develop a carry-in boat access to the J-shaped channel at the north side of the Recreation/Staging Unit. This could be a small pier or dock, (floating or pile-supported) accessible by foot, that could be used for launching canoes, kayaks, or other small non-motorized, car-top boats, that could be carried in from the parking lot.
- Conduct periodic dredging to maintain adequate depth in the J-shaped channel for non-motorized boat access. Dredging will be conducted in full compliance with state and federal environmental laws and with any easement and permit requirements of: the State Lands Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and other applicable regulatory agencies

Public Transit Accessibility

Tri-Delta Transit bus line 392 provides bus service between the Shore Acres neighborhood and Pittsburg, passing within ½ mile of Bay Point Regional Shoreline. The park would also be located about three (3) miles from the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station. Tri-Delta Transit currently provides bus service from the BART Station into the Shore Acres neighborhood on bus line 389 (weekdays) and 392 (weekends). Line 389 travels up Port Chicago Highway to Pacifica Avenue, and would pass within ½ mile of the Bay Point Regional Shoreline. Park users could take advantage of these transit opportunities to get to the park by traveling via BART and bike or by the Tri-Delta Transit bus service. This would be especially useful for transit-dependent people and others who do not own a car. The Park District also has an opportunity here to encourage non-automobile modes of transportation.

Recommendations

- The Park District should publish the local transit and bicycle trail routes in the park brochure.
- The Park District will support efforts to improve bus service near the park and extensions of local bicycle trails and on-street bike lanes to the park.

C. Resource Management

Vegetation and Wildlife Management

The Park District recognizes both the potential restoration possibilities for the former marshland at this site, as well as the importance of the existing plant communities on site which provide valuable breeding and foraging habitat for marsh wildlife, including many special-status species. The actions recommended in this Land Use Plan attempt to embrace both these concepts.

Recommendations

- Periodically monitor and maintain the health of existing populations and valuable habitat for special-status species in the marshland and seasonal pond areas. Periodic prescribed burning or other approved techniques may be used to maintain acceptable densities of cattails that will benefit marsh wildlife.
- Periodically monitor the on-site populations of invasive, terrestrial and water plants, such as pampas grass and water hyacinth. As needed, implement projects to manage invasive species through the District's existing Integrated Pest Management program.
- Limit vegetation management work to the non-nesting season for special-status birds identified on site.

- Seek grant funding to implement marsh restoration of former marsh areas that have been diked off. Restoration work would involve major earthmoving, removal of levees, and lowering the elevation of previously filled marshland.
 - ⇒ Cut and fill will be balanced on site if possible, with fill material being deposited on upland areas.
 - ⇒ Pursue only those designs that will create self-sustaining channels that will minimize or eliminate the need for future dredging.
 - ⇒ Balance the preservation of the existing vegetation communities on site (e.g., seasonal ponds) with the improvement of marsh habitat. It is recognized that some wildlife may lose habitat while others benefit from the expansion of marsh habitat.
 - ⇒ Maintain access for the State Lands Commission across Park District property.
 - ⇒ Obtain necessary federal, state and regional permits for marsh restoration, cattail maintenance, and invasive weed abatement activities.

- Provide control measures to eliminate the establishment of red fox and feral cat populations.

D. Public Safety

The Park District provides for the safety and protection of park visitors and staff, the protection of natural resources, and the protection of adjacent neighbors and their property. Public safety response is provided in conjunction with local public safety agencies as described above in Section II F. The following recommendations would address identified public safety needs at the new regional shoreline.

Recommendations

- Provide secure fencing along the southern boundary of the property to prevent trespass and discourage the unsafe crossing of the railroad embankment.

- Remove from the property the piles of dumped concrete, metal floats, cargo container, and any other discarded debris.

- Provide a strong, cooperative response to public safety incidents, by the Park District Police Department, Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, or Department of Fish and Game, as appropriate to the nature of the incident.

- Provide a strong, cooperative response to wildfire and search and rescue incidents, by the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the East Bay Regional Park District Fire Department.

- Maintain appropriate vegetation clearances around structures and facilities to protect them in case of wildfire.

- Gate the parking lot with separate entrance and exit lanes. Equip the exit lane with "tiger teeth" or similar device to prevent entry through the exit. Lock the parking lot gates at dusk to prevent after-hours parking. Provide a Knox box or similar apparatus to the gate so that Contra Costa County Fire Protection District will have the ability to enter the park in emergencies.

E. Future Park Expansion

The tidal marsh directly north of the Park District property (Figures 4, 5) is the natural transition zone between the dry upland and the waters of Suisun Bay. Because of this the Park District will be evaluating the expansion of the park operating area to include more of this marshland. Approximately 80 acres of the tidal marsh is owned by the State Lands Commission. The Park District will need to consider the costs and benefits to the District of this potential, future addition to the Bay Point Regional Shoreline. The State Lands Commission has expressed interest in recommending the approval of a lease that would authorize the Park District to use the marshland for open space, habitat restoration, and public access (Plummer 2000).

Recommendation

- The Park District should evaluate the expansion of the park to include the 80-acre State Lands Commission property. If pursued, the potential park expansion would be addressed in a management agreement that would be negotiated with the State Lands Commission.

F. Business Plan

A Business Plan will be developed to coordinate the construction of facilities and the implementation of the resource management actions proposed for Bay Point Regional Shoreline. Currently this parkland is maintained in land bank status. The need for additional staff will be evaluated to open and maintain this additional 51 acres of parkland.

Recommendations

- Identify operational costs to open parkland for public use.
- Identify potential capital and operating grants, endowments, donation of funds, assets and services that relate to site development and education goals.
- Establish public and private partnerships with qualified organizations to implement and manage facilities and programs.
- Identify potential revenue-generating activities.
- Designate revenue from future bond acts to develop capital improvements.