

The Field Semester

## Preliminary planning submittal packet

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## THE FIELD SEMESTER

# PRELIMINARY PLANNING SUBMITTAL LETTER

### Project Overview

The Port Costa Conservation Society, the Bull Valley Agricultural Center, and The Field Semester are joining forces to restore the degraded Big Bull Valley Watershed and revive the historic Port Costa Schoolhouse. The result will be expanded community resources, a thriving ecosystem, and an innovative destination for recreation and education.

### Site

The Big Bull Valley Watershed: Only 40 minutes from downtown Oakland, nestled into the hills on the shore of the Carquinez Strait, Port Costa is at the confluence of urban spaces and the cultural, political, industrial, and ecological systems that support them. The town embodies California's rich and complex history: once the biggest wheat port in the United States, Port Costa today is a one-road hideaway, home to about 200 residents. It sits in the midst of a coastal region dotted with oil refineries, yet the town is surrounded by more than 3,000 acres of open space. The educational opportunities for The Field Semester's students are almost overwhelming. Though notably unique and isolated in feeling, Port Costa is geographically accessible to many urban student populations—ensuring our ability to attract a diverse student body that will represent a broad range of environmental perspectives and experiences. Port Costa and its natural beauty will give students an inspiring, perspective-changing immersion in nature without seeming too distant or entirely disconnected from their home communities.

TFS students will live in cabins around the Bull Valley reservoir, learn and dine in the school building, and regenerate and maintain these structures and the surrounding land. The campus will showcase ecologically sound land stewardship and innovative sustainable agriculture, while also connecting students to the region's rich and complex history.

The site is located along an East Bay Regional Parks District trail, and Port Costa visitors will be able to view historical exhibits and period classrooms in the schoolhouse. Outside, they will find picnic areas alongside the creek, meandering paths and edible landscaping, natural play areas for children, and open space for dogs. The schoolhouse will continue to serve as a community center for the town. When The Field Semester is not in session, the Bull Valley Agricultural Center will use the cabins around the lake as a retreat center for people involved in regional sustainable agriculture. Together, the preserve, schoolhouse, and programming will demonstrate how innovative land stewardship can create ecologically restorative spaces that are well suited for recreation and learning, agriculturally productive, and of service to the local community.

## Partners

**The Field Semester:** The emerging generation is our last chance to create a healthy planet—but our current educational system is not preparing them to create sustainable systems and make the cultural changes we need. Public and private schools alike are failing to teach students to identify, gather, and assess all the information that is crucial to the design of environmentally and socially sustainable solutions. Schools also do very little to emotionally connect our students with their environments. And, while our society is more diverse than ever, students are often not encouraged to incorporate the experiences of others into their thinking. Secondary education must play a leading role if we are to shift our world from its current unsustainable course.

The Field Semester (TFS) seeks to fill this void by offering a unique and accessible opportunity to nurture a generation of leaders whose education will help them thrive in their lives, careers, and efforts to restore our world. Tfs will give a diverse group of high school juniors and seniors a chance to live, work, and learn on the land for an entire semester, using this natural laboratory to find sustainable solutions to environmental challenges and to learn first hand what it takes to build sustainable communities.

TFS blends intellectual study and experiential learning. Students will develop a deeper understanding of their role in the world through rigorous coursework, daily responsibilities, community engagement, and active environmental stewardship. Key subjects are California's natural and cultural history, ecology, the economics and finance of sustainability, public policy, place-based literature, food and energy systems, and the politics of land and water. Tfs will create a learning environment where students from many diverse backgrounds will be asked to draw connections between their experiences together on the land and their own lives. By the end of the semester, every student will have a deep understanding of their own perspectives, the perspectives of others, and the living systems in which we are all embedded. They will leave tfs knowing how they can apply all this information to the development of creative and effective solutions to our world's interrelated problems.

An integral part of this program is assembling a truly diverse student body that reflects varied geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. To this end, tfs will open with a budget allocating 30 percent of our revenue to financial aid, likewise, TFS is building strategic partnerships with individuals and regional organizations that have relationships with historically underserved communities.

**Bull Valley Agriculture Center:** Founder Earl Flewellen and his colleagues have a record of success in building businesses in Port Costa, a commitment to sustainability and the community, and a history of success at preserving the area's natural and historical assets. They created the regionally sourced Bull Valley Roadhouse, a

bustling restaurant and bar recognized as one of the Bay Area's top 100 restaurants by the San Francisco Chronicle in 2013, 2014, and 2015 and by Condé Nast Traveler as one of the 70 best new restaurants in the world in 2013; the historic Burlington Hotel, opened in 1883, which the team transformed from rundown seediness to a popular destination for travelers; the adjacent café; and E.G. Flewellen's Bee Farm, a self-supporting apiary and retail honey business.

With these projects finally holding their own, the time was right to focus on giving back to the surrounding land and community. To these ends, the Bull Valley Agricultural Center was founded in 2015, and donations were raised to acquire the land where the bees were happily thriving—a first step towards preserving that land, protecting it from relentless vandalism and refuse dumping, and securing its future as a community resource. The site has been subject to a remarkably tumultuous past few hundred years. At the turn of the century, a dam was built that transformed the watershed into an industrial reservoir—supplying water for the steamships and trains that came to the port in town. Over the last century, subsequent hardscaping, neglect, mismanagement, and an odd range of uses have left the watershed overrun with invasive species, plagued by erosion and siltation, and a flooding liability to the entire town downstream.

Through careful studies of the site's hydrology and ecology, BVAC, with the help of The Field Semester, aims to regenerate the watershed's ecology such that it may become an asset for educational and recreational uses that respect habitat, connect people with nature, and enrich the local and regional communities.

**Port Costa Conservation Society:** For nearly 30 years, The Port Costa Conservation Society, the primary community nonprofit in Port Costa, has been transforming the town's historic schoolhouse from a crumbling shell of a building into an impressive community center. The 1911 Classic Revival two-story building was on the brink of collapse when the PCCS purchased it in 1988. With no maintenance since the school closed in 1966, ceiling joists had cracked under the weight of rainwater pooling on the roof, plaster fell in great sodden chunks from the ceiling, wooden floors buckled, and lack of proper drainage undermined the foundation. With funds raised both locally and nationally and an incredible team of dedicated volunteers, PCCS has been working tirelessly to rejuvenate the 15,000-square-foot schoolhouse with renovations including extensive seismic retrofitting; upgraded electrical, plumbing, and fire-suppression systems; and ADA-compliant elevators and restrooms. PCCS board chair Ridge Greene is a longtime contractor with a focus on institutional buildings and schools, and along with the rest of the board, brings deep community ties and engagement to the collaboration. With the help of The Field Semester, PCCS hopes to finally finish the restoration and re-enliven the schoolhouse as a thriving educational and community asset. While The Field Semester will use the building for classrooms, a workshop, and a kitchen, the completed building will also offer the local community an improved center for meetings, recreation, and events. The space will allow students and locals to engage meaningfully through lectures, workshops, and projects hosted by TFS and residents of Port Costa and the surrounding region.

# APN MAP



APN 368133007: Port Costa Conservation Society School Site

APN 368120001: The Field Semester

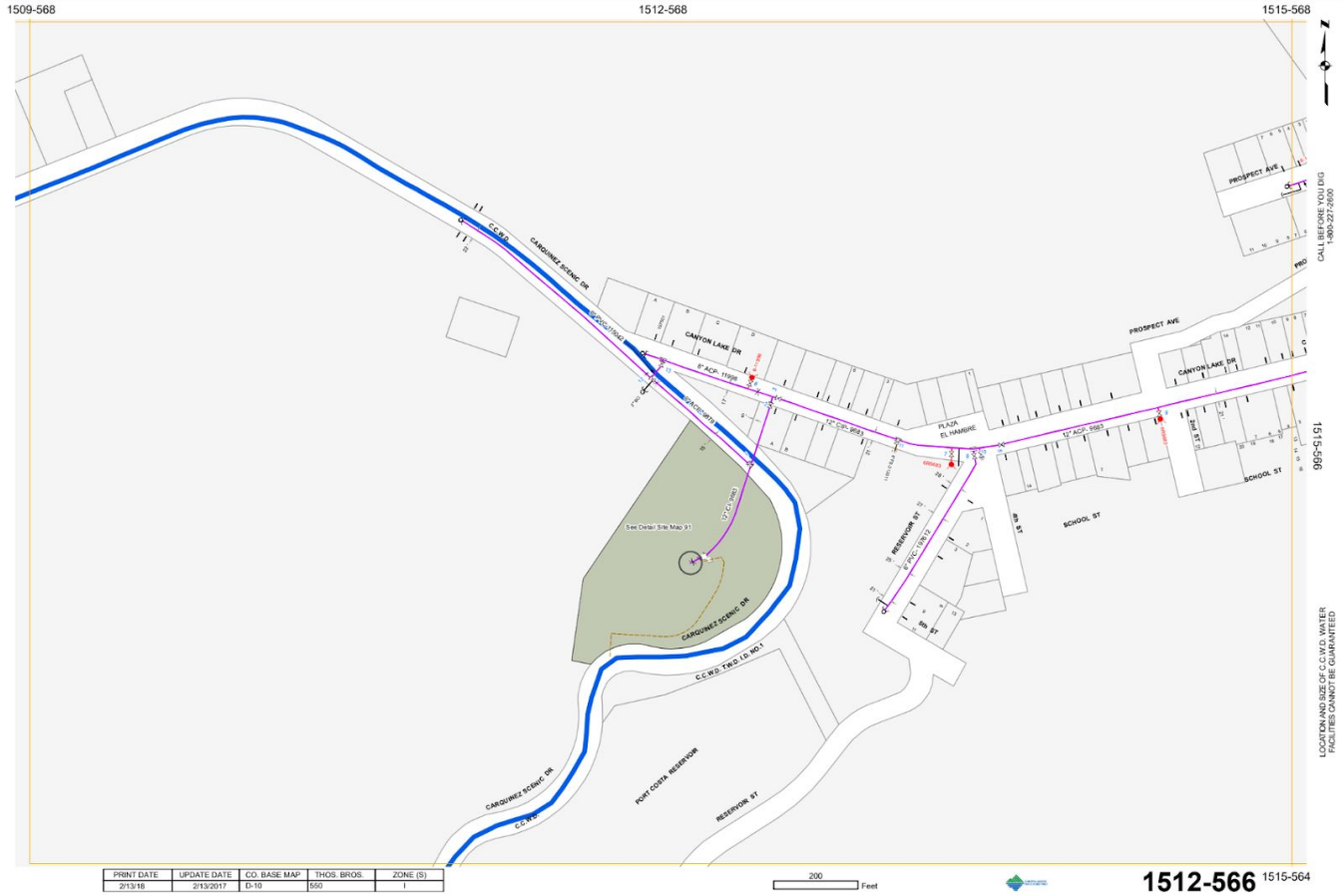
# PROGRAM / INTENDED OCCUPANCY

AREA GROUP	SUB-SPACES	#	SF per	TOTAL
		UNITS	unit	AREA
				SQ. FT
<b>In Historical Society BLDG</b>				<b>10630</b>
<b>Classroom</b>	seminar rooms (45 people)			1575
	laboratories (24 students)			1440
<b>Office</b>	Principal's office			360
	Assistant's office			150
<b>Dining areas</b>	Total FTE divided by 3.15 multiplied by 12. Considered 45 students and 8 instructors = 63			1000
<b>Kitchen</b>	The maximum space allowance for a kitchen area includes space for food preparation, serving line(s), walk-in and reach-in refrigerator, walk-in and reach-in freezer, dry storage, dish washing, can washing, office, employees' room and restrooms, receiving dock, and waste holding area.			856
<b>Whole group gathering space</b>	The multi-purpose room will NOT be used as the Dining Room.			4104
<b>Recreation/Leisure Space</b>	Faculty Area (Includes faculty lounge, faculty workroom, faculty restrooms, etc.)			300
<b>Restrooms / Showers</b>	Provide handicapped adult male and female restrooms at 125 square feet each.			250
<b>Study space</b>	The allocations will include space for computer stations, with the number of stations not to exceed 1/9 of the total student design capacity.			250 min
	Librarian Office			120
	Audio / Visual			175
	Storage / Workroom			200
	Circulation / Checkout			100
<b>On Historical Society Site</b>				<b>850</b>
<b>Facility Maintenance Shop.</b>	The maximum space allowances provided for each population level based on the total student design capacity	1		400
<b>Maintenance Material Storage.</b>				200
<b>Maintenance</b>	The maximum space allowance			250

<b>Equipment</b>				
<b>Parking</b>	2 vans, 1 maintenance truck, 2 staff cars	5	128	640
<b>Agricultural space</b>	Multiple small gardens-annual/perennial mix/food/edible landscapes			
	Orchards			
	Row crop fields			
	Aquaculture in lake/ponds			
<b>New BVAC Structures</b>				<b>9499</b>
<b>Tent cabins</b>	sleeping rooms (45 students and 3 interns) at 50 to 70 square feet per student exclusive of furniture (wardrobe, desks, beds, etc.) and not to exceed a maximum of four students per room. An additional 35 square feet per student will be provided for furniture and storage space to include a wardrobe, bed and desk.	12	400	4800
<b>Staff House</b>	Designed for one 5-person family, or divisible for two small families (couples)	1	1500	1500
<b>Guest Cabin</b>	4 season, more weatherized than tent cabins (1-3 interns, staff, guests)	1	500	500
<b>Full Bathing Facility</b>	Centralized shower facility, 8 individual stalls, (1 ada)	1	750	750
<b>Toilet Facility</b>	Composting Toilets: 2 toilets per unit, only 2 composter needed for flow expectations, 3 provided.	3	108	324
<b>Outdoor Kitchen*</b>	Small cooking projects, Washing/Processing station (15' x 35')	1	525	525
<b>Covered Group Gather*</b>	Semi-conditions Classrooms, Shade structures, central gathering space /covered	60	10	600
<b>Barn*</b>	Shed for Farming/Maintenance Structure, equipment			500
<b>Dock*</b>	10 x 20	1	200	200
<b>Misc Structures*</b>	tree platform / Canopy observation less than 12x10'			
<b>Outdoor Spaces</b>				<b>840</b>
<b>Dining Areas</b>	Long picnic table for whole community	60	9	540
<b>Group gathering space</b>	campfire gathering space uncovered	60	5	300

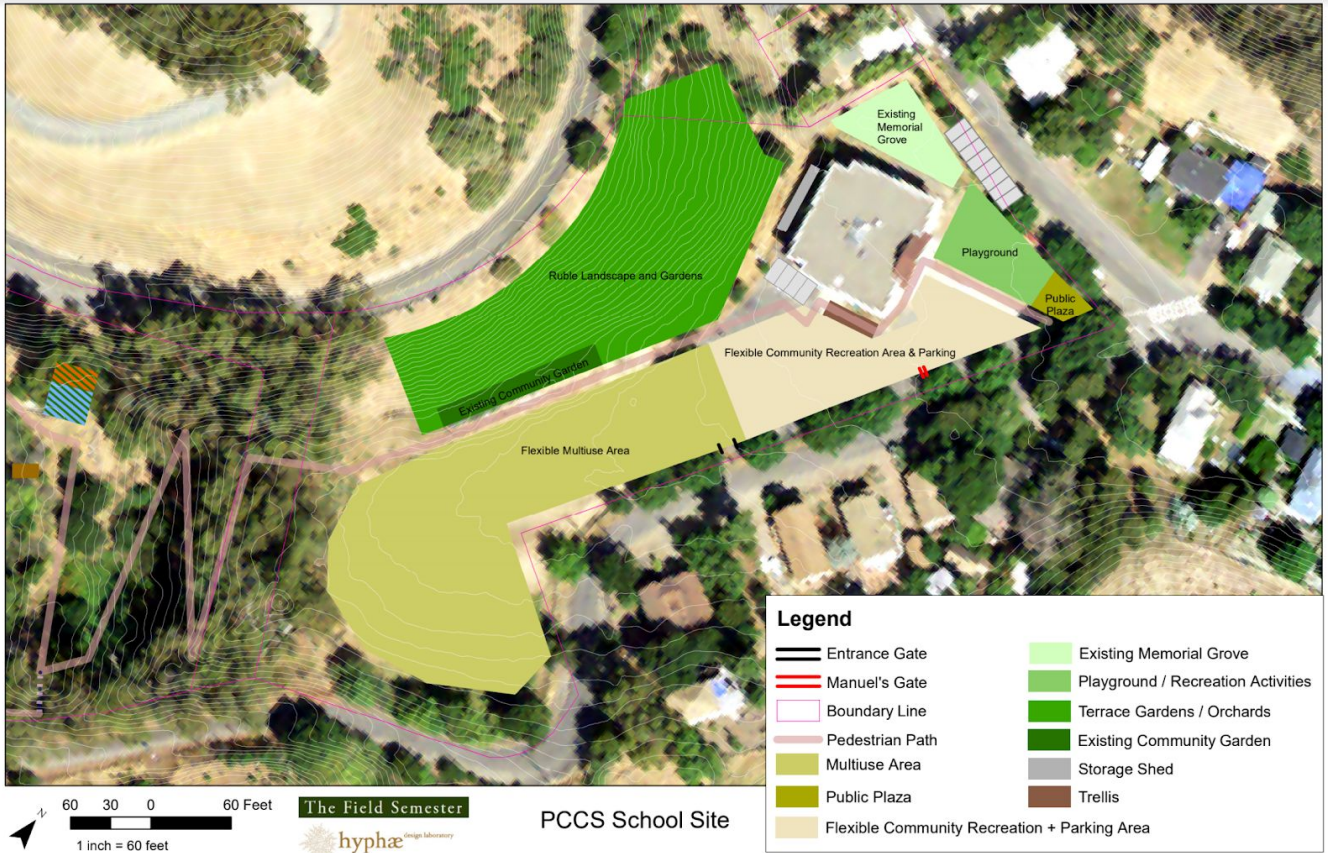
# ATTACHMENTS

## [Contra Costa Water District parcel map](#)

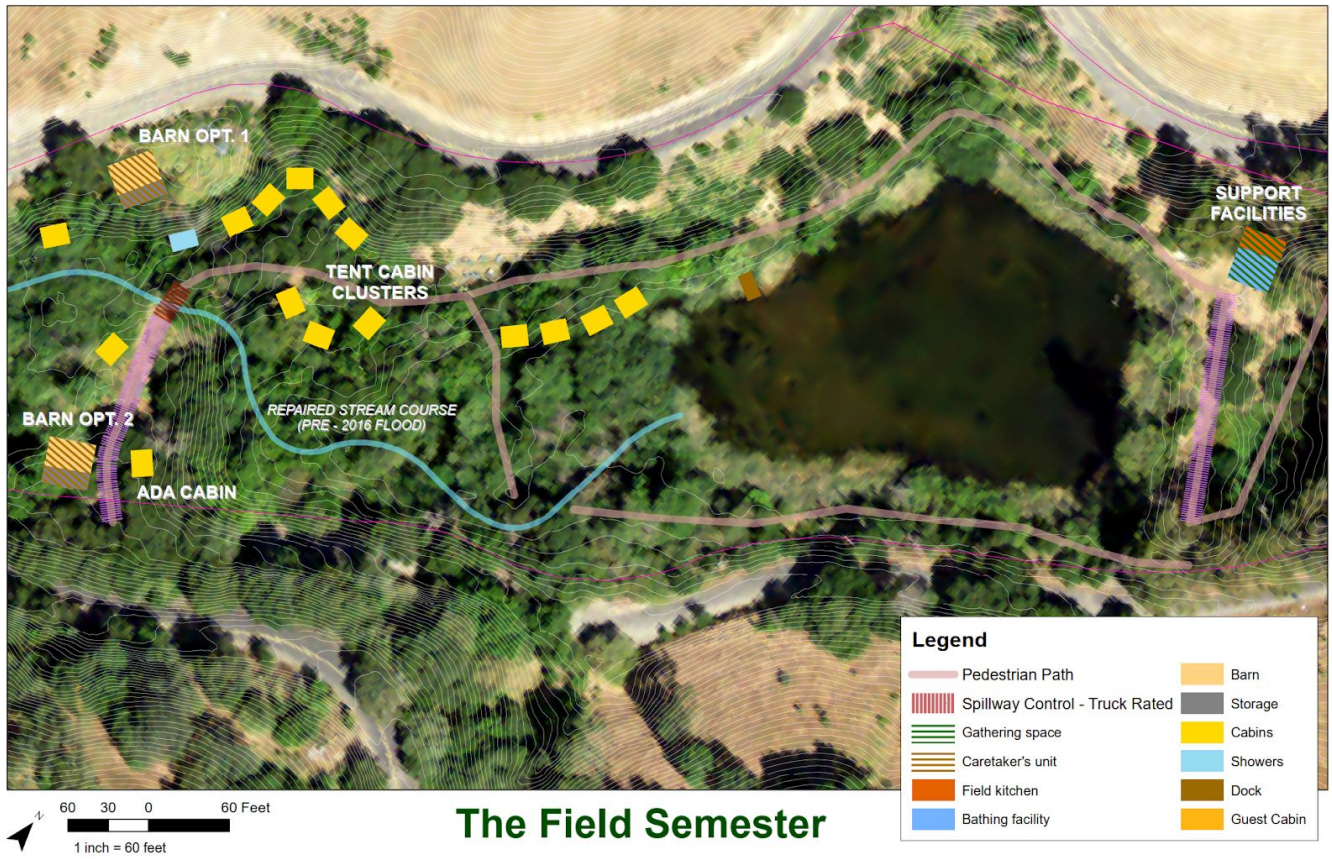




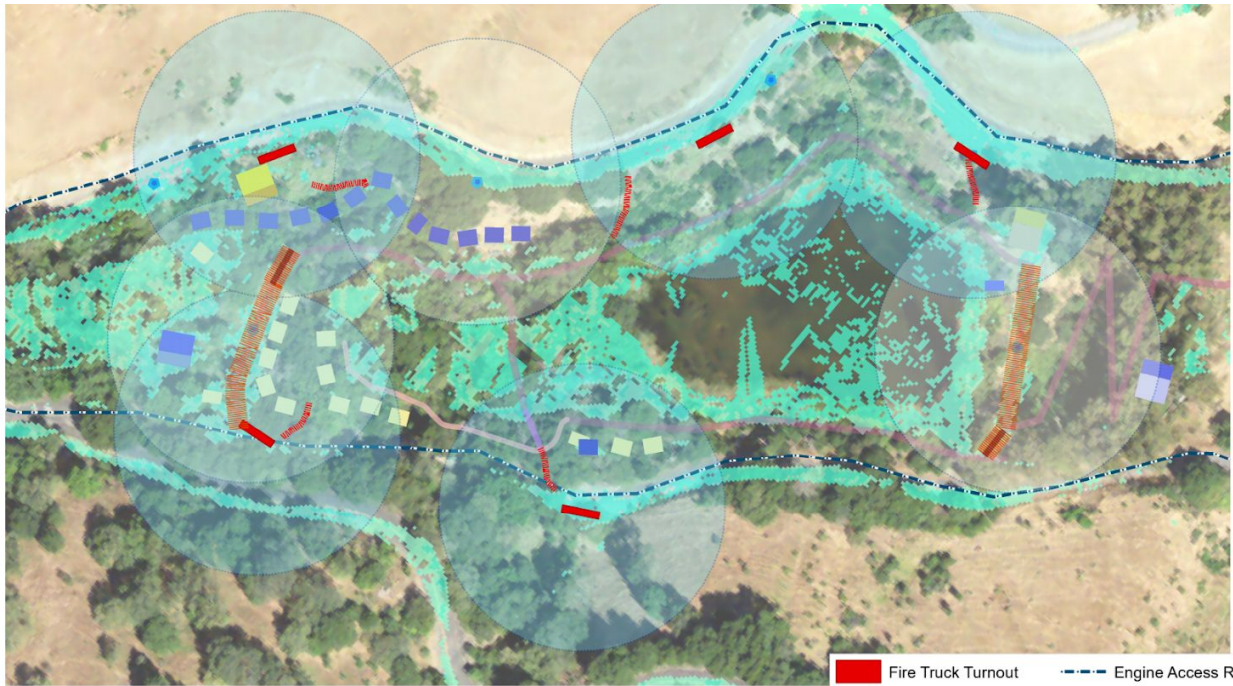
# Porta Costa Conservation Society School Site Plan



# Working Master Plan (September 2019)



# Conceptual Fire Access map (March 2019)



THE FIELD SEMESTER  
Existing and Proposed Fire Engine Access

	Fire Truck Turnout		Engine Access Route
	Fire Access Stairs (1:2)		Engine turnouts no ped.
	Proposed Bridge		<5% Slope
	Rated on site route		<8% Slope
	150' turnout rad.		
	150' alt rad.		

# Preliminary Environmental Assessment

**Table 2. Environmental Permitting Timeline**

<b>Resources Potentially Impacted</b>	<b>Permit or Consultation</b>	<b>Regulation or Policy</b>	<b>Regulatory Agency</b>	<b>Official Process</b>	<b>Typical Duration from Submittal to Authorization</b>
Streams, wetlands, reservoir	Nationwide Permit	Section 404 of the Clean Water Act	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Agency has 30 days to review for completeness	4–12 months.
California red-legged frog	Biological Opinion	Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act	U.S Fish and Wildlife Service	Agency has 135 days (90 days for USACE/USFWS consultation, 45 days to prepare the Biological Opinion).	4–9 months
Historic properties	Cultural Landscape Report, Area of Potential Effects map, and Department of Parks and Recreation 523 Forms	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act/CEQA	State Historic Preservation Officer	State Historic Preservation Officer requires 30 days to respond to any objections to determinations for cultural resources.	2–4 months
Streams, wetlands, reservoir, and riparian vegetation	Water Quality Certification	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act	Regional and State Water Quality Control Boards	30 days to determine completeness, 60 days after determined complete to issue or deny certification.	3–9 months
Streams, wetlands, reservoir, and riparian vegetation	Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement	Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	30 days to determine completeness of application, then 60 days to issue agreement/permit.	3–9 months.
Surface waters	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	Section 402 of the Clean Water Act	State Water Resources Control Board; Contra Costa County	SWRCB reviews submitted Permit Registration Documents for adequacy, then issues waste discharge identification number.	One week for SWRCB; County review duration to be determined
Heritage trees or protected trees	Tree permit	Ordinance Codes 816-4 and 816-6	Contra Costa County	Submit application and fee at least 10 days prior to activity that requires permit	To be determined

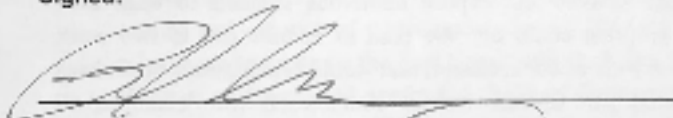
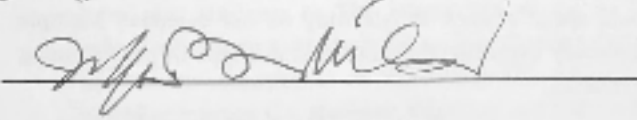
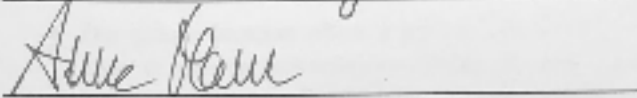
# LANDOWNER BUY-IN

## BOARD RESOLUTION

The Board of Directors of the Port Costa Conservation Society resolves that PCCS fully supports development of The Field Semester's program and facilities at Port Costa. Specifically:

1. The Board approves The Field Semester's proposed operating plan, site conceptual plan, and term sheet for a lease of certain facilities in the Schoolhouse, all as presented to the Board on April 18, 2018.
2. The Board acknowledges that all of the materials presented at the April 18 meeting are subject to revision, and the Board retains the right to review and approve the final versions.
3. The Board agrees that in the coming months, PCCS will:
  - a. Participate in refining site plans and schoolhouse renovation plans.
  - b. Participate in county and agency permit and approvals process in support of the project.
  - c. Make PCCS facilities available for and participate in fundraising efforts spearheaded by TFS and BVAC in accordance with the lease term sheet.
  - d. Work with TFS and BVAC to craft consistent messaging and communications about the project.

Signed:

	Date <u>7-16-18</u>
	Date <u>7-16-18</u>
<u>Michael Domagala</u>	Date <u>7-16-2018</u>
	Date <u>7-16-18</u>
_____	Date _____

# CAMPING CODE:

## California Building Code

Section 450 Group C [Sfm]

450.1 Group C Occupancies defined

450.1.1 Organized camps

For the purposes of these regulations, Group C Occupancies shall mean “organized camps” as defined in Section 18897, Health and Safety Code.

450.1.1.1 Description

An organized camp is a site with programs and facilities established for the primary purpose of providing an outdoor group living experience with social, spiritual, educational or recreational objectives, for five days or more during one or more seasons of the year.

Email from Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development:



Yaeir Heber <yaeirheber@gmail.com>

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## Field Semester Project Follow-Up

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Judi Kallerman <Judi.Kallerman@dcd.cccounty.us>

Fri, Mar 1, 2019 at 1:05 PM

To: "yheber@fieldsemester.org" <yheber@fieldsemester.org>, Will Nelson <Will.Nelson@dcd.cccounty.us>, Dominic Aliano <Dominic.Aliano@bos.cccounty.us>, Jason Crapo <Jason.Crapo@dcd.cccounty.us>

Cc: Brent hyphae <brent@hyphae.net>, Ivan Heitmann <ivan@hyphae.net>, "Earl Flewellen (Bull Valley Roadhouse)" <earl@bullvalleyroadhouse.com>, "peterwcolby@gmail.com" <peterwcolby@gmail.com>, Soren Santos <sorensantos@gmail.com>

Dear Yaeir and group,

At this preliminary stage of the project Abed and I have determined that your project will be under our jurisdiction as well as the local fire department. We will review for compliance with Planning, Fire and Health. Please contact your local utilities that serve the parcel as well. The school will need to meet all the code requirements for an **E** occupancy and the organized camp will meet all the requirements for the **C** occupancy. You will need to provide an accessible path from the school to the camp areas. If you are planning on building permanent tent structures they will need to meet the requirements of the code. Let's meet again when you have preliminary drawings for the structures you are proposing for the project.

We look forward to working with you all to make your vision a reality.

Regards,

Judi Kallerman

Principal Plan Checker

Department of Conservation and Development

Application and Permit Center

30 Muir Rd

Martinez, Ca 94553

925-674-7776

# Planning department checklist

## Plot (site) Plan

- a. **All existing property lines labeled** and fully dimensioned.
- b. **All public and private roads, easements and drainage installations adjacent to the subject parcel(s).**
- c. **All existing and proposed improvements (including drainage)** with distances to all property lines.
- d. Distance from property lines to existing improvements on parcels adjoining the subject parcel(s).
- e. **Names of adjoining property owner(s).**
- f. **Topographic contours labeled with elevation, known geologic hazards, creeks/streams and drainage ditches.**
- g. Location, species, drip lines and trunk diameters of all trees with a diameter of 6 inches or greater, measured 4½ feet above ground whose trunks lie within 50 feet of any proposed improvements. This shall include all such trees on the subject property as well as trees on adjoining properties whose canopy extends onto the subject property. Number the trees for identification purposes and indicate if they are to be removed or altered in any way.
- h. North arrow and scale.
- i. **Existing and proposed parking layouts, driveways** and landscaped areas (all fully dimensioned).
- j. **Computations of lot coverage, gross floor area and landscaped areas (all indicated in square feet).**
- k. Area of the subject parcel(s) officially mapped within the boundary of a Special Flood Hazard Area (if applicable).
- l. **A vicinity map showing sufficient information such as streets, highways, railroad tracks, water bodies, landmarks etc. to locate the subject parcel(s).**

## Floor Plans

- m. All rooms, hallways and other common areas with their dimensions and use (i.e. bedroom, kitchen, etc.).
- n. Locations of doorways, stairways and landings, windows, permanent fixtures (sinks, toilets, showers, etc.) and major mechanical equipment (hot water heaters, furnaces, etc.).

## Building Elevations

- o. Exterior dimensions (height, width, depth) of all proposed improvements. Height is measured at the point within the building footprint that has the greatest distance between the ground and the top of the building directly above.
- p. Proposed exterior ornamentation such as shutters, planting boxes, window trim, cornices, signs, railings, etc.
- q. Proposed exterior materials (i.e. wood siding, stucco, stone veneer, concrete tile roof, etc.).