



February 28, 2008

Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit Tentative Order Comments

Attn: Dale Bowyer

S.F. Bay Water Board

1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400

Oakland, CA 94612

Via Email: mrp@waterboards.ca.gov

Subject: Comments on the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit Tentative Order NPDES No. CAS61008

Dear Mr. Bowyer:

The San Francisco Bay Trail Project is a nonprofit organization administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) that plans, promotes and advocates for the implementation of a continuous 500-mile bicycling and hiking path around the shoreline of San Francisco Bay. When complete, the trail will pass through 47 cities, all nine Bay Area counties, and will cross seven toll bridges. To date, 290 miles, more than half the length of the Bay Trail alignment, has been developed.

We are concerned that the Tentative Order places newly constructed impervious surface trails in the same category as New Road Projects (Section C.3.b.i (4)). Although we are supportive of the need to control run-off pollution into our waterways, we feel that this order, if adopted, could have consequences that would burden shoreline trail construction with unnecessary mitigation.

The Bay Trail provides easily accessible recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, including hikers, joggers, bicyclists and skaters. It also serves as a regional non-motorized commute corridor and offers access to the physically disabled. In urban and suburban areas, the Bay Trail is typically constructed with a 12-foot paved travel width and 2-foot pervious surface shoulders on both sides. (See the attached typical multi-use trail cross section). The Tentative Order suggests that if trails are constructed within 50 feet of streams or creeks they would fall under the proposed regulation. The Bay Trail is often constructed within 50 feet a water body with an impervious travel surface. The Tentative Order requires that such trails be constructed of permeable materials, "...such as pervious concrete, porous asphalt, unit pavers, and granular materials." (Section C.3.c.i (2)(e)). This will substantially increase trail construction costs

and will almost certainly result in fewer miles of trails being built. It is not clear what problem this Tentative Order is seeking to correct. Shoreline trails are constructed with a cross slope that allows for drainage into the soft surface shoulders and landscaping is frequently planted along the edge of the trail.

We feel strongly that trails are not in the same category as streets, roads or highways. Trails are designed for pedestrians and bicyclists and will not accumulate the same level of pollutants as roads used by motorized vehicular traffic. Moreover, people that walk and bike to their destinations reduce the use of motor vehicles and their polluting emissions. The Bay Trail Project is seeking to reduce the number of automobiles on the road by providing safe and enjoyable alternatives to vehicle travel in the Bay Area.

Thank you for considering these comments. We look forward to be working with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and other stakeholders to further our mutual interest in preserving and enhancing the environment of the San Francisco Bay Region. Please contact me at 510-464-7935 or laurat@abag.ca.gov with questions.

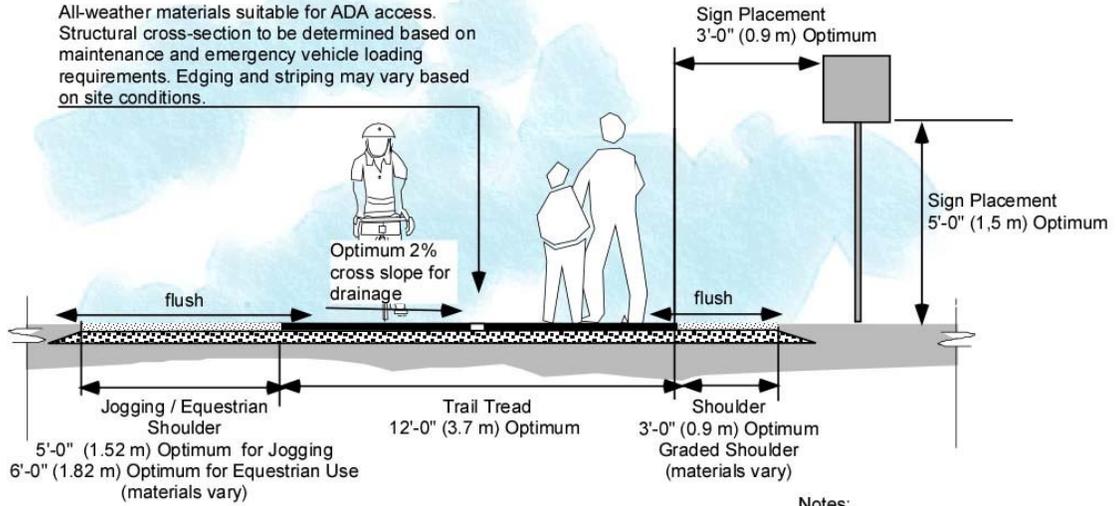
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Thompson".

Laura Thompson
Bay Trail Project Manager

Attachment: Typical Multi-Use Trail Cross Section

Typical Multi-Use Trail Cross Section



- Notes:
- Section illustrates optimum dimensions. CalTrans HDM design standards should be referenced for minimum dimensions.

