SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION

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May 12, 2011

Mr. Michael Machado
Executive Director
Delta Protection Commission
14215 River Road
P.O. Box 530
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Dear Mr. Machado:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the "Great California Delta Trail Blueprint Report for Contra Costa and Solano Counties" (September 2010). The Solano County Park and Recreation Commission (Commission) reviewed the Blueprint Report at its March 10, 2011 meeting and unanimously endorsed the comments in this letter. We appreciate Alex Westhoff of the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) attending the meeting to present the report.

The Commission hereby expresses support for the concept of the Great California Delta Trail and recommends the Blueprint Report for approval by the County Board of Supervisors, contingent on DPC incorporating the following comments into the Delta Trail planning process. Furthermore, the Commission requests that this letter be incorporated as an exhibit in the Blueprint Report to record the official comments of this Commission, which has advisory oversight of recreation-related policies in Solano County.

1. The Commission submits these comments to improve the Great Delta Trail planning effort by being more inclusive of trailhead and recreational opportunities in Solano County. In addition, the waterfront and trail development interests of the Cities of Benicia, Suisun and Vallejo do not appear to be well represented.

2. The Commission would have preferred that this report had been issued as a draft, so that review comments such as these from the Commission and recreational agencies at the city- and County-level could have been incorporated into a final report.

3. Policy 3.8 should include appropriate mention of the three Solano County parks that are located within the project study area (Sandy Beach County Park, Belden's Landing Water Access Facility and Lynch Canyon Open Space Park).

4. Policy 7.2 should include mention of the Solano County Park and Recreation Division.

5. A staff member from the County Park and Recreation Division and a County Park and Recreation Commissioner should be considered for inclusion on the TAC (Technical Advisory Committee). Staff members from the Cities of Benicia, Suisun and Vallejo should also be considered.

6. Policy 10.1, as well as Section 4.1 (Public Safety and Liability – Potential Solutions) should include specific mention of the need to organize and fund "patrol" of the trail throughout overlapping jurisdictions (different counties, cities, districts, etc.). Some level of patrol would be an important consideration to ensure public safety (especially in remote rural areas), as well as to ensure litter pick-up, to maintain good relationships with neighboring property owners adjacent to the trail, and to provide for periodic maintenance inspections of the surface conditions on the trail.

7. Section 3.3 (p. 21). The report mentions Belden's Landing, but no symbol indicates this facility on the setting maps (pp. 24-24) or Figure 8 (Solano County (North) Opportunities). Belden's Landing could be indicated on the maps as an excellent opportunity for a trailhead for a water trail through Suisun Marsh. It has ample paved parking, as well as restrooms and a developed boat launch and dock. The slough passing here is relatively protected so that it is accessible by smaller craft and kayaks.

8. Section 3.3 (p. 21). Sandy Beach County Park is mentioned here (also shown on the report cover photo). This should be indicated on maps as a possible opportunity for a water trail trailhead, with ample paved parking, a developed boat launch, dock, restrooms and a campground. The launching location would be more accessible to larger, motorized watercraft because the current here in the Sacramento River is swift.

9. Section 3.4 (p. 22). Solano County does provide public equestrian trails. Lynch Canyon Open Space Park provides 10 miles of multi-use trails accessible to equestrians. Public access to the park has been funded and operated since 2007 as one of the Solano County Parks, for the Solano Land Trust (the landowner), by means of a joint management agreement.

10. Lynch Canyon Open Space Park has a trail staging area, which is also an official Bay Area Ridge Trail staging area. This trailhead should be shown on the map on p. 24 and on Figure 8 -- Solano County (North) Opportunities.

11. Section 5 -- Best Practices. This section would benefit by identifying some measure of cost (e.g., maintenance cost and operational cost per mile) for each of these trails. That way, future financing decisions could be based on actual past cost data, and inform decision-makers about the ongoing costs of trail upkeep.

12. Section 7: The report would benefit by presenting dates for an implementation schedule (even a rough approximation) for the steps in the Action Plan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to reviewing future work products and being involved in the planning of the Great California Delta Trail.

Regards,

Steve Hermsmeyer, Chair, Solano County Park and Recreation Commission

Cc:

Michael Reagan, Chair, Solano County Board of Supervisors
Michael Lango, Director, Solano County General Services Department
Alex Westhoff, Delta Protection Commission
Jim Louie, Solano County Resource Management Department
Steve Leutholz, Solano County Public Works Division
Harry Englebright, Tri-City and County Cooperative Planning Group