Corte Madera Marsh Restoration

Introduction to the Golden Gate Bridge Corte Madera Marsh Restoration Project and Potential Relocation and Expansion of the Town of Corte Madera’s Public Access Easement

Presented by:
WRA, Inc. and the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD)

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Presentation Overview

Why are we here?

1. The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District (District) owns a 72 acre parcel on the edge of the Bay in Corte Madera. The District has obligations to:
   • Restore 4 acres of marsh habitat due to Larkspur Ferry Terminal construction and operation
   • Restore additional areas as mitigation credits to be used for ferry terminal improvements in Larkspur and San Francisco

2. Present a concept of relocating and increasing the area of the public access easement on the parcel as part of the District’s project to restore marsh habitat
Information About the Existing Public Access Easement

1. Public Access Easement is currently limited to a **10-foot wide** trail along the southern and eastern berm.

2. SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) required the District to grant this public access easement to the Town of Corte Madera as a condition of approval for constructing the Larkspur Ferry Terminal.

3. Easement does not authorize access to the northern boundary of the site and does not include a loop trail.

4. Easement does not authorize access to central areas.
   - Authorized public access shown in **green**.
   - Unauthorized public access shown in **red**.
   - Existing easement is approximately
     - 4,020 linear feet, 0.92 acre
Corte Madera Marsh Restoration Project

Goals of the Project

1. Restore a significant amount of tidal marsh and seasonal wetlands
2. Expand habitat for endangered species including the Salt marsh harvest mouse and California Ridgway’s rail
3. Relocate and expand public access easement and create the opportunity for ownership of a new public access easement area to be transferred to the Town of Corte Madera
4. Provide adequate buffer areas between public access areas and habitat for endangered species
5. Create the opportunity for the restoration areas to be annexed into the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, which is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Alternative A versus Alternative B

Both Alternatives:
- Restore:
  - ~25 acres of tidal marsh
  - ~6 acres of seasonal wetlands
- Habitats resilient to sea level rise
- Opportunity for the restoration areas to be annexed into the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve

Alternative B:
- Improves public access areas to be deeded to the Town of Corte Madera
  - Relocates and expands public access area
    - 3,200 linear foot loop trail
    - 8.5 acres for recreation
- Buffers human disturbance from habitats that support endangered species
Proposal to Relocate the Public Access Easement at the GGBHTD’s Corte Madera Marsh Property

- Multiple regulatory agencies have jurisdiction over project and must provide concurrence.

- Regulatory agencies have advised the District that the location of existing easement is not preferable with the goals of the restoration project.

Under Alternative B, District is proposing to relocate and expand the public access easement.

- There is an opportunity for new public access area ownership to be transferred to the Town of Corte Madera, providing additional public recreation space.
Highlights of the Proposed Tidal Marsh Restoration Project

- Seasonal wetlands
- Upland refugia and buffer areas
- High marsh habitat with pickleweed
- Tidal channels and mudflats
- Low marsh habitat with cordgrass

Illustration of the proposed Corte Madera Marsh Restoration Project

Breach at northern channel for tidal exchange to new marsh habitat
Project Status

1. Informal consultations started with regulatory agencies:
   1. US Army Corp of Engineers
   2. California Department of Fish and Wildlife
   3. Regional Water Quality Control Board

2. Presented concepts to:
   1. Marin Baylands Advocates
   2. Marin Audubon Society

3. Project status and next steps:
   1. Finalize concept and begin CEQA by June 2017
   2. Complete CEQA documentation by June 2018
   3. Complete design by January 2019
   4. Secure permits and advertise for construction by June 2019

4. Questions?
END