



NFWF

# The Salt Marsh Trail Enhancement Project: Final Programmatic Report (AMENDED)

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*Recipient Organization/Agency: Friends of the Palo Alto Parks*

*Date Submitted: November 1, 2023 (revised January 5, 2024)*

*Award Amount: \$54,000*

*Matching Contributions: \$162,000 expected for sign fabrication and installation*

*Total Disbursement: \$44,600*

*Easygrants ID: 64378*

## 1. Summary of Accomplishments

Nearly all designs for exhibit signage and interactive pieces have completed and are now fabrication ready, with the exception of images still needed for 3 boardwalk panels. In total, 37 panels for 37 stops on the boardwalk were designed (save for 3 images still needed) and 23 panels for 10 stops on the Trail were designed. Interactive designs include a marsh cross section and sediment wheel. Fabrication contractors have also been identified and are ready to begin when committed fabrication funding has been released by the State of California. As required by the State, the City of Palo Alto must secure deed restrictions for planned exhibit sites in the Baylands before fabrication funding is made available and the City of Palo Alto Council needed to approve these deed restrictions. Council voted to approve the deed restrictions for the project in June of 2023, and the City's Real Estate Department is working on legal paperwork needed to file with the County (Santa Clara County). Installation of exhibit signage and interactives is slated for the months of September and October of 2024.

Once signage and interactives have been installed, visitors to the Baylands Preserve will be able to learn about the flora, fauna and ecology of this saltmarsh and deepen their enjoyment and understanding of this special place.

## 2. Project Activities & Outcomes

### Activities

While the activities funded by the NFWF—the design of the signage and interactives—was mostly completed, the fabrication and installation of signage and interactives (which is to be funded by the State of California) did not take place during this grant period due to delays associated with obtaining the necessary deed restrictions.

### Benefits

Once completed, the new trail experience will enhance visitors' awareness and understanding of the rich diversity of life in, and interesting ecology of, the Baylands salt marsh habitat. With more for visitors to learn and discover during their new trail experience, enjoyment of this coastal recreation site will be heightened and dwell times will be extended. It is also our hope that certain trail signs--those dedicated to the history of adjacent neighborhoods on the East Palo Alto side of the trail--will particularly encourage visitation of the trail

and Baylands preserve by members of that community, mostly comprised of low-income and ethnically diverse minorities.

### 3. The Future

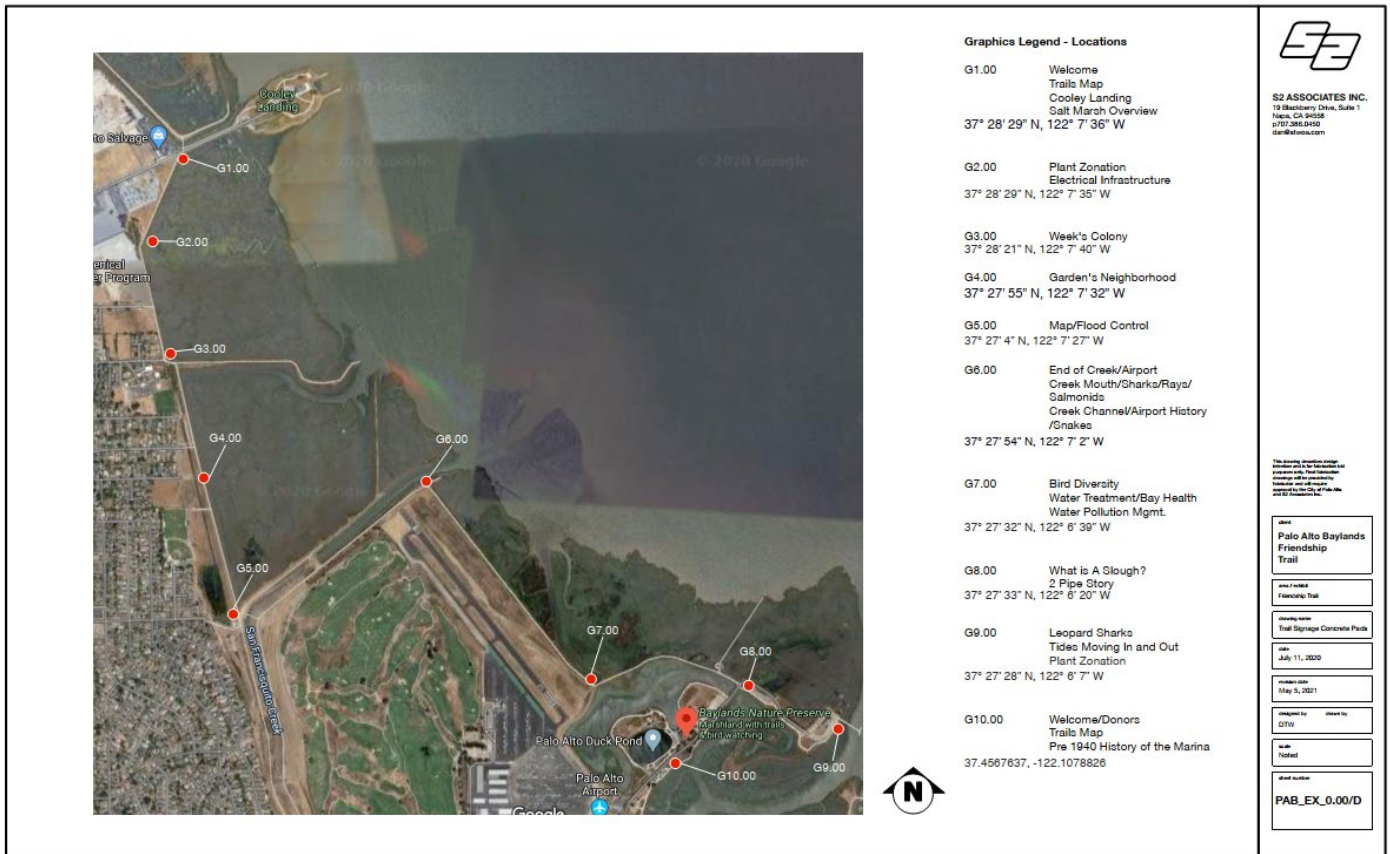
We anticipate final fabrication and installation of the signs to be completed by October of 2024.

### 4. Lessons Learned

This process taught us that deed restrictions enacted by the City of Palo Alto take several years to secure and we should have allowed for this when we constructed the timeline for the project.

### 5. Project Documents

Project photos and other selected images are included below. These are a small subset of the trail stop locations, sign panel designs, and other documents developed under the grant.



*Image 1: Map of trail stop/interpretive signage locations on the Friendship Trail in the Palo Alto Baylands. There are 10 stops along the trail. G1.00 is the Cooley Landing entry point on the East Palo Alto side of the trail. G10.00 serves as both an entry point for visitors entering the trail from the Palo Alto side and a final concluding stop for visitors entering the trail from the Cooley Landing side. We expect visitors to experience different portions of the trail during different visits, and we have designed each stop to provide a satisfying and valuable experience when experienced on its own and or in concert with other stops along the trail.*



*Image 2: This is the site of trail stop G1.00 from the map in Image 1 (above). Signs at this location will welcome visitors to the trail. It will include a map of the Friendship Trail and its stops. There will also be information about Cooley Landing and an overview of the flora, fauna and ecology of the Baylands. (Photo by Alex Hamilton)*





*Image 3: This is the site of trail stop G4.00 from the map in Image 1 (above). Signage at this location will describe the history of the Gardens neighborhood that can also be seen from the Trail. In addition to educating the public about the ecology of the Baylands, we wanted to include signage that connected the local community to the marsh. (Photo by Alex Hamilton)*



*Image 4: This is the location of trail stop G6.00 from the map in Image 1 (above). Signage at this location will talk about the mouth of the San Francisquito Creek that flows through the Baylands and along much of the Friendship Trail. It describes some of the fauna living in the creek and surrounding landscape. It also describes how the landscape of the Baylands was changed to support human installations like the Palo Alto Airport that sits to the right of this stretch of the trail. (Photo by Alex Hamilton)*





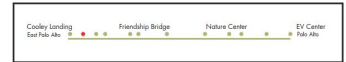
*Image 5: This is the location of trail stop G7.00 from the map in Image 1 (above). This site is on the front facing deck of the Baylands Nature Center (on the opposite side of the building from the Boardwalk). Signage at this location will: (1) discuss the large number of different types of birds that feed in the slough; (2) describe how treated waste water flows out of the pipes emptying into the slough in front of the Nature Center; and (3) show the Waste Water Treatment Plant situated along the edge of the Baylands. (Photo by Alex Hamilton)*

**Today, people are an unavoidable part of the Estuary's wetlands.**

There is no way to completely remove the visible impact of people from your view of the wetlands. The electrical towers you see in this area provide the vital infrastructure needed to carry electrical power to millions of people. They have been here since 1925. Birds nest and roost around them, but the wires pose a collision hazard.

**Hoy en día, las personas son una parte ineludible de los humedales del estuario.**

No hay forma de apartar por completo a las personas de su vista de los humedales. Las torres eléctricas son un ejemplo. Llevan aquí desde 1925. Los pájaros anidan y se posan a su alrededor, pero los cables representan un peligro de colisión para las águilas y pelicanos. Mire donde mire, verá signos de la infraestructura vital necesaria para generar energía para millones de personas de la gente.



Friendship Trail. Celebrating Communities Caring for a Salt Marsh Together

*Image 6: This is an example of a sign developed for the trail. The text on the sign describes the intersection of human and natural landforms in the Baylands. The electrical grid can be seen prominently traversing the Baylands from any vantage point in the park, but especially from here. This sign is planned for installation at trail stop G2.00 (see the map from Image 1, above).*



### **Marsh plants live in zones.**

Different plants grow in different parts of the marsh. Where the plants grow depends on how long they can stay submerged and how well they can tolerate salty water and soggy, muddy soil.

### **Las plantas del pantano viven en zonas.**

Diferentes plantas crecen en diferentes partes del pantano. El lugar donde crecen depende de cuanto tiempo pueden permanecer sumergidas y cuanto pueden tolerar el agua salada y la tierra empapada y lodosa.



*Image 7 This is an example of a sign developed for the boardwalk. It is the first Boardwalk stop. The image is of the water canal running through the marsh to the left of the Boardwalk. The sign vantage point is a view of the marsh canal and distinct zones of different types of plants that live at various distances from water. Plant zonation is a direct result of the salt water in the marsh and how plants have evolved to cope with it.*

**POSTING OF FINAL REPORT:** *This report and attached project documents may be shared by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and any Funding Source for the Project, including via their respective websites. In the event that the Recipient intends to claim that its final report or project documents contain material that is exempt from disclosure by law, the Recipient shall clearly mark all such potentially protected materials as “EXEMPT” and provide an explanation and complete citation to the law for such exemption.*