

Working
collaboratively to
protect and restore
the waters and lands
of Tomales Bay
watershed



WINTER 2003

Bulletin

NUMBER 2

Time for Action

For the future health of Tomales Bay, a Draft Watershed Stewardship Plan is very near completion. The next step—a crucial one, requiring lots of community involvement—will be a series of public meetings to distribute the plan and discuss its elements. See page 3 for the schedule and best location for you. Our watershed deserves and requires our best possible effort.

Who has prepared this Plan, and why? Here's a brief summary.

Who: The Tomales Bay Watershed Council is a voluntary group of watershed stakeholders, including landowners, local organizations, and government agency representatives. The Marin County Resource Conservation District is our primary fiscal agent.

What: A Watershed Plan is a tool to guide and coordinate restoration and protection efforts. With the support of the Council, the effectiveness of agencies responsible for the health of our ecosystem is greater. We must take responsibility for where we live.

Why: A plan of action to direct our joint efforts is called for by the seriousness of problems that include:

- ◆ The Bay and Lagunitas and Walker Creeks are impaired by pathogens, nutrients (human and animal waste), sediment, and mercury.



"The sustained effort to track the value of Tomales Bay for wintering and migrant birds, begun in the late 1980s, has become an impressive demonstration of ongoing stewardship by those who love this place."

John Kelly, biologist



Tomales Bay Watershed Council members at a January 2003 all-day work retreat, Inverness Yacht Club.

◆ Valuable habitat has been lost or degraded for many species — salmon, shrimp, native oysters, birds, and others.

◆ Agriculture is under economic and regulatory pressure. It is agriculture that provides the majority of our open space and the buffer between public lands and the urban world.

Now is the time. We have a rare opportunity to address our water pollution and habitat problems while continuing the effort to ensure the long-term success of sustainable agriculture. In accepting this responsibility, we affirm the efforts of those who left a healthy watershed for us to share. Success, though, will rest on the widest possible participation now.

This is our privilege as residents of this watershed, working together to strengthen the place we share. And this work is our most valuable legacy for those who will follow us.

— Michael Mery, for the Council

This publication is dedicated to
the memory of Ellen Straus,
a Tomales Bay Watershed Council activist and mentor.

Citizen's Guide to the Watershed Plan

Title: *Tomales Bay Watershed Stewardship Plan: A Framework for Action*

Goals: The goals of the Watershed Stewardship Plan are to:

- ◆ Ensure water quality in Tomales Bay and tributary streams sufficient to support natural resources and beneficial uses.
- ◆ Restore and preserve the integrity of natural habitats and native communities.
- ◆ Develop strategies to implement the plan and to protect the watershed.
- ◆ Involve and educate the public to become watershed stewards.

Actions: To achieve these goals, four actions have been developed:

Action 1.0 ◆ Develop a coordinated and comprehensive water quality monitoring plan for Tomales Bay and tributary streams.

Action 2.0 ◆ Support implementation of practices and projects that will reduce nonpoint sources of water pollution and enhance habitats in Tomales Bay and its watershed.

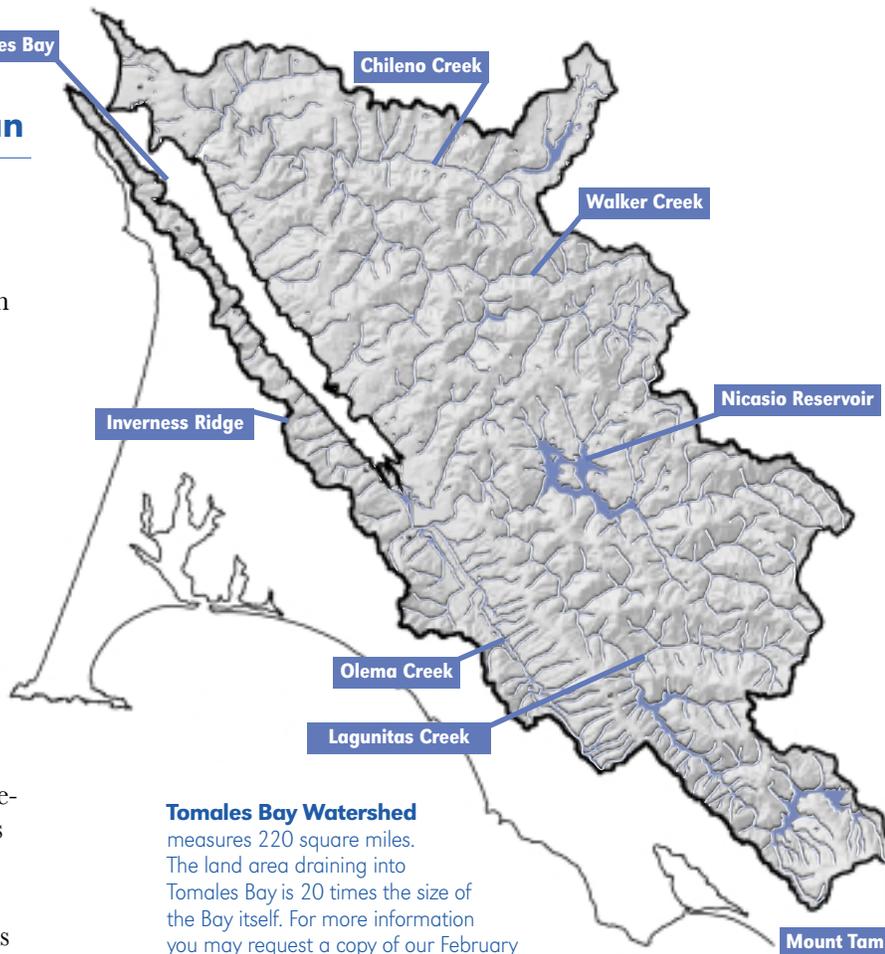
Action 3.0 ◆ Assess, protect, and restore key habitats for species of local interest.

Action 4.0 ◆ Promote and support public outreach and education about Tomales Bay and its watershed.

Elements: Details for each action are provided within the respective sections of the Plan. These include prioritized projects, studies, and programs complete with budget estimates, time lines, and potential lead agency or organization. In this manner, the public and members of the council can use this Plan either collectively or individually for direction on the development and implementation of watershed stewardship activities. In

"Tomales Bay is the perfect place for us to demonstrate good watershed citizenship: it belongs to a large system of coastal estuaries but is small enough for us to take care of. Our stewardship can be a model but, to succeed, will take all of us working together."

Don Neubacher, National Park superintendent



Tomales Bay Watershed measures 220 square miles. The land area draining into Tomales Bay is 20 times the size of the Bay itself. For more information you may request a copy of our February 2002 newsletter.

In addition to supporting such activities through the actions, the Plan provides background information about water quality and about erosion and sedimentation within respective appendices.

Timeline: Present and future actions.

- ◆ Complete Draft Watershed Stewardship Plan: *February 2003*
- ◆ Promote public outreach campaign to facilitate review of draft plan by community and additional watershed stakeholders: *March–June 2003*
Outreach to include a series of public meetings where the Plan will be presented by the Council for consideration and discussion with the community.
- ◆ Support public comment period: *March 10 to June 6, 2003*
- ◆ Revise Plan based on comments, and promote adoption of Plan: *July 2003*
- ◆ Pursue action items in this Plan: *2003 and beyond*

The Future of the Council: The Council has been awarded organizational support funding through 2005.

Tomales Bay Watershed and You

Each person who lives within or visits the watershed is a Tomales Bay Watershed Citizen. What are some actions we can take for responsible watershed citizenship? Offered here are just a few possibilities. Watch for more on our website: www.tomalesbaywatershed.org.

- ▶ Support local food growers and producers.
- ▶ Volunteer in habitat restoration projects.
- ▶ Monitor the condition of streamside vegetation along a nearby creek.
- ▶ Participate in beach and road clean-up efforts.
- ▶ Maintain our septic systems in a conscientious manner.
- ▶ Plant drought-tolerant native plants that provide habitat for native animals.
- ▶ Get familiar with the *Tomales Bay Watershed Stewardship Plan: A Framework for Action* (see facing page).
- ▶ Attend public meetings to discuss and comment upon the Plan (see schedule at right).
- ▶ Email your written comments on the Draft Plan to: **comments-tbwc@earthlink.net**
- ▶ Assist TBWC as a committee member.
- ▶ Assist TBWC with local fundraising.
- ▶ Volunteer for TBWC in administrative, public outreach, research, or restoration activities.
- ▶ Be informed. Attend monthly meetings of TBWC—every third Tuesday, 4 to 6 PM, Red Barn Classroom at Point Reyes National Seashore.

▶ **Make a tax-deductible contribution to help cover TBWC operating costs. The Council's primary fiscal agent is Marin County Resource Conservation District. Checks are payable to Marin County RCD/TBWC.**

Your Input Needed

Schedule of Public Meetings:

- **Wednesday, April 16, 2003 — Point Reyes Station**
The Dance Palace church space
6:30 to 8:30 PM
- **Tuesday, April 22, 2003 — Tomales**
Tomales Town Hall
6:30 to 8:30 PM
- **Thursday, April 24, 2003 — San Geronimo**
San Geronimo Valley Cultural Center
6:30 to 8:30 PM

Watch for announcements of public meetings and events in the *Point Reyes Light* and *Marin I.J.*, and on Horizon Cable and KWMR 90.5 and 89.3 FM.

▶ To be added to the mailing list, please contact us at:

Tomales Bay Watershed Council
P. O. Box 447
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956
(415) 663-9092
Neysa King, coordinator
email: neysaking@earthlink.net
web: www.tomalesbaywatershed.org



"The good news is that a lot of people care greatly about this place. Witness all the creek restoration that's going on on the ranches!"

Sally Gale, rancher and restorationist

Photo courtesy Sally Gale

▶ Council Membership and Affiliation:

Catherine Caufield, *Environmental Action Committee of West Marin*

Liza Crosse, *San Geronimo Valley Planning Group and Aide to County Supervisor Steve Kinsey*

John Finger, *Hog Island Oyster Company*

Ken Fox, *Tomales Bay Association*

Sally Gale, *Marin County Resource Conservation District*

Robert Giacomini, *Tomales Bay Agricultural Group*

Stan Gillmar, *Inverness Association*

Ann Grymes, *East Shore Planning Group*

Alex Hinds, *Marin County Community Development Agency*

Dale Hopkins, *San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board*

Jared Huffman, *Marin Municipal Water District*

John Kelly, *Audubon Canyon Ranch, Cypress Grove Research Center*

Marty Knapp, *West Marin Chamber of Commerce*

Gregg Langlois, *California Department of Health Services*

David Matthews, *California State Parks*

Kate McClain, *Blue Waters Kayaking*

Michael McClaskey, *Point Reyes Village Association*

Michael Mery, *Community Resident*

Don Neubacher, *Point Reyes National Seashore*

Paul Olin, *University of California Extension, Sea Grant*

Gail Seymour, *California Department of Fish and Game, Watershed Protection and Restoration Program*

Ed Ueber, *Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary*

Bill Vogler, *Lawson's Landing*

Reuven Walder, *Salmon Protection and Watershed Network*

“Dateline 2010: western Marin County, California. ♦ The Tomales Bay watershed now has improving water quality and habitat, as well as diverse and healthy agriculture, thanks to cooperative action by the area’s residents, visitors, and agencies.”

Will the above statement become true?

Your participation can guarantee that it does.

Stewardship on the part of many citizens, along with active partnerships among agencies and organizations, are proven ways to protect the Tomales Bay Watershed.

We CAN address our problems. Here are a few milestones to date:

- ♦ preservation and protection of open space and agricultural lands
- ♦ implementation of soil and water conservation projects
- ♦ restoration of aquatic habitats
- ♦ restoration of habitat that supports neotropical migratory songbirds
- ♦ prohibition of jet ski use on the Bay and its tributaries

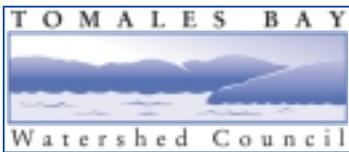
Future collaboration — built on this foundation of hard-won success — will be needed.

Today, local stewardship has brought about increased understanding of the condition of Tomales Bay and its tributary streams — of native habitats, water quality issues, and links between sources of pollutants and water quality.

By working together — with an expanded sense of community — we can protect aquatic and terrestrial habitats essential to Tomales Bay while preserving our region’s culture and heritage.

“We need to think and act as the very important part of the watershed that we are – not as separate observers – because we have the power to do so much harm or good. Knowing that, we should step lightly, use wisely, and help others to do the same.”

John Finger, Tomales Bay mariculturist



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“The beauty and life of Tomales Bay are an inspiration for the job we all share—caring for the whole watershed.”

**Kate McClain,
kayak company
operator**

Postal Patron