

Girl Scouts Save the Bay

Project Outline

July 2006

Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts is the preeminent organization for girls with 3.8 million girl and adult members. Now in its 94th year, Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

Across the United States and internationally, Girl Scouting is rapidly evolving from its traditional focus of "cookies, camping and crafts" to a vibrant, contemporary movement where girls from all backgrounds, cultures and abilities grow and thrive.

Girl Scouts Save the Bay – the new green in Girl Scouting

Girls Scouts Save the Bay (GSSTB) is the Girl Scouts of San Francisco Bay Area's "bold audacious project" – girls, their families, neighbors and adult leaders working to protect and restore the San Francisco Bay. Developed by girls, GSSTB leads the Girl Scouting movement supporting girls in learning about critical issues that affect their home, their families and the future – and how they can make a difference now and over their lifetime.

With a \$500,000 lead gift from the internationally renowned Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, Girl Scouts of San Francisco Bay Area is positioned to fully implement this historic and ground breaking initiative.

The San Francisco Bay

The San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary is the largest estuary system on the west coasts of both North and South America, encompassing 1,600 square miles, ranging from the salty waters of San Francisco Bay to the brackish waters of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Estuary's vast upstream watershed drains more than forty-percent of California's land-mass, including the freshwater streams of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Ranges.

The San Francisco Bay covers 400 square miles with an average depth of fourteen feet, with depths of 360 feet at the Golden Gate. Even though the Bay has shrunk by a third in the last 150 years, and only about twenty-five percent of its original wetland, riparian, and tidal mudflat habitat remain, the Bay still supports the only urban commercial fisheries in the nation. The Bay is also the largest harbor on the U.S. Pacific Coast, with more than 67,000,000 tons of cargo passing annually through the Golden Gate.

More than one million shorebirds and waterfowl make their home on bay marshes while millions of others use it as a migratory destination or a rest and food stop. The Delta is a major nursery for fish and invertebrates as well as a highway for migrating salmon and steelhead. The ecosystem supports some 750 species of fish, animals, and birds, many of which are endangered.

One hundred and fifty years of pollution, over fishing, fill and shoreline development and upstream water diversions have severely impaired the health of the Bay. Wetland habitat and freshwater inflow to the Bay have decreased dramatically, along with the once abundant fish and wildlife populations that depended on them. The fish that remain are not safe to eat, and their habitat is being overrun by destructive alien plant and invertebrate species.

Girl Scouts Save the Bay: Program Components

1. Discover – Lead – Take action!

These are the three integral steps to Girl Scouting and to Girl Scouts Save the Bay. Using age-appropriate activities, girls first discover and learn about the San Francisco Bay. Girls begin to lead – for example, telling friends and family members about what they've learned. Girls then start to take action – advocating for personal responsibility such as water conservation or preventing pollution. For older girls that can also mean learning about a specific policy issue and advocating on a local, state or national level for change.

2. Projects

Discover Your Watershed: Girls, adult leaders and family members have adopted local watersheds and, with partner organizations, work to protect and restore the watershed over the long-term. The baseline data (such as water quality) the girls are collecting is being incorporated into region-wide data-sets used by scientists and policy makers. To date, twenty-nine watersheds have been adopted in the Bay Area.

Earned Awards: Using age-appropriate curriculum, girls earn badges and patches related to their knowledge of the San Francisco Bay – its ecology, history, culture and geography.

Girl Scouts Amazing Bay Day: On September 30, 2006, girls, their friends and family members from all over Northern California will gather at six festival sites around the Bay for the public launch of Girl Scouts Save the Bay.

Girl Scouts San Francisco Bay Pledge: Girls will develop a pledge to protect the Bay and to conserve water, asking friends, family members and the general public to take the pledge to protect the Bay.

Girls Water Congress: The Girls Water Congress will develop and implement the Girl Scouts Save the Bay water advocacy agenda.

Field Trips: Girls, family members and adult leaders participate in field trips around the San Francisco Bay.

Day and Resident Camps: Girl Scouts Save the Bay programs are integrated into all five resident and nine summer day camps.

CSI(Crime Scene Investigators) – Girl Scouts Save the Bay: Girls will learn how to investigate clean water violations in the San Francisco Bay.

Girl Scouts Save the Bay: Scope

1. Girls and adult volunteers

Girl Scouts Save the Bay programs and activities are available to all of the Girl Scouts of San Francisco Bay Area's (GSSFBA) girls and adult volunteers. In 2005, GSSFBA had 29,000 registered girls and 19,000 registered adult volunteers. An additional 50,000 immediate family members also participate in Girl Scout activities. GSSFBA's strategic plan calls for an annual 8% growth in membership.

One of the key long-term goals of the Girl Scouts Save the Bay is to replicate the project in other regions.

Based on current planning, beginning in 2008, Girl Scouts of San Francisco Bay Area's region will incorporate the majority of the remaining Girl Scout councils on the northern California coast, bringing the membership to approximately 40,000 girls and 23,000 adult leaders.

2. Geographic

Girl Scouts of the San Francisco Bay Area includes the five-county core region of the Bay Area: San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Contra Costa and Alameda. Based on current planning, beginning in 2008, Girl Scouts of San Francisco Bay Area's region will incorporate the majority of the remaining Girl Scout councils on the northern California coast.

3. Budget

The current project budget for Girl Scouts Save the Bay is \$2.3 million over three years.

Girl Scouts Save the Bay: Supporters and Program Partners

1. Advisory Council

Co-chaired by **Senator Dianne Feinstein** and **Dr. Sylvia Earle**, the Advisory Council includes distinguished leaders in the areas of the environment, technology, science, government, non-profits and businesses.

2. Program Partners

Program partners include key organizations working to protect and restore the San Francisco Bay including Save the Bay, The Bay Institute, The Watershed Project, River of Words, Aquarium of the Bay, and Richardson Bay Audubon.

Girl Scouts Save the Bay: Timing

- 2005:** Project Launch (October)
Core curriculum and badge work
- 2006:** Discover Your Watershed
Girl Scouts Amazing Bay Day
Girl Scouts Save the Bay Pledge
- 2007:** Girls Water Congress
CSI – Girl Scouts Save the Bay

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