



## **Building a Blueprint for Action Implementing the Petaluma River Access Plan**

The Petaluma River is a valuable recreational and ecological resource, and a group of volunteers, planning professionals and government representatives is actively working together to increase the public's access and appreciation of this historic waterway.

The city has an approved plan, entitled the Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan, which addresses river protection and supports new access points for people to reach the river and use it recreationally – for walking, cycling, fishing, bird and wildlife watching, boating, landscape painting or relaxing.

In 2008, the city received a community assistance grant from the National Park Service to help develop a “river trail” as part of its Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Several NPS professionals and a volunteer landscape architect contribute to this effort.

Among the projects the NPS is assisting on are: designing a pedestrian and bicycle path along the waterfront; identifying and enhancing public access to the river; planning for river related recreation amenities including: community access points, public restrooms, and interpretative signage. The NPS is coordinating with partner organizations in the planning and development of a public boathouse and a river heritage center. In addition, working with a partnership of public and private entities (Petaluma River Access Partnership, or ‘P-RAP’), NPS is helping the city innovate a strategy for building community investment and acquiring the money needed to implement both short-term and long-term projects.

The Petaluma Small Craft Center Coalition is a local group of recreational boaters who is working with the NPS, the city and P-RAP participants to move the project forward. Coalition members have brainstormed about how to implement the river access and enhancement plan, and have laid the groundwork for accomplishing goals described in the city's plan.

They recognize this is an ambitious project, and are eager for residents and professionals in related fields, such as contractors and landscape architects, to join them as volunteers in shaping the future of the Petaluma River and waterfront area, while honoring the numerous already approved city plans which provide river access.

A portion of the city's River Access and Enhancement Plan is currently underway to revitalize the river, focusing on a 3-mile section from the site of a planned pedestrian bridge at Water Street north of Washington Street down-river to Shollenberger Park, with primary attention on the Turning Basin to Petaluma Marina section.

People who want to participate in increasing river access and enhancement or any specific river-related projects are encouraged to contact Assistant City Manager Scott Brodhun at 778-4380 or project coordinator Susan Starbird at [rca@starbirdcreative.com](mailto:rca@starbirdcreative.com) or 778-7277.