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MEDIA RELEASE

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Call for Community Grant Applications

Morro Bay National Estuary Program announces today the semi-annual Call for Community Grant Applications. Twice a year, community members and organizations are invited to submit proposals to implement projects that improve the health of the Morro Bay estuary and watershed. The Estuary Program will award up to \$17,000 in total. The maximum funding which applicants may request is \$5,000.

“The Community Grants Program is an important component of the Estuary Program’s goal of engaging community members in helping to keep water clean in Morro Bay,” commented Lexie Bell, Assistant Director at Morro Bay National Estuary Program. “These grants help fund on-the-ground projects that bring long-term benefits to the Morro Bay estuary and watershed.”

The Community Grants Program funds community-led projects that implement or support an Action Plan listed in the Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (<http://www.mbnep.org/Library/ccmp.html>). The 58 Action Plans address seven priority issues that impact the health of the Morro Bay estuary, including:

- Accelerated sedimentation
- Bacterial contamination
- Elevated nutrient levels
- Toxic pollutants
- Scarce freshwater resources
- Preserving biodiversity
- Environmentally balanced uses

The grant application deadline is September 5, 2014 at 5pm (PST). Grants Program criteria, application, and details are available online at http://www.mbnep.org/Our_Work/grants.html. The maximum funding which applicants may request is \$5,000. All proposed projects should seek to:

- Engage the community
- Create public awareness and participation
- Implement an Action Plan identified in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan <http://www.mbnep.org/Library/ccmp.html>
- Use cost-effective measures to implement projects
- Leverage funds through other community partnerships

Since 2001, over \$1.5 million in grant funding has been awarded for projects implementing components of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. In recent years funding was provided to projects which promote clean boating practices in Morro Bay, implement stormwater management techniques in the Morro Bay watershed, and increase awareness of marine debris in and around the bay.



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“Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a valuable partner in our efforts toward Zero Waste. Through their contributions we created an educational facility to generate awareness and provide information that can assist everyone to do their part to ensure that our communities are more sustainable. The staff members are insightful and make themselves available to help answer questions through every step of the process. The most remarkable aspect about the Estuary Program is that they continue to provide assistance even upon completion of the projects. That is a sign of a loyal partner,” said Josh Heptig, Golf Superintendent San Luis Obispo County Parks.

Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a non-regulatory, non-profit organization that brings together citizens, local government, non-profits, agencies, and landowners to protect and restore the Morro Bay Estuary for people and wildlife. The Estuary Program conducts monitoring and research, restores natural habitats, and educates residents and visitors on how to keep Morro Bay clean and healthy.

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