
Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of May 5, 2016 IC minutes
5. **DISCUSSION:** Morro Bay in Bloom Rainwater Harvesting Project Community Grant Update

The project originated when a Morro Bay in Bloom member thought Centennial Park would be a good site for a rain garden, based on a tank they had seen at the Estero Community Garden. A member who is a civil engineer designed the restraint system for the tanks. The 600-gallon and 265-gallon tanks are already installed and filled with rain water. The drip irrigation system is installed and ready to distribute water throughout the park. The pump to feed the irrigation system is too large, so a smaller one needs to be purchased before it can be installed. The interpretive panel has been installed. A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for November.

6. **DISCUSSION:** Update on City of Morro Bay Boat Yard and Haulout project

In May, the Executive Committee voted to table the Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization request to help fund the feasibility study for the boat yard and haulout facility. If the City of Morro Bay moved forward with funding a Feasibility Study before the August meeting, then the committees would reconsider the grant already submitted.

The City is working with the Harbor Advisory Board to move the project forward and is continuing to explore the potential for a partnership with a private entity. The interested parties are looking at the opportunity to incorporate the maritime museum into the project. At this time, the City has not yet initiated a feasibility study. The Harbor Advisory Board will review additional details from the private developer (Terry Simons) at the September meeting, including a more refined timeline and costs for project development. Staff's preference is to table the issue again until November. Another option is to vote on the application as is stands. The IC discussed the issue at their August 4 meeting and agreed to table the discussion until their November meeting.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Status of Camp San Luis Obispo partnership for stormwater management

Summary: In order to be eligible for solicitations involving storm water, applying entities must be part of a Stormwater Resource Plan (SRP). The Estuary Program and National Guard Base at Camp SLO (CSLO) initiated the development of an SRP for CSLO in anticipation of applying for a grant for stormwater treatment. Since then, the county's two Resource Conservation Districts teamed with the County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Water Resources Division to produce a county-wide SRP that will include CSLO, which precludes the need to create a CSLO SRP separately. CSLO and the Estuary Program will coordinate with the county-wide effort. CSLO and other partners have developed a list of potential projects and are seeking funding. A few of the projects are small and could benefit from a fairly

modest amount of funding. The group (see attachment for a list of members) may decide to apply for a Community Grant to support this project work.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Updates on funding and monitoring efforts for Eelgrass

The Estuary Program continues to collaborate with partners to study the causes for the precipitous decline in eelgrass in the bay. This effort includes applying for funding and working with partners in their funding and research efforts. Two new funding sources are likely to be awarded: Potential and on-going efforts in this area can be summarized as follows:

- The Estuary Program is in the midst of finalizing a grant contract for CDFW Duck Stamp funding to support monitoring of eelgrass restoration beds. The grant is for monitoring during the Summer and Fall of 2016 and throughout 2017. If monitoring indicates restoration success, then a second phase of the project would begin for small scale restoration, including transplanting, seed dispersal, and habitat creation. The award amount is \$20,900. The contract was expected to begin in mid-August.
- NOAA has awarded the Estuary Program a grant for \$35,000 to support Estuary Program eelgrass monitoring this fall. The grant also supports Cal Poly monitoring and research efforts by providing funds for equipment, supplies and contractor support. The grant start date is mid-September.

Multiple Cal Poly research efforts are underway. The following is an update on these projects:

- Cal Poly faculty Ryan Walter was awarded an internal Cal Poly research grant for \$14,000. The project is underway to monitor and analyze water quality data to better understand eelgrass decline. The research examines historic water quality and environmental data over the course of the eelgrass decline and characterizes existing bay hydrodynamics and physical forces across spatial gradients in eelgrass survival. Ryan deployed water quality sensors throughout the bay during the month of July.
- Cal Poly professor Jennifer O'Leary was awarded an internal Cal Poly grant for \$14,000 to support fish trawling in the estuary, in order to better understand how the loss of eelgrass habitat has impacted fish populations. The trawls are scheduled to take place in early October.
- Cal Poly professor Jenn Yost was awarded an internal Cal Poly grant to support a study of eelgrass genetics in different regions of the bay. Understanding the genetics will inform the restoration efforts, since if genetics differ greatly between different regions, eelgrass transplanting between these regions is less likely to be successful. Jenn's team has been collecting eelgrass samples in July and August from throughout the bay.

9. **DISCUSSION:** Update on Watershed Projects

Trout Unlimited was awarded a NOAA grant to replace the fish ladder on Pennington Creek, which is located upstream of the Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School campus. The site also contains a diversion to feed a pond on school property. The permits required for the project are expected to place limits on operation of the diversion. The Estuary Program role in the project involves providing monitoring support, both before and after project installation, to demonstrate the impacts on flows in the creek. These monitoring efforts began in early August.

The rainfall for the past year was disappointing. Our watershed received about half the rainfall of an average year. This lower than average rainfall impacts our efforts on the Pennington Creek rainwater catchment project. Cal Poly land management staff indicated that only one of the four 78,000 gallon tanks filled during last winter's rains. Cal Poly began using the water in the tanks on August 1. The wells are still in use for the student residence on the site, but is not being used to feed the cattle troughs. Cal Poly staff are monitoring the use of the wells and the tank. This will continue until the tanks are

empty. Our sensors will track creek water levels during that time to determine if any impact can be detected in the surface flows.

10. DISCUSSION: Update on Mutts for the Bay Program

The Estuary Program is working with SLO County Public Works on establishing and maintaining Mutt Mitt dispensers in the Los Osos area. At this time, Estuary Program volunteers are managing a dispenser at Cuesta Inlet and one at Broderson trail and the County is providing bags. Dog owners have used over 8,000 bags at these two dispensers since January. In the Morro Bay area, three dispensers were added to the program this year, including the two at the Morro Bay dog park and one at the new Morro Creek bike bridge. Dog owners have used more than 170,300 bags at dispensers in Morro Bay since January. During the IC meeting, there was discussion about disposal of used bags. If a waste receptacle is not provided, bags are often left either near the dispenser or along the trail. The IC discussed potential education efforts to help modify this behavior by pet owners.

The Estuary Program hosted its third annual DogFest event on May 15. The event featured activities and vendors geared toward dogs and their owners. We estimated over 300 people attended. Event activities included a dog agility course, demonstrations, and a fake dog poop pick up race. The event was covered in local media, including local news casts and newspapers. Plans are underway to for a DogFest event in spring of 2017.

11. DISCUSSION: Executive Committee Function and Logistics

An organization can benefit from a periodic look at their own purpose and workings to determine if the group is operating efficiently and effectively. To aid this discussion, staff sent out a survey two weeks prior to the August EC meeting. The results have been compiled and will be shared with the group.

12. Adjourn to next meeting of November 9, 2016 at 4 pm at the MBNEP offices.

Attachments:

1. May EC meeting minutes
2. Summary of Status of CSLO and Stormwater Planning