



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
MBNEP Offices, Morro Bay

Feb 15, 2017
4:00 pm

Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of November 9, 2016 Executive Committee minutes
5. **ACTION:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Workplan Input – See 2017 Workplan as a reference

Estuary Program staff will prepare the 2018 Workplan over the next few months and present it for consideration at the May committee meetings. Current budget projections indicate level funding at \$600,000, although staff will also develop alternative budgets to prepare for other potential scenarios. Staff will present an overview of the ongoing and new tasks planned for FY2018. Committee members will then be asked to flag tasks they see as priorities, task they consider to be low priorities, and ideas that are not currently included in the workplan that they feel merit attention in the future. We are taking this facilitated approach to discussing the workplan in order to better solicit feedback from the committee.

6. **ACTION:** Restoration Fund Five-Year Plan: 2018 to 2022

We are nearing the end of the five-year plan for Restoration Fund spending for 2013 to 2017. At the meeting, we will present our proposed spending plan for 2018 to 2022. See attachments.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Executive Committee Bylaw Discussion

Following the discussion at the November EC meeting, Marshall and Jennifer met to update the bylaws, which are presented here for further consideration. See attached.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Update

Efforts are underway to move the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve (CCER) restoration project forward. Conceptual designs (30%) are completed and will be finalized in April 2017. Plans include lowering levees to reconnect the creek with its floodplain, grading two secondary (avulsion) channels to improve floodplain habitat and stabilize banks, planting riparian vegetation, and re-sloping a creek road crossing to reduce erosion.

The project is currently funded by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) to support permitting and biological/cultural surveys to support design and permitting.

The estimated milestones are to conduct permitting and surveys in 2017 to 2018, with implementation anticipated during 2018 to 2019.

9. **DISCUSSION:** Eelgrass Update on Monitoring, Restoration, and Research

The Estuary Program has been focusing quite a bit on eelgrass monitoring and restoration efforts.

Monitoring

- Detailed monitoring of the conditions of existing eelgrass beds occurred in fall 2016 and will be conducted biannually in partnership with Cal Poly. Permanent transects are also monitoring annually for eelgrass presence and health.
- Surveys of previous restoration beds indicate low survival. However, surveys indicate eelgrass present in areas where it has not been seen since the decline. See attached map.
- We are planning a survey utilizing sonar to map eelgrass that is not exposed at high tide and anticipate a future aerial imagery mapping effort in the fall.

Restoration

- Grants from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and CDFW Duck Stamp are funding a small-scale experimental planting effort. We are planning two rounds of planting, one in March and one in the summer/fall. Eelgrass will be harvested from beds throughout the bay and planted in plots in two areas – near the bay mouth and near State Park Marina. Various anchoring methods will be tested prior to implementation. We are currently working to obtain permits and work through the logistics for the effort.

Research

- In August, staff presented the four eelgrass research projects being conducted by Cal Poly faculty. All four projects are still ongoing and preliminary results are anticipated in the summer.

10. **INFORMATION:** Update on State of the Bay Events

The Estuary Program staff are about to send the 2017 State of the Bay Report to the printer. The publication presents answers to nine questions regarding the health of the bay and watershed. The report will be released in March.

Planning is underway for the triennial State of the Bay events, which will occur primarily in April of this year. The calendar includes:

- **April 1:** A presentation of environmental report card results on water quality, bacteria, and shellfish farming accompanied by launch of an estuary-themed beer brewed by Libertine, at their Morro Bay location.
- **April 8:** A bay-friendly gardening event in partnership with SLO Botanical Gardens.
- **April 14:** Art show and open house in partnership with the Gallery at Marina Square.
- **April 15:** Saturday Scientist presentation on macroinvertebrates in conjunction with the Morro Bay Natural History Museum.
- **April 18:** Presentation of environmental report card results on eelgrass, sediment, and climate change as part of the Science After Dark series, in San Luis Obispo.
- **April 22:** Earth Day paddle event, which is a day to get people out on the water.
- **April 27:** Presentation of data on Morro Bay and Pacific flyway birds by Andrea Jones of California Audubon and steelhead research by Ann-Marie Osterback of NOAA, at the Morro Bay Natural History Museum.
- **Throughout April:** Poetry contest.
- **May 20:** DogFest, a dog-themed event with a clean water message.

11. Adjourn to next meeting of May 10, 2017 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments:

1. November 2016 EC meeting minutes
2. Workplan FY2017
3. Restoration Five-Year Plan: 2018 to 2022
4. Draft Executive Committee Bylaws Update
5. Eelgrass map