



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
Estuary Program offices, Morro Bay, CA

November 8, 2017
4:00 pm

Minutes

Attendees: Marshall Ochylski, *Los Osos CSD*; Jennifer Epp, *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*; Tim Duff (on the phone), *CA Coastal Conservancy*; Trudy O'Brien, *Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization*; Joel Neel, *Bay Foundation*; Ethan Bell, *Stillwater Sciences*; Crow White, *Cal Poly*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- Lexie provided some updates from the Implementation Committee, in the absence of Becka Kelly. Audubon reported that the new no-pet policy at Sweet Springs seems to be going well and that they are excited for the East Sweet Springs opening on November 12 at 2pm. Los Osos residents continue to share concerns about wild pigs in the salt marsh, and the Estuary Program is coordinating with a number of partners to better understand the impacts and management options. The Harbor Department received a \$25,000 grant for derelict boat removal but will likely need more funds to address the issue. The Land Conservancy is working on two additional easements in our watershed, besides the one addressed later in the agenda.
- Jennifer Epp – Two recent Water Board tours in the watershed, hosted by the Estuary Program, were very successful and received a lot of positive feedback.
- Ethan Bell – Stillwater Sciences coordinated recent pikeminnow removal efforts under contract with the Estuary Program and are looking to expand the effort in the future. Camp SLO is preparing a steelhead management plan with participation from a number of local partners.
- Trudy O'Brien – Bay Shrimp are now being landed in Morro Bay (100,000 pounds this season so far), as is market squid. Local fishermen continue to talk with Trident about the wind farm project and possible mitigation for fishermen. Trudy shared the story of the *Pamela Rose's* recent tragedy at sea with the loss of one crew member due to a falling mast.
- Suzanne Marr – The Region 9 manager that oversees EPA staff working on NEPs is now Gail Louis. Gail is interested in doing a site visit here in Morro Bay.
- Crow White – Crow is representing Cal Poly as the alternate on the EC for Kristin Hardy. He announced Dean Wendt's new position as Dean of College of Science and Math and the subsequent internal search for a new Director of the Center for Coastal Marine Sciences and a new Dean of Research. The acting Dean of Research is Chris Kitts. Crow is participating in the Ocean Tipping Points project, gathering long-term monitoring and research data to try to predict changes in coastal and ocean environments.
- Tim Duff – The restoration plan for the Morrissey property should be done by the end of the year. One issue still outstanding is access to a well site on the property that is used by neighboring land owners. State Coastal Conservancy is hoping to fund permitting and restoration in future years (through 2020).
- Marshall Ochylski – 224 homes are still needing to connect to the Los Osos sewer. The Broderson injection wells are online and operating, but the upper aquifer is showing no improvement from them due to the lower than expected flows. The plant is generating about half the treated water expected, possibly due to water conservation measures.

2. Public Comment – None presented.

3. Agenda Revisions – None presented.

4. ACTION: Consider Approval of August 23, 2017 EC minutes

Vote: Joel Neel motioned to approve, Ethan Bell seconded. Unanimous in favor.

5. ACTION: Recommendations on Community Grant Application (see attached)

The EC considered the two Community Grant applications submitted for the fall round.

Project: Curriculum for Elementary-Age Morro Bay Watershed Stewardship
Applicant: Sarah Bryant

Request: \$4,800
Matching Funds: \$2,000
Total Budget: \$6,800

The proposed project involves the development of watershed curriculum for two grade levels, development of a material list, and purchase of two materials kits. The Bay Foundation, the E&O Working Group, and the Implementation Committee agreed with the goal of the project, but were concerned about implementation of the effort based on the relatively limited reach of the project and lack of specificity on the final product.

Project: Education for Eradication of Sahara Mustard and Spiny Three-corner Jack
Applicant: Celebrate Los Osos

Request: \$2,108
Matching Funds: \$785
Total Budget: \$2,893

The proposed project submitted by Celebrate Los Osos requests funding for the printing and mailing of flyers, posters, and counter top cards. The materials would educate the public on invasive species and provide information about two specific invasive plants, the Sahara mustard and the spiny three-corner jack. Staff, the E&O Working Group, and the IC recommended funding the project, as the project was seen as having value as an educational effort, rather than as a restoration project.

Votes: First vote for Curriculum grant – Joel Neel motioned to deny funding and provide feedback to the applicant about improving the project for a future application. Ethan Bell seconded. Unanimous in favor. Second vote for Invasive Species Education grant – Joel Neel motioned to approve, Ethan Bell seconded. Unanimous in favor.

6. ACTION: Conservation Easement Project Funding Approval – See attachments

In May 2012, the Bay Foundation and Executive Committee approved a 5-year spending plan for the Restoration Fund that includes \$148,000 allocated to land conservation efforts. Estuary Program staff worked closely with the Land Conservancy to support conservation easements in the watershed during this time period. Due to delays in match funding from the Department of Defense (through Camp SLO) and landowner availability, no conservation easements that required outside funding were completed before the end of FY17. However, the Land Conservancy is now close to completing a deal for a 133-acre conservation easement in Los Osos Valley that has up to \$660,000 secured from Department of Defense funding and requires \$140,000 in match. The easement is in a high priority area of the watershed for land conservation and preserves approximately 66 acres of oak woodland and other native habitat. The easement allows the current agricultural footprint to continue and reserves the right for one homestead to be developed.

Estuary Program staff recommends that the funding request is approved and funded using the FY17 allocation so that the FY18-22 Restoration Fund allocation can be preserved for the rest of the planning period.

Vote: Joel Neel motioned to approve the allocation of \$140,000 of FY17 Restoration Fund money to support the easement, Crow White seconded. Unanimous in favor.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Presentation of EPA Semi-annual Report – See attachments

Staff presented the budget summary from the semi-annual report covering the period of April 1 through September 30, 2017.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Program Evaluation Action Item Update – See attachments

In 2016, the EC requested periodic updates on the items identified in the Program Evaluation (PE) letter from EPA's review in 2015. Staff presented an update through the fall of 2017 on the status of the actions.

9. **DISCUSSION:** Program Updates

CCMP Update: Our FY18 Workplan contains a new task to assess the EPA guidance as well as the current version of the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) to determine areas to expand or update. We will be hiring an Environmental Planning intern to assist with the process. We are currently advertising the position with Cal Poly's City & Regional Planning Department, and the position will run throughout Winter quarter.

Morro Bay Science Explorations Series: The first in a series of three scientific talk events took place on October 12. Carolyn Geharty of the Estuary Program, Erin Aiello of Cal Poly, and local biologist John Roser presented data related to eelgrass and the biota that depend on it. The event drew over 40 attendees. Please mark your calendars for our event on February 8 addressing climate change. Dr. Karen Thorne of the USGS will talk about her work studying sea level rise impacts on tidal marshes, and Dr. Michael Boswell will talk about climate adaptation management. At our June 7 talk, the topic will be otters.

10. Adjourn to next meeting of February 14, 2018 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments to original staff report:

- Minutes from August 23, 2017 meeting
- Community Program grant applications
- Description and maps for conservation easement
- Semi-annual report
- Program Evaluation Letter Update