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**Staff Report**

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1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of August 23, 2017 EC minutes
5. **ACTION:** Recommendations on Community Grant Application (see attached)

For the fall round of Community Grant application review, the Estuary Program received two grant applications. In both cases, staff were contacted prior to the application deadline and worked with the applicants to tailor the project to meet the CCMP goals and confirm to the guidelines of the Community Grant program.

From Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, \$1,500 in Community Grant funding remains, as it was not awarded during that fiscal year. With the start of the FY18 grant cycle, the \$10,000 in funds for the year are now available for award. The total amount to potentially be awarded in FY18 is \$11,500.

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

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

**Summary:** Sarah Bryant, a local parent, identified a need for teaching materials specific to watershed processes in the Morro Bay area. For her proposed project, she would develop curriculum that would address this need, with a focus on the issue of sedimentation. The deliverables would include curriculum materials that contain directions, materials lists, and assessment tools. The materials would meet the current science educational standards. The deliverables would also include two kits of supplies for use in the community, as well as photos of students engaged in the activities. Bryant would test the materials at her children's school (Family Partnership Charter School Montessori Center in Morro Bay), conduct revisions, and test them again in her children's summer camp (Left Coast Art Studio Summer Camp). As part of the grant, 65 children would be reached. The curriculum and two kits would be available to any interested educators for use in local schools, by homeschool groups, etc.

The grant would help cover labor, printing, and the cost of materials for the two kits. The project includes donated time by Bryant and teachers at FPCS MB as well as grant funds from the NOAA Ocean Guardian School program and the Whole Kids Foundation (affiliated with Whole Foods Market).

**Recommendation:** While staff and the E&O Working Group were supportive of the concept of the project, there were serious concerns about implementation of the effort. Based on the relatively limited reach of the project and the lack of specificity on the final product, staff and the E&O Working Group

do not recommend funding this request as submitted. Staff saw three potential areas that, if addressed, could mean that staff might recommend funding the project. Those areas are: 1) development of curriculum for one grade level rather than two, 2) more detailed description of what exactly will be developed (i.e., number of lessons, timeframe they would cover, etc.), and 3) development and implementation of a distribution and training plan to get the curriculum out to local schools so that the project has a broader reach.

**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

**Summary:** Celebrate Los Osos (CLO) proposed a project to inform and educate local residents and property owners about two invasive species, the Sahara mustard and spiny three-corner jack. The project involves the design, printing, and mailing of 6,500 postcards for direct mailing to residents and absent property owners and 2,760 flyers to be inserted into the water bills of the LOCS Water Company. The project includes printing of 200 informational posters and informational countertop cards, to be distributed to local businesses. CLO will conduct observations in the early summer to determine if their message has been heeded.

**Recommendation:** Staff and the E&O Working Group feel that the project supports the CCMP Action Plan addressing invasive species control as well as the priority issue of preserving biodiversity. We feel the project has value as an educational piece on invasive plants, rather than for the potential impact as a restoration effort. Staff and the E&O Working Group recommend funding the application at the requested amount.

**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.

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

Twice a year, the Estuary Program submits a semi-annual report to EPA, which provides the program status on the budget and the tasks laid out in our workplan. The time period for the report is the second half of FY17 (April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017).

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

As previously discussed in the EC, the committee would like to check in periodically regarding the status of items identified in the Program Evaluation (PE) letter from EPA's review in 2015. The letter identifies things for us to work on in the next five years. Our plan is to check in annually with a brief status on these items. We did so in November 2016 and have an updated write up for the EC. Please see the attached memo.

**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 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. Note the later than usual date. The IC meeting had to be re-scheduled so that the Bay Foundation meeting would occur first, resulting in some dates that differ from our typical meeting calendar.

**Attachments:**

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