



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

February 13, 2019
4:00 pm

Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of November 14, 2018 Executive Committee (EC) minutes
5. **ACTION:** Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Implementation Funding Request – See attachment

The Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve implementation phase has been funded through California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) grant funding. (Additional funding \$50,000 was received from EPA for pre-project permitting and assessment costs.) Staff is requesting an allocation of \$100,000 from the Restoration Fund to meet the match obligations of both grants and secure a full budget for the project. Current grant funding totals \$1,469,018. It is anticipated that Restoration Fund money will support engineering oversight of the implementation, contractor upgrades to well improvements including capping of a well and upgrading another well for plant irrigation, possible plant monitoring for California Conservation Corps restoration plantings, and contingency funds for budget changes.

Funding Sources:

Funding Source	Amount
CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program	\$1,069,018
State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) Grant	\$400,000
EPA Climate Ready Estuaries Grant (permitting funding only)	\$50,000
Proposed MBNEP Restoration Fund	\$100,000
Total	\$1,619,018.00

Summary Budget by Category:

Budget Category	Total Costs	Funding Source
Permits	\$20,000	EPA
Bidding	\$7,705	MBNEP
Monitoring	\$21,270	CDFW
	\$69,830	SCC
	\$30,000	EPA
General Contractor	\$992,970	CDFW
	\$47,295	MBNEP
MBNEP Staff Time Covered by non-EPA Grants	\$54,778	FRGP
Revegetation Contractor	\$327,322	SCC
	\$5,000	MBNEP
Contingency	\$40,000	MBNEP
	\$2,848	SCC
Total Budget	\$1,619,018	

The project will implement a restoration project on 320 acres below Hollister Peak along Chorro Creek that is owned by CDFW. The overall purpose of the project is to restore and enhance floodplain connectivity and riparian vegetation for steelhead and other wildlife/aquatic species, while reducing sediment loading to the Morro Bay estuary.

6. DISCUSSION: FY2020 Workplan Input – See attachments

As staff begins to create the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Workplan, we are soliciting input from the EC, Bay Foundation, and Technical Advisory Committees to help us prioritize our work. To help accomplish this, we created a survey and sent it out to committee members and project partners. We are currently compiling the results and will share them at the meeting. To assist the discussion, attached are a list of proposed FY2020 Workplan tasks and the FY2019 Workplan for reference.

7. DISCUSSION: FY2018 to 2022 Restoration Fund Spending Summary – See attachment

In February 2017, the Bay Foundation and Executive Committee approved a five-year spending plan for the Restoration Fund for \$600,000. In FY2018, \$51,480 was allocated to projects. The total amounts and percent of overall allocation was as follows:

- Community Projects: \$10,000 (32% of five-year total)
- Studies and Monitoring: \$41,480 (37% of five-year total)
- Implementation: \$0 (0% of five-year total)
- Land Conservation: \$0 (0% of five-year total)

Other Restoration Fund spending included the annual \$10,000 allocation in the EPA workplan, of which \$2,639 was spent, and \$140,000 from the FY2012 to 2017 spending plan for the Kandarian Farms conservation easement.

8. DISCUSSION: Program Highlights

- **Technical Advisory Committees:** Estuary Program staff has reached out to TAC members and solicited their input to support our program. Committee members and project partners with expertise in

E&O and in specific technical areas have been called upon to provide input on Community Project applications. We have also begun coordinating with these partners as we develop our 2020 State of the Bay Report.

- **Eelgrass Restoration:** Staff has conducted monitoring of the 2017 and 2018 restoration plots, which continue to do well. Planning is underway for planting efforts in February and March of 2019, which are on the same scale as the 2018 effort. The effort is funded by a grant from the CDFW Duck Stamp Grant Program.
 - **Sea Grant Project:** The Estuary Program is a partner with Cal Poly on a Sea Grant project studying bay hydrodynamics and circulation and how these impacted the eelgrass decline. Dr. Ryan Walter of the Cal Poly Physics Department deployed water quality sensors throughout the bay during the summer of 2018 and again this winter. During the month-long deployment of bay equipment from January to February, the Estuary Program is monitoring creek sediment levels to look at how sediment transport during storms impacts bay water quality. We are happy to report that the January 15 to 17 storm delivered 1.82 inches of rainfall, enough to raise the Chorro Creek stage height to 11.5 feet, nearly overtopping the bridge. These types of rainfall events are rare, and we feel very fortunate that one of these occurred during the time of the bay sensor deployment. Results from the study are expected early in 2020.
 - **E&O Updates:** Our Nature Center has some new and exciting features. A few outdated exhibits near the windows have been removed and replaced with easy-to-use viewing scopes and a large interpretive panel explaining wildlife you might see out the window. Additionally, the program was awarded a \$40,000 grant over three years from the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust to support the Mutts for the Bay program, including direct support of dispensers as well as education and outreach efforts.
9. Adjourn to next meeting of May 8, 2019 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments:

- Minutes from November 14, 2018 EC meeting
- FY2019 Workplan
- Proposed FY2020 Workplan Task List
- Restoration Funding Spending Plan (approved August 2017)