



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

May 8, 2019
4:00 pm

Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of February 13, 2019 Executive Committee (EC) minutes
5. **ACTION:** Recommend approval of Fiscal Year 2020 Workplan (see attached)

The principal funding source for the Estuary Program operations is the annual EPA grant. For Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), current budget projections indicate level funding at \$600,000, in addition to a \$25,000 award to support ocean acidification research for a total of \$625,000 for FY20. We apply annually in the spring for the next fiscal year's funding. As part of the application, we are required to prepare a proposed Workplan that addresses the programmatic needs of the Estuary Program while also complying with EPA guidelines for such funding. Staff has developed a Workplan that largely continues our major ongoing tasks through the next fiscal year. New tasks include preparing for the EPA Program Evaluation process which will happen in 2020, as well as the State Park Marina Parking Lot project to address stormwater runoff to the estuary.

Staff recommends that the EC approve the proposed Workplan.

6. **ACTION:** Recommendations on Community Project Applications (see attached)

There is one Community Project application this round for our consideration. It is an effort to design and print a translation of an existing kids' activity book into Spanish. This book shares information on MPAs and is currently available in print and online in English. This application was reviewed by staff and members of the E&O Technical Working Group.

In the second round of awards for FY18, \$700 of the funding for FY19 was awarded to Dr. Perrine for his wildlife camera project. In the first round of funding for FY19, we awarded \$4,998 to Cuesta College for eelgrass research and \$450 to the SLO MPA Collaborative for ROV accessories. This means that a total of \$6,148 has been awarded to date, leaving a remainder of \$3,852 available to award in this round of funding.

Project: MPA Children's Activity Booklets in Spanish
Applicant: MPA Collaborative – San Luis Obispo District

Request: \$3,800 over one-year
Matching Funds: \$3,417
Total Budget: \$7,217

Summary: This proposed project would build upon the recently completed kids activity booklet created by the SLO MPA Collaborative, which involved the creation of content (which the Estuary Program

helped review), the graphic design, and the printing of the booklet. This work was conducted with a \$15,000 grant from Coastal Quest which was managed by the Estuary Program. A portion of the grant was used to translate the book into Spanish. In order to make this translated version available, the layout must be adjusted and then the book can be printed and shared online.

The proposed project has the following budget components:

- Cost for graphic design to format the translated text into the document
- Cost for printing and taxes

This application was reviewed by members of the E&O Working Group who supported the proposed project without any changes.

Recommendation: Staff supports funding for this project as proposed, as it will provide us with valuable educational materials for reaching a population that we not currently serving effectively.

7. DISCUSSION: Presentation of Semi-annual Report (see attached)

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. This report covers our work for the first half of FY19, which is from October 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019. The report summarizes the budget status and Workplan task progress. We have expended 70% of our current 320 grant that started in FY17.

8. DISCUSSION: Program Evaluation Letter Update (see attached)

The EC requested periodic updates on the status of the corrective actions listed in the Program Evaluation letter completed in early 2016. Estuary Program staff have made progress in multiple areas, as described in the attached document. Staff will provide an update at the November 2019 EC meeting.

9. DISCUSSION: Program Highlights

- **Ocean Acidification Funding:** EPA had additional funding available for NEPs to support projects related to nutrients in FY20. This included projects involving ocean acidification (OA). Dr. Emily Bockmon of Cal Poly's Chemistry Department has been conducting studies of pH and carbonate chemistry in Morro Bay over the past year, and we partnered with her to apply for \$25,000 to support the purchase of OA equipment. We were awarded \$25,000 for this equipment purchase of two pH sensors. We are working with Dr. Bockmon to update our QAPP and Workplan to include this new monitoring effort. Monitoring will occur throughout FY20, with a report to be completed at the end of the year.
- **Eelgrass Updates:** The Estuary Program successfully completed eelgrass transplanting in February and March. Initial monitoring indicated that the February transplants were suffering, and this was thought to be due to the stormy weather which followed the transplanting work. High winds and rains would have contributed to higher turbidity, which could have shaded out the new transplants. Additional monitoring of the transplants will continue to track their progress. Planning is underway to apply for the permit to support transplanting efforts in 2020. A bathymetry survey is slated for the spring. NOAA is contributing \$25,000 to the effort to fund the installation of tide stations, which allows for the calculation of tidal prism for comparison to historical measurements.
- **Microplastics Monitoring:** The Estuary Program developed curriculum, an outdoor collection activity, and lab analysis to monitor for microplastics on Coleman Beach. We partnered with the Morro Bay High School (MBHS) freshman science teachers so that all 180 freshmen could participate. We plan to

continue this monitoring each year with MBHS students, allowing for continued science education opportunities and development of a long-running data set.

- **Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Updates:** The request for proposals was issued to find a construction firm to conduct the CCER construction. The work is slated to start July 1. Precision Construction, a local firm, has been hired to assist with bid review and contractor selection. The Estuary Program also has a contract secured with ESA for engineering support. All permits and surveys have been completed for the project.

10. Adjourn to next meeting of August 14, 2019 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments:

- Minutes from February 13, 2019 EC meeting
- Community Projects Application
- FY20 Workplan
- FY19 Semi-annual report
- Program Evaluation Status Report