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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Planning Process	1
Background	4
Watershed at a Glance	4
Demographics	4
Economy	5
The Morro Bay National Estuary Program	5
Programs and Actions	7
EO-1 Public Education and Outreach	7
Communications, Publications, and Presentations	7
Mutts for the Bay	9
Collaborative/Partner Efforts	9
EO-2 State of the Bay	10
EO-3 Nature Center and Related Displays	11
EO-4 Formal Education Programs	12
Program Style Guide	14
Mission and Tagline	14
Logos and Branding	14
Fonts and Styles	14
Appendix I	15
Morro Bay National Estuary Program Communication Priorities Survey	15
Appendix II	18
Morro Bay National Estuary Program Communication Priorities Survey Results	18
Appendix III	24
Conservation Planning Initiative Technical Advisory Committee Survey Results	24



Introduction

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program (Estuary Program) works to protect and preserve the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed. The program works under a management planned called the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), which outlines the Priority Issues for the estuary and watershed. It also outlines the program's goals and identifies 58 Action Plans to address these Priority Issues. The program's original CCMP was finalized in 2001. It was revised in 2012 with extensive input from the community and project partners to ensure that the most relevant goals, actions, and issues were the focus of the organization's work moving forward. The CCMP will be updated again in 2020.

The Communications Plan is a supplement to the 2020 Update of the CCMP for the Estuary Program. This strategic communications plan provides a blueprint for staff to effectively communicate the Estuary Program mission and organization priorities both internally and externally. The information in this Communications Plan is further intended to guide public engagement and education initiatives for the Estuary Program for the 2020-2025 timeframe and beyond.

This document presents a framework to assist Estuary Program staff and partners in allocating Program resources effectively and efficiently. Implementation should be done in the form of Morro Bay National Estuary Program annual work plans, which identify staff and funding needs associated with meeting the Estuary Program's long-term goals and objectives.

MORRO BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

Morro Bay National Estuary Program works to protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary for people and wildlife. The Estuary Program is a collaborative, non-regulatory, nonprofit organization that brings together citizens, local governments, non-profit organizations, state and federal agencies, and landowners to support a healthy environment and vibrant local communities.

Planning Process

The plan incorporates feedback from key public outreach partners, volunteers, and citizens interested in the health of the Morro Bay estuary and surrounding lands gathered through an online Communications Priorities survey in May - June 2019 as well as additional feedback from Estuary Program advisory committees. This survey questions are found in Appendix I and survey results in Appendix II at the end of the document. The results identify priority communications, education, and outreach needs. They also indicate emerging issues and attitudes about these issues to leverage moving forward. Overall, the Actions identified in this document reflect MBNEP's priorities from the 2020-2025 period and beyond.

The first important consideration in the solicitation of internal and external feedback for the Communications Plan is the demographic profile of the watershed and Estuary Program partners. The fact that more than 75% of survey respondents are 55 years and older indicates that the Estuary Program could increase efforts to reach people in younger demographics through communication, education, and outreach activities.



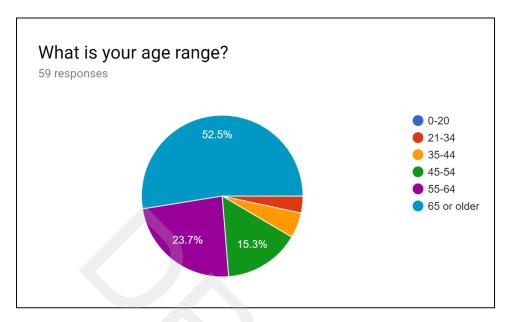


FIGURE 1 - DEMOGRAPHICS

Another significant demographic figure highlighted by the Communication Priorities survey are the home City and County of respondents. An overwhelming majority of respondents are from San Luis Obispo County, with the most respondents coming specifically from the City of Morro Bay, the community of Los Osos, and the community of Cayucos. While all of these communities are communities in which the Estuary Program focuses efforts due to their proximity to the Bay and watershed, other respondents hail from all parts of the state of California, such as Southern California, the Central Valley, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Other quantifiable metrics from the Communications Priorities Survey include relationship with the Estuary Program and how program partners and local citizens are informed about the Bay and Estuary Program activities. 81.4% of respondents highlighted email and other forms of digital communication tools as the primary ways to learn about Estuary Program activities and events. This illustrates the strength of digital and electronic media for communication activities and reach currently. Nonetheless, respondents agree with the value of community events such as the triennial State of the Bay events and other local festivals. This finding suggests that the Estuary Program can focus on cultivating innovative partnerships with local business, community organizations, and other organizations to further communication goals.

Participants in the Communication Priorities Survey also ranked what they felt were the biggest issues affecting the health of Morro Bay and surrounding lands. These issues were generated from those priority issues outlined in the CCMP. The top three responses to the question of the biggest issues affecting the health of Morro Bay and surrounding lands include impacts from stormwater runoff, the loss of native plant and animal species, and increased sedimentation in the Estuary. The Communications Priorities Survey also gauged education priorities in terms of topics that should be taught in the classroom, with the top three choices being climate change, impacts from stormwater runoff, and a tie between habitat loss and ensuring environmentally balanced uses in the Bay and surrounding lands.



Along with the Communications Priorities Survey, input and emerging directions were also derived from the Estuary Program Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) survey generated during the Conservation Planning Initiative (CPI) process. Participants in the TAC consist of partners and professionals from the scientific community with whom the Estuary Program collaborates with. As such, the TAC survey gauged the relative importance of various watershed issues and the role the MBNEP can play in partnering in conservation, restoration, and research activities.

Accelerated sediment should remain a top priority of concerns, as excessive sediment impacts multiple habitats and species in different systems across the watershed and the estuary. Similarly, when asked which 3-5 watershed priorities are good fits for the MBNEP to focus on in the next 5-10 years, the TAC indicated reduced sedimentation, land conservation and development, and increased eelgrass habitat as their three top priorities. In addition to these priorities, the TAC also indicated that the MBNEP should work to increase its public profile, reputation, and credibility by leveraging relationships with civic groups, local nonprofits, and other governmental agencies. Furthermore, the TAC collectively agreed that sea level rise impacts should focus efforts on understanding the impacts of sea level rise as a whole and how it impacts habitat rather than direct impact to communities, a role best left to local Planning departments. Overall, the results from the TAC Survey, especially in terms of priority issues with which the MBNEP should focus efforts upon, are similar to the results and sentiments identified in the public Communications Priorities Survey distributed to the general public and organizational partners.

Given these results from the Communications Priorities survey, the Estuary Program will continue to educate and motivate both local residents and visitors to continue to be good stewards of the Bay and surrounding lands through comprehensive communication initiatives, as well as innovative partnerships with diverse stakeholders. Coupled with feedback from Estuary Program advisory committees and annual work plans, the Communications Plan will identify future actions for communications, education, and outreach activities. Future Actions are identified in the 'Programs and Actions' section of this Communications Plan.

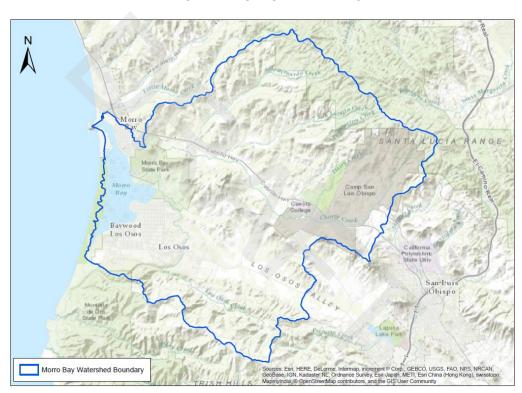


Background

Watershed at a Glance

The Morro Bay watershed, approximately 76.65 square miles in size, is located within the County of San Luis Obispo and further comprises the City of Morro Bay and the Community of Los Osos. The Morro Bay estuary environment encompasses the lower reaches of Chorro and Los Osos creeks, a wide range of wetlands, salt and freshwater marshes, intertidal mud flats, eelgrass beds, and other subtidal habitats. Given this wide range of habitat found within and around the Morro Bay estuary, the estuary hosts one of the most significant and least disturbed wetland systems on the central and southern California Coast.

All of the Estuary Program's monitoring, conservation, restoration, and education efforts are focused primarily in the Morro Bay Estuary and its watershed, which is depicted in Map 1 below.



MAP 1 - MAP OF THE MORRO BAY WATERSHED

Demographics

The two most populated jurisdictions in the Morro Bay watershed include the community of Los Osos and the City of Morro Bay. Unincorporated within the County of San Luis Obispo, Los Osos is a small coastal town with a population of about 15,700 people. There is a significantly smaller but growing youth population in Los Osos by comparison. Similarly, Morro Bay is a small seaside town and home to people of all ages and a variety of demographic groups. The population in Morro Bay after the 2015 census was 10,640, with the predominant age group consisting of residents of the age of 65 or older (American Community Survey, 2015). There is a significantly smaller youth population in Morro Bay by comparison. Nonetheless, although there is a substantial elderly population in the community, the working age and younger populations have remained constant and continue to support the local economy in Morro Bay as well as other community needs.



Economy

Much of the local economy in Morro Bay is tourism and retail focused. Morro Bay's beaches, parks, museums, galleries, and special events attract people from throughout the Central Coast and the State of California as a whole, and are a strong contributor to the local economy. The estuary provides significant tourism and recreation benefits for the local community. Tourism generated over \$175M in sales tax revenues and employed more than 66,060 in Santa Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Mateo Counties in 2005. Paddle sports, birding, boating, recreational fishing, and photography attract tourists, making preservation of a healthy estuary essential to the long-term financial stability of the region.

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program works to protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary for people and wildlife. The Estuary Program is a nonprofit, collaborative, non-regulatory organization that brings together citizens, local governments, non-profit organizations, state and federal agencies, and landowners to support a healthy environment and vibrant local communities.

Strengths of the Program include:

- A science-based approach to identifying and addressing threats to the Morro Bay estuary
- A wide-angle and holistic view of the entire Bay watershed
- A foundation built on collaboration and engagement that fosters trust among diverse stakeholders and engages partner entities in all levels of the organization.
- As an independent nonprofit that engages in voluntary approaches to conservation and restoration, the Estuary Program is well positioned to work with a wide variety of stakeholders, sectors, and landowners.

Major challenges facing the Program include:

- Balancing the needs and communication preferences of a wide-ranging set of audiences with limited capacity and funding.
- The difficulty of estimating budget needs for programming from year to year, due to limited funding availability and changing costs of goods and services.
- Staying up-to-date with our partners' work in order to build on, rather than duplicate, their efforts to ensure that all Estuary Program goals are being addressed in the watershed.

The Estuary Program also maintains an active Monitoring Program. The data collected by the Estuary Program and project partners allow us to track long-term ambient conditions and to assess the effectiveness of implementation efforts. The Monitoring Program includes a strong volunteer monitoring component. By facilitating citizen science, the Estuary Program increases stewardship while collecting valuable data to guide our restoration and education work.

Facts about the Volunteer Program

- Morro Bay National Estuary Program enlists the help of volunteers to monitor water quality, conduct habitat restoration projects, support the Mutt Mitt program, and educate the public about ways to conserve life and habitats in the estuary and watershed.
- From 2002 2012, 500+ volunteers logged 13,369 volunteer hours. During this time, volunteers:
- Collected 2,225 creek water quality samples
- Collected and analyzed 2,477 bacteria samples



- Collected 219 marine plankton samples from the bay
- Assessed 4,900 feet of creek habitat for macroinvertebrates and habitat quality
- Monitored eelgrass shoot density of 200 square meters of bay habitat
- Refilled and monitored 38 Mutt Mitts dispensers throughout Morro Bay

Additional Facts about Morro Bay and the Morro Bay Watershed

- Approximately 75 square miles (48,000 acres) of watershed drains into roughly 3.6 square miles (2,300 acres) of bay.
- Morro Bay hosts an incredibly diverse array of unique, fragile, or rare habitats, which are home to nearly two dozen threatened, and endangered species including many that only exist in the vicinity of the Morro Bay watershed.
- Three marine mammal species live and raise their young in Morro Bay. These include Southern sea otters, harbor seals, and California sea lions.
- Morro Bay is a stop on the Pacific Flyway, the major migration path for birds on the West Coast.
- The Audubon Society's annual count regularly identifies more than 200 species of birds.
- Morro Bay is considered the most significant wetland system on the Central Coast of California.

Morro Bay's is one of a handful of estuaries across California with water that is clean enough to support active oyster farming.



Programs and Actions

This Communications Plan identifies the Action Plans in the CCMP that supports each education and outreach activity. Current programs and FY 2018-2020 budget allocations as well as future actions include:

EO-1 Public Education and Outreach

Communications, Publications, and Presentations

Goals and Objectives: Communicate with a variety of audiences using presentations, printed materials, online presence, social media, and other venues.

Target Audience: A variety of audiences including residents, tourists, interested citizens, and stakeholders at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.

Description of Activities: The Estuary Program's Education and Outreach program conducts regular communication with a variety of audiences. Several channels are employed to reach these audiences with meaningful information to educate the public about the program's efforts. These efforts include the following:

- Website The Estuary Program website (<u>www.mbnep.org</u>) will be updated with content on a regular basis.
- Blog –The Estuary Program will continue the Estuary Program blog. Posts are made about once a week and can be viewed on the website or by subscription. They are also shared via social media.
- Social Media The Estuary Program utilizes Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter extensively; these have proven to be important tools to communicate with the community. Photos and status updates are posted to the Facebook page multiple times a week (https://www.facebook.com/mbestuary). Posts are strategic and integrated with messages posted on our website and in the blog. Messages cover a variety of topics, such as project and fieldwork highlights, volunteer opportunities, community events, presentations given by Estuary Program staff, and other information related to the Estuary Program mission. Currently, the Estuary Program has more than 1,400 Facebook fans, 1,600 Instagram followers, and more than 560 Twitter followers. In FY19, the Estuary Program will continue to increase two-way communication using social media tools.
- Annual Report The annual report summarizes the reach and impact made by the Estuary Program across all programs (Education and Outreach, Restoration and Conservation, and Research and Monitoring). The report is created annually and is available online and in limited print.
- **Speaking and Exhibit Engagements** Estuary Program staff present watershed and estuarine information for interested groups throughout the area.
- News Releases News releases will be distributed for newsworthy activities or milestones, such as the State of the Bay, annual bioassessment monitoring, and others. Key messages will be drafted and incorporated into the news releases. These key messages will be integrated to other communication channels.
- Brochures Brochures about the Estuary Program, volunteer opportunities, and formal educational opportunities will be distributed at the Estuary Nature Center,



community events, and presentations in which Estuary Program staff participate. They will also be made available online when possible.

Implementers and Their Roles: Partners in Estuary Program communication efforts include the city of Morro Bay, the county of San Luis Obispo, the Morro Bay Natural History Museum, State Parks, and others. These partners provide resources and expertise, promote Estuary Program events, and share our materials and message with the public.

Key Deliverables: A summary of work conducted for this item will be included in the semi-annual report.

Timeframe and Estimated Milestones: The Estuary Program maintains a social media and blog schedule that addresses current events and other topics and is updated in real time.

Estimated Budget: \$4,100 for design and printing of annual report, \$1,400 for website maintenance, hosting and design, \$2,000 for brochure and other outreach material printing. Total: \$7,500.

Long-term Outcomes: Residents and visitors better understand their roles as stewards of the Morro Bay estuary. They practice behaviors that help keep our waters clean.

CWA Core Programs the Project Supports: Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Programs.

Future Actions:

- 1. Strategically utilize digital engagement based on Google analytics and jetpack statistics for referring websites, web searches, etc.
 - 1.1. Continue using communication methods that survey respondents noted as the most effective: email, website, word of mouth (encourage board and committee members to reach out), fourth place was a tie between community calendars (both digital and print), blog, and combined social media platforms.
- 2. Continue to create communications, education, and outreach content that addresses the Estuary Program's priority issues, with emphasis on the issues that survey respondents wanted to know more about: 1. Loss of habitat, 2. Tie between: Loss of native plants and animals, and 3. tie between conflicts between impacts of uses and threats to clean water
- Along with the Estuary Program's priority issues, continue to create communications, education, and outreach content that addresses the relationships and connections that conservation and restoration actions will have on Estuary and Watershed health and longevity.
- Continue hosting Morro Bay Science Explorations with the Estuary Program to inform the
 public about science issues and current research that are relevant to the health of the
 Morro Bay estuary and watershed.
- 5. Expand opportunities for citizen participation in communication, education, and outreach programs.
- 6. Expand opportunities for citizen participation in restoration, conservation, and monitoring activities with the Estuary Program and partner organizations.
- 7. Increase public awareness of the Estuary Program brand and activities.



8. Increase public profile, reputation, and credibility by leveraging relationships with civic groups, local non-profits, and other governmental agencies.

Mutts for the Bay

Goals and Objectives: Support pet waste management program to prevent bacterial contamination in the bay.

Target Audience: Local dog owners, dog-friendly hotel staff, tourists who visit Morro Bay with their dogs, youth who have dogs at home or who might own dogs in the future.

Description of Activities: The Estuary Program has managed a Mutts for the Bay Program since 2008. The effort involves accepting donations, installing dispensers, coordinating volunteers, and working with partners to install and maintain pet waste bag dispensers throughout the watershed. Use of the bags prevents bacteria from pet waste from reaching the estuary, where shellfish farms and recreational bay users require clean water.

Implementers and Their Roles: Partners include the city of Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo County, the two entities responsible for stormwater management efforts in the urban areas surrounding the estuary. A portion of the effort involves public education to share a clean water message and encourage responsible pet owner behavior.

Key Deliverables: Program statistics and milestones will be provided in the semi-annual reports.

Timeframe and Estimated Milestones: Program statistics will be ongoing.

Estimated Budget: Staff time and applying for funding as opportunities become available.

Long-term Outcomes: Responsible behavior by pet owners reduces bacterial loading to the estuary, protecting beneficial uses such as shellfish farming and recreation.

CWA Core Programs the Project Supports: Addressing diffuse, nonpoint sources of pollution. Protecting wetlands. Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Program.

Future Actions:

- 1. Continue providing free dog waste bags to the public at dispensers throughout the watershed.
- 2. Increase the number of dispensers in the watershed if needed, as indicated by public request and the results of surveys of dog waste at different locations.
- 3. Create new opportunities for community engagement and education based on the Mutts for the Bay program.

Collaborative/Partner Efforts

Goals and Objectives: Support outreach projects in the community that further the Management Plan goals.



Target Audience: Partners include California State Parks through their SeaLife Stewards program, the Seabird Protection Network, the City of Morro Bay's Harbor Department, local recreational business owners, and other organizations as appropriate.

Description of Activities: Opportunities for various community projects will be maximized throughout the year as they arise. Some of these projects will be pursued as a result of community partner projects.

Implementers and Their Roles: Partners include California State Parks through their SeaLife Stewards program, the city of Morro Bay's Harbor Department, and local recreational boating business owners. The effort also includes supporting the Central Coast Aquarium in developing Morro Bay-specific content.

Key Deliverables: Materials completed as projects develop.

Timeframe and Estimated Milestones: Materials are completed as projects develop.

Estimated Budget: \$2,500 is allocated for partner projects and other opportunities as they arise in FY19. Staff time and \$1,400 is allocated for partner projects and other opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Outcomes: Coordinate with partner organizations about key messages associated with each community project. Rollout of the messages and education and outreach material will be closely tied to the project implementation.

CWA Core Programs the Project Supports: Addressing diffuse, nonpoint sources of pollution

Future Actions:

- 1. Continue encouraging engagement with the Estuary Program through traditional partnerships with stakeholder and advocate groups
 - 1.1. Reach beyond traditional partnerships to reach new stakeholders and advocates in underrepresented demographics and communities
- Work on strengthening existing relationships with nonprofits that share similar goals (ECOSLO, CCSPA, SeaLife Stewards, SLOMPAC, Marine Mammal Center, Pacific Wildlife Care, Central Coast Aquarium)
- 3. Leverage, publicize, and build upon existing institutions such as Cuesta, Cal Poly, and other schools in activities to accomplish goals.
- 4. Structure communication activities that effectively addresses the importance of Morro Bay within the broader scientific community in order to encourage and stimulate valuable research in the Morro Bay watershed.

EO-2 State of the Bay

Goals and Objectives: Production and execution of the triennial State of the Bay report and events.

Target Audience: People who live in the Morro Bay watershed; people who live in San Luis Obispo County and come to Morro Bay; tourists who visit Morro Bay on a recurring basis from other areas in California and beyond; students at the primary, secondary, undergraduate, and



graduate levels; community interest groups including Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, and other service organizations; scout groups; landowners; business owners; staff and administrators from partner organizations, agencies, other nonprofits; and government officials at the local, state, and federal level.

Description of Activities: Every three years, the Estuary Program hosts a State of the Bay (SOTB) conference/event series to share knowledge about the status of the estuary and watershed in terms of clean water and healthy habits. The Estuary Program develops a public-friendly report to share data collected by our program and our partners. The series of events share the data as well as a clean water message.

Implementers and Their Roles: Project partners include the Central Coast State Parks Association docents, ECOSLO (a local non-profit focused on environmental conservation), and other education partners.

Key Deliverables: The deliverables include a report card available in print and online, plus attendance statistics from SOTB events.

Timeframe and Estimated Milestones:

Estimated Budget: Staff time and \$4,500 to design and print the report card in FY19. Staff time and \$8,000 to support event planning and logistics in FY20.

Long-term Outcomes: To share the results of monitoring by the Estuary Program and its partners, with the goal of increasing education on nonpoint source pollution, restoration, etc.

CWA Core Programs the Project Supports: Addressing diffuse, nonpoint sources of pollution. Protecting wetlands. Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Program.

Future Actions:

- Continue hosting State of the Bay events and other presentations through existing structures set up by partner organizations (e.g. Morro Coast Audubon Society, CCSPA MindWalks, ECOSLO Green Drinks, etc.)
- Plan and execute State of the Bay events that educate the public about the issues regarding
 the health of the Morro Bay estuary and watershed based on the findings of the
 Communications Priorities survey.
- Create educational multi-media content to complement the printed State of the Bay report
 and publicize this content through the digital communication methods noted by survey
 respondents.
- 4. Engage a broader audience in State of the Bay activities, with special focus on people in the 18 to 55 year-old age range.

EO-3 Nature Center and Related Displays

Goals and Objectives: Update and maintain the content and displays in the Nature Center.

Target Audience: Local and visiting students in the pre-K through middle-school levels; local and visiting families; adults interested in learning more about the bay and how to take care of it; other interested citizens.



Description of Activities: About 25,000 visitors have stopped by the Estuary Program's Nature Center each year since it was established in 2005. A fish tank, a watershed mural, and stereoscopic photo images are some of the most popular exhibits. After more than a decade of heavy use, the Nature Center's worn displays need to be updated or replaced. The Estuary Program will continue to seek funding for update efforts and to engage local partners in developing exhibits and funding. The Estuary Program will develop grant application, reports, and deliverables for funders.

Implementers and Their Roles: The Morro Bay Museum of Natural History will be a partner in this effort, lending their expertise in the development of exhibits and seeking funding for such efforts. Others such as the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Historical Society of Morro Bay, and the UC Santa Cruz Seymour Marine Discovery Center lend advice and expertise.

Key Deliverables: A summary description of work conducted for this item will be included in the semi-annual report.

Timeframe and Estimated Milestones: Exhibit updates are expected to be finished at the end of FY20.

Estimated Budget: Staff time, as well as additional grants that are still to be determined.

Long-term Outcomes: The Estuary Nature Center serves as a learning center about the Estuary, with updated and engaging exhibits.

CWA Core Programs the Project Supports: Addressing diffuse, nonpoint sources of pollution. Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Program.

Future Actions:

- 1. Update Morro Bay Estuary Nature Center with content that matches the interests and knowledge gaps noted in the Communications Priorities survey.
- 2. Add content that educates and appeals to children through age 12, their parents and grandparents.
- 3. Increase awareness of the Morro Bay Estuary Nature Center through digital and print promotion.

EO-4 Formal Education Programs

Goals and Objectives: Develop formal education partnerships and services, and continue to maintain the Nature Center and other education efforts.

Target Audience: K-12, undergraduate, and graduate students and their instructors.

Description of Activities: The Estuary Program will continue working with partners to integrate estuary-focused activities into existing formal educational programming. Activities include watershed model demonstrations in classrooms and supporting watershed education by partners. In addition, the Estuary Program will maintain the Estuary Nature Center, which is visited by approximately 5,200 individuals monthly during the high season.

Implementers and Their Roles: Partners include the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History, a direct collaborator in creating education programs. Teachers, parents, and volunteers from local



schools reach out to the Estuary Program for direct support in developing education programs on topics such as watersheds and the water cycle. Cal Poly faculty are also partners, bringing classes to the estuary to conduct research and fieldtrips. Staff also visit classrooms from primary through college-level to present the results of our work. Central Coast Aquarium has been a key partner, providing their Floating Lab fieldtrips to students from outside of the area.

Key Deliverables: Deliverables will be Nature Center statistics, watershed model demonstration statistics, and fieldtrip and presentation statistics, to be included in semi-annual reports to EPA.

Timeframe and Estimated Milestones: The Nature Center promotional materials and statistics will be ongoing. The statistics on watershed model demos and fieldtrips will be included in the semi-annual report.

Estimated Budget: Staff time.

Long-term Outcomes: Formal educational partnerships disseminate estuary-related messages to local students. The Estuary Nature Center serves as a learning center about the estuary with updated and engaging exhibits.

CWA Core Programs the Project Supports: Addressing diffuse, nonpoint sources of pollution. Protecting coastal waters through the National Estuary Program.

Future Actions:

- 1. Form new school partnerships to engage underrepresented more diverse student groups from K-12, and post-secondary levels.
- Continue to create formal education content that addresses the Estuary Program's priority issues, with emphasis on the issues that survey respondents and Estuary Program staff consider important for students to understand: 1. Climate change, 2. Impacts of stormwater runoff, 3. Loss of habitats, native plants and animals, 4. Environmentally balanced uses of the bay



Program Style Guide

NOTE: Additional content on suggested fonts, sizes, and logo choice and placement specifications to be determined and included in final version of the plan.

Mission and Tagline

Mission Statement – Full version to be used for internal documents

Option 1: The Morro Bay National Estuary Program works to protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary and watershed for people and wildlife. The Estuary Program is a collaborative, nonprofit organization that brings together citizens, landowners, governmental bodies, organizations, and agencies to support clean water, healthy ecosystems, and a balanced use of the estuary as a natural resource.

Option 2: The Morro Bay National Estuary Program protects and restores the Morro Bay estuary and watershed for people and wildlife. As a collaborative, local nonprofit organization, the Estuary brings together citizens, landowners, governmental bodies, organizations, and agencies to support clean water, healthy ecosystems, and balanced use of the estuary.

Option 3: The Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a local nonprofit organization that works to protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary and watershed for people and wildlife. Estuary Program representatives work collaboratively with citizens, landowners, governmental bodies, organizations, and agencies to support clean water, healthy ecosystems, and balanced use of the estuary.

<u>Mission Statement – Simplified</u>

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program works collaboratively to protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary and surrounding lands for people and wildlife.

Tag Line

- 1. Protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary.
- 2. Protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary for people and wildlife.
- 3. We protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary for people and wildlife.

Note: Taglines are simple statements that convey a core value about an organization or product (e.g. "Just do it" - Nike). Taglines can be incorporated into all communications products so long as it is done in manner that matches communication objectives.

Logos and Branding

See note above.

Fonts and Styles

See note above.



Appendix I

Morro Bay National Estuary Program Communication Priorities Survey

- 1. Where do you live? (Please include your city and county.)
- 2. What is your age range?
 - a. 0–20
 - b. 21-34
 - c. 35-44
 - d. 45-54
 - e. 55-64
 - f. 65 or older
- 3. What best describes your relationship with the Estuary Program?
 - a. Volunteer (e.g. water quality monitor, board or committee member, event staff)
 - b. Staff or volunteer member of a partner organization
 - c. Formal or informal educator
 - d. Citizen interested in the health of the Morro Bay estuary and surrounding lands.
 - e. Donor
 - f. Other (please explain)
- 4. How do you usually learn about Estuary Program activities and events? (Select all that apply.)
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Twitter
 - d. Email
 - e. Blog
 - f. Website
 - g. Community events/festivals
 - h. Online community event calendars
 - i. Event calendars in local newspapers
 - j. Flyers in local businesses
 - k. Word of mouth
 - I. Other (Please explain.)
 - m. I am not aware of any Estuary Program activities or events
- 5. In your opinion, which of the following are the best ways to inform the public about how they can help protect and restore the Morro Bay estuary and the lands that surround it? (Choose three.)
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Twitter
 - d. Email
 - e. Blog
 - f. Website
 - g. Community events/festivals
 - h. Online community event calendars
 - i. Event calendars in local newspapers
 - j. Flyers in local businesses
 - k. Word of mouth
 - I. Other (Please explain.)
- 6. Which of the following Estuary Program outreach and education programs have you or other members of your household participated in? Mark all that apply.



- a. Morro Bay Science Explorations with the Estuary Program (science talks at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens)
- b. State of the Bay events and activities, held every three years
- c. DogFest community gathering and educational event
- d. In-classroom presentations for students in grades K-12 and college
- e. Visiting the free Morro Bay Estuary Nature Center at 601 Embarcadero, Morro Bay, CA
- f. Talks given by Estuary Program staff to community groups such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, etc.
- g. Presentations at partner group events (e.g. Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, Third Saturday Walks at the Elfin Forest, Morro Coast Audubon Society Community Talks, etc.)
- h. Walking field trips to Black Hill and the Morro Bay State Park Marina Peninsula Trail (scheduled by request)
- i. My household members and I have not participated in any Estuary Program programs.
- j. Other (Explain.)
- 7. What do you think are the biggest issues affecting the health of Morro Bay and the surrounding lands? Choose three.
 - a. Stormwater runoff from cities and agricultural areas
 - b. Climate change
 - c. Habitat loss
 - d. Scarcity of water
 - e. Loss of native plants and animals and an increase in nonnative species
 - f. Marine debris
 - g. Sediment (soil and sand) filling in the bay
 - h. Threats to clean water such as toxics, bacteria, etc.
 - i. The conflict between the impacts of economic and social uses of the environment (like recreation, fishing, shellfish farming, ranching, etc.) and environmental conservation.
 - j. Other (Please explain.)
- 8. What environmental issues relating to Morro Bay and the surrounding lands do you think are the most important to teach in the classroom? Choose three.
 - a. Stormwater runoff from cities and agricultural areas
 - b. Climate change
 - c. Habitat loss
 - d. Scarcity of water
 - e. Loss of native plants and animals and an increase in nonnative species
 - f. Marine debris
 - g. Sediment (soil and sand) filling in the bay
 - h. Threats to clean water such as toxics, bacteria, etc.
 - i. The conflict between the impacts of economic and social uses of the environment (like recreation, fishing, shellfish farming, ranching, etc.) and environmental conservation.
 - j. Other (Please explain.)
- 9. How well informed do you feel about the health of the Morro Bay estuary and surrounding lands? Choose a number between 1 (least informed) and 5 (most informed).
- 10. What topics would you like to learn more about? (Choose three.)
 - a. Stormwater runoff from cities and agricultural areas
 - b. Climate change
 - c. Habitat loss
 - d. Scarcity of water
 - e. Loss of native plants and animals and an increase in nonnative species



- f. Marine debris
- g. Sediment (soil and sand) filling in the bay
- h. Threats to clean water such as toxics, bacteria, etc.
- i. The conflict between the impacts of economic and social uses of the environment (like recreation, fishing, shellfish farming, ranching, etc.) and environmental conservation.
- j. Other (Explain.)
- 11. Share your additional thoughts about the Estuary Program's education and outreach activities in the space provided below.

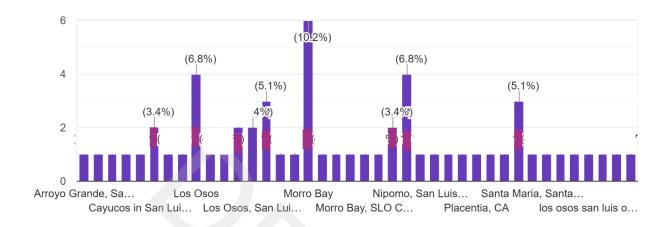


Appendix II

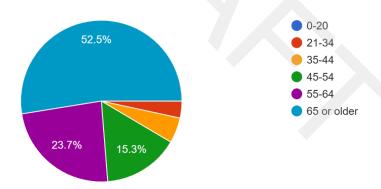
Morro Bay National Estuary Program Communication Priorities Survey Results

Where do you live? (Please include your city and county.)

59 responses



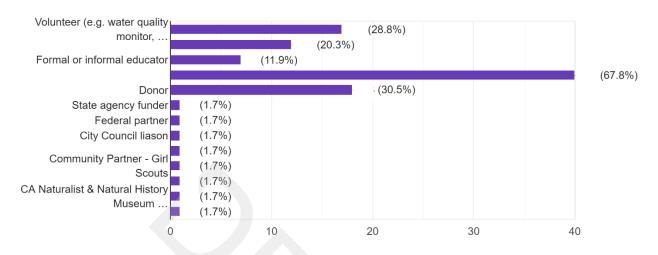
What is your age range?



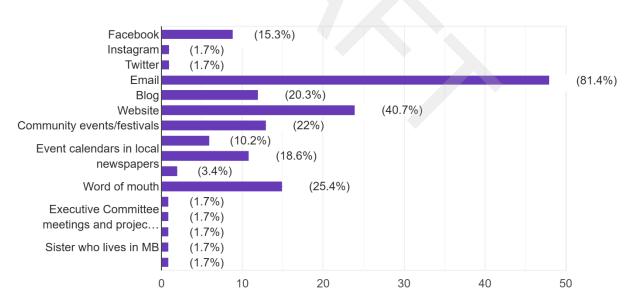


What best describes your relationship with the Estuary Program? Mark all that apply.

59 responses

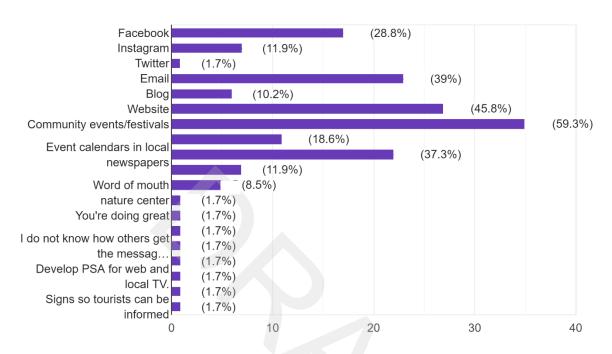


How do you usually learn about Estuary Program activities and events? (Select all that apply.)





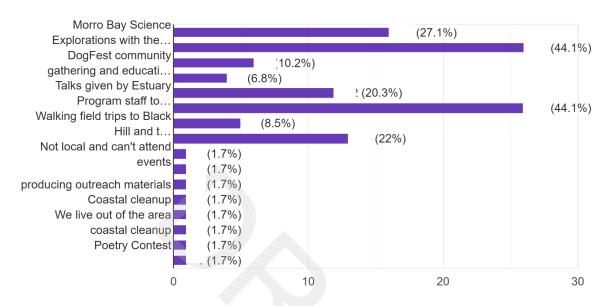
In your opinion, which of the following are the best ways to inform the public about how they can help protect...ands that surround it? (Choose three.)



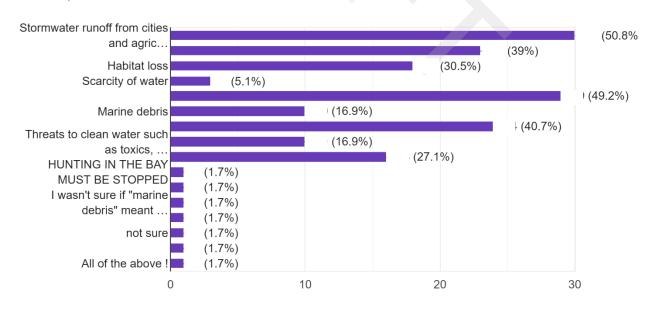


Which of the following Estuary Program outreach and education programs have you or other members of your hous... participated in? Mark all that apply.

59 responses

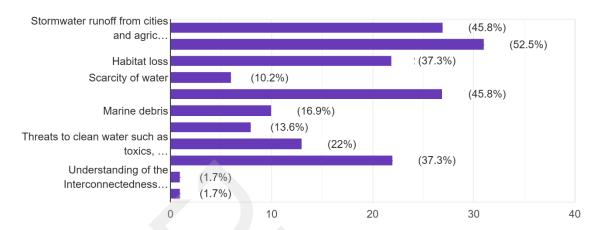


What do you think are the biggest issues affecting the health of Morro Bay and surrounding lands? (Choose three.)





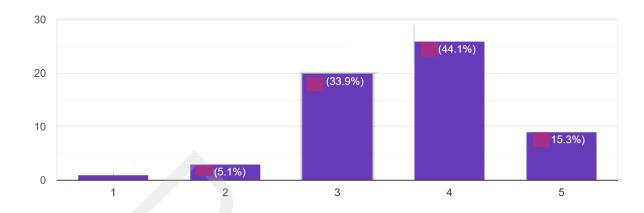
What environmental issues relating to Morro Bay and the surrounding lands do you think are the most important to...ach in the classroom? (Choose three.)



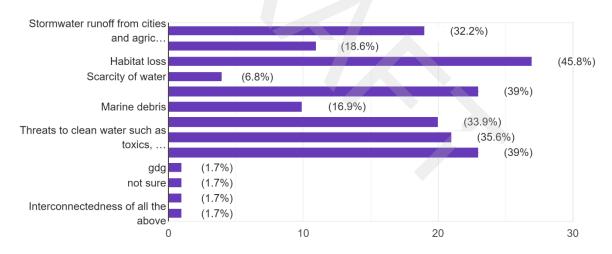


How well informed do you feel about the health of the Morro Bay estuary and surrounding lands? Choose a numb...st informed) and 5 (most informed).

59 responses



What topics would you like to learn more about? (Choose three.)





Appendix III

Conservation Planning Initiative Technical Advisory Committee Survey Results

<u>Survey Question 1</u>: What is the relative importance of these various watershed wide issues? Please mark priority issues as either 'low', 'medium', or high'. Please choose 5 high priorities, 5 medium priorities, and 4 lower priorities.

Watershed Issues	TAC Responses Summary
1) Sediment	Accelerated sediment inputs from the watershed is a continued concern and the sediment TMDL for both Chorro and Los Osos Creeks should be a top priority. Excessive sediment impacts multiple habitats and species in both creek systems (e.g., fish spawning habitat) and the estuary (e.g., turbidity levels for eelgrass habitat).
2) Instream/ Floodplain Habitats	Restoring floodplain processes will aid in improving other prioritized priorities (e.g., sediment capture, increased instream flow).
3) Steelhead	Steelhead are a keystone species and protecting them will likely lead to benefits for other native aquatic life. Focusing on other priorities (e.g., freshwater flow, land conservation) should also improve conditions for steelhead and other native fish. Removing fish barriers continues to be a high priority.
4) Land Conservation	Land conservation is the most effective, long-term protection for the watershed and the bay. This is also often the most direct action to address many of the other important watershed priorities.
5) Freshwater Flow	Climate change and droughts will affect the quantity of freshwater inputs and therefore will likely have negative impacts to estuary habitats and overall productivity. While some creeks historically ran dry in alluvial sections, there are still creative solutions to augment water quantity for improved habitat and wildlife in the watershed.
6) Eelgrass	Expanding eelgrass acreage remains an important issue in the watershed for the important habitat it provides for estuarine species. Other priorities (e.g., improved water quality, reduced sedimentation, and improved bay circulation) would also potentially help improve conditions for eelgrass. Depending on what the most limiting factors are to support eelgrass, identified factors should become a higher priority.
7) Invasive Fish	If no action is taken to remove invasive fish, this may limit steelhead recovery in the watershed. Much work has been done in the watershed to address this issue and should continue if sustainable funding is available.
8) Bacteria	It is important to continue to implement best management practices to reduce bacteria as it is important to public health. TAC members who ranked addressing bacteria levels as a lower priority responded that they did not think there were many projects remaining in the watershed to address this concern



	or thought other priorities (e.g., land conservation) would also help to address this issue.
9) Nutrients	It is important to continue to implement best management practices to reduce nutrients, especially if they are linked to eelgrass survival. Nitrates in Warden Creek are especially concerning and would be a high priority to address in the watershed.
10) Invasive Plants	Efforts for reducing or eradicating invasive plant species should be pursued (e.g., mustard, castor bean, cape ivy) when funding is available. For some TAC members, this issue was ranked as a lower priority given other important issues in the watershed.
11) Toxins	TAC members thought that addressing toxins was still an important issue due to public health concerns but did not think toxins were as much of a problem now as they were in the past. Nonylphenol was called out as a toxin to stay particularly aware of. If additional toxins are identified to be issues then toxins may rank as a higher priority in the future.
12) Sea Level Rise Habitats	Working to protect estuary habitats for accelerated sea level rise was ranked as a low priority by TAC members compared to other watershed issues. Many members thought there was a need to better understand the range of future sea level rise changes to estuarine habitats and what implementation actions are actually feasible to be able to rank this priority in relation to other priorities that are better understood in the watershed. The importance of focusing on other climate change impacts in the watershed (e.g., change in quantity/timing of stream flows) beyond sea level rise was also discussed.
13) Sea Level Rise Communities	The majority of TAC members responded that municipalities and local planning departments should take the lead on assessing how to prepare coastal communities (e.g., Morro Bay, Los Osos) for sea level rise and other climate change impacts. Members shared that the MBNEP was more suited to assist with specific habitat changes due to sea level rise rather than other direct impacts (e.g., salt water intrusion to groundwater) to communities.
14) Birds	TAC members responded that most estuarine bird populations are doing alright. Addressing other priorities (e.g., eelgrass) would also support local bird populations that are declining (e.g., black brant).

Table 1: Summary of TAC member responses to their relative priorities for a range of Morro Bay watershed issues. TAC member evaluations were weighted based on their response of either high (value of three), medium (value of two), or low (value of one) and then summed and ranked.



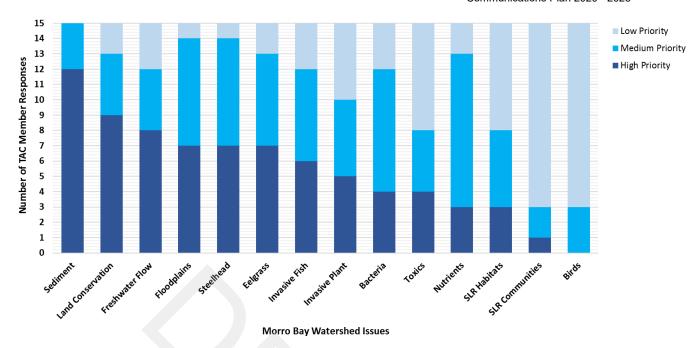


Figure 1: The number of TAC members ranking various watershed priorities in Morro Bay as either a high, medium, or low priority. Fifteen TAC members participated in the survey.

<u>Survey Question 2</u>. Which 3-5 watershed priorities, do you think are good fits for the MBNEP specifically to focus on in the next 5 to 10 years?

TAC members were also asked to identify which of the 14 watershed priorities were good fits for the MBNEP to focus on in the next 5-10 years. The top priorities for the MBNEP to focus on were the following: 1) reduced sedimentation, 2) land conservation and development, 3) increased eelgrass habitat, 4) improved instream/floodplain habitat, 5) improved steelhead population, 5) increased freshwater resources, 6) removal of invasive fish species, and 7) reduced bacteria and pathogens.

<u>Survey Question 3</u>: What do you see as the most critical role the MBNEP can play in partnering in projects?

TAC members were also asked what role(s) the MBNEP could have to help meet these watershed priorities. The below table highlights TAC member survey responses.

MBNEP Role in Partnerships	TAC Responses Summary
Outreach	MBNEP plays an important role in outreach and education to the general public, youth, and landowners. Continuing to foster better communication and coordination between all partners will help to achieve results.
Public Profile	MNBEP could increase its public profile to engage a broader community and keep
	the health of the watershed a high priority in people's minds. MBNEP can also



	leverage it's reputation and credibility to bring more organizations onboard (e.g., civic groups, local non-profits, and governmental agencies).
Data Storehouse	MBNEP could be a repository of data. This repository could be strengthen by having a watershed wide GIS map with projects that have been completed to date (e.g., monitoring, restoration projects). There could also be improved access to data and reports pertinent to the goals of the MBNEP on MBNEP's website, including both older and newer studies.
Project	MBNEP could play a lead role in identifying problems and/or bringing problems to the forefront. MBNEP could evaluate continued relevance of issues/indicators and
Development/	perhaps refocus on new ones. MBNEP can also help to identify high priority
Prioritization	projects and leverage expertise to implement these projects.
Grant Manager/	MBNEP could play a vital role as a grant manager where priority projects from
Writing Grants/	partners are developed and implemented. MBNEP could increase their efforts on obtaining donations and funding that can be used for land acquisitions and
Funding	development of conservation easements.
Other	 Convene a freshwater resources working group to refocus water budget discussions in light of recycled water efforts and prioritize flow augmentation sites.
	 The MBNEP offers continuity. Whereas other groups may be intermittently involved, the MBNEP can ensure a consistent presence.
	 Further involve Cuesta College, California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, and other schools as well as appropriate consulting firms to accomplish goals.
	 MBNEP could be a powerful tool in local planning and permitting decisions,
	 although it may require a 'louder' voice in some decision making processes. Maybe the MBNEP should focus more on facilitating increased research
	efforts that may or may not necessarily be collaborative. Surprised at the
	small amount of research that has been done in Morro Bay.
	Help provide GIS capabilities for watershed projects. of TAC responses on what releas the MRNER cap play to help achieve watershed.

Table 2: Summary of TAC responses on what roles the MBNEP can play to help achieve watershed priorities.