
Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of August 14, 2019 Executive Committee (EC) minutes
5. **ACTION:** Recommendations on Community Project Application (see attached)

There is one Community Project application for our consideration in this round. It is an effort to support watershed education through the building and use of a Watershed Protector Demonstration Station and Educational Toolkit. The Demonstration Station illustrates important soil conservation and watershed concepts and will be appropriate for use with youth, adults, and for more specialized trainings such as for rangers and firefighters. A video containing an example of these stations is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YjFfEjqWZY> At around the 2:30 mark, the lecturer begins using the station, and it gives an excellent overview of the value of this teaching tool.

As this is the first round of awards for FY20, we have the full \$10,000 budget for the year available.

Project: Watershed Protector Demonstration Station and Educational Toolkit
Applicant: Lisa Andreano and Robin Hazard of California State Parks

Request: \$5,000 over one-year
Matching Funding: \$39,124
Total Budget: \$44,124

Summary: The proposed project involves the construction of a Demonstration Station, purchase of ancillary items, and graphic design and printing for curriculum items. The work would be carried out by California State Parks (CSP) staff, with curriculum development support from the Natural History Museum docents.

The proposed project has the following budget components:

- Purchase of materials to build a Demonstration Station: \$1,000
- Customized pop-up tent to use with Station at events: \$1,500
- Curriculum materials and station supplies: \$40
- Graphic design of Activity Booklet: \$2,000
- Printing of Watershed Activity Booklet: \$460

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

The project reach would be broad. CSP has reached out to partners to determine the use. The station would be used at the Natural History Museum by the docents in their watershed education programming, at the Mid-State Fair, at the Central Coast Wildlife Festival, at State Parks Campfire programs, and with school programs offered by CSP. Additionally, the station would be used for two staff trainings: Basic Firefighter, Fire Ecology, and Resource Advisor Trainings; and Basic Visitor Service Training (Ranger Cadet Training). Creek Lands Conservancy is interested in utilizing the station in conjunction with a new grant from the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust to bring watershed education to third through fifth graders in San Luis Coastal Unified School District over three years. State Parks is also reaching out to local Resource Conservation Districts and Cal Poly to see if they have interest in borrowing the unit.

Recommendations: Staff supports funding for this project as proposed, as it will provide a valuable tool for watershed education. CSP has a solid plan for the unit to be widely used throughout the watershed and beyond, and they have the infrastructure and partnerships in place to ensure its use.

6. 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 budget and tasks laid out in our Workplan. This report covers our work for the second half of FY2019, which is from April 1 through September 30, 2019. The report summarizes the budget status and Workplan task progress. We have expended 91% of our current 320 grant that started in FY2017.

7. DISCUSSION: Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan update process

The CCMP update process continues. Since our last update, we are now working on the following steps:

- Finalizing edits to the CCMP document.
- Contracting with a graphic designer for the updated document.
- Preparing to present the updates to the Technical Advisory Committees.

The remaining steps in the process are as follows:

- Present the update approach to the Technical Advisory Committee in Fall 2019 for approval.
- Present the draft document to the EC for approval.
- Work with a graphic designer to incorporate edits.
- Finalize the document and distribute to partners in 2020.

Note that in addition to updating the CCMP, the program is preparing for the Program Evaluation (PE) by EPA in 2020, creation of our triennial State of the Bay report, and planning of the State of the Bay events throughout Spring 2020.

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

The EC requested period 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.

9. DISCUSSION: Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve (CCER) Update

The construction phase of the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve project is now complete! Grading and all erosion control tasks were completed by early October. The last construction task was to remove the temporary creek crossing installed across Chorro Creek to allow heavy

equipment to access the site. This work was done in mid-October and went smoothly. A number of steelhead and other fish were removed from the site prior to in-stream work. Fish removal and monitoring was conducted by Stillwater Sciences. The next phase is planting 1,500 plants by the California Conservation Corps (CCC). These plants were grown in the CCC's own nursery and are of very high quality, seeded right from our watershed. Planting started November 4 and is going well, although the very packed soil is making for slow going. We anticipate extending the planting timeline past the original three weeks planned.

10. DISCUSSION: Program Highlights

- **Monitoring Updates:** The topobathy lidar survey was completed, as was the tidal station monitoring that allows for tidal prism calculations. We've conducted some preliminary analysis comparing the bay elevations to historic data for inclusion in the State of the Bay report. We have contracted with Tetra Tech to conduct stormwater runoff monitoring for the State Park Marina Parking Lot Improvement Project. They will conduct First Flush monitoring from the first big storm of the year, as well as sample two subsequent storms prior to construction. Following construction, they will also survey the parking lot to ensure that all runoff is being captured by the parking lot treatment.
- **Eelgrass Updates:** Monitoring of the 2019 eelgrass transplanting effort is wrapping up, with October monitoring results by Tenera Environmental available soon. This data will give us a more complete picture of the results of the February transplanting versus the March transplanting. Initially we were seeing better survival of plants from the March planting as compared to the February planting due to stormier weather at that time. We are in the process of working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop the permit for restoration work in 2020. We received eelgrass restoration funding from Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) to support two years of work.
- **Education & Outreach Updates:** We hosted a successful CCER field tour and volunteer appreciation party on November 3, with approximately 30 attendees. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to see the project they've been hearing so much about over the years. We recognized outstanding contributions of Monitoring Program Volunteer Betsy Kinter and Community Volunteer Gary Ruggerone. The State of the Bay Report is currently in the graphic design phase, with printing and distribution expected for early 2020. Planning is underway for a series of State of the Bay events throughout spring 2020 to share the results of the report.

11. Adjourn to next meeting of February 19, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments:

- Minutes from August 14, 2019 EC meeting
- Community Project application
- Semi-annual report
- Program Evaluation Status