

REVISED FY2018-FY2022 Restoration Fund Spending Plan

Prepared for July/August 2020 Committee and Board Meetings
by Estuary Program staff



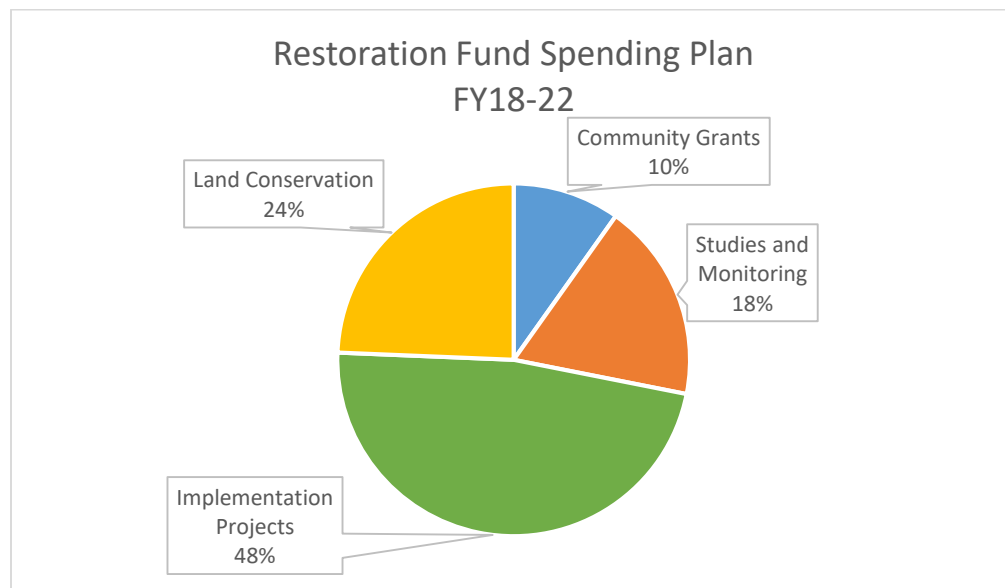
Background

In February 2017, the Estuary Program’s Committee and Board (“Management Conference”) approved a five-year spending plan for \$600,000 of the Restoration Fund, with the remaining amount left for interest accrual. Subsequently, the Management Conference revised the Community Projects Program to increase partner engagement and quality of projects that help implement the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. This revision in May 2020 increased the allocation for community projects from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year. The increase only applies to FY21-FY22 of the spending plan.

The total balance of the Restoration Fund investment account is about \$1.63 million, compared to \$1.55 million eight years ago. We have made back a little more than we spent over the previous spending plan period. Using a similar division between spending and saving, we can save about \$900,000-\$1 million (depending on market results) for investment and spend \$610,000 over the next five years.

Proposed spending plan for FY18-FY22

Spending Categories	Projected Amount to be Spent
Community Grants	\$60,000
Studies and Monitoring	\$111,500
Implementation Projects	\$290,000
Land Conservation	\$148,500
TOTAL	\$610,000



Spending Plan Description

Community Projects:

The Estuary Program will continue to support community-based projects that help implement actions in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. For FY18-20, this spending plan allocates \$10,000 per year. The Management Conference revised the Community Projects Program in May 2020 and upped the total allocated annually to \$15,000 for FY21 and FY22.

Studies and Monitoring:

A portion of the Restoration Fund will continue to support the completion of research projects, planning efforts, and studies that assist the Estuary Program and its partners in planning restoration and conservation efforts and that address actions in the CCMP. This category also includes spending to support monitoring efforts if needed. Anticipated projects include periodic eelgrass and/or bathymetry mapping, eelgrass monitoring, high-level statistical analysis of monitoring data, and new monitoring program equipment.

Implementation Projects:

The largest portion of the available Restoration Fund money will support the implementation of on-the-ground restoration and conservation efforts that align with the CCMP and support partnership efforts. Anticipated projects include implementation of the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Floodplain Restoration Project, pikeminnow management, road erosion project maintenance, eelgrass restoration, and other projects as developed by the Estuary Program and partners. The proposed allocation for this category is \$70,000 higher than the previous spending plan to accommodate anticipated state and federal grant match needs for the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve project.

Land Conservation:

The Estuary Program will continue to support land conservation (acquisitions and conservation easements) by paying for items that are difficult to cover with other funding sources, such as appraisals and baseline studies. The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is an important partner in these efforts and is actively working within the watershed to complete easements and acquisitions that are aligned with the CCMP. The timeline of land conservation agreements is unpredictable and dependent on interested landowners. Despite this inherent uncertainty, Estuary allocating funds to land conservation efforts is prudent. Often, funds for appraisals, baseline studies, and other upfront costs are needed quickly and are difficult to find through grant sources. The Estuary Program can facilitate more land conservation efforts in our watershed by having funding set aside for these types of costs, as well as providing match to acquisition or easement costs.