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**Staff Report**

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1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of February 17, 2021 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** Recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2022 Workplan (see attached)

The principal funding source for the Estuary Program is the annual EPA grant. For Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22), current budget projections indicate funding of \$700,000. This is a 5.5% increase over FY21. 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 the funding. Staff has developed a Workplan that largely continues our major ongoing tasks through the next FY.

As per previous discussions with the Bay Foundation and EC, the additional funding available for FY22 have been put towards the following projects: additional staff support for Education & Outreach, work on pikeminnow management, pre-project support for the Highway 1/Adobe Road fish passage barrier removal effort, and State of the Bay analysis and event planning.

A few efforts were discussed as priorities but did not receive increased funding in this Workplan. Ocean acidification was determined to be a priority and will be funded for the next two years by an NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant award in partnership with Cal Poly. As sea level rise analysis is also of interest, we have partnered with USGS on a grant application and are awaiting a decision. There was also discussion of adding more capacity for eelgrass with a technician position. The logistics of this type of position are tricky, as we mainly need support during certain tide windows. Due to these limitations, we opted to put support toward a contract with a consultant to provide eelgrass capacity when needed, rather than hiring.

Staff recommends that the EC approve the proposed Workplan.

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 the budget and tasks laid out in our Workplan. This report covers our work for the first half of FY21, which is October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. The report summarizes the budget status and Workplan task progress.

At this point in the five-year grant cycle, we've expended 84% of our current 320 grant (started in FY17), with a remainder of approximately \$524,825. The Estuary Program has met 190% of its match requirement for the cumulative grant with cash match and estimated current in-kind contributions (approximately \$6,086,582).

## 7. **DISCUSSION:** Pikeminnow Management Update

Enhancing habitat for steelhead has been a long-term goal for the Estuary Program. Management of invasive pikeminnow, which can predate on steelhead and compete with them for habitat, has been important to our steelhead restoration effort. Stillwater Sciences recently complete a report on pikeminnow management efforts. The conclusions were as follows:

- Management efforts in Chorro Reservoir have been met, with only one captured in 2017.
- Pikeminnow management led to a decrease in density from 2017 to 2020, while steelhead increased in density during the same time period.
- The work set a target ratio of steelhead to pikeminnow to be protective of steelhead. That ratio was met in three out of the last four years based on total fish captured.
- In 2020, we saw a limited distribution of pikeminnow and high steelhead numbers in lower Chorro Creek. However this may be due to low flows that prevented movement upstream.

Next steps include additional pikeminnow management work this fall, supported by funding from a private donor and 320 grant funds.

## 8. **DISCUSSION:** Highlights from the Association of National Estuary Programs (ANEP)

During the month of April, a number of opportunities for outreach to the Biden administration and Congressional representatives have occurred. Lexie and Ann met with Rep. Carbajal and his staff, discussing restoration projects and habitat improvements for Monarch butterflies. Lexie and the other California NEPs introduced Sen. Padilla's new staff to the National Estuary Program and connected with Sen. Feinstein's staff. In addition, Lexie represented ANEP at meetings with the Assistant Administrator for Water at EPA and Senate Appropriations Committee staff. ANEP is also coordinating with EPA on national workshops on environmental justice, climate change, nutrients, and coastal zone management this month.

## 9. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **CCER Drone Imagery:** We recently commissioned a repeat drone flight of the CCER site. The image is available here: <https://www.mapsmadeeasy.com/locations/public/c409aa2443594652865fcf29ef61bb1b/> The icon on the top right corner of the screen lets you turn on and off the images from the three time periods: during restoration, six months post-project, and a year and a half post-project.
- **Bioassessment Update:** We just completed our 2021 bioassessment season. This year we were able to monitor our planned ten sites, despite not being able to utilize volunteers due to COVID restrictions. We were alarmed by the low water levels this year, but it looks like our timing was perfect and quite a few macroinvertebrates were collected in the samples. Data is due back from the lab in September. The work was funded by a grant from the Harold J. Miozzi Charitable Trust, the eighth year they've provided support for this effort.
- **Harold J. Miozzi Trust invests more in Mutts for the Bay:** We currently have a grant with the Harold J. Miozzi Trust to expand our Mutts for the Bay locations and increase outreach about the program. Due to impacts from the pandemic, the city did not continue its funding partnership with us for the program this year (\$5,000). The Miozzi Trust has stepped in to fill that gap, keeping this program fully funded. We are re-branding the dispenser stickers to reflect this higher-level partnership and also adding recognition online.

- **Poetry Contest:** The 2021 Morro Bay Estuary Poetry Contest is underway, and the submittal deadline has been extended to May 24. For more information, visit the webpage: <https://www.mbnep.org/poetry21/>
- **Community Project Update:** There are three active Community Projects ongoing at this time. For the State Parks Watershed Demonstration Station project, construction of the module has been delayed due to COVID. But extensive progress has been made to develop the accompanying curriculum. Dr. Nikki Adams' Microplastics Monitoring project is underway. Materials for sample analysis have been purchased and the first round of monitoring just occurred. Dr. Adams asked for an extension of the project agreement because of delays due to COVID. The project is expected to commence as planned. The Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (CSLRCD) project to restore monarch and pollinator habitat is going well. CSLRCD has coordinated with Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) to conduct the project at Sweet Springs. An MOU is about to be signed. MCAS had planning documents that assisted CSLRCD in project planning. They are on track to start planting trees this summer and other plants in the fall. They expect to be done with the project early next year.

10. Adjourn to next meeting of August 18, 2021 at 4:00 p.m., to be held remotely via Zoom.

**Attachments:**

- Minutes from February 17, 2021 EC meeting
- FY2022 Workplan
- Semi-annual Report