



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting  
Via Video Conferencing

February 16, 2022  
4:00 pm

### Minutes

**Attendees:** Matt Keeling, *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*; Crow White, *Cal Poly*; John Flaherty, *Central Coast Outdoors*; Jeremiah O'Brien, *Commercial fishing interest*; Blake Fixler, *SLO County*; Jason Curtis, *Bay Foundation*; Marshall Ochylski, *LOCSD*; Chris Womack, *LOCSD*; Lisen Bonnier, *Ag interest seat*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*; Mike Multari, *MBNEP Staff*.

#### 1. Introductions and Updates

- Jason Curtis: Vice chair for Executive Committee (EC) and Vice President of the Bay Foundation. Serving on the EC as the Bay Foundation representative. Jason is the Vice President for Instruction at Cuesta.
- Blake Fixler: Bruce Gibson's legislative assistant and his alternate on the EC.
- Crow White, Cal Poly Bio Dept: Kevin Johnson reports working on Olympia oyster recruitment in Morro Bay, trying again this year. Ryan Walter and Andrew Fricker are working on drone mapping of eelgrass and developing machine mapping, which is improving.
- Jeremiah O'Brien: Serves on the Harbor Advisory Board, is the Vice President of the Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization, and serves on the board of Morro Bay Community Quota Fund.
- Matt Keeling, Executive Officer of Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board: His only update is on the Pecho Energy Storage Project. He'd sent around some information on the project. Staff released their funding plan for the \$5.9M settlement funds they received from Diablo Canyon. The plan is now available for public comment until March 2. The item will be on April 21 - 22 Board Meeting agenda. They will be issuing a request for proposals for local projects that could benefit the region.
- John Flaherty, Central Coast Outdoors, representing tourism: Unfortunately the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival had to be canceled with only three days' notice due to COVID. Recreation and tourism are doing well in the bay, and they are continuing to see almost record breaking numbers for their business.
- Chris Womack, Director of Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD): Marshall is our representative, and Chris is the alternate but is attending because she likes to keep up with what's going on.
- Marshall Ochylski, Board of Directors of LOCSD: Just got done with a meeting of the Basin Management Committee for Los Osos, working on the sustainability of our groundwater basin. The solid waste franchise for the community of Los Osos was previously turned over to the County, and now it is about to be turned back over to the CSD. They will go back to doing some of the things they were doing before - dealing with rubbish by the bay and having chipping days.
- Suzanne Marr of EPA Region 9: No updates.
- Mike Multari, Interim Executive Director for the Estuary Program: Thank you all for participating in NEP. Acting as the interim director for his fourth stint, going back 20 years. Helping out while we find a replacement for Lexie.
- Ann Kitajima, Assistant Director: No updates.

#### 2. Public Comment – None.

#### 3. Agenda Revisions – None.

4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of November 17, 2021 EC meeting minutes.

**Vote:** Marshall motioned to approve, John seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

5. **ACTION:** EC membership and chairperson approval

Lisen Bonnier is an organic farmer in the Los Osos Valley. Her techniques include erosion control, cover crops, and tillage methods to reduce sediment from leaving the farm. She put her farm land into a conservation several years ago. Jean-Pierre Wolf recruited her to join the EC.

Ethan Bell has served as the EC chairperson for the past two years. The EC bylaws allow for him to serve a second consecutive term, and he has expressed an interest in serving a second term if approved.

**Vote:** Jason motioned to approve Lisen's membership and Ethan's chairperson term. John seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

6. **DISCUSSION:** FY2023 Workplan Ideas (see attached)

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 workplan is due to EPA in June. We are expecting \$750,000 in funding, which is a \$50,000 increase over the FY2022 funding. We are soliciting input on the workplan at this stage in the process. If you have ideas, please feel free to reach out to staff.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding is expected to be approximately \$970,000 for each National Estuary Program. We are awaiting guidance from EPA. Once again, please reach out to staff with potential ideas for projects or partnerships to implement this funding.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Program Evaluation (PE) Letter Update (see attached)

Every five years, each National Estuary Program undergoes a Program Evaluation process with EPA to review the program's progress and status. The process culminates in a PE letter which lays out noteworthy accomplishments and areas for improvement. Staff reports to the EC and Bay Foundation twice a year on the program's progress toward addressing areas for improvement. See the attached summary for details.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **Hiring:** Riley Hine has joined the program as our Communications & Outreach Coordinator. The Executive Director (ED) hiring is underway, with interviews with the top candidates. The selected candidate met with the Bay Foundation board and we hope the selection will be made soon.
- **Community Project Updates:** Staff provided updates on the two recently completed and one ongoing Community Project.
- **Restoration Project Highlights:** Staff provided an update on potential stormwater improvement projects with Camp San Luis Obispo and how the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve site fared in December's storms.

9. Adjourn at 5:15 p.m. to the next meeting of May 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m., to be held remotely via Zoom.