

FY2023-FY2027 Restoration Fund Spending Plan

Prepared by Estuary Program staff for November 2022 Executive Committee and Bay Foundation Board Meetings



Background

In February 2017, the Bay Foundation and Executive Committees approved a five-year spending plan for \$600,000 of the Restoration Fund, with the remaining amount left for interest accrual. In summer 2020, Estuary Program staff presented an update on spending under that plan to increase Community Project spending in the last two years of the spend plan. As of November 2022, we have allocated \$40,000 for projects and spent \$272,215, which is approximately 45% of the \$610,000 budget.

The total balance of the Restoration Fund investment account is about \$1.63 million, compared to \$1.58 million five years ago. We have made back a little more than we spent over the past five years. Using a similar division between spending and saving, we can again save about \$1,000,000 for investment and spend \$625,000 over the next five years.

Proposed spending plan for FY2023 to FY2027

Spending Categories	Projected Amount to be Spent
Community Grants	\$75,000
Studies and Monitoring	\$100,000
Implementation Projects	\$300,000
Land Conservation	\$150,000
TOTAL	\$625,000



Spending Plan Description

Community Grants:

The Estuary Program will continue to fund community-based projects that help implement actions in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. This spending plan allocates \$15,000 per year, with the maximum funding amount of \$10,000 for a project.

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, new monitoring program equipment, student support in the form of fellowship stipends, and other projects to be developed by Estuary Program staff.

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 climate adaptation modeling and implementation, stormwater improvement projects, invasives management, vegetation mapping, historical ecology study, steelhead monitoring and fish passage improvements, and other projects as developed by the Estuary Program and partners.

Land Conservation:

The Estuary Program will continue to support land conservation (acquisitions and conservation easements). 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, it is prudent for the Estuary Program to allocate funds for land conservation efforts. 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.