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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 August 17, 2022 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** Recommendations on Community Project Applications (see attached)

There are two Community Project applications for our consideration in this round. They are a proposal by Dr. Alexis Pasulka of Cal Poly to study back bay phytoplankton, and a project from the Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSO) to address marine debris.

We have a total of \$15,000 to distribute for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. The maximum amount for a project is \$10,000.

The project details can be found in the attached document *Community Project Applications for Fall 2022, Summary of Projects, Technical Review, and Staff Recommendations*.

Staff recommends EC approval of the two proposed projects.

6. **ACTION:** Recommendations on Restoration Fund Budget Request for FY2023 to FY2027 (see attached)

Every five years, staff develops a spending plan for Restoration Funds to support the program's work. This is funding that came to the Estuary Program through a 1997 Consent Decree issued to PG&E for discharge permit violations. The original \$3.66M was provided to the Bay Foundation to support implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The funding is managed by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB), EPA, the Bay Foundation, and the EC.

The funding currently remaining is the earnings and interest from investment of the original Consent Decree. All parties involved in the MOU are interested in seeing the funding being spent to support the Estuary Program's goals. These spend plans lay out a roadmap for use of these funds.

The status of the Restoration Fund spending for FY2018 to FY2022 is as follows:

Spending Summary	Spent	Budget	% Budget Spent
Community Projects	\$42,369	\$60,000	71%
Studies & Monitoring	\$15,706	\$111,500	14%
Implementation Projects	\$65,640	\$290,000	23%
Land Conservation	\$148,500	\$148,500	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$272,215</b>	<b>\$610,000</b>	<b>45%</b>

Staff recommends approval of the five-year spend plan for Restoration Funds.

**7. DISCUSSION:** Semi-annual Report (see attached)

Twice a year, the Estuary Program submits a semi-annual report to EPA, which provides the program status on budgets and tasks laid out in our workplan. This report covers our work for the second half of FY2022, from April 1 to September 30, 2022. We have expended 76% of our current 320 grant and met 416% of our match requirement for the cumulative grant that started in FY2022.

**8. DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **2021 Eelgrass Map:** In December 2021 and January 2022, Cal Poly flew its drone and collected high resolution imagery of the bay at low tide. Eelgrass was identified manually, and a baywide eelgrass map and acreage number were developed. The project mapped approximately 500 acres of eelgrass in the bay, with an error of approximately  $\pm 10\%$ . For more details and to see a time series of maps, visit our website at <https://www.mbnep.org/eelgrass/>
- **Community Project Updates:** Dr. Nikki Adams' Microplastics Monitoring Project is now complete. Results indicate microplastics present at monitoring in the front, mid, and back bay, although not at levels as high as at other more populated estuaries in the region. Analysis is being finalized, and results will be shared once they become available. The Harbor Department's spill response project is ongoing, with staff distributing oil absorbent pads to local boaters along with our program's Clean Boating educational materials. The Camp KEEP watershed education project will not be moving forward. The organization is struggling with capacity issues and is unable to proceed with the project at this time. We will check back in to see if they are interested in moving forward with any aspects of the project.
- **Expanding Capacity:** As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding coming to our program, hiring to increase staff capacity is underway. A full-time Monitoring Technician and Education Specialist have been hired, and we are finalizing a decision on a Restoration Coordinator. We have plans to hire additional Administrative support in the near future.
- **Administrative Updates:** The 2022 CCMP update was approved by EPA. The updated document is available on our website at <https://www.mbnep.org/comprehensive-conservation-management-plan/> We submitted the grant application forms for the BIL funding (similar to how we do each year for the 320 grant) and are waiting for the administrative go ahead to begin spending. We are beginning work on an Equity Strategy related to the BIL funding, where we determine an equity baseline for our current work and lay out how we will track changes as the funding is spent.

**9.** Adjourn to next meeting of February 15, 2023 4:00 p.m., to be held remotely via Zoom.

**Attachments:**

- Minutes from August 17, 2022 EC meeting
- FY22 Period 2 Semi-annual Report
- Community Project summary
- Restoration Fund Spend Plan for FY23 to FY27