



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting  
Via Video Conference Call

February 15, 2023  
4:00 pm

## Staff Report

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1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of November 16, 2022 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** EC Bylaw Approval (see attached)

The EC bylaws are in need of updates in three specific areas:

- The Morro Bay Harbor Department (MBHD) is a long-time partner of the Estuary Program and input from the organization on workplan development, Community Projects, Clean Boater outreach, and other efforts has been invaluable. While we've had an MBHD representative on the committee, it's been due to the coincidence that they served as the former Implementation Committee (IC) representative. As we have dissolved the IC and replaced it with Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), we would like to ensure future MBHD participation by adding an MBHD membership seat to the EC. This refers to Section 2a, Membership.
- In Section 2c, Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee, we would like to propose changes. We'd originally structured the TAC to more closely mirror the IC, with a representative to attend EC meetings to share the group's input. Because the TACs are a much looser structure made up of multiple committees rather than a single IC, having a single TAC representative does not make sense. While the IC used to come to a consensus and vote on their recommendations for the EC, the new TACs provide their technical input but do not necessarily come to a consensus recommendation. Staff reviews their input and makes the recommendations. All feedback from TAC meetings is compiled by staff and shared with the EC to support workplan development, Community Project review, etc. Staff would like to formalize this shift with these changes to the bylaws.
- In Section 5, Technical Advisory Committee Appointments, the process for TAC member selection is laid out. In reality, the EC has never been so involved in this membership selection process, either for the IC or the TACs. Staff recruit and select members of the TAC. While this is often done with input from EC members, approval by the EC does not seem warranted and staff would like to update the bylaws to reflect the simplified approach.

Staff recommends EC approval of the Bylaw updates.

6. **DISCUSSION:** Workplan Update for 320 and BIL Funding for Fiscal Year 2024

Each spring, the Estuary Program begins the process of creating a budget and workplan for the upcoming Fiscal Year (FY). This year, we are creating these for both the 320 and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. We are expecting \$850,000 in 320 funding and \$917,000 in BIL funding for FY2024.

Our approach to kick-off this process is to present to the EC the existing workplan tasks and include any new tasks planned. These new tasks were identified as priority needs through partner communications, conservation planning, and existing efforts to secure other grant funds. A few tasks are complete and this is indicated by the strikeout of the task. This discussion is an opportunity for the EC members to bring up project areas that they feel are missing from the two workplans. We will need to narrow the list for the final workplan to meet the budget limitations.

**Workplan Task Categories for 320: (Projects for possible additional funding marked with \*)**

**Restoration and Conservation**

- Land Conservation
- Restoration Maintenance and Monitoring
- ~~Eelgrass Restoration~~
- Other Restoration
- Restoration Project Development
- Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Maintenance and Monitoring
- Aquatic Invasive Species (Pikeminnow) Management

**Monitoring and Research**

- Monitoring Program Coordination
- Reporting and Analysis
- Data Management
- Quality Assurance
- Project Effectiveness Monitoring
- Eelgrass Monitoring and Research
- Partner Research Efforts
- ~~State of the Bay Analysis and Reporting~~

**Education and Outreach**

- Communications
- Education
- Nature Center Update
- Community Partner Projects
- Other E&O Tasks
- Mutts for the Bay
- ~~State of the Bay Events~~

## **Program Administration**

- Manage Committees and Partnerships
- Grants and Contracts Administration and Financial Management
- General Administration and Human Resources Management
- Tracking Implementation of the Management Plan and Workplan
  - Develop performance measures for CCMP\*
- Community Projects Program

For BIL funding, we are expecting \$917,000 for FY2024. Assuming we submit our Equity Strategy before the June 1 deadline, the match requirement will the BIL funding will be waived.

## **Workplan Task Categories for BIL: (Projects for possible additional funding marked with \*)**

### **Capacity Building**

- Personnel
  - Additional support for E&O\*
- BIL Management and Equity Strategy Coordination

### **Monitoring**

- Tracking Bay Health
  - Projects to address bacteria TMDL\*
  - Bay phytoplankton monitoring effort\*
- Tracking Creek Health
  - Expanded ag monitoring (nutrients, toxics, herbicides, pesticides)\*
- Eelgrass Monitoring & Research
- Data Analysis & Management

### **Restoration**

- Invasive Species Management
- Climate Research, Planning & Adaptation
  - Sea-level rise monitoring and analysis w/ USGS\*
  - Easement for flooded property\*
  - Lower Chorro flooding assessment\*
  - Historical ecology work\*
- Fish Habitat Monitoring & Improvement
  - Estuarine fish monitoring\*
- Implement BMPs in Watershed
  - Stormwater management planning\*

### **Water Infrastructure**

- Stormwater Improvement
- Groundwater Monitoring
  - Additional work with the LOCSA\*

## Education & Outreach

- Communications
- Environmental Education
- Nature Center Updates
- Community Engagement and Stewardship
  - Develop Community Project with local tribes\*

### 7. **DISCUSSION:** Program Evaluation Letter update (see attached)

Every five years, each of the National Estuary Programs undergoes a Program Evaluation process with EPA to review how the program is doing. Continued participation in the program is contingent upon passing this process. The process culminates in a Program Evaluation (PE) letter, which lays out the noteworthy program accomplishments and areas for improvement. Twice a year, Estuary Program staff provides an update of activities to address the challenges identified by EPA in the PE letter. The attached summary describes activities underway or planned to address these challenges. Challenges for us to address include reporting measurable outcomes from projects and expanding outreach to non-English speakers.

### 8. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **Community Project Updates:** An agreement has been developed with Dr. Alexis Pasulka on a Morro Bay phytoplankton monitoring effort. Monitoring equipment has been purchased, two students have been selected to participate, and training has started. An agreement has been finalized with the Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD) to expand trash management in the Baywood area. Efforts are underway, with the trash receptacles expected to be installed by late spring. The Harbor Department's spill response project is complete, and final project reporting is wrapping up.
- **Expanding Capacity:** As part of the BIL funding coming to our program, we've been hiring to increase staff capacity. A full-time Restoration Coordinator was selected and came on board late last year. We have plans to hire additional Administrative support in the near future.
- **Administrative Updates:** The final agreement for the BIL funding came through in early January and we are able to bill expenses going back through November 2022. Our annual financial audit is wrapping up. The spring Association of National Estuary Program meeting is scheduled for the third week of March in Washington, D.C. and Mel will be attending. We are currently working with a consultant to develop the Equity Strategy for the BIL funding.

### 9. Adjourn to next meeting of May 17, 2023 at 4:00 p.m., to be held remotely via Zoom.

#### **Attachments:**

- Minutes from November 16, 2022 EC meeting
- EC Bylaws with proposed changes
- PE letter update