



Staff Report

1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of August 16, 2023 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** EC Membership Vote

The Government-at-Large position was filled by the State Coastal Conservancy for many years. While they are unable to continue with direct participation, they continue to coordinate with our program on funding and project opportunities.

Following our discussion in August, we reached out to the San Luis Obispo (SLO) County Public Works Department to determine if they would be interested in serving on the EC. As the Estuary Program and the County are involved in similar efforts to protect and restore habitats, they are a good fit for the EC. Staff reached out to Public Works staff, and the County put forth Deputy Director of Public Works Kate Ballantyne as an EC member and Director of Public Works John Diodati as the alternate.

Staff recommend approving membership of SLO County Public Works staff on the EC.

6. **ACTION:** Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Workplan Approval (see attached)

Based on the expected BIL funding for FY24, staff developed a workplan and budget for \$910,000 in BIL funding. Workplan tasks are the same as those in the FY22/23 BIL workplan, as most projects are multi-year efforts. Project highlights include stormwater management projects, monitoring and restoration partnerships with educational institutions, land managers, and regulators, and expansion of environmental education through teacher trainings and curriculum development.

Staff recommends EC approval of the FY24 BIL grant workplan and budget.

7. **DISCUSSION:** 320 and BIL Semi-annual Reports (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. As we are now managing funding from our 320 and BIL grants, two separate semi-annual reports are now required.

For our 320 funding, we have expended 85% of our funding since the cumulative grant began October 1, 2021 and met 273% of our match requirement.

For our BIL funding, we have expended 30% of our funding since the cumulative grant began, although the contracting was not completed and funds were not available until January 2023. The BIL funding for FY22 and FY23 does not have a match requirement.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **Community Project Updates:** Three Community Projects are underway. For the phytoplankton monitoring project, research and analysis continues. We are working with Dr. Pasulka to continue the project using BIL funding. The Cal Poly team produced a poster to be shared at the Coastal Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) conference in mid-November. The Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSO) are working through some logistical challenges on placement and installation of trash receptacles but the project will move forward as planned. Our FY24 project for One Cool Earth to support outdoor environmental education at Baywood Elementary began in August and is proceeding as planned.
- **Administrative Updates:** Our full-time Monitoring Technician is leaving in January, so efforts are ongoing to hire for the position. This month, staff are attending the CERF conference and the ANEP fall conference in Portland, Oregon.
- **Monitoring Updates:** The fall bay fish monitoring was completed in September using otter trawls, beam trawls, purse seines, beach seines, and fyke nets. Monitoring was conducted at 16 locations, and we sampled eDNA for comparison to the physical catch. We will repeat the monitoring in the spring. We conducted our first round of toxicity testing of creek waters earlier this summer, and results indicated some toxicity at San Luisito Creek. We are currently planning our wet season toxicity monitoring as well as a pesticide monitoring effort to be started next year.
- **Restoration Updates:** Dune work is underway, with planned ice plant management and dune plant monitoring on the sand spit as part of a UCSB Climate Action grant. Fall pikeminnow management was completed in October. The effort included PIT tagging steelhead and installing antennae to track their movement through lower Chorro Creek. Staff conducted a salt marsh bird's beak survey of the bay and found a 12% increase in habitat area.
- **Education and Outreach Updates:** Estuary Program staff completed three teacher training courses in FY23. We held a Science on Tap event in September and are planning another for early December. Nature Center updates continue. Staff is regularly tabling at SLO and Morro Bay farmer's markets and attending other local events.

9. Adjourn to next meeting of February 21, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., which will be hybrid with some attendees participating via Zoom and others meeting in the Estuary Program office.

Attachments:

- Minutes from August 16, 2023 EC meeting
- 320 Semi-annual Report
- BIL Semi-annual Report
- FY24 BIL workplan and budget