



**Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
Estuary Program Offices, Morro Bay, CA
and via Video Conferencing**

**May 20, 2026
4:00 pm**

Minutes

Attendees: Jason Curtis, *Bay Foundation*; Phil Hammer, *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*; Becka Kelly, *Morro Bay Harbor Department*; Ethan Bell, *Stillwater Sciences*; Christine Womack, *Los Osos Community Services District*; Dr. Crow White, *Cal Poly*; Jim Dantona, *SLO County*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*, Jodi Marfia, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates
 - Jason Curtis: No updates from the Bay Foundation for the EC.
 - Ethan Bell: Continue to collaborate with Estuary Program supporting steelhead and controlling pikeminnow in Chorro Creek, partnering to apply for funding with the state. Publication with CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife Bulletin assessing the effectiveness of efforts to support steelhead and control pikeminnow just got accepted should be good press for the Estuary Program and watershed. Will continue pikeminnow management efforts through the fall. Collaboration looking at fish passage barriers in the creeks and throughout the County to determine which need to be assessed and removed.
 - Crow White: Spoke with Heather Liwanag, Marine Mammal Physiologist at Cal Poly – asked her about bird flu epidemic and current status. According to NOAA it is officially over because patterns of infection have declined. While there is still spillover from birds to pinnipeds, it's not occurring from pinniped to pinniped. The Central Coast marine mammal rescue team swabbed all elephant seal carcasses they could identify and all tested negative. One California sea lion that was found in Morro Bay did test positive for H5N1 – they think it came down from up north but it isn't spreading.
 - Christine Womack: The Los Osos CSD has hired a new General Manager, Greg Kwolek, previously the Morro Bay's Public Works Director. The CSD's previous GM, Ron Munds, will be assistant GM until his retirement in August.
 - Jim Dantona: Approved Turri Road signage prohibiting camping to be posted so that Sheriff can begin to enforce the no camping ordinance, preventing pollution runoff into the estuary. The Public Works team will put up signs shortly and then Sheriff's Department will begin enforcement.
 - Phil Hammer: Two permit applications; Grassy Bar to extend operations for another 5 years, and the Army Corps of Engineers dredging – looking at dredging further than is typical.
 - Becka Kelly: Dredge boat Yaquina currently doing Harbor entrance and north sandpit, with some high spots they are hoping to touch on. Expected to complete work around June 6 or 7. One weather delay last week due to strong winds. The city is exploring a project to dredge the State Park Marina in the future. Not currently on the Army Corps list; It would be a separate contract. Hoping to be contracted for next winter. It would not be the Yaquina – it would be a clamshell dredge vs a hopper dredge. Waiting to get through environmental review. The harbor has seen uptick in use since fishing season started in April. Commercial salmon season is currently happening.
 - Ann: No updates.
 - Jodi: No updates.
2. No public comment.
3. Agenda revisions: None

4. **ACTION:** Consider approval of February 18, 2026 Executive Committee (EC) minutes

Vote: Jim moved to approve, Crow seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

5. **ACTION:** EC member elections

Staff recommends approving Dr. Bockmon as the member for the Science & Research interest seat and Dr. Johnson as the alternate, with three-year terms beginning in August 2026.

Vote: Jim moved to approve the slate recommended by staff. Ethan seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

6. **ACTION:** Consider approval of 320 base funding workplan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027

If updates to the workplan and budget are necessary per EPA feedback, staff will modify them as required. The EC will be notified if any substantive changes occur.

Staff recommend approval of the FY27 320 base funding workplan.

Vote: Chris motioned to approve, Crow seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Semi-annual reports for 320 base and IIJA funding

EPA requires semi-annual reports – one for 320 and one for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) grant. For the 320 grant, we have expended 75% of funding since October 2021, and we have met 201% of our match requirements. For the IIJA infrastructure grant we have expended about 60%. This grant does not require any match. Both have an end spend date of March 31, 2028. Jason asked about the final end date for spending for IIJA. Our FY26 IIJA grant application has an end date of March 31, 2028, and we will not be asking for any additional extensions so that is our final spend date.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

Administration:

- No additional updates

Monitoring:

- Special thanks to Miossi Charitable Trust – they have funded bioassessment for our program since 2013.

Restoration:

- Crow asked if we were aware of the Dangerman Preserve at Point Conception and how they were removing their iceplant. Similar protocol to Estuary Program.

Communications, Outreach, & Education:

- Science Explorations event at Cuesta was very well attended event.
- Science After Dark to be Tuesday, May 26 at Central Coast Aquarium in Avila. We are doing two presentations at the event. Tickets can be purchased directly through the Aquarium's web site.

9. Adjourn to next meeting of August 19, 2026 at 4 p.m., which will be hybrid with attendance via Zoom or meeting in the Estuary Program office.

Vote: Crow moved to adjourn at 4:50, Ethan seconded. All in favor.