



**Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting  
Estuary Program Offices, Morro Bay, CA  
via Video Conference Call**

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

### **Staff Report**

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1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider approval of February 18, 2026 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** EC member elections

The Science Seat on the EC, which is typically filled by Cal Poly faculty, have been valued contributors to the committee. Beginning in summer 2026, Dr. Crow White will be taking an academic sabbatical and thus will be resigning from the EC. The Science Seat alternate, Dr. Emily Bockmon, is interested in serving as the EC member. Crow and Emily identified Dr. Kevin Johnson of Cal Poly and who is serving as a Sea Grant Aquaculture Specialist, is interested in serving as the alternate. These changes would take place with the August 2026 meeting.

Staff recommend approving Dr. Bockmon as the member and Dr. Johnson as the alternate, with terms beginning in August 2026.

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

The National Estuary Programs for FY27 has been set as of \$850,000. The workplan tasks for FY27 are substantially similar to recent workplans, in particular because the 320 base funding is focused on operational costs while Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding is focused on project work. Changes to the FY27 320 base funding workplan include removing workplan tasks related to the 2026 State of the Bay and the addition of a task to update the Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan. Additional funding will also support increasing supply costs and staff compensation. Note that the workplan includes the following Consent Decree allocations: \$34,500 to support Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve (CCER) maintenance and \$15,000 for Community Projects.

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.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Semi-annual reports for 320 base and IIJA funding (see attached)

Twice a year, the Estuary Program submits semi-annual reports to EPA, which provide program status on the budget and tasks laid out in our workplans. Separate plans are created for IJJA and for 320 base funding.

For our 320 base funding, we have expended 75% of our funding since the cumulative grant began on October 1, 2021. We have met 201% of our match requirement. Cash and in-kind match are at approximately \$8 million.

For our IJJA funding, we have expended 59% of our four years of funding which totals \$2,662,740. The IJJA funding does not require match. This IJJA grant funding must be spent by March 31, 2028.

## 8. DISCUSSION: Program Highlights

- Administration Updates:
  - IJJA Grant: The Estuary Program received the FY26 IJJA grant in mid-April, and staff are coordinating with project partners to get those projects started. The hiring process is ongoing for the Associate Director position, with a decision expected before the end of May.
  
- Monitoring Updates:
  - Bioassessment: In mid-April, Monitoring staff led a spring bioassessment training for new staff, WSP Corpsmembers, CCAMP, and several CCC Corpsmembers. The season is now underway, with surveys starting in late April and continuing approximately weekly until mid-June.
  - Flow Monitoring: Monitoring staff are about halfway through our environmental water demand (EWD) monitoring for the spring season. Staff collect streamflow measurements at nine locations during April and May, a time of year when adequate water in the creeks is crucial for steelhead life stages.
  
- Restoration Updates:
  - Walters Creek Road Crossing & Floodplain Enhancement: Our consultant completed the ranch road crossing designs, including a new culvert, and cost estimates for permitting and implementation. We are evaluating feasibility given the costs. Additional beaver dam analogs were also constructed in late April.
  - Iceplant Removal Monitoring: Spring monitoring was completed in April to assess how dune habitat is responding to iceplant treatment. Overall we are seeing a positive response in native vegetation.
  - Arundo Removal: In a subaward with SLO County, 13 populations of Arundo were treated recently on Cal Poly property on Chorro Creek.
  - Eelgrass Genomics Study: The Nature Conservancy recently won a two-year OPC grant to evaluate eelgrass genomics related to temperature thresholds. Morro Bay will be one of six estuaries taking part in similar monitoring (reciprocal transplants, seed & blade collection for genetic study).
  
- Communications, Outreach, & Education Updates:
  - Communications: In the last four weeks, on Facebook we gained 280 new followers, received 151,100 views from 92,560 unique viewers, and had 106 link links (to our blog or Eventbrite). On Instagram, we gained 92 new followers and received 33,163 views from 12,040 unique viewers.

- Outreach: SOTB events are going well. We talked to 300 people at Beaver Fest and signups for our next two upcoming events are filling up. The Earth Day Cleanup and Science Explorations, were a big success.
- Education: In the past month, we hosted fieldtrips with six schools, interacting with about 150 students. The fieldtrips included kayaking, tidepooling, Elfin Forest exploration, and more. Preparation continues for the summer teacher training workshop series to be held in June in conjunction with Cal Poly. Plans are underway for summer family field trips, with dates to be released soon.

9. Adjourn to next meeting of August 19, 2026 at 4 p.m., which will be hybrid.

**Attachments:**

- Minutes from February 18, 2026 EC meeting
- FY27 320 base funding workplan
- 320 semi-annual report
- IJJA semi-annual report