



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

November 20, 2024  
4:00 pm

### Staff Report

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1. Introductions and Updates
2. Public Comment
3. Agenda Revisions
4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of August 21, 2024 Executive Committee (EC) minutes (see attached)
5. **ACTION:** Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Workplan and Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 (see attached)

Based on the expected BIL funding for FY25, staff developed a workplan and budget for \$910,000 in funding. The workplan tasks are the same as those in the previous BIL workplans, as most projects are multi-year efforts. Project highlights include a groundwater monitoring project with the Los Osos Community Services District, monitoring and restoration partnerships with educational institutions, land managers, and regulators, and expansion of environmental education through teacher trainings and curriculum development.

Staff recommend EC approval of the proposed FY25 BIL workplan and budget.

6. **DISCUSSION:** Semi-annual Reports for 320 and BIL (see attached)

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

For our 320 funding, we have expended 85% of our funding since the cumulative grant began on October 1, 2021. We have met 225% of our match requirement. Cash and in-kind match are at approximately \$5.1 million.

For our BIL funding, we have expended 53% of our three years of funding. The BIL funding does not have a match requirement.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Program Highlights

- **Community Project Updates:** The California State Parks (CSP) education Community Project is well underway. Nearly 24,000 copies of the Discover MPA's Activity Guide have been printed and delivered to CSP. Their staff have already begun distributing the guide to their museums, parks, and programs throughout the San Luis Coast District. They are tracking staff time and copies distributed for this effort, which will be reported when the project is complete.

- **Monitoring Updates:** We received the bioassessment taxonomy data for the spring monitoring season and were pleased to see an improvement in the macroinvertebrate scores. The scores were low in 2023, likely due to the high winter flows earlier that year. We submitted our data to the State Water Board for their Integrated Report process where they assess the impairment status of waterbodies throughout our region. We are beginning planning for a spring 2025 baywide eelgrass map and our regular fall eelgrass monitoring.
- **Restoration Updates:** The new Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE) Coastal Watershed Grant (CWG) is now underway, supporting work with USGS on SLR planning and adaptation measure development. We did fieldwork this fall looking at marsh elevation changes. For the San Luisito Creek fish passage barrier removal project, the consultant completed a hydrology report and conceptual designs for two alternatives which will be reviewed with agency partners. At CCER, we conducted geomorphic surveys to look at erosion and accretion changes over time. At Walters Creek, draft conceptual designs have been completed that include low-tech actions such as installing beaver-dam analogs, post-assisted log structures, and gully repairs. For the historical ecology study, SFEI completed a list of referenced documents and georeferenced maps. Next, they will start mapping habitat types within the watershed from the 1800s, with expert review planned. We coordinated with the CCCs on hand removal of iceplant on the sandspit, and additional treatment is planned for later in the fall. UCSB collected drone imagery to look at vegetation and dune changes within the city of Morro Bay owned section of the sandspit. Staff is finalizing a Habitat Protection and Restoration Strategy, a requirement from the EPA, which will be made available when completed.
- **Communications, Outreach, & Education Updates.** Staff hosted a Science Explorations event featuring four presentations on eelgrass in August, and a Science on Tap event about the habitats of Morro Bay in October. We are planning another Science Explorations event for mid-January, with a focus on climate resilience. Our education programming for the summer wrapped up and we reached over 750 students through programming with the Morro Bay Junior Guards, Morro Bay Little Guards, and the Creek Lands Conservation summer program. The 2025 Educator Workshop series planning is underway; staff held two training events in September and October to train selected educators to be part of the facilitation team for 2025. The September Creeks to Coast Cleanup with EcoSLO was a success, with approximately 70 volunteers picking up over 30 pounds of trash at the Morro Rock site. Staff updated an existing Mutts for the Bay coloring book to be a more well-rounded activity booklet focused on eco-friendly dog ownership. We also tabled at the Woods Humane Society Wiggle Waggle festival for the third year in a row and connected with over 150 attendees.

8. Adjourn to next meeting of February 19, 2025 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 21, 2024 EC meeting
- FY25 Draft BIL Workplan
- 320 semi-annual report
- BIL semi-annual report

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