



# Director's Report

August 21, 2019

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### 2019 State of the Estuary Conference



The program for the State of the San Francisco Estuary Conference will be posted on the conference web site the week of August 19th. The Early-Bird Registration deadline is September 23rd. The two-day event will highlight the latest information about the region's work to sustain and improve the estuary's habitats, living resources, water quality, climate resilience, and environmental stewardship. The Reception on the evening of October 21st will feature over 150 Poster Presentations and the Arts Showcase: "Exploratorium Field Station: Art & Artifacts from the Fisher Bay Observatory Gallery." Check out the conference website to get more information: <http://www.sfestuary.org/soe/>.

### IRWM Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Involvement Program (DACTIP)

As mentioned in the last Director's Report, SFEP is taking over the administration of the DACTIP from the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water. SFEP has worked with both DWR and the originally contracted partners to develop draft scopes of work for all parties moving forward. The DWR contract agreement is currently undergoing MTC review and

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approval. Eleven DACTIP partner agency agreements are being finalized. The intent is to have all parties back under contract by early September.

### Clean Vessel Act Program Outstanding Service Award



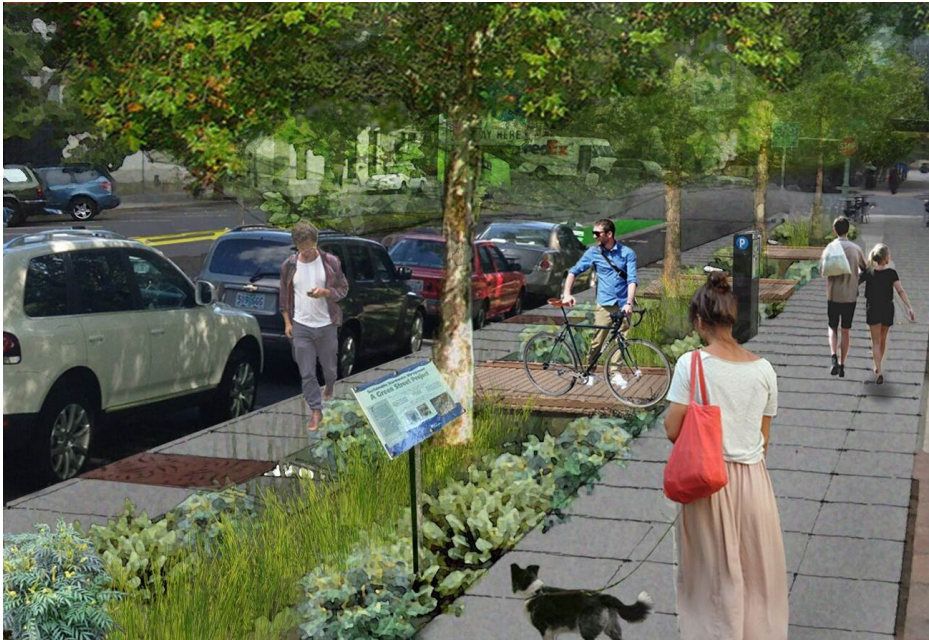
Pumpout Nav, the Clean Vessel Act Program's mobile app to locate recreational boater sewage pumpouts, has been selected for an Outstanding Service Award by the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA). SOBA is an organization that provides a forum for the exchange of views, ideas, concepts and experiences related to all aspects of recreational boating facilities and has members from all 50 states. The Outstanding Service Award is presented to individuals or agencies that have made a significant contribution to improved access to the nation's public waters.

Pumpout Nav, available on both iOS and Android, points recreational boaters to nearby operational sewage pumpouts, outlines rules and regulations, offers details about the impacts of sewage in the waterways, and guides users through videos and instructions on how to use a pumpout. The award will be accepted by CVA staff during the annual SOBA conference in Portsmouth, Virginia on September 11.

### San Pablo Avenue Green Stormwater Spine

This array of green infrastructure retrofit projects will begin in September in Berkeley (from Harrison Ave to the northern city limit) with the Oakland site (one block north of Frank Ogawa Plaza) starting soon thereafter. We are still awaiting utility relocations to start the Emeryville and El Cerrito sites, likely early in 2020. Originally conceived to implement seven green stormwater retrofits in seven cities treating seven acres of runoff along San Pablo Avenue in the East Bay, the project has been downsized to four sites and 6 acres treated cumulatively due to site

conditions, costs, and utility conflicts. Because of the project delays, we lost some implementation money from the first round of IRWM, however MTC stepped in to replace this loss with Bay Area Toll Authority funding. Other funding sources include the Natural Resources Agency's Urban Green Program and Caltrans mitigation for the SF-Oakland Bay Bridge span replacement.



## San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA) has updated its logo and website (<http://sfbayrestore.org/>). Look out for the funding logo (pictured below), which combines the SFBRA Logo with Measure AA, and will be popping up on signs around the Bay for SFBRA funded projects. In June, staff of the SFBRA announced that it will recommend allocating \$67.5 million Measure AA funding to five projects to improve the health and ecological functions of the Bay. Two of the five projects were awarded funding at the June 7 Governing Board meeting; the remaining three will be presented for funding at the December 6 Governing Board Meeting.

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The projects approved for funding in June include:

- \$968,916 to Marin Audubon Society to prepare technical studies, refine designs, and conduct environmental review and public outreach for restoration and sea level rise adaptation actions at Tiscornia Marsh.
- \$57,026,673 over a five-year period to the Santa Clara Valley Water District for design and implementation of the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project to provide flood protection, restore 2,900 acres of former salt evaporation ponds, and enhance public access in the Alviso area of South San Francisco Bay. \$11 million of the full award will be allocated in this first year.



The projects that will be presented for funding at the December 6 Governing Board Meeting include:

- \$7,929,855 to Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for the Restoration of Lower Walnut Creek, creating and enhancing a 328-acre mosaic of tidal marsh and channels, adjacent terrestrial lowlands, and uplands to support a diversity of plant communities and wildlife species.
- \$450,000 to East Bay Regional Park District for to plan and permit the Coyote Hills Restoration and Public Access Project, which will restore rare high value habitat along the Bay margin and provide public access on 306 acres of park land in Fremont.
- \$1,100,000 to for the Port of San Francisco Heron's Head Park Shoreline Resilience Project, which will restore the subtidal, tidal and upland habitat of this park with living shoreline elements and native plants designed to adapt to sea level rise.

Check out the [new website](#) to see learn about all of the projects funded by Measure AA.



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## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWM) Projects

#### **Marin/Sonoma Conserving Our Watersheds: Agricultural BMP Projects**

*Project Sponsor: Marin Resource Conservation District*

The Conserving Our Watersheds: Agricultural BMP Project's goal was to encourage collaboration with local ranchers and other natural resource management agencies to implement BMPs to improve water quality within the Tomales Bay, San Antonio, and



Novato Creek watersheds. To accomplish this, the RCD worked with local land owners to assist 17 landowners in installing 31 BMPs. The benefits of the installed BMPs included improved water quality, increased on-farm water supply, and enhanced wildlife habitat. Twenty-two entities, including local ranchers and natural

resource management agencies, engaged in collaboration to make this project a success.

#### **San José Green Street Demonstration Project**

*Project Sponsor: City of San José*

The City of San José constructed seven bioretention rain gardens along Chynoweth Avenue, a busy street bordered by Santa Clara County's Martial Cottle Park to the north and residential single family and multifamily homes to the south. The project involves the reconstruction of a residential street to eliminate excess



lane width while constructing new bioretention areas on the northern side of the street to treat stormwater runoff. The project created approximately 5,600 square feet of bioretention rain gardens, installed approximately 19,500 square feet of porous asphalt, and eliminated approximately 40,000 square feet of existing impervious pavement. The project demonstrates retrofit of a street type common in the Bay Area and highlights the integration of LID features in an area with two different land uses.

### **Bay Area Regional Drought Relief Conservation Program**

*Project Sponsor: StopWaste*



The Bay Area Regional Drought Relief Conservation Program (the Project) implemented water use efficiency best management practices (BMPs) including toilet/urinal rebates, clothes washer rebates, landscape rebates, toilet/urinal direct installation, and lawn-to-garden education throughout the San Francisco Bay Area region. This Project was in response to recent dry years and other strains on the Bay Delta and Bay Area water supplies and it supported the statewide 20% drought demand reduction goal. This Project was completed successfully, exceeding original goals and accomplishing anticipated benefits. This project converted 3.75 million square feet of lawn to

landscape and over 50,000 high-efficiency toilet, urinal, and washer rebates issued. Additionally, the lawn-to-garden website has reached over 475,000 people since its creation in 2015, providing information on lawn conversion rebates, compost and mulch sources, and how to sheet mulch. The program also engaged 23 partner vendors who provided in-store information on sheet mulching for lawn conversion. Like lawn-to-garden, the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper program created customer-facing educational materials for landscapers in Sonoma and Marin Counties. This project anticipates a reduction in water use by approximately 28,000 AF over the 20-year lifespan of the installed features.

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## NEW FUNDING

### Transforming Shorelines (\$1,481,409)

We are excited to share the [Transforming Urban Water Initiative](#) has received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 SF Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund for a project titled *Transforming Shorelines: Advancing nature-based solutions and building capacity for innovative approaches linked to wastewater treatment*. The Transforming Shorelines project will create critical linkages between wastewater treatment, resilience to sea level rise and water quality improvement. The project intends to foster collaboration among engineers, designers, regulators, planners, managers and researchers to support innovative, multi-benefit solutions. Transforming Shorelines will develop much-needed tools allowing audiences to use best available science to improve design, permitting and implementation of nature-based multi-benefit projects. It will also advance design, permitting and implementation of a suite of nutrient management, sea level protection, water quality improvement and habitat enhancement projects around the San Francisco Bay. The project will kickoff this fall and run through 2023.

Project partners include the East Bay Dischargers Authority, Oro Loma Sanitary District, San Francisco Estuary Institute, and several local project proponents around the Bay. For information about the project, please contact Heidi Nutters ([heidi.nutters@sfestuary.org](mailto:heidi.nutters@sfestuary.org)).

### Wetland Regional Monitoring Program Phase II (\$489,670)

SFEP has been selected for FY 2019-2020 Wetland Program Development Grant funding for the Wetland Regional Monitoring Program Phase II. The grant was submitted in partnership with the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Bay, Aquatic Science Center, San Francisco Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

This project will finish planning the SF Bay Wetland Regional Monitoring Program ([WRMP](#)), building capacity for tidal marsh restoration and protection by enabling the assessment of wetland projects relative to ambient conditions. The overall objective of this WRMP project

is to gain alignment with state and federal wetland regulatory programs and procedures, and build capacity to manage and deliver WRMP data and information. Specific actions include: 1) Determine WRMP funding, governance and program administration; 2) Determine how the WRMP will serve federal, state, and regional regulatory programs; and 3) Design a user-informed data management system to manage and deliver WRMP data and information to answer the management questions established previously. The project will begin following final approvals and continue through 2021 and has a total budget of \$653,170 including match. For more information about the project, please contact Heidi Nutters ([heidi.nutters@sfestuary.org](mailto:heidi.nutters@sfestuary.org)).

## COMMUNICATIONS

### ESTUARY News Magazine



The June [issue of ESTUARY News](#) explores the rainbow flavors of infrastructure — green, blue, living, nature-based, multi-benefit. As regional regulators require more from municipalities on the stormwater management front, many are developing more specific plans, building demo projects, and expanding rain gardens, pervious parking lots, and tree wells. This issue also describes the construction of the region's fifth and largest living shorelines project at Giant Marsh near Point Pinole.

### National Estuaries Week

The Senate passed a resolution on August 2nd designating the week of September 14 through September 21 as "National Estuaries Week." The resolution describes the economic importance of estuaries and the critical ecosystem services

estuaries provide that protection human health and safety, points out the ongoing threats to estuaries, and calls out the importance of the Coastal Management Act, National



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Estuarine Research Reserves and the National Estuary Program. We encourage all of our partners to add their Coastal Cleanup or Creek to Bay Day events to the National Estuaries Week [events website](#) and to promote National Estuaries Week on social media and other platforms. Resources including sample posts are available on the [Restore America's Estuaries website](#).

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

### NEP Reauthorization Bill

The Protect and Restore America's Estuaries Act (HR 4044), a bipartisan bill which would reauthorize the National Estuary Program (set to expire in 2021), was introduced late July by Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-NJ), Rep. Garret Graves (R-La), and Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-Tex) and has been referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The bill nearly doubles the authorized funding for the program and ensures that plans governing estuaries consider the effects of recurring weather events and develop adaptation strategies. I will be tracking this bill and will keep the Implementation Committee informed of its progress.

### Staff Updates



**Leslie Perry** has been with SFEP for 13 years providing staff assistance to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, working under a contract funded by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The County has decided to not renew the contract, so Leslie will be joining us at the Bay Area MetroCenter in San Francisco to work on other SFEP projects, including IRWM. We are excited to bring Leslie's extensive experience with flood control projects, stream restoration, urban stormwater runoff, watershed stewardship, and permitting and environmental review more broadly to SFEP's projects and programs.





**Tommy Alexander** is a graduate student intern at SFEP for the summer of 2019. During his time here, he's helping to implement the program's Communications Plan through content creation and web analytics, and is also working to support project managers with contract data management and process documentation. Tommy is pursuing an MS in Environmental Management at the University of San Francisco, where his primary research involves assessing the consistency and success of compensatory mitigation requirements under the California Coastal Act.

### November Strategic Planning Retreat

Don't forget that the last Implementation Meeting of 2019 on November 6 will be an all day Strategic Planning Retreat! We will focus on remaining challenges to implementing the current Estuary Blueprint and begin to set the stage for the next version.