



Director's Report

May 20, 2020

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

National Estuary Program Coastal Watersheds Grant Program

Restore America's Estuaries released the first [Request for Proposals](#) for the new National Estuary Programs Coastal Watersheds Grant Program. The Grant Program is the result of many years of effort on the part of the US EPA, the Association of National Estuary Programs, and Restore America's Estuaries. The competitive grant program was added in the 2015 reauthorization of the National Estuary Program and currently has \$4 million in appropriated funding. The program will fund projects that implement Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans in all 28 National Estuaries. Letters of Intent are due by August 7th and submittals from our area are required to include a letter of acknowledgement from SFEP.

Transforming Urban Water (TrUW) Initiative

The SFEP-led TrUW Initiative works to advance nature-based solutions in partnership with wastewater treatment plants in the SF Estuary. The Initiative includes ongoing collaborations with our research partners on the Oro Loma Horizontal Levee Outdoor Laboratory that continues to study/monitor water quality benefits of horizontal levees. Oro Loma is designed to become a regional testing laboratory to answer questions about horizontal levees other wastewater managers might have. Working with the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Treatment Center, operated by Valley Water, a section of the Oro Loma Horizontal Levee was recently converted to test inflow of Reverse Osmosis Concentrate (leftover from potable water recycling). Our research partners from UC Berkeley released the first [scientific paper](#) on the results of the Oro Loma Outdoor Laboratory, highlighting the successful nutrient removal of such infrastructure. We are excited to see many years of

work come to fruition, and look forward to additional results being published in the coming year. For more information visit the program website: <https://www.sfestuary.org/truw/>.

WRMP Plan Now Available



The Wetland Regional Monitoring Program Plan for the SF Estuary was published April 2, 2020. The WRMP will improve wetland restoration project success by putting in place regional-scale monitoring increasing the impact, utility and application of permit-driven monitoring to inform science-based decision-making. Once in place, the WRMP will be a robust, science-driven, collaborative regional monitoring program that includes: a) Monitoring site network; b) Open data sharing platform; c) Comprehensive science framework.

The WRMP website includes a link to the Plan as well as a brief project handout: www.wrmp.org.

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Updates

In its first virtual meeting on May 8th, the Governing Board of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority heard the slate of [nine projects](#) that staff will recommend for consideration for the third round of Measure AA grant funding for approximately \$11.6 million. The projects include a number of grants to advance innovative approaches to shoreline restoration and community-led restoration projects. At the May 8th meeting, the Governing Board approved funding for two of those projects; the [San Pablo Baylands Collaborative Protection & Restoration \(CPR\) Project](#): Phase 1 and the [North Richmond Shoreline Living Levee Project](#).

The North Richmond project, will be managed by SFEP Project Manager Josh Bradt, and represents one of the innovative community-led restoration projects funded in this round. The funding was granted to West County Wastewater District to work with the coordinating committee and partners to conduct technical studies and data collection; develop conceptual designs and associated cost estimates; and engage the public, key stakeholders,

and the regulatory community as the initial phase in determining feasibility and alignment options for a living levee that will be designed to create transitional upland habitat, provide sea level rise flood protection to critical infrastructure and neighboring disadvantaged communities, and improve public access to the North Richmond Shoreline.

GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

San Pablo Ave Green Stormwater Spine project implementation continues, with the Oakland site being substantially completed and opened back up to traffic. This project site installed a linear bioretention planter along the full length of the block in downtown. NBC Bay Area News featured this site in a recently [broadcasted piece](#). Installation of interpretive signage and boardwalks over the planter are coming in May.



The final two sites in El Cerrito and Emeryville are planned for the summer, after water pipeline relocations that were delayed by COVID-19 related postponement of non-emergency repairs.

The City of San Mateo successfully completed implementation of three green stormwater retrofits at the residential intersections of 4th Ave

& Fremont St., 5th Ave & Delaware St., and 9th Ave & Delaware St. The City's Public Works Engineering Division developed the construction plans in-house using typical conceptual intersection retrofit specifications developed for the Urban Greening Bay Area project funded by the EPA's SF Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund. The implementation of the

retrofits was funded by the same grant. The pictures below are from the 9th and Delaware location. Contact Josh.Bradt@sfestuary.org for more information.



Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWM) Grants

The IRWM program has worked with the Bay Area IRWM Coordinating Committee to update the IRWM Plan, have it approved by the state, and to get the new plan adopted by all required parties. The Plan was approved in March, 2020 and is now being considered for adoption by governing bodies through the Bay Area.

The Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement IRWM grant has made significant progress toward completing the 11 needs assessments that are being conducted throughout the region. This work has been delayed due to the need to have community meetings and the limitations imposed by COVID-19. One major issue that was noted in preliminary findings from these needs assessments was mistrust of tap water quality. SFEP hosted a tap water quality testing workshop on May 12 to begin discussing how to move forward in addressing the mistrust in tap water quality. Contact James.Muller@sfestuary.org for more information.

NEW FUNDING

2020-21 Clean Vessel Act Program - \$262,000

SFEP was awarded a new Clean Vessel Act Grant from the CA State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways. This yearly grant has been secured by SFEP for the past 12 years. The 2020-21 effort will support three SFEP staff to run this dynamique education/outreach and pollution prevention program. Funds will advance the development of the award-winning Pumpout Nav app for iOS and Android devices, as well as remote outreach efforts on pollution-prevention for the boating community. More information can be found at www.sfestuary.org/boating.

State Coastal Conservancy Prop 1 Grant - Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot Project - \$500,000



SFEP was awarded funds from the State Coastal Conservancy Prop 1 grant round to support design and permitting of the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee pilot (PAHLP) project. The PAHLP project is located within the City of Palo Alto's Baylands Nature Preserve, and adjacent to its wastewater treatment plant, the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant. The project would build a gentle, vegetated slope that provides

multiple benefits including habitat for sensitive and endangered species, wastewater polishing treatment, public access, and flood protection for adjacent communities and City of Palo Alto (City) infrastructure. For more information, contact Heidi Nutters (heidi.nutters@sfestuary.org) and check out the project website: <https://www.sfestuary.org/truw-pahlp/>.

COMMUNICATIONS

ESTUARY News Magazine

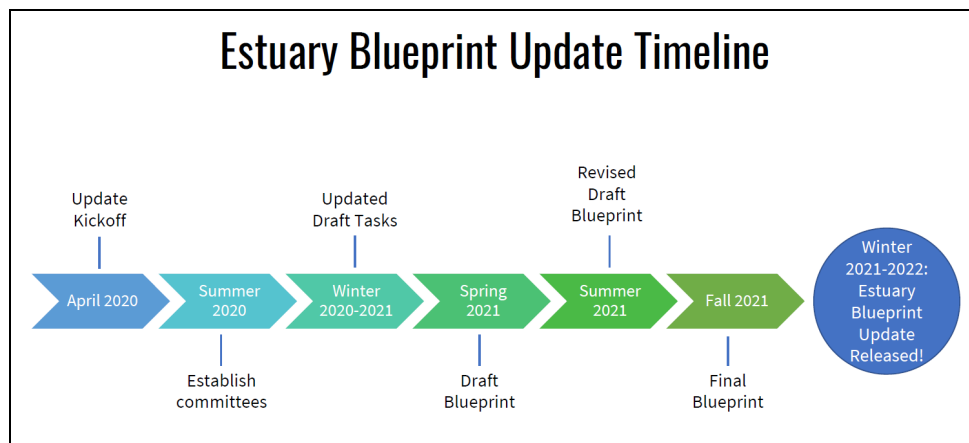
The March [issue of ESTUARY News](#) highlights the importance of watersheds as resilient infrastructure. Stories inside explore everything from dam removal to cold water releases for steelhead to the restoration of creek mouths and former flood control channels. Additional coverage looks at where the salmon are moving as they migrate from the Sacramento River's headwaters to the Pacific, and examine wastewater recycling in the Pajaro River watershed.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Estuary Blueprint Update

Call for Steering Committee Members! If you are interested in helping guide the 2022 update of the Estuary Blueprint, please consider joining the Blueprint Update Steering Committee. The BUSC (we will work on the acronym) will consist of a subset of IC members who will meet in between IC meetings to help keep the Update process moving forward. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer (caitlin.sweeney@sfestuary.org or 415-778-6681).



SFEP Staff Receives Watershed Leadership Award!

I am pleased to report that Josh Bradt received a Watershed Leadership Award by the Planning Committee for the 2019 Contra Costa Creek and Watershed Symposium. The award recognizes outstanding leadership and vision in protecting the watersheds of Contra Costa County. Josh joins the following distinguishedA honorees for the 2019 award:

Whitney Dodson, *East Bay Regional Park District*

Helen Fitandes, *The Watershed Project*

Juliana Gonzalez, *The Watershed Project*

Heidi Petty, *Contra Costa Resource Conservation District*

EPA 5 Year Program Evaluation

As reported in the Director's Report for March 18, every five years, each NEP undergoes a Program Evaluation process undertaken by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Program Evaluation consists of two parts: 1) a package of written materials including responses to standardized performance measures and a narrative summary of the NEP's work plan goals and activities, and 2) an on-site visit by the Performance Evaluation Team from EPA Headquarters and including an ex-officio NEP Director (to be undertaken in September).

I submitted the package of written materials on March 16 as required. However, on April 23 I was notified that due to COVID-19 all in-person site visits for the 2020 round of Program Evaluations have been cancelled.