



Director's Report

November 18, 2020

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2021 State of the Estuary Conference

Due to meeting restrictions imposed by Covid-19, and the uncertainty of the year ahead, the 2021 State of the Estuary Conference is being planned as a primarily virtual event, with the possibility of hosting remote, small gatherings where allowed, including on site at the Bay Area Metro Center as well as throughout the Bay and Delta. This conference is tentatively scheduled for the week of September 27th to October 1st, 2021. We are conducting research on the best platforms and services with which to host and facilitate the conference, along with its many breakout sessions, poster sessions, and scheduled activities. The staff is currently working on forming the Conference Steering Committee, and will plan to hold the first meeting in January 2021.

Healthy Watersheds Resilient Baylands

Implementation of several exciting South Bay urban greening projects, part of the Healthy Watersheds, Resilient Baylands Program, are nearing completion. The City of Sunnyvale's first green stormwater infrastructure project has been installed on a major arterial street, Caribbean Drive. In addition, partners Grassroots Ecology and Canopy have coordinated hundreds of volunteers over the past three years to plant native trees and other plants at five sites in East Palo Alto, including three sites along the Bay Trail. SFEI's final Sediment Strategy report will be released later this year, and another SFEI product of the grant, [Making Nature's City](#), is undergoing further development. The program, funded by EPA's WQIF grant, recently received a two-year extension in order to bring a new green infrastructure project in East Palo Alto into the program, and to further advance planning for tidal wetlands restoration at Pond A8 in the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project.

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

Progress is being made on San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA) projects. The Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy, was the first project funded by Measure AA to be completed. The [project description](#) and final report, "[Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy.](#)" are available on the [SFBRA project website](#). The [Montezuma Tidal and Seasonal Wetlands Restoration](#) project was one of the first projects to be funded by the SFBRA. Funds from the \$1.6 million Measure AA grant were used to prepare the site for the breach, which occurred on October 27, 2020, reconnecting 550 acres to tidal marsh to the Bay.



Montezuma Wetlands: Beginning of Phase 1 Breach October 2020

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Ocean Acidification - Data Analysis Project

Building on a previous project that deployed two moored sensors (remember BOB and MARI?) in the Bay in 2018 to perform long-term scientific monitoring of ocean acidity and carbon dioxide in the waters of the Bay, the most recent EPA-funded project focused on further analysis of the data collected from the sensors. Led by a UC Davis scientist, two years of data on pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, salinity and dissolved carbon dioxide were collected and summarized, an analysis was undertaken to identify low-oxygen and low pH events, and an interpretation of the factors responsible for those events were all provided in a final project report. Findings from the analysis will also be submitted for publication in a scientific journal.

NEW FUNDING

NEP Award for FY 20-21 - \$662,500

We received our annual National Estuary Program award from EPA for FY 21. This year's award marks an increase of \$62,500 from the previous year. The IC approved the workplan and budget for the expected FY 21 award at the May 2020 meeting.

IRWM Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement - \$1,807,000

The California Department of Water Resources has added \$1.8 million to our \$3 million grant we received in 2019 to fund water needs assessments in disadvantaged communities and Tribes. This funding will support additional project development needs and Tap Water Quality Testing that has been widely requested by the communities we are working with.

Science Partnership to Support the San Francisco Estuary - \$946,246

We are entering into a new agreement with the Delta Stewardship Council to implement scientific studies and projects to respond to priority issues that impact the Estuary. Specific tasks include collaborating with the Delta Stewardship Council on the Estuary Blueprint update, the State of the Estuary Report, the State of the Estuary Conference, and science communication products. We hope to have the new agreement in place by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATIONS

ESTUARY News Magazine



The September issue of ESTUARY News summarizes 12 years of research on the fish-friendly Yolo Bypass, and profiles one man who has spent a lifetime helping fish around dams. Reporters take readers out on the Delta to survey fish with cameras, and into the offshore ocean to troll for salmon from a kayak. This issue also covers the latest research on COVID in wastewater, emerging contaminants in stormwater, harmful algal blooms in the Delta, a bold landscape redesign proposal for Franks Tract, as well as concerns about the region's aging fleet research

vessels. Three stories and a new podcast explore shifts in how the region is distributing environmental dollars and opportunities with more of an eye on equity and racism.

Estuary News has also curated and promoted a monthly digital newsletter, "[Pearls](#)," composed of shorter, timely articles focused on estuary-wide issues. The April - July issues included stories on new science around cattle and Delta water, whales and carbon, wildfire and forest management, and horizontal levees and regional adaptation planning, among others.

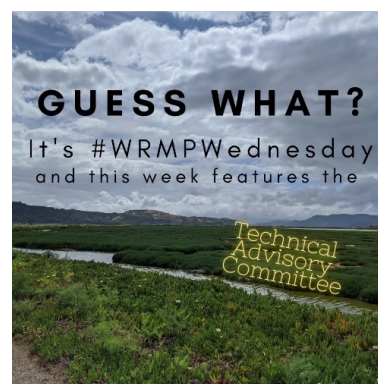
In a special new segment called Estuary Voices, SFEP's Liz Juvera asks women working at the equity forefront to share their observations, struggles, and insights.



Their observations reflect the different stages of their careers, and the different types of organizations they work in, including a small NGO, a city planning department, a state regulator, and a regional collaborative of local governments. This podcast, [Equity with Intention](#), shares a selection from four different interviews.

Social Media Guest Programs: #WRMPWednesdays and #CVAFridays

At the beginning of July, the Wetland Regional Monitoring Program began a periodic “takeover” of the Estuary Partnership’s social media platforms ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)), posting as the WRMP about the program and key sites and people. Kelly Santos, the Estuary Partnership’s SeaGrant fellow, leads this effort.



Beginning in August, the Clean Vessel Act Program joined in the fun with their own “takeover” of the Estuary Partnership’s social media platforms with #CVAFriday.

Both takeovers have been very successful and will continue on a monthly basis.

National Estuaries Week

September 19-26 was National Estuaries Week. The 28 National Estuary Programs, the 29 National Estuarine Research Reserves, and the 10 Restore America's Estuaries programs offered in-person and virtual opportunities throughout the week during which close to 10,000 participants learned about and enjoyed our estuaries. Members of the House and Senate signed bi-partisan resolutions in support of National Estuaries Week. The theme of National Estuaries Week this year was #EstuaryHeroes. The



San Francisco Estuary Partnership used the opportunity to take to social media to celebrate some of our local estuary heroes from various organizations including the Watershed Project, the SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, the CA State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, and the SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

Innovations in Nature-Based Systems for Coastal Protection Webinar

Restoration projects and programmatic efforts in the SF Bay were featured in a webinar hosted by the [University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science](#) on November 5, 2020. The panel was moderated by Cindy Palinkas, and panelists included: Heidi Nutters, San Francisco Estuary Partnership; Doug George, Office for Coastal Management, NOAA; Dave Halsing, State Coastal Conservancy; and Donna Ball, San Francisco Estuary Institute.

To listen to the recorded webinar, [follow this link](#) and use the password **&pR2QUx4**.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Estuary Blueprint Update

The Estuary Blueprint Steering Committee met in September and October. The Steering Committee reviewed a Draft Action Update Strategy which will be used to guide the review and update of the actions. The Action Update Strategy draws from the Guiding Principles for the 2022 Blueprint update, considers different categories of tasks, and addresses climate change vulnerability. The Steering Committee also continued review and discussion of existing actions, considered an equity strategy for the update, discussed potential new actions, and reviewed a Working Groups Plan.

Based on feedback from the Steering Committee, eleven working groups have been established to review individual or small clumps of existing actions. The working groups each have a SFEP staff lead who will coordinate closely with Steering Committee members, existing action owners, and other additional partners to develop and review new draft actions.

The IC should expect to see Blueprint-related agenda items at all of your meetings through 2021. For example, today's meeting focuses on climate resilience, which will inform the update of several actions. The IC should expect to have draft content to review primarily during the Summer 2021 timeframe. In addition, IC members will likely be contacted individually for input during the drafting process between now and Spring of 2021.

IC Changes



John Klochak has taken advantage of an early retirement opportunity from USFWS and transitioned into a new position as a senior ecologist with the King County, Washington Department of Natural Resources & Parks, Water & Land Resources Division, River and Floodplain Management Section. With the earlier transition of Anne Morkill from her position with USFWS to become the Executive Director of the Laguna Foundation, both the primary and alternate representatives for the USFWS on the IC are now vacant. I am working with the USFWS to appoint new representatives to join the IC.