



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 19, 2021

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2021 State of the Estuary Summit - October 1

After much internal and external discussion, we are scaling back the 2021 SOE Conference to a one day virtual event, making it available to participants for free, and streamlining the content to something more manageable to produce without external technical support.

The 2021 State of the Estuary "Summit" will be held October 1 (previously Monday-Tuesday September 27-28) in order to utilize our agency's existing platforms and manage the associated scheduling constraints. We expect to return to our usual 2-3 day in-person format in 2023.

Estuary Blueprint 2022 Update

Progress continues on the update of the Estuary Blueprint, as Working Group Leads have convened or are convening kickoff meetings, individual Action meetings, and one-on-one calls and Zoom meetings. The Steering Committee met recently on the topic of sediment, including SFEI's recently released report, to lay the groundwork for integration of the recent findings and recommendations into the next Blueprint. Outreach and public engagement efforts are also underway: staff have presented to the RWQCB, SFBRA, BACWA, the NASA "Green Team" Staff Group, and Bay-Delta RCDs, and have more presentations scheduled in the coming weeks. In addition, a brief, general survey is available online to solicit public input into the update process. To share with others, please use this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/estuaryblueprint>.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Supplemental Environmental Program Projects

The Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) Program recently wrapped up four projects: two with EBMUD, one with San Jose Water Company (SJWC), and one with Ross Valley Sanitary District (RVSD). These projects showcase the breadth of projects in the SEP Program. For more on the SEP Program and SFEP's role, visit <https://www.sfestuary.org/supplemental-environmental-projects/>

One of the two projects led by EBMUD entailed the installation of 1000+ leak detection loggers on water distribution pipes to detect and repair leaks near creeks when they are small, and detect pipe breaks quickly, minimizing the risk of unplanned discharges of potable water to local creeks. For the second SEP project, EBMUD installed fifteen new chlorine analyzers at distribution system reservoirs to remotely monitor chlorine residual levels, allowing for improved public health by ensuring more consistent chlorine residuals in the potable water distribution system.

For its project, SJWC recently led the update of the *Best Management Practices Manual for Drinking Water System Releases* for the Cal-Nevada Section of the American Water Works Association. The updated manual for water agencies provides guidance on water main leak detection, unplanned or emergency discharges, mapping sensitive water bodies, and much more.

RVSD funded a wetland enhancement and revegetation project at Creekside Marsh, a site adjacent to Corte Madera Creek in Kentfield. The project, implemented by Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed, upgraded a culvert to increase tidal exchange and replaced some of the existing soil with clean mud from the Bay to make the former dump site more hospitable to subsequent revegetation with mid- and high-marsh plants.



RVSD's completed wetland enhancement and revegetation project at Creekside Marsh along Corte Madera Creek, completed under the SEP Program. Credit: Darcie Luce

Clean Vessel Act Program Virtual Outreach

The Clean Vessel Act Program is a long-running, grant-funded program through the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, focusing on education and outreach promoting public awareness about boat sewage and its proper disposal. Over the years, SFEP staff have attended over 45 boat shows and given over 75 presentations on clean boating, interacting with thousands of recreational boaters throughout the region.



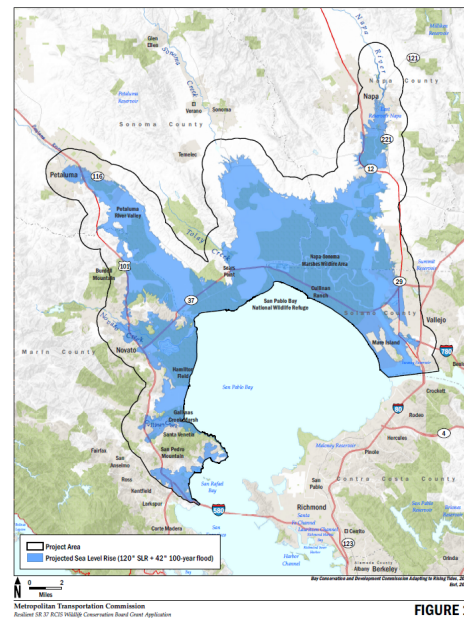
With the onset of COVID-19 and the cancellation of all in-person events, staff working on the clean boating program needed to quickly pivot to an education and outreach program that was 100% virtual. The result was a year of online presentations, social media campaigns and a reimagining of what outreach means without face-to-face interactions. That grant ended in April 2021.

The new education and outreach grant for \$330,000 began in May and runs through the end of 2022. Staff have continued to create free sewage pollution prevention tools for

boaters that have been well-received both regionally and nationally. The photo on the left is a kit for boaters to help service their boats while protecting waters from unintended sewage discharge. The team has also expanded the award-winning Pumpout Nav app that offers coverage in Washington, Oregon and the Lake Champlain region of Vermont, New York and Quebec. With in-person events potentially returning in 2022, staff will take lessons learned from a year of virtual interactions and bring some new tools to enliven a 15-year old program.

NEW FUNDING

In partnership with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (lead agency), Caltrans, and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, SFEP applied for and has been notified of a pending award of \$640,000 from the Wildlife Conservation Board to develop a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) for the San Pablo Bay Shoreline (between the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and Carquinez Bridge touchdowns). The proposed RCIS will incorporate the range of climate projections into the development of conservation actions designed to increase the resiliency of San Pablo bayland habitats, transportation infrastructure (centrally, State Route 37), and neighboring communities to sea level rise and extreme weather events. It will define a framework to promote the implementation of these conservation strategies as compensatory mitigation, and as advanced mitigation credits. This would allow for sponsoring agencies to implement advanced restoration and nature-based solutions to climate change adaptation projects along the SR 37 Corridor. The transportation agencies would benefit from assurance that these up-front efforts will be counted towards mitigations necessary to implement future Resilient SR 37 Corridor Program projects.



COMMUNICATIONS

ESTUARY News Magazine

The March issue of ESTUARY News shares some of the bounty of spring, as activists, engineers, and adventurers challenge themselves to get stuff done on the tail of Covid. Stories include a proposed solo kayak trip from SF to Hawaii, the latest on stalled flow agreements, and how scientists have linked climate change to weather extreme events. Also in this issue, North Bay restoration progress on various projects, a deep dive into sediment monitoring plans, and an opinion from Restoration Authority's Jessica Davenport on opening up bayshore breathing space for all. Plus beavers, snow, oil spills, and Delta at risk of stronger floods and less water supply.



Estuary Voices Podcast interviewed Caitlin Sweeney and Amanda Bohl to discuss new priorities and challenges in updating the 2016 Estuary Blueprint, including equity and environmental justice, bringing more social sciences to bear on the biological and physical sciences governing management, and continuing to integrate actions across the lower and upper Estuary. Listen here:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-346725849/estuary-voices-two-leaders-seek-to-humanize-and-connect-estuary-mgt-caitlin-sweeney-amanda-bohl>

SFEP Staff “On Tour”

Save the Bay's [Shaping the Bay's Climate Future](#) virtual event will be held on Thursday June 3rd. Hosted by Bay Area journalist Wendy Takuda, Josh Bradt will be speaking on a pre-recorded panel with David Lewis and Allison Chan of Save the Bay, and Amanda Brown-Stevens of Greenbelt Alliance. The event will also air an earlier taped panel with

David Lewis and Jessie Olson of Save the Bay and Donna Ball from SFEI. The earlier panel focused on bay shoreline issues while the second looked at the uplands.

Sierra Club's Webinar Series continues with a webinar on [Why We Need Nature-Based Adaptation to Sea Level Rise](#) on May 27th. Josh Bradt will be on a panel presenting the North Richmond Shoreline project in the morning and James Muller will be speaking on an afternoon panel on easing the funding challenge for adaptation projects.

This year's National Estuary Program Spring meeting included a workshop on "Environmental Justice and Climate Change: Intersectional Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities in the NEP," which several SFEP staff helped to plan and participated in. The workshop, held as one in a series of four workshops to replace the usual in-person NEP Spring meeting, featured a joint presentation from Josh Bradt and James Muller titled "Let Communities Lead the Way: Moving Towards Equity and Empowerment." The talk focused on lessons learned from SFEP's administration and project management of the Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management Programs Disadvantaged and Tribal Involvement Program designed to ensure the voices and expertise of under-represented communities are included in water management planning throughout the region. Darcie Luce, as a member of the organizing committee for the workshop, provided an introduction to the presentations and helped wrap up the workshop. All three staff also facilitated breakout sessions to discuss ways the NEP and EPA can advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice in their work.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

NEP News

Over 60 members of the House of Representatives (including eight Bay Area delegates) signed on to a letter to the House Committee on Appropriations requesting that the NEP be fully funded at the level of \$50 million, with at least \$1 million provided to each National Estuary Program, and \$7.5 million for the competitive awards program (letter attached). A similar letter is currently circulating for signature in the Senate.

Staff Changes



We have a new baby! Heidi Nutters went on maternity leave in late March and Raven Lyra Hourteillan arrived on April 8. Congratulations to proud parents, Heidi and Lore, and welcome to the SFEP family, Baby Raven!



Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2021

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

As supporters of the nation's estuaries, we write to thank you for your past support of the National Estuary Program (NEP) and ask you to continue to invest directly in the stewardship of the nation's coasts. We urge you to fund the NEP at the authorized level of \$50 million, including at least \$1 million per NEP, and \$7.5 million for competitive awards in FY 2022.

Congress reaffirmed its strong support for the NEP by reauthorizing this program in the 116th Congress. On a bipartisan basis, Congress increased the authorized level of funding for this highly successful program and underscored its importance in protecting and restoring the nation's coasts, bays, and estuaries.

Of all federally funded coastal programs, only the NEP organizes local stakeholders as partners in a decision-making framework to fund local priorities. NEPs provide technical, management, and communication assistance to develop priorities and implement comprehensive actions, including stormwater and infrastructure projects, seagrass and shellfish restoration to support fishing and tourist industries, science and monitoring to guide decision-making, and innovative education programs for the next generation of Americans.

The NEP public-private partnership model makes efficient use of federal dollars to provide successful on-the-ground results. NEP partners include commercial agriculture and fisheries, energy and water utilities, local businesses, construction and landscaping professionals, engineering and mining companies, state and local governments, higher education, and other community organizations.

The NEP consists of 28 unique, voluntary programs established by the Clean Water Act to protect and improve estuaries of national significance. Each program engages its local

community in a non-regulatory, consensus-driven, and science-based process. For every dollar EPA provides, NEP programs leverage \$19 in local funds to protect and improve coastal environments, communities and economies.

We encourage you to fully fund the NEP at the authorized level of \$50 million, provide at least \$1 million to each NEP, and fund the innovative, targeted competitive awards program at \$7.5 million, consistent with Public Law 116-337. Thank you for your strong and enduring support of the National Estuary Program over the years, and for considering our request.


Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

**National Estuaries Program (NEP)
Additional Signatories
April 27, 2021**

/s/ Val B. Demings
/s/ Jimmy Panetta
/s/ Eric Swalwell
/s/ Christopher H. Smith
/s/ Gerald E. Connolly

/s/ Peter A. DeFazio
/s/ Sean Casten
/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.
/s/ Juan Vargas
/s/ John Garamendi

/s/ John P. Sarbanes
/s/ Tom Malinowski
/s/ Garret Graves
/s/ Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon
/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi
/s/ Jerry McNerney
/s/ Judy Chu
/s/ Mark DeSaulnier
/s/ Salud Carbajal
/s/ Vicente Gonzalez
/s/ Filemon Vela
/s/ Carlos A. Gimenez
/s/ Jared Huffman
/s/ Kim Schrier
/s/ Zoe Lofgren
/s/ Darren Soto
/s/ Julia Brownley
/s/ Jamaal Bowman, Ed. D.
/s/ Tony Cardenas
/s/ Suzan DelBene
/s/ Brian Fitzpatrick
/s/ Abigail D. Spanberger
/s/ W. Gregory Steube
/s/ Jackie Speier

/s/ Marilyn Strickland
/s/ A. Donald McEachin
/s/ Andy Kim
/s/ Earl Blumenauer
/s/ Adam Smith
/s/ Anna G. Eshoo
/s/ David N. Cicilline
/s/ William R. Keating
/s/ Ted W. Lieu
/s/ Cliff Bentz
/s/ Lee Zeldin
/s/ Hakeem Jeffries
/s/ Jerrold Nadler
/s/ Frank Pallone, Jr.
/s/ Jamie Raskin
/s/ Madeleine Dean
/s/ Lizzie Fletcher
/s/ Mike Thompson
/s/ Nydia M. Velazquez
/s/ Vern Buchanan
/s/ Jerry L. Carl
/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
/s/ Pramila Jayapal