



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

August 17, 2022

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2022 San Francisco Estuary Blueprint RELEASED!

The Final 2022 Estuary Blueprint was released at the end of July, following concurrence from the U.S. EPA on June 30 (please see attached letter). The final plan has been formatted for [print](#) and for ADA-compliant viewing [online](#). A limited number of copies have been printed and are available for Implementation Committee members. Please provide your mailing address to Darcie Luce at darcie.luce@sfestuary.org if you would like a hard copy mailed to you.

In preparation for release, Estuary Partnership staff developed communications materials that were distributed to the Implementation Committee, including a one-page briefing sheet and a social media toolkit. Estuary Partnership and SFEI staff collaborated to revamp the Blueprint portion of the SFEP's website at <https://www.sfestuary.org/estuary-blueprint/>. The revamped online home of the Blueprint now includes:

- A [storymap tour](#) of the Blueprint for new audiences
- Both the print and ADA-accessible online PDFs
- Pages for each of the 25 actions, including an easy-to-read progress tracking gauge for every task (visit <https://www.sfestuary.org/progress-tracking/>)

The 2022 Estuary Blueprint, and the recent federal funding to implement the Blueprint, has been featured in the following news articles:

- SF Gate: [SF Estuary Program to Receive \\$4.5M To Restore Water Quality, Habitat](#)
- Daily Republic: [Group releases plan to improve health of SF Bay, Delta](#)



- San Mateo Daily Journal: [EPA announces wetlands funding spike](#)
- Marin Independent Journal: [San Francisco Bay restoration plan updated amid funding surge](#)
- East Bay Times, Mercury News (duplicates of Marin IJ article): [San Francisco Bay restoration plan updated amid funding surge](#)

#partnershipinaction

NEW FUNDING

Honey Hive Fund/Friends of the Estuary (\$300,000)

We have received an anonymous donation of \$100,000 per year for the next three years through the Honey Hive Fund through the Friends of the Estuary. The Fund will support the work of the Partnership to center the voices of women and LGBTQI individuals of color in estuarine health and well-being. Specifically, funds will support emerging leaders through conference scholarships, internships, and professional development. In addition, the funds will support the establishment of the Estuary Youth Council to advise and engage communities about the Estuary Blueprint, State of the Estuary Report, State of the Estuary Conference, and the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program.

COMMUNICATIONS

Knee Deep Times

Visit <https://www.kneedeepetimes.org/> for lots of new stories, including profiles of young climate activists and articles on a variety of topics such as citizen science, wildfire and flood insurance. Be sure to check out the in depth article on the San Pablo Avenue Stormwater Spine project, including a video journey via bicycle to visit all the sites: [Cruising the San Pablo Spine – A Green Streets Test Lab](#).

KneeDeep Times is now able to accept donations! Please consider supporting journalism at the frontiers of climate resilience through a [tax-deductible donation](#).

Estuary News



The [June issue](#) of Estuary News Magazine explores the outer limits of Delta science and research: Can we recover salmon, capture carbon, live with the Russian thistle? It also profiles three young scientists, visits Delta drawbridges in action, and reviews state efforts to come to a voluntary agreement on flows, as well as to fast-track restoration projects.

Now in her 31st year as managing editor, Ariel Rubissow Okamoto will not be renewing her current contract when it ends in June 2023. At this point in her long and successful career, Ariel is choosing instead to dedicate her time to special Estuary-related science writing and podcasting projects, and to KneeDeep Times. In addition, funding for Estuary News is dependent upon renewed commitments from partners and with current competing priorities the future budget for Estuary News is quite lean. At the current partner commitment levels and with a new editor, we will not be able to afford to produce four print issues a year.



What is the future of Estuary News Magazine? What are your future priorities for Estuary News? Is remaining in print important? Can partners increase funding to support a new editor and 4 print issues a year? Is it time to sunset Estuary News, move to producing online Pearls only, or some combination of Pearls and print issues? I'd like to hear from you!

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding

With the July 26 release by US EPA of the NEP BIL Implementation Memo, planning for the ~\$4.5m of BIL funds to SFEP can begin in earnest. The Implementation Memo provides guidance for NEPs on how EPA will administer the BIL funds. The Memo outlines the required timing and content of a BIL Long-Term Plan for the five years of funding and for annual BIL Workplans and budgets. The BIL Long-Term Plan is required to be submitted by June 1, 2023, but annual workplans and budgets can be submitted for FY 22 and FY 23 prior to the submittal and approval of the Long-Term Plan. I will be working with Luisa Valiela at EPA Region 9 to submit our FY 22 workplan and budget this fall and would expect to receive the award for FY 22 by the end of the calendar year, with work commencing in early 2023.

FY23 NEP Appropriations

Both the House and Senate drafts of FY23 appropriations bills have been released. Both the House and Senate bills allocate \$800,000 per NEP, a \$50,000 increase from FY22. Both House and Senate bills also include additional funding for the NEP competitive fund (\$4 million in the Senate and \$2 million in the House). In addition, both bills include funding for the San Francisco Bay Geographic Area Program (what funds the US EPA's Water Quality Improvement Fund grant program) – with \$24 million in the Senate bill and \$54 million in the House bill. Of course all of this can change as the bills go through further deliberations, but this is a good starting point!

Staff Changes



It is with sadness that I announce that Josh Bradt will be leaving SFEP later this month. Josh has been with the Partnership for ten years, specializing in Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Watershed Management projects. Thanks to Josh's tenacity, creativity, problem-solving skills, and a good sense of humor, the San Pablo Avenue Stormwater Spine project was recently completed after ten years of effort – a milestone no one was quite sure would ever be realized and a testament to Josh's skills.

Josh has also been a leader in collaboration and community-centered engagement, dedicating time and energy to developing partnerships and identifying funds to advance climate adaptation strategies in places like North Richmond and working with community-based partners to undertake water-related needs assessments under the IRWM DACTIP program.



Although Josh will be sorely missed at SFEP, I am pleased to report that he isn't going too far. He has joined the Bay Area Regional Collaborative (<https://barc.ca.gov/>) as the BARC Program Coordinator and will be lending his expertise towards a climate resilient Bay Area. I truly look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with Josh in his new role. Please join me in thanking Josh for all his amazing work over the past ten years at SFEP and wishing him the best!

Josh's shoes are impossible to fill so we've restructured his position somewhat and are hiring for a Lead Environmental Scientist to provide scientific and technical leadership, support and coordination for the Partnership for a broad range of projects and programs. If you know someone with a natural or social science background who you think would be a good fit, please pass on this job announcement:

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/mtcca/jobs/3651310/lead-environmental-scientist>



Liditza Saldana joined SFEP in June through MTC's Summer Mentorship program. Lidi served as an integral team member to the Communications Team, working closely with Darcie Luce and Diana Fu to schedule weekly social media content, and evaluate outreach and engagement analytics. Lidi created the Estuary Blueprint Social Media Toolkit that has been circulated to the Implementation Committee. Lidi's last day was August 9th. Thank you for all your great work this summer, Lidi!



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF WATER

June 30, 2022

Sona Chilingaryan, Acting Assistant Director
Tribal and State Assistance Branch, Water Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Dear Sona,

I am writing to inform you that Headquarters concurs with Region 9's certification that the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's (SFEP) updated Estuary Blueprint (CCMP) has fulfilled all EPA requirements in the CCMP update content checklist, incorporated all relevant comments, and has been approved by the SFEP Implementation Committee and the Executive Council. This updated CCMP is now the official final version.

The thoroughness of the submission documentation greatly simplified the review process. We appreciate SFEP's receptiveness and responsiveness to take comments into consideration and respond to our input. Their cooperation greatly helped the process.

I want to recognize the leadership shown by Luisa Valiela, Region 9 SFEP Coordinator, in her close collaboration with our HQ Coordinator for SFEP, Vince Bacalan. Their effective working relationship ensured an excellent final outcome and enabled us to avoid any concerns late in the process.

With this concurrence, the 2022 Estuary Blueprint with its associated content checklist and the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment are officially considered final for the record. They will be placed in our files along with the certification document you provided.

When you notify the SFEP Director, Caitlin Sweeney, that EPA HQ signs off on their updated Estuary Blueprint along with the Vulnerability Assessment and considers them to be final, please extend the HQ team's appreciation and congratulations on a job well done.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeff Lerner, Chief
Partnership Programs Branch
Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

cc: Brian Frazer
Luisa Valiela
Vince Bacalan