

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

March 12, 2026

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Palo Alto Horizontal Levee

Construction of the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee is ongoing. The majority of construction on the habitat portion of the horizontal levee has been completed. Work with the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be ongoing through Summer 2026.

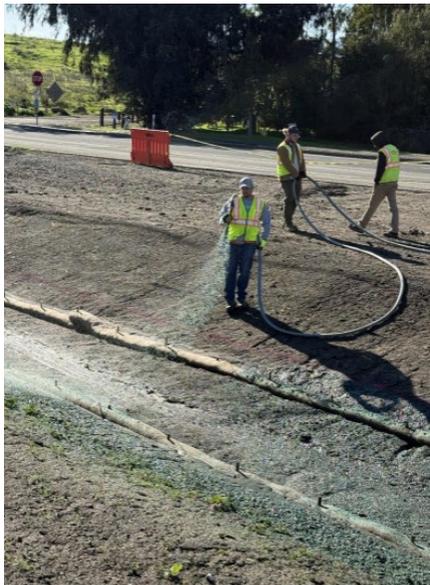


Image captions: Image (left) showing completion of levee work and (right) construction crew doing hydropneumatic seeding at the project site in January, 2026. Photo credit: Zoon Engineering

Community outreach and engagement is also ongoing at the site. Nuestra Casa is currently recruiting interns at local community colleges to participate in wastewater internships at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, circulating outreach materials to community members about the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee, and working with CSU Channel Islands to complete another

microplastics monitoring campaign. They have also completed two bioblitzes in partnership with the City of Palo Alto.



Community planting at the site (led by Save The Bay) is complete. However, upcoming events are happening to support maintenance of the plants.

The City of Palo Alto, Save the Bay and the Estuary Partnership hosted a media tour during one of the planting days, leading to some media coverage of the project, including this story from [NBC Bay Area](#), [KTVU Fox 2](#), [San Jose Mercury News](#), [Palo Alto Weekly](#), [San Francisco Chronicle](#) and others.

Image caption: Community planting event with Save the Bay at the project site. Image credit: SFEP

Hayward Shoreline Resilience Workshop

Last November, nearly 150 community members and elected officials gathered at the Cherryland Community Center for the “Sea Level Rise Workshop: Planning for a Resilient Hayward Area Shoreline.” Organized by the newly formed Hayward Eden Area Resilience Collaborative, the event provided an overview of three major projects that will shape the future of the Hayward shoreline: 1) the work of the Hayward Area Shoreline Planning Agency in implementing the Hayward Shoreline Adaptation Master Plan; 2) The First Mile Horizontal Levee Project ongoing design, and: 3) the Hayward Nature-Based Solutions Project to transform the Hayward Water Resource Recovery Facility’s former oxidation ponds into treatment wetlands.

Together, these efforts reflect a strong commitment to collaborative planning and nature-based solutions to prepare Hayward’s shoreline for rising sea levels. The Hayward Eden Area Resilience Collaborative includes the Estuary Partnership, Greenbelt Alliance, the City of Hayward, the East Bay Regional Park District, and numerous additional public and private partners.

The workshop was covered in the Tri-City Voice:
<https://tricityvoice.com/hayward-combats-sea-level-rise/>

Priority Conservation Area Grant Program Update

Conserving the region's natural resources and open space, protecting residents from environmental impacts and hazards, and enhancing access to parks and open space are all core goals of the [Priority Conservation Area \(PCA\) Grant Program](#). Estuary Partnership staff are administering the PCA Grant Program, which was initiated by MTC in collaboration with the State Coastal Conservancy in 2013 to provide funding for projects that acquire, restore, or improve designated PCAs. Designated PCAs are regionally significant lands with broad agreement for long-term protection or enhancement.

In October 2025, staff released a Call for Projects for \$8 million, incorporating goals for climate adaptation, urban greening, and equity. There were 53 letters of interest received, requesting more than \$35 million. An evaluation panel, including SFEP staff, have evaluated and advanced a subset of these projects to prepare full applications that are due March 20. The evaluation panel will then complete a subsequent evaluation and make recommendations for funding to the MTC commission in June.

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Grants



SAN FRANCISCO BAY
RESTORATION AUTHORITY

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority received 18 eligible applications requesting just under \$80 million for the 9th Grant Round. Five projects, for a total of \$12.5 million, are on the [recommended list](#) that will be presented to the Governing Board on March 6th. After reviewing the list of recommended projects, each project will go to the board individually for approval at the June (or later) Governing Board meeting.

Projects on the recommended list include Bay Rise Park Project in Burlingame (The SPHERE Institute), Hayward Marsh Improvements Project (East Bay Regional Park District), Accelerating Ecosystem-Scale Habitat Stewardship in Richardson Bay Project (Richardson Bay Regional Agency), Brisbane Living Shoreline Project (One Shoreline), and Napa River Estuary Enhancement and Public Access Project (Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District). These projects include two planning projects and three primarily implementation projects.

Wetlands and Flood Risk Reduction StoryMap



The Wetlands and Flood Risk Reduction StoryMap was created to support the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) People and Wetlands Workgroup’s goal of understanding how wetland restoration can reduce coastal hazards and strengthen community resilience across the San Francisco Bay Area. This bilingual, interactive resource introduces key concepts related to coastal flooding, the protective benefits of wetlands, and the vulnerabilities faced by shoreline communities. It explains how wetlands absorb wave energy, store floodwaters, and improve quality of life, while also acknowledging the historic loss of wetlands due to development and bay fill. The StoryMap weaves scientific data, community stories, and visual tools to illuminate the essential role wetlands play in protecting people and places as sea levels rise.

Through interactive maps and restoration profiles, the StoryMap highlights five sites—San Rafael’s Canal District, Emeryville Crescent Marsh, Yosemite Slough, MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline, and Cooley Landing—showing how restoration efforts help buffer communities from flooding, revitalize ecosystems, and enhance public access.

Access the Story Map here:

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4ebfe02824c04de089f63cf7b9c44da4?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=12+12+2025&utm_campaign=WRMP+Newsletter+Winter+2025

COMPLETED PROJECTS

IRWM 2025 Round Up

The Integrated Regional Water Management Program consists of several rounds of state funding managed by the Estuary Partnership to implement dozens of projects. In 2025 eight projects were completed and closed out. Project implementers included the Coastal Conservancy, Sonoma County Water Agency, City of Calistoga, East Bay Municipal Utilities District, the City of San Jose, Daily Acts, and the SF Public Utilities Commission. The total amount of grant funding expended for the eight projects was just over \$27.8 million, with total project costs of \$81.5 million.

Benefits across the suite of projects include fish passage, tidal marsh restoration and flood management, increased recycled water capacity, water conservation, and green infrastructure to treat urban stormwater runoff.



Image Caption: City of San Jose's River Oaks Stormwater Capture Project. Image Credit: SFEP

Oakland Alameda Adaptation Project Update



The [Oakland-Alameda Adaptation Committee](#) (OAAC) established a coordinated and inclusive action plan and subregional organizational structure to accelerate adaptation to coastal and inland flooding and enhance critical infrastructure, natural habitat, recreational opportunities and access, and community resilience within the San Leandro Operational Landscape Unit (OLU). The Working Group serves as a pilot for locally-driven adaptation planning with regional partnership and support, providing a model that can be replicated in other OLUs along the San Francisco

Bay and other coastal areas across the world with complex, urban shorelines with multiple landowners and stakeholders.

The Estuary Partnership, through IJA funding, supported the City of Alameda’s efforts to establish a Working Group, and complete an Existing Conditions Report, Community Partner Engagement Strategy, and Governance White Paper. Funding also supported public outreach. We are pleased to share this work is now complete and City of Alameda partners have made significant progress toward subregional planning for a [Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan](#). This work funded under IJA is now complete! This work supports implementation of Estuary Blueprint Tasks 1-6 and 3-1.

NEW FUNDING

IJA Yr 4 and 5- \$1.82m (EPA)

The San Francisco Estuary Partnership has been awarded its final two years of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding from the U.S. EPA. The last two years of this five-year grant will fund Estuary Partnership staff time for community engagement, Technical Assistance for hazard mitigation and ongoing communications. The Technical assistance will provide technical support to community organizations, Tribes, non-profits, and local jurisdictions in an effort to mitigate capacity limitations and advance projects and programs that implement the Estuary Blueprint. This assistance will include grant writing and support at the local or subregional level for adaptation planning and implementation projects.

Olympia Oyster Initiative - \$75k (The Nature Conservancy)

The San Francisco Estuary Partnership will receive \$75,000 to support the San Francisco Bay Area Olympia Oyster Public Education Initiative. The Initiative aims to increase the pace and scale of native oyster restoration in the San Francisco Bay through public education and outreach. The Estuary Partnership will lead on social media messaging to accompany the public launch of [The Alluring World of Olympia Oysters](#), a web story that educates the public about the importance of Olympia



Oyster restoration. This public education initiative is a partnership with the Nature Conservancy, the California State Coastal Conservancy, SF State University's Estuary and Ocean Science Center, the Native Olympia Oyster Collective, and Hog Island Oyster Company.

ADV Survey and Technical Assistance - \$1m (State Water Resources Control Board)

The Estuary Partnership is in the process of receiving funding from the State Water Resources Control Board to advance projects that implement the Estuary Blueprint. This funding will support Blueprint Action 23 (Trash) by creating a database to track abandoned and derelict vessels in the Bay, and Action 3 (Adaptation Planning) by developing a shared regional climate adaptation technical assistance framework with the goal of helping cities and counties with natural resource protection planning. The technical assistance framework will assess existing technical assistance programs and help to identify strategies to improve program delivery moving forward.

Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program - \$660k (US Environmental Protection Agency)

The Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) received an additional \$660,000 from the U.S. EPA San Francisco Bay Program Office to continue the Estuary Partnership's co-management of the program through 2029. Estuary Partnership staff work under these funds includes facilitating WRMP Steering Committee meetings and ongoing program governance; continuing to develop human dimensions indicators for monitoring; collecting, analyzing and creating visualizations of human dimensions monitoring data; disseminating WRMP results to end-users through webinars, newsletters, trainings, workshops, the WRMP website, and site visits to improve wetland restoration and adaptive management; partnering with local organizations on wetland education and workforce development opportunities; and aligning WRMP results with regulatory information needs to make wetland monitoring more cost-effective.

COMMUNICATIONS

Launch of the State of Our Estuary

In October 2025, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, in partnership with the San Francisco Estuary Institute, launched [The State of Our Estuary](#): a

centralized, dynamic, and accessible website for reporting on the health of the Estuary. The online hub offers the most comprehensive regional health report of the San Francisco Estuary, sharing indicator metrics on water quality, fish and bird populations, tidal marshes, and more. The online hub launched during the 2025 State of the Estuary Conference and has garnered regional publicity from multiple media outlets across California, including [ABC7](#), [Maven's Notebook](#), [Bay Area Local News Matters](#), [KneeDeep Times](#), and [the Los Angeles Times](#).

2025 State of the Estuary Conference Media Coverage

On October 28-29, 2025, the State of the Estuary Conference held its 17th biennial Conference at the Oakland Scottish Rite Center. The Conference was attended by over 700 regional resource managers, scientists, and community members with a shared mission of preserving habitats, supporting thriving species, managing resources effectively, and promoting community health. The audience and local media were enthralled by a new element incorporated into the Conference this year, which explored the connection between artistic expression, storytelling, restoration, and conservation. Local media at the following outlets covered the event: [SF Gate](#), [Third News](#), and [PR Newswire](#).

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

2026 EPA Workshop and DC Fly-In

Later this month, Principal Program Manager James Muller and I will attend the yearly National Estuary Program-EPA Annual Workshop in DC. James and I will also use the opportunity to visit the Congressional offices whose districts intersect with our planning area to talk about the National Estuary Program and the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's work.

IC CHANGES

Friends of the Estuary

The Friends of the Estuary have identified Board Member **Beck Barger** as their primary representative on the Implementation Committee and Board Member **Carl Wilcox** as the alternate.

San Francisco Estuary Institute

With the retirement of **Warner Chabot** from his position as the Executive Director of the San Francisco Estuary Institute, SFEI designated Interim Executive Director **Emily Corwin** as their primary representative on the Implementation Committee.

Delta Stewardship Council

The Delta Stewardship Council appointed **Dr. Rachel Wigginton**, newly appointed by Governor Newsom as Special Assistant for Planning and Science, as their primary representative on the Implementation Committee, replacing **Amanda Bohl** who left DSC last year.