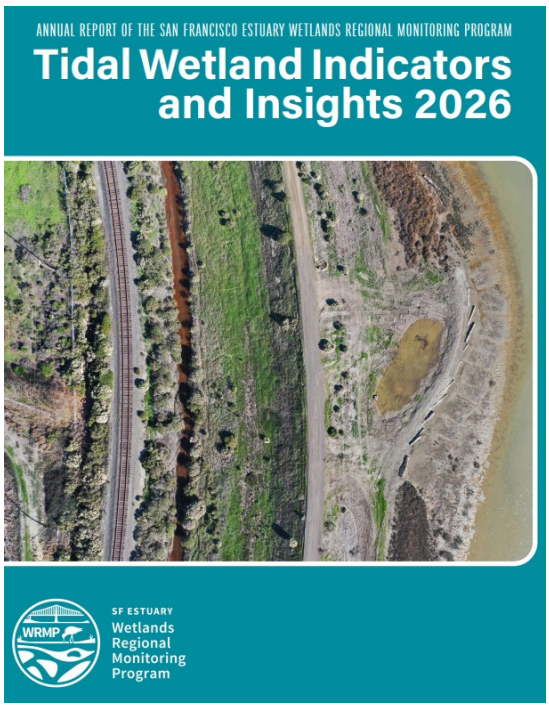
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 5, 2026

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

First WRMP Annual Report



After several years of developing management questions, monitoring metrics, and data collection methods as part of a function-based monitoring framework, the WRMP entered a new phase in 2024 with the launch of region-wide data collection. The WRMP is designed to support more effective tidal wetland restoration and adaptive management by developing a coordinated regional approach to monitoring and supporting more cost-effective, permit-driven monitoring.

The annual report showcases how the WRMP, with its broad coalition of partners and collaborators, is building a shared scientific foundation for wetland managers, regulators, restoration practitioners, and funders. The report also highlights the WRMP's growing suite of publicly accessible data, metrics, and tools that help track wetland condition, water quality, human dimensions, and other indicators of ecosystem health."

Wildcat Creek Restoration Progress and Funding Update

After approval by the ABAG Governing Board on March 19, 2026, Mithun was officially contracted as the prime consultant to work with the funded project partners (The Watershed Project, Urban Tilth, CCC Flood Control, and West County Wastewater as majority match contributor) starting work in May to carry forward Task 1 (Re-WRAP) and Task 3 (Trail Designs). Mithun has made steady progress in developing the Re-WRAP by

holding partner meetings to ensure alignment across priorities, forming a framework for building report sections and data collection planning, completing a literature review of parallel reports, and developing preliminary options for the draft outline of the Plan document. Mithun & SFEP have continued to convene the Wildcat San Pablo WCSPC Watershed Council Sub-Committee meetings and are working to assemble sub-topic groups from this committee that will support specific report sections. Mithun and their sub-consultants (SFEI and FlowWest) have also drafted the sediment data collection fieldwork plan and presented it to the WCSPCWC Subcommittee.

The Watershed Project and Trout Unlimited have continued water quality data tracking throughout the creek, Benthic Macroinvertebrate Surveys in the upper reach of the Wildcat Creek, fish barrier assessments, and submissions to CEDEN on the data collected. Urban Tilth and The Watershed Project have also continued to support the County planning process for post-construction mitigation and restoration of the Lower Wildcat Creek floodplain, including supporting the development of the tree replanting plan for the Wildcat Creek floodplain. They have been mapping existing stands of native plants to be protected during construction and begun propagating native trees from the planting list in the UT native plant nursery, to be outplanted in Fall 2027.

Clean and Green updates at the West County Wastewater District property, a portion of which will be used as match for the Restoring Wildcat Creek project, are now complete. WCW staff will help to provide match documentation by the end of 2026.

While work has been underway on the project, the project team has been looking for ways to fill a ~$4M funding gap identified by Balance Hydrologics, the County's consultant drafting designs for the Task 2 excavation, re-channelization, and restoration work. To fill this gap, the team has applied for several sources of additional funding, and after review by committee, has successfully been awarded grant funding (~$5M) by the DWR’s Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program in Sept 2026.

SFEP staff has requested an amendment to extend the project completion date for the Restoring Wildcat Creek Project by two years to June 2030. This extension will allow project staff and subconsultants to successfully complete the tasks of the grant as provided to the EPA, complete grant agreements for parallel funding sources, and overcome any further delays to the project.

Living Levee Design Guidelines Makes Headway

On October 12, Susan Glendening convened a Technical Advisory Committee kick-off meeting to formally launch the development of the *Design Considerations for Living Levees* technical report. This report will consolidate information for practitioners in the San Francisco Bay Area

about nature-based levees for sea level rise adaptation and using an NBS levee for nutrient removal from treated wastewater effluent. It will cover such factors as landscape contexts such as operational landscape unit conditions and tidal effects; regulatory frameworks; governance; and design elements spanning a spectrum of green to gray-green (hybrid) elements. The TAC includes representatives from agencies and consultants with real-world experience planning, designing, and constructing NBS levees, including East Bay Dischargers Authority, Palo Alto wastewater treatment plant, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Control Board, ESA Inc., and others.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

IRWM Prop 84 Round 4

SFEP finally closed out Round 4 of funding through a Prop 84 grant from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) under their Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program (IRWM). IRWM was undertaken as a collaborative effort to manage all aspects of water resources in a region. The program crossed jurisdictional, watershed, and political boundaries; involved multiple agencies, stakeholders, individuals, and groups; and attempted to address the issues and differing perspectives of all the entities involved through mutually beneficial solutions. More information on IRWM, including a video of the program after 20 years, can be found on the IRWM website.

SFEP managed Prop 84 Round 4, which began in 2016 and closed out in March 2026, and included seven implementation projects. Grant funding came to $21.3M, with $53.4M in matching funds. Many staff members have worked on managing seven rounds of DWR grant funding, which includes over 70 projects to date.



A completed island in Pond A2W at the Mountain View portion of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. DWR funded $4.8M of the project. Photo by Magali Gauthier.

Palo Alto Horizontal Levee



Photo credit: Zoon Engineering

The Palo Alto Horizontal Levee project, a nature-based approach designed to help fragile marshlands adapt to rising sea levels, is completed! The project team, including the Design Engineer, ESA/HDR, Resident Engineer/Construction Management Firm, Zoon Engineering, construction firm, Corcus Construction, plus City of Palo Alto and SFEP coordinated closely and completed construction. Construction is now complete, including testing, commissioning, and punch list items.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on September 10. ABAG Executive Board President Susan Adams and San Francisco Estuary Partnership assistant director Heidi Nutters today joined Palo Alto mayor Vicki Veenker, EPA deputy regional administrator Cheree Peterson, State Coastal Conservancy deputy executive officer Evyan Sloane, Palo Alto Public Works director Brad Eggleston, Association of Ramaytush Ohlone cultural director Gregg Castro and other dignitaries for the celebration to inaugurate the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot Project. Read the project completion announcement here: https://abag.ca.gov/news/abag-estuary-partners-celebrate-pioneering-adaptation-effort.

NEW FUNDING

EPA Funding for Strip Marsh East Restoration



Photo Credit: National Audubon Society

The U.S. Environmental Protect Agency (EPA) announced Awards on September 22, 2026, for their San Francisco Bay Program grants. We received an initial award of $5.6 million with another $8.3 million to be awarded next federal fiscal year for restoration work at Strip Marsh East (SME). This funding will support a large-scale restoration project at SME along Highway 37 in San Pablo Bay by reusing sediment produced from excavation of new tidal channels and lowering berms. The project will also deliver a report on how sediment moves through the Bay-Delta estuary to inform long-term planning. These funds will be managed by staff through 2032.

Bay Area Clean Water Agencies EPA Grant: Clean Water Together

The Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), in close coordination with SFEP, was selected for award of $7 million in Phase 1 funding and $16,766,096 in total grant funding through 2029 from the EPA San Francisco Bay Program Office for the Clean Water Together project. The project mobilizes a large coalition of regional partners, including SFEP, to implement a range of solutions for reducing nutrient loads to San Francisco Bay. SFEP's role in the project focuses on advancing nature-based approaches for nutrient management through helping bring the First Mile Horizontal Levee to a shovel-ready state; managing a comprehensive feasibility analysis for a new horizontal levee in the South Bay for treating reverse osmosis concentrate; leading technology transfer through the Transforming Shorelines Collaborative and Bay Area One Water Network; and supporting BACWA with project administration.

Communications

Harvest Festival



This October, Estuary Partnership staff members Susan Glendening and Alexis Gabriel joined the Emeryville Harvest Festival to share resources on the region's actions to address sea level rise. The group spoke with community members about the state-mandated Shoreline Adaptation Plan and its aims to help community members better prepare for sea level rise, flooding, water quality protection, and extreme storms while allowing continuous access to the shoreline. They also provided information on how community members could get involved. A highlight of the event, which included conversations with over 35 community members, was helping them understand potential climate adaptation methods, like horizontal levees, through a physical model complete with salt-marsh harvest mice and shorebirds.

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Tour Attended by Elected Officials

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority welcomed elected officials, the public, and programmatic staff to join a tour of East Bay projects on October 9, 2026. Officials from Fremont, Newark, Alameda County, and the state listened in as Restoration Authority and East Bay Regional Parks staff provided highlights on the Hayward Marsh



Restoration and Coyote Hills Restoration and Public Access projects. The tour allowed attendees to learn more about these two dynamic projects, which utilize Measure AA funds for restoration efforts, improvements to public access, and increased climate resilience infrastructure. To learn more about the tour, visit the ABAG news page.

Team Oly Update

Team Oly, a new 2-year public education campaign led by The Nature Conservancy and SFEP, seeks to increase the rate of Olympia oyster restoration in the San Francisco Bay by coordinating a broad coalition of researchers, funders, businesses, and community-based organizations to tell compelling stories about the value of Olympia oyster restoration. Members of the coalition include the Coastal Conservancy, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Native Olympia Oyster Collaborative, San Francisco Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Hog Island Oyster Co, and others. In the past quarter, Team Oly has grown their online presence to garner 3 million views, 65,000+ link clicks, and 3,200 followers on Instagram alone. Team Oly has also led outreach and engagement events with the Exploratorium, elected officials, and the Association of National Estuary Programs.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Estuary Blueprint Update

Staff have worked with US EPA Region 9 staff to determine a course of action for the Estuary Blueprint Update. The Estuary Partnership will undergo a reassessment of the 2022 CCMP and expect findings to indicate that it is still relevant with over 70% of Milestones left to be achieved. Staff will convene the Estuary Blueprint Steering Committee in early 2027 to advance next steps.

STAFF CHANGES

New SFEP Director Julie Beagle



It is with great excitement, curiosity, and humility that Julie Beagle steps in as the Director of SFEP on November 2, 2026.

Julie Beagle was most recently the Environmental Services Branch Chief for the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) San Francisco District. She brought a focus on integrating nature-based approaches into USACE studies, projects, and operations. She was the technical lead on several Engineering with Nature pilot projects, including piloting strategic shallow water placement of dredged materials in SF Bay to support marsh and mudflat resilience to sea-level rise. Julie also served as a National Practice Lead for the Engineering With Nature Program (EWN) and was a co-author on the first engineering practice guides for nature-based solutions that are in development by EWN and partners. Before her almost six years at USACE, Julie was the Deputy Director of the Resilient Landscapes Program at the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) where she led many of the shoreline resilience and adaptation efforts, including serving as lead author for the San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Atlas, a resource for employing nature-based adaptation measures along the SF Bay shoreline. Prior to her ten years at SFEI, Julie worked with land managers on the North Coast of California to reduce fine sediment runoff into salmonid streams and contributed to watershed-scale river restoration projects in the Napa River Watershed. She has worked as a fluvial and estuarine geomorphologist throughout the rivers and wetlands of California for the last 20 years and has a master's degree in environmental planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and a bachelor's degree in History and Environmental Science from Barnard College at Columbia University.

Julie is thrilled to join the SFEP team, and looks forward to supporting the growth of individuals and the organization especially as the SF Estuary continues to need bold steps towards equity, resilience, and adaptability for people, habitats and wildlife in the face of continued climate change. Looking forward to working together!