



# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 6, 2024

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Save the Date for the next State of the Estuary Conference - October 28-29, 2025!

Mark your calendars for the next State of the Estuary Conference! With the next conference in October of 2025, we will be back on our usual schedule of every other year in the Fall. More details to follow soon.

### Bay Area Tap Water Testing Report Released



The Estuary Partnership teamed up with 11 community organizations and Simple Lab, to conduct our largest community-driven water quality effort to date. This initiative, funded by California's Integrated Regional Water Management program, was driven by concerns from underserved BIPOC communities on water quality, costs and safety. We hope this effort will inspire similar community-driven initiatives elsewhere, aiming for safe and affordable water for all. For more details, check out the full report: <https://www.sfestuary.org/tap-water-testing-report/>.

### San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Seeks Members for Advisory Committee and Governing Board

The Restoration Authority's Governing Board is seeking representatives and leaders from community-based organizations, Tribes, agencies, and other experts in their field of work to serve on the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority's Advisory

Committee. [Applications](#) are due by November 8, 2024. The full announcement is available on the Authority's [website](#). In addition, [ABAG is recruiting](#) elected officials of bayside cities or counties, regional park districts, or regional open space districts for SF Bay Restoration Authority Governing Board. Letters of interest are due November 27, 2024. Please reach out to Karen McDowell ([karen.mcdowell@sfestuary.org](mailto:karen.mcdowell@sfestuary.org), 415-778-6685) if you have questions about the Governing Board seats.

## NEW FUNDING

### Bipartisan Infrastructure Funding - Yr 3 (\$909,800)

The third year of BIL funding (BIL Yr3) was awarded to the Partnership in early August 2024. The BIL Yr3 workplan includes tasks within the climate adaptation implementation, equity, and communication programmatic focus areas. The climate adaptation implementation task includes construction support for the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot project, a novel and innovative initiative project that links nature-based solutions to achieve habitat improvement, public access, flood protection and water quality improvement. Equity tasks include the continuation of the Estuary Partnership Equity Team that will examine internal and external opportunities and approaches to advance equity, grant writing support for CBO's and Tribes, and the third year of the Estuary Youth Council. BIL Yr3 will continue to support ongoing outreach and communications efforts and will finalize the Outreach and Communication Program Plan that future outreach and communication efforts will stem from.

### EPA Wetlands Program Development Grant – Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (\$665,000)

This grant will support the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program in aligning with regulatory data needs, as well as developing systems of delivering information to support science-based decision-making for wetland restoration and management. It will also enable the WRMP to begin to enact its 5-year Equity and Engagement Strategy by supporting partnerships with community-based organizations and Tribes to co-develop wetland programming related to community-engaged monitoring, workforce development, and other educational opportunities.

### State Revolving Fund – State of Our Estuary (\$1 million)

We are currently finalizing an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board for a new Clean Water State Revolving Fund “forgivable loan” to continue development and support of the State of Our Estuary web platform. The funding will

be used to advance human dimensions indicators, update existing indicators, and include them all into the centralized website that will report on the health of various aspects of the San Francisco Estuary.

## Friends of the Estuary/Honey Hive – Estuary Youth Council (\$500,000)

As reported in previous Director’s Reports, the Friends of the Estuary received funding through the Honey Hive, a fund provided by a private donor via the Tides Foundation, to support justice initiatives within the Estuary Partnership centered on marginalized groups, including women, 2SLGBTQIA+ and people of color. In partnership with community-based organizations from across the region, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership piloted a leadership and professional development program called the Estuary Youth Council. Based on the success of the first year, the funders extended the agreement an additional two years and increased the funding by \$500,000 for a total funding amount of \$800,000. The additional funding will extend programming for the Estuary Youth Council and support other equity initiatives within the Estuary Partnership.

## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### Transforming Shorelines



Partnership staff submitted a Final Report for the EPA-funded Transforming Shorelines Grant. The award totaled \$1,481,109 and ran from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2024.

The Transforming Shorelines project created critical linkages between wastewater treatment, resilience to sea level rise and water quality improvement.

The project worked to foster collaboration among engineers, designers, regulators, planners, managers and researchers to support innovative, multi-benefit solutions. Transforming Shorelines developed much-needed tools allowing audiences to use best available science to improve design, permitting and implementation of nature-based multi-benefit projects. Finally, it worked to advance design, permitting and implementation of a suite of nutrient management, sea level protection, water quality improvement and habitat enhancement projects around the San Francisco Bay.

Key partners on the grant included the East Bay Dischargers Authority, Oro Loma Sanitary District, San Francisco Estuary Institute and US Environmental Protection Agency Region 9. Some highlights of the outputs from this project include:

- Initial designs for the [First Mile Horizontal Levee](#)
- [Regulatory Pathways for Nature-based Solutions](#)
- [Equity Guidebook](#) for Wastewater Treatment Managers
- Meetings of the [Transforming Shorelines Collaborative](#) (on a range of topics)
- Regional Roundtable Final Report - [Nature-based Solutions for Coastal Resilience, Habitat Enhancement and Water Quality Improvement, November 2021, Summary Report](#)

## Oro Loma Horizontal Levee – Advancing New Designs



*Photo: Kris Decker, OLSD*

The Oro Loma Sanitary District recently completed the Oro Loma Horizontal Levee — Advancing New Designs for Resilience and Water Quality Improvement project, funded by the Clean Water State Revolving Fund through the Estuary Partnership. A pilot horizontal levee was originally constructed at Oro Loma in 2016 to test the ability of a gentle, vegetated slope to remove nutrients and contaminants from secondary wastewater effluent. The Advancing New Designs project involved redesigning a portion of the original site to test different slopes, materials, and size (thickness) of the water treatment layer. This project will provide valuable information on the potential to scale up horizontal levees around the Bay and use them to treat Reverse Osmosis Concentrate. Water quality studies are ongoing by UC Berkeley researchers (Sedlak Research Group), with support from Valley Water.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## National Estuaries Week

This September, congressional members from the House and Senate, including seven from California, signed their respective resolutions providing continued support for National Estuaries Week. The Association of National Estuary Program (ANEP) saw more elected officials, including almost a third of the US Senate, sign the resolution this year. These resolutions aim to draw attention to these vital bodies of water locally and around the country while also encouraging the public to become involved in their protection. To learn more, read the [full article](#) about National Estuaries Week.

## How an Estuary Partnership grant is working to transform Petaluma through regenerative landscaping

The Estuary Partnership team has been busy working with partners across the nine counties in its continued commitment to meet Blueprint goals. This Fall, the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) team joined a Daily Acts tour to learn more about how the non-profit is applying its regenerative landscaping program partially funded through an IRWM grant. The tour took the team across Petaluma to see the many techniques Daily Acts uses to significantly reduce water usage for individual residents, parks, and schools. To learn more about the tour, read the [full article](#) on our website.

## WRMP Newsletter

The [WRMP Autumn newsletter](#) highlights the onboarding of our two new Lead Scientists: Aviva Rossi, PhD and Lisa Beers, PhD. It also provides updates on the site network California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM), our Equity and Engagement Strategy, and the Baylands Habitat Map.

## Estuary Blueprint Newsletter Update

The Blueprint Newsletter is transforming into a new [Newsletter](#) that will provide more expansive coverage of the Estuary Partnership's work. This quarterly bulletin will share critical information and opportunities, notices of upcoming events or deadlines, recent press releases and news coverage, and organizational, staff, and partner updates centering the San Francisco Estuary. It will also serve as a platform to continue to share Blueprint progress.



# IC CHANGES

## New Stormwater Membership

After the dissolution of the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association as a non-profit in 2021, the IC seat for stormwater was left vacant for some time. However, the creation of the Bay Area Municipal Stormwater Collaborative (BAMSC), an informal collaboration of the municipal stormwater programs in the Bay Area, provides an opportunity to once again have stormwater represented on the IC.



Reid Bogert is the Stormwater Program Director for the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program.

Reid has been appointed by the BAMSC Steering Committee as the primary representative for BAMSC on the IC. Welcome, Reid, and thank you for joining!

# STAFF CHANGES

## Welcome Graham!



We are very excited to welcome Graham Laird Prentice to the Estuary Partnership staff!

Graham is joining as the Climate Adaptation Specialist in the Climate Resilience Program, reporting to Heidi Nutters. Graham has worked over the past 15 years on design initiatives to bring about more inclusive and healthy environments, neighborhoods, cities, and

regions. His project and management experience is grounded in complex, multi-scalar thinking in contexts ranging from across the U.S., to Mexico, Israel/Palestine and India. He has been employed by the design firm Mithun for the past seven years and his most recent projects include the North Richmond Living Levee and the City of Richmond's Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Resiliency Plan, as well as supporting BCDC's Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan.

Graham holds a masters in landscape architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, School of Design, and has received multiple awards for innovative environmental and social justice projects. His family is now six-generations in the East Bay, the unceded Ohlone land of Huchiun, where he lives with his partner and they are raising their daughter. He is also an artist and advocate for various forms of engaging with the Bay, especially kayaking and fishing.