



November 4, 2014

Mr. Jean-Pierre Wolff, Chair
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA. 93401-7906

Subject: Item #13 Morro Bay National Estuary Program Consent Decree Funds Spend Plan

Dear Chairman Wolff and Board Members:


I am writing you today to express our support for the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's (NEP) spending proposal for the future of the Consent Decree funds under their guardianship. Since 1997, these funds have helped support important estuarine and watershed conservation work within the Morro Bay area. As a result, the NEP has leveraged \$9.35 million for water quality and habitat protection. There is a continued need for these funds to implement the Estuary Program's management plan and worthy projects identified for future spending.

For the past 30 years the Coastal Conservancy has been actively involved in projects to reduce sedimentation to the estuary and to expand and enhance wetlands and other habitat. In 1990, the Conservancy prepared the Morro Bay Watershed Enhancement Plan and in partnership with the NEP funded conservation projects on private lands in the upper watershed. In addition to funding erosion control projects in the upper watershed, the Conservancy also partnered with the NEP and local RCD to acquire and restore lands in the lower watershed along both Chorro and Los Osos Creeks. The Chorro Flats and Los Osos Wetland Reserve projects have successfully trapped tons of sediment upstream of the bay while enhancing their riparian corridors. More recently, the Conservancy partnered with the NEP to establish the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve, and we worked together to acquire a conservation easement on the Maino Ranch.

Next month my board will consider a request to fund the acquisition of a property along Los Osos Creek in partnership with the NEP and local RCD. I am confident this request will be warmly received; especially given the federal wetland grant funding my staff has secured with the help of NEP and RCD staff. And next spring my board will consider a request from the NEP to provide match funding for their proposed eelgrass restoration program. Again, I am confident this request will be supported given the federal funding my staff has secured with the help of NEP staff.

I urge you to support the NEP's spending plan and to support their continued custody of these funds.

Sincerely,


Sam Schuchat
Executive Officer
California State Coastal Conservancy

CC: Adrienne Harris Executive Officer, MBNEP

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