



San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund – Grantee Report

Project name: Collaboratively Restoring Eelgrass in Richardson Bay to Improve Water Quality and Climate Resilience

Report type: Quarterly Report

Reporting period: January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024

Prepared by: Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Coastal Policy Solutions, on behalf of Richardson Bay Regional Agency (RBRA)

Activities conducted during the previous quarter:

Task 1: Continue implementation of the Richardson Bay Eelgrass Protection and Management Plan (EPMP)

Activities:

1. Signage:
 - Developed full Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ) signage plan, including sign design, location, proof of ownership, analysis of previous signage permits, etc. (current signage plan is included with this report as Attachment 1)
 - Submitted signage permit application to BCDC on 3/20/24. Received confirmation of receipt. Awaiting response.
 - Conducted follow up communications with USCG Waterways Division for development of USCG signage permit.

Task 2. Develop Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan (RAMP) – no activities during this reporting period.

Task 3. Marine Debris Removal – no activities during this reporting period.

Task 4. Restoration, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management

Activities:

1. Continued development of QAPP for eelgrass monitoring
2. Collection and analysis of baseline eelgrass and moored vessel distribution data to support 2024 planting planning, including planting site selection (plan for 2024 eelgrass transplanting to begin in May 2024)
3. Survey of proposed donor sites to support Scientific Collecting Permit

Task 5: Community Engagement and Support

Activities:

1. Audubon Community Conservation Fellow (CCF):

- The CCF obtained their drone license to aid in waterbird surveys of Richardson Bay and was the pilot in command for 5 of the 6 waterbird surveys during the 2023/24 waterbird survey season. CCF and Audubon biologists began analysis of this season's data.
- 2. Audubon Youth Leader (AYL) engagement
 - Each week, AYLs visit Richardson Bay Audubon for programming. Topics this period include: Marine Mammal Center Field Trip – learned about general ecology of San Francisco Bay; Paul da Silva, Board Member of the Marin Chapter CA Native Plant Society – learned about the importance of native plants, including in estuary systems; Bird Bingo/ Scavenger Hunt at Blackie's Pasture – learned about the specific ecology of Richardson Bay, including bird species that rely on eelgrass.
- 3. Vessel buyback program
 - Six vessels and one floating home purchased and removed from the bay during this reporting period. (Sixteen vessels total since program reintroduction April 13, 2023.)
- 4. Other community support
 - Since the start of RBRA's Housing Support Program on 5/1/23 (program described in the last quarterly report): 11 people have been housed, an additional four people have been issued housing vouchers and are working with Southern Marin case workers to find housing, and four more people are in the process of receiving vouchers.
- 5. Public affairs
 - RBRA staff and project consultants meet weekly with RBRA's public affairs team, Progress Public Affairs, to coordinate on social and earned media highlighting the importance of eelgrass to wildlife and communities. Communications and earned media from this quarter include:
 - Released first quarterly RBRA newsletter via email
 - RBRA staff and consultants interviewed with Bay Nature Magazine (story expected summer 2024)
- 6. Stakeholder Outreach and Education Plan – a draft plan is still in development

Task 6: Project management

Activities:

1. Accounting:
 - Developed work plan for 2024 Q1 and budget plan for FY25.
 - Submitted a drawdown request to ASAP.gov covering the period October 1 – December 31, 2023 (submitted January 31).
 - Drafted and submitted quarterly report to EPA for the period October 1 – December 31, 2023 (submitted January 31).
2. Subawardees/subcontractors:
 - Finished development and secured RBRA board approval for project subawardees SFSU and Audubon; work included: Worked with subawardees to develop scopes of work and budgets consistent with EPA award

guidelines, developed professional services contracts and staff reports, facilitated receipt of necessary insurance documents, delivery of signed materials for RBRA board meeting on March 14. (Subaward documents are included in this report as Attachments 2 & 3.)

- Began development of scopes of work with data scientist (for analyzing waterbird survey data) and graphic designer (for educational signage).
 - Processed subawardee/subcontractor invoices.
3. Other
- Regular meetings with project partners, including weekly or biweekly check ins, project kickoff call on February 20, and monthly project coordination call on March 19.
 - Conducted coordination for EPA staff site visit to Richardson Bay (final date TBD after several weather-related rescheduling).

Progress towards milestones:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Deliverable Name</u>	<u>Progress</u>
Task 1: Continue implementation of the Richardson Bay Eelgrass Protection and Management Plan (EPMP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signage demarcating boundaries of the Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ) 2. Annual habitat and waterbird monitoring 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing 2. Ongoing
Task 2: Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan (RAMP) development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete, although the RAMP may be periodically updated
Task 3: Marine debris removal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invoices and quarterly reports describing marine debris removal activities during the previous quarter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not yet initiated
Task 4: Restoration implementation (including adaptive management and monitoring)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15 acres of restored eelgrass 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing
Task 5: Community engagement and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outreach and Education Plan 2. Stakeholder Workshop Reports 3. Student Testimonials 4. List of vessels acquired via Vessel Buyback Program and description of disposal efforts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiated 2. Not yet initiated 3. Not yet initiated 4. Ongoing

Task 6: Project management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quarterly Reports 2. Final Report containing an assessment of how effective the project was in achieving the stated objectives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In process 2. Not yet initiated
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Problems encountered with achieving outputs and outcomes:

- None.

Activities planned for the next quarter:

- Merkel & Associates:
 - Coordinate with RBRA on final planting area selection with consideration of vessels remaining and relocation planning activities underway.
 - Eelgrass transplantation will commence in early May and continue through June 2024
 - A post-planting summary memorandum will be prepared to document the status of planting at the end of the planting period.
 - Marine debris removal is expected to be minimal during 2024 but may opportunistically commence during planting.
- SFSU
 - Coordinate with Merkel & Associates on implementation of the above items
- Audubon:
 - Kayaking trip with AYL to look at eelgrass in late April 2024
 - Finish analysis, draft, and submit final report for 2023/2024 waterbird survey of Richardson Bay
 - Begin contracting process for 111th Group to fly eelgrass bed for annual damage survey; select candidate flight dates with appropriate low tide.
- Coastal Policy Solutions
 - Finalize Outreach and Education Plan
 - Submit permit application to USCG and USACE for EPZ signage project and continue coordination for installation of signs
 - Continue project management activities
- RBRA
 - Continue community support efforts (e.g., Vessel Buyback, Housing Support)

Costs incurred during the reporting period and cumulative project costs since the beginning of the project, by task:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Costs Incurred This Period</u>	<u>Cumulative Project Costs</u>	<u>Funds Budgeted</u>	<u>Funds Remaining</u>
Task 1: EPMP implementation	\$ 7,065.78	\$ 15,752.34	\$ 92,952.50	\$ 77,200.16
Task 2: RAMP development	\$ 22,710.50	\$ 22,710.50	\$ 85,452.50	\$ 62,742.00
Task 3: Marine debris removal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
Task 4: Restoration implementation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,532,224.00	\$ 1,532,224.00
Task 5: Community engagement	\$ 5,775.00	\$ 54,395.00	\$ 677,233.00	\$ 622,838.00
Task 6: Project management	\$ 12,295.25	\$ 28,635.75	\$ 304,724.00	\$ 276,088.25
Total	\$ 47,846.53	\$ 121,493.59	\$ 2,782,586.00	\$ 2,661,092.41

Assistance needed from EPA:

- None at this time.

Project photos during this reporting period:



Caption: Audubon biologist prepares to fly a drone for waterbird surveys at Richardson Bay. Photo credit: Audubon CA



Caption: Audubon community conservation fellow (CCF) teaching Audubon Youth Leaders (AYL) about native plant restoration. Photo credit: Audubon CA



Caption: Audubon Youth Leaders (AYL) birding during winter waterbird season at Richardson Bay. Photo credit: Audubon CA



Caption: Audubon Youth Leaders (AYL) at Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito. Photo credit: Audubon CA