SFEI | AQUATIC SCIENCE CENTER
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San Francisco Estuary Institute and Aquatic Science Center
Board Meeting
October 2, 2026 - Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting
In-person at 4911 Central Avenue, Richmond, CA
Lunch Provided at 12pm for in-person attendees

Remote participation via Google Meet:
https://meet.google.com/ang-ytfm-qto
Or dial: (US) +1 574-404-3770 PIN: 329 728 459#

Any issues, please contact Ernie Moran, erniem@sfei.org

AGENDA *(Joint Business)*

1.	**Call to Order/Roll Call - Welcome Stefanie Woodward!**	10:00am Ann Hayden
2.	**Closed Session – Confidential Strategic Briefing**	10:10am Ann Hayden
3.	**Public Comment**	10:25am Ann Hayden
4.	**Action: Consent Items** *Attachment #1 – June 26, 2026 SFEI-ASC Board Minutes Draft* *Attachment #2 – ASC 26-06 and SFEI 26-06 Resolution - Gift Policy Revisions* **Desired Outcome:** Approval of the June 26, 2026 board minutes and adoption of *ASC 26-06 and SFEI 26-06 Resolutions - Gift Policy Revisions*	10:26am Emily Corwin
5.	**Executive Director's Report** *Attachment #3 – Executive Director's Report* **Desired Outcome**: Update Board on recent and future SFEI activities	10:30am Emily Corwin
6.	**Financial Report** *Attachment #4 – Financial Report* **Desired Outcome**: Review last quarter financials and federal indirect-rate impacts	10:45am Jen Trudeau Emily Corwin

7.	**Action: Board Committee Structures, FY27 Assignments & COI Compliance** *Attachment #5 – Board Committee Charters & FY27 Roster Alignment Matrix* **Desired Outcome**: Review updated FY27 Committee Charters, baseline roster placements, and open volunteer opportunities for the Audit and Development Committees. Confirm 100% completion of annual Conflict of Interest (COI) disclosures. Board Review and Approval of FY27 Standing Committee rosters via one of two paths: • Option A: Approve baseline rosters and delegate authority to the Board Chair to populate open volunteer slots submitted by October 31. • Option B: Populate open volunteer slots live during the meeting and approve the finalized roster.	11:00am Ann Hayden Emily Corwin
8.	**Science Update: Novato Baylands Strategy** *Attachment #6 – Science Topics Memo* **Desired Outcome:** Evaluate SFEI's landscape-scale restoration modeling for integrating upstream flood protection, State Route 37 infrastructure resilience, and tidal wetland habitat restoration in San Pablo Bay.	11:10am Ellen Plane
9.	**Science Update: Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) Updates: Annual Report & LIDAR Release** *Attachment #6 – Science Topics Memo* **Desired Outcome:** Provide input on data dissemination strategies to support decision-making and wetland restoration tracking.	11:25am Aviva Rossi and Lisa Beers
10.	**Science Update: 2026 Pulse of the Bay: Nutrients Edition** *Attachment #6 – Science Topics Memo* **Desired Outcome:** Provide strategic guidance on communicating NMS science priorities, public outreach, and technical support for regional wastewater infrastructure investments driven by the 2024 Watershed Permit	11:40am Ian Wren
	Adjourn Joint Business Meeting and Call to Order the SFEI Meeting	11:55am

San Francisco Estuary Institute Business Meeting

SFEI 1.	**FY27 Q1 SFEI Program Plan Update** *Attachment #7 –* FY27 Q1 *SFEI Program Plan Update* **Desired Outcome:** Approve the FY27 Q1 SFEI Program Plan Update	11:56am Emily Corwin Shannon Bowley
	Adjourn SFEI Meeting	12:00pm

Proposed Upcoming Board Meetings: Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm

January 29, 2027 - Donor Strategy Approval, Board Seat Renewals

April 30, 2027 - Audit Approval

June 25, 2027 - Budget Approval

October 2027 - Annual ED Review, Annual Update of Conflict of Interest Forms and Committee Assignments

Attachment #1

Minutes from June 26, 2026 SFEI-ASC Joint Board Meeting

Attendance

Present: Amber Mace, Amit Mutsuddy, Ann Hayden, Carter Brown, Emma Russell, Jessica Law, Jim McGrath, Lori Schectel, Lorien Fono, Luisa Valiela, Phil Crader, Skyli McAfee, Tessie Bellarmine, William Peterson, Xavier Fernandez

Staff: Emily Corwin, Jen Trudeau, Shannon Bowley, Anna de Lopez, Katie Janss, Wiese Jalali, Jeremy Lowe, Kayli Paterson, Rebecca Sutton

Absent: Patrick Pulupa

Joint SFEI-ASC Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order** – The SFEI-ASC Board of Directors meeting was called to order at **10:01 AM** by Chair, **Ann Hayden**. Members introduced themselves for roll call and a determination of a quorum was made.
2. **Closed Session** – Board members only.
3. **Public Comment** – None
4. **Action and Consent Items** – **Emily Corwin** invited any suggestions to amend the April 24, 2026 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Skyli McAfee's name was misspelled (Skyli McAfree). The Board also discussed a clean-up resolution to reconcile the organization's bylaws. This formalizes the gift exemption policy passed in 2025 and integrates the 2013 conflict of interest policy into the bylaws.
   Amit Mutsuddy moved to approve the minutes, **Jim McGrath** second. The motion was approved with a majority.
5. **Evaluation and Election of New SFEI Board Members**
   - **Emily Corwin** presented a formalized due diligence process for new board candidates, pilot-tested with the consideration of Stefanie Woodward for an at-large board member seat. The process was developed to address any concerns or potential conflicts arising from **Stefanie Woodward's** employment at Meta including the requirement to sign the 2013 conflict of interest policy, review the gift policy, and recuse themselves from specific votes, such as contracts involving Meta or discussions on data center-linked utility metrics. In communications with Emily Corwin and Ann Hayden, **Stefanie Woodward** confirmed their intention to serve as an individual rather than a representative of Meta.
     The board deliberated on the recommendation to appoint **Stefanie Woodward**, expressing support for the rigor of the new due diligence and checklist process developed by the development committee. While acknowledging concerns regarding the influence of large technology companies, the consensus was that engaging a diverse range of perspectives, including those from Silicon Valley, is beneficial for the organization's growth and relevance.
   - **Election of Stefanie Woodward**: Following the discussion, a motion was made to elect Stefanie Woodward to an at-large seat on SFEI's board of directors, contingent upon them signing the required conflict of interest forms.
     Ann Hayden moved to approve Stefanie Woodward to the board, **Amit Mutsuddy** second. The motion was approved with a majority.

6. **Interim Executive Director's Report** – **Emily Corwin** summarized the Interim Executive Director's report by highlighting strong scientific performance, operational stability, and a historic period of growth including the following:
    - **Financial Status** – As of the end of March, the organization is running a $1M net surplus, primarily driven by high staff billability rates exceeding 70%.
    - **Staff and Growth** – Total headcount has reached 92 staff members. SFEI's employment page remains its most visited website, recently attracting over 670 applicants for an entry-level career position. The organization expects to exceed 100 staff members by the end of the calendar year. Annual promotions were also finalized, celebrating the advancement of over 20 staff members across all tiers.
    - **Federal Regulatory Risk** – Leadership is closely monitoring a proposed rule change from the federal Office of Management and Budget that would permit the federal government to cancel grants or cooperative agreements at any moment. Because 55% of SFEI's current funding is derived from federal grants, this represents a notable long-term risk that further underscores the importance of building the organization's financial reserves. SFEI is tracking the rule closely but does not plan to issue a formal public comment letter.
    - **Facilities and Lease Extension** – SFEI is negotiating a lease extension with its current landlord at its existing reduced rate. This extension provides the incoming permanent Executive Director with a longer runway to negotiate long-term facility options or explore property purchases.
    - **Grant Awards** – SFEI had five competitive EPA funding proposals selected to move forward into contracting, representing over $6M in SFEI labor over the next five years. SFEI is the designated lead agency on four of these projects.
    - **Public Engagement and Media** – SFEI hosted a successful storytelling event for staff and board members. Additionally, the organization was invited to feature its nutrient management strategy work, alongside BACWA, at the annual Exploratorium Bay Day event on August 1. Recent high-profile media features included an appearance by Laura Feinstein on KQED Forum discussing historical ecology and an ABC7 News segment on microplastics featuring Diana Lin and Kayli Paterson.
7. **Financial Report** – **Jen Trudeau** summarized FY26 financials to date by detailing the organization's performance through the end of March 2026, noting an overall strong financial trajectory.
    - **Net Surplus and Revenue** – The organization is running a net surplus of approximately $1M, representing about 6% of the $16.5M total revenue generated to date. A sizable surplus is anticipated to remain by the close of the fiscal year.
    - **Program Performance** – Total labor generated across all programs reached $11.2M. The $5.3M variance from total revenue represents pass-through reimbursable funds dedicated to subcontracts, partnerships, and equipment.
    - **Program Baseline Structures** – The Clean Water program benefits from stable, baseline "hard money" through stakeholder-funded initiatives like the RMP and NMS. Conversely, other programs rely more heavily on "soft"project-by-project funding.
    - **Investment Strategy** – SFEI continues to optimize its held capital across two primary vehicles: the State of California's low-risk Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) and a newer allocation of approximately $3.8M in higher-yield Treasury bills

generating roughly 5% interest.

8. **Three Science Updates** – **Jeremy Lowe, Kayli Paterson,** and **Becky Sutton** presented the science updates.

   - **Golden Gate Fields (GGF)– Jeremy Lowe** presented an informational update on SFEI's technical assistance for the future ecological restoration of the 118-acre GGF racetrack property. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is currently seeking to raise approximately $150M to $175M to acquire the property for eventual transfer to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD).

     SFEI's role is to provide scientific support with historical ecology and restoration options, rather than to participate in active advocacy or property acquisition. The project vision draws heavily on a concept developed by SFEI in a 2024 memo that outlines a maximum-potential ecological design.

     The Board noted critical site constraints that must inform future planning, including competing public demands for community recreational sports fields on the southern end of the property. Existing environmental conditions were also noted by the board, including wave overwash that routinely deposits sand onto the Bay Trail and restricted culverts that choke off circulation and have historically driven up local PCB contamination levels during flooding events .

   - **Dryer Lint Study** – **Kayli Paterson** presented a study regarding a community-driven science project tracking microfiber emissions from individual household laundry dryers. The study was conducted in partnership with the Desert Research Institute and 5 Gyres, with funding from the Ocean Protection Council, NOAA, and Sea Grant.

     The project was inspired by SFEI's 2019 Microplastic study showing that 39% of microplastics found in Bay Area tributaries were fibers, resulting in an estimated three trillion microfibers entering the bay annually via runoff. Dryers serve as a primary vector for depositing these fibers into the atmosphere and subsequently into stormwater.

     The study successfully mirrored broader Bay Area demographics by collecting samples from 19 community scientists across various counties, tracking an average household size of 2.75 people, and capturing a 12-hour collection window from a student laundromat at Cal State University East Bay.

     Using Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy polymer identification, the team determined that approximately 10% of the emissions from residential samples were plastic polymers. The remaining 90% was mostly cotton, though it was noted that chemically dyed cotton blends are increasingly being evaluated as a watershed concern. Student laundromat samples yielded a higher plastic composition at 18%.

     A single household load emits between 1 and 19 milligrams of microfibers. Scaled annually across 275 standard household loads, a single household produces roughly 50g of total fiber emissions and 6g of pure plastic. An estimated metric ton of these dryer-vented fibers are washed into the SF Bay annually via stormwater annually.

     The presentation highlighted aftermarket filtration systems, which have proven highly effective at reducing vented fibers, as well as the rising adoption of ventless energy-efficient condensing dryers.

- **Emerging Contaminants Work Group 20-Year Anniversary** – **Rebecca Sutton** gave a retrospective of the RMP ECWG's 20th anniversary celebration, which took place on Earth Day this year. Formed in 2006, the work group operates to proactively identify, track, and mitigate upcoming chemical threats before they result in widespread ecological harm.

  The presentation highlighted several key historical achievements and policy impacts derived directly from the work group's data on PBDEs (flame retardants) where source tracking data permitted the RMP to document a swift ecological recovery following state bans of the toxic compounds.

  SFEI partnered with the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) on a key flea control pesticides study, which demonstrated that residential pet "spot-on" products were traveling via wastewater pathways into local waters. This resulted in the creation of a globally unique, state-funded wastewater monitoring initiative by the DPR.

  Lastly, SFEI provided critical stormwater data to a multi-agency regional research effort investigating severe Coho salmon mortality, resulting in the discovery of a highly toxic, tire-derived contaminant, 6PPD-Quinone. SFEI's prescient localized sampling enabled the California Department of Toxic Substances Control to pass the world's first regulation restricting 6PPD in vehicle tires.

  Over its 20-year history, work group data has directly informed more than 20 states and federal regulatory decisions. Prominent global scientific advisers have commended the team for unique global leadership in translating emerging raw data into tangible, actionable environmental policies .

Adjourned SFEI-ASC joint meeting and Call to Order the SFEI meeting at 12:26pm

1. **SFEI Resolution No. 26-03 Micro-Purchase Increase** – **Emily Corwin** presented the micro-purchase increase resolution from $10k to 50k which is passed annually to increase the organization's federal micro-purchase threshold.

   Jim McGrath moved to approve Resolution No. 26-03, **Lorien Fono** seconded. The motion was approved with a majority.

2. **FY26 Q4 SFEI Program Plan Update** – **Emily Corwin** presented the program plan update with emphasis on the Google Impact Fund Proposal. This proposal focuses on historical ecology, creating a parallel path that conducts a historical ecology effort within the Russian River watershed while testing opportunities to integrate AI. The goal is to evaluate if AI can be used to inform future historical ecology efforts. Though the probability of securing the funding is low, SFEI is utilizing the proposal to introduce itself to companies operating in the AI sector ahead of upcoming IPOs in the AI space.

   Skyli McAfee moved to approve the SFEI program plan, **Jim McGrath** seconded. The motion was approved with a majority.

Adjourned SFEI meeting and Call to Order the ASC meeting at 12:30pm

1. **ASC Resolution No. 26-03 Micro-Purchase Increase** – **Emily Corwin** presented the micro-purchase increase resolution from $10k to 50k which is passed annually to increase the organization's federal micro-purchase threshold.

Jessica Law moved to approve Resolution No. 26-03, **Lori Schectel** seconded. The motion was approved with a majority.

2. **FY26 Q4 ASC Program Plan Update** – **Emily Corwin** asked for any questions or comments for the proposed ASC Program Plan Update.

   Jim McGrath moved to approve the ASC program plan, **Amit Mutsuddy**, and **Xavier Fernandez** abstained for the Protecting Bay Fishers and Historical Shoreline Imagery Projects. The motion was approved with a majority.

Adjourned at 12:33pm

Action Items

- ☐ Skyli McAfee to review bylaws to see if the board should analyze the existing bylaws for inconsistencies or necessary updates to be included in the 2026 amended version.
- ☐ Board to sign the 2013 conflict of interest policy during a future board meeting.
- ☐ Emily Corwin to consider the option of term limited employment contracts to the Regional Monitoring Program leadership or other project-based hires to address staffing risks.
- ☐ Emily Corwin to coordinate and conduct a meeting with Tessie Bellarmine explain financial guardrails and budget margin compression.
- ☐ Emily Corwin to retrieve documentation detailing the split between state and federal policy wins achieved through the emerging contaminants work group. Provide the breakdown of these regulatory decisions.
- ☐ Emily Corwin to develop a strategy to elevate and share the historical impact stories from the 20-year emerging contaminants work group. Coordinate the distribution of these narratives to reach a wider audience.
- ☐ Xavier Fernandez to share information on the organization and conduct of the recent team scavenger hunt event.

Attachment #2

Date: October 2, 2026
To: SFEI-ASC Board of Directors
From: Emily Corwin, Executive Director
RE: Revisions to the SFEI Gift Acceptance Policy: Corporate Pro-Bono Partnerships, Partner Anonymity, and Mutual Trademark Controls

AGENDA ITEM: Consent Item 4 (Resolution SFEI 26-06 / ASC 26-06)

I. REQUESTED ACTION
Adopt Resolution SFEI 26-06 / ASC 26-06 approving targeted amendments to the SFEI Gift Acceptance Policy to incorporate governance provisions for corporate pro-bono services, partner anonymity protocols, mutual trademark and brand use controls, and a formalized Corporate Due Diligence Protocol.

II. BACKGROUND & STRATEGIC CONTEXT
SFEI operates primarily on cost-reimbursable government contracts and restricted grants (~98% of annual revenues). While this supports direct project delivery, it severely limits operating margins and overhead necessary to invest in internal technology infrastructure, digital tooling, and research data catalogs.

To address this internal capacity gap, SFEI's Environmental Informatics (EI) program engaged a major global technology consulting firm's pro-bono corporate social responsibility program to deliver volunteer software engineering services. The project deploys an internal **GeoBlacklight** data discovery platform across SFEI's 30-year geospatial data archive. Similar pro-bono technical collaborations have historically been utilized with other technology partners.

In formalizing this recent corporate engagement, two governance realities emerged:

1. **Partner Non-Disclosure / Anonymity:** Corporate partners frequently stipulate strict non-acknowledgment or confidentiality conditions regarding pro-bono contributions to manage their internal communications and public disclosures.

2. **Asymmetric Trademark & Branding Terms:** Standard corporate engagement contracts often permit the commercial partner to reference the nonprofit’s name and logo in marketing, advertising, and client proposals, while placing strict restrictions on the nonprofit's communications.

A comprehensive review of SFEI’s governing documents (the 2014 Amended Bylaws and the 2025 Gift Acceptance Policy) revealed no explicit policies governing the receipt of pro-bono corporate professional services, reciprocal written pre-approval for brand/trademark usage, or a formal due diligence protocol for corporate partnerships.

III. PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

The proposed amendments update the 2025 Gift Acceptance Policy in three targeted areas:

1. **Section III.7 (Corporate, Foundation, and Pro-Bono Partnerships):** Expands policy scope to formally cover corporate pro-bono professional services, technical assistance, and in-kind software development. Reaffirms that pro-bono support must never compromise SFEI’s scientific objectivity or imply commercial endorsement.

2. **Section IV (Review, Approval, and Due Diligence Protocol):** Formally incorporates a 5-Stage Corporate Due Diligence Protocol. Establishes clear approval authority (Executive Director approval for routine pro-bono arrangements; Finance/Development Committee consultation for high-risk or >$100,000 fair market value arrangements).

3. **Section V (Donor Recognition, Anonymity, and Trademark/Brand Control):** Codifies mutual brand and trademark protection. Explicitly establishes that neither SFEI nor its corporate donors or pro-bono partners may use the other party’s name, logo, or trademarks in external marketing, press releases, or client proposals without **prior written consent** from the Executive Director and the partner’s authorized officer.

IV. FISCAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

Adopting these revisions strengthens SFEI’s institutional risk posture without adding operational friction:

- **Protects SFEI Brand & Scientific Independence:** Prevents unauthorized commercial use of SFEI's name or implied endorsement of commercial products or services.

- **Enables R&D & Tech Acceleration:** Establishes clear operational parameters for accepting valuable corporate pro-bono engineering and technical assistance.

- **Honors Partner Confidentiality:** Ensures SFEI complies with corporate partner non-disclosure requirements while fulfilling public nonprofit transparency standards.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve Resolution SFEI 26-06 / ASC 26-06 as presented on the Consent Calendar.

Attachments:

- Resolution NO. SFEI 26-06
- SFEI Gift Acceptance Policy (Full Amended Text)

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ESTUARY INSTITUTE (RESOLUTION NO. SFEI 26-06)

AND THE AQUATIC SCIENCE CENTER (RESOLUTION NO. ASC 26-06)

APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO THE SFEI GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY TO GOVERN CORPORATE PRO-BONO SERVICES, PARTNER ANONYMITY, RECIPROCAL TRADEMARK AND BRAND APPROVALS, AND CORPORATE DUE DILIGENCE PROTOCOLS

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) is dedicated to delivering visionary science so people can revitalize nature in their communities, maintaining strict scientific independence, objectivity, and public trust; and

WHEREAS, SFEI periodically engages with corporate entities, technology firms, and professional service providers to receive pro-bono engineering, technical assistance, and software development that builds internal capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of SFEI adopted the current Gift Acceptance Policy on October 3, 2025 (rescinding the prior 2018 policy under Resolution SFEI 26-04); and

WHEREAS, recent corporate pro-bono collaborations, including an engagement with a global technology consulting firm to establish an internal GeoBlacklight geospatial data catalog, demonstrated the need to establish explicit governance rules regarding pro-bono service exchanges, partner non-disclosure requests, reciprocal written pre-approval for corporate branding and trademark usage, and risk-based due diligence; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director, in consultation with program leadership, has formulated targeted amendments to Sections III.7, IV, and V of the Gift Acceptance Policy, together with an operational Corporate Due Diligence Protocol, to ensure that corporate relationships do not compromise SFEI's scientific integrity, impose operational liabilities, or misuse SFEI's brand;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Aquatic Science Center that:

1. **Adoption of Policy Amendments:** The Board of Directors hereby adopts

and approves the amended **San Francisco Estuary Institute Gift Acceptance Policy (Amended October 2, 2026)**, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

2. **Establishment of Corporate Due Diligence Protocol:** The Executive Director is authorized and directed to implement the Corporate Due Diligence Protocol across all SFEI and ASC programs.

3. **Authority to Execute Agreements:** The Executive Director retains sole administrative authority to grant written pre-approval for the external use of SFEI's name, logo, and trademarks, and to negotiate and execute corporate pro-bono and in-kind service agreements consistent with this Policy.

4. **Effective Date:** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Aquatic Science Center this 2nd day of October, 2026.

SFEI Gift Acceptance Policy (Full Amended Text)

(Originally Approved June 27, 2025; Amended October 2, 2026)

I. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures governing the acceptance of charitable gifts, corporate contributions, in-kind support, and pro-bono professional services to the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI). It is designed to ensure all contributions support SFEI's mission, maintain the Institute's scientific independence, protect its public brand and trademarks, and uphold public trust.

II. Guiding Principles

- SFEI accepts gifts, in-kind support, and pro-bono services that align with our mission to deliver visionary science so people can revitalize nature in our communities.

- All contributions to SFEI—regardless of their source—are accepted under strict conditions to ensure that funding or services do not influence the scope, direction, methods, findings, conclusions, or communications of our scientific work. Donors and corporate partners may not participate in or influence research design, data interpretation, publication, hiring, or project governance. SFEI retains full editorial, methodological, and decision-making control over all programs and outputs.

- Donor or pro-bono partner support does not imply endorsement of any individual, company, commercial product, or service.

- SFEI is committed to transparency, accountability, scientific objectivity, and legal compliance.

III. Types of Gifts and Support Accepted

SFEI may accept the following types of gifts and support, subject to review:

1. **Cash or Cash Equivalents** – Unrestricted or designated for specific programs, subject to staff capacity and alignment with SFEI goals.

2. **Publicly Traded Securities** – Liquidated upon receipt unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director or Finance Committee.

3. **Gifts-in-Kind (Tangible Property)** – Tangible personal or scientific property may be accepted if it can be directly used by SFEI programs or readily liquidated.

4. **Bequests and Planned Gifts** – Accepted via wills, trusts, or beneficiary designations. SFEI encourages prospective donors to consult with independent legal and tax advisors.

5. **Real Estate** – Must be reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee; subject to environmental due diligence, marketability, and liability considerations. SFEI will not accept real estate that poses significant financial or legal risk, including but not limited to environmental contamination, insurance liabilities, or costly maintenance obligations.

6. **Restricted Gifts** – Accepted when restrictions are reasonable, aligned with SFEI strategic priorities, and administratively feasible.

7. **Corporate, Foundation, and Pro-Bono Partnerships *(AMENDED)*:**

    - **Pro-Bono Professional Services:** SFEI may accept pro-bono technical assistance, software development, data architecture, legal, or management consulting services from corporate entities where such services enhance SFEI's internal capacity, technology infrastructure, or mission delivery.

    - **Scientific Independence:** Corporate gifts, sponsorships, and pro-bono service exchanges must never compromise SFEI's scientific objectivity or create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

    - **Endorsement Prohibition:** Corporate support shall never imply SFEI endorsement of the partner's products, commercial services, or regulatory positions.

    - **Approval Authority:** All pro-bono service agreements and co-branded corporate sponsorships must be reviewed under SFEI's Corporate Due Diligence Protocol and approved in writing by the Executive Director prior to contract execution.

IV. Review, Approval, and Due Diligence Protocol *(AMENDED)*

1. **Administrative Authority:** SFEI staff may review and accept routine unrestricted cash gifts under $100,000.

2. **Executive and Committee Review:** The Executive Director, in consultation with the Development and Finance Committees, will review gifts of real estate, gifts with unusual restrictions, corporate pro-bono service engagements exceeding $100,000 in estimated fair market value, and non-routine corporate partnerships.

3. **Mandatory Due Diligence Review *(NEW)*:** Prior to executing agreements for corporate pro-bono services or accepting major corporate contributions, SFEI staff shall complete a **Corporate Due Diligence Review** covering mission alignment, internal staff capacity, intellectual property terms, scientific integrity, and brand protection.

4. **Right of Refusal and Termination:** SFEI reserves the right to decline any gift, refuse pro-bono services, or withdraw from a partnership that violates law, contains unreasonable conditions, conflicts with SFEI's mission, exposes SFEI to unindemnified claims, or creates a real or perceived conflict of interest.

V. Donor Recognition, Anonymity, and Trademark/Brand Control *(AMENDED)*

1. **Donor Recognition:** SFEI publicly recognizes donors, sponsors, and partners in annual reports, project portals, and relevant publications, unless anonymity is requested.

2. **Donor Privacy & Anonymity:** SFEI honors donor and partner privacy. Anonymous contributions and confidential pro-bono collaborations will be honored, provided the partner's identity is disclosed internally to the Executive Director for compliance and conflict-of-interest tracking.

3. **Reciprocal Brand & Trademark Usage Controls *(NEW)*:**

    - **Mutual Consent Required:** Neither SFEI nor any corporate donor, pro-bono service provider, or foundation partner shall use the other party's name, logo, trade names, or registered trademarks in press releases, promotional marketing, advertisements, client pitches, or external announcements without **prior written approval** from both parties.

    - **Executive Director Sign-Off:** For SFEI, written approval may only be granted by the Executive Director (or an authorized officer specifically designated in writing).

    - **Honoring Partner Publicity Restrictions:** When a corporate partner requests non-acknowledgment or strict pre-approval (as in pro-bono volunteer arrangements), SFEI staff shall strictly maintain confidentiality and refrain from public attribution, subject only to statutory disclosures on IRS Form 990 or single audit reports.

VI. Acknowledgment, Stewardship, and Tax Substantiation

All charitable gifts will be acknowledged in writing in accordance with IRS regulations and IRC Section 170(f).

VII. Policy Oversight

This policy is maintained and reviewed periodically by the Development Committee and the Board of Directors. Any amendments must be approved by formal resolution of the Board.

VIII. Scientific and Ethical Integrity

SFEI operates with absolute commitment to scientific and ethical integrity. All research and public communication activities are conducted independently. SFEI maintains sole and exclusive discretion over project scope, methodology, data analysis, staffing assignments, and publication of findings. Funders and partners are strictly prohibited from editing, delaying, suppressing, or influencing scientific findings.

Attachment #3

Date: September 25, 2026
To: SFEI-ASC Board of Directors
From: Emily Corwin, Executive Director
RE: Executive Director's Report

Executive Summary

Financial: FY26 closed with a $1.2M surplus, but federal indirect-rate reconciliations could create up to ~$600k in cumulative revenue impacts; management is therefore holding the surplus as a buffer pending January review.

Strategy: Strategic planning is underway, with Board engagement beginning in January and approval targeted for June.

Governance: COI collection is underway; bylaws, reserve allocation, and COI policy revisions will return in January.

Development: Year-end fundraising goal is $30k, with a $15k target match and a November donor event.

Partnerships: New leadership at SFEP and SFEI's invitation to the SFBAYJV Management Board create meaningful regional collaboration opportunities.

Board support requested: guest introductions for the November event, participation in strategic planning

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Board Appointments & Onboarding

- **Welcome Stefanie Woodward!** We are thrilled to formally welcome Stefanie Woodward, Watershed Stewardship Lead at Meta, to the SFEI Board of Directors!

- **SF Bay Joint Venture Board Seat:** SFEI has been invited to join the Management Board of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBAYJV), strengthening regional coordination on wetland restoration and climate adaptation science.

Strategic Planning & Schedule Update

We are advancing a structured process to update SFEI's Strategic Plan over the coming months. We are evaluating options for a January Board Retreat to facilitate in-depth discussions on our long-term vision. The preliminary schedule is as follows:

- January 29, 2027 Board Meeting: Review strategic approach and draft institutional goals
- April 30, 2027 Board Meeting: Review draft final Strategic Plan update
- June 25, 2027 Board Meeting: Final Board review and approval of the updated Strategic Plan

Organizational Leadership & Regional Opportunities

We are excited to share that former SFEI scientist Julie Beagle will step into the role of Director of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) on November 2. Having spent years leading SFEI's initiatives in the Resilient Landscapes program, Julie's appointment creates extraordinary opportunities for deep alignment and coordination between SFEI and SFEP.

FY26 Financial Summary & Federal Rate Adjustments

- SFEI achieved its largest net surplus to date at $1.2M (~5.5% of $22.4M total revenue), driven by high staff billability on major federal awards, $200k in Treasury Bill/interest yields, and reduced occupancy costs following a lease extension through April 2030.
- Following Department of the Interior negotiations, SFEI's allowable federal indirect rate was capped at 51.7% (compared to a 70.4% break-even cost) due to disallowed indirect labor expenses. Reconciling this FY24 rate in arrears requires returning $120k in FY27 ($52k to active grants and $70k to the federal government), with cumulative revenue impacts potentially reaching up to ~$600k across FY24–FY26 reconciliations.
- Due to ongoing federal rate uncertainties and future reconciliations, SFEI is deferring the transfer of the FY26 surplus into the Operational Reserve until the January 2027 Board Meeting. The $1.2M surplus serves as a vital financial buffer while SFEI evaluates and transitions to a new billing structure aligned with federal grant requirements.

Deferred Governance & Policy Items

To ensure sufficient time for comprehensive review, consideration of the following governance items is being postponed to the January 2027 Board Meeting:

1. Potential resolutions regarding Bylaw reconciliation and structural updates.
2. Proposal to transfer FY26 surplus into the Operational Reserve.
3. Potential Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy revisions will be brought for Board consideration.

Development & Outreach Update

- **Annual Impact Report Released:** The *SFEI 2025–26 Annual Report* is officially complete. Hard copies are being mailed to partners this week and will be distributed at the upcoming RMP Annual Meeting. The report was highlighted in our September 22 newsletter and is accessible on the SFEI website. We plan to highlight in future social media posts and during our year-end campaign.
- In partnership with Board Member Emma Russell and a generous major donor, SFEI will host an intimate fundraising event on Thursday, November 19 in San Francisco (cocktail attire; target ~45 attendees). The event features a committed $5,000 match from an existing donor toward a total $15,000 unrestricted target. **Board members are encouraged to submit guest names and email addresses to Katie Janss by Friday, October 9.**
- SFEI is launching its Year-End Campaign with a tentative goal of raising $30,000 between November 1 and December 31, supported by a target $15,000 matching gift. Katie Janss will provide outreach templates and assets for Board members to share with their personal and professional networks.
- **Ocean Hoptimism Public Outreach Event:** On August 27, 2026, Sierra Garcia represented SFEI's Clean Water Program as the featured speaker at Ocean Hoptimism at Faction Brewing in Alameda. Her presentation, "The Urban Upstream: Tracking Coastal Pollution to Its Sources," engaged the public on the science behind clean water solutions.

Conference Participation & Science Engagement

SFEI staff have represented the Institute at several high-profile regional and national forums:

- **California Association of Environmental Restoration Specialists (CAERS):** Emily Corwin and Rachel Wigginton (Delta Stewardship Council) co-led the plenary session.
- **Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) National Conference:** The SFEI team presented extensively at RAE, strengthening SFEI's national visibility in nature-based shoreline adaptation, sediment management, and estuarine monitoring. Staff used the conference to deepen relationships with funders and collaborators.
- **EBMUD 75th Anniversary Event:** Participated in regional celebrations honoring 75 years of public water utility stewardship.
- **Bay-Delta Science Conference & 30x30 Partnership:** Contributed scientific leadership to multi-agency sessions supporting statewide biodiversity and conservation targets.
- **Upcoming Events:**
  - California Climate Resilient Summit: October 20–22, 2026
  - RMP Annual Meeting: October 21, 2026

Risks & Opportunities

- **Federal funding / indirect cost recovery — WATCH:** reconciliation exposure and future billing model transition.
- **Revenue diversification — OPPORTUNITY:** growth in private/philanthropic funding and partnerships.
- **Regional partnerships — OPPORTUNITY:** SFEP leadership transition, SFBAYJV Board participation.

Status of Actions from June 2026 Board Meeting

Action Item	**Responsible Party**	**Status Update**
Review bylaws to determine if the Board should analyze existing bylaws for inconsistencies prior to the 2026 amended version.	Skyli McAfee / Emily Corwin	Postponed to January 2027 Board Meeting.
Collect Board member signatures for the Conflict of Interest policy.	Board of Directors	Executing during the October 2026 Board Meeting.
Evaluate option of term-limited employment contracts for RMP leadership and project-based hires.	Emily Corwin	Considered and evaluated against organizational retention and federal award stability.
Meet with Tessie Bellarmine to review SFEI Financials	Emily Corwin	In progress.

Retrieve documentation detailing the split between state and federal policy decisions impacted by ECWG data.	Emily Corwin	Complete. Documented 20+ policy wins, including 5 major regulatory decisions at the federal level (available at sfei.org/programs/rmp/policy-impacts).
Develop strategy to elevate ECWG historical impact narratives across broader media channels.	Emily Corwin	Complete / Ongoing. Expanded social media campaign, featured ECWG in the Annual Report, published newsletter article picked up by *Maven's Notebook*, and hosted public outreach at the *Hoptimism* event.
Share organizational setup and conduct details from the recent Regional Board staff scavenger hunt.	Xavier Fernandez	In progress.

Development Committee

Director Name	**Primary Expertise**	**Proposed Role**	**Status**
Ann Hayden	Environmental Policy, Water Resilience & Philanthropic Alliances	Committee Chair	Confirmed
Jessica Law	Water Policy & Stakeholder Engagement	Member	Confirmed
Stefanie Woodward	Corporate Water Stewardship & Philanthropic Networks	Member	**Unconfirmed**
Emma Russell	Tech Strategy, Digital Engagement & Private Philanthropy	Member	**Unconfirmed**
[Open Slot]	Individual Giving & Community Outreach	Member	*[Open Slot]*
[Open Slot]	Individual Giving & Community Outreach	Member	*[Open Slot]*

Attachment #4

Date: September 22, 2026
To: SFEI - ASC Board of Directors
From: Emily Corwin and Jen Trudeau
RE: FY26 Financial Summary

Key Takeaways

- **Record Financial Surplus:** SFEI achieved its largest surplus to date at $1.2M (representing ~5.5% of total revenue), driven by major federal grants and $200k in interest and Treasury Bill yields.
- **Federal Indirect Rate Reductions:** Ongoing rate negotiations with the Department of the Interior are resulting in lower indirect rates, significantly below break-even costs (e.g., 51.7% vs. 70.4% break-even in FY24).
- **Revenue Reconciliations & Future Losses:** Cumulative revenue reductions could reach up to ~$600k across FY24–FY26 rate reconciliations, and is resulting in a $120k book loss in FY27 due to returned funds.
- **Operational Reserve Deferred:** Due to federal rate uncertainties and future reconciliations, no FY26 surplus is currently being transferred to the Operational Reserve; this will be revisited at the January 2027 Board Meeting.

Summary

During Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), we had a net addition of 1 staff member. We hired 7 new employees while 6 left the organization (2 retired and 4 pursued other opportunities). Our staff count stood at 94 at the end of the fiscal year, with 7 open or pending positions remaining.

For the year, we generated a surplus of $1.2M (Figure 1), representing roughly 5.5% of our $22.4M total revenue. Beyond labor and reimbursable revenue, we earned $200k in other revenue from interest and Treasury Bill yields.

We are also benefiting from reduced rent: we are currently in Year 3 of a 3-year lease extension, and recently executed another extension at reduced rates through April 2030. This lower rent expense has reduced overall costs and driven larger surpluses over the past three years.

This marks the largest surplus SFEI has achieved to date, largely driven by an influx of major federal grants that required high staff billability to meet key deliverable timelines.

However, a significant challenge lies ahead. Each year following our annual audit, we negotiate our indirect and fringe benefit rates for federal grants with the Department of the Interior, applied in arrears. During FY24 negotiations, the negotiator noted that our programmatic indirect labor was too high and stated that high percentages would no longer be allowed in the rate calculation. Consequently, they removed $220,000 in labor expense from the FY24 indirect labor pool (~10% of total indirect labor), leaving a portion of our indirect labor unrecovered for that year.

We expect that the negotiators will enforce even lower programmatic indirect labor allowances in FY25 and FY26, which will result in our indirect rates continuing to decrease well below break-even costs. For instance, in FY24, our break-even indirect rate was 70.4%, but the final approved allowable federal indirect rate was set at 51.7%—a 26% reduction.

The reduced indirect rate results in decreased revenue in the year that we apply the final indirect rate. We reconciled the final approved FY24 rate in our current fiscal year (FY27) against labor billed to federal grants in FY24. Due to the rate reconciliation, we will return $52k to active grants and $70k to the federal government for closed grants (~$120k total). We estimate returning an additional $150k–$250k for FY25, and potentially over $250k for FY26. Over this three-year period, cumulative revenue could be reduced by up to ~$600k, depending on the final negotiated indirect labor allowances. If funds are returned to the projects and the federal government, this shows up as a loss in the year we reconcile. Therefore, FY27 will include a loss of $120k on our books.

Since federal grants comprise roughly 60% of our portfolio, these changes significantly affect overall revenue generation. In response, we are researching a new billing model aligned with our federal project portfolio, though developing and implementing it will take time. **Fortunately, the FY26 surplus provides a helpful financial buffer during this transition and rate adjustment period.**

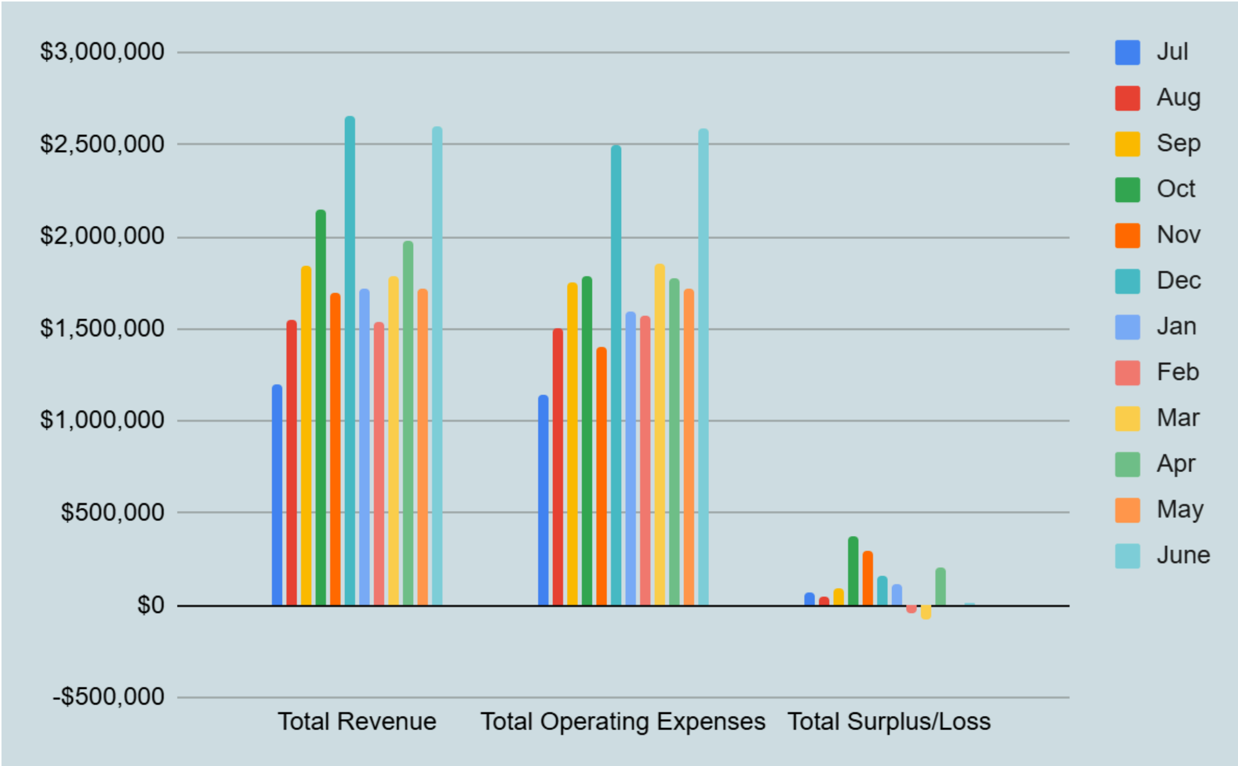


Figure 1. FY26 Total Revenue, Operating Expenses, and Profit/Loss by month

Due to the change in the federal indirect rate, and uncertainties of future fiscal year negotiations, at this time we are not proposing to transfer any of the FY26 surplus into the Operational Reserve. We propose to revisit a potential transfer to the Operational Reserve at the January 2027 Board Meeting.

FY2026 Projected and Actual Budget

Table 1 shows our projected FY26 budget and our actual revenue and expenses for the fiscal year.

High Level Summary

Several revenue streams exceeded our initial projections:

- **Reimbursable Subcontractor Revenue**: A large EPA grant received in September 2025 included more consultants with larger budgets than anticipated.
- **Individual Donor Revenue**: Secured both a higher volume and larger overall amount of individual donations than planned.
- **Interest Revenue**: Outperformed expectations, which had originally budgeted for lower interest yields due to projected rate cuts.

Expenses also came in higher than expected across several line items, driven by organizational growth, and market rate increases:

- **Reimbursable Subcontractor Expense:** Aligned with the September 2025 EPA grant, reflecting higher consultant count and expanded scope**.**
- **Audit:** Costs rose significantly in Year 2 after our new auditor under projected initial scope requirements.
- **Human Resources:** Unplanned cost incurred to outsource a salary survey following approval of the FY26 budget.
- **PG&E:** Electricity costs continued to climb higher than budget forecasts.
- **Telephone:** Exceeded budgeted projections**.**
- **Lease Expenses:** Updated lease accounting methodology led to higher recognized actual expenses relative to initial projections.

We also had some significant cost savings on a few line items including:

- **Legal:** required less legal support than planned
- **IT:** required less software/hardware than planned
- **Rent:** Adjusted for a new accounting methodology. Budgeting originally included full rent, whereas actual income statement entries reflect CAM costs (with rent now logged under account 798.01).
- **Professional Development:** increased focus on billable work resulted in less opportunity for professional development
- **Recruitment:** required less than planned
- **Communications:** required less than planned
- **Employee Appreciation:** did not utilize the full budget
- **Development:** did not utilize the full budget

Table 1. Proposed Budget vs Actual Spending for FY26

Item	Projected FY26 Budget	FY26 Spending	Variance %
Revenue			
401.00 Billed Labor	$14,118,116	$14,874,093	5%
421.00 Billed Subcontractor Reimbursable	$4,503,797	$7,037,034	56%
440.01 Assets Without Donor Restriction	$30,000	$53,364	78%
820.00 Assets With Donor Restriction	$300,000	$283,150	
LAIf and other interest	$100,000	$184,902	85%
Expenses			
Total Salary & benefits	$12,809,426	$12,782,248	0%
Reimbursable expenses	$4,503,797	$7,054,065	57%
733.00 Legal	$40,000	$20,936	-48%
734.00 Audit	$35,000	$52,471	50%
735.00 Consultants	$200,000	$201,217	1%
736.00 Human Resources	$10,000	$22,855	129%
740.01 Building Expense - Trash	$7,210	$7,879	9%
740.02 Building Expense - Property Taxes	$4,000	$3,170	-21%
740.03 Building Expense - PG&E	$32,000	$49,137	54%
750.00 Supplies - Office	$10,000	$8,714	-13%
751.00 Publication/Photos	$12,000	$10,823	-10%
752.00 Printing	$8,000	$1,031	-87%
753.00 Postage - USPS	$1,000	$1,407	41%
754.00 Courier - UPS, FedEx, Delivery Service	$1,500	$1,106	-26%
755.00 Equipment - Office < $5K	$5,000	$1,317	-74%
760.00 Workstation Software	$10,000	$17,346	73%
761.00 Workstation Hardware	$40,000	$20,543	-49%
763.00 Internet	$14,000	$4,171	-70%
764.00 Storage - Data	$10,000	$7,303	-27%
765.00 Server Software	$17,000	$22,381	32%

766.00 Server and Other Hardware	$12,000	$3,460	-71%
767.00 Small Equipment/Books - IT	$2,000	$675	-66%
769.00 Cloud Services - IT	$40,000	$32,867	-18%
770.00 Rent	$290,271	$33,476	-88%
771.00 Equipment - Leasing	$38,000	$39,553	4%
773.00 Telephone	$55,067	$68,237	24%
774.00 Insurance	$90,000	$85,290	-5%
775.00 Repair and Maintenance	$12,000	$7,969	-34%
777.00 Janitorial Services	$23,000	$23,400	2%
780.00 Travel - General	$7,896	$7,094	-10%
781.00 Prof Dev/Training/Conf/Meetings	$75,000	$18,817	-75%
782.00 Meetings/Events	$2,500	$1,389	-44%
783.00 Professional Membership Dues	$5,000	$3,280	-34%
784.00 Recruitment	$30,000	$7,373	-75%
785.00 License and Taxes	$3,000	$1,918	-36%
787.00 Communications	$15,000	$684	-95%
790.00 Depreciation	$14,400	$12,704	-12%
791.00 Expenses - Payroll Misc.	$130,000	$131,872	1%
796.01 Unallowable - EE Appreciation	$50,000	$32,228	-36%
796.07 Unallowable - Development	$93,000	$28,795	-69%
797.00 Bank Fee	$600	$971	62%
798.01 Lease Expense	$328,271	$386,725	18%
TOTALS			
Total Revenue	$18,751,914	$22,432,544	
Total Operating Expenses	$18,736,802	$21,218,898	
Total Operating Profit/Loss	**$15,111**	**$1,213,646**	

Attachment #5

Date: October 2, 2026
To: SFEI-ASC Board of Directors
From: Emily Corwin, Executive Director
RE: Annual COI Compliance and Review and Approval of Board Committee Structures and FY27 Roster Assignments

Desired Outcome

The Board is requested to:

1. **Confirm 100% Completion** of the annual Board Conflict of Interest (COI) disclosures.
2. **Review and Adopt** the Terms of Reference (Charters) for SFEI's three standing committees.
3. **Select and Execute** one of two approval pathways (Option A or Option B) to populate open volunteer slots and finalize committee roster assignments for FY27.

1. Annual Conflict of Interest (COI) Compliance Status

In accordance with the 2013 SFEI/ASC Conflict of Interest Policy, all Board members must annually disclose "other interests" (ownership, employment, vendor ties, or advisory roles) to ensure complete transparency and prevent divided loyalties.

- To resolve a multi-year gap in formal annual documentation, staff launched a digital compliance workflow via DocuSign in September 2026.
- Disclosures incorporated a new **Disclosure Statement**, allowing Directors to formally affirm either "Option 1: No Interests to Disclose" or detail specific affiliations under "Option 2: Other Interests to Disclose" (establishing formal recusal protocols for relevant project votes).
- As of September 25, 2026, we have **68% submission** of signed COI disclosures across all active Directors. We need 100% to fulfill our audit compliance requirements.

The COIs will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and document where recusals are needed. We can all work together to monitor and deal with potential or actual conflicts.

2. Terms of Reference (Standing Committee Charters)

Our standing committees serve as the working engines that translate our mission—to deliver visionary science so people can revitalize nature in our communities—into sustainable financial and operational realities. The following Terms of Reference establish the explicit authority, composition, and responsibilities for each standing committee.

A. Executive Committee Charter

Purpose: The Executive Committee is established to handle urgent matters that arise between regular meetings of the Board of Directors and to provide a sounding board for the Executive Director on sensitive strategic or personnel issues.

Composition:
- Consists of at least three (3) Directors, including the Board Chair and Vice-Chair.
- The Board Chair shall serve as the Chair of this committee.

Authority & Responsibilities:
- **Urgent Actions:** Authorized to act on behalf of the full Board on matters that cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting, except for those powers specifically reserved for the full Board under Bylaw 7.1 (e.g., amending Bylaws, filling vacancies).
- **ED Oversight:** Conducts the annual performance review and compensation adjustment for the Executive Director.
- **Emergency Spending:** May authorize unbudgeted expenditures up to $100,000 in emergency situations, with a requirement to report such actions to the full Board within 48 hours.
- **Reserve Fund Authorization:** Authorized to review and approve formal requests from the Executive Director to use the Operating Reserve Fund for purposes defined in the Institute's Operating Reserve Policy (e.g., disaster response, funding fluxes, or office relocation).

Meetings:
- Meets monthly or as needed at the call of the Board Chair.
- Staff Liaison: Emily Corwin

B. Audit Committee Charter

Purpose: The Audit Committee provides oversight of SFEI-ASC's financial reporting, internal controls, and the independent audit process to ensure compliance with federal Uniform Guidance and California state law.

Composition:

- Consists of at least two (2) Directors.
- **Compliance Note:** In accordance with the California Nonprofit Integrity Act, the committee may not include staff members, the president / CEO, or the Treasurer.
- Ideally, at least one member shall have "financial expert" experience (accounting, CFO, or audit background).

Authority & Responsibilities:

- **Auditor Selection:** Recommends the retention or termination of the independent auditor to the full Board.
- **Audit Review:** Meets with the auditor to review the scope of the annual audit and the final results, including any "Management Letter" comments.
- **Internal Controls:** Monitors the implementation of corrective actions for any identified audit findings or internal control deficiencies.
- **Reserve Policy Review:** Conducts an annual review of the Operating Reserve Policy to ensure the target amount remains appropriate for the Institute's scale, risk profile, and financial position.
- **Replenishment Monitoring:** Oversees the status of any active Reserve Replenishment Plans to ensure that used funds are restored to target levels within the three-to-four-year timeframe required by policy.

Meetings:

- Meets at least twice per year: once to approve the audit plan and once to review the draft audit before it is presented to the full Board.
- Staff Liaison: Jen Trudeau

C. Development Committee Charter

Purpose: The Development Committee oversees SFEI's long-term sustainability by guiding fundraising strategy, fostering donor relationships, and ensuring the ethical implementation of the Gift Acceptance Policy.

Composition:

- Consists of at least two (2) Directors.
- May include non-Director "community members" as advisors, provided the committee is led by a Director.

Authority & Responsibilities:

- **Gift Policy Oversight:** Serves as the primary review body for corporate gifts or sponsorships exceeding $50,000.
- **Board Recruitment Support:** Assists in identifying and vetting Board candidates (e.g., performing the **Due Diligence Checklist** review).
- **Strategic Planning:** Reviews and recommends the multi-year fundraising plan and campaign goals to the full Board.

Meetings:

- Meets quarterly, or more frequently during active campaigns.
- Staff Liaison: Emily Corwin and Katie Janss

3. Board Decision Framework & Proposed Motions

To finalize committee rosters while allowing flexibility for Directors to step into open working slots, the Board Chair presents two options for Board consideration:

Option A: Approve Baseline Rosters + Delegated Appointment
Best for allowing Directors time to review workload commitments post-meeting.

> **Form of Motion:** *"Move to approve the FY27 Standing Committee Charters and baseline roster assignments as presented in Attachment #5, and delegate authority to the Board Chair to assign additional Director volunteers to open Audit and Development Committee seats based on interest submitted by October 31, 2026."*

Option B: Live Roster Population & Immediate Finalization
Best for completing all committee appointments live during today's session.

> **Form of Motion:** *"Move to approve the FY27 Standing Committee Charters and finalized roster assignments as presented in Attachment #5, incorporating the Director volunteer additions agreed upon during today's meeting."*

FY27 BOARD COMMITTEE ROSTER ALIGNMENT MATRIX

Executive Committee

Director Name	Board Title / Affiliation	Committee Role	Status
Ann Hayden	Board Chair / Environmental Defense Fund	Chair	Confirmed
Skyli McAfee	Vice Chair, SFEI	Member	Confirmed
Amber Mace	Vice Chair, ASC / CA Academy of Sciences	Member	Confirmed
Lorien Fono	Treasurer / BACWA	Member	Confirmed
Jessica Law	Secretary / Water Policy Leadership	Member	Confirmed
Carter Brown	Audit Committee Chair / Macrae	Member	Confirmed

Audit Committee

Compliance Note: Must have no staff, Board Chair, or Board Treasurer per CA Nonprofit Integrity Act.

Director Name	Primary Expertise	Proposed Role	Status
Carter Brown	Legal / Compliance / Internal Controls	Committee Chair	Confirmed
Tessie Bellarmine	Governance, Risk Management & Performance Analytics	Member	**Unconfirmed**
[Open Slot]	Financial Literacy / Risk Oversight	Member	*[Open Slot]*
[Open Slot]	Legal / Compliance / Internal Controls	Member	*[Open Slot]*

Attachment #6

Date: October 2, 2026
To: SFEI-ASC Board of Directors
From: Emily Corwin, Executive Director
RE: Science Topics: Novato Creek Baylands Strategy, Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) Updates, and 2026 Pulse of the Bay: Nutrients Edition

Summary

This memo provides an overview of three critical science updates and major program deliverables featured on the joint business agenda for the October 2, 2026 Board Meeting. These initiatives directly represent SFEI's core mission to deliver visionary science so people can revitalize nature in their communities.

1. Science Update: Novato Creek Baylands Strategy (Agenda Item 8)

The Novato Creek baylands encompass over 4,000 acres of undeveloped, diked baylands along San Pablo Bay—representing **one of the largest remaining tidal wetland restoration opportunities in the San Francisco Bay Area.**

Diking and land modification since the mid-1800s eliminated approximately 90% of the area's historical tidal marsh, creating severe land subsidence and exacerbating upstream flood risks along lower Novato Creek. Rising sea levels and severe storm events threaten regional infrastructure, causing repeated flooding of State Route 37 (SR 37) and impacting the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) line.

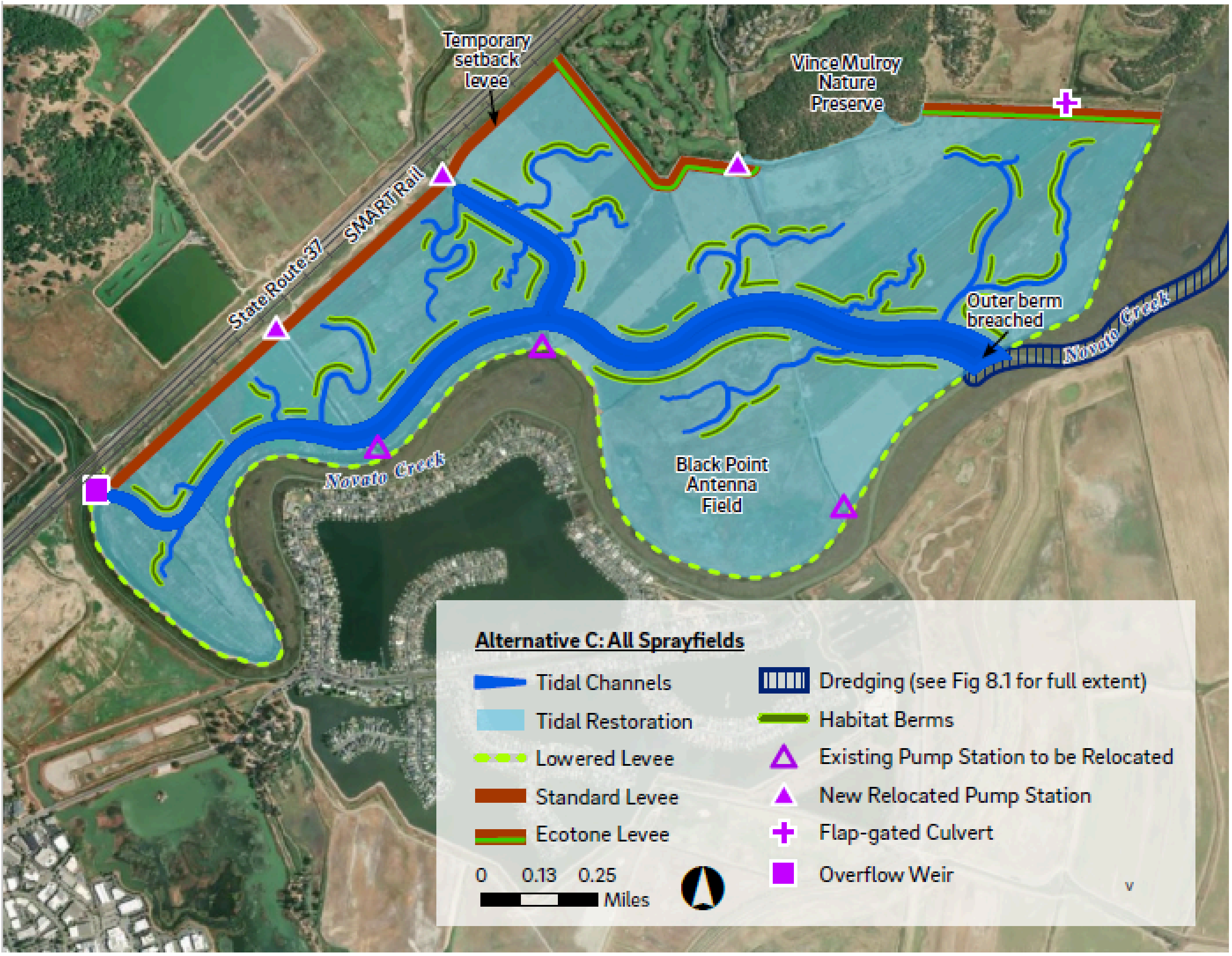
Building on the 2015 Novato Creek Baylands Vision, SFEI and its project partners—the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, Marin County Flood Control District, Marin Audubon Society, Environmental Science Associates, and Far Western Anthropological Research Group—evaluated landscape-scale and project-scale restoration alternatives, with input from the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

Key findings and strategy recommendations include:

- **Preferred Long-Term Landscape Alternative (Alternative 2: Single Breach):** Routes primary tidal exchange through a new channel in the Marin County sprayfields via a single downstream breach rather than through the constrained Novato Creek channel. This configuration maximizes habitat development and sediment accretion, cuts 50-year peak flood water levels by over 3 feet at SR 37 and 1.5 feet at US-101, and reduces required in-marsh dredging from 1.67 million cubic yards down to 0.6 million cubic yards.
- **Preferred Near-Term Project Alternative (Alternative C: All Sprayfields):** Identifies the 829-acre Marin County sprayfields and Black Point Antenna Field as the

top-priority initial project. By constructing a temporary setback levee to protect SR 37 and SMART, breaching the outer berm, and dredging Novato Creek downstream, Alternative C achieves high cost efficiency ($49,000 per acre; approximately $40 million total construction cost) and eliminates the need to maintain nearly 17,000 linear feet of aging, non-engineered berms.

Desired Outcome: Evaluate SFEI's landscape-scale restoration modeling for integrating upstream flood protection, State Route 37 infrastructure resilience, and tidal wetland habitat restoration in the Novato Baylands.



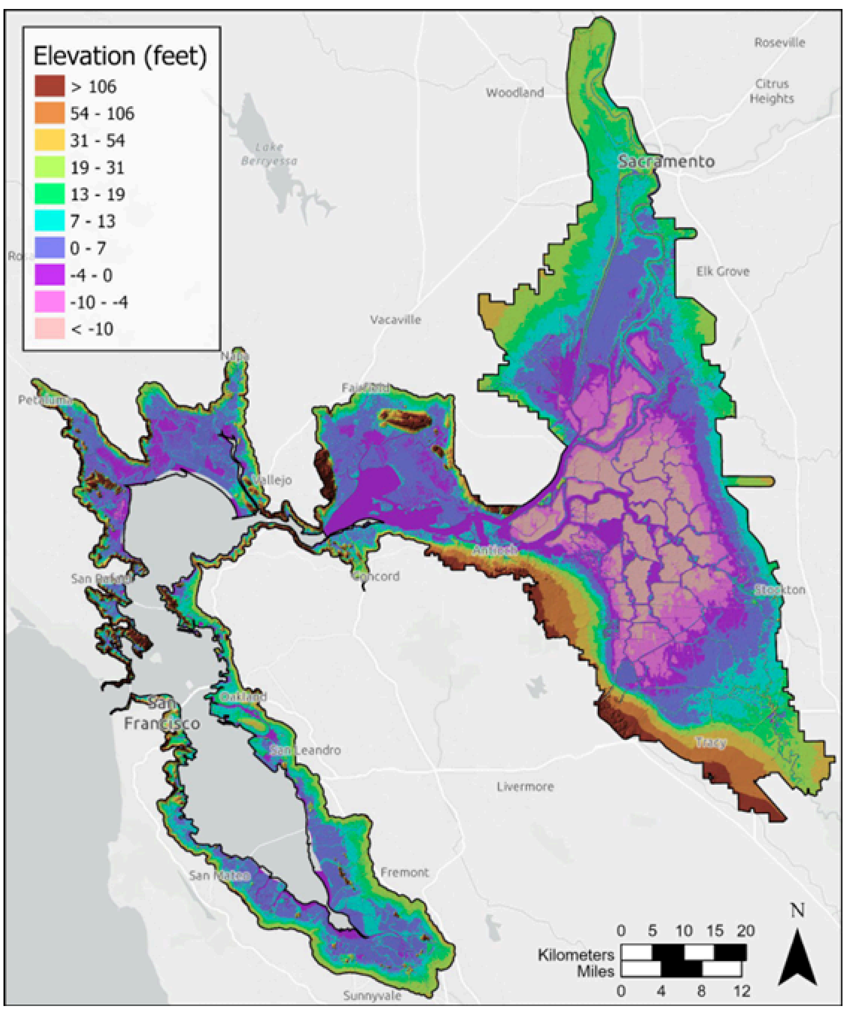
2. Science Update: Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) Updates: Annual Report & LIDAR Release (Agenda Item 9)

Established to transition San Francisco Estuary wetland monitoring from fragmented, project-by-project compliance into a unified regional effort, the WRMP initiated Estuary-wide data collection in 2024. Co-managed by SFEI and SFEP with funding from the US EPA Region IX and regional partners, SFEI is releasing two foundational deliverables: the *2026 Annual Report: Tidal Wetland Indicators and Insights* (SFEI Publication #1329) and the *2025 Bay-Delta LIDAR Dataset*, released in 2026.

Key highlights include:

- **Inaugural Data Collection & Framework:** Synthesizes 1–2 years of baseline data across the WRMP's 3-tiered spatial framework (Level 1 Remote Sensing, Level 2 Rapid Assessment, Level 3 Site-Scale Monitoring) across Benchmark (historic), Reference (older restored), and Project (newly restored) wetlands.
- **High-Resolution Elevation Mapping:** Releases a seamless, high-precision 3D elevation LIDAR dataset covering 1.25 million acres across the Bay-Delta, achieving a non-vegetated vertical accuracy of $\pm 3.38cm$ to establish elevation capital across tidal sites.
- **Updated Regional Tracking Tools:** Highlights the updated Baylands Habitat Map 2020 (classifying 480,833 acres across 23 habitat types), the 2025 Restoration Map (tracking 168 tidal wetland projects totaling 27,013 acres), and the new *EcoAtlas WRMP Profile Tool* for custom spatial queries.
- **Monitoring Program Synthesis:** Integrates multi-metric indicators across 70 Surface Elevation Tables with Marker Horizons (SET-MHs), 120 planned CRAM assessment sites, continuous water quality monitoring, and 575 fish trawls (sampling 397,027 fish and macroinvertebrates across 71 species).

Desired Outcome: Provide input on data dissemination strategies to support decision-making and wetland restoration tracking.



First High-Resolution Elevation Map for Whole Bay-Delta

3. Science Update: 2026 Pulse of the Bay: Nutrients (Agenda Item 10)

The 2026 edition of SFEI's flagship publication, *The Pulse of the Bay*, is dedicated entirely to nutrients and the state of estuarine science in San Francisco Bay. While the Bay historically exhibited resilience to heavy nutrient loading due to strong tidal mixing, turbidity, and clam grazing, long-term USGS monitoring led by the late Dr. Jim Cloern (1948–2025) revealed a persistent shift toward increasing phytoplankton biomass beginning in the late 1990s.

In the summer of 2022, an unprecedented harmful algal bloom (*Heterosigma akashiwo*) caused severe oxygen depletion and killed thousands of fish. This event triggered major regulatory and scientific actions:

- **2024 Watershed Permit Mandate:** In July 2024, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board reissued the Nutrient Watershed Permit, requiring the region's 40 wastewater agencies to collectively reduce dry-weather nitrogen discharges by **40% from 2022 levels within 10 years**.
- **Infrastructure Investments:** Previous Watershed Permit studies estimated approximately **$11 billion** in costs to comply through traditional treatment upgrades. The 2024 permit is now driving the region's largest wave of wastewater infrastructure investment since the 1970s, with agencies evaluating approaches including biological nutrient removal, water recycling, treatment wetlands and other nature-based or innovative solutions.
- **Tracking Bay Health Grant:** In 2024, the Regional Monitoring Program and the Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) secured a grant from the US EPA San Francisco Bay Program Office, effectively doubling the budgets of both programs over five years to support expanded monitoring, high-resolution moored sensor networks, and biogeochemical modeling.

Desired Outcome: Strategic guidance on communicating Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) findings.

Attachment 7

Date: October 2, 2026
To: SFEI Board of Directors
From: Shannon Bowley, Grants and Contracts Manager
Re: FY27 – Q1: SFEI Program Plan Update

On the next pages is a table summarizing the SFEI projects not previously approved.

Recommended Action: Approve FY27 – Q1: SFEI Program Plan Update

SFEI - Program Updates

	Title of project	Total proposal budget requested	Total SFEI labor budget requested	Underlying funding source	Project Description
Program: RL **Principal Investigator:** Karen Verpeet **Project Manager:** Kara Mirmelstein **Funder:** Packard Foundation **Status:** Not Submitted **Funding Probability:** 100% **Project Start Date:** 10/15/2026 **Projected Duration:** 1.5 years	Urban Nature Collaborative Formation	$ 200,000	$ 170,000	Private	The project will have two tasks. Task 1. Establish Steering Committee. Establish this critical foundational advisory group to guide the UNC's priorities and success. Task 2. Community and Partner Outreach. Coordinate with regional partners and communities to strategically increase urban nature and continue to build our presence as the key umbrella collaborative for urban nature in the Bay Area. Project Partners: TBD...the project is focused on SC and community outreach, so there will be many parties and partners involved, some of whom will receive stipends/honoraria Focus Area: Urban Ecology (RL)
Program: RL **Principal Investigator:** Lydia Vaughn **Project Manager:** Lydia Vaughn **Funder:** San Mateo County **Status:** Submitted **Funding Probability:** Unknown **Project Start Date:** 1/1/2027 **Projected Duration:** 5 years	San Mateo County RICAPS Carbon Sequestration Methodology Technical Assistance	$ 220,000	$ 220,000	Local	SFEI will support San Mateo County's climate action plan implementation by developing a carbon sequestration methodology and integration framework. SFEI will recommend methods to quantify carbon and greenhouse gas benefits from parkland climate-smart practices such as ecosystem restoration and rangeland compost application. Along with these methods, SFEI will develop data collection and reporting protocols for GHG inventories and a list of potential pilot parkland project concepts, which they will provide as an integrated accounting and implementation framework. SFEI will also serve as a technical and QA/QC adviser for the County's bi-annual assessment of carbon sequestration. Project Partners: Cascadia Environmental (proposal lead) Focus Area: Ecosystem Carbon (RL)
Program: CW **Principal Investigator:** Jordyn Moscoso, David Senn **Project Manager:** Will Geiken, David Senn **Funder:** Ocean Protection Council (OPC) **Status:** Submitted **Funding Probability:** Unknown **Project Start Date:** Unknown **Projected Duration:** Unknown	Monitoring, Research, and Modeling to Support Ocean Acidification, Hypoxia, and Marine Harmful Algal Bloom Management in California	$ 104,777	$ 83,821	State	This project will evaluate and apply the Regional Ocean Modeling System with Biogeochemical Element Cycling and Domoic Acid Prediction model (ROMS-BEC-DA), a mechanistic model that embodies a generalized nutrient-stress paradigm for DA production. The goal of this project is to determine to what extent this paradigm explains DA variability across CA and if species-specific responses to temperature and nitrogen form alter dynamics. The contribution from SFEI includes identifying scenarios across multiple years spanning contrasting precipitation and climate conditions, conducing simulations using the SFEI Hydrodynamic and Biogeochemical Model, and providing model output for comparison. Project Partners: SCCWRP, UCLA, UC Santa Cruz Focus Area: Modeling (CW)

SFEI - Program Updates

	Title of project	Total proposal budget requested	Total SFEI labor budget requested	Underlying funding source	Project Description
Program: RL **Principal Investigator:** Alison Whipple/Sarah Lowe **Project Manager:** Sarah Lowe **Funder:** Sonoma County **Status:** Submitted **Funding Probability:** 95% **Project Start Date:** 11/15/2026 **Projected Duration:** 3 years	Monitoring coordination and training through the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP)	$ 200,000	$ 190,000	Local	As the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP) moves from development to implementation, it will focus on monitoring stream health using two survey designs: 1) targeted continuous monitoring stations, and 2) an infrequent probabilistic watershed-wide stream condition assessment using the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM). This funding adds to existing funding to support SFEI (the implementing entity of the R3MP) to: (1) develop a final survey design and sample draw for the statistically-rigorous stream condition survey; (2) provide a 5-day CRAM Practitioner training to local scientists; (3) and continue to coordinate monitoring alignment across the watershed. Project Partners: North Coast Regional Water Board, Sonoma County, R3MP Member entities Focus Area: Watersheds (RL)
Program: RL **Principal Investigator:** Karen Verpeet **Project Manager:** Karen Verpeet **Funder:** Silicon Valley Community Foundation **Status:** Not Submitted **Funding Probability:** 80% **Project Start Date:** 11/1/2026 **Projected Duration:** 1 year	Urban Nature Collaborative Steering Committee Inaugural Meeting	$ 25,000	$ 24,500	Private	The Urban Nature Collaborative will be establishing a steering committee -- this funding will allow us to plan for and host an all-day workshop at SFEI's offices to have all members meet in person and be fully focused on how the Collaborative can facilitate the creation of more and higher quality nature in Bay Area cities. Project Partners: The steering committee members will all be new or existing partners, but we do not anticipate any funding for them through this contract (it will be covered through another contract) Focus Area: Watersheds (RL)