

San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund – Grantee Report

Project name: Collaboratively Restoring Eelgrass in Richardson Bay to Improve Water Quality
Report type: Quarterly Report
Reporting period: July 1, 2026 - Sept 30, 2026 (FYE27 Quarter 1)
Prepared by: Jess Bode, 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)

Coastal Policy Solutions and RBRA staff conducted the following activities:

1. Enforcement of Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ):
    - Continued enforcement of the EPZ throughout the quarter.
    - As of the end of the reporting period, zero vessels remained in the Eelgrass Protection Zone.
    - No citations were issued during this period.
    - One vessel is pending removal through the Vessel Buyback Program and the temporary housing support program. Coordination is ongoing with the vessel occupant for removal and disposal of the vessel.
    - Coordination has begun with the Ulysses team for deployment of an unmanned vehicle for survey and monitoring of the Richardson Bay Eelgrass Protection Zone.

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

Task 3. Marine Debris Removal

1. Merkel & Associates:
    - Completed final debris removals during this period, bringing the total debris removed to approximately 4,920 lbs.

Task 4. Restoration, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management

San Francisco State University's Boyer Lab and Merkel & Associates coordinated to conduct the following activities:

2. Merkel & Associates:
    - Conducted final eelgrass restoration of the season. This brings the total eelgrass planted under the EPA grant to 16.5 acres, exceeding the targeted 15 acres.
    - Participated in monthly team coordination meetings.
    - Coordinated with Boyer Lab on fall monitoring, including spatial distribution surveys and in situ monitoring.
3. Boyer Lab (SFSU):
    - Staff cleaned and tidied the baywater system from the year's eelgrass restoration campaign.
    - Dr. Boyer and staff attended monthly full team meetings, and worked on invoicing and quarterly reporting.
    - Dr. Boyer's staff worked on water quality monitoring data to support understanding of algal bloom dynamics in the Richardson Bay eelgrass bed.
    - Dr. Boyer gave a talk at the Restore America's Estuaries conference, including a review of eelgrass restoration work from this project.
    - Dr. Boyer and staff worked with Merkel & Associates to plan fall monitoring of a subset of the planted mooring scars.
    - Staff continued to work on data and visualization in support of monitoring reports.

Task 5. Community Engagement and Support

1. Audubon California conducted the following activities:

Community Conservation Fellow (CCF):

- Community Conservation Fellows helped plan, coordinate, and lead the summer AYL Marin Naturalist Program. Each Fellow created and presented their own lesson to the cohort, which included a Bioblitz on the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary (RBACS) property to learn about the Richardson Bay watershed at large, and a specific eelgrass lesson during which the cohort kayaked in the eelgrass bed. Each Fellow also completed an eelgrass-focused article, which will be posted to the Richardson Bay Audubon website or shared in another format.

Audubon Youth Leader (AYL) Engagement:

- The six-week summer high school AYL session – the Marin Naturalist Program – ran from July 6th through the week of August 10th, with 9 students participating. Students completed a RBACS Bioblitz on iNaturalist, kayaked to see the Eelgrass Protection Zone in Richardson Bay (a first-time kayaking experience for four of the students), learned about the Conservation Ranching program, and heard from local Climate Justice community organizers with the Canal Alliance. The program concluded with student capstone projects, including an RBACS Field Guide, a Youth Climate Literacy Workshop Proposal, a GIS project mapping Harmful Algal Blooms, and others.

Habitat and Waterbird Monitoring:

- The 111th Group successfully photographed the Richardson Bay eelgrass bed for the “Assessing Eelgrass Damage in Richardson Bay Analysis” on July 16th. Image analysis has begun and the draft report is underway.

2. RBRA conducted the following activities:

Vessel buyback (VBB) program:

- One vessel is pending removal through the Vessel Buyback Program in coordination with the temporary housing support program. Coordination with the vessel occupant is ongoing.

Other community support:

- RBRA continues its partnership with Marin County Health and Human Services and Marin Housing Authority to execute the RBRA Housing Program.
- Cooperation with the Marin County Sheriff and City of Sausalito continues for management of all waters within Richardson Bay.

3. Coastal Policy Solutions and RBRA staff coordinated to conduct the following activities:

Outreach and Engagement:

- Continued coordination on the RAE presentation submission; prepared, finalized, and presented a project poster and spoke on a panel at the Restore America’s Estuaries conference.
- Reviewed the “Assessing Rafting Waterbird Usage in Richardson Bay – 2026” final report and the “Summer 2026 AYL – Eelgrass Kayak Outing” report.
- Conducted a media interview with Larissa Zimberoff on July 30th; conducted follow-up discussions in August.
- Discussed individual boat damage analysis with the Audubon team as a follow-up on a news story.

Task 6 Project management

Coastal Policy Solutions conducted the following activities:

- Continued assisting with EPA WQIF eelgrass grant audit requirements, including EPA audit budget projection for FY27 and other EPA audit questions.
- Continued assisting with the RBRA fiscal year-end budget report.
- Supported the RBRA Board meeting agenda and attended the RBRA Board meeting on July 9th.
- Started and submitted the quarterly report process for FYE26 Q4, including inputs for CPS, Audubon, SFSU, Merkel & Associates, and RBRA quarterly reports, photos, and budget details.

- Started and submitted Drawdown #26 for $47,460.02, including processing of CPS, Audubon, and SFSU invoices.
- Finalized and submitted Drawdown #27 for $14,314.92.
- Finalized and submitted Drawdown #28 for $38,549.14.
- Updated project information in EcoAtlas.
- Initiated the process of receiving the overlay of planting areas for the EPA grant and other surveys; coordinated with Adris Sparks from the Merkel team.
- Facilitated Richardson Bay/EPA Project Monthly Calls for July, August, and September.
- Continued coordination with project partners (e.g., scheduling, project coordination meetings, etc.), including continued efforts and engagement with Merkel & Associates for delivery of project reports, check-ins with EPA project management staff, connection calls with staff from Galilee Harbor, EOS, Ulysses, and the City of Sausalito, and weekly calls with RBRA staff, Audubon staff, SFSU staff, Merkel staff, and other key partners.
- Processed subawardee/subcontractor invoices.

Progress towards milestones:

Task	Deliverable Name	Progress
Task 1: Continue implementation of the Richardson Bay Eelgrass Protection and Management Plan (EPMP)	1. Signage demarcating boundaries of the Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ) 2. Annual habitat and waterbird monitoring	1. **Complete** - EPZ buoys installed November 7, 2024, with ongoing maintenance 2. Ongoing - final waterbird monitoring report due July 15th
Task 2: Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan (RAMP) development	1. Restoration and Adaptive Management Plan	1. **Complete**, although the RAMP may be periodically updated
Task 3: Marine debris removal	1. Invoices and quarterly reports describing marine debris removal activities during the previous quarter	1. **Complete** – total of approximately 4,920 lbs removed to date
Task 4: Restoration implementation (including adaptive management and monitoring)	1. 15 acres of restored eelgrass	1. **Complete** – 16.5 acres planted, exceeding the 15-acre target
Task 5: Community engagement and support	1. Outreach and Education Plan 2. Stakeholder Workshop Reports 3. Student Testimonials	1. Updated: Workshop work plan and poster templates completed 2. Not yet initiated 3. student capstone projects **completed**

	4. List of vessels acquired via Vessel Buyback Program and description of disposal efforts	4. Ongoing
Task 6: Project management	1. Quarterly Reports 2. Final Report containing an assessment of how effective the project was in achieving the stated objectives	1. In process 2. Not yet initiated

Problems encountered with achieving outputs and outcomes:

- No significant problems were reported during this quarter. The overall planting effort has exceeded goals and was completed ahead of schedule.

Activities planned for the next quarter:

- Merkel & Associates:
  - Complete overall project reporting.
  - Conduct fall 2026 monitoring and reporting.
  - Finalize SCP reporting.
  - Wrap up invoicing.
- SFSU
  - Complete processing of samples from October 2025 monitoring.
  - Complete data entry, visualization, and analysis of October 2025 monitoring data.
  - Plan and carry out fall 2026 monitoring.
  - Conduct sample processing and begin data entry, visualization, and analysis of October 2026 monitoring data.
- Audubon:
  - Complete analysis for the “Assessing Eelgrass Damage in Richardson Bay Analysis” and submit draft report by November 15th.
  - Begin the fall semester of the school year AYL program, focused on habitat stewardship, starting October 14, 2026, and running through the new year.
  - Begin hiring for two new Community Conservation Fellows, with an expected start date in early January.
- Coastal Policy Solutions
  - Continue coordination of project activities.
  - Process invoices and drawdowns as necessary.
  - Continue social media digital campaigns on LinkedIn to increase awareness.
- RBRA
  - Continue enforcement of the EPZ.
  - Continue progress toward vessel removal and housing program implementation.

Costs incurred during the reporting period and cumulative project costs since the beginning of the project, by task (current as of 09/30/26):

Task	Costs Incurred This Period	Cumulative Project Costs	Funds Budgeted	Funds Remaining
Task 1: EPMP implementation	$ 719.63	$ 92,992.45	$ 92,952.50	$ (39.95)
Task 2: RAMP development	$ 3,975.81	$ 51,235.32	$ 85,452.50	$ 34,217.18
Task 3: Marine debris removal	$ -	$ 70,725.00	$ 90,000.00	$ 19,275.00
Task 4: Restoration implementation	$ 23,066.69	$ 1,148,554.92	$ 1,532,224.00	$ 383,669.08
Task 5: Community engagement	$ 21,127.47	$ 549,684.06	$ 677,233.00	$ 127,548.94
Task 6: Project management	$ 17,492.98	$ 285,897.48	$ 304,724.00	$ 18,826.52
Total	$ 66,382.58	$ 2,199,091.22	$ 2,782,586.00	$ 583,496.78

Assistance needed from EPA:

- None at this time.

Project photos during this reporting period:








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