Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (SMBNEP)

2019 Program Evaluation

Review Period: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2018

Governing Board Meeting
June 20, 2019

Thanks!

- Tom, NEP staff, partners, and Management Conference (MC) members for a wonderful visit

- PE Review Team
  - Erica Yelensky, NEP Coordinator, EPA-R9
  - Vince Bacalan, NEP Coordinator, EPA-HQ
  - Jennifer Hecker, Executive Director, Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership

- Visiting
  - David Smith, Assistant Director, Water Division, EPA-R9

National Estuary Program (NEP)

- Created as an amendment to CWA (Section 320)
- Designated 28 estuaries of national significance
  - Santa Monica Bay became NEP in 1988

- Cornerstones of NEPs
  - Watershed-based approach
  - Science-based decision making
  - Collaborative problem solving
    - Consensus-driven
  - Public participation

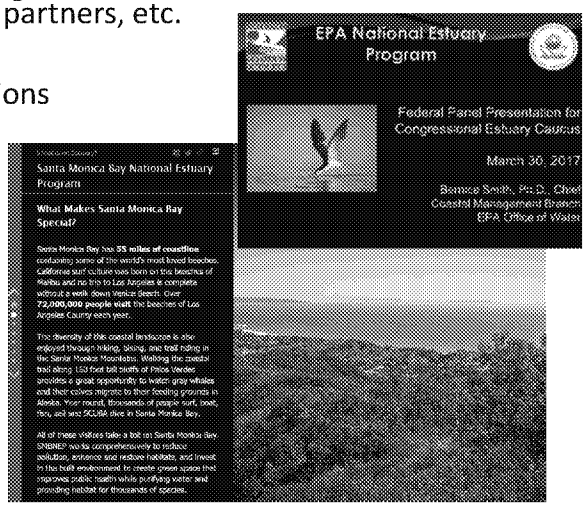
- Success is shared at the local and national level

Purpose of NEP Program Evaluation (PE)

- Ensure adequate progress is being made in CCMP implementation and that continued EPA support is warranted.
- Highlight each Program's unique environmental results, strengths and challenges.
- Identify areas where EPA can help provide resources to meet needs or enhance performance.
- Confirm EPA's continued support for the NEP and to seek stakeholders' commitment to the Program.

How EPA Uses Program Evaluations

- Success stories and achievements highlighted on EPA NEP website, used for Congressional briefings, meetings with partners, etc.
- Identified challenges help inform decisions for funding support.
  - Ocean acidification sensor
  - Risk-based vulnerability assessment
  - Organizational assessment
- Makes connections to other EPA offices and programs.
- Share products/approaches/lessons learned across EPA and the NEPs.



Addressing 2014 PE Letter Challenges

✓ Financial Management
- Diversifying funding sources and partners
  - State Bond programs, fundraising, corporate/private donations, additional grants and funding mechanisms at the federal, state, and local levels
- High leveraging capacity: range of 15:1 to 58:1 (average 29:1)

✓ Outreach and Public Involvement
- MOU/MOA being updated as part of the CCMP revision process
- Continued public engagement through WAC and public meetings
- Communication through website, print/social media, meeting-related documents

Preliminary Findings: **Strengths**

- Competent, organized, skilled NEP staff to help implement CCMP action items
- Diverse representation of partnerships and entities that make up the SMBNEP study area
- Demonstrated leadership in topics that are based on sound science:
  - Informing policy/ordinance for trash reduction (use of plastic bags/straws)
  - Addressing stormwater/nutrient issues (rain gardens, bioretention ponds)
  - Mobilizing volunteer groups for restoration efforts (kelp forest, beach, dune)

Preliminary Findings: **Challenges**

- SMBNEP identity as an independent, autonomous entity
  - Branding
    - program logo, consolidated website with background/products/accomplishments
  - Governance structure of the Management Conference (MC)
    - Better define relationship among partners, members, and staff = org chart
    - Delineation of roles, functions of Board/committees, and NEP's value add
    - Staying relevant and more responsive to current needs/priorities
- Disaster/emergency preparedness document in place
- Action Agenda tracking
  - Transparent, accessible, and engages the public

Next Steps for PE Review Team

- Recommend a “pass” to EPA management
- Draft PE findings letter
- Share with SMBNEP staff for comment
- Incorporate feedback and submit to EPA management for signature
- Send signed copy to NEP Director
- Next scheduled PE: 2024

Questions and Discussions