

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan?

- a. The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan defines the priority issues facing the health of the Morro Bay estuary and watershed. The Management Plan presents action plans to effectively address those issues and is the guiding document for the Morro Bay National Estuary Program.

2. Why does the Estuary Program need to have a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan?

- a. In 1995, Morro Bay was accepted into the National Estuary Program, which was established in 1987 by amendments to the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act requires each National Estuary Program to develop and implement a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, or Management Plan. The primary purpose of the Management Plan is to identify problems (called “priority issues”) that threaten the ecological and economic resources of the estuary and watershed, and to define various action plans to effectively reduce those issues.

3. Why was the Management Plan updated?

- a. Great progress was made in addressing the priority issues from the original Management Plan (which was completed in 2001). However, more work needs to be done. Over the last decade, the understanding of some of these issues has increased through experience in the field, new research, and environmental monitoring, much of which has been supported by the Morro Bay National Estuary Program and its partners. Improved approaches to addressing the priority issues and areas warranting further study have been identified. In addition, new issues not recognized in the first Management Plan, notably the effects of climate change, need attention. These developments drove the effort to update the Management Plan and its action plans.

4. What are the major changes in the updated Management Plan?

- a. The 2012 Management Plan combines two priority issues from the original Management Plan – habitat loss and declining steelhead populations – into one issue that focuses on enhancing biodiversity to maintain habitat and ecosystem functions. In addition, the original Management Plan did not address climate change at all. The 2012 Management Plan includes three specific climate change action plans and also integrates climate change issues in 15 other action plans. Finally, the 2012 Management Plan organizes action plans by type of action rather than by priority issue, as was the case in the original management plan. This reorganization means that each action plan now more clearly addresses multiple priority issues.

5. What opportunity did the public have to provide input into the Management Plan?

- a. In 2011, Morro Bay National Estuary Program staff hosted three public meetings, four technical workshops, and one public comment period to solicit public input on suggested updates to the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The revised draft Management Plan was released for formal public comment in February 2012. Based on public input, Morro Bay Estuary Program staff worked with the Estuary Program Management Committees to make final revisions to the plan.



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- 6. How much progress has been made in addressing the priority issues originally identified in 2001 Management Plan?**
 - a. All of the action plans from the 2001 Management Plan were initiated. Most are complete or ongoing; 10 are in progress. A handful of action plans were deemed infeasible to implement due to cost or environmental concerns.

- 7. How will the Morro Bay Estuary Program implement the Management Plan?**
 - a. The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan was developed with a five-year planning horizon. The Estuary Program will prepare an annual workplan that specifies tasks to be undertaken each year. Tasks within each annual workplan will be based on addressing the most pressing issues facing the estuary as well as having the appropriate partners and sufficient funding in place to ensure success.

- 8. What is the role of partners in helping to implement the Management Plan?**
 - a. Listed within action plans are partners whose mission and goals are well aligned with the action plan. Each partner organization's depth of involvement depends on the nature of projects being implemented, funding availability, and technical resources. Some partners work closely with the Estuary Program to secure joint funding to install riparian fencing, complete restoration projects, or initiate outreach campaigns. Other partners provide in-kind or cash match or technical advice. Partners may also engage in projects within the watershed that are part of their own organization's mandate (such as the Los Osos Wastewater Treatment Plant project by the County of San Luis Obispo).

- 9. Will the Management Plan be updated again?**
 - a. The primary focus areas presented in the beginning of Chapter 3 "Maximizing Impact in the Next Five Years" will be updated every five years. Also every five years, the rest of the Management Plan will be reviewed to determine if updates are needed. A large scale re-write is not anticipated within the next ten years.

- 10. How will implementation of the Management Plan be tracked and reported?**
 - a. Each action plan presents an implementation tracking measure that the Morro Bay National Estuary Program will monitor to demonstrate progress over time. Additionally, the Estuary Program will track the measures presented in Chapter 3 for the primary focus areas under each priority issue. This information will be available to the public through periodic reports from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program.

- 11. How can I access the Management Plan?**
 - a. The Management Plan is available online at <http://mbnep.org/Library/ccmp.html>. A hard copy or CD may be requested by contacting the Morro Bay National Estuary Program by phone (805-772-3834), email (staff@mbnep.org), or in person (601 Embarcadero, Suite 11 (upstairs), Morro Bay California 93442).

- 12. Who should I contact with further questions?**
 - a. General questions about the Management Plan can be directed to Lexie Bell, Assistant Director, at lbell@mbnep.org or 805-772-3834, ext. 16. Requests for accessing the Management Plan in person can be made by contacting the Morro Bay National Estuary Program by phone (805-772-3834), email (staff@mbnep.org), or in person (601 Embarcadero, Suite 11 (upstairs), Morro Bay California 93442).