

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

**STAFF SUMMARY REPORT: Brian Thompson
MEETING DATE: October 14, 2026**

ITEM: 6

Informational Item – Supplemental Environmental Project Funding in Alameda County and Contra Costa County for Trash Cleanup – Status update on recent accomplishments by KIDS for the BAY

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DISCUSSION:

Dischargers that agree to settle a monetary penalty (administrative civil liability) have the option to offset a portion of the liability to complete a supplemental environmental or enhanced compliance project. The project must comply with the [Supplemental Environmental Project Policy](#) (SEP Policy), which includes requirements to connect the location of a violation with the affected communities so that those people receive the direct benefits of the project. The SEP Policy also prioritizes equity by encouraging projects in disadvantaged communities with environmental justice concerns to promote health, safety, and well-being for residents who are most impacted by environmental impairment including trash. One option dischargers have to satisfy these elements of the SEP Policy is to fund a trash cleanup project through a local school district with KIDS for the BAY.

[KIDS for the BAY](#) is a non-profit environmental education organization sponsored by the [Earth Island Institute](#) that is committed to restoring healthy environments and fostering environmental stewardship across all communities. KIDS for the BAY, now in its 35th year of operation, collaborates with teachers to inspire environmental consciousness in children, empowers students to get involved in environmental action projects, and promotes equity in science by partnering with under-resourced elementary schools. Trash cleanup is an environmental action project component of the KIDS for the BAY Watershed Rangers Program. Because this is a recurring program, we have a template for these projects with costs itemized by classrooms served, so the full scope of the project can be scaled to the amount of available funding. It is an efficient way to fund a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) in Alameda County or Contra Costa County. KIDS for the BAY trash cleanup projects provide education about watershed health and trash reduction, activities to survey trash and to collect and categorize it, documentation and reporting of results to local municipalities with the identification of trash “hot spots,” and professional development training on watershed science education and equity for teachers and students.

Since 2018, more than 1,500 KIDS for the BAY students in 63 classes have participated in Watershed Rangers Programs, supported by \$276,250 of SEP funding to date. Recent SEPs approved by the Board in 2025 and 2026 bring the total amount of available SEP funding approved for KIDS for the BAY programs to \$484,850, including multi-year programs currently in progress in Richmond and Martinez. In the recent 2025-2026 school year, funding supported programs in the City of Richmond in West Contra Costa Unified School District across five partner schools. These Watershed Rangers Programs included ten teachers and 236 participating students, who completed 421 hours of environmental stewardship and cleaned up 169 gallons of trash. 78% of students were from low-income communities and 41% were English Language Learners.

One of the most impressive outcomes from last school year was students' recognition of similar types of trash while categorizing it during trash cleanups and their desire to figure out who was responsible. KIDS for the BAY Educators assisted students in identifying the brands of plastic trash found and the parent companies that originally manufactured this plastic packaging. Students wrote persuasive letters to these corporations, urging them to take responsibility for the plastic trash packaging polluting their local watersheds. This increased awareness of corporate responsibility for trash pollution and the students' desire to advocate for the health of their watersheds and stop pollution at the source are core tenets of environmental protection that are impressive to have learned at such a young age. With this trajectory, the Watershed Rangers sponsored by KIDS for the BAY are well-poised to become the pollution prevention heroes of the future!