



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DWR and CDFW Award \$3 Million for Salton Sea Fish and Wildlife Habitat

SACRAMENTO -- The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) have awarded \$3 million for projects to create wetland habitat for fish and wildlife dependent on the Salton Sea and to test technologies for future restoration.

The grants were made through the first funding cycle of the Salton Sea Financial Assistance Program (FAP), as part of the State's Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Program.

Recipients of the grants are:

- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service -- Red Hill Bay Project
- Imperial Irrigation District/Sephton Water Technology -- Salton Sea Water Habitat Pilot Project
- Salton Sea Authority/Torres Martinez Tribe -- Habitat Enhancement & Creation: GeoTube Technology and Solar PV Power on SS Playa, Torres Martinez Wetlands

Projects' objectives and funding may be found at http://www.water.ca.gov/saltonseahabitat/final_list.cfm.

The Salton Sea is the largest inland surface water body in California and is located along one of the most important flyways in North America, providing critical habitat for one of the most diverse bird populations in the United States. This habitat is threatened, however, by the terminal sea's increasing salinity.

State legislation enacted in 2003 and 2004 required the Natural Resources Agency, in coordination with DWR and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to undertake a restoration study to determine a preferred alternative for restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem and the protection of wildlife dependent on that ecosystem. This was completed in 2007. However, to date, the Legislature has not provided funding to implement the preferred alternative.

To address the near-term loss and degradation of habitat, the Legislature appropriated funds for conservation measures to protect fish and wildlife species dependent on the sea. The FAP provides grants to eligible applicants (local agencies, nonprofit organizations, tribes, universities, and State and federal agencies) and was conceived as an opportunity for Salton Sea stakeholders to participate in the restoration process using funds provided by Proposition 84, The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.