

THE RESOURCES AGENCY DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES • DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

Salton Sea

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM



Community Meetings

We Want to Hear From You

December 4 and 6, 2006

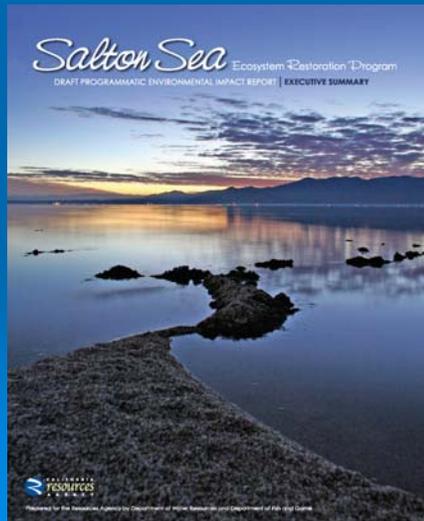
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Department of Water Resources

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Meeting Overview



- Introduction to the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)
- Overview of Alternatives
- Contents of the PEIR
- PEIR distribution
- Commenting on the PEIR
- Next Steps

Project Participants

- California Resources Agency
- Department of Water Resources
- Department of Fish and Game
- In consultation with:
 - Salton Sea Advisory Committee
 - US Geological Survey, Salton Sea Science Office
 - US Bureau of Reclamation
 - Salton Sea Authority
 - Imperial Group

Background

- Environmental problems at Salton Sea are becoming worse
 - Nutrients cause eutrophication that can kill fish and birds and cause odors
 - High salinity kills fish
 - High selenium can harm fish, birds, and people
 - Soils exposed as the water recedes can cause air quality problems
- Reduced flows due to implementation of the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) will increase the problems

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Project Legislation

The State Salton Sea Restoration Act of 2003 (adopted to facilitate approval of the Quantification Settlement Agreement) states:

“It is the intent of the Legislature that the State of California undertake the restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem...”

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Working Together to Restore the Salton Sea

- Shared Objective
 - Improving the conditions at the Salton Sea
- State's Commitment
 - The State is committed to addressing the major environmental concerns at the Salton Sea
- Stakeholder Process
 - The State is committed to an open and objective process
 - We are working closely with stakeholders through the Salton Sea Advisory Committee and its various Work Groups
- Building Broad Acceptance to Select Preferred Alternative
 - Critical for successful implementation

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The Overall Process

- The State is working vigorously to meet the requirements of the Salton Sea Restoration Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- A preferred alternative will be selected only after a **full and open, public process**
- This effort will build upon and utilize previously performed work - it will not "re-invent the wheel"

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Basis of Alternatives for Ecosystem Restoration Plan

- Restore habitat, maintain stable water elevations, and restore water quality at the Salton Sea
- Eliminate air quality impacts of restoration actions
- Protect threatened and endangered species
- Consider recreational and economic opportunities
- Maintain the Salton Sea for agricultural discharge
- Plan must be reliable and flexible

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PEIR – Requirements and Development

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
 - Requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) when an agency action may have a significant impact on the environment
 - Specifies various requirements for content and process when preparing an EIR
- Programmatic EIR is conceptual in nature
 - Uses available information at a broad level
 - Component locations and specific details will be addressed in subsequent project-level EIRs

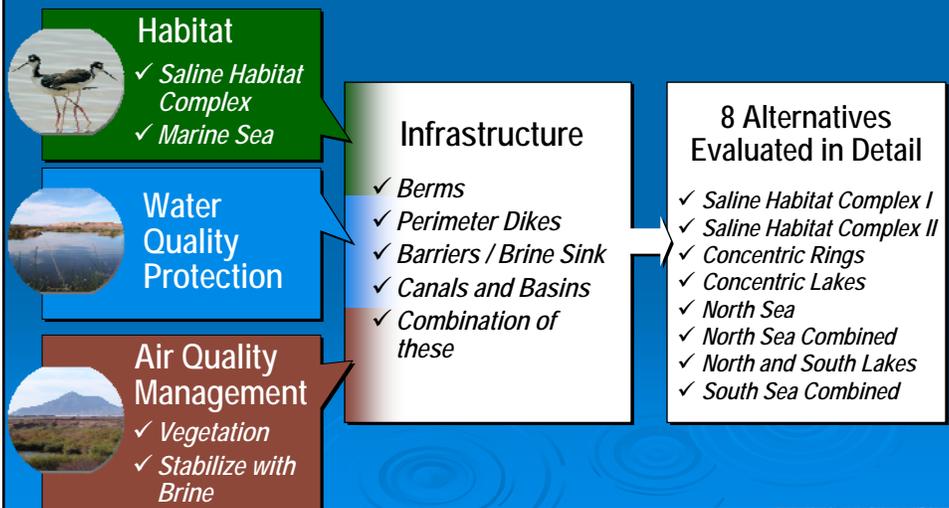
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PEIR – Requirements and Development (con't)

- Represents an independent analysis of various alternatives for restoration
- Conducted as an open process with input from various stakeholders
- The PEIR is needed regardless of which alternative is selected
- No preferred alternative identified
 - To be selected from one of the alternatives or a combination of alternatives

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Components of All Alternatives



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Marine Sea

- Salinity between 30,000 and 40,000 mg/L, similar to typical ocean water
- May be able to support a recreational fishery
- More recreational opportunities



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Brine Sink

- Provides the “outlet” necessary to manage elevation and salinity
- Expand and contract seasonally
- Salinity would eventually exceed 200,000 mg/L (over 6 times saltier than ocean water)



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Saline Habitat Complex

- Berms would create cells with habitat of varying depths, salinities, and structural features
- Provides wildlife habitat



Air Quality Management Tool Box

- Options that require water
 - Salt crust
 - Water-efficient vegetation
 - Event-driven irrigation
 - Regular watering
 - Seasonal surface wetting
- Options that require minimal water
 - Gravel cover
 - Chemical stabilizers
 - Tillage
 - Sand fences



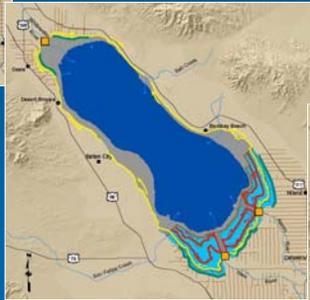
Phase I - 2020



**Alternative 1:
Saline Habitat Complex I**

Construction = \$2.3 billion
O&M = \$91 million/year Phase IV

Phase II - 2030



Phase IV - 2078



LEGEND

- Saline Habitat Complex
- Exposed Playa
- Brine Sink
- River/Creek
- Highways
- Agricultural Drain
- AQM Canal*
- Pupfish Channel*
- SHC Distribution Canals
- Sedimentation/Distribution Basin

Phase I - 2020



**Alternative 2:
Saline Habitat Complex II**

Construction = \$3.3 billion
O&M = \$108 million/year in Phase IV

Phase II - 2030

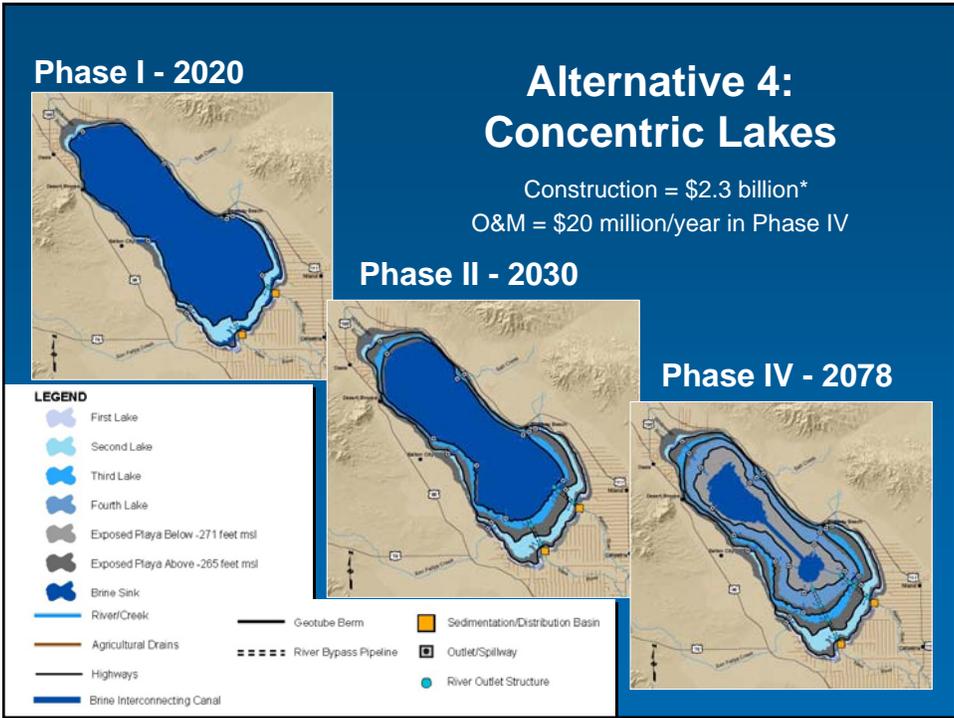
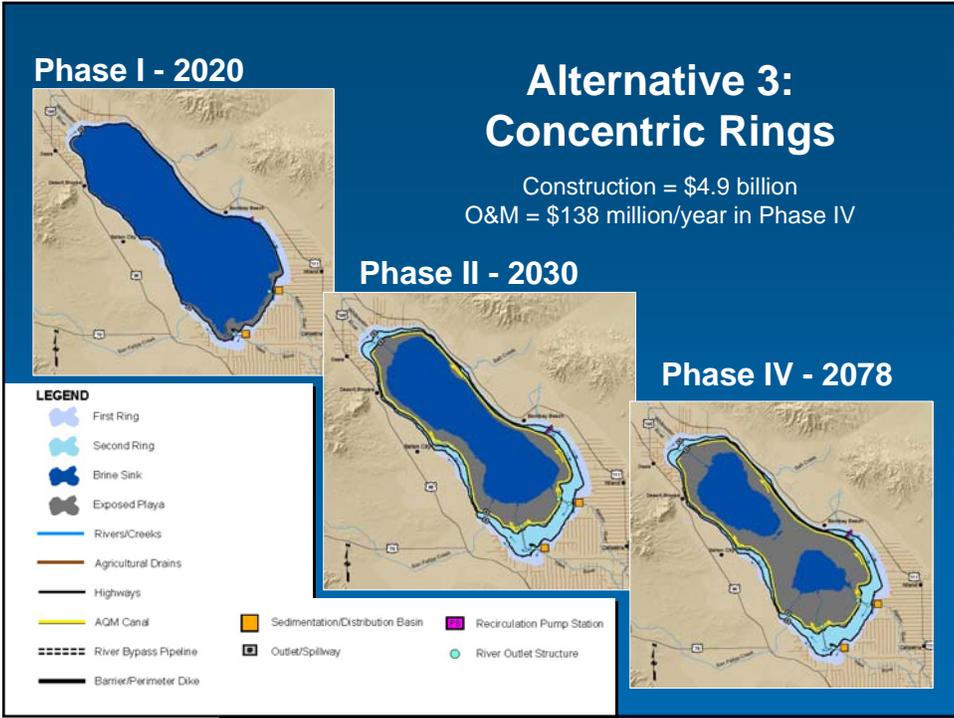


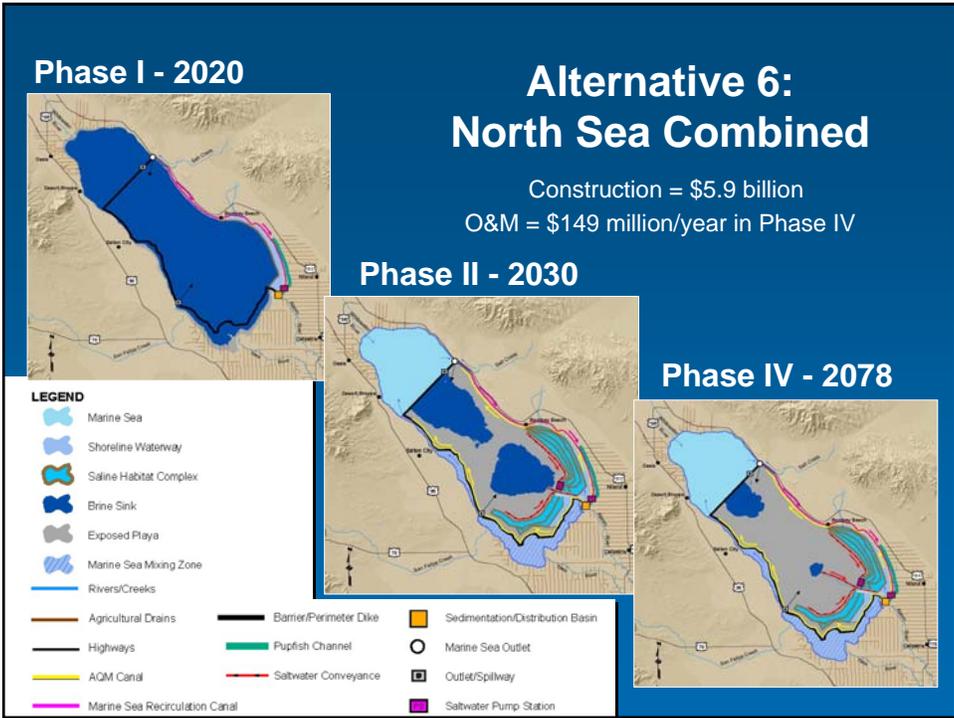
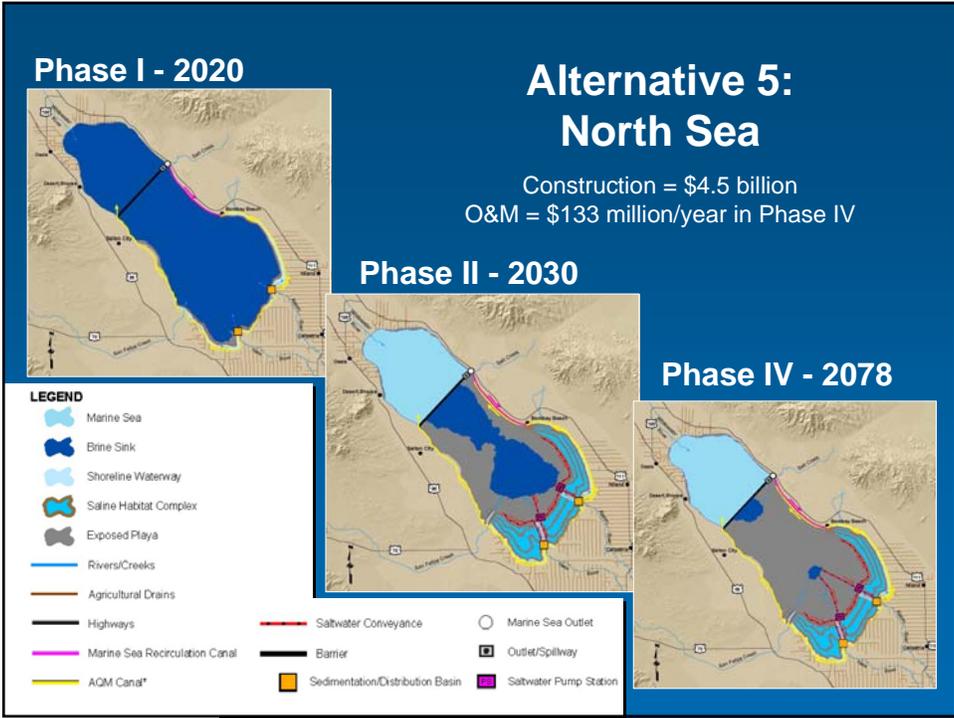
Phase IV - 2078

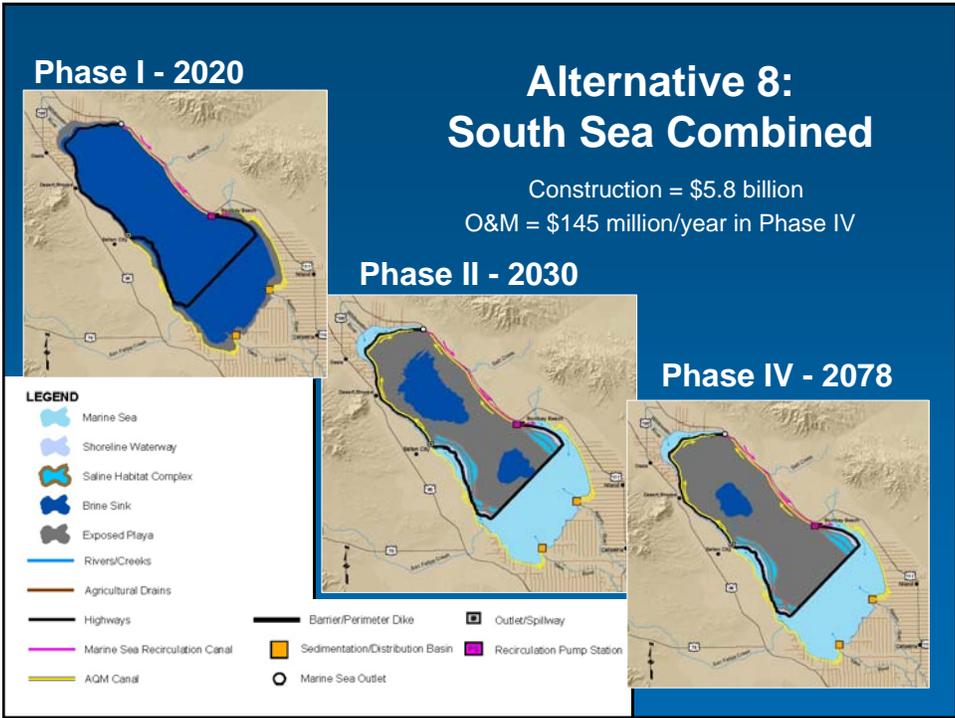
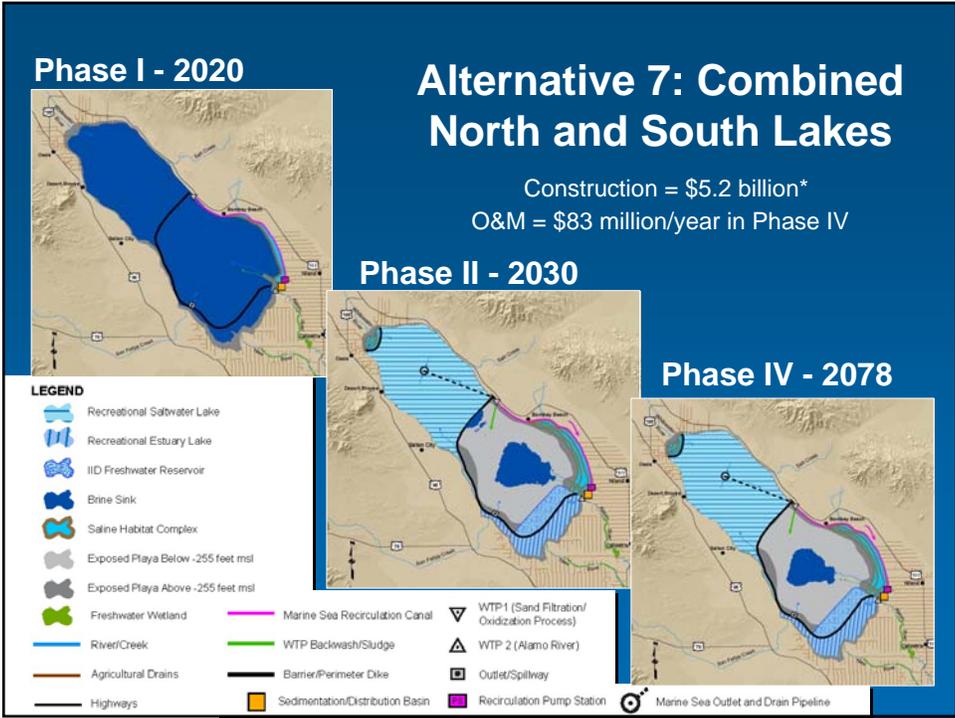


LEGEND

- Shoreline Waterway
- Saline Habitat Complex
- Brine Sink
- Exposed Playa
- River/Creek
- Agricultural Drain
- AQM Canal*
- Saltwater Conveyance
- Highways
- Sedimentation/Distribution Basin
- Saltwater Pump Station







Phase I - 2020



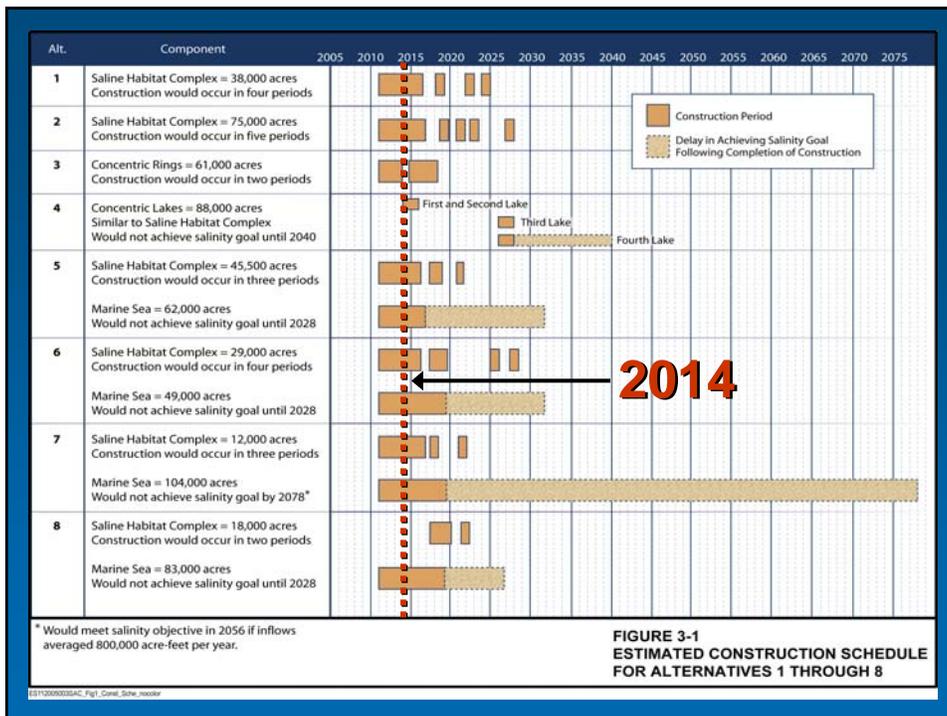
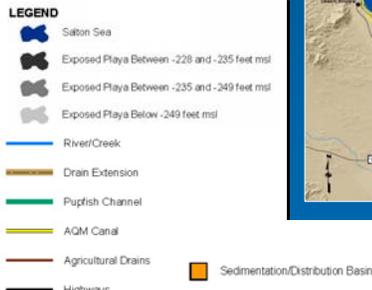
No Action Alternative- Variability Conditions

Construction = \$0.8 billion
O&M = \$48 million/year Phase IV

Phase II - 2030

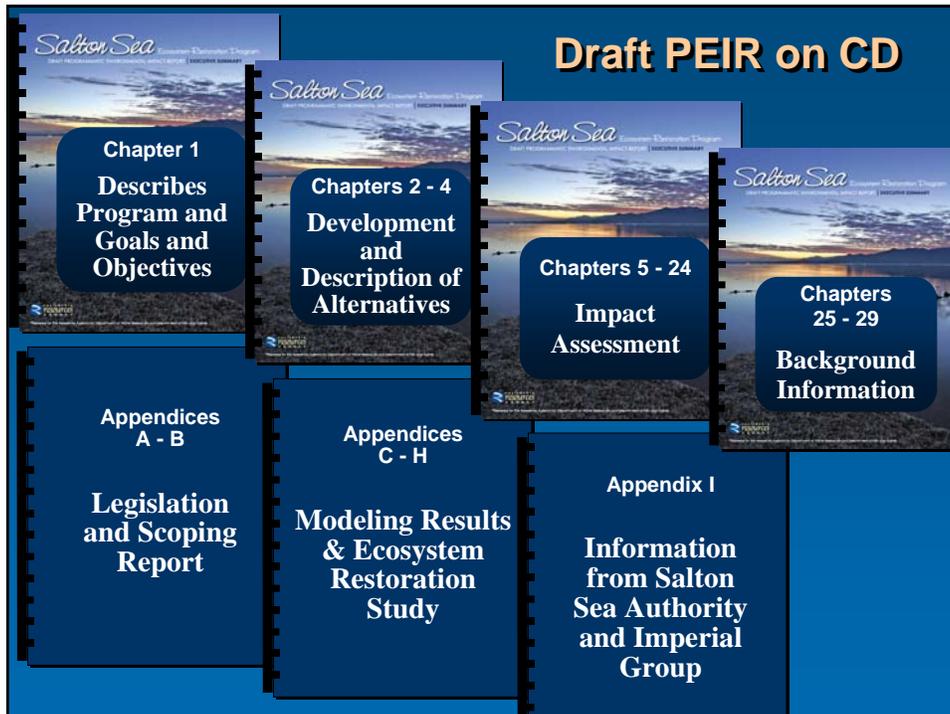


Phase IV - 2078



Comparison of Components of the Alternatives

Component	Benefits	Concerns	Alternative
Deep Marine Sea (greater than 10 feet deep)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Diverse fish & bird use ✓Diverse recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Requires a lot of rock ✓Water quality issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓North Sea ✓North Sea Combined ✓North and South Lakes ✓South Sea Combined
Moderately Deep Marine Sea (up to 10 feet deep)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Diverse fish & bird use ✓Moderately diverse recreation ✓More shoreline water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Requires a lot of rock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Concentric Rings ✓North Sea Combined ✓North and South Lakes ✓South Sea Combined
Shallow Saline Habitat (up to 6 feet deep)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Diverse bird use ✓Can be built in phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Limited fish species ✓Less diverse recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓All except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentric Rings
Air Quality Management of Playa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Reduces dust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Requires canals, pumps, irrigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓All fully managed except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentric Lakes - North and South Lakes



Your Executive Summary

- Overview of:
 - Importance of the Salton Sea
 - Ecosystem Restoration Program purpose, study area, and study participants
 - Alternatives and alternative development process
 - Analysis assumptions
 - Benefits and impacts
- CD at back contains entire PEIR

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PEIR Distribution

- Executive Summaries with CDs of entire PEIR
 - Mailed to over 1,300 people on the mailing list
- Hardcopies
 - Available for review at various locations throughout the watershed
- On project website
 - www.saltonsea.water.ca.gov

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Commenting on the PEIR

- Public participation is an essential part of the CEQA process
- CEQA requires evaluation and written responses to comments on environmental issues
- Comments should focus on:
 - Sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts
 - Adequacy of mitigation measures (called Next Steps)
- Specific, detailed comments are most helpful
- Comment period ends January 16, 2007

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Submitting Comments on the PEIR

- Comments can be submitted via:
 - Mail to:
 - Dale Hoffman-Floerke
 - Salton Sea PEIR Comments
 - Department of Water Resources
 - 1416 9th Street, Room 1148-6
 - Sacramento, CA 95814
 - E-mail to:
 - SaltonSeaComments@water.ca.gov
 - Fax to:
 - 916-654-4925

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Steps to Selecting a Preferred Alternative



Selecting a Preferred Alternative

- Possible considerations in selecting a preferred alternative:
 - Ability to achieve the objectives of the Salton Sea Restoration Act
 - Ability to be adaptable in response to uncertainty
 - Environmental and technical factors
 - Non-environmental factors
 - Public support
 - Cost and funding
- Could be a combination of several alternatives

Next Steps

- Consider comments on the Draft PEIR
- Identify a preferred alternative
- Prepare Funding Plan for the preferred alternative
- Prepare Final PEIR
 - Includes:
 - Responses to comments on the Draft PEIR
 - Preferred alternative
 - Changes, if any, to the Draft PEIR
- Decision by State Legislature - 2007

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Upcoming Meetings

- Salton Sea Advisory Committee
 - December 13, 2006
 - Torres Martinez Reservation, Recreation Hall
 - 9:30 am to 3:30 pm
- Next Public Outreach Meetings
 - In the watershed:
 - Early January
 - Outside of the watershed:
 - Sacramento, Oakland, San Diego

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Your Input is Important!

Send Your Comments to:

**Dale Hoffman-Floerke
Salton Sea PEIR Comments
Department of Water Resources
1416 9th Street, Room 1148-6
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Visit www.saltonsea.water.ca.gov for more information

