



The Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Plan



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Sponsor List

- California Resources Agency
- The Honorable Bob Filner, Member of Congress
- Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny
- Senator Jim Battin
- Assemblywoman Bonnie Garcia
- Assemblyman John J. Benoit
- The Salton Sea Authority

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Why Are “We” Here?

“We” = State of California

- State legislation to implement the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) gave the State of California the responsibility for:
 - Salton Sea ecosystem restoration
 - Environmental restoration
- The Secretary for Resources is to prepare an ecosystem restoration plan
 - Plan must include range of alternatives
 - Submit plan to the Legislature by the end of 2006

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Background

Colorado River Water Supplies

- The Colorado River is a major source of water for Southern California
- For years, California has used more than its basic allocation
- Rapid growth in Arizona and Nevada in the 1990s forced California to reduce its use to its basic allocation
- California had to identify alternate sources of water to make up for reductions

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Background

Salton Sea Environmental Issues

- Environmental problems in the Salton Sea became major public policy issues
 - Fish & Wildlife die-offs
 - Increasing Salt Levels
 - Nutrient Impacts
 - Major Selenium Problem
 - Future Air Quality Impact

All of these factors impact the fish, wildlife, habitat & people

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Background

The QSA

- After much negotiation, the QSA was approved in late 2003 and led to the establishment of a state policy of restoring the Salton Sea and of permanently protecting the fish and wildlife resources dependent upon it

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QSA Implementing Legislation

- The implementing legislation for the QSA:
 - Senate Bill 277 (Ducheny)
 - Senate Bill 317 (Kuehl)
 - Senate Bill 654 (Machado)
 - Senate Bill 1214 (Kuehl)

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The State's Responsibilities

Environmental Restoration

- Under the Legislation, the State is to undertake the “restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem and the permanent protection of the wildlife dependent on that ecosystem”

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The State's Responsibilities

Environmental Restoration *(continued)*

- The Secretary for Resources is to prepare:
 - An Ecosystem Restoration Plan
 - A Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
 - Financing Plan
 - Submit to Legislature by December 2006

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Salton Sea Environmental Restoration Plan

- Restoration Plan is a major undertaking
- Implementation will be an ongoing project

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Salton Sea Environmental Restoration Plan

Major Elements

- Water Management Infrastructure
- Habitat Restoration
- Water Quality Management
- Air Quality Management

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Major Elements of Restoration Plan

Water Management Infrastructure

- Barriers to divide the Salton Sea
- Evaporation Ponds
- Pipeline / Canals to Gulf of California or Pacific Ocean

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Major Elements of Restoration Plan

Habitat Rehabilitation

- Diverse and sustainable populations of fish and wildlife
- Different habitats in the Sea
- Integrate with on-shore habitats

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Major Elements of Restoration Plan

Water Quality Management

- Salinity Levels
- Nutrient Removal
 - Eliminate Odors and Fish Die-Offs
- Selenium Removal
 - Ongoing Sediment Sampling
 - Ongoing Fish Sampling

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Major Elements of Restoration Plan

Air Quality Management

- Eliminate air quality impacts from restoration actions
- Existing monitoring stations
- Additional monitoring
 - Wind Tunnels
 - Air Quality Monitoring Stations

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The Process & Where We are Going

- The State is working vigorously to meet the requirements of the implementing legislation and of 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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Next Steps

- Obtain public comments on conceptual alternatives
- Define Alternatives
- Prepare Ecosystem Restoration Plan
- Prepare Programmatic Environmental Impact Report

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Alternatives

Alternatives Identification

- Reviewed prior and on-going studies
- Identified 27 groups of alternatives
 - More than 250 total alternatives

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Alternatives

Preliminary Screening Criteria

- Restore habitat, water elevations, and water quality at the Salton Sea
- Maintain Sea for agricultural discharge
- Eliminate air quality impact of Restoration
- Focus on Salton Sea Watershed
- Consider recreational and economic opportunities
- Reliable and Flexible

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Alternatives

No Action Alternative

- Identifies what would occur if no action is taken
- Demonstrates future beneficial and adverse impacts from the Program
- Required by CEQA

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Alternatives

Action Alternatives

- Considering previous and new alternatives
- Currently at a conceptual level

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Alternatives

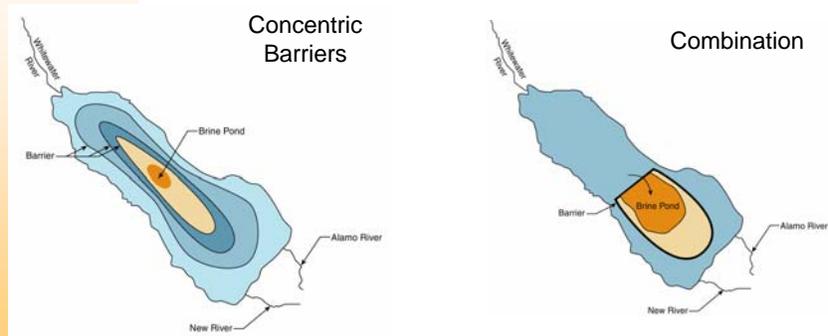
Conceptual Alternatives Examples



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Alternatives

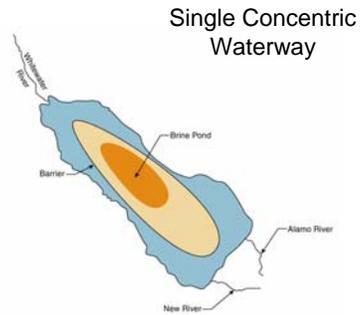
Conceptual Alternatives Examples (continued)



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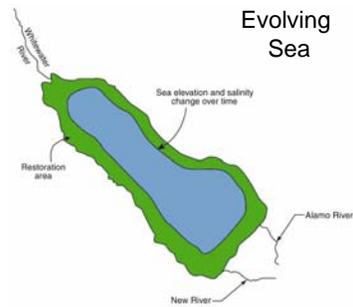
Alternatives

Conceptual Alternatives Examples (continued)



Alternatives

Conceptual Alternatives Examples (continued)



Key Issues

- Previous studies have not addressed in detail:
 - Air Quality
 - Water Quality
 - Habitat Management
- Ecosystem Restoration Plan will study these things

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Ecosystem Restoration Plan Implementation Schedule

- Over the summer of 2005, the alternatives will be defined and evaluated
- Draft EIR published in early 2006
- Final EIR published in fall 2006
- Notice of Determination in December 2006
- Secretary for Resources submits plan to Legislature by December 31, 2006
- **Decision by State Legislature**

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Revised Notice of Preparation

- Revised Notice of Preparation to clarify that the California Resources Agency is the CEQA lead agency.
 - DWR and DFG are assisting Resources Agency
- No need to resubmit scoping comments
- Prior scoping comments are summarized on DWR's web page – www.water.ca.gov

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Send your comments to

California Resources Agency
Office of the Secretary
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Visit www.water.ca.gov for more information

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