

State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
December 12, 2012

ITEM: 10

SUBJECT: Information Item: San Dieguito Lagoon: Restoration, Fill Removal, and Storm Water Best Management Practices (BMPs) (*Mike Porter*)

PURPOSE: This is an information item requested by San Diego Water Board Member Henry Abarbanel at the August 8, 2012 Board Meeting on the status of restoration, fill removal, and storm water best management practices at the San Dieguito Lagoon.

RECOMMENDATION: There is no recommendation as this is an information item and the Board will take no action.

KEY ISSUES: None.

DISCUSSION: The San Dieguito Lagoon and wetlands are located in Del Mar, just north of San Diego, California. The Lagoon and wetlands serve important functions vital to the ecology of the San Diego Region. Birds use the wetlands as a stop on the Pacific Flyway. The wetlands provide nesting and foraging areas for endangered species, and a fish hatchery habitat. The Lagoon and wetlands support a promising population of snails, crabs, amphibians, small mammals, birds, and provide fish a place to spawn and grow. The Lagoon coastal area is a significant scenic resource for residents and visitors.

This item provides an opportunity for three presentations by the California Coastal Commission, the 22nd District Agricultural Association, and Southern California Edison on the status of restoration, fill removal, and storm water best management practices at the mouth of the San Dieguito River (also known as the San Dieguito Lagoon and wetlands).

The California Coastal Commission will present information pertaining to a recent settlement in March 2012 with the 22nd

District Agricultural Commission (District), owner and operator of the Del Mar Fairgrounds, that ends nearly two decades of dispute between the two State agencies over several hundred acres of land near the San Dieguito Lagoon and wetlands, in the City of Del Mar. The land, some of which is a seasonal wetland, had been used by Del Mar Fairgrounds for parking and other activities without the required permits. Under the terms of the settlement the District has agreed to delineate and dedicate permanent conservation easements to protect buffer areas along the San Dieguito River and to undertake other measures to protect the river and wetland habitat. The timing and content of this settlement, particularly the wetland and habitat restoration along the river, are significant given the recent completion of the 150 acre restoration of the San Dieguito Lagoon and adjacent wetlands. This 150 acre restoration effort was funded by Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas and Electric and the biological communities and natural functions of the Lagoon and wetlands are in early stages of recovery. The settlement will help support the restoration effort and improve water quality.

The District will present information pertaining to its efforts to implement a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) and comply with other requirements of the Statewide Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES permit. The San Diego Water Board authorized the District's enrollment for coverage under the Phase II MS4 permit in May 2012 to reduce pollutants in storm water discharges from the Del Mar Fairgrounds to the San Dieguito River and wetlands.

The Southern California Edison Company will present information on the recently completed restoration of 150 acres of the San Dieguito Lagoon and wetlands to mitigate the estimated impacts on marine fish populations caused by the cooling water systems for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) Units 2&3. The mitigation project entailed 1) restoration of the aquatic functions of the Lagoon through permanent inlet maintenance and expansion of the tidal basin and 2) creation of subtidal and intertidal habitats on both the east and west sides of Interstate 5. A key accomplishment of the project was to remove the sand that has periodically plugged the San Dieguito River channel over the years. The restored wetlands are projected to be fully vegetated in approximately two years.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: None.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice of this item was provided in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the December 12, 2012 Board meeting, which is posted on the website.