



WATER RESOURCES AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

Monterey County

DATE: September 19, 2011

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Brent Buche, Chief of Operations & Maintenance
SUBJECT: Salinas River Channel Maintenance Program Update

This is an update of activities related to the Salinas River Channel Maintenance Program (CMP) that have occurred since the last update to the Agency Board of Directors (BOD) in June 2011.

History of CMP

The Agency has administered the CMP since 1997, after severe flooding occurred on the Salinas River in March 1995. The US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is the permitting authority for maintenance activities in the Salinas River; however, in order for them to issue a permit, other regulatory agencies must first issue their permits. The Agency has received two 5-year permits issued from the ACOE, and one interim permit for continuous work through 2008.

The Agency initiated the 2009-2014 CMP in the same manner as done in the previous 14 years but due to the number of comments received during the review period, it was determined that in the best interest of the CMP, a more thorough Environmental Impact Report (EIR) needed to be prepared. Since then, the Agency has been working on the preparation of an EIR, as one step in the process to obtain the necessary permits.

Scope of Work

There are some proposed additions to the scope of work of the contract with Cardno ENTRIX, to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), such as adding the three tributaries: San Lorenzo Creek, Bryant Canyon Channel, and the Gonzales Slough; and performing additional studies and reports, including: an economic analysis, biological surveys, and Greenhouse gas emissions analysis. A new scope of work and budget will be prepared and is anticipated to be brought before the BOD for consideration in November.

Public Scoping Process

A Notice of Preparation was circulated in April to over 200 agencies and individuals. The Agency received 23 written responses. Staff prepared follow-up responses to each letter requesting additional information, clarification of points made, and copies of works cited. These

responses were requested by August 30th so that staff could finalize the project description and continue moving forward with the preparation of the Draft EIR. As to date, the Agency has received 9 emails and letters with additional information, works cited, and/or questions of the Agency.

Studies and Technical Analyses

The following reports, studies, and analyses have been identified as needing to be prepared or updated to complete the EIR. The statuses of each are detailed below:

- **Biological Surveys:** Many of the existing surveys of flora and fauna need to be updated to present day conditions so that they are relevant for analysis in the EIR. The timing of when the surveys can occur is dependent on the species and will be performed at the most appropriate time. This work will continue through spring 2012.
- **Economic Analysis:** Staff is collecting data and preparing the scope for this analysis.
- **Flood Capacity Modeling:** Cardno ENTRIX staff has begun work on developing a flood capacity model. The modeling will move forward once LiDAR data is released by the United States Geological Survey. This data allows for a more comprehensive area to be studied.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** This will begin once staff has met with the resource agencies to determine the scope of the analysis.
- **Vegetation Mapping:** Cardno ENTRIX has prepared a preliminary report and associated maps identifying the distribution and abundance of native and other non-native vegetation along the mainstem of the Salinas River. Additional data needs to be collected and the report needs to be updated to include the vegetation along the tributaries.

Additional studies may need to be completed, and will be added to this list once they have been identified.

Next Steps

- Develop Alternatives to be analyzed
- Meet with Responsible Agencies to discuss the proposed project and alternatives
- Update the scope of work and budget to include the tributaries and additional studies
- Commence additional technical analyses

Budget

- FY 2011-2012 Budget includes monies totaling just over \$400,000 for both staff and consultants' time
- Approximately \$400,000 was spent in FY 2010-2011