



## WATER RESOURCES AGENCY

# MEMORANDUM

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Monterey County

**DATE:** January 11, 2012

**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 Information Item provided to the Agency Board of Directors (BOD) in September 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.

### **EIR Process**

#### **1. Public Scoping**

A Notice of Preparation was circulated in April 2011, to over 200 agencies and individuals. The Agency received 23 written responses and an additional 9 letters providing additional information or clarification.

#### **2. Scope of Work**

The scope of work was updated to include additional technical studies and the expansion of the Program Area to include Gonzales Slough, Bryant Canyon Channel and San Lorenzo Creek, where the MCWRA performs routine maintenance. The budget was then updated to reflect these changes as well as the elimination of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) portion of the report. These changes were approved at the December 2011 BOD Meeting.

### **3. Alternatives**

Staff evaluated a list of possible flood management alternatives. Staff then developed two action alternatives to be analyzed in the EIR, which are potentially feasible and could meet the goals of the Program. These are the “Reduced Channel Maintenance/Lower Impact Alternative” and the “Floodplain Enhancement Alternative”.

### **4. 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:

- **Flood Capacity Modeling:** The model will be used to analyze flood capacity within the Salinas River banks as well as identifying areas of inundation during different flow events. The LiDAR data has been acquired and a check on its quality has been performed. The next step will be to build the model using criteria acceptable to all pertinent parties. The estimated completion date for the model and related analyses is May 2012.
- **Economic Analysis:** Phase one of the analysis will begin next month, which includes data collection and development of an economic model. Phase two will use Flood Model data and therefore will commence in May and is anticipated to be completed in late June 2012.
- **Habitat Assessment:** 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. These surveys and related assessment will begin in March and continue into July 2012 to ensure that they are performed at the most appropriate time.
- **Vegetation Mapping:** 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, have been prepared. The report and maps will be updated to include the vegetation along the tributaries, and should be completed in late March.

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

### **Next Steps**

- Meet with Resource Agencies in late January to discuss the proposed project, alternatives selected, flood modeling approach, and interim maintenance activities.
- Commence additional technical analyses

### **Budget**

- The recently approved Cardno ENTRIX Contract Amendment No. 1 brings the cost of completing the EIR to \$585,387.
- Funds, totaling \$250,000, were approved in the FY11-12 budget but revenue shortfalls could cause delays in the EIR progress.