



Salton Sea Management Program Update

May 20, 2020

Governor's Revised Budget Proposes 10 New Positions for the SSMP, Funding for North Lake Pilot Project and New River Improvements

Governor Gavin Newsom's revised 2020-21 state budget proposal would authorize 10 new positions for the Salton Sea Management Program, including six located at a local Salton Sea office and two at the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Bermuda Dunes office. The positions would be within the Department of Water Resources, CDFW and the Natural Resources Agency.

The proposed budget also includes \$19 million in Proposition 68 funding for the Salton Sea Authority to implement the North Lake Pilot Project. The funding would provide the Authority with its full allocation of Proposition 68 funding to continue work to address both habitat restoration and air quality impacts on surrounding communities.

The 156-acre pilot project located near the community of North Shore would create new deep-water habitat to replace the habitat lost as the Salton Sea recedes. It would also create shallow habitat that would suppress dust along over one mile of receding shoreline.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered unprecedented challenges for the state budget. It has also underscored the urgent need to advance projects around the Salton Sea to help improve conditions for communities that have long been burdened with poor air quality," Natural

Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot said. “This budget proposal is a strong signal that the Administration remains committed to delivering projects at the Sea.”

The revised budget also continues to support \$28 million in funding for the New River Improvement Project, which aims to address pollution exposure challenges, create public health benefits and enhance access to green, healthy spaces for Calexico residents. The funding includes \$18 million in one-time General Fund and \$10 million from Proposition 68.

Phil Rosentrater, executive director of the Salton Sea Authority, said the budget proposal brings new hope for a healthier and more prosperous Salton Sea region. “The Salton Sea Authority applauds the Governor’s action to reverse the long trajectory of despair at the Salton Sea – one of California’s most environmentally challenged and economically distressed regions. The Administration’s May Revise budget continues to support \$28 million to protect vulnerable communities from exposure to America’s most polluted river -- the New River which flows across the Mexican border to the Salton Sea. Balancing that investment on the south end of California’s largest inland sea is a \$19.3 million investment toward a North Lake project that will provide benefits including air quality protection, habitat restoration, recreation and economic recovery for struggling communities around the Sea.”

Luis Olmedo, executive director of the environmental justice organization Comite Civico del Valle, also applauded the May budget proposal. “We are forever thankful to Governor Gavin Newsom, because under his administration the Salton Sea and New Rivers are a high public health budget priority. For over 100 years the Salton Sea border region has been neglected by the federal Government and California, despite the obvious necessity for investment in critical areas of infrastructure,” Olmedo said. “COVID-19 makes it more urgent than ever to address these inequities in areas that have become infectious hotspots.”

More on the revised budget is available at <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/>.

Next SSMP Engagement Committee Meeting Planned for June

The state team is working to schedule a virtual meeting of the SSMP Engagement Committee in June.

The planned March 19 meeting in El Centro was cancelled due to challenges associated with COVID-19. The team hopes to announce a new date and options for participating in the coming days.

Melinda Dorin Added to State's Salton Sea Team

The California Department of Water Resources is pleased to announce Melinda Dorin as its new Program Manager of the Salton Sea Management Program. She started on May 1 and is based in Sacramento. Dorin is working on the SSMP's Species Conservation Habitat Project and assisting with permitting and biological resources in other areas of the program.



Dorin brings a wealth of knowledge about project management, species monitoring and state and federal permitting. For the past three years, Dorin has worked as a program manager for the Delta Protection Commission, where she developed land use planning documents, reviewed levees and other infrastructure programs, and focused on sustainability of the agricultural economy of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Prior to that, Dorin worked as a non-profit consultant where she conducted workshops and aided in strategic planning, conservation planning, and program review. She has worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on salmon passage and Delta smelt projects in the Delta, and also monitored surveyed a variety of endangered species for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. She has almost 15 years of experience working for state agencies.

Dorin holds a Bachelor of Arts Science in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from University of California San Diego. She served for a decade on the board of directors for the nonprofit Environmental Council of Sacramento.

Spanish Language Salton Sea Management Program 2020 Annual Report Now Available

The California Natural Resources Agency has published a Spanish language edition of the 2020 Annual Report on the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP). The report provides a summary of recent and planned activities by the SSMP to address air quality and ecological threats at the Sea.

The Annual Report describes the progress made by the state team over the past year and provides a project implementation timeline. It also summarizes planning activities, partnerships and community engagement efforts.

The Spanish language version is available [here](#).