

Salton Sea Funding and Feasibility Action Plan Overview – April 2016

The broad goal of the Salton Sea Funding and Feasibility Action Plan project is to develop an updated vision for the Salton Sea and surrounding region that matches funding realities with needs. The project has three specific goals for the Salton Sea and its surrounding area:

- Provide a healthy environment for residents around the Sea
- Work toward a Salton Sea and bordering habitat that sustains enough aquatic life to provide habitat for wildlife on the Pacific flyway
- Help revitalize the economy around the Salton Sea and in Imperial and Riverside Counties

Goals and objectives for the project are divided into the following categories: planning and engineering, environmental, and financing and feasibility which includes evaluating land development options and alternative energy sources. The basic project goals along with the specific objectives for implementing the goals will continue to be re-assessed and re-evaluated as each phase of the project is implemented.

The Salton Sea Funding and Feasibility Action Plan project is funded by a \$2 million grant between the State of California Natural Resources Agency and the Salton Sea Authority (the Authority), Agreement No. 0540 – SSA 1. The project is organized into the following seven benchmarks:

- **Benchmark One** is the Work Plan. The Work Plan is posted to the Authority website (<http://saltonsea.ca.gov/News>) and is considered a living document subject to update as the program moves forward. The Work Plan provides an overview of the project and the methods that are being used to complete each of the benchmarks.
- **Benchmark Two** consists of a Data Report which provides a review and update of existing environmental data at the Sea. A working draft of this document is posted on the Authority website (<http://saltonsea.ca.gov/News>).
- The **third benchmark** consist of a review of previously proposed alternatives with respect to existing conditions, including engineering data and an evaluation of individual restoration components. A working draft of this document is also posted on the Authority website (<http://saltonsea.ca.gov/News>).
- A set of conceptual plans for restoration components with cost estimates is required to be developed under **Benchmark Four**. The analysis includes an evaluation of pipeline alternatives for conveying water into the Sea from other sources and out of the Sea. Conceptual designs and cost estimates for these alternatives have been prepared in draft form for state review. Benchmark Four also includes an engineering evaluation of structural alternatives to incrementally divide the Sea into smaller compartments to create a smaller, sustainable Sea. Other issues to be addressed include the formation of habitat areas and methods for dust mitigation as well as integration of renewable energy development and recreational values.
- The **fifth benchmark** will be marked by the completion of an infrastructure development feasibility report. A team of financial analysts, real estate investment professionals and economic forecasters has been retained to develop this benchmark to rigorous standards.
- **Benchmark Six** involves economic analyses and funding feasibility with a major portion to be completed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). The NREL report, focused on

potential revenue that may be available from fees associated with renewable energy development in the area around the Salton Sea, is posted on the Authority website.

- **Benchmark Seven** will be comprised of the Final Report and the associated presentation of findings which will integrate the results of the first six benchmarks.

In addition to the seven benchmarks discussed above, a Project Management Task involves program administration, oversight and legal review. The two year project is on time and under budget for completion by the required end time of May 16, 2016.