



Media Release

Central Coast Water Board Certifies Flood Control and Habitat Project on Salinas River

**For immediate release
Sept. 30, 2014**

**Contact: Phillip Hammer
(805) 549-3882**

The Salinas River brings many benefits to Monterey County, but it can also bring devastation: Severe floods in 1995 destroyed one-fourth of the Salinas Valley projected crop value, and damaged more than 30,000 acres of the valley's farmland.

The flooding that year caused an estimated \$240 million in flood-related damage to farmland, and altered the course of the river, resulting in the loss of more than 1,100 acres of farmland to erosion.

A project to help alleviate flood damage in the future while protecting and enhancing the water quality and habitat along the river has been approved by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The Salinas River Multi-Benefit Demonstration Project, proposed by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, involves vegetation maintenance, sediment management and non-native vegetation removal in high flow channels of the river. The actions are designed to make the river flow more efficiently to minimize flooding in high water years.

The demonstration project, which is along two five-mile segments of the Salinas River near the communities of Chualar and Gonzales, would also help recharge groundwater in the region. Scientists and other experts will be monitoring the program to assure that habitats are maintained for the health of the fish and wildlife that depend on the river.

"This sort of cooperative effort allows the Monterey County Water Resources Agency to address a serious flooding problem for farms while protecting beneficial uses along the river and improving the river habitat," said Regional Water Board Executive Officer Ken Harris. "If successful, it could be expanded to benefit the entire river."

The Regional Water Board included several conditions with the certification to ensure that habitat and water quality are protected. Mitigation measures for removal of trees along the river include the planting of cottonwood, sycamore and alder trees at a three to one ratio, and removal of invasive plants along the river. Detailed daily monitoring of project activity is also required to protect habitat and water quality.

The work is a demonstration project, which still needs approval from federal agencies. If successful, the project could be expanded to the full 100 miles of the river.

For more information on the project, visit the Monterey County Water Resources Agency web site at <http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/SalinasRiverStreamMaintenanceProgram/SRSMP.html>

###