

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL
BOARD
SANTA AN REGION

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SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT (SEP)
Application Form

(Please review the General SEP Qualification Criteria and the SEP Evaluation Form before completing this form; please provide all relevant information that could be used for evaluating your application.)

The following information is needed for consideration of a project for inclusion to the list of approved SEP projects for the Region.

I. Information about the Entity Requesting SEP Funds (SEP Proponent)

Name of SEP Proponent: Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
Address: 11615 Sterling Avenue Riverside, California 92503
Contact Name: Mark Norton, Water Resources and Planning Manager
Phone number: 951 354 4221 Fax: n/a
E-mail address: mailto: mnorton@sawpa.org

II. SEP Project Details

Name of Project: Santa Ana Sucker Habitat Protection and Beneficial Use Enhancement

Project Summary: (include scope of work, methods and materials, water quality/environmental benefits from the project, work products, etc. You may attach the details on a separate sheet.)

The Santa Ana Sucker Habitat Protection and Beneficial Use Enhancement Project would be implemented in Reach 4 of the Santa Ana River to support the preservation of beneficial uses such as Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM) and Wildlife Habitat (WILD)

by restoring habitat within the reaches that are of critical importance to the Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*). Since April, 2000 the sucker has been listed as “threatened” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The project will implement the *One Water One Watershed 2.0 Plan*, the Santa Ana River Watershed’s adopted watershed management plan by restoring, through a phased approach, approximately five acres of habitat under the Ecosystem Services goal.

In the USFWS’ *Draft Recovery Plan for the Santa Ana Sucker* released in November 2014, the Service states that “given the substantial reduction in the range of the species, the currently occupied areas, particularly in the Santa Ana River watershed, will likely not be sufficient to provide the resiliency and redundancy necessary for recovery.” To preserve the beneficial uses of the inland reaches of the Santa Ana River where rare or endangered species exist, special control requirements are necessary to assure attainment and maintenance of particular quality criteria, which may vary slightly with the environmental needs of the particular species.

Based on the Santa Ana Riverwalk Habitat Survey, conducted annually by the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team since 2006, the river channel is predominantly sand substrate upstream for 18.5 miles above Prado Dam. Based on the recently released draft USFWS Plan, regularly there have been low numbers of Santa Ana suckers at locations that historically had the highest abundances (San Marino Environmental Associates, Santa Ana sucker research progress report: 2010). According to the draft Plan, over a 10-year survey period from 2001 to 2011 results indicate a decline in the annual average estimate of Santa Ana suckers (San Marino Environmental Associates, Santa Ana sucker research progress report: 2009; San Marino Environmental Associates 2010).

The Project which was initially requested by, and will be developed in conjunction with, the USFWS, will include a phased approach of relocation of rocks and boulders within Reach 4 of the Santa Ana River in order to create scour and expose cobble and gravel that the Santa Ana sucker depend on for foraging and spawning. Due to the shallow depth of sand cover in parts of Reach 4 of the Santa Ana River, heavy rocks will expose gravel and cobble that are approximately 1 foot under the top layer of sand. Results from the 2014 study, *Habitat variability and distribution of the Santa Ana sucker, Catostomus santaanae, in the Santa Ana River from the confluence of the Rialto channel to the Prado Basin*, indicate that a substrate composition of cobble, gravel and boulders largely corresponds with the presence of Santa Ana suckers.

Creation of these habitat restoration areas are critically important as the River downstream from La Cadena Avenue in Reach 4 fluctuates in flow, which can strand suckers in pools. The major sources of flow near La Cadena Avenue include runoff, groundwater and discharges from wastewater treatments plants. The area is also the location of a nonnative, invasive, filamentous algae outbreak, first identified in February 2014 as *Compsopogon coeruleus*. According to the *Draft Recovery Plan for the Santa Ana Sucker*, the Santa Ana sucker is not known to forage on or spawn within filamentous algae.

The first phase of the project will include developing a project implementation plan whereby a certified hydrologist and/or engineer will assist in the development in the construction design of the rock structures and assess the project site. SAWPA staff will work with the resource agencies and the Regional Water Board to identify the specific location of the project within Reach 4. Digital map products will be developed and SAWPA staff will consult with the major landowners, likely the flood control district, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Detailed specifications will be included, which can include the size of the rock needed, their configuration, and the equipment needed to place them. A biologist and/or resource conservation district will also assist in the design and provide comments on the construction specifications as needed. Specifications for onsite monitoring and species protection measures will be provided. A logistical plan will also be developed in order to specify the staging area for the rocks and the access needed to place them in the wetted portion of the River. These detailed plans will be used to submit the required permits and agreements from the resource agencies, the flood control district who is the majority landowner in the area, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

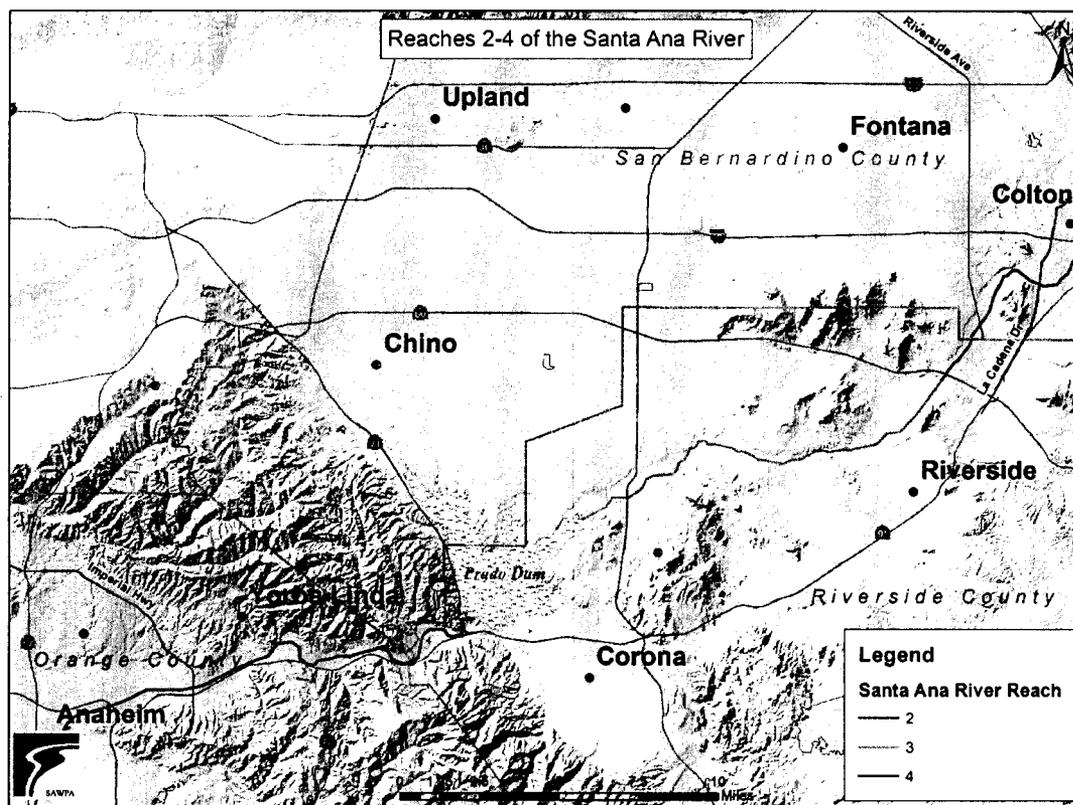
If there are funds remaining for the first phase, the Project will secure the purchase of rocks and heavy substrate material, and identify rocks within the River, and map their coordinates. The next phases of the project will include contracting with a construction contractor to utilize a backhoe and dump truck to place rocks in a staging area near a site and later place them in the River. A certified biologist will monitor the ambient water quality, collect information related to the ambient condition of biota, as well as conduct presence-absence surveys of Santa Ana sucker. Ambient water measurements will assist in maintenance of beneficial uses designations for this reach such as WARM and WILD whereby a further understanding of water quality, habitat improvements and the Santa Ana sucker's absence/presence can be drawn.

As the *Draft Recovery Plan for the Santa Ana Sucker* states, specific tolerances to water quality variables such as water temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity have not been determined for Santa Ana sucker. Citizen monitoring may be enlisted in order to provide monthly measurements of riparian coverage and the size of the exposed gravel bars at the project site. The Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team will provide press releases and summaries through member agency press offices and social media platforms to educate the public on the Project and the beneficial uses of the Santa Ana River.

Permits and certification that will be considered include a Streambed Alteration Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 401 Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, a 404 Permit from the Army Corps of Engineers and a right-of-way access permit from the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

Location of Project: (include watershed or waterbody, location maps, etc.):

With the analysis of the hydrologist, and in conjunction with the USFWS, the Santa Ana Sucker Habitat Protection and Beneficial Use Enhancement Project will be implemented in Reach 4 of the Santa Ana River in Riverside County. The total size of the project will not exceed five acres.



Project Schedule: (include start date, expected end date, interim and final report dates [at a minimum, quarterly reporting is required by SEP Policy]):

The Project timeline would begin in June 2015 and the overall estimated project deadline when all phases are complete would be up to October 31, 2017 to ensure at least a year surveying after the placement of rocks.

The Project would begin upon the proposals acceptance by the Regional Board and will be implemented timely after the end of the sucker's spawning season (mid-March to early July) to provide immediate relief to the species.

This phase of the project, the project implementation plan, will be provided to the Regional Board by February 2016. In future phases, the rocks would be moved into place in the River in late summer and early fall of 2015 or 2016, depending on when funds are received, and biological monitoring will continue throughout the following year.

Overall Project Schedule (All Phases)

Task/Subtask	2015					2016					2017															
	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Overall Project	[Shaded]																									
Project Management	[Shaded]																									
Contract with Regional Board	[Shaded]																									
Submittal of Quarterly Reports	[Shaded]																									
Implementation	[Shaded]																									
Project Implementation Plan	[Shaded]																									
Rock Surveying	[Shaded]																									
Additional Rock Purchase/Transportation	[Shaded]																									
Permitting	[Shaded]																									
Rock Location in River (Heavy Equipment)	[Shaded]																									
Monitoring	[Shaded]																									
Biological and Ambient Water Quality Monitoring	[Shaded]																									

Deliverables: (interim and final reports, analytical results, model runs, etc.)-

Deliverables will include the project implementation plan by February 2016 from the program manager and quarterly reporting. Quarterly reports will summarize progress made on the project implementation plan and the consultation with other agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers and resource agencies.

III. Total project cost and the amount of SEP money requested: (include a breakdown of project costs such as overhead/project management, design/consultation, construction/implementation, sample collection/analysis, report preparation; indicate other funding sources, if any. For other funding sources, indicate if the funds have been committed, any restrictions on the funds, and the amount.)

The project cost for this phase is \$24,000. Costs include project management, acquiring site access, and contracts with a hydrologist and biologist. See detailed budget below.

Line Item	SEP Funding	Further Detail
Project Implementation Plan		
Hydrologist/Engineer	\$ 4,500	1 FTE, \$150/hour, 30 hrs
Biologist	\$ 7,500	1 FTE, \$125/hour, 60 hrs
Project Management & Access/Permit Planning	\$ 4,000	1 FTE, \$125/hour, 32 hrs
Permitting Support (as needed)	\$ 8,000	1 FTE, \$125/hour, 64 hrs
Total	\$ 24,000	

IV. Nexus: (Explain how the proposed SEP project benefits the watershed impacted by the discharge for which a fine was assessed. This information may not be available during the initial SEP application process and may be submitted later.)

The discharge is from the City of Beaumont into a tributary of San Timoteo Creek, which is tributary to the Santa Ana River. The proposed project is to benefit the designated beneficial uses of the Santa Ana River.

V. Discharger: (If you are requesting SEP funds as part of a settlement for an enforcement action, include the name of the Discharger and the enforcement action; otherwise, leave it blank.)

City of Beaumont, Mandatory Minimum Penalty Order No. R8-2015-0012.

Supporting Documents

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Letter of Support for the Santa Ana Sucker Habitat Protection and Beneficial Use Enhancement Project, 2015.

Excerpt from the Draft Recovery Plan for the Santa Ana Sucker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014.

Orange County Water District. 2011. Santa Ana Sucker Habitat Restoration Project Monitoring Report.