

**Date:**

March 12, 2012

**Applicant:**

Natural Resources Agency  
901 P Street, Room 411A  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Contact: Kent Nelson  
(916) 653-9190

**Applicant's Representative:**

Dudek  
Contact: Vipul Joshi  
(760) 479-4284

**Project Name:**

Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) Project, WDID No. 7A133126001

**Receiving Water:**

Salton Sea

**Location:**

City or area: The Project site is located at the southern end of the Salton Sea, near the mouth of the New River, Imperial County, California

Longitude/ Latitude: 33° 6' 13.8" N and 115° 42' 2.8" W

Township/Range: The study area lies within the Westmorland West and Obsidian Butte 7.5-minute quadrangles. The SCH Project site is located within Township 12 South, Range 12 East, and Sections 13–14 and 23–29 as mapped by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

**Project Description:**

The purpose or goal of this Project is to develop a range of aquatic habitats that will support fish and wildlife species dependent on the Salton Sea in Imperial County, California. The applicant's objectives include the following:

- Provide appropriate foraging habitat for piscivorous bird species;
- Develop habitats required to support piscivorous bird species;
- Support a sustainable, productive aquatic community;
- Provide suitable water quality for fish;
- Minimize adverse effects on desert pupfish (*Cyprinodon macularius*);
- Minimize risk of selenium;
- Minimize risk of disease/toxicity impacts;
- Develop and implement a monitoring plan;
- Develop a decision-making framework; and
- Provide proof of concept for future restoration.

The Natural Resources Agency proposes restoration in an effort to develop a range of aquatic habitats that will continue to support fish and wildlife species that use the Salton Sea.

The Natural Resources Agency's preferred alternative would create up to 3,770 acres of shallow ponds, contained within low berms, on either side of the New River at elevations less than -228 feet mean sea level. The ponds would be supplied with a combination of brackish and saline water. This water would be pumped from the New River and Salton Sea, respectively, and blended to maintain an appropriate salinity range suitable for fish species that are currently adapted to living in the Sea's saline environment. The SCH Project is designed as a "proof-of-concept" project in which several Project features, characteristics, and operations could be tested under an adaptive management framework. The proof-of-concept period would last for approximately 10 years after completion of construction. By that time, managers would have had time to identify those management practices that best meet the Project goals. After the proof-of-concept period, the Project would be operated until the end of the 75-year period covered by the Quantification Settlement Agreement (2078) or until funding were no longer available. The SCH ponds would be constructed and operated by the DFG, on behalf of the Natural Resources Agency.

**Action:**

Pending

**Water Board Contact:**

Jay Mirpour, Water Resources Control Engineer

(760) 776-8981

[jmirpour@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:jmirpour@waterboards.ca.gov)