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**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

IMPERIAL STREAMS SALTON SEA AND TRIBUTARIES FEASIBILITY STUDY

LOCATION: The study area is located within Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties, California and includes the Salton Sea and its tributaries which may be suitable for aquatic ecosystem restoration.

AUTHORITY: A resolution of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, 114th Congress 2nd Session held April 28, 2016 authorized the Secretary of the Army to investigate and recommend improvements of flood risk management, ecosystem restoration and other water and land related resources for the Salton Sea and the vicinity including all tributaries with a view toward restoration and protection of the environment, and improvements to public health and safety for the Salton Sea and Tributaries, within Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties, California.

PROPOSED PROJECT: In its current condition, the Salton Sea is a shallow, saline, terminal lake sustained by agricultural runoff from the Imperial and Coachella Valleys. The lake provides significant habitat for an estimated 400 avian species, which include both Endangered Species Act listed threatened and endangered species and several State listed species of concern. Recent water transfers (the 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement) and other factors have reduced inflows to the Salton Sea. As a result, salinity is increasing, and more lakebed is becoming exposed. Salinity levels in the Salton Sea have exceeded tolerance limits for most fish species, resulting in the loss of a majority of the fishery, declines in bird populations from the loss of food, and wind erosion of recently exposed lakebed soils. Further loss of water in future years is projected to continue the degradation of the Salton Sea's ecosystem due to increasing salinity and other water quality issues, including temperature extremes, eutrophication (increased nutrient loads), related anoxia (oxygen deficiency), and algal productivity.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Non-Federal Sponsors, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Salton Sea Authority, are currently evaluating the study boundary, establishing the purpose and need of the study, and considering the initial array of alternatives to address the degraded ecosystem and public health concerns surrounding the Salton Sea. In accordance with the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, this study will aim to address an identified threat to public health, safety, or welfare; preserve or restore ecosystems of national significance; and/or preserve or restore habitats of importance for federally protected species, including migratory birds; and contribute to other ongoing or planned Federal, State, or local restoration initiatives. Furthermore, the object of an ecosystem restoration project is to restore degraded ecosystem structure, function and dynamic processes and bring about a less degraded and more natural condition. Ecosystem restoration projects should be formulated in a systems context to improve the potential for long-term survival of aquatic, wetland, and terrestrial complexes as self-regulating, functioning systems.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT COMPLIANCE: An evaluation and decision on a Feasibility Study is a federal action; and therefore, is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental compliance requirements. The Corps will be responsible for ensuring environmental compliance requirements with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, policy and procedures. NEPA and other analyses completed to comply with other environmental statutes

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(e.g., Endangered Species Act) will be commensurate with the scale and potential effects of the study. To avoid the need for preparation of duplicative documents, a joint California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/NEPA document in collaboration with DWR is anticipated. The analyses will take into consideration areas including but not limited to effects to the human environment, biological and cultural resources, Tribal resources and consultation, and Resource Agency consultation. At this initial phase of the study, a determination for appropriate NEPA documentation has yet to be established. Additional opportunity for public comment will be scheduled after the initial phase of the Study.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Tribal, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; and other interested parties for initial input into the ecological and related problems at the Salton Sea, potential consideration of the initial array of alternatives, and any correspondence for otherwise potential pertinent information.

Please note that the Corps is in receipt of the public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program's Salton Sea Long – Range Plan. Those comments previously submitted will be taken into consideration as part of this study. This initial scoping period will be an opportunity for additional or duplicative comments and suggestions regarding the restorations of the Salton Sea and its tributaries.

Additional study information may be found on the Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study website: <http://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utis/getfile/collection/p16021coll7/id/23499>

Comments or suggestions will be accepted from May 8, 2023, to June 6, 2023.

Comments should be mailed to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
Planning Division
Attn: Emily Lester
3636 N. Central Avenue, Suite 900
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: CESPL-Imperial-Streams-Salton-Sea@usace.army.mil



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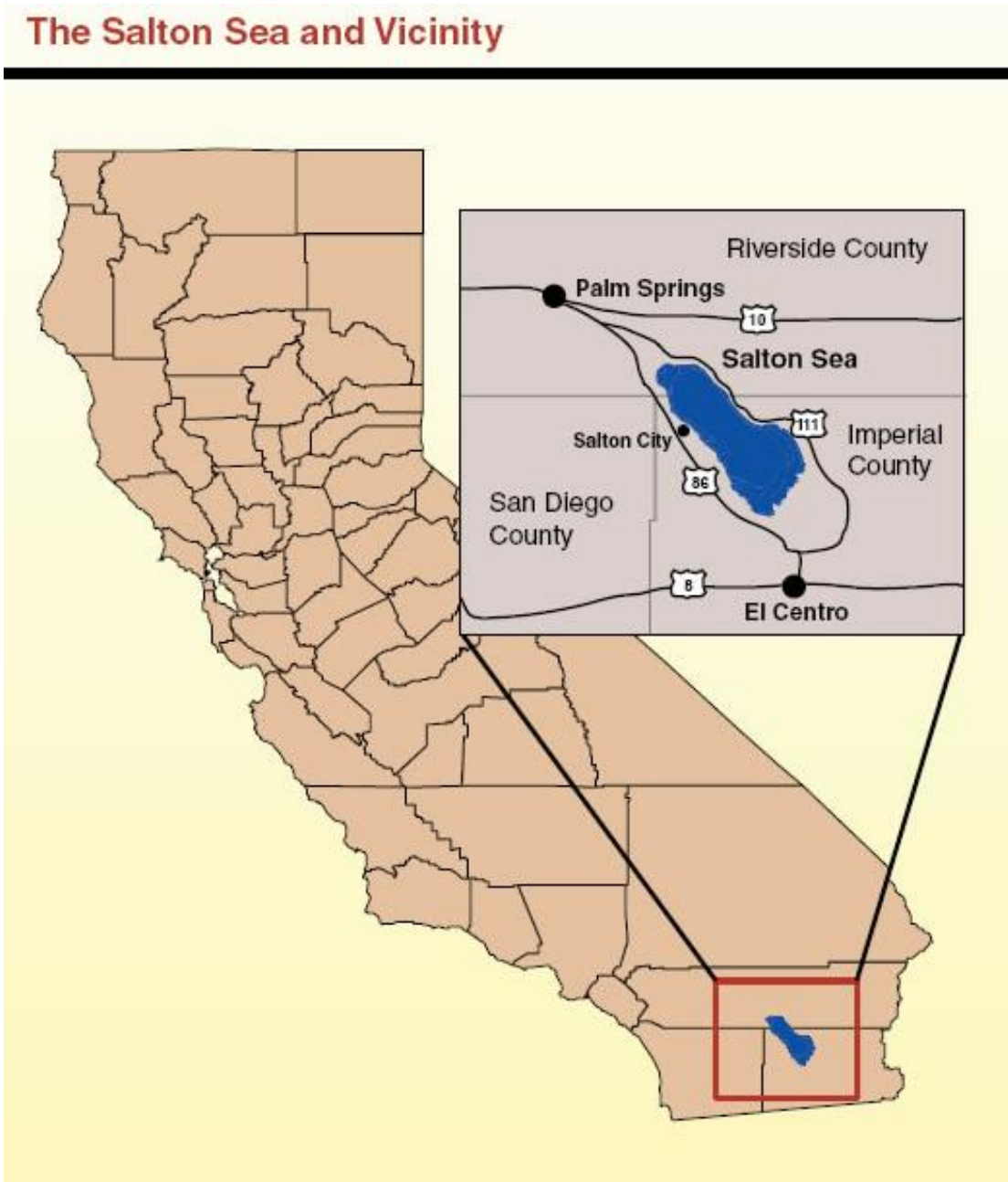


Figure 1. The Salton Sea and Vicinity (CA LAO 2008)