



CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

State of California Salton Sea Management Program

SALTON SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

FINAL



September 2024

Communities and Tribes of the Salton Sea,

Your voices and input have been our guide as we have worked to improve conditions at the Salton Sea to protect the health of those living near the Sea and restore environmental habitat. We have made real and important progress these last few years, including establishing a 4,100-acre aquatic project at the southern end of the Sea and installing over nearly 500 acres of native plants to suppress dust near shoreline communities. This long-overdue progress is building momentum for much more important work ahead of us in coming years.

Through this work, I have had the privilege to meet many of you and to hear directly about your hopes for your families and communities. I also understand grave concerns you have about conditions at the Salton Sea and a range of other challenges you face to health, prosperity and opportunity. We have learned so much from you.

We embarked on this public engagement project to better understand challenges local communities and tribes face and to learn more about ideas and opportunities about how to address these challenges. We asked our partner on this project Better World Group to cast a wide net to collect perspectives from all local communities and residents who wanted to share their views about their full range of concerns, ideas and suggestions.

Why this public engagement project? As our Agency has worked to restore the Sea through our Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP), we have learned that needs of local communities go far beyond simply improving physical conditions at the Sea. We have learned that residents envision a range of changes that can improve their lives and their communities. Better understanding these needs and opportunities will help us shape our SSMP projects when possible to deliver multi-benefits.

And where addressing certain needs is beyond the scope and resources of SSMP, identifying these needs helps to engage a range of partners who can help meet these needs, including federal, state and local government agencies, business organizations, community-based groups and nonprofit organizations.

Our California Natural Resources Agency and its departments are committed to working together to build a bright future for the Salton Sea region. In addition to directly improving conditions at the Sea, the work of our agency can touch down in important ways in this region: strengthening resilience to climate change and its impacts; conserving lands and protecting sacred places; building clean energy and water infrastructure; conserving and diversifying water supplies, expanding access for all communities to parks and nature, building partnership with tribal governments, and redressing environmental injustices. The Salton Sea is a place where all these opportunities can—and should— be realized.

This region is a beautiful, unique and special place. We recognize your leadership and strength of vision to help make it an even better place. We are committed to working with you to make this a reality.

Onward,



Wade Crowfoot
California Natural Resources Secretary

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Executive Summary

The Challenge

In the Southeastern corner of the state, straddling Imperial and Riverside counties, the Salton Sea (the Sea) is California's largest inland lake and home to many California Native American tribes and communities. Once a resort destination, the Sea has since become a growing environmental issue. The Sea has been shrinking, largely due to water transfers out of Imperial Valley that reduce inflows to the Sea. Drought and changes to Colorado River water availability exacerbate this trend. Although it continues to provide a vital stop along the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds, the water has become increasingly saline. As the Sea shrinks, it exposes the lakebed that has the potential to release dust, contributing to worsening air quality in a region already struggling with poor air quality from high wind events, idling vehicles, high off-road activity, commercial truck traffic, and agricultural burning.

Compounding this, communities in the Eastern Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley have for decades also faced social and economic challenges. While these vibrant communities have rich cultural and natural resources, they suffer from decades of underinvestment. Residents have highlighted that local communities struggle with poor air quality, health issues, low broadband access, unreliable electricity, limited access to recreational opportunities, inadequate transportation systems, and underfunded public health infrastructure and services. These challenges make it difficult to overcome the growing environmental challenges related to the Sea.

The Salton Sea Management Program and a Call for Multi-Benefit Projects

The Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP or "Program"), which is a coordinated effort by the California Natural Resources Agency ("Resources"), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Department of Water Resources, was formally created in 2018 and tasked with advancing projects to improve air quality and provide environmental habitat to meet legally required restoration at the Sea. The Program's work is driven by a need to address the shrinking Salton Sea, and is guided by State legislation, State Water Board Orders, and formal agreements between federal, tribal, and local entities. The Salton Sea Restoration Act of 2003 outlined the Legislature's intent for the State to restore the Salton Sea ecosystem and subsequent State Water Board Orders set a restoration milestone of 29,800 acres by 2028. The SSMP has developed a multi-pronged approach that includes projects around the Sea that increase wildlife habitat and reduce dust from exposed lakebed. The Program also led the development of a long-range restoration plan, beyond 2028, and is collaborating with local, state, federal, and tribal partners on a feasibility study of ecosystem restoration options identified in the long-range plan.

While there has been significant progress recently, there is more work to be done. For years, Salton Sea residents and advocates have been asking for "multi-benefit infrastructure projects" that would bring greater benefits to the region by protecting and improving public, environmental, and economic health for tribes and local communities. Recognizing the importance of capturing a more holistic understanding of how to meet communities' needs, the SSMP contracted Better World Group Advisors (BWG). In November 2023, BWG completed the [Salton](#)

[Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions Report](#), which summarizes many months of recent community feedback and years of past public comment into a comprehensive catalogue of needs from shoreline communities related to the Salton Sea.

The Salton Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions Report identified eight principal types of community needs related to the Salton Sea and its shoreline communities:

1. Community engagement, capacity building, and coordination
2. Early, often, and meaningful tribal consultation
3. Equitable outdoor access and recreation at the Sea
4. Public health
5. Inclusive and sustainable workforce development
6. Expanded transportation access
7. Climate action
8. Broadband access for all communities

The SSMP's restoration efforts may provide opportunities to engage in and support broader regional efforts to address the needs of Salton Sea shoreline communities identified by BWG. Addressing some needs could potentially fit into the SSMP's legislative and regulatory requirements for restoration. For example, community engagement and tribal consultation are foundational to the SSMP's planning and project implementation efforts. The SSMP sees opportunities for potential recreation, climate resilience, and workforce development co-benefits in its restoration work. Other topics, however, including transportation, broadband, and healthcare are outside the Program's jurisdiction and scope.










Monitoring equipment at Clubhouse vegetation enhancement site.

Credit: Burke Rix.

Overall, the report has been extremely valuable in helping the SSMP and others develop a greater understanding and appreciation for the range of community needs and will enable the Program to uplift certain recommendations when opportunities arise. CNRA is grateful to the community members, California Native American tribes, and regional partners who participated in this effort to detail what efforts and projects to consider. This document outlines what kind of progress the SSMP has made in some areas as well as opportunities the Program is able to prioritize next.

Map of the Salton Sea region. Credit: Salton Sea Management Program

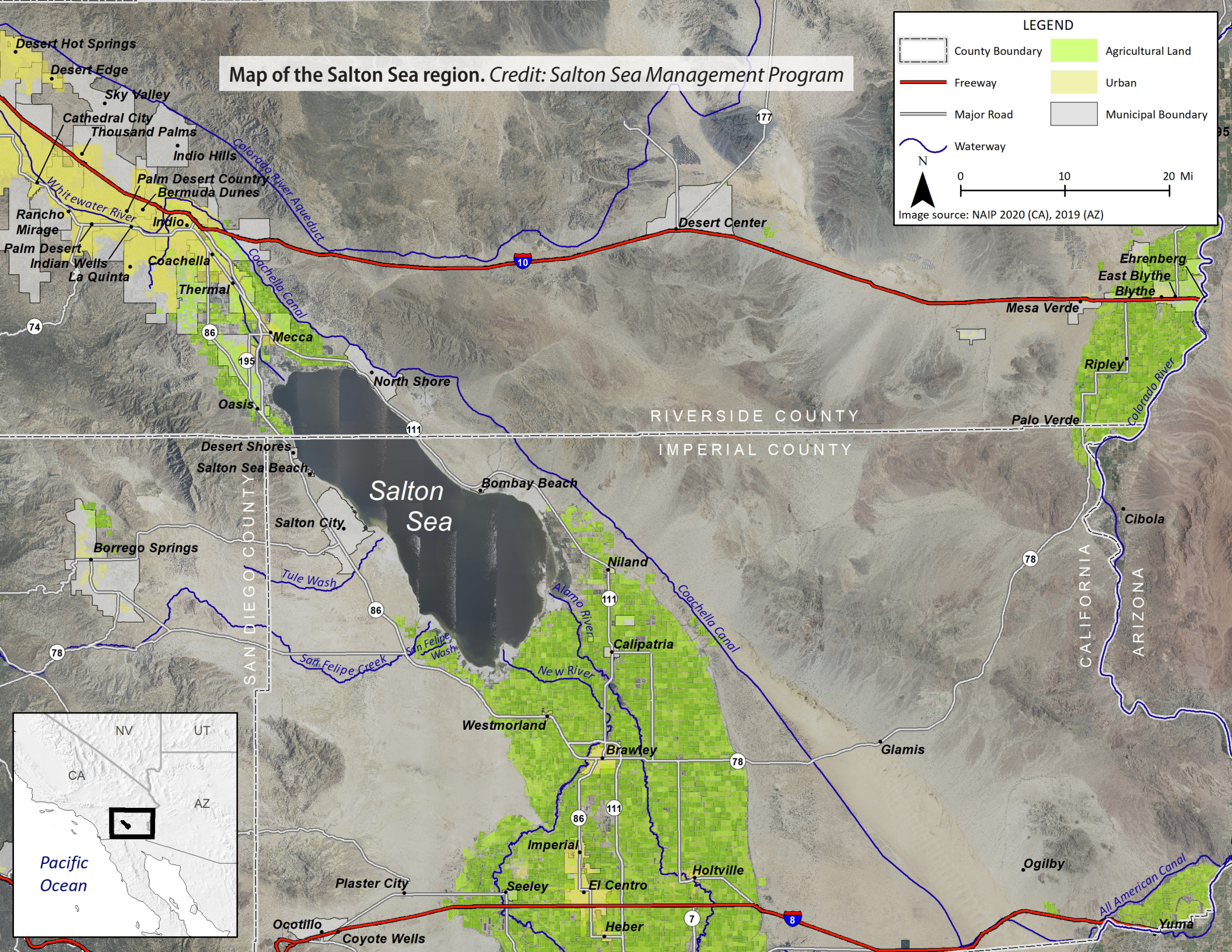
LEGEND

	County Boundary		Agricultural Land
	Freeway		Urban
	Major Road		Municipal Boundary
	Waterway		

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Image source: NAIP 2020 (CA), 2019 (AZ)



Introduction

The present-day Salton Sea (the Sea), once the site of the ancient Lake Cahuilla, is California's largest inland lake. The Sea sits in California's far Southeast corner, between Imperial and Riverside counties. One of the most important stops along the Pacific Flyway for millions of migratory birds and a popular fishing site,¹ the Sea was once a popular resort destination in the 1950s. Over the decades, however, the 343-square-mile body of trapped water has become one of California's most pressing ecological and environmental justice issues.

The Sea is rapidly changing. Expanding water conservation and climate change-driven drought are reducing inflows into the Sea and combined with high evaporation rates are causing the Sea to shrink in size. As it shrinks, the exposed lakebed has the potential to release dust and worse regional air quality, which is already heavily impacted by dust from nearby desert ecosystems, use of unpaved roads, agricultural practices such as burning, vehicles idling at the nearby U.S.-Mexico border, and other inputs. These factors contribute to respiratory illnesses and significant health issues across the region.¹ The Sea's waters are increasingly salty and impacted by pesticides from agricultural runoff and heavy metals. A shrinking sea and reduced important environmental habitat are severely impacting fish and wildlife.

Despite these challenges, the region is home to vibrant and diverse shoreline communities that are deeply connected to the ancient beauty of the Sea. They have advocated for decades to improve conditions

in the region. This includes California Native American tribes who are the original stewards of the Salton Sea's lands and waters. The Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians' reservation is located along the northwest side of the Sea, and much of their lands include the shoreline and the lakebed. The Tribe considers the shoreline, the original lands within the lakebed, and the surrounding landscape as their cultural and spiritual base.

The area is home to diverse populations. In both Imperial and Riverside County over 50 percent of residents identify as Latino and over 20 percent were born outside of the United States.² A vibrant Purépecha community, an indigenous group from central Mexico, resides near the Sea with an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 residents.³ Many households speak a language other than English: over 40 percent in Riverside County and nearly 75 percent in Imperial.⁴

Residents of Imperial and Riverside counties are relatively young, compared to the rest of California and that youthful spirit is evident in its dynamic social and environmental movement.⁵ The region is currently planning for lithium development, which could eventually contribute one-third of the world's lithium demand to support a clean energy future.⁶ The Salton Sea connects these landscapes and communities, and is where the region's environmental, social, cultural, and economic goals all intersect.

Equity and Environmental Justice at the Salton Sea

There is a long history across the United States of violence against Native American people, forced removal of tribal nations from their lands and resources, and systemic racism that has stymied investment in communities of color, leading to less access to basic infrastructure and services. These historical wrongs and inequities have also played out in Salton Sea shoreline communities. While rich in abundant resources and strong community ties, the region continues to grapple with considerable social, economic, and environmental challenges. These issues have been exacerbated by continued lack of investment in these communities and has led to a lack of adequate transportation, broadband, environmental, public health infrastructure, and services.⁷

Residents are burdened with air pollution exceeding levels seen in many other parts of the state.⁸ Local children visit the emergency room with asthma-related issues at nearly double the state average and the related medical bills are a significant burden in an area that also struggles with high rates of poverty.⁹ Daily activities are complicated in some areas because bus service is limited to once a week and there is insufficient access to high-speed internet.¹⁰ These challenges add up, often making life very difficult for these under-resourced tribes and communities.

A strong regional network of community-based organizations and engaged residents have driven advocacy that has maintained visibility and sparked action at the Salton Sea and across the region. Their work has grown local support for multi-benefit infrastructure, public health, and equitable workforce development. These groups include but are not

limited to Comité Civico del Valle, Alianza Coachella Valley, Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI), Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability, and Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Coalition. These leaders engage community members in health monitoring and economic and environmental visioning for the future. They also have regularly provided the State with strategies for meaningful community engagement and have been participants on the Salton Sea Management Program's Community Engagement Committee. The SSMP recognizes the abundant local leadership and expertise in Eastern Coachella and Imperial Valleys and the need for continued collaboration.



Lotería night with residents. Credit: Kounkuey Design Initiative

The Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) and a Call for Multi-benefit Projects

In 2003, local, state, and federal water agencies entered into an agreement to facilitate a long-term water transfer from the Imperial Valley to other areas of Southern California, known as the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). This agreement, supported by state legislation, transferred water from Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to Coachella Valley Water District, Metropolitan Water District, and the San Diego County Water Authority in exchange for investments to improve water efficiency within the Imperial Valley. The QSA helped California water agencies to comply with a need to reduce usage of the Colorado River Basin. This reduced the amount of water irrigating farm fields near the Sea and the resulting runoff, which remains the primary source of water for the Sea. These changes in water use led to legislation and regulations for the restoration and stabilization of the Salton Sea, which guide SSMP's efforts.

The California State Legislature and successive Governors have also worked for solutions at the Sea. The [Salton Sea Restoration Act](#) (Senate Bill 277) said, "It is the intent of the Legislature that the State of California undertake the restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem and the permanent protection of the wildlife dependent on that ecosystem." The Legislature has passed bills and bonds related to the QSA to fund restoration and research on the Sea.¹¹ In 2015, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. established the Salton Sea Task Force to establish air quality and ecological goals at the Salton Sea, paving the way for the SSMP.

The Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) formally began in 2017 and is led by the California Natural Resources Agency ("Resources") in collaboration with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The SSMP works to improve environmental conditions at the Salton Sea and meet the State's



Residents participating in KDI's 'mobile obelisk' to identify community needs. Credit: Kounkuey Design Initiative

legal requirements through dust suppression and wildlife habitat restoration projects.

The State Water Board monitors the SSMP's work on Salton Sea restoration through Water Rights Orders, which approve long-term water transfers and set specific restoration milestones to address public health and environmental concerns. For example, Water Board Order WR 2017-134 set annual restoration acreage milestones for the SSMP's Phase I Salton Sea restoration, requiring 29,800 acres by 2028.¹² The SSMP reports on its progress to meeting these milestones to the State Water Board and the public each year.

The SSMP's work is also guided by various agency memoranda of understanding (MOU), including one executed on August 31, 2016, and amended on January 18, 2017, by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and California Natural Resources Agency. The MOU identified a goal of developing projects to protect or improve air quality, wildlife habitat, and water quality as necessary to minimize human health and ecosystem impacts at the Salton Sea in the mid-term.

For years, tribes, community residents, and advocates have pushed for “multi-benefit infrastructure projects” and other solutions to address the region's community health, environmental, climate and economic challenges. The State recognizes the critical importance of these needs and, in an effort to elevate them, the SSMP contracted Better World Group Advisors (BWG) to develop the Salton Sea Community Needs Report and Strategy Recommendations (Needs Report). The Report summarizes years of public comment and months of community feedback to uplift, compile, and catalogue the needs of shoreline communities related to the Salton Sea.

The [Salton Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions Report](#) identified eight principal types of community needs related to the Salton Sea and its shoreline communities:

1. Community engagement, capacity building, and coordination
2. Early, often, and meaningful tribal consultation
3. Equitable outdoor access and recreation at the Sea
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“Community needs” refers to the vital infrastructure, programming, and other investments that lead to healthy, resilient, and just social, economic, and environmental outcomes.



Community meeting in Thermal, March 2020.
Credit: California Natural Resources Agency

The SSMP's restoration efforts provide opportunities to engage in and support broader regional efforts to address the needs of Salton Sea shoreline communities. Community engagement and tribal consultation are foundational to the SSMP's planning and project implementation efforts. And the SSMP sees opportunities for potential recreation, climate resilience, and workforce development co-benefits in its restoration work. Addressing other needs highlighted in this document, such as transportation, healthcare, and broadband, are mostly beyond the scope of the SSMP, the California Natural Resources Agency, and its departments and will require other private or public entities to lead.

Statewide Policies

The Newsom Administration has developed significant statewide initiatives, executive orders, and policies that reflect the prioritization of tribal partnerships, equity, equitable outdoor access, conservation, and climate resilience. These provide context for other efforts alongside those undertaken by the SSMP and highlight statewide policies and initiatives to address some of the strategies set forth in the Community Needs Report.

- **Executive Order N-15-19:** In 2019, Governor Newsom formally apologized to California Native American tribes for the state's legacy of violence and neglect and recommitted to the tribal consultation requirements set forth in Governor Jerry Brown's [Executive Order B-10-11](#).
- **Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands:** In 2020, Governor Newsom began requiring the administration to increase tribal access and co-management with California Native American tribes on the state's lands and natural resources and to identify opportunities for ancestral land return.
- **Executive Order on Equity:** [Executive Order N-16-22](#) advanced the State's commitment to equity and ending "identity-based disparities" by directing state agencies and departments to take additional actions to embed equity considerations in their mission, policies and practices.
- **Climate Adaptation Strategy:** The [California Climate Adaptation Strategy](#), as mandated by Assembly Bill 1482 (Gordon, 2015) links together the state's existing and planned climate adaptation efforts, showing how they fit together to achieve California's six climate resilience priorities. The Strategy is organized around outcome-based priorities, enabling a coordinated, integrated approach to building climate resilience.



Community outreach at the Salton Sea. Credit: CNRA

- **30x30:** [Executive Order N-82-20](#) established the goal of protecting 30 percent of the state's lands and waters by 2030, while supporting access and climate resilience.
- **Equitable Outdoor Access Act:** In 2022, Assembly Bill 30 codified the state's commitment to equitable access by requiring the CNRA and the Department of Transportation to consider and incorporate it in policies and investments.
- **Outdoors for All:** The 2023 [Outdoors for All](#) strategy outlines ways government and non-government partners can increase outdoor access for all Californians.
- **Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction in California:** [Assembly Bill 1657](#) established the commission, which led a scoping process and published a [report](#) on the opportunities and challenges of lithium development in the Imperial Valley, which will directly impact communities at the Sea. This report elevated tribal and community priorities.

Salton Sea Management Program Status and Opportunities to Support Community Needs

The SSMP is specifically tasked with restoring approximately 30,000 acres of exposed lakebed of the Salton Sea, by the year 2028, through aquatic habitat and dust suppression projects and developing a long-term plan for the ecological restoration of the Salton Sea. Since its initiation in 2017, the SSMP has made significant strides, including constructing a 4,100-acre aquatic habitat dust suppression project, initiating vegetation enhancement projects across miles of exposed lakebed, developing a draft Long-Range Plan for Salton Sea restoration, producing an ecosystem-wide Monitoring Implementation Plan, and reinitiating Community Engagement, Long-Range Plan, and Science Committees to advise the SSMP. Significant progress has been made with much more work ahead. Despite recent progress, as of 2023, the SSMP is behind in meeting annual acreage targets, and while program capacity, project delivery, and community engagement and tribal consultation



Community engagement at Salton Sea State Recreation Area led by KDI.
Credit: Kounkuey Design Initiative

have improved, the SSMP recognizes the work is ongoing, and the SSMP strives for continual improvement.

The Community Needs Report has been valuable in helping the SSMP and others develop a greater understanding and appreciation for the range of community needs and will enable the Program to uplift certain recommendations when opportunities arise. CNRA is grateful to the community members and partners who participated in this effort to detail what actions and projects to consider. This section briefly summarizes the needs identified in the Needs Report, outlines the current status of the SSMP's activities related to the eight identified needs, and describes opportunities for the SSMP to prioritize as future projects and phases are funded.

Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination

Community-based organizations and residents have consistently asked for more opportunities to participate in and lend their leadership to the restoration of the Sea. Residents have advocated for the meaningful inclusion of community members at SSMP public meetings, including youth, non-English speakers, and farmworkers. They have identified that translation, site tours, and other resources are needed to help make this happen.

Current SSMP Status: In recent years, the SSMP has worked to invest time and resources to improve community outreach and engagement. This effort was in response to feedback and recommendations received from community members and representatives to improve community engagement in SSMP processes, plans, and projects. As a result, regular community meetings are now hosted in community-friendly and virtual spaces, with Spanish interpretation, bilingual presentations and translated meeting materials in plain language. This is now standard for all SSMP events. At meetings and workshops, sign-in sheets are used to facilitate follow up with community residents.

The SSMP implements targeted outreach to connect with harder-to-reach communities in the region and other interested parties, with the objective of inviting communities to be engaged, share feedback, and be informed about the SSMP efforts at the Sea. Acknowledging the challenges of limited broadband within the region, meeting information is often shared by radio and newspapers, as well as placing flyers on community boards, in businesses, and distributing them at schools in student backpacks. In addition, the SSMP works with partners to share meeting and program information at local events.

The SSMP has hosted multiple site tours at active project sites, bringing tribes, community leaders, regional partners, local and state officials to further inform them about progress on restoration projects and the significant investments the state has made at the Sea. The SSMP expects to continue these site tours during the coming years and as projects are implemented as part of the 10-Year Plan and future long-term restoration efforts. Recently, with the development of the 10-Year Plan National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment, Dust Suppression Action Plan and the Draft Salton Sea Long-Range Plan, community feedback was sought prior to and during plan development.

In response to community feedback and recognizing that more needs to be done to increase comprehensive community engagement, the SSMP has increased its capacity to enhance community engagement. In recent years, the SSMP has hired two positions based in the Salton Sea region to increase the Program's capacity, a Deputy Assistant Secretary and a Public Affairs Officer. It has also continued to award funding to regional partners like the Salton Sea Authority and Comité Cívico del Valle to support and enhance community engagement and outreach. In 2023, the local SSMP Public Affairs Officer has developed an informative presentation about the SSMP's restoration efforts and taken it on the road to present at various meeting spaces such as City Council meetings held in Imperial County and the Coachella Valley.

The SSMP continues to host frequent meetings with the SSMP Community Engagement Committee and is exploring new partnerships,





Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot and Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy Samantha Arthur meet with community advocates at the Species Conservation Habitat Project. Credit: Better World Group

including with community residents, to join and engage in this committee. The SSMP Community Engagement Committee serves as the hub and primary venue to plan engagement activities and identify the best outreach and involvement strategies for SSMP public events. The Community Engagement Committee, co-chaired by County of Imperial and Alianza Coachella Valley, consists of representatives from community-based organizations, interested parties, local leaders, governmental agencies, and tribal governments. It enlists leaders of local community groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to help guide SSMP engagement efforts, reach community members through varying communications channels, and increase community engagement in SSMP planning activities. The Community Engagement Committee has two working groups that meet outside larger committee meetings to tackle specific tasks and work in coordination with the SSMP team and the committee co-chairs. The Outreach Working Group meets to prepare for upcoming public meetings to discuss meeting format, discuss opportunities for additional engagement, review meeting

materials, and coordinate on collaborative outreach. The Annual Review Working Group meets once a year to review committee membership, review and update the committee charter, and help recruit new or additional members for the Community Engagement Committee.

With COVID-19 restrictions lifted, the SSMP has begun to host some in-person regional meetings in the evenings for members of the community to attend and share feedback. This is especially important for shoreline communities with limited to no access to broadband to participate in online meetings.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Partner with the Community Engagement Committee to finalize the draft Engagement Plan developed in 2020, identifying community-specific methodologies with clear metrics to evaluate engagement and outreach.
- Consider ways to seek new participation from community leaders to serve as members of the Community Engagement Committee.
- Expand project tours and presentations at local public meetings to support an understanding of the SSMP's activities and build engagement with new partners.
- Update the SSMP website to provide an improved tool for public communication and a resource for information on the SSMP's activities. Provide tutorials at public workshops as needed for the new Project Tracker.
- Add translation and interpretation capabilities to serve the Purépecha community to support their interest and engagement in the SSMP.
- Integrate community engagement into the Imperial Streams Salton Sea Feasibility Study to ensure the federally led process meets SSMP engagement thresholds.

- Develop a public facing dashboard that tracks Salton Sea ecosystem conditions.
- Solicit input on grant program guidelines for possible future SB 125 lithium excise tax grants for community engagement, public amenity, capital improvement, or community-benefit projects.
- Continue to improve collaboration with local entities to leverage state and local resources and enhance the effectiveness of state restoration projects.
- Look for opportunities to inform community members about forthcoming projects and solicit feedback when appropriate to gain community insights and help align potential recreational elements with community needs.
- Look for opportunities to expand Spanish speaking staff in the Salton Sea Management Program to bolster engagement with Spanish speaking communities.
- Continue to include reporting on partnerships and community engagement in the SSMP Annual Report, including opportunities identified in this report.

Early, Often, and Meaningful Tribal Consultation

The Salton Sea holds traditional and cultural significance for many California Native American tribes across the desert region. The Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians' reservation is located along the northwest side of the Sea, and they are a primary landowner of parts of the shoreline and lakebed. Historical wrongs committed against tribes, and lack of timely consultation has led to a lack of resources and capacity to engage and has excluded tribes from participating in key decision-making. Tribes located near the Sea, or who have significant cultural ties, are interested in engaging further to be collaborative partners in Salton Sea restoration yet note that there are barriers.



Torres Martinez Tribal Chairman Thomas Torte, Jr. plants the first tree of the native tree planting project with assistance from California Conservation Corps Conservationist Yuritizi Renteria.

The California Natural Resources Agency, including SSMP, DWR, and CDFW, is committed to early, often, and meaningful consultation with all California Native American tribes with ancestral ties to the Salton Sea area with the goal of collaborative problem-solving on the many issues the region faces. Existing state policies, such as Executive Orders N-15-19 reaffirming Executive Order B-10-11, Governor Newsom's Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands, and CNRA's Tribal Consultation Policy provide a guide for meaningful tribal consultation.

SSMP Current Status: The SSMP is committed to early, often and meaningful consultation with all California Native American tribes with ancestral ties to the Salton Sea area with the goal of collaborative problem-solving on the many issues the region faces. The SSMP team will continue to consult with tribes and, when possible, seek to have

in-person consultations with tribes. The SSMP will also continue to pursue new and existing avenues to include tribal governments and tribal expertise in the restoration of the Sea and protection of tribal cultural resources at the Sea.

The SSMP works through state tribal liaisons at CNRA, CDFW and DWR to engage with tribes in the region. Additionally, a Deputy Secretary for Tribal Affairs has joined the Resources Agency in recent years to support and expand the participation and inclusion of tribal governments and communities, including the work undertaken by the SSMP. There are approximately 25 tribes in the region who have expressed interest in the Salton Sea. Early, often, and meaningful tribal consultation is a core principle at the State. The SSMP invites tribal representatives to serve and participate in the various committees used to inform the Program on restoration and engagement at the Salton Sea.

The SSMP is coordinating temporary land access agreements to understand the natural features of tribal owned parcels to inform restoration projects around the Sea. The Program continues to work towards learning about past tribal-led restoration projects to help inform current and future work the State is undertaking. Through this process, the SSMP hopes to build future collaborations between tribes and the State.

Tribal consultation and guidance were sought and incorporated throughout the development of the draft Long-Range Plan, through tribal consultation and other outreach. Representatives of tribal governments were invited to participate on the Long-Range Plan Committee, an inter-tribal roundtable meeting was hosted by Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians to discuss tribal leaders' priorities at the Sea and to support the development of the Plan, and a joint tribal meeting was held virtually to present restoration concepts, evaluation criteria and seek specific feedback and comments. Tribal feedback and comments helped inform the development of criteria to evaluate long-term restoration concepts, including incorporation of tribal expertise



KDI's ECV Environmental Justice Youth Cohort maps Salton Sea shoreline, in partnership with Loma Linda University. *Credit: Kounkuey Design Initiative*

and tribal access to and protection of natural resources, cultural resources, and tribal cultural resources. The SSMP, with support from DWR Tribal Liaisons, convened three virtual inter-tribal working groups to inform this community needs effort.

In December 2022, the State of California entered into the Commitment to Support Salton Sea Management Related to Water Conservation and the Lower Colorado River Basin Agreement with the Department of the Interior, Imperial Irrigation District, and Coachella Valley Water District. This agreement commits \$2 million over five years in federal funding to support at minimum two Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian tribal positions to support SSMP project implementation.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Assist in the formation of a Salton Sea Tribal Advisory Committee to meet on a regular basis with the SSMP to discuss ongoing efforts at the Sea and serve as a conduit between tribes in the region and the SSMP to exchange information and receive timely input from tribes on restoration projects and programs at the Sea.
- Contract with tribal monitors for monitoring of natural resources, cultural resources, and tribal cultural resources at SSMP restoration sites.
- Host regular tribal site visits to SSMP restoration projects.
- Hire an SSMP tribal affairs lead to improve consultation and coordination with tribal governments.
- Incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge, improve tribal access to the Sea, and protection and use of tribal cultural and sacred sites and resources.
- Partner closely with the new Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian staff on restoration project implementation and tribal-led projects and priorities.
- Seek collaboration with tribes with ancestral connections to the Salton Sea on the naming and renaming of restoration sites.
- Collaborate with tribes to facilitate access and use of reestablished native vegetation with the goal of promoting tribal stewardship, cultural and medicinal use, and education of tribal youth and community members.
- Through early, often, and meaningful tribal consultations in the development of the Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study, identify opportunities to optimize tribal access to natural and cultural resources and incorporate tribal expertise into project concepts and evaluations.



Visit to the SCH Pump Station. Credit: CNRA

Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea

Many Salton Sea shoreline communities have no local park access, meaning they lack spaces where they can play, exercise, gather, rest, or get refuge from the heat. In Riverside County, 38% of residents live more than a half-mile from a park, many of which are concentrated in the Coachella and Eastern Coachella Valleys.¹³ In Imperial County, most available recreation lands lack basic features, such as restrooms, that would allow residents to regularly and comfortably spend time there. Salton Sea shoreline communities advocate for more recreation and outdoor gathering infrastructure, including community centers that offer ways to celebrate local history, arts, and culture, offer broadband and provide a refuge from extreme heat. Residents and advocates have repeatedly called for more outdoor access and recreation investments. Shoreline communities have asked for more parks, walking trails and paths, sidewalks, bike paths and lanes, and improved lighting. Some residents have expressed concerns about air quality and water quality at potential recreation areas at the Salton Sea.



Local political leaders and staff learn about the Salton Sea. Photo was taken at the Rock Hill Trail at the Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge. Credit: Camila Bautista/Audubon

SSMP Current Status: Within its capacity, the SSMP is working to incorporate opportunities for outdoor access and recreation into its restoration projects where compatible with dust suppression and habitat objectives at project sites. Some of these features are being added to Phase 1: 10-Year Plan projects consistent with the [Draft NEPA Environmental Assessment](#), which states that projects will prioritize public amenities, such as picnic areas and walking trails, as long as dust suppression outcomes are not compromised.¹⁴ Several 10-Year Plan projects in the planning and construction phases contemplate opportunities to include these benefits. For example, the Species Conservation Habitat Project includes a wildlife viewing area with interpretive signs, the Audubon Bombay Beach Restoration Project may provide walking trails, viewing areas, and educational signage. The North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project, led by the Salton Sea Authority in partnership with the County of Riverside, proposes recreational opportunities to increase access.

The SSMP has limited staff capacity, and most program funding is earmarked for implementation of the SSMP Phase 1: 10-Year Plan, which identifies habitat and dust suppression projects within a defined geographical region. Additionally, the State is not a landowner at the Sea, and adding access or recreation features require obtaining additional site control agreements from landowners. The demands of long-term maintenance are also an important consideration for potential restoration features because the SSMP does not have permanent operations and maintenance funding at this time. Increased funding and partnerships would allow the SSMP to expand recreation opportunities at the Sea.

Currently, the SSMP is looking to identify access and recreational opportunities earlier in the planning process, in order to begin discussions with landowners to determine their willingness to allow these opportunities to be incorporated into restoration projects to increase project benefits. Frequent coordination meetings with regional entities, partners, including landowners are occurring regularly to coordinate and potentially add these elements to discussions around land access easements and future operations and maintenance. In addition, the SSMP is working with project partners to identify opportunities to leverage funding to incorporate recreational features adjacent to SSMP projects to increase access and recreation potential.

Through input given at the SSMP draft Long-Range Plan Committee and other public meetings, the SSMP has developed acceptability criteria around equitable outdoor access used to score different restoration concepts. The recreation and equitable access [chapter](#) in the SSMP Long-Range Plan focused on recommendations for how the long-range plan process and projects can support and incorporate equitable access, recreation, and associated amenities at the Sea. The SSMP is working to carry this forward into the next phase of planning, the Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study, led by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Develop programmatic land access agreements with landowners at the Sea to streamline the process of building new restoration projects.
- Complete construction of a wetland viewing area with a native plant garden at the SCH project site.
- Develop bilingual interpretive signage at the SCH site to share the ecological and cultural significance of the Salton Sea and the project site. Ensure signage includes the most commonly used languages near project sites. For example, potentially add Purépecha translation on signage at the northern end of the Sea. Continue to invite local tribes to share tribal historical and cultural knowledge for signage.
- Develop a public access plan for the SCH site that can provide access for residents while maintaining safety at water pumps and weirs and compatibility with endangered species habitat.
- Work with Audubon California and landowners to provide pedestrian access features at the Audubon Bombay Project, consistent with endangered species habitat and dust control requirements.
- Coordinate with other agencies to create cohesion when developing infrastructure elements, such as signage, trails, and picnic tables and benches. Explore opportunities to light pathways and trails where appropriate, keeping in mind the impact of lighting to species.
- Utilize equitable outdoor access evaluation criteria developed with community input in the Long-Range Plan to continue to evaluate and score restoration concepts and projects and consider recreation and access on federal lands as part of concept evaluation.
- Support partner-led efforts to develop thorough trail planning to create a network of trails around the Sea or general development plans for recreational infrastructure around the Sea.



Water quality sampling at the Species Conservation Habitat Interception Ditch.
Credit: California Department of Water Resources

- Develop an operations and maintenance plan for completed restoration projects at the Sea, potentially with funding realized from the lithium severance tax enacted by the Legislature.
- Participate in partner-led regional efforts to provide more cohesion and meaningful outdoor and cultural experiences through enhanced signage and programming.
- Strive to ensure that community members have access to recreational spaces and are not hindered from using these spaces because of financial barriers.
- When the inclusion of recreational features is an option at restoration sites, carry out community engagement to help ensure any recreational features meet community needs and preferences.

Public Health

For decades, communities near the Salton Sea have faced severe public health and environmental hazards. The California Environmental Protection Agency scores most census tracts for Salton Sea communities as heavily burdened by pollution. The region consistently fails to meet federal air quality standards and has high rates of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5). The SSMP leads dust suppression projects at the Salton Sea, a key part of protecting the health of shoreline communities. As the Salton Sea recedes, exposed lakebed has the potential to worsen local air quality. The SSMP's restoration projects at the Sea reduce dust emissions by flooding areas of exposed lakebed or creating engineered roughness and growing native vegetation that slow wind speeds and tamp down dust. The program does not have regulatory authority over the region's air quality but does conduct monitoring as part of its work within its restoration sites. Residents have highlighted the need for more access to this data, including to view air and water quality data from the SSMP and other agencies in one place.

SSMP Current Status: As noted above, the SSMP is implementing dust suppression projects at the Salton Sea that includes air quality

monitoring at project sites. The SSMP does not have regulatory authority over the region's air and water quality but does conduct monitoring as part of its work within its restoration sites. Residents have highlighted the need for more access to air and water quality data, including data collected by the SSMP.

Implementing projects that protect air quality for communities and create habitat is at the core of the SSMP's restoration projects and charge. Though these projects help address public health, the SSMP does not currently have capacity, jurisdiction or expertise to take a lead role to track public health conditions around the Sea. However, the SSMP can support this work, share data with other agencies, researchers and community scientists, and use data to inform geographic locations of future restoration projects.

During the development of the [SSMP Dust Suppression Action Plan \(DSAP\)](#), the Program consulted with the California Air Resources Control Board, local air quality management districts, Imperial Irrigation District's Air Quality Mitigation Program, universities, and CBOs within its restoration sites. Associated with this effort, the Program conducted public outreach and engagement that helped inform the location of projects as well as air quality monitoring equipment to complement and augment existing air quality monitoring efforts. Community input identified a need to collect data along the northern end of the Sea adjacent to the Eastern Coachella Valley and the community of North Shore. In response to this feedback, monitors were placed in the area. Also, the high priority emissive areas identified in the DSAP were carried forward into the 10-Year Plan for NEPA coverage to facilitate environmental compliance and expedite project delivery.

Through the SSMP Long-Range Plan Committee and other public meetings, the SSMP has developed acceptability criteria to score different restoration concepts, including criteria around "Do No Harm" which evaluates the extent that a restoration concept prevents, reduces, and controls the risk of environmental harm to environmental justice communities. In 2022, the SSMP released the Monitoring



Local landscape subcontractor planting within the SSMP Vegetation Enhancement project near the community of Salton City. Credit: Burke Rix

Implementation Plan, which provides a framework for tracking the status and trends of the land, water, air, and biota of the Salton Sea ecosystem. The SSMP is working with its contractors to prepare an annual workplan for 2024 in collaboration with partners collecting data at the Salton Sea.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Continue to prioritize dust suppression projects for the most emissive areas to maximize benefits to public health.
- Continue to update the online Salton Sea Project Tracker every six months, including supporting updates to partner-led projects, to maintain public transparency on project progress.

- Develop more comprehensive air quality reports for SSMP project sites that are accessible to the public and appropriate for a non-technical audience. Continue to measure air quality benefits of completed restoration projects.
- Coordinate with other agencies, researchers, and community scientists to collect data within the framework of the Monitoring Implementation Plan that has utility for researchers answering public health questions about the Salton Sea.
- Explore development of a data management hub to coordinate data management and identify data gaps across indicators identified in the MIP. Solicit feedback from the Science Committee during the potential development of a data management hub.

Inclusive and Sustainable Workforce Development

Restoration efforts underway at the Salton Sea provide career opportunities through state or contracting positions. There is broad interest from leaders in local government, education, and trades in creating a restoration and environmental stewardship economy in the region and making sure these jobs are high-quality and available for residents. Additionally, there is a recent emphasis on growing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum in local education to better serve the new lithium industry in the Imperial Valley.

SSMP Current Status: Restoration efforts underway at the Salton Sea provide career opportunities through State entities as well as contractors. The SSMP continues to build its team with positions based in Imperial and Riverside counties. As a lead state program for restoration at the Sea, the SSMP supports local or targeted hiring for projects, prioritizing local contractors when possible and contractors who use local materials and hire locally, particularly among tribes and local under-resourced and low-income communities. However, more is needed to connect local communities to Salton Sea restoration work. More emphasis on growing science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum in local

education would be helpful in matching the growing capacity needs of the SSMP and the Program's potential to hire locally.

The SSMP hires locally and prioritizes local contracts and businesses whenever possible. While the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have successfully hired locally, there are legal barriers to requiring a local hiring preference for projects. The SSMP proactively sought information to identify qualified contractors for the vegetation enhancement projects, and a local company was awarded the contract. Material for that project is also sourced from local farms and aggregate for the SCH was sourced from a local quarry. The SCH project is a technically complex Design-Build project requiring significant and specialized expertise. Of the more than 20 companies from across the nation who attended the initial job walk, only six formally responded to the Request for Qualifications from which the Design Builder was eventually selected. In the selection process, the SSMP incorporated scoring incentives for a robust Local Outreach Plan to increase the participation level of the local workforce.

In response to input from community members and advocates, the SSMP continues to collaborate and coordinate with tribes, including the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians tribe on SSMP projects and plans, and is developing a Public Entity Agreement to hire tribal monitors to enhance the protection of sensitive tribal cultural, ceremonial, or other beneficial resources.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Collaborate with the Labor & Workforce Development Agency and their departments to evaluate opportunities to develop legally compliant policies and practices that support the SSMP in creating quality jobs and ensuring investments to disadvantaged communities.

- Serve as a point of connection and support to the region's workforce development efforts by providing details about restoration project needs to regional leads, such as universities, workforce boards, unions, and school districts.
- Support the development of curriculum, training, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs that prepare residents for these restoration careers.
- Support the California Conservation Corps (CCC), or other similar groups, to maintain restoration and recreational infrastructure.

Climate Action

Climate change is predicted to increase drought, wildfire smoke, and flash flood events, which create additional health and safety risks for residents of the Salton Sea region.¹⁵ Imperial County ranks among the top ten most climate vulnerable counties in the United States due to the number of heat days and residents with health conditions.¹⁶

Community members and organizations highlight climate resilience as a priority for Salton Sea communities. They have repeatedly called for "multi-benefit and climate resilient infrastructure projects." These include community greening, cooling centers and climate-resilient gathering spaces, and shade. Priorities also include investments in electric charging infrastructure, microgrids, stable electricity, and clean stable water supply. There is also strong interest in better understanding how future climate conditions will affect SSMP restoration projects, to inform adaptive management and support long-term success.

SSMP Current Status: The SSMP's restoration work advances California's climate and biodiversity agendas. SSMP's nature-based solution projects utilize native drought tolerant trees and plants that sequester carbon, reduce climate risks such as extreme heat, and build the Salton Sea's resilience to future climate impacts. Aquatic restoration projects create habitat connectivity and refugia for birds on the Pacific Flyway, and projects help fish, like the Desert Pupfish, adapt to climate change.



Community outreach at the Salton Sea. Credit: Kounkuey Design Initiative.

To ensure the SSMP's restoration projects are climate resilient, the Program relies on best available climate science to understand the future hydrology of the Salton Sea. The primary inflows to the Salton Sea are agricultural runoff from irrigation in Imperial and Coachella Valleys with Colorado River water. Climate driven drought in the Colorado River Basin stresses these water supplies and any reductions in water deliveries will decrease inflows to the Salton Sea. As the region continues to face the impacts of climate change, particularly extreme heat, the SSMP hopes to

support community efforts to build climate resilience and contribute to carbon neutrality through decarbonizing transportation and the economy. While the SSMP's authority does not allow the Program to lead these efforts, existing and future construction of restoration projects and public access points may create opportunities to support the community's broader climate efforts.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Identify opportunities to incorporate features that deliver climate benefits into SSMP projects. For example, visitor centers, wildlife viewing areas, or recreational areas could include shade structures, EV charging stations, and the selection of drought-tolerant native vegetation and plants to increase tree canopy for shade.
- Research potential to include solar powered heating and cooling and/or heat pumps in potential future SSMP structures.
- Increase efforts to get the word out about state grant programs that support building resilience in climate vulnerable communities.
- Continue to rely on the best available climate science in restoration planning decisions.

Expanded Transportation Access and Broadband Access for All Communities

Limited public transportation services and gaps in transportation infrastructure prevent residents from safely and reliably accessing the Salton Sea. Additionally, communities around the Salton Sea do not have the transportation infrastructure and programs to fully support their day-to-day activities. Some communities around the Sea, such as Bombay Beach, receive bus service only once a week. Residents identify the need for more bus routes to connect the region, more walking and bike routes to parks, and safety improvements, including lighting, sidewalks, and shade at bus stops.

Similarly, inadequate broadband access in communities hinders the SSMP's community engagement efforts, as well as limiting resident's access to jobs and vital services. Digital channels are the primary format for SSMP community engagement. Although the SSMP does post bilingual physical flyers, canvassing, and ads on radio, television, newspapers, and social media, and has restarted in-person meetings that were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, announcements and background information that residents use to decide whether or how to participate are primarily posted online. During the height of the pandemic, virtual meetings were important for the program to continue restoration work. Yet, lack of broadband access made it difficult for key communities most impacted by the Sea — such as Bombay Beach, Salton City, Oasis, Thermal, Mecca and North Shore — to engage in pivotal planning processes, such as the SSMP's Long-Range Plan.

SSMP Current Status: The region's need for affordable and reliable broadband is apparent and hinders the ability of the SSMP to quickly share important information and receive crucial feedback from communities via the SSMP listserv, website, web-based meetings, and recorded meetings and videos. Gaps in transportation infrastructure may prevent residents from accessing restoration projects at the Sea, including access points for recreation.

The SSMP is exploring opportunities to coordinate its construction activities with local agencies. In response to community input, it is also learning more about the type of infrastructure needed to sustain electric vehicle charging stations. This includes laying conduit near parking lots to potentially accommodate future charging station infrastructure, should some other funding opportunity present itself and to avoid digging up newly constructed parking lots. This aligns closely with the "Dig Once" policy identified in the Community Needs Report, where construction activities are coordinated to align the implementation of multiple goals, such as broadband and restoration.

SSMP Opportunities: As additional funding and staff capacity become available in future projects and phases of restoration at the Salton Sea, the SSMP will consider the following actions:

- Coordinate with local agencies to explore integration of construction activities at restoration projects with parallel activities being carried out by local entities to improve broadband or transportation infrastructure.

Looking Forward

The challenges at the Salton Sea identified by local communities are a call to action for philanthropic organizations, community-based organizations, and private and public institutions from the local to state to federal level. Partnership and collaboration are essential to address the interconnected and multifaceted challenges that face tribes and local communities.

The SSMP is committed to continuing to be a positive force in the Salton Sea region by carrying out restoration projects that protect air quality and create wildlife habitat. These efforts and large-scale investments of state funding can also provide additional co-benefits in terms of recreation, climate action, and workforce development. Informed by constructive input from community members, local leaders and interested groups, the SSMP will continue to work with partners to implement projects to improve conditions near the Salton Sea and institutionalize inclusive community engagement within and across SSMP projects.



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Appendix A

Outreach and Engagement During the Public Comment Period and Changes Made to the Draft Report

In addition to outreach and engagement conducted over eighteen months to develop the Draft Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report, the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) carried out outreach and engagement after the release of the draft report to inform the final document. The SSMP Team carried out the following key actions following the release of Draft SSMP and Community Needs Report:

1. Provided 60-day public comment period from January 26, 2024 to March 26, 2024.
2. Convened the Outreach Working Group and then the SSMP Community Engagement Committee to develop a public engagement strategy.
3. Comite Civico, contractors for the SSMP, summarized the draft report into an accessible single page summary and developed a series of prompts for community members to identify their needs. They canvassed door-to-door and collected 25 comment letters in English and Spanish.
4. Held three public workshops during the public comment period – one in Riverside County, one in Imperial County, and one online.

These activities are summarized further in this appendix. Public feedback received as written and verbal comments are summarized, and changes made between the Draft and Final Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report are also listed in this appendix.

Public Comment Period

The SSMP provided a 60-day public comment period to solicit feedback and recommendations on the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report and the related Salton Sea Community Needs



and Recommended Actions Report by Better World Group. The 60-day period was selected to allow ample time for community members and organizations to review the draft documents and provide comments. The SSMP first announced the release of the Draft Reports and the start of the public comment period in January 2024, through the SSMP Update e-Newsletter. The SSMP Team also directly distributed the draft documents via email at the start of the public comment period to the SSMP Community Engagement Committee and to Tribes, organizations, and partners who participated in working groups during the development of the Community Needs Reports. The draft documents were posted on the SSMP website in English and Spanish.

March 2024 Public Comment Summary

Public comments were submitted by community members and community-based and non-profit organizations. Comments included recommended actions around meaningful Tribal engagement, public health, community engagement, transportation, workforce development, and climate resilience in shoreline communities. Most community comments and feedback, particularly those submitted by Salton City and Mecca residents via a survey by Comité Civico del Valle, align with existing recommendations included in the report. Many comments provided feedback and suggested improvements that could be integrated into SSMP's restoration efforts. These included strategies about partners the State should engage with and what information the public would like to receive pertaining to SSMP's restoration efforts and incorporation of the surfaced needs. A copy of all public comments received are listed in Appendix B.

SSMP Outreach Working Group, a Subcommittee of the Community Engagement Committee

On February 1, 2024, the SSMP Outreach Working Group convened to initiate the planning of the three community workshops around the Community Needs Reports. The SSMP team presented a suggested outreach plan to promote the Community Needs Reports meetings and asked for recommendations on how to best conduct the meetings. The working group members shared their ideas and expertise to help structure the meetings in a community-oriented format that would enable participants to share their thoughts and perspectives on the draft reports. The SSMP Outreach Working Group concluded that an overview presentation, followed by informational breakout stations could lead

to a more productive meeting to gather additional feedback from community members. An additional recommendation made was for the SSMP to conduct a meeting primarily in Spanish and interpreted into English to help better serve the Spanish-speaking communities around the Sea. The SSMP was unable to accommodate this suggestion with existing capacity but acknowledged that it was a great recommendation to consider for future meetings as capacity increased. The SSMP did provide live Spanish interpretation at all public meetings.

SSMP Community Engagement Committee

On February 9, 2024, the SSMP called on the SSMP Community Engagement Committee to collaborate and help determine how to best structure and carry out public meetings to convey information and encourage community participation. The Committee was informed about the three meetings that were planned, two in-person and one virtual option on Zoom, and the suggested meeting format. The committee was asked for overall feedback on the suggested structure and the idea of incorporating the breakout stations into the public meeting. The SSMP also asked about other ways and strategies to solicit feedback, seeking the Committee's advice, while also identifying other areas for collaboration and support. The Committee members sought additional clarity on how the SSMP Team would be staffing the stations and who would be taking notes during the meeting, as well as how the Spanish interpretation would work during the breakout groups. The Community Engagement Committee was informed that the SSMP Team and its contractors, as well as volunteers from the Outreach Working Group, will staff the stations and take notes during group conversations. The SSMP confirmed Spanish interpretation would be available using auricular devices to anyone requesting these services.

Community Needs Reports Public Meetings

During the 60-day public comment period, the SSMP team conducted a series of meetings to connect with communities on the ground around the Salton Sea, inform them about the Draft Community Needs Reports, and gather live feedback and recommendations to help shape the final documents. Community meetings were conducted in community-oriented venues during the evening, with materials and services needed to best serve the goal and objectives of the meetings.

This summary details the methodology, approach, and outreach efforts conducted for the Community Needs Reports meetings.

The State Team incorporated input received by the SSMP Community Engagement Committee and other partners into planning the public meetings. The State's goal was to encourage public participation in a welcoming environment. For these reasons, meetings were held in the evening, in community-oriented venues such as schools and community centers, Spanish interpretation service was provided, and refreshments were provided to encourage participation. The meetings were structured to be engaging with multiple ways to provide feedback, comments, and questions.

The SSMP structured the in-person meetings with an overview of the Program's work, specifically around the development of the two reports. Better World Group provided a presentation on the development of their commissioned report, Salton Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions. The SSMP then presented the SSMP and Community Needs Report, focusing on the eight surfaced needs and possible integration to SSMP restoration efforts.

After the overview presentations, the in-person meetings included four stations (with two needs per station) where the participants were able to engage in smaller group conversations around each need. Members of the public engaged in small breakout discussions, a priorities dot voting exercise, and were given Post-it notes to leave additional comments. Notes and feedback were collected as conversations progressed.



The online option was offered in a webinar format that offered an overview of the two draft reports. This meeting was held at noon on a Friday, aiming to serve those that needed time during regular business hours with better broadband access. A public comment period was offered during the virtual meeting to solicit feedback from participants.

Meeting Dates and Locations

- Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Mecca Community Center, 65-250 Coahuilla Street, Mecca, CA, 92254
- Thursday, March 14, 2024, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
West Shores High School, 2381 Shore Hawk Avenue, Salton City, CA 92275
- Friday, March 15, 2024, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Virtual Meeting on Zoom. Facebook Live in Spanish at “Salton Sea Community, Outreach, Education, and Engagement (COEE)” Facebook page.

The SSMP Team used a variety of outreach methods to engage the community and promote the Community Needs Reports meetings that included bilingual materials such as the following:

- Meeting Flyers, printed and digital
- Social Media Toolkit for X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram
- TV and Radio Public Service Announcements
- SSMP Update e-Newsletters
- Direct outreach to partners and networks

Meeting Materials and Services

To ensure delivery of a consistent message and to present the Community Needs Reports information to the public, the public meetings provided the following materials and services:

- Meeting Agenda (bilingual)
- Poster Board Exhibits (bilingual)
- Dot Voting on Poster Boards for In-Person meetings (bilingual)
- Comment Cards and Sign-in Sheets (bilingual)
- Simultaneous Spanish Interpretation (headsets, small group facilitators, presentation of some material in both English and Spanish)
- Complimentary snacks and beverages (provided by Comité Civico del Valle, Burke Rix Communications, and SSMP staff)

Meeting Attendance

All three public meetings were attended by bilingual Spanish and English-speaking attendees. Community members showed up informed and passionate about the wellbeing of their communities. The in-person meetings sparked more active engagement from the

public than the virtual meeting; however, both formats received high praise from attendees during the post-meeting survey, administered via Mentimeter, which gauged the relative usefulness and informativeness of the community meetings. Outlined below is the high-level feedback California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and Better World Group (BWG) received on their respective documents and broad themes.

Feedback from the Three Public Needs Meetings

Workshop I | March 13, 5:30 - 7:30pm | Mecca Community Center

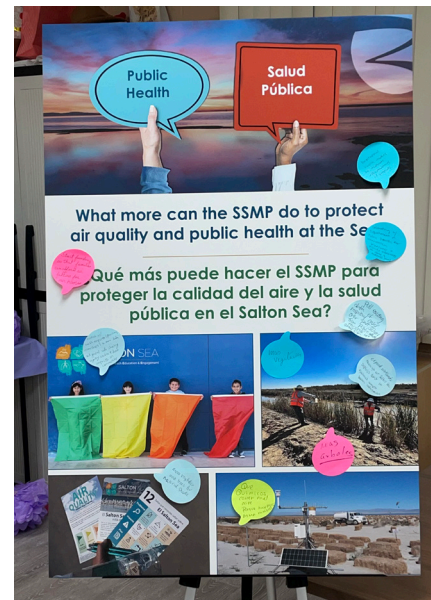
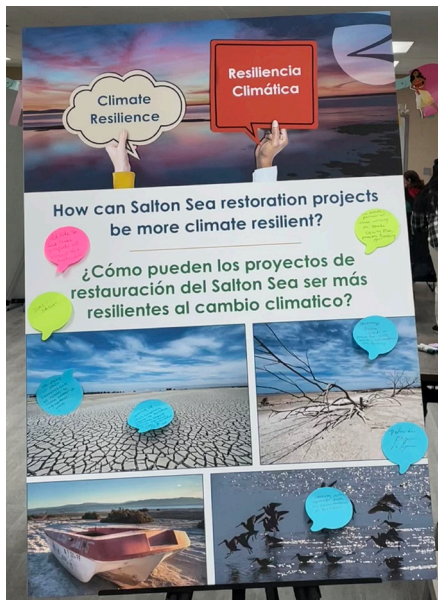
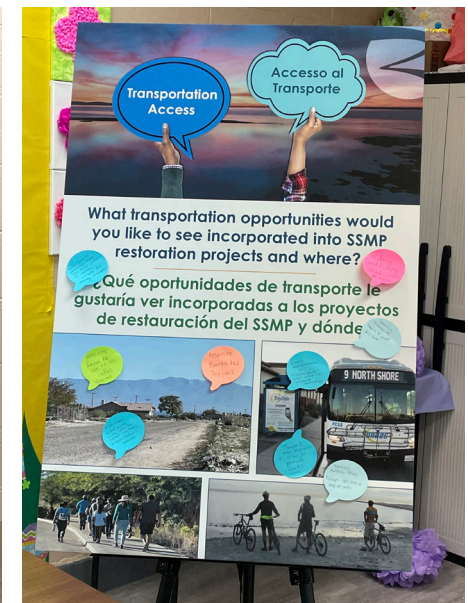
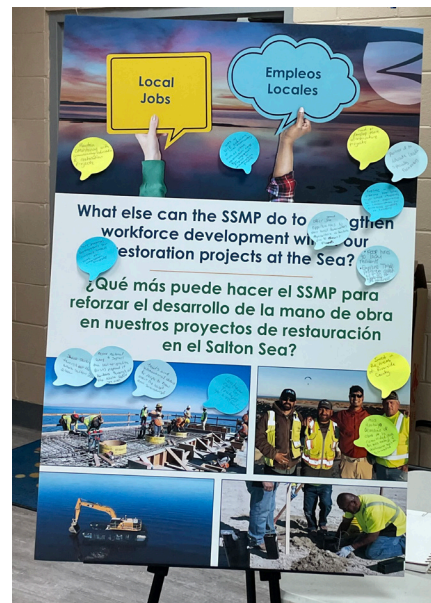
1. BWG Community Needs and Recommended Actions Report

Participants did not provide comments on the BWG Community Needs and Recommended Actions Report.

2. CNRA SSMP and Community Needs Report

Below are questions, needs, and concerns attendees brought up during the question-and-answer session prior to breaking out to the needs stations activities.

- a. Community members asked to see increased lighting, shelter/shading, benches, and sidewalks connecting bus stops with community hubs so that both the elderly and the young can safely get to where they are going. One participant asked, "What is in the air that is impacting local communities?"
- b. Community members requested to see more monitoring of what is specifically coming off the sea.
- c. A few participants described the sensory impacts of poor air quality by saying the following:
 - "The sea smells like dead fish. What is CNRA doing to protect the fish in the sea?" This smell impacts the residents' day-to-day life.
 - Community members also expressed concerns over their cars smelling like dead fish when the residents turn on their air conditioning.



Poster boards presented at public meetings.

- One attendee wondered if the smell attracts the Boatman bugs which get stuck to the residents' cars.
- Community members expressed a desire to support legislation and politicians that benefit the restoration but raised the concern that there isn't much outreach or education. Participants asked what bills are going to help the Salton Sea and the surrounding communities.
- Community members expressed confusion on how best to engage with federal and state bills impacting their local environment.
- One attendee asked, "Where are the conservation efforts being made?"

3. Needs Stations – Breakout

The public self-selected to break out into English- and Spanish-speaking breakout groups. The following notes capture the thoughts, questions, and concerns of English-speaking participants regarding each needs station. See notes from Civico Del Valle in Appendix B for Spanish responses.

a. Tribal Consultation and Local Jobs

- Increase knowledge of Tribal Knowledge and stewardship as part of Community Needs programming.
- Increase resources to increase Tribal natural resources capacity.
- Maintain consistency with community education and restoration projects.
- Hire seasonal farmworkers for contract-based work at vegetation projects.
- Work with local organizations such as Urban Corps or CA Conservation Corps (CCC) for vegetation projects and beautification projects.



- Fund or develop more infrastructure projects.
 - Partner up to educate locals (especially farmworkers).
 - Explore opportunities for local high school students to gain experience in conservation or ecological projects and careers.
 - Offer good job opportunities to our local farm workers. Agricultural work is hurting due to recent floods.
 - Keep hires local.
 - Invest in areas of Riverside County.
- #### b. Transportation and Broadband
- Community members asked, "Could the lithium tax fund projects relating to transportation and broadband?"



Broadband Poster

- Enhance access to broadband communication by removing economic barriers.
- Incorporate broadband in connective trails or SSMP projects.
- Host events like this at sites near the Salton Sea and connect authority figures to those meetings.
- Phone signals are always failing in the area – there is a great need for broadband expansion.

Transportation Poster

- Multipurpose pathways that can store water or capture sunlight for energy generation.
- Multi-modal access points to be able to travel via bike, scooters, and smaller vehicles.

- Increase transportation or infrastructure near Salton Sea adjacent communities.
- Light sidewalks and trails.
- Hiking and biking trails would be nice.
- Spacious parking spaces.

c. Climate Action and Outdoor Access

Outdoor Access Poster

- Develop trails and information stations for people to learn about their habitat and surroundings.
- Motus Wildlife Tracking System (Motus) tower and birding engagement.
- Prevent barriers for communities to utilize facilities such as usage or reservation fees.

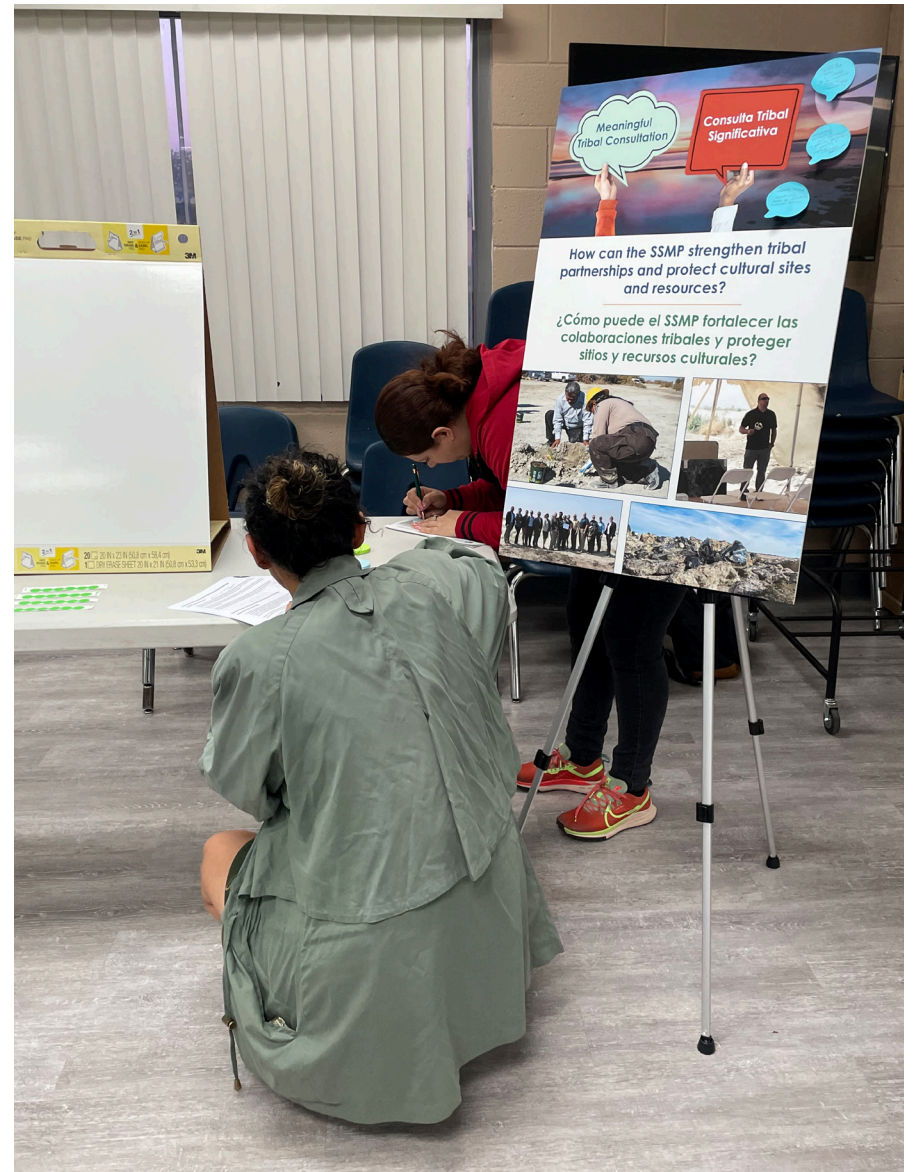
- Certified wildlife habitat workshop or instructions.
- Expand recreational multi-modal transportation to Riverside County particularly North Lake Demonstration Project.
- Create trails around the area with lots of shade and infrastructure to help suppress the dust.
- Establish a plan to involve the community in all parts of implementation (planning, design, and budgeting).
- Provide safety elements such as lighting, more pavement, and walking trails.

Climate Action Poster

- Use algae or other technology such as oysters to clean water at agriculture inlets.
 - Work with local organizations (Torres Martinez Urban Conservation Corps) on composting efforts to increase greening projects and restore soil.
 - Work with startups such as [Flower Turbines](#) or [AirLoom](#).
 - Leverage strong winds in the region for more energy generation via turbines.
 - Partner with those working on the Shade Equity Plan.
- d. Public Health and Community Engagement

Public Health Poster

- Residents noted that dust around the Salton Sea can be a bit more harmful to human health, and were wondering if CNRA was investing in any natural air filtration projects to reduce harm to residents?
- What is causing the odor and how can the public protect themselves? Do CNRA's air monitors pick up on harmful gases, such as hydrogen sulfide?



- What can CNRA do to get more information about the respiratory issues in the Salton Sea region?
- Start funding so families can afford air filters for our homes.
- Connect with health experts (physicians and researchers) to share data and general information regarding the impact dust has on community health.
- Increase vegetation for more natural shade.
- Pull existing data of respiratory cases over the past thirty years from public health records.
- Expand wetlands throughout the Salton Sea to suppress dust in natural ways.

Community Engagement Poster

- Residents are interested in having a community advisory board to support and inform the SSMP and to engage coastal communities about CNRA's work.
- Suggest having a constant presence within the communities via community council meetings.
- Hire bilingual English- and Spanish-speaking staff.
- Use accessible language and materials (not just translations).
- Join or support local efforts in all departments.
- Request a participatory budgeting process.
- Hold similar meetings at school sites with families during a range of school hours.
- Distinguish jurisdictions for state and federal agencies.

4. Dot Voting Activity (Green Dots from Mecca meeting)

Attendees indicated which needs they would like CNRA to prioritize by placing dot stickers next to the core themes identified in the BWG Community Needs and Recommended Action Report. Each community member was given three dot stickers to vote with to gauge their top three priority areas.

- Public Health: 15 dots
- Outdoor Access: 14 dots
- Community Engagement: 8 dots
- Local Jobs: 7 dots
- Transportation Access: 7 dots
- Climate Resilience: 5 dots
- Tribal Consultation: 3 dots
- Broadband Access: 3 dots



Final results of dot voting activity (Green dots - Mecca meeting; Red dots - Salton City meeting)

5. Group Discussion

- Residents expressed burnout and disillusionment from a deluge of public engagement but a lack of actionable accountability on part of the State. Community members are tired of repeating themselves.
- The public expressed interest in taking information home with them. One attendee expressed wanting a form of “homework” which asks community members specific questions or encourages them to do independent research in-between meetings.
- Community members are interested in establishing ongoing involvement and having opportunities to continue providing feedback on the SSMP.
- Community members asked when they could expect to see the results of the SSMP benefiting their communities.
- Attendees were excited about opportunities to tour SSMP restoration sites and expressed a need for virtual tours for community members who cannot physically attend the tours.

Workshop II | March 14, 5:30 – 7:30 pm | West Shores High School

1. BWG Community Needs and Recommended Actions Report

Participants noted they liked the length and clarity of information in the BWG video.

2. CNRA SSMP and Community Needs Report

Below are questions, needs, and concerns attendees brought up during the question-and-answer session.

- a. “What is the relationship between the SSMP and previous studies that have occurred over the past 40 years?”
- b. “How many acres of land has CNRA restored?”



3. Needs Stations – Breakout

Community members split into four groups. The notes below are from a group of six English-speaking community members. See notes from Comité Civico Del Valle in Appendix B for Spanish responses.

a. Tribal Consultation and Local Jobs

- Participants were interested in learning if CNRA is partnering with local colleges and high schools to train students to enter the workforce. One resident said, “There needs to be a curriculum that trains students to work on restoration projects.”
- Community members want to see students brought out to restoration sites and meet with CNRA staff to learn about potential career opportunities.

- Attendees want to learn how to access wildlife aid and field tech internships and jobs.
- Residents were interested in figuring out how to engage local inmates in conservation efforts to support SSMP and provide jobs skills for inmates.

b. Transportation and Broadband

- Community members expressed a need for community destinations around the Salton Sea, such as a cultural museum which would showcase the unique history of coastal communities such as Bombay Beach.
- One resident suggested that CNRA should have public transportation available to take residents to public comment sessions.
- Bus stops need to be well lit, shaded, and have adequate seating.
- Participants expressed a desire to tax big businesses in the Imperial Valley to invest in local community infrastructure, asking questions such as “Could the lithium tax be used to fund building out the public transportation infrastructure?”
- Parents mentioned that students have a difficult time doing their homework since they lack reliable internet access.

4. Dot Voting Activity (Red Dots from Salton City meeting)

Attendees indicated which needs they would like CNRA to prioritize by placing dot stickers next to the core themes identified in the BWG Community Needs and Recommended Action Report. Each community member was given three dot stickers to vote with to signify their top three priority areas.

- Transportation Access: 12 dots
- Public Health: 9 dots
- Local Jobs: 9 dots
- Outdoor Access: 7 dots



- Community Engagement: 5 dots
- Climate Resilience: 4 dots
- Broadband Access: 2 dots
- Tribal Consultation: 1 dot

• Climate Action and Outdoor Access

- One resident had previously had success planting adult mesquite trees as a dust suppressing alternative to the hay bales.

• Public Health and Community Engagement

- The community may not see hay bales as a long-term dust suppression solution. Residents expressed concerns about hay bales being saturated with dust, introducing allergens, and being stolen by community members.



- Residents would like to see more interagency collaboration so that community members do not have to repeat themselves at so many different public engagement opportunities.
- Community members want to be invited on a public tour of the restoration sites to see tangible progress. One community member expressed wanting a virtual tour available on YouTube.
- Residents expressed frustration towards agricultural farmers for polluting local water ways. They would like to see increased taxation on the agricultural industry.
- Could CNRA help fund the installation of dust monitors in public and residential buildings?

Workshop III | March 15, 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Virtual Webinar

The SSMP hosted a Zoom Webinar on Friday March 15 between 12:00 – 1:00 PM. The meeting included the same overview presentation of both reports given by BWG and SSMP staff. Due to time constraints and the format of the webinar, breakout groups for the surfaced needs did not occur. Instead, there was time after the presentations for public comment when attendees could speak or type questions in a chat function and members of the SSMP could answer the questions live. Several questions were asked and answered as summarized below:

1. One participant asked how public health is being addressed through the SSMP's restoration actions.
 - The SSMP then gave a description of ongoing restoration projects:

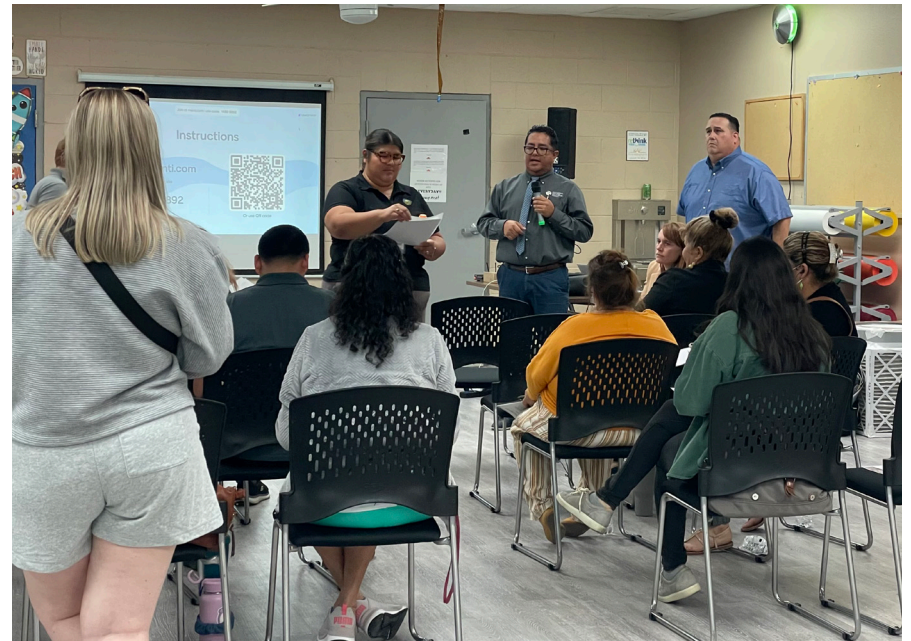
- The first were the Vegetation Enhancement projects. It was stated that the SSMP's phase I construction actions include placing straw and grass bales to create engineered surface roughening to reduce wind speeds at the ground level, thus reducing emissions originating from project sites. Another important function of the bales was to protect young plants between bale rows and downwind of the baled areas, to help foster growth and establishment of native vegetation.
- The second was the Aquatic Habitat projects, such as the Species Conservation Habitat Project, which creates ponds for fish and birds to feed and reproduce. When these ponds are developed over large acreage footprints, they are then wetted, which suppresses dust originating from project sites.

2. One participant asked about how the SSMP's restoration efforts can benefit small businesses in the Salton Sea Region.

- The SSMP responded that restoration projects employ local firms where possible, contributing to a local workforce. However, some contractors employ trade from out of the region who boost the local economy by way of hotel stays in the region and eating and frequenting local establishments. It would depend on the specific type of small business, but bringing restoration jobs to the region could help small businesses and in fact already do so by way of the activities discussed above.

The meeting concluded with an interactive Mentimeter poll that showed participation from both Imperial and Riverside counties. According to the poll, participants found the meeting valuable in learning more about the SSMP's efforts.

The recording of the meeting can be found at:
<https://bit.ly/ssmpCommunityNeeds>



Changes to the Report

Based on written public comments received during the 60-day public comment period and verbal comments received during workshops, the following changes were made to the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

Comment Received		Change to SSMP Report
1	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination</i> 6. Develop an Improved SSMP Website with Community Input	Added to Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination: Provide tutorials at public workshops as needed for the new Project Tracker.
2	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination</i> 1. Continue to Improve on Community Engagement and Outreach	Added to Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination: Continue to improve collaboration with local entities to leverage state and local resources and enhance the effectiveness of state restoration projects.
3	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination</i> 1. Continue to Improve on Community Engagement and Outreach	Added to Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination: Look for opportunities to inform community members about forthcoming projects and solicit feedback when appropriate to gain community insights and help align potential recreational elements with community needs.
4	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination</i> 3. Recruitment of Additional Personnel, Especially Spanish-Speaking Staff	Added to Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination: Look for opportunities to expand Spanish speaking staff in the Salton Sea Management Program to bolster engagement with Spanish speaking communities.
5	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination</i> 4. Commit to Annual Reporting on Actions Related to Community Needs	Added to Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination: Continue to include reporting on partnerships and community engagement in the SSMP Annual Report, including opportunities identified in this report.
6	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea</i> 1. Prevent Financial and Language Barriers for Local Communities	Added to Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea: Ensure signage includes the most commonly used languages near project sites. For example, potentially add Purépecha translation on signage at the northern end of the Sea.
7	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea</i> 1. Prevent Financial and Language Barriers for Local Communities	Added to Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea: Strive to ensure that community members have access to recreational spaces and are not hindered from using these spaces because of financial barriers.
8	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea</i> 2. Develop Comprehensive Community Engagement Processes	Added to Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea: When the inclusion of recreational features is an option at restoration sites, carry out community engagement to help ensure any recreational features meet community needs and preferences.

Comment Received		Change to SSMP Report
9	Public comment received during breakout activity at Community meetings (comment received during both in-person meetings): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light sidewalks and trails. • Provide safety elements such as lighting, more pavement, and walking trails. 	Added to Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea: Explore opportunities to light pathways and trails where appropriate, keeping in mind the impact of lighting to species.
10	Public comment received during breakout activity at Community Meeting in Mecca: Residents are interested in having a community advisory board to support and inform the SSMP and to engage coastal communities about CNRA's work	Added to Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination: Consider ways to seek new participation from community leaders to serve as members of the Community Engagement Committee.
11	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Public Health</i> 1. Emphasize Reporting, Action, and Follow-Up	Added to Public Health section: Continue to update the online Salton Sea Project Tracker every six months, including supporting updates to partner-led projects, to maintain public transparency on project progress.
12	Salton Sea Partnership Letter: <i>Public Health</i> 2. Support Research and Data Collection	Explore development of a data management hub to coordinate data management and identify data gaps across indicators identified in the MIP. Solicit feedback from the Science Committee during the potential development of a data management hub.
13	Internal addition	Added Appendix A: Outreach and Engagement During the Public Comment Period and Changes Made to the Draft Report
14	Internal addition	Added Appendix B: Summary of Workshops and Comments Received During Public Comment Period

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Appendix B: Summary of Workshops and Comments Received During Public Comment Period

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On January 26th, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) released the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report for a 60-day public comment period. On March 13, 14, and 15, CNRA hosted three community workshops to provide an overview of key findings and to gather public input on the report. Two meetings were held in local communities (Mecca and Salton City), and one was held online.

This Appendix is organized as follows. First, meeting summary notes and community needs surveys by Comité Civico Del Valle are provided. After, eight comment letters and emails received during the public comment period are provided.

From: [Melanie Echeverría](#)
To: [Hernandez, Miguel@CNRA](mailto:Hernandez,Miguel@CNRA)
Cc: [Isamay J. Pasillas](#)
Subject: Salton Sea Community Workshop Notes (March 13 & 14, 2024)
Date: Friday, March 15, 2024 3:01:07 PM

Hello Miguel,

I have written in this email the notes I took from both workshops at Mecca and Salton Sea. I took notes based on the Q&A portion for everyone and following along Spanish groups through breakout sessions. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Wednesday, 3/13/24 Mecca

Community Feedback

- more sidewalks for children to have safe walking access; for the community overall to feel safe during walks and for children to walk safely to school
- more information to surrounding cities on the chemical that comes from out of Salton Sea that pollutes air; what is coming out of the lake
- efforts to get rid of smell; the smell impacts community members' health; information on what is being done to protect the fish
- during extreme heat conditions; insects come out and a strong smell; smell is circulating inside the cars; insects are in cars; more children are getting diagnosed with asthma or other respiratory conditions
- want more information distributed to community members in regards to policy, bills, and laws that pertain to Salton Sea; want education on what bills/policy/laws support restoration of Salton Sea; do not feel like community is supported with education on bills/policy/laws
- want a tour of Salton Sea to see efforts of restoration; want Salton Sea Tour to be virtual and available to everyone
- want more in person/interaction workshops to target all surrounding cities of Salton Sea

Thursday, 3/15/24 Salton City

Community Feedback

- curious and wanted more information on if the Salton Sea will dry up completely, explanation why it's called 2018 SSMP- "Been a community member for 20 years and does not feel much has been done- what's the difference in restoration efforts since it's called 2018 SSMP?"
- wanted information about acres completed broken down
- wanted information on how much flooded or nearly flooded for habitat will look like in 2 years; wanted information on how much natural hay bale has grown and how much did CNRA plant? ; item bush
- more sidewalks, walking signs, light poles, stop signs, or stop lights since their streets are unpaved/gravel roads and no light street view access
- need for urgent care clinic since the one closest to their city only opens twice a week; lack of access to transport for healthcare services
- liked Dust Suppression Project; children get sick often and only thing doctors tell them it's allergies; air quality is bad and affecting children's health
- information on who will finance changes community members are suggesting
- need for a park; many adolescents in community and do not have a park for recreation activities such as practicing for sports, hanging out, etc.
- immediate need for sidewalks and to fix streets; "tires need to be changed every 2 years because of potholes"
- fix streets/roads, "I pay for taxes and they don't have the fund to fix streets?"

- need of better wifi access; on windy days there is no signal for wifi; "I have 5 kids and they need wifi for school and to educate themselves on how the environment is impacting us"
- "All jobs are a commute of 40 minutes, especially to only spanish speaking residents"; hiring locals and local vendors for materials is a great opportunity SSMP is offering"
- suggestion for clean up: middle school students, high school students, and prisoners

-
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Melanie Echeverria
Community Health Worker



Summary

In Southern California, there's a big lake called the Salton Sea. It used to be a popular vacation spot but now it's facing problems. The lake is getting smaller because water is being taken away, and this is causing issues for the environment. The water is becoming too salty, and when the lake gets smaller, it exposes the ground, which can release dust into the air. This dust is making the air quality worse in an area that already has problems with air pollution.

The people who live near the lake, in places like the Eastern Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley, also have other challenges. These communities have been dealing with problems like bad air quality, health issues, poor internet access, unreliable electricity, limited recreational opportunities, and not enough support for health services. These issues make it even harder for them to deal with the environmental problems related to the Salton Sea.

What is being done?

There's a program called the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP), run by the California Natural Resources Agency and other departments. This program started in 2018 to fix the issues at the Salton Sea. They're working on projects to improve air quality and create better habitats for animals around the lake. They have rules they need to follow from the government to restore the lake by 2028.

Even though they've made progress, there's still a lot of work to be done. People living near the Salton Sea have been asking for projects that can help in multiple ways, not just fixing the lake. The SSMP got help from a group called Better World Group Advisors to understand what the communities need. They made a report in November 2023 that lists eight main needs:

1. Involving the community more in decisions.
2. Talking to Native American tribes more often and in a meaningful way.
3. Making sure everyone has equal access to outdoor activities at the Salton Sea.
4. Taking care of public health.
5. Creating jobs in a fair and sustainable way.
6. Improving transportation options.
7. Doing things to fight climate change.
8. Making sure everyone has good internet access.

The SSMP is looking at these needs and trying to figure out how to help. Some things fit into their plans for restoring the Salton Sea, like community involvement and talking to tribes. But other things, like transportation and internet access, are not in their plans. Still, they find the report very useful to understand what the community needs and will try to use it to make better decisions in the future. They are thankful to the people and groups who helped with the report.

Dear CNRA,

My name is Robert Hudson and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 25 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. More internet access as well as business access to community markets and jobs.
2. More out door activities for kids and health care access. Get more involvement with community decisions on community recreation centers.
3. Find a way to get more businesses like ~~Mc~~ McDonald's, Walmart, and Vons closer to community that don't have means or access to public transportation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,



Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Robert Hudson y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 25 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Más acceso a internet así como acceso comercial a mercados y empleos comunitarios.
2. Más actividades al aire libre para los niños y acceso a atención médica. Tener más participación en las decisiones comunitarias sobre centros de recreación comunitarios.
3. Hallar la forma de tener más comercios como Mc Donald's, Walmart y Vons más cerca de la comunidad que no tiene medios o acceso al transporte público.

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero quetomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Laura y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 38 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Incremento de negocios y valor de casas
2. Banquetes en la ciudad
3. Una oficina de quejas

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Dear CNRA,

My name is Laura and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 38 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. More business and value of houses
2. Benches in the city
3. An office to make complaints

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Estimado CNRA,

Mecca
Mi nombre es Julia Miramontes y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 64 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Evitar el que entre el agua de México a US. (mejorar la calidad del agua del Salton Sea)
2. Quitar la fábrica que contamina entre Lincoln Ave. (mejorar la calidad del aire)
3. Plantar árboles en las banquetas.

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Dear CNRA,

Mecca
My name is Julia Miramontes and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 64 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Avoid water entering from Mexico to the US (improve water quality of Salton Sea)
2. Get rid of the factory that contaminates between Lincoln Ave (improve air quality)
3. Plant trees on benches

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Estimado CNRA,

Mecca
Christian Ortiz
Mi nombre es _____ y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 31 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Que haya mayor transparencia y que se informe de lo que va a suceder en el Salton Sea (mejor comunicación)
2. Limpiar el Salton Sea y sus alrededores
3. Transporte Público (Mejorarlo). Crear nuevas rutas.

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Dear CNRA,

Mecca

My name is Christian Ortiz and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 31 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. More transparency and get information on what will happen on Salton Sea (more communication; ask opinion)
2. Cleaning of Salton Sea and surrounding areas
3. Public transportation (improvement). Creation of more roads

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Dear CNRA,

My name is VAUGHN FOSMU and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for ____ years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Attention to that which is Best
for the communities people long term
2. _____
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Vaughn Fosmu

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Vaughn Fosmu y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante ____ años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Atención a lo que es mejor para las personas de la
comunidad
2. _____
3. _____

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

_____[firma]_____

Dear CNRA,

My name is Herbert D. Dodd and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 14 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Flooding; stopping
2. clean salton sea for our kids; get rid of salt for helping the habitat of our fish w/ clean water.
3. Stop farmers dumping in salton sea ~~th~~ from their fields, runoff.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Herbert D. Dodd y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 14 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Detener las inundaciones
2. Limpiar Salton Sea para nuestros hijos; deshacerse de la sal para ayudar al hábitat de los peces con agua limpia
3. Detener el escurrimiento de los campos de los agricultores en Salton Sea

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

BOMBAY

Dear CNRA,

My name is DAVE and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for _____ years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1.

NO FIRE DEP

2.

MED
KIDS ON SCHOOL BUS HOUR

3.

AIR QUALITY

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Estimado CNRA,

BOMBAY

Mi nombre es DAVE y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante _____ años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. No hay estación de bomberos ni centro médico

2. El autobús de los niños demora horas

3. Calidad del aire

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Bombay Beach

Dear CNRA,

My name is Anthony and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for _____ years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Education - no local school - kids bused hours each day to and from school
2. Air Quality - health of residents at risk
3. Fire & Medical - no services for local residents - Great risk for community members

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

AT Jones

Estimado CNRA,

BOMBAY BEACH

Mi nombre es ANTHONY y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante _____ años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Educación en las escuelas locales - los niños pasan horas esperando el autobús hacia y desde la escuela
2. Calidad del aire - la salud de los residentes está en riesgo
3. Bomberos, médicos - No hay servicios para los residentes locales - Gran riesgo para los miembros de la comunidad

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Dear CNRA,

My name is GALIA and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 15 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. better access to respiratory health care
2. more protections / better legislation for farmworkers / vulnerable communities
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

GALIA

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es GALIA y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 15 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Mejor acceso para atención médica respiratoria
2. Más protección / Mejor legislación para los trabajadores agrícolas / Comunidades vulnerables
3. _____

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Dear CNRA,

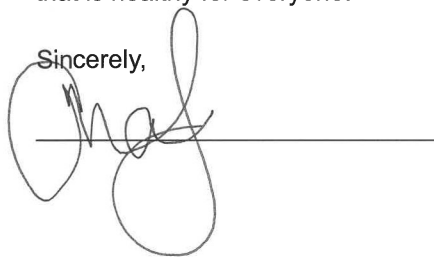
My name is ANA and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 10 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. A clean of the lake, the smell is horrible. Us residents have to deal w the horrible air quality.
2. More healthcare services. Here in Bombay it take aprox 35-40min for an ambulance to arrive.
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,



Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es ANA y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 16 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Limpieza del lago; el olor es horrible. Los residentes de EE. UU. deben lidiar con la horrible calidad del aire
2. Más servicios de atención médica. Aquí en Bombay. ¡Una ambulancia tarda aprox. 35-40 minutos en llegar!
3. _____

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

_____[firma]_____

Dear CNRA,

My name is Marie Ramos and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for ____ years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. this needs road fixing they are with holes & terrible.
2. needs a walmart, groceries are too expensive here.
3. needs transportation to city & back home like buses or taxi services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Marie Ramos



Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Marie Ramos y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante ____ años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Los caminos necesitan arreglo; tienen baches y están terribles
2. Se necesita un Walmart; los almacenes son demasiado caros aquí
3. Se necesita transporte hacia y desde la ciudad, como servicios de taxi y autobús

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Marie Ramos

Dear CNRA,

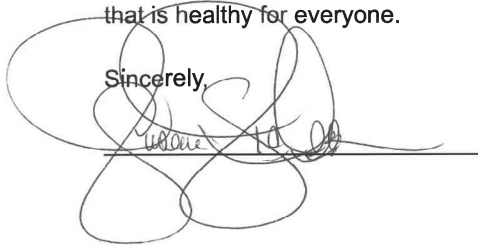
My name is Susie and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 4 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Street Lights and Side Walks.
2. Activities for Children
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,



Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Susie y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 4 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Alumbrado público y veredas
2. Actividades para los niños
3. _____

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Dear CNRA,

My name is MELISA and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 10 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Better transportation system
2. More employment opportunities
3. More activities for children like boys & girls club.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,



Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es MELISA y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 10 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Mejor sistema de transporte
2. Más oportunidades de empleo
3. Más actividades para los niños como "boys and girls club"

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

_____[firma]_____

Dear CNRA,

My name is Agustín Martínez and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 25 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Clinics near the disadvantaged communities
2. Better roads, housing, affordable payments in gas house, electricity and water bills.
3. More police in the disadvantaged communities, air monitoring and reports of air quality.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Agustín Martínez

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Agustín Martínez y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 25 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Clínicas cerca de las comunidades desfavorecidas
2. Mejores caminos, viviendas, pagos asequibles en cuentas de gas, vivienda, electricidad y agua
3. Más policía en las comunidades desfavorecidas; monitoreo del aire e informes sobre calidad del aire

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

_____[firma]_____

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Yoli y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 30 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Invitación a ideas nuevas
2. Premiar la mejor idea
3. Mandar gente (personal) a las casas con información de persona a persona

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,



Dear CNRA,

My name is Yoli and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 30 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Welcome new ideas
2. Reward the best idea
3. Send people (staff) to homes with in person information

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Danna y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 5 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Estoy de acuerdo con las acciones y medidas que se quieren tomar.
2. Me gustaría que también se tomara en cuenta los medios de transporte que hay en Imperial, para los estudiantes.
3. Más medidas de seguridad para estudiantes en en el condado y en el colegio.

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Danna Chaves

Dear CNRA,

My name is Donna and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 5 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. I agree with the actions and measures to be taken
2. I would like that means of transportation in Imperial to be taken into account as well, for students
3. More security measures for students in the County and at school

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Donna Chaves

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Brenda y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 1 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Estoy de acuerdo con que la salud publica sea una prioridad
2. Me gusta la idea de las areas verdes y que se hagan mejoras para el beneficio de la comunidad
3. _____

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Brenda Castro

Dear CNRA,

My name is Brenda and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 1 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. I agree that public health be a priority
2. I like the idea of green areas y improvements for community benefit
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Brenda Castro

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es ELVIA VASQUEZ he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 12 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. PODER VENIR ALLI O COMPRAR
CASA
2. SABER QUE TANO DANGEROSE
LA CONTAMINACION POR EL RIO
3. QUE TAN BUENO SERIA TRABAJAR
ALLI AHORA QUE VIENEN LOS NUEVOS
PROYECTOS.

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

ELVIA VASQUEZ

Dear CNRA,

My name is ELVIA VASQUEZ and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 12 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Be able to live there or to buy a house
2. Knowing how harmful contamination is due to the air
3. How good it would be to work there now that new
projects are coming

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

ELVIA VASQUEZ

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Ninfa y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 75 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. yo estoy de acuerdo con la
prioridad de salud pública
2. mi nieta y sus hijos padecen
alergias por la contaminación del
3. medio ambiente de Coachella

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

Ninfa Salazar

Dear CNRA,

My name is Ninfa and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 15 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. I agree that public health is a priority
2. My grandchild and her children suffer from allergies due to
environment contamination in Coachella
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Ninfa Salazar

Estimado CNRA,

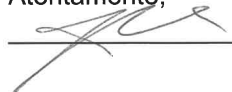
Mi nombre es JAIME RAMO y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante 62 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. AIR IS AN INVENTIVE VERY IMPORTANT
PARA LA SALUD DE TODO
2. SALTON SEA NEEDS MUCH ATTENTION
3. _____

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,



Dear CNRA,

My name is JAIME RAMO and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 62 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. The air of Imperial is very important for everyone's health
2. Salton Sea needs a lot of attention
3. _____

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

_____ [signature] _____

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Belen Tapia y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle Imperial durante _____ años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias.

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. mas Areas verdes, Respirar mejor aire.
2. Conservar una area mas saludable.
3. Conservar nuestra agua, hacer mas conciencia.

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente, Belen Tapia

Dear CNRA,

My name is Belen Tapia and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 15 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report:

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. More green áreas, breath better air
2. Keep a more healthy area
3. Take care of our water; raise more awareness

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Belen Tapia

Dear CNRA,

My name is Enrique and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for 32 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Free Internet for everyone
2. Taking care of public health
3. Creating jobs in a fair and sustainable way.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,



Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Enrique y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 32 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Internet gratis para todos
2. Ocuparse de la salud pública
3. Crear empleos de manera justa y sustentable

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Dear CNRA,

My name is Alexis Galarza and I have been an ~~Imperial Valley~~ community member for 30 years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Understandable language
2. Community steps
3. More engagement

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Alexis D.

Estimado CNRA,

Mi nombre es Alexis Galarza y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante 30 años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Vocabulario comprensible
2. Pasos comunitarios
3. Más participación

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Bombay Beach

Dear CNRA,

My name is Mike and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for _____ years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. No Fire Department or Medical Facility
2. School - Kids on bus for hours everyday
3. Air Quality - health of residents at risk

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Mike

Estimado CNRA,

Bombay Beach

Mi nombre es Mike y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante _____ años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. No hay estación de bomberos ni centro médico
2. Escuela - niños en el autobús por horas todos los días
3. Calidad del aire - salud de residentes en riesgo

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

[firma]

Bombay

Dear CNRA,

My name is Virginia and I have been an Imperial Valley community member for years. I'm writing to submit my public comments for the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report.

The report should include, and is not limited to, the following community needs:

1. Fire department - Medical Facility - none for local residents
2. School - Kids tired to and from school for hours each day
3. Air Quality putting local residents at risk

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report. I hope you take my comments into consideration as we work to create an environment that is healthy for everyone.

Sincerely,

Virginia C. Ben

Estimado CNRA,

Bombay

Mi nombre es Virginia y he sido miembro de la comunidad del Valle de Imperial durante años. Escribo para presentar mis comentarios públicos sobre el Programa de Gestión del Mar Salton y el Informe de Necesidades Comunitarias:

El informe debería incluir, sin limitarse a ello, las siguientes necesidades de la comunidad:

1. Estación de bomberos - Centro médico - ninguno para residentes locales
2. Escuela - autobuses para niños hacia y desde la escuela por horas todos los días
3. La calidad del aire pone en riesgo a los residentes locales

Agradezco la oportunidad de comentar sobre este informe. Espero que tomen en consideración mis comentarios mientras trabajamos para crear un entorno saludable para todos.

Atentamente,

 [firma]

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From: [Michael Gardner](#)
To: [CNRA Salton Sea](#)
Subject: Salton Sea Community Needs Report, Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 6:31:02 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

Redevelopment of the Salton Sea for recreational purposes or continued use as a vital part of the Pacific Flyway is a fools task.

Let's first acknowledge what the Salton Sea is and why it is there. Its creation and continued existence is a human caused disaster, the result of a breached levee in 1905 in Yuma, Arizona and pollution from agricultural runoff.

Its use as a stopover on the Pacific Flyway has resulted in the death of tens of thousands of birds. The justification as a stopover is only due to the destruction by draining and agricultural development of Lake Tulare over one hundred and fifty years ago. A natural lake that served as an important stopover for tens of thousands of years, Lake Tulare has reemerged over the last two years, the result of above average precipitation. Wildlife restoration and water resources conservation should be focused there, not wasted on the Salton Sea.

Let's recognize the Salton Sea for what it is, the poster child for what should be the country's largest EPA Super Fund site.

Capture and treat agriculture runoff infill and use it to recharge groundwater.

Treat existing water and use it to recharge groundwater or as a water source for pumped storage closed loop electricity generation making use of a reservoir located in nearby mountains and the below sea level elevation of the Salton Trough.

Cap the existing and newly exposed soil from water level depletion.

Install what would properly be the world's largest utility scale solar array farms. Installed with battery storage, connected to upgraded power lines through the Coachella Valley, to supply California with 100 percent non-carbon based electricity.

Build out deep well lithium mining.

Source funding from the perpetrators and the beneficiaries of the Salton Sea: The Imperial Irrigation District (IID), the Bureau of Reclamation, the industrial scale agriculture businesses of the Imperial Valley. As initial costs are paid off, these entities would inherit the income generated from electricity generation and mining royalties.

Michael Gardner
Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: [Satish Mahna MD](#)
To: [CNRA Salton Sea](#)
Subject: Response to the Public Comment Request
Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 5:29:32 PM

Honorable Secretary Wade Crowfoot,

I congratulate you on your commitment for addressing the issues surrounding the Salton Sea, including receding water, increasing solute content (salt, organic matter, pesticides and Selenium etc.), ill-health effects of exposed toxic dust and loss of habitat. As mentioned, more needs to be done and for that reason, I penned down my thoughts below.

OBJECTIVE: “The Program’s work is driven by a need to address the shrinking Salton Sea”.

THE PROBLEM: As it stands, Salton Sea is an emaciated hypovolemic body of water with solute excess that needs optimization of fluid (water) and electrolyte levels akin to Renal Dialysis of a patient with kidney failure.

From what I gather, based on the document provided, the Sea has been shrinking because of diminishing inflow of water (be it because of QSA, drought or Colorado River water availability) with **secondary effects** of exposed lakebed and habitat loss. The other issues include increased salinity (**projected to reach close to the Dead Sea level by 2045**), high levels of nutrients and presence of pesticides, and continuously retreating Sea shoreline exposing Playa further.

As inflows are reduced by water transfers and other factors as discussed below, the Sea will eventually become a semi-solid brine pool (over 200 g/L salt) surrounded by hard-surface salt flats similar to the Great Salt Lake in Utah and the Laguna Salada basin southwest of Mexicali. (Benchmark 3: Evaluation of Alternatives With Respect to Existing Conditions - Salton Sea Funding and Feasibility Action Plan - Prepared for Salton Sea Authority - August 2015)

It is interesting to note that Mr. Joseph C. Caldwell, PE, of the Webb Associates, in reference to the Salton Sea North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project wrote that **water supply is a necessity**, regardless of which alternative is selected and without water there is no project.

CONCERNS: Given the deficit California is running, and National debt of \$34 trillion; concerns of the Congressional Budget Office who warned that **this balance could tip to 181% of GDP by 2053**; Fed chairman Jerome Powell **calling for an "adult conversation"** about fiscal responsibility; the CEO of JP Morgan Chase & Co, Jamie Dimon, cautioning of a **potential 'rebellion' in global markets** prompted by the escalating U.S. national debt; Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan adding that **it's time Washington looked the problem in the eye**; the US is **headed for a debt "death spiral"** if politicians don't rein in spending (Nassim Taleb), will there be appetite to support the ongoing projects at Salton Sea on long term basis?

THE SOLUTION: The intended Primary Objectives and foremost requirements, then, shall include replenishment of water, removal of existing solutes (salt, nutrients and other

contaminants), and preventing the new solutes from entering the Sea. The Secondary Objectives of Habitat Restoration and addressing the exposed Playa will automatically be met.

Multiple Studies and Articles prepared on behalf of the SSA and SSMP have recommended Desalination Facility at the Salton Sea, and provision of Desalinated Water (e.g., from the Sea of Cortez) to restore the water level. Prohibitive cost estimates and time required to complete the project have been an obstacle in implementing the plan.

Baring delays in the permitting process, the plans can be completed in a reasonable timeframe. For example, using Nevada Solar One (Renewable Energy Project that uses Concentration Solar Radiation Technology) as a benchmark, a reasonable size Project can be completed in 2-3 years' time in a cost effective manner by using sustainable resources (Water from the Sea of Cortez and Solar Radiation) with zero carbon footprint, and without the risk of stranded assets/resources.

The objectives noted above can be **more than met** at reasonable cost provided the effort is combined with **2022 scoping plan for achieving carbon neutrality** (November 16, 2022) and **decarbonized grid in 2050 proposed by the U.S. Department of Energy** (Solar Future Study – US Department of Energy – Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – September 2021). Not only needs of the Salton Sea Restoration can be met with the suggested mechanism(s) but the **water needs of the entire Southwest USA can be fulfilled**. Public Private Partnership, and collaboration with Federal, State and Local Governments will be required. This will help stimulate the circular economy; build clean energy and water infrastructure; help diversify water supplies; provide resilience to climate change.

Simply stated, Desalination Facility that uses Sea Water and Concentration Solar Radiation, is needed at the Salton Sea. Streamlining and speeding-up the Permitting process will be helpful unless the stakeholders and concerned Federal and State Government Agencies have already concluded that the Salton Sea is unsalvageable, have decided to put the Sea in hospice care and have started writing its obituary. If not, there are solutions available that can help improve the conditions at the Salton Sea and restore it to a good health.

OPPORTUNITIES: Building Clean Energy and Water infrastructure; conserving and diversifying water supplies; resilience to climate change and its impacts; land conservation; protecting sacred places etc., and creation of economic opportunities are all achievable.

One can expect creation of good paying jobs in Steel Industry, Construction, Auto Industry (Electric Vehicles), Transportation, Manufacturing Industry (Parabolic Troughs, Pumps, Turbines, Heat Exchangers etc.), Utilities (Water and Electricity), and Operation and Management of Desalination and Renewable energy Plants.

Given the proximity of the National and International Airports to the Salton Sea, and need of desalinated water and renewable energy world over, opportunity exists where the State and/or the Federal Government can organize International Summits to showcase the Technology which uses sustainable resources that can address the Climate change. An example is the recent Itali-Africa Summit held in Rome **attended by several Heads of States** (attached picture).

With Warmest Regards,

Satish
Satish Mahna, M.D.
Founder, SamudraSurya

From: [Miguel Mendoza](#)
To: [CNRA Salton Sea](#)
Subject: Comments on the draft of the Salton Sea Management Program and community Needs Report
Date: Friday, February 2, 2024 11:21:48 PM

Greetings:

As requested here are comments on the draft of the Salton Sea Management Program and community Needs Report

Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea (p12)

Comments:

Consider opportunities to engage college students in the design of viewing towers. The purpose of the towers is to safely observe the progress of SSMP efforts in the surrounding areas.

Suggestions:

solicit student designs as a contest and engage the Audubon and tribal communities to select winner(s).
winning design team members get 2 yr scholarships to further their collegiate studies and chances to evaluate proposals to construct their designs.

Alternative suggestions:

provide scholarships to students at local universities (SDSU, IVC, UCSD, etc) to earn degrees in environmental studies.

still other suggestions:

viewing towers can actually become public television broadcasting or weather monitoring stations. Towers may also be broadband relay stations for equitable access to the Internet.

Finally:

send out Request for Quotes (RFQ) for other ideas to solve community needs and then turn RFQs into RFPs to implement the best ones. Scope of RFQs should include cost estimates to complete

Sincerely,

Miguel Mendoza
Imperial Valley born
Living in Lomita, CA

From: [Miguel Mendoza](#)
To: [CNRA Salton Sea](#)
Subject: More Comments on the draft of the Salton Sea Management Program and community Needs Report
Date: Monday, February 5, 2024 12:51:50 AM

Greetings;

As requested, **here are more comments on the draft of the Salton Sea Management Program and community Needs Report**

General :

Note that a common theme is showing up. Local expertise is hard to find (six qualified out of 20 respondents to RFQs) so we need to grow it or import it.

Remember that considerations and suggestions can be spread out over the 10 year life of the SSMP Long range Plan.

The ultimate goal is to leave the Salton Sea valley better in 2032 than it was in 2020.

Remaining comments follow:

Public Health (p13,14)

Comments

Consider drafting RFQs/RFPs for robotic water and air sampling. Samples can be collected on a preprogrammed schedule and securely stored for later collection and further analysis. NASA's Mars rover, for example, collects ground samples and tests for signs of water/life on another planet! The SSMP can gather and publish the data it needs to collect. Data should show the 10 year impact of completed projects.

Consider creating RFQs/RFPs to construct a research center to capture data and study air and water quality at the Salton Sea and its impact on the surrounding valley.

Consider funding scholarships for local civil and environmental engineers to serve as interns and employees at the research center for air and water quality.

Develop a center of excellence for respiratory illnesses at local medical centers through medical school scholarships and loans.

Consider expanding local veteran administration medical services first through national guard or ready reserve assignments.

Inclusive and sustainable Workforce Development

Consider establishment of scholarships for civil and environmental engineers to research and further develop Salton Sea management programs.

Consider scholarships to develop tribal monitors to enhance the protection of sensitive tribal cultural, ceremonial, or other beneficial resources. Particularly focus on dig once policy considerations in urban planning and design.

Consider funding to create a nonprofit foundation for administration of scholarship programs.

climate Action

- see workforce development comments and considerations above.

focus of workforce development should not only be on the sea but also on improving surrounding communities.

Consider RFQ/RFPs to create climate-resilient gathering spaces, shade for city and market centers, development of greener open areas, and solar powered cooling centers

expanded transportation access and broadband access for all communities

- see workforce development comments and considerations above and develop a local pool of expertise.

Consider ways to encourage communities to add bus routes for more frequent service to Bombay Beach. Use smaller and electric vehicles, for example, or maybe add 'pay in advance' Uber like services. (when broadband makes it more possible)

Consider viewing towers that double as broadband relays for a public internet. The addition of solar power on towers could drive small data center servers for data storage and internet web services.

Consider expanding public library networks and installing outdoor solar powered and shaded cement park benches with library access to internet.

Add bike and vehicle charging stations to all future construction projects.

From: [Rob Simpson](#)
To: [CNRA Salton Sea](#)
Subject: Are you kidding me??
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 4:18:45 PM

Your approach is so upside down that it defies description.

Please take everything you are doing and reverse it!

Yes, I have forgotten more about this subject than your combined council from San Diego that seeks to "steal more water" from the Colorado River Basin. Get a clue and stop stealing water. I can show you how.

Rob Simpson


Call me and get an earful!

From: [Ellen Strenski](#)
To: [CNRA Salton Sea](#)
Subject: The only solution to SS problems
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 1:57:01 PM

Is water importation from Mexico. The rest is a farce.
Ellen Strenski





South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov

Friday, April 05, 2024

Via Electronic Mail Only

Wade Crowfoot

California Natural Resources Secretary
715 P St., 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comments on the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report

Dear Mr. Crowfoot,

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the California Natural Resources Agency's (CNRA) *Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report Draft for Public Comment* (Draft Report). The Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) is a collaborative effort between the CNRA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and California Department of Water Resources to address air quality and ecological concerns at the Salton Sea by advancing projects to restore environmental habitat and reduce dust from exposed lakebed of the Salton Sea; South Coast AQMD supports the objectives of the SSMP. South Coast AQMD has collaborated through the SSMP process, including providing comments on the SSMP *Dust Suppression Action Plan* and attending numerous SSMP community meetings to ensure interagency alignment in addressing community concerns.

The Draft Report summarizes the background and vision of the SSMP, community insight, progress made, challenges encountered, and future direction of the program. Additionally, the Draft Report discusses environmental injustice issues, including social and economic challenges faced by local communities and tribes, and highlights the need for multi-benefit projects to address those challenges.

California Assembly Bill 617 (AB 617)¹ is a California law that addresses the disproportionate impacts of air pollution in environmental justice communities and invests resources and focuses on localized actions to reduce air pollution in these communities. Since 2018, the California Air Resources Board has designated six AB 617 communities for South Coast AQMD to develop Community Emission Reductions Plans (CERPs) under the guidance of each community's Community Steering Committee (CSC). In 2019, the Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) was designated as an AB 617 community and the Salton Sea was identified as one of the CERP air quality priorities by the ECV CSC. South Coast AQMD provides the following recommendations to further align the SSMP's goals with South Coast AQMD's AB 617 ECV CERP strategies pertaining to the Salton Sea.

¹ California Assembly Bill 617, California Health, and Safety Code Section 44391.2

1. Incorporate collaboration with other agencies to identify strategies to mitigate pesticide runoff into the Salton Sea to address a major concern in the community, including objectives in the ECV CERP;
2. Include clear milestones and metrics (e.g., timeline and description) of the SSMP into the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report, which will ensure transparency and accountability, and enable the community to track progress of implementation;
3. Ensure active and continued participation of the SSMP Community Engagement Committee (committee), and provide the committee with decision-making power to guide implementation of the SSMP through the lens of a community member; and
4. Provide information on the SSMP's current and future sources of funding, including a breakdown of the amounts spent, to ensure transparency of the SSMP's expenditures to the community.

South Coast AQMD appreciates the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the Draft Report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, do not hesitate to reach out to me at uvo@aqmd.gov or 909-396-2238.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Uyen-Uyen Vo'.

Uyen-Uyen Vo

Planning and Rules Manager

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with
Community Air Programs



March 26, 2024

Samantha Arthur
Assistant Secretary for Salton Sea Policy
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA, 9581475

Sent via email

Attn: Salton Sea Community Needs Report

Dear Samantha Arthur,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we offer the following comments on two draft reports: *Better World Group's Salton Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions 2023*, and *State of California Salton Sea Management Program's Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report*. As a partnership, we bring together organizations with diverse backgrounds and expertise, all committed to making the Salton Sea region healthy and sustainable. Our efforts include direct engagement and advocacy alongside local communities. These reports give us optimism for the implementation of projects that approach the Salton Sea in a comprehensive way and ensure the sustainability of the Sea while also ensuring it is a vibrant, accessible, and healthy environment for both present communities and future generations.

We commend California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) for their dedication to increasing and improving community engagement efforts and tactics and Better World Group (BWG) for their ongoing outreach efforts throughout the development of these documents, which serve as a poignant reflection of long-standing community needs. We offer the following comments to strengthen both documents and ensure that the recommendations outlined in the documents come to fruition.

Better World Group Salton Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions 2023

This report reflects a holistic description of community needs and priorities as voiced through years of community advocacy. Furthermore, it provides comprehensive recommendations that directly align and respond to these community needs and priorities.

To ensure that the recommendations in the report move forward and further strengthen the implementation of these proposed actions, we recommend including a list of recommended entities who could offer expertise and support within each identified topic area including information to specific departments and contacts within these entities. Collaborating with partners who not only have expertise in the identified areas, but also have authority to implement these recommendations has the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness and execution of the proposed recommendations and increase community awareness. This collaboration will also foster community ownership and ensure that initiatives are tailored to the unique needs of the community while efficiently leveraging new and existing resources.

Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report

We commend the Salton Sea Management Program for its proactive approach and careful consideration in identifying recommended actions from the BWG report under their purview. We propose the following actions to further address the diverse and evolving needs of the community, ensuring that the SSMP's endeavors closely align with community priorities and needs. The recommended actions are categorized based on the specific needs they are intended to fulfill.

Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Coordination

We acknowledge the strides in community engagement made by CNRA and the SSMP over the years. To continue fostering enhanced community engagement, capacity building, and coordination, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Continue to Improve on Community Engagement and Outreach

Strengthen collaboration with local entities to understand community priorities and incorporate them into SSMP activities. The report rightly identifies the need to increase community engagement for a better understanding of SSMP activities. However, we urge the program to go beyond presence and education by increasing collaboration with local entities to understand collective community efforts, identify available resources, foster community ownership and empowerment, and enhance the overall impact of both state and local initiatives.

2. Partner with Local Entities to Pilot Program Activities

Work with local entities to pilot program activities that provide communities with a preview of what will be available at each public access project. This initiative would increase excitement, improve expectations, and gather meaningful feedback from the community. By offering sneak peeks or trial runs of planned activities, the SSMP can gauge community interest, gather insights for fine-tuning initiatives, and ensure that final projects align closely with community needs and preferences.

3. Recruitment of Additional Personnel, Especially Spanish-Speaking Staff:

We acknowledge the recent SSMP efforts in hiring dedicated community engagement staff, which represents a positive step towards effective communication and engagement. However, to further enhance outreach, capacity building, and funding identification for activities outlined in the report, we emphasize the critical need for additional personnel dedicated to fostering collaboration among partners, identifying available resources, and sustaining community engagement and outreach.

Given the region's majority Spanish-speaking population, there is a particular emphasis on the urgent need to recruit more Spanish-speaking staff, preferably from the Salton Sea region, which will not only facilitate effective communication but also contribute significantly to community ownership and empowerment initiatives. Strengthening the team with bilingual and community-focused professionals will enhance the overall impact of the SSMP's efforts and better serve the diverse needs of Salton Sea communities.

4. Commit to Annual Reporting on Actions Related to Community Needs:

SSMP should demonstrate a commitment to annual reporting on actions related to community needs as reflected on both the BWG report and the CNRA report. This reporting should include progress updates, outcomes achieved, and any adjustments made based on community feedback especially public comments. This transparency ensures accountability, and allows for continuous improvement in addressing community needs.

5. Implement Ongoing In-Person Workshops for Updates and Community Feedback:

Instead of hosting a one-time event at the beginning of a project, SSMP should implement ongoing in-person workshops. These workshops will provide regular updates on SSMP activities and gather continuous community feedback. We also recommend developing a communication strategy, such as a sign-in sheet, that allows community members with questions during these sessions to indicate if follow-up is needed. This way, someone from the SSMP team can address their particular concern or unanswered question. This approach fosters a dynamic and responsive relationship between SSMP and the community, ensuring that initiatives align with evolving community needs and priorities.

6. Develop an Improved SSMP Website with Community Input:

Ensure that the planning for the improved SSMP website takes into account community feedback and needs. Collaborate with the community to gather input and suggestions for website improvements, including providing information about SSMP activities in plain language and incorporating future actions related to the Community Needs Report. Additionally, upon release of the tool, we recommend SSMP provide a comprehensive tutorial on website navigation, detailing the information under each tab. During subsequent events and meetings, include a call to action encouraging community members to explore the map and sign up for the SSMP newsletter to ensure continued engagement with SSMP activities.

7. Establish a Transparent Participatory Budgeting Process:

Develop a transparent participatory budgeting process for potential future SB 125 Lithium Excise Tax Grants. This process empowers communities by involving them in decision-making and promotes accountability in resource allocation. It fosters trust and partnership between SSMP and the community, ensuring that resources are allocated where they are most needed.

8. Incorporate Clear Benchmarks and Goals:

We urge the Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs document to incorporate clear benchmarks and goals for the short-term (1 year), mid-term (3 years), and long-term (5 years) periods. While we acknowledge that the implementation of these benchmarks and goals is contingent upon available funding and personnel resources, establishing such milestones is crucial for tracking progress and ensuring accountability. For instance, a feasible benchmark could involve the hiring of dedicated personnel to address community outreach needs. These benchmarks will provide tangible targets to guide efforts and enable stakeholders to assess the program's effectiveness in meeting the community's needs over time.

Equitable Outdoor Access and Recreation at the Sea

Ensuring equitable outdoor access and recreational opportunities at the Salton Sea is essential to create a welcoming environment that caters to the diverse needs of our community members. It's imperative that outdoor spaces are accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for all. Here are key recommendations to achieve this goal:

1. Prevent Financial and Language Barriers for Local Communities:

It's crucial to prevent additional barriers, such as fees for using facilities, that may hinder local communities' access to outdoor amenities. Implementing equitable outdoor access and recreation means ensuring that financial constraints don't limit community members' ability to enjoy and benefit from these facilities.

In addition it's important to recognize the diversity in our region that includes various indigenous communities. For this reason, it's important that there is multilingual interpretive signage at the SCH site as well as at other SSMP project sites, especially those closest to communities surrounding the Salton Sea.

2. Develop Comprehensive Community Engagement Processes:

Create a comprehensive community engagement process for projects related to outdoor access and recreation. This process should involve community members at every stage, including brainstorming, funding discussions, design collaboration, implementation involvement, opening events, maintenance planning, and beyond.

Public Health

Addressing public health needs for Salton Sea communities requires a proactive and collaborative approach. Here are key recommendations to improve public health outcomes:

1. Emphasize Reporting, Action, and Follow-Up:

Focus on more than just monitoring public health indicators. Emphasize the importance of reporting findings, taking actionable steps based on data, and implementing follow-up measures to track progress and address emerging health concerns. Build a project tracker into a Salton Sea dashboard that allows researchers/community scientists/agencies to self register and submit updates to their current projects and project descriptions. This is key for transparency about current projects at the Sea.

2. Support Research and Data Collection:

Allocate resources for research initiatives and data collection efforts focused on understanding the health impacts of Salton Sea-related environmental factors such as Hydrogen Sulfide emissions whose smell is one characteristic most associated with the Salton Sea. Investing in research will provide valuable insights into health trends, risk factors, and effective mitigation strategies, guiding evidence-based decision-making for public health interventions.

Increase capacity by working with different agencies, academic institutions, researchers, and community scientists to collect data within the framework of the Monitoring Implementation Plan to answer public health questions particularly by establishing a link

between the water and air quality. Foster collaboration with community scientists and researchers to monitor the Salton Sea at large. Encourage the regional water board and partner agencies to be the government agencies responsible for quarterly water sampling throughout the entire Salton Sea. In addition, information should be more readily available than what is provided through the CEDEN network which has a long lag time.

3. Enhance Community Health Education and Outreach:

Develop and implement comprehensive health education and outreach programs targeting Salton Sea communities. These programs should focus on raising awareness about environmental health risks, promoting preventive measures, and empowering community members to take proactive steps towards improving their health outcomes. SSMP can leverage its communication channels and partnerships to deliver impactful health education initiatives. Ensure that this information is nontechnical through the use of visual aids and short community-friendly summaries that can be piloted in community workshops.

4. Collaborate with Healthcare Providers and Agencies:

Foster collaboration with local healthcare providers, public health agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure coordinated efforts in addressing public health challenges. This includes, but is not limited to, partnering with county public health departments to provide updates about Water Quality and recreational safety at the Salton Sea. The department of public health from the two counties should issue public health notices around the Sea for safety regarding recreational contact. This should include information about the bacterial concentrations and harmful algal bloom information. This collaborative approach will facilitate access to healthcare services, enhance health surveillance systems, and promote a holistic approach to community health improvement. Additionally, identify and disclose what agency has the jurisdiction to address certain challenges so that the community knows who to go with concerns.

By incorporating these recommendations into its activities and initiatives, the Salton Sea Management Program can play a pivotal role in safeguarding public health, addressing environmental health disparities, and promoting sustainable development in the Salton Sea region.

* * * * *

In closing, we strongly advocate for implementing the recommendations outlined in our comments, in conjunction with *Better World Group's Salton Sea Community Needs and Recommended Actions 2023* and the *State of California Salton Sea Management Program's Salton Sea Management Program and Community Needs Report*. We commend the SSMP for addressing the challenges faced by communities in the Salton Sea region and urge them to

collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to secure additional funding and expertise for the region.

The SSMP should identify opportunities to leverage limited existing Salton Sea funding to unlock additional funding from other sources and ensure that projects deliver multiple benefits, meeting both the state's legal obligations to the Salton Sea as well as satisfying the community needs identified in the report.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate further with the California Natural Resources Agency, the Salton Sea Management Program, and other stakeholders to turn these recommendations into actionable strategies that benefit the community. For any inquiries or to discuss these matters in more detail, please contact Krystal Otworth at kotworth@leadershipcounsel.org.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to enhancing the quality of life and environmental sustainability in the Salton Sea region.

Sincerely,

Krystal Otworth
Policy Advocate
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

Erin Woolley
Senior Policy Strategist
Sierra Club California

Isabella B. Arzeno Soltero, PhD
Assistant Professor
University of California, Los Angeles

Aydee Palomino
Environmental Justice Campaign Project Manager
Alianza Coachella Valley

Sandra Ramirez
Executive Director
Coachella Valley Parents

Yunuen Ibarra
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Lideres Campesinas

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CC

Wade Crowfoot
Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency
California Natural Resources Agency

Cecilia V. Estolano
Chief Executive Officer
Better World Group

Miguel Hernández
SSMP Public Affairs Officer
California Natural Resources Agency