



## MCWRA Briefing Report SALINAS RIVER STREAM MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

April 30, 2013

**Subject:** Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program – status and next steps

### **Current Status:**

- The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) has administered the Program since 1997, after severe flooding occurred on the Salinas River in March 1995.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is the lead permitting authority for maintenance activities in the Salinas River; however, in order for them to issue a 404 permit, they must have consultations with other Federal regulatory agencies regarding the Endangered Species Act.
- The State Regional Water Quality Control Board ensures compliance with the Clean Water Act by issuing a 401 Water Quality Certification.
- Additional State and local permits are also required.
- The BOD approved a Professional Services Agreement with Cardno ENTRIX to perform a joint California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) / National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document including supporting analyses, for the amount of \$399,997, effective in June 2010.
- The BOD approved a contract Amendment in December 2011, in the amount of \$185,390, to include maintenance activities that the Agency performs on the tributaries, additional analyses and studies, and for the preparation of just an EIR. The total contract amount for the EIR is \$585,387.
- The Federal Lead Agency (ACOE) is ultimately responsible for the preparation of the NEPA documentation and was not in support of performing an EIS. Therefore, the stand alone EIR will include an economic analysis appendix that analyzes socioeconomic issues that can be incorporated into the NEPA analysis.
- The current program focuses primarily on vegetation and sediment removal within the river corridor. However, to ensure the long-term viability of the program and future regulatory approvals for increased flood protection, an alternative approach may need to be investigated.
- The Public Draft EIR was released on March 18, 2013, for a 45-day review period. A Public Workshop was held on April 18<sup>th</sup> and comments are due by 5:00 pm on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Next Steps:**

- Prepare responses to comments on the Draft EIR
- Hold a Public Hearing on the Certification of the Final EIR in late summer
- Prepare Findings/Record of Decision by August 2013
- Prepare necessary documents for ACOE 404 permit and submit application
- Begin NEPA process with the ACOE as Lead Agency

### **Completion will require:**

- Certification of the CEQA Document
- Preparation of a Biological Assessment
- Completion of a NEPA Document
- Completion of Biological Opinions from NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Acquisition of all necessary permits