



TODAY'S ACTION

Receive an update on Salinas River
Lagoon Sandbar Management and
Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan



Discussion

- The Salinas River is not hydrologically connected to the ocean for much of the year
- A naturally occurring sandbar forms at the river mouth during the dry season
 - May be significantly higher than surrounding land
- When Salinas River flow resumes it has potential to flood low lying areas prior to overtopping the sandbar

Discussion

- The Agency performs emergency sandbar management actions to prevent flooding of agricultural land and homes around the lagoon
- Emergency sandbar management is required in most years (7 of the past 10)
- Sandbar management has the potential to result in take of one or more federally listed species
- The Agency does not have a permit to cover incidental take

Discussion

- 1997 Salinas River Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan
- 2018 Salinas River Lagoon Sandbar Management Plan Project Description (plan has not been developed) and Salinas River Sandbar Management Monitoring and Reporting Plan
- Documents define criteria for managing the sandbar for flood prevention
- Minimize impact on sensitive species and water quality but do not provide the Agency with permits

Discussion

- The Salinas River Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) will analyze sandbar management actions, define impacts and mitigation, and serve as a basis for an incidental take permit (ITP) under the Endangered Species Act
- HCP will provide comprehensive coverage of sandbar management activities
 - Approximately three years from completion
 - Sandbar management likely during that time

Discussion

- USFWS has strongly recommended that the Agency pursue a short-term solution to obtain an ITP
- Agency staff has started working with the USFWS on a plan to develop a Low-Effect HCP and apply for an ITP to cover flood prevention sandbar management until the full HCP can be completed

Discussion

- The LEHCP will have significant overlap with the full Salinas River HCP
- Some components grant funded
- Limited scope (1 activity, 3 species)
- Limited term (5 years)
- Mitigation measures required
- Determined by species impact
- Will be created in parallel with the full HCP
- Goal of completion prior to potential sandbar management actions in the winter of 2022/23

Financing

- Estimated cost of non-grant funded work is \$45,000
- Work will start with existing HCP and sandbar management funding from the current Agency budget
- Additional funding will be identified in the upcoming FY23 budget
- Adoption of the Plan would require Agency commitment of funding for mitigation measures during the plan term
 - Estimated to be \$20k to \$50k per year

Other Agency Involvement

- Ongoing discussion with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service
- Update given to the Planning Committee during their February meeting

Compatibility with Strategic Plan

Development of the LEHCP for sandbar management supports:

- Strategic Plan Goal D, Strategy 1 by pursuing a necessary permit for the core service of flood prevention through Salinas River Lagoon sandbar management;
- Goal B, Strategy 4 by performing analysis in support of the development of the Salinas River Habitat Conservation Plan and;
- Goal C, Strategy 6 by leveraging grant funding to support these actions.

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