

## Sea subject of new restoration proposal

**T**he Salton Sea Authority is conducting an independent study of a proposal by United States Filter Corp. to provide water to metropolitan Southern California by turning the Salton Sea into a wide, slightly saline river flowing around a salt-water marsh.

The Authority board voted in December to have independent consultants assess technical, biological, financial and other components of the plan.

A white paper of the evaluation will be prepared by qualified consultants and reviewed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Salton Sea Authority Technical Advisory Committee and the Salton Sea Science Office.

The white paper will include a critical assessment of the plan, suggest refinements or improvements and provide recommendations for next steps.

The plan also will undergo a peer review, lead by the Salton Sea Science Office in a process that may also include focused workshops.

U.S. Filter says its plan would provide up to 500,000 acre-feet of potable water by capturing the irrigation runoff that now feeds the Salton Sea. The water would be caught in a dike and channeled to a desalinization and treatment plant at the north end of the Sea.

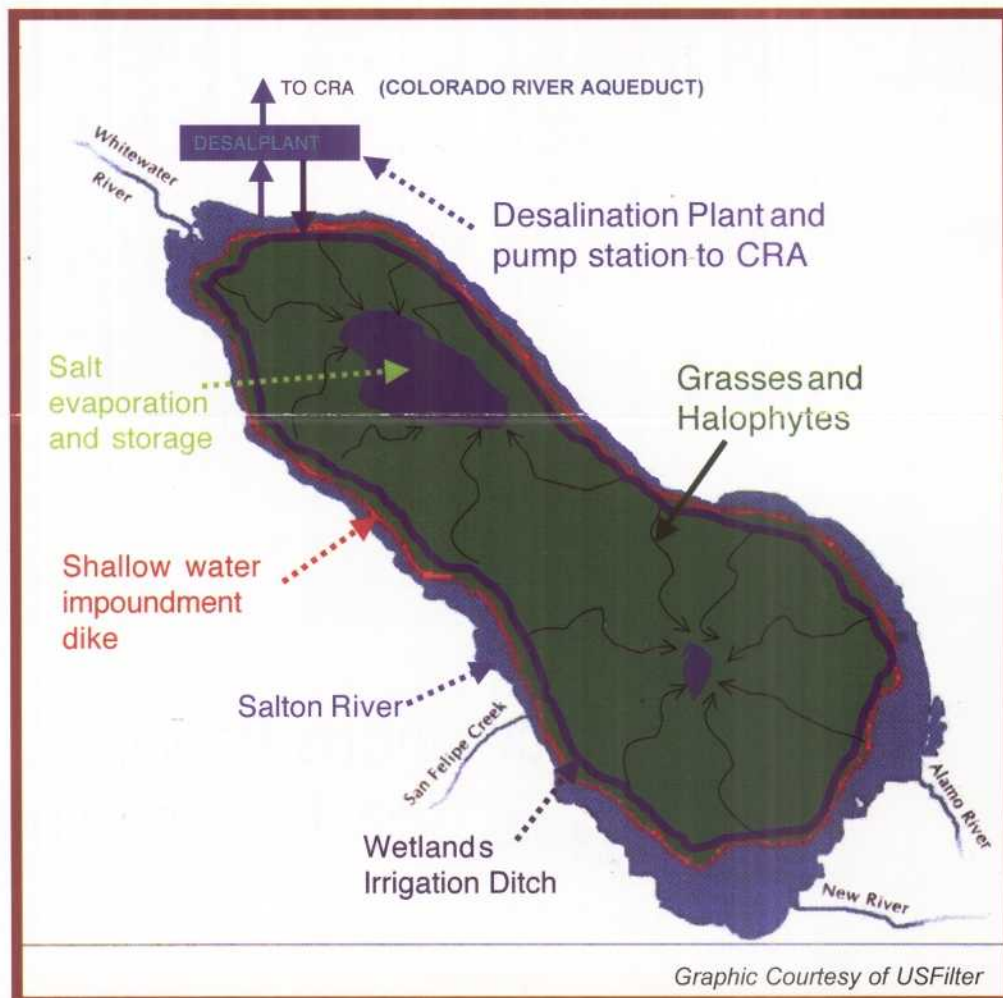
Discharge from the plant would flow to a pool inside the Sea and would eventually form a smaller lake inside the Sea as a repository for salt. Meanwhile, the outer river would be slightly saline and would be suitable for

fishing and boating.

The plan is designed to marry water supply objectives with environmental protection features.

There are a number of environmental and water quality issues as well as possible visual and recreational impacts that have been raised regarding the plan. The intent of the independent evaluation is to seriously consider those impacts, suggest strategies for improving elements of the plan and weigh the benefits of the plan against the impacts.

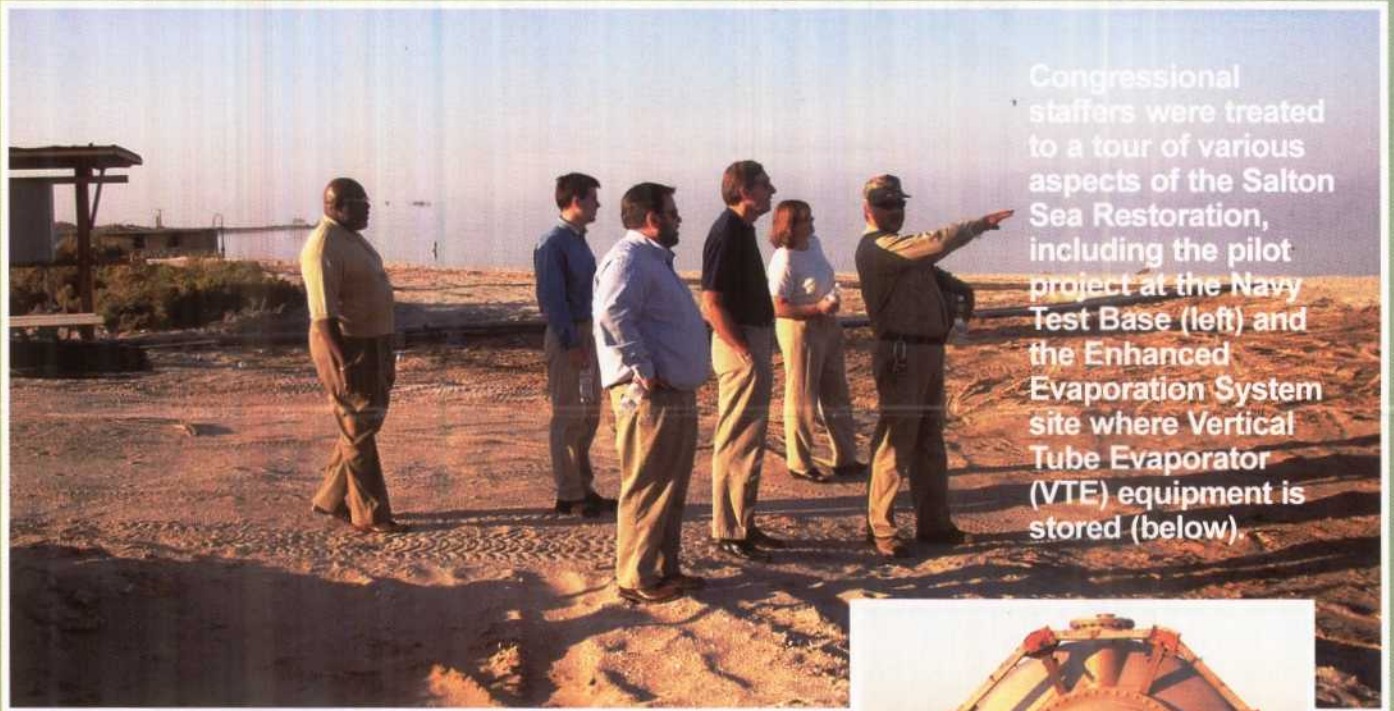
The Authority Board also established a citizens advisory panel to help evaluate the plan.



Graphic Courtesy of USFilter



## OUTREACH AND RESTORATION EFFORTS CONTINUE



Congressional staffers were treated to a tour of various aspects of the Salton Sea Restoration, including the pilot project at the Navy Test Base (left) and the Enhanced Evaporation System site where Vertical Tube Evaporator (VTE) equipment is stored (below)

### Legislative Tour Provides Insight

On October 29 and 30 four Congressional staffers were lead on a tour of the Salton Sea by Salton Sea Authority staff. The staffers on the tour were: James Peterson of Senator Feinstein's office, Al Garrett of Senator Boxer's office, Linda Valter of Representative Bono' office and Josh Johnson, staff director of the House Water and Power Subcommittee.

"It is always useful to get out and see things first hand and I welcome the opportunity to learn more about the Salton Sea," said Josh Johnson.

In addition to stops at the pilot project at the Navy Test base and discussions with the Bureau of Reclamation, the group visited the solar ponds, the Sea cleanup facility, Kent SeaTech, and was given an airboat tour of the Sea by Sylvia Pelizza and staff of the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge. The group also had opportunities to meet with Salton Sea Authority Board members and officials of the Imperial Irrigation District and the Coachella Valley Water District.

"The SS is a very complex issue that I expect will be with us well into the future. I am grateful to the SSA for organizing this tour and keeping me informed of the latest developments so that I can effectively advise Senator Feinstein," said James Peterson.



Photos by Paul Weghorst, BOR

### Sediment Study to Begin

Agrarian Research, Inc. has been awarded a contract to study the shallow subsurface sediments of the Salton Sea.

"This is a continuation of our science-based approach to the restoration effort. We need to accurately determine the composition of the sea bed in order to answer key air quality questions that have arisen in connection with a smaller Salton Sea due to water transfers," said Authority Board President Andy Horne.

Agrarian was selected from among six companies that responded to a request for proposals. The companies are familiar with sediment characterization and fugitive dust issues.

*(See Sediment Study on next page)*

## **Sediment Study (Continued)**

The evaluation team gave Agrarian the highest marks based upon their sample design, use of technology, handling of data and knowledge of the issue. The Salton Sea Science Office and Science Advisory Committee supported this conclusion.

Agrarian's proposal had the best sample frequency, will use preliminary and main surveys to insure adequate coverage and will use sensor technology to interpret results, according to the staff evaluation of the proposals.

"They have experience working in the Salton Sea ecosystem and at Owens Lake, where fugitive dust problems are prevalent," said SSA President Horne. Agrarian Research, which is headquartered in Bishop, designed, constructed, operated and evaluated the Authority's Solar Pond Project.

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## **Contract Renewed for On-Sea Fish Recovery**

The Salton Sea Authority Board in December approved a \$166,608 one-year extension of a contract with Environmental Recovery Solutions to provide on-sea recovery of fish during die offs.

The Authority originally contracted with ERS in December 2001 for the unique pilot project that removes fish from the surface of the Sea during die-off periods before the carcasses have a chance to foul the Sea's shoreline.

The project is designed to eventually become commercially self-supporting.

During the past year the project has been well received by business and community interests around the Sea.

ERS has secured permits, constructed marine equipment and spent over 100 days out on the water either removing fish or searching for mortalities.

Many lessons were learned during this first year. In addition, estimated total project cost of approximately \$450,000 will be below ERS' original budget of \$475,000.

Over the past year, according to ERS records, ERS recovered and disposed of 61,000 lbs of fish, which was substantially below previous years' totals. Fish die-off events were considerably higher for calendar years 1999 and 2000.

When ERS initially submitted their proposal, the company anticipated reimbursing the Authority for capital equipment purchased. Their revenue was to be obtained by operating a fish emulsion project called hydrolysates. Due to the small amount of fish that were recovered during the year, the program did not get underway. When there is sufficient fish mass, ERS will begin operation of the pilot plant in conjunction with their fish recovery operations. Funding for fabrication of the pilot plant will be provided by ERS. Operational funding will be provided by ERS and through the sale of the hydrolysate to participating farms.

## **NEW BOARD MEMBER APPOINTED**



**Marion Ashley**, the newest member of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, has been appointed a member of the Salton Sea Authority Board.

Ashley represents Riverside County's Fifth Supervisorial District. Until recently, he served as a director of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and as a board member and past president of the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), where he has led efforts for more efficient operations and more equitable rates for water users.

He is also president of the EMWD Facilities Corporation and a director of the Association of California Water Agencies.

Ashley is a Certified Public Accountant with experience in a major national accounting firm, former president of a real estate investment firm, and former chairman of Valley Bank of Moreno Valley.

He has given more than 30 years of public service to Riverside County. In addition, his family has donated hundreds of acres in the west Perris hills to establish University of California's "Motte Rimrock Reserve" for wildlife preservation.

Community service and youth programs have always been top priorities for Ashley, who founded the Perris Youth Basketball Program, served as a director and treasurer of Riverside Community Hospital, past president of the Rotary Club of Perris, as trustee of the UC Riverside Foundation and a trustee of the March Field Museum Foundation.

He is a native of Riverside County and attended local schools. He graduated from Riverside Community College and San Diego State University with degrees in Business Management. He and his wife of 47 years, Mary, live in Perris. They have six children and fourteen grandchildren.

## Workshops Provide Teacher Training on Technology and the Sea



wildlife resources. Various exercises for students teach them both GIS tools and information about the Sea.

The first two workshops have been held at sites in both the Imperial and Coachella Valleys. Teachers are joined by student-participants to learn the technology, gain knowledge, and practice the exercises. During the workshops, teams of teachers and students may be asked to do such things as plot rivers, highways, and communities around the Sea; compare inflows to the Sea from the various rivers; find hidden resources; or analyze certain challenges.

In addition to training teachers and students, the workshops are being used to refine both the web site and the instructor curriculum. The web site, still under construction, may be accessed at

<http://institute.redlands.edu/s2e2gis>

Roughly 40 teachers and students from primarily middle and high school levels are taking part in the training.

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The Salton Sea Authority has provided a grant to the University of Redlands Education Department to conduct a teacher training program combining information on the Salton Sea with GIS (geographic information system) technology. Students will be able to learn science concepts by accessing a web site that contains six units on topics such as water quality at the Sea, air quality, and

<http://institute.redlands.edu/s2e2gis>

### Meetings Schedule

#### Board of Directors Meeting

01/16/03 10:00 a.m.  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
50 Desert Shores  
Desert Shores

#### Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

02/06/03 10:30 a.m.  
Salton Community Services  
District  
Salton City

#### Events

Salton Sea International  
Bird Festival  
02/14 to 2/17/03



Plaza La Quinta  
78-401 Highway 111, Suite T  
La Quinta, CA 92253  
[www.salttonsea.ca.gov](http://www.salttonsea.ca.gov)

TIM KRANTZ  
DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAG  
UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS  
SALTON SEA DATABASE PROGRAM  
1200 E COLTON AVE  
REDLANDS CA 92374-3720

