

# RESTORATION UPDATE

A newsletter on the Salton Sea Restoration Project

Salton Sea Authority

October 2004

[www.saltonsea.ca.gov](http://www.saltonsea.ca.gov)

## Salton Sea Authority Eyes Odor Solution

New programs to decrease odor and reduce fish mortality at the Salton Sea may soon be on the way.

The Salton Sea Authority, at its October 28 board meeting, will consider allocating \$1 million in state funding to implement an on-the-Sea, solar powered, 24 hour a day odor and fish kill solution. “If the Board approves the proposal, we will start concentrating on areas with severe odor problems, poor circulation, stagnant waters and repeated fish kills – as well as areas close to human population,” stated Salton Sea Executive Director Ron Enzweiler.

The Salton Sea Authority is considering a product specifically designed for eutrophic lakes to control blue green algae, increase dissolved oxygen levels throughout the water column and oxidize hydrogen sulfide emissions. Together, these three outcomes would dramatically decrease the odor and reduce fish mortality at the Sea.

One of the pollution solutions being examined is the SolarBee SB 10000 v12, a floating solar-powered circulator constructed of stainless steel and corrosion resistant polymers. The newest generation SolarBee,



Konocti Bay in Clear Lake, California.

the v12, features a brushless motor and on-board battery system that allows it to operate 24 hours per day per year. The unit has a design life of 25 years.

The 16' diameter machine draws up to 10,000 gallons per minute from below and spreads it gently across the top of the body of water for continuous surface renewal. The device's mixing action greatly accelerates the biological and solar processes that clean up both waste water and fresh water.

“We've got to get started on real programs to address the Sea's ongoing problems,” Enzweiler said. “Odor and fish mortality

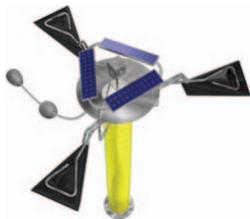
are two issues near the top of a long list.”

Funding for the proposed program will come from an original request by Senator Jim Battin who secured \$2 million in funding for the Salton Sea Authority in California's budget in 1999. \$1 million of these funds was designated and used for the one-to-one match of \$1,000,000 in federal funds used to complete the Feasibility Study and environmental documents prepared jointly by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Authority under the 1998 federal Salton Sea Act.

The remaining \$1 million is designated

for water treatment programs like the ones now being proposed.

Benefits of the proposed technology are numerous. The Solar Bee controls blue green algae which in turn, reduces taste and odor problems in drinking water, improves aesthetics and eliminates fish kills. Walt Wilson, Fishery and Wild Life Biologist for the Department of Defense



3-D graphic presentation of the unit and intake hose.

installed three SB 10000s in Lake O'Neil at Camp Pendleton in June 2003. He reports, "The lake was hyper eutrophic, had no oxygen and was plagued by blue green algae blooms. Within a week after installing the SolarBees, oxygen gradually saturated the water column and the blooms decreased by 99 percent."

Furthermore, for a year and a half they have been completely maintenance free. But most importantly to Wilson, "They have changed my lake for the better - well beyond my expectations. This year's

fishery recruitment, or the result of this year's spawning, has been prolific. The fishery has improved tremendously. It went from a nearly septic lake to a thriving fishery!"

Torquay Canal in Delaware saw fish die-offs exceeding 2 million fish every year prior to installing the SolarBee. This year they lost about 100 little fish in an area without a SolarBee but have since added another to mitigate the problem.

The SolarBee also controls inorganic chemical release from sediment; reduces manganese, iron hydrogen sulfide and phosphorous recycling and turnover problems; improves DO and pH levels; and can reduce or eliminate stratification when desired.

SolarBee President Joel Bleth added, "This product will eliminate fish kills over 50 acres per machine. But some of the areas, such as harbors and "fingers" require more units due to their shape."

Former Imperial Valley resident and SolarBee California district sales manager,



Torquay Canal in Rehoboth, Delaware.



Gaynor Lake in Longmont, Colorado.

Sandy Walker said the following is being proposed: One unit for the Salton Sea State Recreation area in North Shore and in the harbor, one each at Salton City Beach, Marina and the "fingers;" two in the "fingers" at Desert Shores; and one for the Riviera Keys in Salton City.

Bleth explained that the number of machines relates to surface area, volume of water and the degree of the problem. Approximately seven units are being proposed in the Red Hill Marina area on the south side and 12-13 on the north.

If the board approves the proposed project in October, units could be installed by March 2005. Technical staff say people who live around the Sea should start to notice a difference within a few months.

Questions and information regarding the proposed project are available by emailing Dan Cain at [dcain@saltonsea.ca.gov](mailto:dcain@saltonsea.ca.gov).

## New River Wetlands Project Continues Progress

On the morning of Saturday, October 23, the Citizens' Congressional Task Force on the New River held a salt cedar removal event at the Imperial New River Wetlands Project site. To bolster a little healthy competition among volunteers, awards were

given for the most salt cedar collected and best weed arrangements. Approximately 30 people joined in to work on the effort.

The salt cedar event was just the latest in a long line of efforts to improve the water quality of the New River. Formed in

the early 1900s when the Colorado River flooded, the New River is an international river originating 20 miles south of the Mexican Border and meandering through agricultural fields until it reaches the Salton Sea.

Both the New and Alamo Rivers acquire nutrients and heavy metals from sewage, nutrients, silt and selenium and pick up pesticides from agricultural run-off on their way to the Salton Sea. These inflows add to the problems and degradation of the Sea.

In 1997, Desert Wildlife Unlimited was in search of a solution to the pollution problem. The grassroots group worked with local, state and federal agencies to obtain grants and permits in order to construct two wetlands. The purpose of these pilot wetlands was to implement pollution control and improve the quality of water discharged from the New River into the Salton Sea.

To determine the program's success, extensive water quality monitoring is

being conducted over the next three years. If successful, wetlands will be constructed in selected areas along both rivers.

To date, Imperial and Brawley Wetlands have been shown to reduce of pollutants; provide habitat for plants, fish, wildlife and migrating waterfowl and increase recreational benefits for hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking and family outings.

And speaking of bird watching and family outings, you will want to SAVE THE DATE for the 8th Annual Salton Sea International Bird Festival, February 18-21, 2005. Festival organizer and New River Wetlands outreach coordinator, Marie Barrett explains, "It attracts people from all over the United States and Canada, England and other countries because of the



(Left to right): Peter Silva, Board Member, State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB)  
Celeste Cantu, Executive Director, SWRCB  
Terry Tamminen, EPA Secretary and Executive Director, Ron Enzweiler.

variety of unique birds – some 400 species – that can be seen here and it is in fact possible to see up to 100 species per day."

Information, brochure and registration can be found at [www.newriverwetlands.com](http://www.newriverwetlands.com)

## DWR to Attend October 28 SSA Board Meeting

The public is invited to attend the upcoming Salton Sea Authority (SSA) Board meeting, Thursday, October 28 at 10am in the Condit Auditorium at the Imperial Irrigation District office in El Centro. Department of Water Resources (DWR) members Joe Grindstaff, Chief Deputy Director, and Jeanine Jones will attend as part of the DWR's continuing efforts to foster closer relationships between the two entities for the purpose of developing a partnership in addressing economic development and recreational opportunities at a restored Salton Sea.

In a recent letter to Salton Sea Authority president Gary Wyatt, Chief Deputy Director Grindstaff wrote, "the state is committed to fully complying with

the California Environmental Quality Act and conducting a robust alternative evaluation process in connection with the restoration effort. We remain committed to identifying a range of financially feasible alternatives and truly look forward to working with the Authority on identifying and evaluating alternatives. I am very encouraged by our recent discussions and the commitment your organization has toward improving the Salton Sea. I believe we can and must work together cooperatively to develop restoration actions at the Sea."

Salton Sea Authority Executive Director Ron Enzweiler said, "The DWR's interest in a collaborative effort with the Authority is most encouraging and equally vital in any and all restoration efforts."

### MEETINGS SCHEDULE

**Board of Directors**  
October 28th, 10am  
Imperial Irrigation District - El Centro

**Technical Advisory Committee**  
December 8th, 1:30pm  
VFW Hall, Desert Shores

**Board of Directors**  
December, date TBD  
Imperial Irrigation District - La Quinta



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# Imperial Group to Present Cascade Alternative to Salton Sea Authority

The Imperial Group recently accepted an invitation to present its alternative restoration proposal for the Salton Sea at the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) board meeting October 28.

The Authority, a public joint powers authority, and the Imperial Group, each have offered restoration plans to control the sea's salinity and other problems which adversely impact the health of California's largest body of inland water.

SSA's "North Lake" proposal calls for dividing the sea with a causeway to create a marine lake to the north (in both Riverside and Imperial Counties) and shallow water wetlands and smaller recreational lakes to the south.

The Imperial Group proposal, known as the Cascade alternative, would create four levels of sea with the highest portion starting at 230 feet below sea level, cascading down to 270 below sea level and ending

with two salt-collecting ponds in the center of the sea. Marine lakes, lagoons and islands intended for a variety of uses would exist at each level in between.

Imperial Group attorney Patrick Maloney states, "This alternative is based in part on the work previously undertaken by the SSA and is the product of a substantial multi-discipline effort by local, regional and international experts to bring creativity and real-world practicality to the dilemma facing the sea. The goal was to create a viable long-term solution rather than meet any particular interest group's expectation," Maloney said. He further hopes that his group and SSA would work together to make this plan succeed.

SSA Executive Director Ron Enzweiler expressed similar intentions suggesting that there are elements of the Cascade alternative that might work well together

with the Authority's North Lake Plan.

The Department of Water Resources, currently managing the state's programmatic environmental review process for ecosystem restoration, is also legislatively required to identify a preferred restoration alternative, by 2006.

While DWR has the lead role in identifying a preferred restoration project for the state, the federal government is looking to expand its input through recent legislation adopted by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, which calls for the Department of Interior to join local and state officials in the restoration process. SSA officials view this partnership favorably, stating that the federal government's goals are more reflective of the Authority's in that recreation and economic development is included in the restoration objectives along with those of environmental and habitat health.

## William Devane to MC Salton Sea Centennial Celebration

Legendary actor, writer, director, restaurateur William Devane has agreed to preside as Master of Ceremonies of Salton Sea 100th Birthday celebration May 7, 2005 announced event Publicity Chairman Ron Spears. This historic, educational, and exciting party promises to be an event not to be missed. Organizers are working to recreate the sea as a thriving tourist destination with a day of boating, skiing, jet skiing, entertainment, food, fishing and fun at "The Fingers" in

Desert Shores on Capri Lane.

The group is hopeful that Governor Schwarzenegger will agree to preside as Grand Marshall and a cast of dignitaries will be on hand to toast the next 100 years. Admission is free, Spears explained, adding that volunteer, vendor and sponsor opportunities are available.

For information, contact Ron Spears at [ronnvi@aol.com](mailto:ronnvi@aol.com) or log onto [www.ss100th.com](http://www.ss100th.com).

### 8th Annual Salton Sea

International Bird Festival  
February 18-21, 2005

