

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

Date: August 12, 2015
To: Governing Board Members
From: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
Subject: Agenda Item 6: Consideration of Resolution adopting the Final Los Cerritos Wetlands Complex Conceptual Restoration Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption Staff recommends adoption of the Final Los Cerritos Wetlands Complex Conceptual Restoration Plan.

BACKGROUND: The Los Cerritos Wetlands is a 500 acre mosaic of public and privately owned properties, land uses and resources located along Pacific Coast Highway, the lower reach of the San Gabriel River, and the Los Angeles-Orange county line. During the past several decades, various agencies and organizations prepared a number of studies and partial restoration plans for portions of the wetlands, but none offers a comprehensive strategy for restoration of the entire wetland area overtime. Because there is now a critical mass of wetland acreage in public ownership, the LCWA would like to begin restoration of those properties in the near future. Thus the LCWA hired Moffatt and Nichol to develop a technical team of restoration ecologists, landscape architects, engineers and hydrologists to develop a conceptual restoration plan for the purpose of designing alternatives which are feasible, cost-effective, and ecologically-beneficial restoration alternatives for the Los Cerritos Wetlands.

The Los Cerritos Wetlands Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP) includes the entire 500 acres of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Complex for the development of a restoration and recreational conceptual plan. The CRP includes the LCWA Phases I, Bryant Properties, Marketplace Marsh, and Synergy Properties which are located within the City of Long Beach and LCWA Phase II, State Lands Commission Parcel, and Hellman Properties which are located within the City of Seal Beach. These properties, potentially in combination with other adjacent public lands, offer a rare opportunity to restore coastal wetlands and create public access improvements. The CRP created a consulting team to review previous plans and studies related to the Los Cerritos Wetlands and compiled information about many important issues that would affect restoration and public access, such as: existing habitats, sensitive species, wildlife corridors, archeological resources, hydrology, hydraulics, sediment characterization, sea level rise impacts, regulatory mandates, permitting requirements, public access and interpretative opportunities.

The LCWA completed development of the CRP by working with a Steering Committee (SC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to guide the consulting team through a course of investigations and analyzes. The SC consists of staff from each member agency of the LCWA JPA. The TAC is composed of representatives of approximately 20 resource and permit agencies and research groups, covering federal, state, regional, and local jurisdictions. The public provided input to this investigation throughout its duration, with six workshops held over 28 months. Workshops were conducted to provide information and to solicit input, opinions, experiences, and categorize the priority areas. The group established goals and objectives to help in guiding in project model for maximum restoration benefits. The CRP goals and objectives were developed with the SC and TAC and then were vetted through the public.

The final set of restoration goals and objectives are listed in Section 2.0 of the CRP. These goals and objectives were the principles guiding site studies and development and analyses of restoration alternatives.

This CRP utilizes all available previous technical documents, and analyzes the performance of three alternatives and a no action scenario from the present out into the future. The time period addressed by this CRP extends approximately 90 years into the future to account for future sea level rise. Sea level rise projections are evolving, but have recently been provided as guidance by the State of California. This CRP considers the guidance and analyzes alternatives for a full range of the most recent sea level rise scenarios to the year 2100. The most recent sea level rise projections range from 1.5 feet to 5.5 feet at year 2100.

The CRP is structured to include background information, analyses of alternatives for future decision-making, and then recommendations for implementation. The actual analyses of alternatives consist of the information below:

- **Descriptions:** A description of each final alternative including infrastructure changes, hydrology, benefits, impacts, and a table specifying pre- and post-project habitat types by acre.
- **Preliminary Designs:** Preliminary designs (schematic design document) for each restoration alternative including grading plans, cross-sections, habitat elevation bands, and structures.
- **Hydrodynamic Modeling:** Hydrodynamic modeling to estimate the size of channels and types of connections or control structures required to achieve the targeted tide range and inundation frequency of the wetlands, and to maintain the current level of flood protection.
- **Maintenance:** Long-term maintenance needs including sediment removal to maintain water control structure functions, channel network functions, habitat areas, and water quality swales. Maintenance cost estimates will be prepared to facilitate comparison between restoration alternatives as part of the alternative evaluation process.
- **Public Access:** Public access plan (PAP) component describing how the public will access and experience the property, as well as how the public access and interpretation concepts are integrated into each restoration alternative.
- **Construction Methods:** Construction methods are identified and assessed to provide information relative to constructability and to provide input to the development of construction cost estimates.
- **Cost Estimates:** Cost estimates for all phases of project implementation including preliminary engineering, environmental review, final engineering, permitting, construction, construction management, construction monitoring, monitoring, and management.
- **Summary Matrix:** A matrix that summarizes the pros and cons for each restoration alternative. The summary matrix shows the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.

The Los Cerritos Wetlands Conceptual Restoration Plan would implement a coordinated restoration vision that will require a phased approach driven by funding availability, land acquisition, permitting and the functional sequencing of project elements. This vision must recognize that some parcels may not be available for restoration until perhaps 2030 or later. As a result, restoration design must be flexible enough to allow for phased implementation as parcels come into public ownership. The Conceptual Restoration Plan for Los Cerritos will not only evaluate the engineering, environmental, and economic feasibility of restoration alternatives within the wetlands ecosystem, but will also provide a conceptual restoration and public access framework that could be implemented in coordinated stages over time. Members of the LCWA have had initial discussions with the private landowners regarding the planning effort, and most of the landowners appear willing to have their properties included.

FISCAL INFORMATION: The LCWA received two RMC grants in the total amount of \$675,000 to fund the completion of the CRP for the entire 500 acres.

The implementation of the CRP including the completion of the CEQA/NEPA documents will require additional funding and may take up to five years to implement the first phase if work continues uninterrupted. Additionally, according to the CRP the probable construction costs from No Project Alternative to Alternative 3 range \$106,000 to \$473,000 per acre.

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RESOLUTION 2015 - 05

RESOLUTION OF THE LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS AUTHORITY
ADOPTING THE FINAL LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS COMPLEX
CONCEPTUAL RESTORATION PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority (Authority) has been established between the Coastal Conservancy, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the City of Seal Beach and the City of Long Beach to facilitate the acquisition, protection, conservation, restoration, maintenance and operation an environmental enhancement of the Los Cerritos Wetlands; and

WHEREAS, the LCWA adopts a resolution to adopt the Final Los Cerritos Wetlands Complex Conceptual Restoration Plan; and

WHEREAS, this action is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); NOW

Therefore be it resolved, that the LCWA hereby:

1. FINDS that this action is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the LCWA.
2. FINDS that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
3. AUTHORIZES the adoption of the Final Los Cerritos Wetlands Complex Conceptual Restoration Plan and make necessary contract and budget amendments.
4. ADOPTS staff report dated August 12, 2015

~ End of Resolution ~

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS AUTHORITY on August 12, 2015.

Joan Cardellino, Alternate to the LCWA Chair

ATTEST:

Terry Fujimoto
Deputy Attorney General

