

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

Date: September 10, 2026

To: Governing Board Members

From: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

Subject: Item 6f: Status Report and Update on the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Planning Project.

BACKGROUND:

The LCWA adopted the Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP) in August 2015, which identified opportunities for restoring tidal connections, creation of new wetland and associated upland habitats, consolidation of oil operations, improvement to passive recreation facilities, creation of a visitor's center, and accommodation of special status species at the Los Cerritos Wetlands. In January 2021 the LCWA certified a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) utilizing the CRP designs to create a program description for a 503-acre program area. The potential impacts of this proposed program were analyzed, and mitigation measures were determined for potentially impacted resources. In May 2021 the LCWA adopted the Los Cerritos Wetlands Habitat Restoration Plan that refined the designs from the PEIR and made recommendations for which projects should be prioritized to tier off from the PEIR. Finally, in August 2023 the LCWA certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project which was based on 65% construction design plans.

The Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration project covers 103.5 acres identified as the South LCWA site and the State Lands Commission site (together comprising the Project Area), both managed by LCWA. This Project Area was historically salt marsh but has been altered through anthropogenic activities.

The project advertised the Final Construction Documents for bid by a qualified Construction Contractor in Summer 2025 and broke ground in October 2025.

FISCAL:

The LCWA acquired a \$25.8 Million grant from the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and a \$6 Million grant from the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to perform Project Management, Final Construction Design Plans and Specifications, Final Permitting, Community Engagement, Environmental Compliance, Construction of Phase 1 of the Project, and Post-construction Monitoring and Adaptive Management. Additional funding has been provided by AES (\$305,000) and from the Orange County Community Fund (OCCF) Warne Fund (\$35,000).

STATUS REPORT AND UPDATE:

Following are the updates regarding the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Planning Project.

1. Project Management:

- a. The Project Management team has met with the consulting team at least weekly since June 2024 and convened Steering Committee meeting every 2 weeks.
- b. The Project Management team continues to coordinate with neighbors, utilities companies, easement holders, and City staff.
- c. The Project Management team continues to manage the budgets for 4 funding sources including an advances totaling \$3,000,000.00 from the OPC grant and \$6,463,000 from SCC.
- d. The Project Management team continues to review all contractor/consultant invoices and prepare them for processing by LCWA staff.
- e. The Project Management Team continues coordinating with the Construction Management and Engineering teams to respond to all submittals and RFIs and reviews 3-week look aheads, work plans, change orders, and field orders.
- f. The Project Management Team continues to coordinate with utilities and permitting agencies.
- g. The Project Management Team is coordinating with CCLB on the scope of work for them to construct the landscape.
- h. The Project Management Team continues managing all contracts

2. Final Designs and Permitting:

- a. Designs were completed in 2025 and all permits were obtained prior to the start of construction.
- b. SoCal Edison provided plans to temporarily relocate poles to facilitate installation of the box bridge and to underground the transmission lines along 1st Street and a new transformer. SCE invoiced the LCWA for the cost to design and install the new underground transmission lines and relocate the poles, and those invoices were paid.
- c. Zayo (Crown Castle) provided designs for relocating communication lines and invoiced the LCWA. The invoice has been paid.
- d. The City of Seal Beach will perform the sleeving of their 18-inch waterline in tandem with the project. Public works representatives have been onsite coordinating with the contractor. A contractor has been selected and a pre-construction meeting has occurred.
- e. All major regulatory permits and lease agreements have been issued.

3. Community Engagement:

- a. General Public
 - i. The outreach coordinator continues to field phone calls and emails to answer questions about the project, attend community events, and provide presentations when requested.
 - ii. Social media posts and a newsletter were produced.
 - iii. A public engagement mixer was planned and hosted on May 13th.

4. Environmental Compliance:

- a. The LCWA continues to provide the necessary Cultural, Biological, and Archaeological Monitoring during any work occurring on site.
- b. The environmental compliance team developed and implemented a Workers Environmental Awareness Program for training all new personnel that visit the site.
- c. The environmental compliance team submits weekly memos summarizing the biological monitoring efforts from the previous week.
- d. A biologist performed a Belding's Savannah Sparrow survey prior to work in nesting season and submitted a memo to CDFW.

- e. Water quality monitoring takes places every 1-2 weeks throughout construction and tidal flushes are coordinated as needed to support fish.
- f. Verified environmental protection measures in the field, including ESA fencing, silt fencing, and turbidity curtain installation.
- g. Biologists monitor birds for nesting behavior and implement buffers as needed.
- h. Biologists document impacts to general wildlife, wetland habitat, and special status plants if and when they occur.

5. Biological Monitoring

- a. All pre-construction surveys have been completed. The baseline monitoring reporting is being drafted.
- b. The team flagged environmental sensitive areas and special status plants at the project site prior to construction.

6. Construction Management

- a. The Construction Management Team coordinated with permitting agencies and utilities, including a consultant that was able to facilitate communications with SCE.
- b. The Construction Management Team coordinated with the labor compliance consultant, attended weekly design team meetings, hosted weekly construction team meetings, and held various internal meetings. They also produced weekly meeting minutes and updated the correspondence log and reviewed 3-week look aheads.
- c. The team drafted field orders and coordinated on signatures, produced progress payments, and tracked workdays.
- d. The team attended the quarterly LCWA board meeting to provide updates.
- e. The team provided daily inspection and onsite observation, including coordination with monitors, schedule of activities, and testing needs. They also ensured a safe worksite, reviewed technical memos and the SWPPP plan.
- f. The team responded to submittals and RFIs and coordinated with the team on responses and performed site visits to verify in field conditions for RFI responses and alignment with project permits, designs, and specs.
- g. The team processes field orders and tracks allowances and contingency funds.

7. Construction

- a. SWPPP and ESA fencing has been maintained
- b. The Contractor maintained site security, including cameras, fencing, and an entrance gate.
- c. The Contractor completed the clear and grub as well as demolition of old infrastructure, asphalt and concrete removal, and tree removal and salvage.
- d. The Contractor completed most of the site grading and berm installation.
- e. The Contractor maintained haul roads and stockpiles.
- f. The Contractor performed numerous soil tests and identified subgrade soils that require amendment prior to topsoil placement.
- g. The Contractor completed construction of the subgrade in all areas designated for upland habitats. The Contractor completed excavation of the Channel system and wetland habitats except for the area directly adjacent to the future box bridge.
- h. The Contractor excavated soils suitable for topsoil, sifted the soil to remove debris, and placed that material in project areas designated for coastal sage scrub. The Contractor imported and placed topsoil on the majority of State Lands.
- i. The Contractor removed and replaced all chain link fence identified in the plans for replacement and installed a new gate at Gum Grove Park.

- j. The Contractor demobilized between August 10 and August 19.
- k. The LCWA's Labor Compliance Consultant attended calls with the project team., prepared pre-con packets, wage determinations, and admin binders/files, pulled wages for contractors and subs, and performed verifications, site visits and crew member interviews.