

SALTON SEA



MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM



Salton Sea Management Program

APRIL 24, 2019

BRUCE WILCOX

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF SALTON SEA POLICY

CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY



Program Goals

Stabilize and manage the Salton Sea to protect public health and critical Pacific Flyway habitat through:

Dust suppression projects that protect the health of local residents

Habitat and restoration projects that benefit fish and wildlife

Phase I of SSMP

- **2018 - 2028**
 - **Cover up to 30,000 acres of exposed playa**
 - **Establishes criteria for water delivery infrastructure and habitat**
 - **Utilizes design build and monitoring to be responsive to site conditions**
- **Focus Areas:**
 - **New, Alamo and Whitewater Rivers**
 - **Air quality and dust suppression projects**

Elevation & Exposed Playa

2,260 acres of new
playa exposed in 2018

Predictions by SALSA2
model are consistent
with 2018 observations

Sea elevations stabilize
and exposed playa may
peak in the mid 2040's

Water Quality

Bureau of Reclamation monitored algae, nutrients, selenium, and dissolved oxygen (DO) between 2004-2017

The current salinity, measured as Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), is 63.7 ppt, which is consistent with modeling

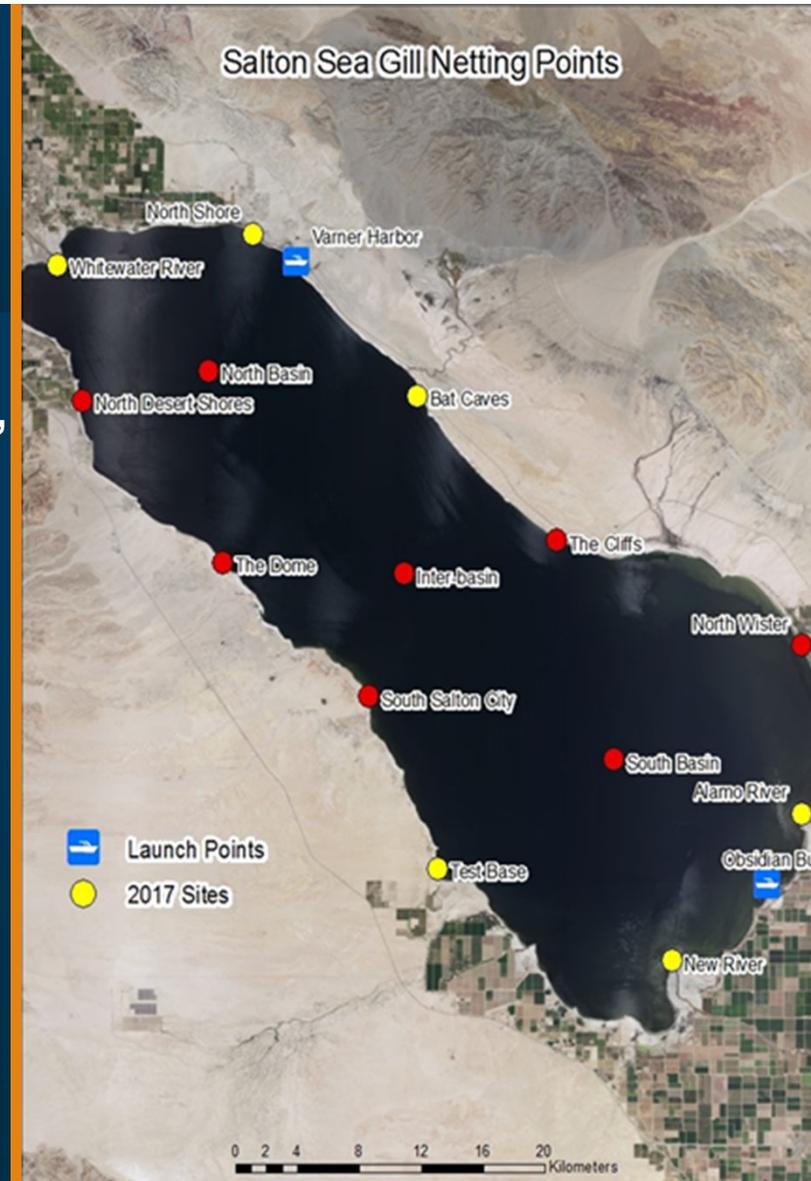
The inflow water from the New River has issues with pathogens and nutrients. The state and federal government are seeking solutions.

Status of Fish

Desert pupfish are doing relatively well in some drains, Salt Creek and Hot Mineral Spa Creek. Pupfish population has declined in San Felipe Creek.

The 2018 catch of Salton Sea tilapia was less than half of the 2017 catch: a historic low.

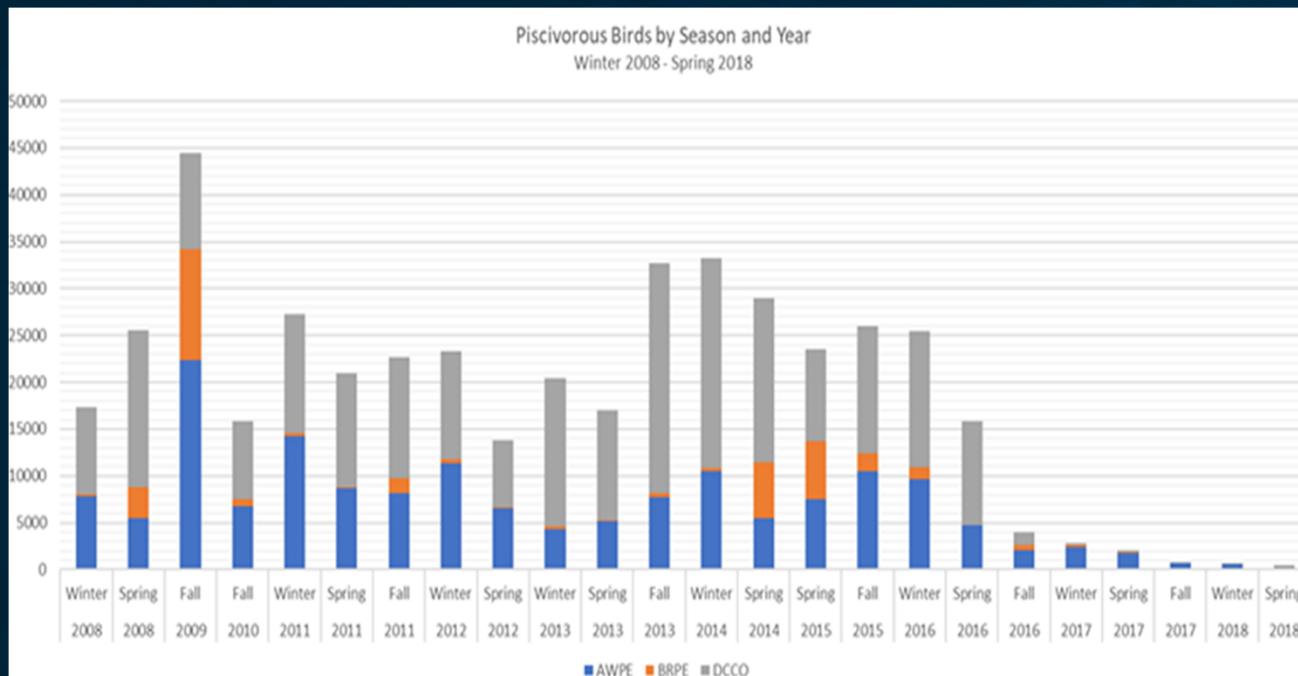
The 2018 catch saw many small-sized fish, which may lead to a greater number of fish in 2019.



Status of Fish-Eating Bird Populations

Fish-eating birds are utilizing resources similar to past usage, though at lower numbers

In Spring 2016, numbers of fish-eating birds present at the Salton Sea began to fall to record lows



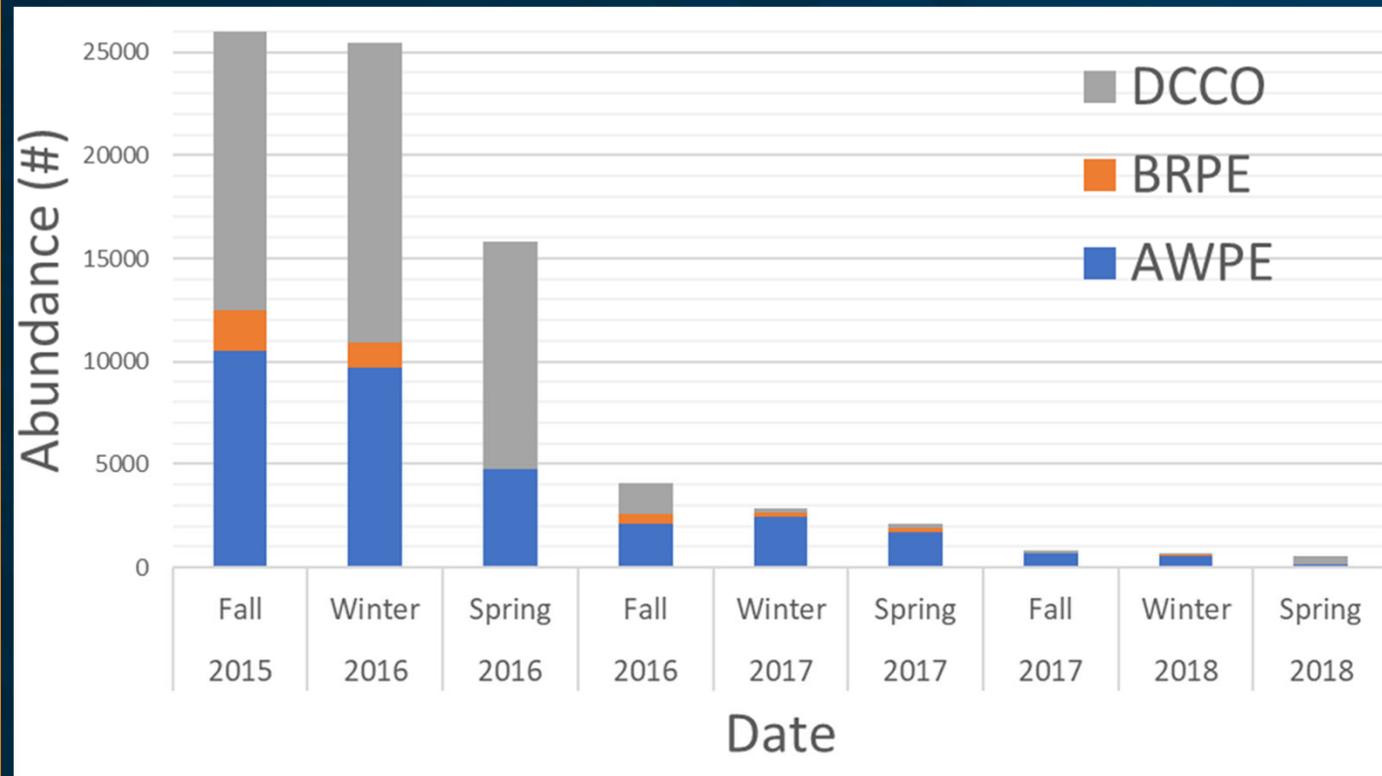
Fish-eating Birds by Season and Year

Fall 2015 – Spring 2018

American White Pelicans:
10% of previously surveyed average

Brown Pelicans: 3% of previously surveyed average

Double-crested Cormorants: below 2% of previously surveyed average



Ongoing Monitoring

Data collected are used to provide information and determine or prioritize appropriate management actions.

In 2019, CDFW will conduct the following surveys using previously-adopted methods:

Desert Pupfish surveys at accessible drains and shoreline pools at the North and South end of the Sea

Gill netting – Status and trends of Salton Sea fish populations

Avian Resources –Current trends of birds utilizing the Salton Sea

Aerial surveys to monitor piscivorous (fish-eating) birds

Colonial Nesting Bird Monitoring

Marsh Bird surveys

Dead and Sick Bird Monitoring

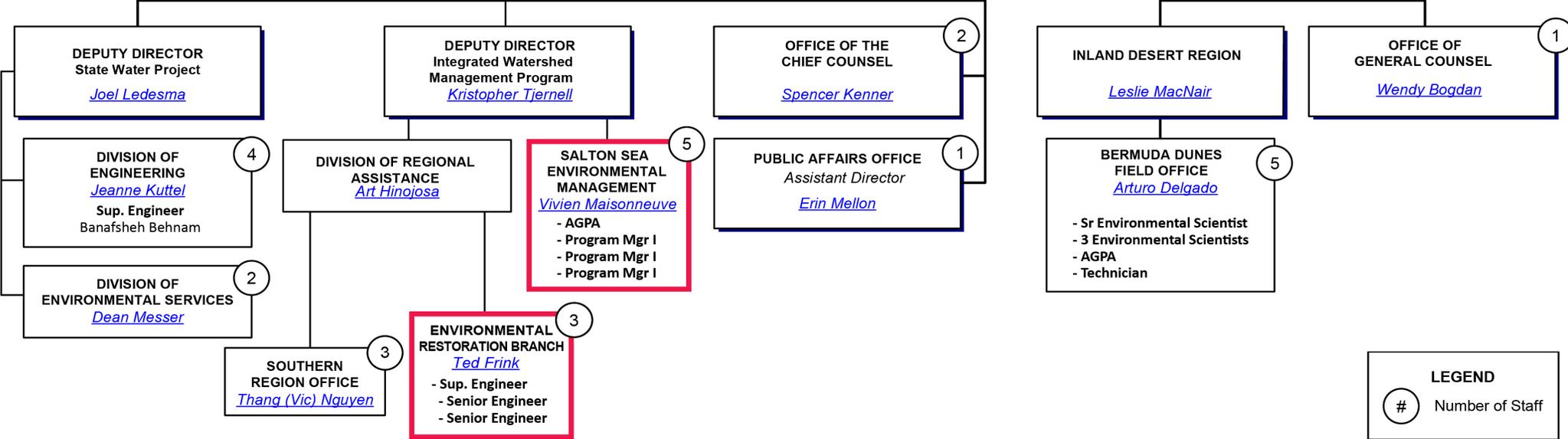
Shoreline Surveys



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LEGEND
 # Number of Staff

Coordination & Outreach

Stakeholders

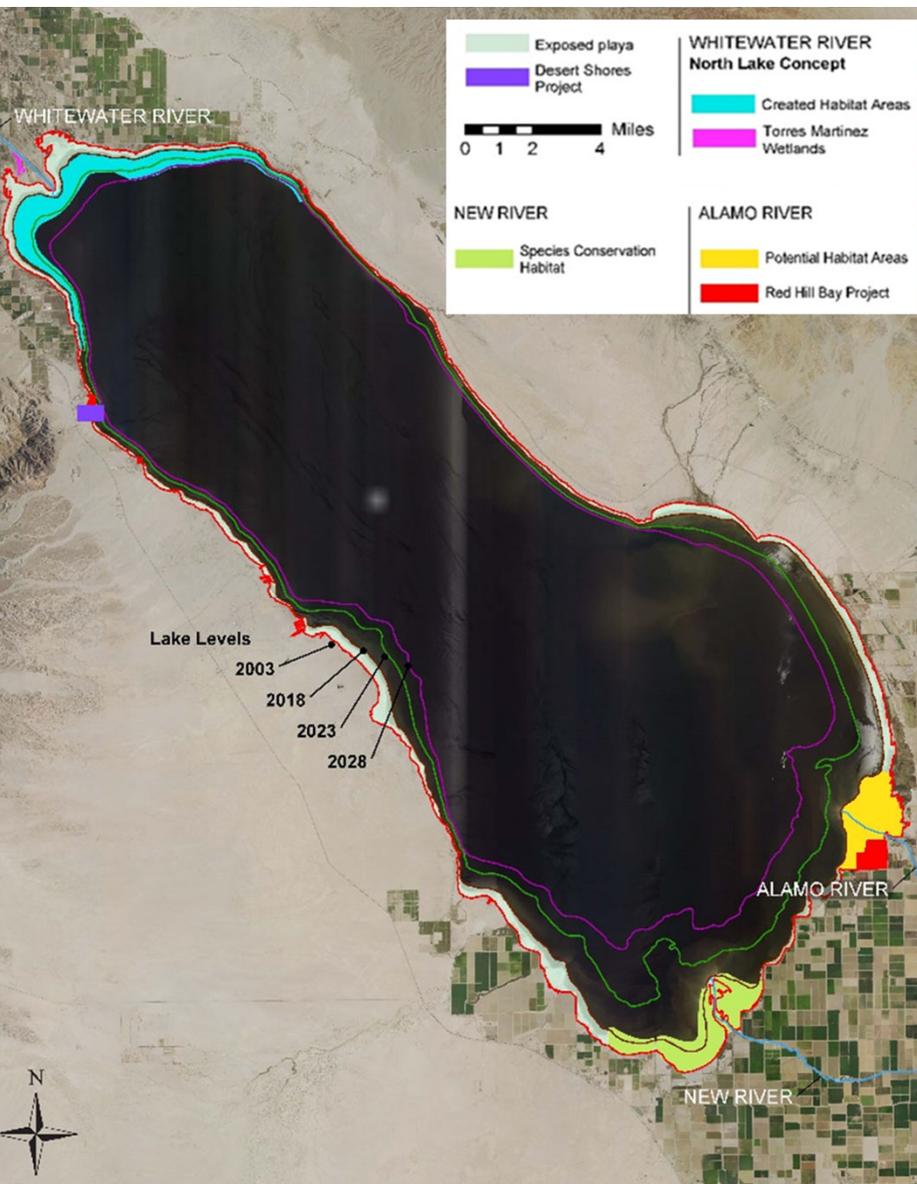
BOR agreement

- 3900 ac. dust-suppression

Public meetings

- **Previous:**
 - March 2018
 - October 2018
 - Feb 2019
- **Upcoming: More interaction with communities**
 - Summer 2019





Current and Future Projects

Current efforts: Mouth of the New, Alamo, Whitewater Rivers

- Primary playa exposure zones

Additional habitat constructed within the 10-year plan, as the sea recedes:

- New River - 7000 acres
- Whitewater River – 6000 acres
- Alamo River – 3500 acres

Anticipate implementing 14,900 acres of dust suppression projects by 2028

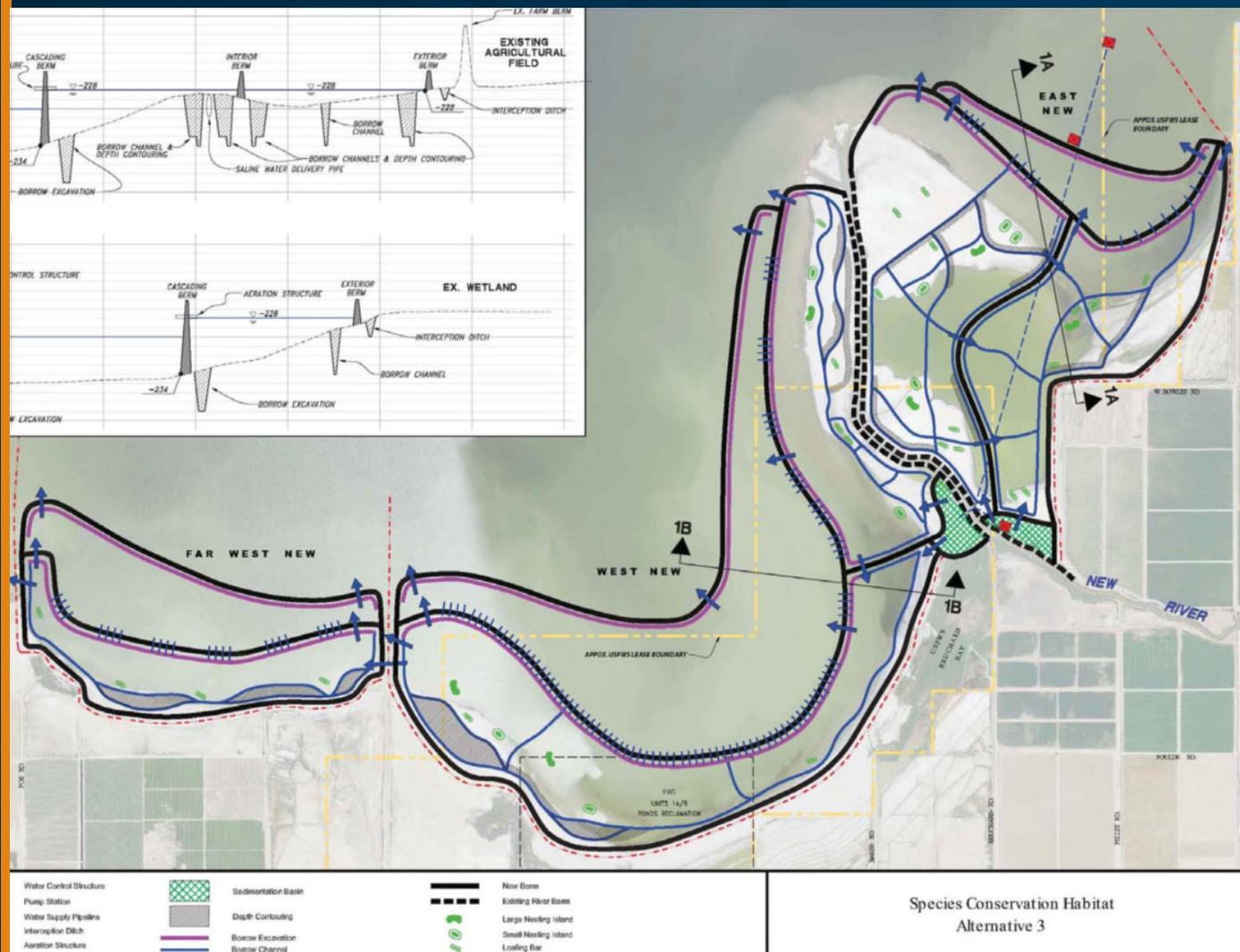
New River Approx. 7000 ac

New River SCH

- Approx. 3770 ac
- Covering exposed playa in the New River area with wetted habitat
- Construction in mid 2020
- 1000 ac completed December 2021; 3770 ac completed December 2023

Additional SSMP projects

- Approx. 3250 ac



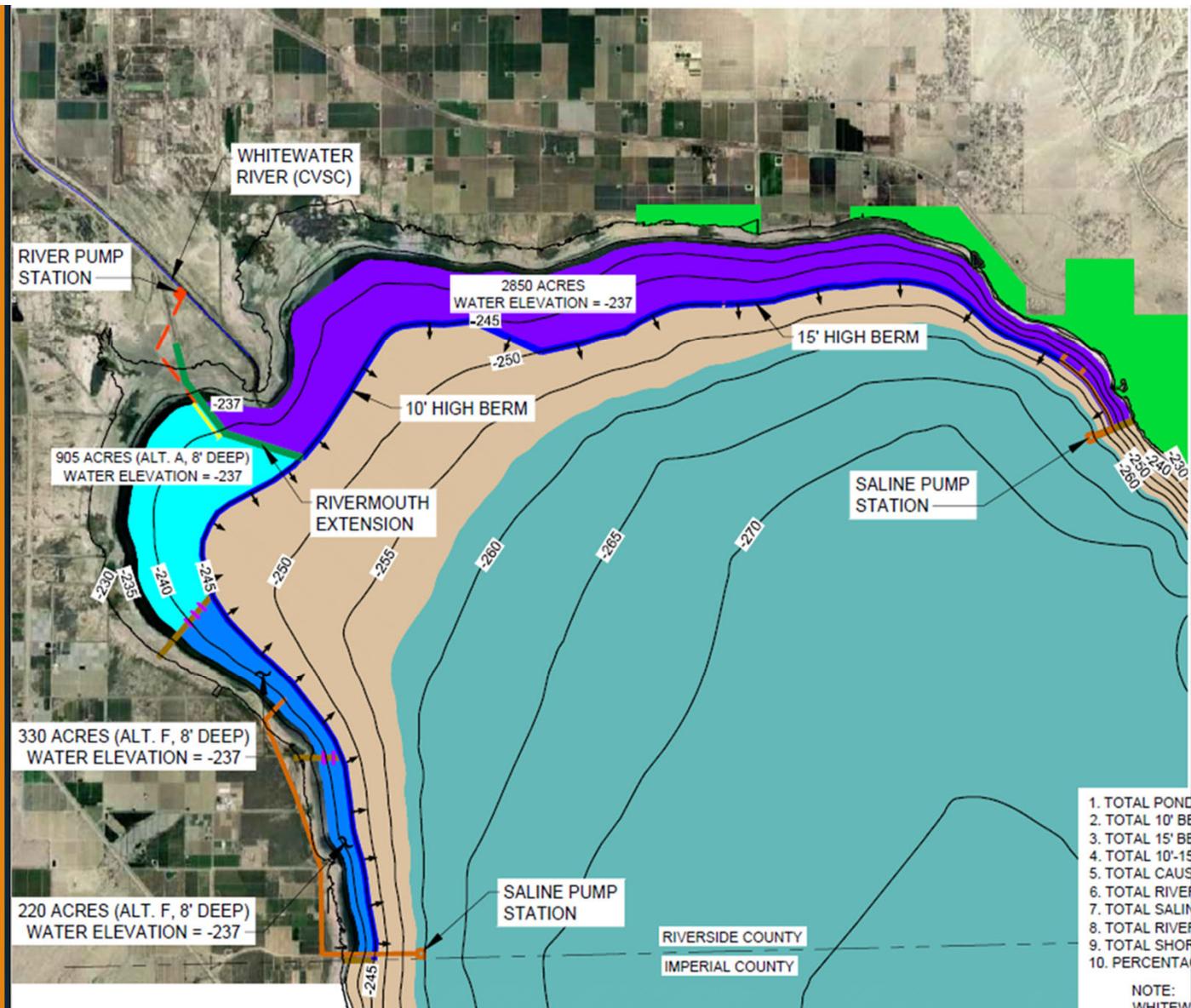
Whitewater River Approx. 6000 acres

North Lake Concept

- Approx. 4000 acres
- Implement in 2023

Additional SSMP projects

- Approx. 2000 acres



Environmental Planning and Permitting

Anticipate reaching the 2024 target of habitat creation and dust-suppression

Agreement with ACOE will be executed to support environmental planning and permitting – expected mid-2019

Supplemental EIS and permits – expected completion 2020

Easement negotiations – on-going

Long-Range Planning

Assess potential long-range solutions:

- Water Import proposals
- Water quality projects
- Local or Regional water sources

The Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration PEIR preferred alternative contains these features: a perimeter lake, marine sea and saline habitat complex

- Current SSMP projects will be complementary to the creation of these features

SSMP 10 – Year Plan Updates

**Whitewater
River
/
North Lake
Concept**

**Potential for
supplemental
water use**

**Goals and
Objectives
refined**

Allocated State Financial Resources

Funding Source	Amount	Appropriated Agency
Proposition 50	\$14 million	Wildlife Conservation Board
Proposition 84	\$26 million	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Proposition 1	\$80 million	Department of Water Resources
Proposition 68	\$190 million	California Natural Resources Agency

For More Information

<http://resources.ca.gov/salton-sea>

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