



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

PROJECT TITLE: Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan, Program Environmental Impact Report

November 13, 2020

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan (Enhancement Plan). State Parks is requesting the comment of your agency as to the scope and content of the Draft Program EIR which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. A brief description of the actions associated with the Enhancement Plan (proposed project), the park unit's location, and a brief description of possible environmental effects are included.

Interested organizations or individuals may also respond to this notice with comments regarding the information contained within it.

Project Title: Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan, Program Environmental Impact Report

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluates potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the programmatic actions described in the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan (Enhancement Plan). Beginning in 2013, an updated Enhancement Plan was developed to provide guidance on restoring and enhancing the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon's (Lagoon) habitats, protecting listed species, reducing threats to public health, and involving stakeholder groups with regard to coastal resource stewardship. Lagoon Improvement Concept alternatives for restoring and enhancing the Lagoon's native habitats were developed as part of the process and are identified in the updated Enhancement Plan. In general, the conceptual-level alternatives in the Enhancement Plan focused on restoring and enhancing native salt marsh and transition habitats in areas currently dominated by invasive grass and providing long-term resiliency to sea level rise using various strategies. Restoration and enhancement would occur through efforts that include focused grading and reconfiguration of the channel network in the Lagoon to provide better freshwater management and enhanced tidal exchange/influence. This element of the proposed project is conceptual in nature and is intended to guide project-level design and CEQA analysis that will occur separately, tiering off this program-level EIR where appropriate. The

Enhancement Plan also identified conceptual vector and trails management and improvement opportunities.

The proposed project as outlined in the Program EIR represents a series of conceptual actions developed in the Enhancement Plan for a program-level approach to restore and enhance salt marsh and other habitats historically present in the Lagoon, improve public access and public safety around the Lagoon's perimeter, and present a "natural system approach" for more effective vector management of *Culex tarsalis*, a freshwater mosquito that can transmit West Nile virus and other forms of brain encephalitis to human hosts. The proposed project has three primary conceptual-level elements:

- Lagoon enhancement – focused grading and modifications to the lagoon channel network to restore and enhance areas of historic salt marsh (i.e., Lagoon Concept 2: Freshwater Management [Channel Improvements]). These areas of historic salt marsh have converted to a brackish system caused primarily by sedimentation and nuisance flows of freshwater from the watershed that have facilitated the establishment of invasive grass and other non-native species. Focused grading and channel improvements would provide features in areas to promote the recovery of salt marsh and facilitate the resiliency and potential expansion of this valued habitat type over time in response to sea level rise. Freshwater management measures would include decreases of input through watershed runoff reduction, potential diversion, and beneficial use of these flows where feasible.
- Trail improvements – proposed improvements/enhancements to existing trails, identification of trails that are anticipated to become inundated with sea level rise and proposed realignment strategies, and opportunities to create linkages to regional trail networks and public transit centers.
- Vector management – focus on freshwater management and improved tidal mixing to improve vector management of *Culex tarsalis* in a manner that also supports the protection of existing salt marsh along with future restoration and enhancement efforts of this habitat type. Measures such as structural improvements to reduce stagnant water within storm drain systems, channel modifications to improve tidal circulation, and channel creation to connect areas of inundation to reduce residence time would be implemented.

PROJECT LOCATION: The Project site is State Marsh Natural Preserve that is part of the Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve located in northern coastal San Diego County (see attached Figure 1-1). Los Peñasquitos Lagoon is a 565-acre coastal estuary that receives drainage from an approximately 59,212-acre watershed comprising three primary sub-drainages: Carmel Valley, Los Peñasquitos Canyon, and Carroll Canyon.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS AND MITIGATION: The Draft Program EIR identified significant and unavoidable temporary environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project alternatives under CEQA to Air Quality and Biological Resources. The Draft Program EIR identified potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation that could be reduced to less than significant to the following topics: Water Quality, Cultural Resources, and Paleontological Resources.

PUBLIC INFORMATION: The Enhancement Plan is digitally available on the following websites:

<http://www.lospenasquitos.org/planning/lagoon-enhancement-plan/>

The Draft Program EIR and other supporting material are digitally available on the following website link and QR Code:

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=983



Due to COVID restrictions and closures, hard copies of the Program EIR will only be available upon request made at least 48 hours in advance at the State Parks San Diego Coast District Office located at:

California Department of Parks and Recreation
San Diego Coast District
4477 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92110
Phone (619) 688-3260

AVAILABILITY AND COMMENTS: In accordance with §§15105 and 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Public Notice officially notifies the general public, public agencies, and interested individuals and organizations that a 45-day public review period will begin on **November 13, 2020**. Written comments regarding environmental issues analysis in the Draft Program EIR and the accuracy and completeness of the Draft Program EIR must be received by **December 28, 2020**.

Please include your name and contact information or the name of a contact person in your organization or agency, if appropriate. Please reference the project title (Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Enhancement Plan, Program Environmental Impact Report) in the subject line of your correspondence.

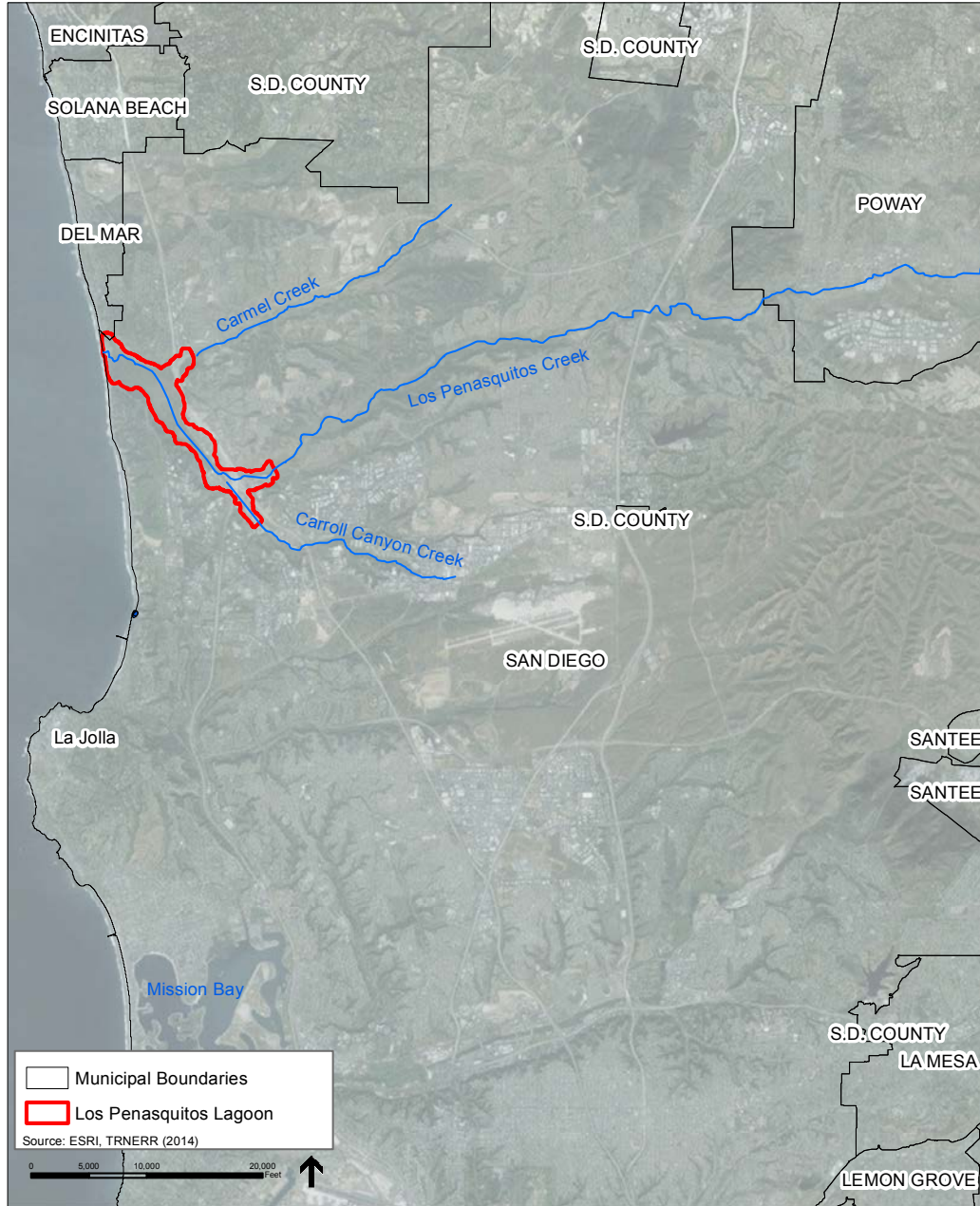
Electronic submittal of comments may be sent to the following email address:

Email: SDCD.CEQA@parks.ca.gov

Written comments can be mailed to the following contact and address:

Cindy Krimmel, Environmental Planner
San Diego Coast District
California Department of Parks and Recreation
4477 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92110
Phone (619) 688-3260

A virtual public meeting will be held on December 12, 2020 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Information on how to attend the virtual public meeting will be posted on the following website page: <http://www.lospenasquitos.org/planning/>



Los Peñasquitos Location Map

FIGURE 1-1. Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Location Map