

Salinas River

Long-Term Management Plan

salinasrivermanagementprogram.org

FEBRUARY 2019



Long-term management of the Salinas River—the longest river system in the central coast of California—will balance considerations for flood control, habitat, and economic viability.

Overview of the Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) is finalizing the development of the **Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP)**, a multi-benefit management program intended to provide guidance to MCWRA regarding its facilities and operations; address river management challenges such as flood control, water supply, and water quality; and outline strategies for conserving and managing natural resources, including threatened and endangered species.

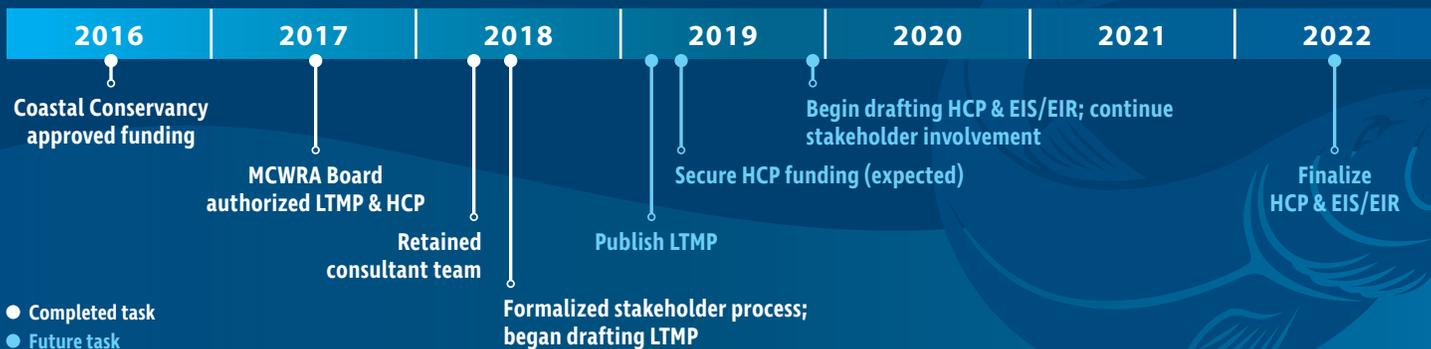
Because operating MCWRA facilities and managing the sandbar at the mouth of the Salinas River Lagoon may result in incidental take¹ of threatened and endangered species, the LTMP will also support the development of a **habitat conservation plan (HCP)**—a planning document required to obtain take authorization from federal authorities. As part of the HCP development process, two environmental documents will be prepared: an **environmental impact report (EIR)** to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, and an **environmental impact statement (EIS)** to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

¹ **Take**, as defined by the federal Endangered Species Act, means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect any threatened or endangered species.

SALINAS RIVER LTMP GOALS (REVISED 2019)

- Identify **long-term solutions for management of the Salinas River** that include flood reduction, water resource management, stream maintenance, and habitat management for threatened and endangered species.
- Investigate the Salinas River Lagoon for the potential of **reducing flooding and improving habitat conditions**.
- Identify potential **improvements to steelhead migration** in the Salinas River utilizing management efforts and anticipated future projects.
- Develop the framework for implementing the LTMP that **meets a variety of multi-benefit management goals**, including implementation of the forthcoming groundwater sustainability plans for the Salinas Valley.
- **Build upon and incorporate public/private partnerships**, compatible with existing land uses and water rights.
- **Document the historical conditions** in the Salinas River watershed in Monterey County.
- **Describe the existing conditions in the Salinas River watershed** in Monterey County—including the physical, biological, and chemical changes in the system over time—and, to the extent possible, the sources driving those changes.
- **Inform development of a future MCWRA HCP** and other planning documents.

TIMELINE of the SALINAS RIVER LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Work Completed to Date

In 2017, MCWRA received funding from the State Coastal Conservancy and approval from the MCWRA Board of Directors to develop the LTMP. Since that time, the following work has been completed.

Consultant Team Selection

Following a public bid process, MCWRA retained a team of consultants to assist with LTMP preparation. Team members include experts in water resources, storm-water management, groundwater, hydrology, biology, conservation, environmental regulation, policy analysis, strategic and financial planning, and public outreach.

Agency and Public Engagement

Because public and agency involvement is critical for successful LTMP development, MCWRA established a robust stakeholder engagement process to solicit input and gather insights.

Planning Group. This group consists of about 30 members, including representatives from regulatory agencies, resource management agencies, conservation groups, and the agriculture industry. Among this group's tasks were reviewing technical and policy issues and making recommendations for plan content.

Working Groups. Working groups delved into specific issues to provide insights and guidance to MCWRA, consultants, and the planning group. Groups were formed around four topic areas: the Salinas River Lagoon, stream maintenance, groundwater, and implementation.

Public Involvement. MCWRA has kept the public informed throughout the planning process by email, establishing and updating the [LTMP website](#), and hosting a public meeting where members of the public could provide input and influence the development of the LTMP. All planning group meetings, held during plan development, were open to the public.

Salinas River LTMP

MCWRA has completed the LTMP for public distribution. The LTMP establishes the plan's goals (*see sidebar on previous page*) and geographic scope. It also charts the Salinas River watershed's historical and existing conditions, including the presence of threatened and endangered species in the study area.

The LTMP identifies the management planning considerations raised throughout LTMP development, along with the management objectives and actions that will guide MCWRA toward long-term management solutions. It concludes by discussing options for implementation like stakeholder involvement, environmental compliance, how progress could be monitored, and funding.

Next Steps

MCWRA will publish the LTMP in late February. The HCP and EIR/EIS will follow, beginning in late 2019 should MCWRA secure funding to support the effort. The HCP will take about 3 years to complete.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT: salinasrivermanagementprogram.org

CONTACT: Elizabeth Krafft, Senior Water Resources Hydrologist, (831) 755-4860, kraffttea@co.monterey.ca.us

