



**Salton Sea Authority**  
**General Manager's Report**  
**To the Board of the Directors**  
February 25, 2021

**Executive Summary**

The efforts of the Authority on the whole continue to progress, but at the project level we are wrestling with typical but frustrating delays. Unfortunately, and as discussed last month, these delays will only further squeeze Authority cash flow in the coming few months. We still project to have adequate reserves to close out the year and transition into the new budget cycle and should begin rebuilding reserves once projects are initiated and other revenue sources materialize.

I would also direct your attention to the memo included in your Board package titled "Strategic Priorities and Values," a framework for the 2021/2022 budget cycle. That document addresses at a high level the current and near future core business practices, projects, and direction of the Authority.

**Advocacy**

Our advocates have been active in both Sacramento and DC. One particular item addressed on this month's agenda specifically addresses longstanding delays in securing a Watershed Act study, a prerequisite to accessing significant federal funds that could be used around the Sea. In Sacramento we continue to explore various accounts and programs that might provide the Authority the additional resources necessary to fully serve our Stakeholders. For additional details, please refer to the reports provided by both our DC and Sacramento advocates included in your Board packet.

**North Lake Pilot Project**

But for a few unreconciled items, the Proposition 68 grant documents are in near final form. It appears, however, securing environmental approvals for the project could cause additional delays. Riverside County and the Authority stand ready to execute on this important "Demonstration Project," and hope that the State representatives can work with diligence and "cut the green tape" on this project which is foundational to the development of deep-water habitat in the region.

## **Desert Shores Community Revitalization**

Several meetings with Project Partners were held in early February. Multiple Project Partners, along with interested and active Stakeholders are actively engaged in a process that should soon produce a project scope sufficient to begin the process of identifying funds to ensure its timely, successful completion.

## **Whitewater Delta Wetlands**

An opportunity arose to potentially utilize up to \$2 million in funds from RCPP for the development of wetlands on private or tribal lands. Time is of the essence in utilizing these committed funds, so finding a project site that allows for expedited development is critical. We are exploring working with the Torres Martinez tribe as a possible expansion and/or re-envisioning of the wetlands previously developed. We are also working with other adjacent landowners in the region to see what a larger assemblage might look like. Unfortunately, CNRA will only allow for wetlands development below a certain elevation due to language in the Water Board Order. We are exploring how we might work within the existing order or otherwise to create more, cost effective wetlands in a timely manner and appropriate location, without being constrained by a contractually driven imaginary line in a somewhat arbitrary location. If successful, this project could lead to greater USDA funding that we could use both near the Torres Martinez lands and elsewhere, perhaps at the New River if appropriate.

## **Red Hill Bay**

We continue to be approached by Stakeholders concerning the challenging situation at Red Hill Bay. The Authority does not have an active role at present, and it is not entirely clear what role it would play if we engaged. However, at the direction of the Board and in cooperation with the Project Partners, the Authority stands ready to assist, consult or coordinate as appropriate in order to finally bring this important project to fruition.

## **Communications**

This item is discussed in greater detail in the Strategic Vision agenda item. We continue to collect names of possible candidates who could assist us with our public relations effort. Assuming funding is identified, we should be ready to proceed with haste to address this very important program need.