

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
June 10, 2005

ITEM: 11

SUBJECT: **FAMOSA SLOUGH CULVERT EXTENSION
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

The Conservancy Governing Board will consider and possibly adopt a resolution (*tentative Resolution 05-12*) authorizing the Executive Officer to prepare a letter in support of the City of San Diego's Famosa Slough Culvert Extension Project. The project will increase tidal exchange within the Slough and will be funded by the State Coastal Conservancy through the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. (*Deborah Jayne*)

PURPOSE: Consideration and possible adoption of tentative Resolution 05-12.

DISCUSSION: Famosa Slough is the last remaining remnant of the vast wetlands/estuary that once existed at the end of the San Diego River between San Diego Bay and Mission Bay. Historically, the River's channel and terminus alternated between San Diego Bay and False Bay (former Mission Bay). Today, although greatly reduced in size and hydrologic function, Famosa Slough is still an important part of the San Diego River system and serves as refuge for flora and fauna during major floods.

Project Background

The California Coastal Conservancy, through the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, has been supportive of restoring and preserving Famosa Slough as a natural habitat to (1) provide sanctuary for wildlife; (2) educate the public about the flora and fauna of wetlands; and (3) increase public awareness, appreciation, and stewardship for wetland systems and their many beneficial functions.

To that end, the State Coastal Conservancy funded the creation of the *Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan* which was published in 1993. In 2000, the State Coastal Conservancy granted \$12,000 to the City of San Diego to prepare a feasibility study to assess the potential for reactivating a culvert between

Famosa Slough and Famosa Channel in order to enhance tidal exchange. In December 2001, the State Coastal Conservancy approved funding to prepare an environmental review document, secure permits, and prepare final construction design for the Famosa Slough Culvert Extension Construction Project.

Project Scope

This project will restore a culvert under West Point Loma Blvd into Famosa Slough to improve tidal exchange and increase tidal circulation within the Slough. The project is one of the hydrological priorities outlined in the *Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan* and has also been identified as a priority in the *Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project 2004 Workplan*.

The total cost of the project is \$370,000. The City of San Diego has located \$40,000 of local funds for the culvert extension project, and is requesting the remaining \$333,000 as an additional grant from the State Coastal Conservancy through the Wetlands Recovery Project. The City may also apply to other entities for grant funding.

Companion Project

The culvert extension project is one of two projects currently proposed for the Slough. The second project is the West Point Loma Boulevard Wetland Restoration Project at Famosa Slough which will remove construction rubble from the area to the south of West Point Loma Boulevard. This project will add nearly an acre of wetland area and be landscaped with native plants and a walking path. The peninsula that extends from this area will be made into an island and thereby enhance the tidal flow in the Slough as well as providing a nesting area for birds safe from predators. The Executive Officer submitted a letter of support for the West Point Loma Boulevard Wetland Restoration Project at Famosa Slough on March 17, 2005. (See **Supporting Document 2**)

The Executive Officer is currently seeking authorization to write a letter of support for the City of San Diego's proposed Culvert Extension Construction Project. The letter will support the City's grant applications for the project.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS:**

1. Tentative Resolution 05-12
2. Support Letter from Deborah Jayne to Chris Zirkle, City of San Diego, Development Services Department, dated March 17, 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt tentative Resolution 05-12.