



Date of Notice: August 2, 2019

# NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

## ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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**PROJECT NAME/NUMBER:** Famosa Slough Eutrophication Monitoring / Project # 635504

**COMMUNITY PLAN AREA:** Peninsula

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 2

**LOCATION:** Famosa Slough and Channel is a 37-acre wetland bisected by West Point Loma Boulevard, directly adjacent to the Interstate 8 (I-8) eastbound lanes on the north and two condominium complexes on the east and west. South of West Point Loma Boulevard, the Famosa Slough pond area is bordered by an existing service station and convenience store on the east, Famosa Boulevard on the west and residential uses on the west, Valeta Street and a public school on the southwestern edge of the Slough in a primarily multifamily residential neighborhood. The proposed project and staging area are located within the southern central basin of Famosa Slough, on the southside of West Point Loma Boulevard, directly adjacent to Famosa Boulevard. The entire Famosa Slough is located within the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Mayor Approval** to allow for the removal of eutrophic algae blooms in the southern central basin of Famosa Slough caused by excessive nutrient loading from urban runoff and trash/debris which will reduce negative impacts to water quality, and biological and recreational resources in the Slough area. Eutrophication or hypertrophication is when a body of water becomes overly enriched with minerals and nutrients which induce excessive growth of algae. The Famosa Slough and Channel are hydrologically affected by three distinct systems. The tidal circulation of seawater is the primary parameter which created, and maintains the coastal wetland ecosystem. Runoff from the local watershed and fresh water flow from the San Diego River Flood Control Channel are the other two sources which provide various amounts of input on a seasonal basis. Famosa Slough is on the Clean Water Action Section 303(d) list of water quality limited segments for eutrophication, with nutrients as the pollutant category (State Water Resources Control Board, 2012), and the 2012 California Integrated Water Quality Report and 303(d) List.

The proposed Project involves the recurring inspection and maintenance of an impaired water body on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list for eutrophication, which has been caused by excessive nutrients (total nitrogen and total phosphorus). The City of San Diego (City) has been directed by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control (San Diego Water Board) to develop and implement a total maximum daily load (TMDL) alternative to address eutrophication in the Famosa Slough. One of the primary activities the City is required to conduct to address eutrophication in the Famosa Slough area of the San Diego River Watershed Management Area (WMA), is to remove floating algal mats from the southern Slough. The Project proposes to conduct the following activities related to algae mat removal each year:

- Monitoring of biomass for algal mats in the Slough weekly June 1st through October 31st of the year.
- Monthly monitoring of biomass for algal mats in the Slough November 1st through May 31st of the year.
- Algal mat removal, twice per year June 1st through October 31st of the year, and/or as necessary.

The proposed Project does not involve permanent development. All work would be performed and/or overseen by the City of San Diego's TSW staff. Proposed algae removal would occur during the summer months when algal cover is greatest. A crew of 2 to 3 people would go out to the Slough for a period of 1 to 2 weeks skimming algae mats from the surface water. Hand tools would be used to perform this work, and no mechanized equipment would be used in the Famosa Slough. To remove algae mats from the Slough, staff would wear waders to remove algae mats by hand with one or more of the following: rakes, nets, kayaks, and/or stand-up paddleboards. Implementation of the project would be limited to work activities in open water, disturbed, and developed habitats, outside of the typical breeding season for migratory birds (February through August). Algae removal activities would be planned towards the end of the nest season (late July-September) to the extent feasible, and pre-activity surveys would be conducted for any work conducted during the nest period.

No grading would occur in the Slough or surrounding vicinity; an existing graded area would be used as the staging area for removal of algae mats, including an approximate 3-foot wide existing earthen (non-paved) path leading to the nearest existing roadway (Famosa Boulevard). Staging for the algae removal would occur at the base of the existing earthen walking path along the eastern side of Famosa Boulevard, at the northwest corner of the site that is south of West Point Loma Boulevard, and access/loading would occur at the unnamed trailhead and along the trail path. The algae would be brought to the staging area onshore and manually placed on tarps, where it would then be placed in a truck for proper disposal offsite at a landfill or other solid waste facility.

The Project does not involve any permanent development or associated construction and would not negatively impact storm water flow; as such, the Project would not require the preparation or use of construction storm water Best Management Practices (BMPs) or a Storm Water Quality Management Plan. Conversely, the Project would serve as a BMP by improving water quality in the Famosa Slough. Therefore, it is not necessary to develop a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan or Water Pollution Control Plan.

The proposed Project does not have the potential to impact potentially significant cultural resources because: 1) no grading or landform modification would occur on upland landforms that have the potential to have supported prehistoric occupation. The proposed Project staging area was previously graded and would not be modified further; 2) proposed algae removal would be undertaken with hand tools such that no mechanical equipment would be placed on upland landforms where the potential for prehistoric occupation is greatest; and 3) the removed algae material would be placed on tarps in the previously graded staging areas, and then transported to a licensed landfill or solid waste facility for disposal, such that there would be no potential for unknown archaeological resources to be indirectly impacted by placement of the organic materials.

**ENTITY CONSIDERING PROJECT APPROVAL:** City of San Diego

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15304(d) (Minor Alterations to Land) and 15307 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources)

**ENTITY MAKING ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** City of San Diego Mayor-Appointed Designee.

**STATEMENT SUPPORTING REASON FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** The City of San Diego conducted an environmental review and technical analysis which provided evidence to support the determination that the project would not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(d) which allows for minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in an improvement of habitat for fish or wildlife resources or greater fish production; Section 15307 which consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies as authorized by state law or local ordinance to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment; and where none of the exceptions listed in CEQA Section 15300.2 would apply in that no cumulative impacts were identified; no significant effects on the environment were identified; the project is not adjacent to a scenic highway; no historical resources would be affected by the action; and the project was not identified on a list of hazardous waste sites pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. This environmental determination is supported by a Biological Reconnaissance Survey and analysis conducted by Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood 2019) which concluded that the Project would not have significant impacts on sensitive species and biological resources and any potential impacts would be reduced or avoided by limiting work activities to open water, disturbed, and developed habitats, and working outside of the typical breeding season for migratory birds (February through August). Algae removal activities would be planned towards the end of the nest season (late July-September) to the extent feasible, and pre-activity surveys would be conducted for any work conducted during the nest period. The cultural determination is supported by qualified staff review of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), in-house resources and a site visit which concluded that the activity would not adversely affect known or recorded resources within proximity to project location in Famosa Slough.

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Victoria Kalkirtz, Senior Planner  
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On August 2, 2019, the City of San Diego made the above-referenced environmental determination pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This determination is appealable to the City Council. If you have any questions about this determination, contact the City Project Manager listed above.

Applications to appeal CEQA determination to the City Council must be filed in the office of the City Clerk within 10 business days from the date of the posting of this Notice (**August 16, 2019**). The appeal application can be obtained from the City Clerk, 202 'C' Street, Second Floor, San Diego, CA 92101.

This information will be made available in alternative formats upon request.

**POSTED:** August 2, 2019

**REMOVED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**POSTED:** M. Herrmann