

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT
(July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014)

MPWMD MITIGATION PROGRAM
WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

MONTEREY PENINSULA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
Prepared March 2015

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

In April 1990, the Water Allocation Program Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD or District) by J.L. Mintier and Associates. The Final EIR analyzed the effects of five levels of annual California American Water (CAW or Cal-Am) production, ranging from 16,744 acre-feet per year (AFY) to 20,500 AFY. On November 5, 1990, the MPWMD Board certified the Final EIR, adopted findings, and passed a resolution that set Option V as the new water allocation limit. Option V resulted in an annual limit of 16,744 AFY for Cal-Am production, and 3,137 AFY for non-Cal-Am production, with a total allocation of 19,881 AFY for the Monterey Peninsula Water Resource System (MPWRS). The MPWRS is the integrated system of water resources from the Carmel River Alluvial Aquifer and Seaside Groundwater Basin that provide the Monterey Peninsula community's water supply via the Cal-Am water distribution network.

Even though Option V was the least damaging alternative of the five options analyzed in the Water Allocation Program EIR, production at this level still resulted in significant, adverse environmental impacts that must be mitigated. Thus, the findings adopted by the Board included a "Five-Year Mitigation Program for Option V" and associated mitigation measures.

In June 1993, Ordinance No. 70 was passed, which amended the annual Cal-Am production limit from 16,744 AF to 17,619 AF, and the non-Cal-Am limit from 3,137 AF to 3,054 AF; the total production limit was increased from 19,881 AF to 20,673 AF per year due to new supply from the Paralta Well in Seaside. In April 1996, Ordinance No. 83 slightly changed the Cal-Am and non-Cal-Am annual limits to 17,621 AF and 3,046 AF, respectively, resulting in a total limit of 20,667 AFY. In February 1997, Ordinance No. 87 was adopted to provide a special water allocation for the planned expansion of the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, resulting in a new Cal-Am production limit of 17,641 AFY; the non-Cal-Am limit of 3,046 AFY was not changed. These actions did not affect the implementation of mitigation measures adopted by the Board in 1990.

The Five-Year Mitigation Program formally began in July 1991 with the new fiscal year (FY) and was slated to run until June 30, 1996. Following public hearings in May 1996 and District Board review of draft reports through September 1996, the Five-Year Evaluation Report for the

1991-1996 comprehensive program, as well as an Implementation Plan for FY 1996-1997 through FY 2000-2001, were finalized in October 1996. In its July 1995 Order WR 95-10, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) directed Cal-Am to carry out any aspect of the Five-Year Mitigation Program that the District does not continue after June 1996. To date, as part of the annual budget approval process, the District Board has voted to continue the program. The Mitigation Program has accounted for a significant portion of the District's annual budgets in terms of revenue (derived primarily from a portion of the MPWMD user fee on the Cal-Am bill) and expenditures. It should be noted that this fee was removed from Cal-Am's bill in July 2009, resulting from actions subsequent to a California Public Utilities Commission ruling regarding a Cal-Am rate request. Cal-Am continued to pay the fee amount (8.325%) under a separate reinvestment agreement with MPWMD through June 2010. The District and Cal-Am have negotiated an annual funding agreement that funded part of the 2014 mitigation program. The District's other revenue sources were used to fund the remainder of the program.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Res. Code 21081.6) requires that the MPWMD adopt a reporting or monitoring program to insure compliance with mitigation measures when implementing the Water Allocation Program. Findings Nos. 387 through 404 adopted by the Board on November 5, 1990 describe mitigation measures associated with the Water Allocation Program; many entail preparation of annual monitoring reports. This 2013-2014 Annual Report for the MPWMD Mitigation Program responds to these requirements. It covers the fiscal year period of July 1 through June 30. It should be noted that hydrologic data and well reporting data in this report are tabulated using the water year, defined as October 1 through September 30, in order to be consistent with the accounting period used by the SWRCB.

This 2013-2014 Annual Report first addresses general mitigation measures relating to water supply and demand (Sections II through XI), followed by monitoring related to compliance with production limits, drought reserve and supply augmentation (Sections XII through XV), followed by mitigations relating to specific environmental resources (Sections XVI through XIX). Section XX provides a summary of costs for the biological mitigation programs as well as related hydrologic monitoring, water augmentation and administrative costs. Section XXI presents selected references.

Table I-1 summarizes the mitigation measures described in this report. In subsequent chapters, for each topic, the mitigation measure adopted as part of the Final EIR is briefly described, followed by a summary of activities relating to the topic in FY 2013-2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, unless otherwise noted). Monitoring results, where applicable, are also presented. Tables and figures that support the text are found at the end of each section in the order they are introduced in the text.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Many activities are carried out as part of the MPWMD Mitigation Program to address the environmental effects that community water use has upon the Carmel River and Seaside Groundwater Basins. Highlights of the accomplishments in FY 2013-2014 for each major category are shown in **Table I-2**.

OBSERVED TRENDS, CONCLUSIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following paragraphs describe observed trends (primarily qualitative), conclusions and/or recommendations for the mitigation program. General conclusions are followed by a summary of selected Mitigation Program categories.

General Overview

Overall, the Carmel River environment is in better condition today than it was in 1990 when the Allocation Program EIR was prepared. This improvement is evidenced by biological/hydrologic indicators such as consistent steelhead adult spawner counts of several hundred fish in recent years as compared to zero to five fish per year when the Mitigation Program began in 1991; improved densities of juvenile steelhead in quantities that reflect a healthy seeded stream; consistently balanced bird diversity in MPWMD restoration project areas compared to control areas; fewer miles of dry river bed in summer and fall than in the past; and higher water tables in the Carmel Valley alluvial aquifer at the end of each water year.

The comprehensive MPWMD Mitigation Program is an important factor responsible for this improvement. Direct actions such as fish rescues and rearing, and riparian habitat restoration literally enable species to survive and reproduce. Indirect action such as conservation programs, water augmentation, ordinances/regulations and cooperative development of Cal-Am operation strategies result in less environmental impact from human water needs than would occur otherwise. The District's comprehensive monitoring program provides a solid scientific data baseline, and enables better understanding of the relationships between weather, hydrology, human activities and the environment. Better understanding of the MPWRS enables informed decision-making that achieves the District's mission of benefiting the community and the environment.

It is acknowledged that there are other important factors responsible for this improved situation. For example, since Water Year (WY) 1991, the Carmel River has received normal or better runoff in 16 out of 23 years. Actions by federal resource agencies under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or the SWRCB under its Order WR 95-10 and follow-up orders have provided strong incentive for Cal-Am and other local water producers to examine and amend water production practices to the degree feasible, and for the community to reduce water use. Except for one year in 1997, the community has complied with the production limits imposed on Cal-Am by the SWRCB since Order 95-10 became effective in July 1995.

Despite these improvements, challenges still remain due to human influence on the river. The steelhead and red-legged frog remain listed as threatened species under the ESA. At least several miles of the river still dry up each year, harming habitat for listed fish and frog species. The presence of the two existing dams, flood-plain development and water diversions to meet community and local user needs continue to alter the natural dynamics of the river. Streambank restoration projects may be significantly damaged in large winter storm events, and some people continue to illegally dump refuse into the river or alter their property without the proper permits. Thus, the Mitigation Program (or a comprehensive effort similar to it) will be needed as long as

significant quantities of water are diverted from the Carmel River and people live in close proximity to it.

Water Resources Monitoring Program

Streamflow and precipitation data continue to provide a scientific basis for management of the water resources within the District. These data continue to be useful in Carmel River Basin planning studies, reservoir management operations, water supply forecast and budgeting, and defining the baseline hydrologic conditions of the Carmel River Basin. Also, the District's streamflow monitoring program continues to produce high quality and cost-effective data.

There is limited storage of surface water by dams on the Carmel River. Los Padres Reservoir, completed in 1948, holds 1,626 AF of usable storage (without flashboard), based on 2008 survey data. Usable storage in San Clemente Reservoir (SCR), completed in 1921, has been essentially eliminated by order of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) due to seismic safety concerns. As an interim safety measure, which remained in effect through WY 2014, DWR has seasonally required Cal-Am to lower the water level in SCR from 525 feet to 515 feet elevation, which is too low for water-supply use. Cal-Am had originally proposed a dam seismic strengthening program. State and federal environmental agencies subsequently urged Cal-Am to reconsider their position and support the dam removal and river reroute option. In July 2009, Cal-Am changed its position and endorsed the dam removal option, as memorialized in the January 2010 multi-agency collaboration statement. District staff continues to participate in technical advisory role. In 2011, Cal-Am circulated a request for bids to complete the removal of the Dam and a contractor was selected for this work in 2013. The first phase of this project began in 2013 with construction of a new access road and placement of the river diversion facilities. In 2014, activities associated with San Clemente Dam (SCD) removal continued and included creation of a subsurface cutoff wall at the upstream end of the reservoir's sediment field and construction of the re-route channel through the San Clemente Creek drainage.

Groundwater levels, and consequently groundwater storage conditions, in the Carmel Valley Alluvial Aquifer have maintained a relatively normal pattern in recent years, in contrast to the dramatic storage declines that were observed during the prolonged 1987-1991 drought period. The relatively stable storage in the Carmel Valley alluvial aquifer in recent years is attributable to a combination of a period of more favorable hydrologic conditions and the adoption of improved water management practices that have tended to preserve higher storage conditions in the aquifer. In WY 2014, Carmel Valley alluvial aquifer storage declined slightly compared with recent years as this year was classified as "critically dry" and marked the third consecutive dry or critically dry hydrologic year.

In contrast, storage conditions in the coastal portion of the Seaside Groundwater Basin have not been stable in recent years, in particular with respect to the deeper Santa Margarita aquifer, from which over 80 percent of the Cal-Am production in the Seaside Basin is derived. This downward trend in water levels reflects the changed production operations in the Seaside Basin stemming primarily from changed practices after SWRCB Order 95-10. The increased annual reliance on production from Cal-Am's major production wells in Seaside, along with significant

increases in non-Cal-Am use, have dramatically lowered water levels in this aquifer, and seasonal recoveries have not been sufficient to reverse this trend.

To address this storage depletion trend, the District initiated efforts in the 2000-2001 timeframe to prepare a Seaside Basin Groundwater Management Plan in compliance with protocols set by the State of California (AB 3030, as amended by SB 1938). This process was superseded by litigation filed by Cal-Am in August 2003, requesting a court adjudication of water production and storage rights in the Seaside Basin. The District participated in all litigation proceedings as an intervening “interested party”. The Superior Court held hearings in December 2005 and issued a final adjudication decision in March 2006, which was amended through an additional court filing in February 2007. The final decision established a new, lower “natural safe yield” for the Basin of 3,000 AFY, and an initial Basin “operating safe yield” of 5,600 AFY. Under the decision, the operating safe yield would be reduced by 10% every three years until the operating safe yield matches the natural safe yield of the Basin in 2021. The Court also created a nine-member Watermaster Board (of which the District is a member) to implement the Court’s decision. With the triennial reductions in operational yield required by the Seaside Basin Adjudication Decision, water levels have not been declining as fast as previously observed.

One of the means that could potentially mitigate this observed storage depletion trend is a program that the District has been actively pursuing since 1996 -- the Seaside Basin groundwater injection program (also known as aquifer storage and recovery, or ASR). ASR entails diverting excess water flows (typically in Winter/Spring) from the Carmel Valley Alluvial Aquifer through existing Cal-Am facilities and injecting the water into the Seaside Groundwater Basin for later recovery in dry periods.

The primary goal of the MPWMD Phase 1 and 2 ASR Projects is better management of existing water resources and production facilities to help reduce impacts to the Carmel River, especially during the dry season. The projects are viewed as being complementary to other larger, long-term water augmentation projects that are currently being pursued for the Monterey Peninsula. These projects, also known as Water Projects 1 and 2, entail a maximum diversion of 2,426 AFY, and 2,900 AFY respectively from the Carmel River for injection. The combined average yield for both projects is estimated at about 2,000 AFY. The operation of the Phase 1 and 2 ASR Projects result in reduced unauthorized pumping of the Carmel River in Summer/Fall and increased storage in the Seaside Basin, which are both considered to be environmentally beneficial.

The ASR water supply efforts in 2013-2014 included: (1) continued work with regulatory and land use agencies on expansion of the Phase 1 Santa Margarita ASR site; (2) completion of the electrical facilities for the Phase 2 ASR Project at the Seaside Middle School site; (3) Completion and testing of the second ASR well at the Phase 2 ASR site; (4) coordination with Cal-Am, federal, and state agencies to construct the necessary infrastructure for the ASR project; (5) coordination with Cal-Am on necessary actions and delivery system facilities to enable expanded ASR; and (6) continued implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Cal-Am to operate the ASR facilities.

Groundwater quality conditions in both the Carmel Valley Alluvial Aquifer and Seaside Basin have remained acceptable in terms of potential indicators of contamination from shallow sources such as septic systems. There have been no identifiable trends indicative of seawater intrusion into the principal supply sources the coastal areas of these two aquifer systems to date.

Steelhead Fishery Program

Annual monitoring conducted by the District shows that the Carmel River steelhead population has recovered somewhat from the remnant levels of the last drought (1987 to 1991) and from past water-supply practices. Though overall fish populations have improved since the inception of the Mitigation Program in 1990, there was a period of general decline in the adult run from 2001 to 2011. Between 1992 and 2001, the spawning population recovered from a handful of fish to levels approaching 900 adults per year as counted at SCD. Then the run experienced a six-year downward trend from 804 adults in 2001 to 222 adults in 2007, rebounding somewhat in 2008 to 412 adults. However, in 2009 and 2010, the population underwent a dramatic reduction to 95 and 157 adults, respectively. In 2011 and 2012, the population rebounded again with 452 and 470 adults passing over SCD, while in 2013 the number dropped again to 249, well below the 1994-2013 average of 421, likely due in part to the dry year. Drought conditions worsened in 2014 and the river failed to connect to the lagoon for the first time since 1990. Despite a lack of sea-run adults in 2014, some resident adults did spawn in the upper valley as evidenced by the appearance of fry during summer rescues. These adults may have been hold-over fish, resident adults or older juvenile fish reared and released from the SHSRF in the fall of 2013.

Previous redd surveys below SCD confirm that the spawning habitat in the lower river has improved considerably over the last 20 years and many adults are now spawning there instead of passing the SCD fish counting station. In addition, juvenile steelhead rescued by the District from the lower river that survive to adulthood are more likely to return to the lower river to spawn rather than migrate upstream past the SCD. In 2011-2012, The District deployed a DIDSON counting station, acquired from CDFW grant funding, in the lower river to help determine whether more adults are in fact spawning downstream of the dam. Staff downloaded and reviewed video data from the 2013 season and reported the preliminary results in 2014.

Variability of adult steelhead counts are likely the result of a combination of controlling and limiting factors including:

- improved spawning conditions in the lower Carmel River, encouraging fish to spawn before they reach the counter at the dam;
- variable lagoon conditions, caused by artificial manipulation of the sandbar and/or naturally occurring periods of low winter flows;
- impediments to adult and smolt migration routes, such as seasonal barriers, inadequate passage facilities, and intermittent periods of low flow creating critical riffles below the Narrows during the normal winter-spring migration season;
- low densities of juvenile fish in 2004, 2007, and 2009-2011 affecting subsequent adult

populations; and

- variable ocean conditions.

- **Juvenile Steelhead**

Monitoring of the juvenile steelhead population at eleven sites along the mainstem Carmel River below Los Padres Dam shows that fish density continues to be quite variable both year to year and site to site from below 0.40 fish per foot (fpf) of stream to levels frequently ranging above 1.00 fpf, values that are typical of well-stocked steelhead streams. In this 2013-2014 reporting period, the average population density was much less than the long-term average of 0.79 fpf for the Carmel River likely due to the ongoing drought and poor habitat conditions in the lower river.

District staff believes the variability of the juvenile steelhead population in the Carmel River Basin is directly related to the following factors:

Positive Factors:

- improvements in streamflow patterns, due to favorable natural fluctuations, exemplified by relatively high base-flow conditions since 1995;
- District and SWRCB rules to actively manage the rate and distribution of groundwater extractions and direct surface diversions within the basin, coupled with changes to CAW's operations at San Clemente and Los Padres Dams, providing increased streamflow below San Clemente Dam;
- restoration and stabilization of the lower Carmel River's stream banks, providing improved riparian habitat (tree cover/shade along the stream and an increase in woody debris) while preventing erosion of silt/sand from filling gravel beds and pools;
- extensive juvenile steelhead rescues by the District over the last 25 years, now totaling 417,837 fish through 2013;
- rearing and releases of rescued fish from the SHSRF of nearly 97,300 juveniles and smolts back into the river and lagoon over the past 18 years (15 years of operation), at sizes generally larger than the river-reared fish, which in theory should enhance their ocean survival;

Negative Factors:

- variable lagoon conditions, including highly variable water surface elevation changes caused by mechanical breaching, chronic poor water quality (especially in the fall), and predation by birds and striped bass;
- barriers or seasonal impediments to juvenile and smolt emigration, such as the lack of

juvenile passage facilities at Los Padres Dam and intermittent periods of low flow below the Narrows during the normal spring emigration season;

- spring flow variability such as low-flow conditions that could dewater redds prematurely or high flows that could either deposit sediment over redds or completely wash them out;
- chronic, and occasionally acute, fall temperature and hydrogen sulfide levels below LPD, and the increase in suspended sediment from the SCD summer draw-down;
- the potential for enhanced predation on smolts and YOY migrating through the sediment fields of LPD and SCD; and
- the recent drought conditions.

A recent challenge that may remain for some years is the potential effects of substantive physical and operational changes to San Clemente Dam required by the Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams (DWR/DSOD), including the process of removal of the dam. The most significant issues are the effect of released sediment from the reservoir on downstream river habitat, proper functioning of MPWMD's SHSRF, and downstream property owners (flood elevations). The three-year dam removal project began in 2013 with the removal of vegetation and rechanneling the river through the reservoir reach. Major changes include:

- lowering of the reservoir water level and changes to the release flows and water quality;
- potentially significant changes in the sediment regime in the Carmel River downstream of San Clemente as the dam removal project progresses; and
- loss of reservoir storage, which, in the past, has helped maintain adequate river flows and cooler water in the lower Carmel River.

District staff continues to provide technical expertise and scientific data to CAW engineers and environmental consultants, DWR/DSOD, CDFW, NMFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others involved in addressing the resource management issues associated with both San Clemente and Los Padres Dams. District staff also continues to provide technical expertise and scientific data to California Department Parks and Recreation, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey County Public Works Department, California Coastal Commission, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Carmel Area Wastewater District, and other regulatory agencies and stakeholders involved in the management of the Carmel River, the Carmel River Lagoon and the barrier beach.

Riparian Habitat Mitigation

The Carmel River continues to show many signs of recovery and stabilization after a combination of increased groundwater extraction, extreme drought and flood events occurred during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s that impacted property owners, threatened species and degraded riparian habitat. In many reaches of the river, fine material (silt and sand) that entered

the main stem during periods of instability has been washed out of the system leaving behind a more complex channel with improved steelhead spawning substrate, diverse habitat, and a richer riparian community. Areas with perennial or near perennial flow (upstream of Schulte Bridge) or a high groundwater table, such as downstream of Highway 1, have experienced vigorous natural recruitment in the channel bottom, which has helped to stabilize streambanks and diversify aquatic habitat.

In these areas, natural recruitment has led to vegetation encroachment that, in some areas, may constrict high flows and threaten bank stability. MPWMD continues to monitor these areas closely and to develop a management strategy to balance protection of native habitat with the need to reduce erosion potential. Environmental review of proposed projects and the process of securing permits is quite complex and requires an exhaustive review of potential impacts.

In contrast to areas with perennial flow, the recovery of streamside areas subjected to annual dewatering requires monitoring. Plant stress in the late summer and fall is evident in portions of the river that go dry. In these areas, streambanks exhibit unstable characteristics during high flows, such as sudden bank collapse, because of the lack of healthy vegetation that would ordinarily provide stability. In addition, due to the presence of main stem reservoirs, there is a lack of sediment delivery from the upper watershed that continues to result in channel degradation (incision of the stream into the valley floor). Thus, pools become deeper and when combined with scour along the outside of streambanks this creates “cut” banks. Although this leads to a more complex and dynamic channel, which is a desirable condition, continued degradation can result in bank collapses and trigger an episode of erosion along the river. District staff continues to document degradation in the river bed including at the Carmel Area Wastewater District pipe across the river downstream of Highway 1 and at bridge infrastructure in the active channel.

Restoration project areas sponsored by MPWMD since 1984 continue to mature and exhibit more features of relatively undisturbed reaches, such as plant diversity and vigor, complex floodplain topography, and a variety of in-channel features such as large wood, extensive vegetative cover, pools, riffles, and cut banks.

As cited in previous reports, the most significant trends continue to include the following:

- increased encroachment of vegetation into the active channel bottom,
- effects to areas with groundwater extraction downstream of Schulte Road,
- channel scour due to a lack of sediment from upstream and from bank erosion,
- healthy avian species diversity, and
- maturing of previous restoration projects.

Carmel River Erosion Protection and Restoration

With the exception of the channel area between the Via Mallorca Road bridge and the Rancho San Carlos Road bridge, streambanks in the mainstem appear to be relatively stable during average water years with “frequent flow” storm events (flows with a return magnitude of less than five years). The program begun by MPWMD in 1984 (and later subsumed into the

Mitigation Program) to stabilize streambanks appears to be achieving the goals that were initially set out, i.e., to reduce bank erosion during high flow events up to a 10-year return flow, restore vegetation along the streamside, and improve fisheries habitat.

Consistent with previous reports, it is likely that the following trends will continue:

- State and Federal agencies consider the Carmel River watershed to be a high priority area for restoration, as evidenced by the interest in addressing water supply issues, the removal of San Clemente Dam, impacts to the Carmel Bay Area of Special Biological Significance, and management of threatened species. Stringent avoidance and mitigation requirements will continue to be placed on activities that could have negative impacts on sensitive aquatic species or their habitats.
- Activities that interrupt or curtail natural stream functions, such as lining streambanks with riprap, have come under increasing scrutiny and now require significant mitigation offsets. Approximately 35% to 40% of the streambanks downstream of Carmel Valley Village have been altered or hardened since the late 1950s. Activities that increase the amount of habitat or restore natural stream functions are more likely to be approved or funded through State and Federal grant programs.
- Additional work to add instream features (such as large logs for steelhead refuge or backwater channel areas for frogs) can restore and diversify aquatic habitat.
- Major restoration projects completed between 1987 and 1999 have had extensive and successful work to diversify plantings. However, maintenance of irrigation systems is ongoing and requires extensive work in water years classified as below normal, dry and critically dry.
- Downstream of the Robinson Canyon Road bridge, the river continues to cut into the channel bottom and form a more complex system of pools, riffles and gravel bars.

Between the mouth of the river and Robinson Canyon Road bridge, many areas of the river appear to be deeper than at any previous time since measurements have been recorded (i.e., beginning in 1978), with many reaches showing several feet of downcutting. This trend, which was identified as a concern in the 1984 Carmel River Management Program EIR, appears to have accelerated in the period from 1998 to 2014. This was a period of exceptional stability (for the Carmel River) as streambanks hardened with structural protection over the past several decades resisted erosion and the force of the river during high flows was directed into the channel bottom. This condition has resulted in the undermining of rip-rap protection and bridge infrastructure in some reaches. To assess the impact of scour and degradation in the bottom of the channel, the District budgeted funds in Fiscal Year 2014-15 to carry out a thalweg survey (survey along the bottom of the channel), which will be compared to similar surveys dating back to 1984.

In the spring of 2010, the Carmel Area Wastewater District's concrete-encased pipe across the bottom of the river was exposed for the first time since it was constructed in 1973. When the pipe encasement was installed, the top was buried two feet below the riverbed. In 2012, District staff measured a maximum of 4.5 feet of scour from the top of the encasement, which is approximately five feet wide and five feet high (see **Figure XVII-3**). In September 2013, District staff measured between 4.0 and 4.25 feet of scour. It is possible that high flows are

passing under the pipe encasement. In addition, the pipe encasement appears to be causing the river to create a large deep pool on the downstream side, while on the upstream side the encasement causes the river bottom to be flat and wide for an extended length. At certain low-flow periods with the lagoon open, the encasement may be creating a temporary barrier to steelhead migration.

In the spring of 2011, the river migrated into the north streambank at the Rancho San Carlos Road Bridge (see **Figure XVII-4**). If no work to stabilize the streambank is carried out, it is likely that the river will continue to migrate toward homes along the north streambank.

Eventually, without corrective measures to balance the sediment load with the flow of water or to mitigate for the effect of the downcutting, streambanks will begin to collapse and the integrity of bridges and other infrastructure in the active channel of the river may be threatened.

Vegetation Restoration and Irrigation

To the maximum extent possible, MPWMD-sponsored river restoration projects incorporate a functional floodplain that is intended to be inundated in relatively frequent storm events (those expected every 1-2 years). For example, low benches at the Red Rock and All Saints Projects have served as natural recruitment areas and are currently being colonized by black cottonwoods, sycamores and willows. In addition, willow and cottonwood pole plantings in these areas were installed with a backhoe, which allows them to tap into the water table. These techniques have been successful and have reduced the need for supplemental irrigation.

Channel Vegetation Management

Another notable trend relating to the District's vegetation management program was the widening of the channel after floods in 1995 and 1998. With relatively normal years following these floods, the channel has narrowed as vegetation recruits on the channel bottom and gravel bars. Current Federal regulations such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) "Section 4(d)" rules promulgated by NOAA Fisheries to protect steelhead significantly restrict vegetation management activities. Because of these restrictions, the District can carry out activities only on the most critical channel restrictions and erosion hazards in the lower 15 miles of the river. In the absence of high winter flows capable of scouring vegetation out of the channel bottom, encroaching vegetation may significantly restrict the channel. As vegetation in the river channel recovers from the high flows of 1995 and 1998 and matures in the channel bottom, more conflicts are likely to arise between preserving habitat and reducing the potential for property damage during high flows. MPWMD will continue to balance the need to treat erosion hazards in the river yet maintain features that contribute to aquatic habitat quality.

Permits for Channel Restoration and Vegetation Management

In 2012, MPWMD renewed its long-term permits with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board for routine maintenance and restoration work. In 2014, the District also renewed a long-term Routine Maintenance Agreement (RMA)

with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct regular maintenance and restoration activities in the Carmel River.

Monitoring Program

Vegetative moisture stress fluctuates depending on the rainfall, proximate stream flow, depth to groundwater, and average daily temperatures, and tends to be much lower in above-normal rainfall years. Typical trends for a single season start with little to no vegetative moisture stress in the spring, when the soil is moist and the river is flowing. As the river begins to dry up in lower Carmel Valley (normally around June) and temperatures begin to increase, an overall increase in vegetative moisture stress occurs. For much of the riparian corridor in the lower seven miles of the Carmel River, this stress has been mitigated by supplemental irrigation, thereby preventing the die off of large areas of riparian habitat. However, many recruiting trees experience high levels of stress or mortality in areas difficult to irrigate. Riparian vegetation exposed to rapid or substantial lowering of groundwater levels (i.e., below the root zones of the plants) will continue to require monitoring and irrigation during the dry season.

With respect to riparian songbird diversity, populations dropped after major floods in 1995 and 1998 because of the loss of streamside habitat. Since 1998, species diversity recovered and now fluctuates depending on habitat conditions. Values indicate that the District mitigation program is preserving and improving riparian habitat.

Strategies for the future

A comprehensive long-term solution to overall environmental degradation requires a significant increase in dry-season water flows in the lower river, a reversal of the incision process, and reestablishment of a natural meander pattern. Of these, MPWMD has made progress on increasing summer low flows and groundwater levels by aggressively pursuing a water conservation program, implementing the first and second phases of the Seaside Groundwater Basin Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project, and recommending an increase in summer releases from Los Padres Reservoir.

Reversal, or at least a slowing, of channel incision may be possible if the supply of sediment is brought into better balance with the sediment transport forces. Additional sediment from the tributary watersheds between San Clemente Dam and Los Padres Dam may pass into the lower river in the foreseeable future with the removal of San Clemente Dam in 2015. However, any increase in the sediment supply may not reach the lowest portion of the river for many years.

In January 2009, CAW agreed to proceed with the removal of San Clemente Dam and reroute of the Carmel River main stem around the sediment field. MPWMD supported this dam removal and re-route project proposed by the California Coastal Conservancy. The project began in the summer of 2013 and is scheduled to be completed in late 2015. In addition to a significant improvement in fish passage, removal of San Clemente Dam would likely reduce the time it takes for sand and gravel from the upper watershed to move through the river bottom and replenish the Carmel River State Beach at the mouth of the river.

Over the long term, an increase in sediment supply could help reduce streambank instability and erosion threats to public and private infrastructure. However, reestablishing a natural supply of sediment and restoring the natural river meander pattern through the lower 15.5 miles of the Carmel Valley presents significant political, environmental, and fiscal challenges, and is not currently being considered as part of the Mitigation Program.

Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant Program

The IRWM program promoted by the DWR encourages planning and management of water resources on a regional scale and promotes projects that incorporate multiple objectives and strategies. In addition, the IRWM process brings stakeholders together and encourages cooperation among agencies in developing mutually beneficial solutions to resource problems.

In November 2007, the District adopted the final IRWM plan for a region encompassing Monterey Peninsula areas within the District boundary, the area in the Carmel River watershed outside of the MPWMD boundary, Carmel Bay and the Southern Monterey Bay. The plan combines strategies to improve and manage potable water supply, water conservation, stormwater runoff, floodwaters, wastewater, water recycling, habitat for wildlife, and public recreation.

Subsequently, MPWMD was successful in 2011 in obtaining a \$995,000 grant from the DWR to update the IRWM Plan to Proposition 84 standards. The plan combines strategies to improve and manage potable water supply, water conservation, stormwater runoff, floodwaters, wastewater, water recycling, habitat for wildlife, and public recreation. In FY 2011-2012, MPWMD entered into a grant agreement with DWR and initiated work on 10 planning projects, including an update to the 2007 plan and several planning projects to benefit local jurisdictions. During FY 2012-2013, additional agreements were signed to work on all 10 planning projects. During FY 2013-14, the IRWM Plan was updated and adopted by the MPWMD Board and the other nine planning projects were completed. The total cost of the project, including local agency match, was about \$1.6 million. A final report on the grant is scheduled for completion in 2015.

Funding from the IRWM grant program and other programs requiring an adopted IRWM Plan could provide the incentive to undertake a set of projects that would continue to improve the Carmel River environment and engage a larger number of organizations in helping to develop and implement a comprehensive solution to water resource problems in the planning region.

Carmel River Lagoon Habitat

The District continues to support and encourage the ongoing habitat-restoration efforts in the wetlands and riparian areas surrounding the Carmel River Lagoon. These efforts are consistent with goals that were identified in the Carmel River Lagoon Enhancement Plan, which was partially funded by the District. The District continues to work with various agencies and landowners to implement ongoing restoration of the Odello West property and future restoration of the Odello East property across the highway. Because of the restoration activities on the south

side of the lagoon, the District has concentrated its monitoring efforts on the relatively undisturbed north side. Staff have also continue to meet and discuss with other agencies the ongoing use of an existing CDPR agricultural well and potential future use of treated water from the Carmel Area Wastewater District to augment the lagoon during periods of low water.

The District expanded its long-term monitoring around the lagoon in 1995 in an attempt to determine if the reduction in freshwater flows due to groundwater pumping upstream might change the size or ecological character of the wetlands. Demonstrable changes have not been identified. Because of the complexity of the estuarine system, a variety of parameters are monitored, including vegetative cover in transects and quadrats, water conductivity, and hydrology. It is notable that due to the number of factors affecting this system, it would be premature to attribute any observed changes solely to groundwater pumping. During the 20-year period to date, for example, there have been two Extremely Wet (1995 and 1998), two Wet (2005, 2006), five Above Normal (1996, 1997, 2000, 2010 and 2011), and five Normal (1999, 2001, 2003, 2008 and 2009), two Below Normal (2002 and 2004), two Dry (2012 and 2013), and two Critically Dry (2007 and 2014) Water Year types in terms of total annual runoff. Thus, the hydrology of the watershed has been wetter than average 45% of the time, and at least normal or better 70% of the time during that period. However, monitoring in 2014 occurred during a Critically Dry Water Year that followed two consecutive Dry Water Years. Other natural factors that affect the wetlands include introduction of salt water into the system as waves overtop the sandbar in autumn and winter, tidal fluctuations, and long-term global climatic change. When the District initiated the long-term lagoon monitoring component of the Mitigation Program, it was with the understanding that it would be necessary to gather data for an extended period in order to draw conclusions about well production drawdown effects on wetland dynamics. It is recommended that the current vegetation, conductivity, topographical and wildlife monitoring be continued in order to provide a robust data set for continued analysis of potential changes around the lagoon.

Lagoon bathymetric cross sectional surveys, initially conducted in 1988, have been completed annually during the dry season since 1994. These data are useful in assessing changes in the sand supply within the main body of the lagoon and are necessary to answer to questions concerning whether or not the lagoon is filling up with sand, thus losing valuable habitat. As indicated in the survey plots, the sandy bed of the lagoon can vary significantly from year to year. In general, no major trends indicating sand accumulation or depletion at the lagoon cross sections have been identified based on available data, with the exception of the upstream-most cross section number 4, which exhibits an overall loss in sand volume over the 1994-2013 period. The sand loss or down-cutting observed at cross section 4 is consistent with the pervasive down-cutting that has occurred along the thalweg of the Lower Carmel River (LCR) upstream of the Highway 1 Bridge for several miles. The trend of LCR streambed scour appears to have begun in Water Year 2006. In addition, now that annual cross sectional data have been collected in two “critically dry” years (WY 2007 and 2014) and two “dry” years (2012 and 2013), it is concluded that substrate elevations at the cross sections generally do not change in these low-flow years, despite the regular occurrence of major lagoon mouth breaches in all of these years, except WY 2014. Accordingly, the multi-year cross-sectional data set (21 years) indicates quantity of streamflow as the primary factor that controls substrate changes at the key cross sections.

Program Costs

Mitigation Program costs for FY 2013-2014 totaled approximately \$2.41 million including direct personnel expenses, operating costs, project expenditures, capital equipment, and fixed asset purchases. The annual cost of mitigation efforts varies because several mitigation measures are weather dependent. Expenditures in FY 2013-2014 were \$0.19 million more than the prior fiscal year due to increases in Mitigation Program costs. However, the overall costs have remained fairly constant (average of \$3 million per year) for last five years. In the past, expenditures had trended upward due to expenditures for the Aquifer Storage Recovery (ASR) Project. ASR Project costs are no longer captured under Mitigation Program Costs. FY 2011-2012 expenditures were \$4.59 million; and FY 2012-2013 expenditures were \$2.22 million.

During FY 2013-2014, revenues totaled \$2.72 million including mitigation program revenues, tax revenues, investment income and miscellaneous revenues. The Mitigation Program Fund Balance as of June 30, 2014 was \$331,973.

Table I-1

**SUMMARY OF COMPONENTS OF MPWMD MITIGATION PROGRAM
July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014**

WATER MANAGEMENT

- Monitor Water Resources
- Manage Water Production
- Manage Water Demand
- Monitor Water Usage
- Augment Water Supply
- Allocation of New Supply
- Determine Drought Reserve

STEELHEAD FISHERY

- Capture/Transport Emigrating Smolts in Spring
 - Smolt rescues
 - Build acclimation facility/tagging study
- Prevent Stranding of Fall/Winter Juvenile Migrants
 - Juvenile rescues
 - Build mid-Valley holding facility
- Rescue Juveniles Downstream of Robles del Rio in Summer
- Operate Sleepy Hollow holding/rearing facility
- Modify Spillway/Transport Smolts Around Los Padres Dam
- Monitoring Activities for Mitigation Plan
 - Adult counts at San Clemente Dam
 - Juvenile population surveys
- Other Activities not required by Mitigation Plan
 - Spawning habitat restoration
 - Fish planting (steelhead broodstock program)
 - Coastal Salmon Recovery Program grant (began mid-2001)
 - Modify critical riffles

RIPARIAN VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

- Conservation and Water Distribution Management
- Prepare/Oversee Riparian Corridor Management Plan
- Implement Riparian Corridor Management Program
 - Cal-Am well irrigation (4 wells)
 - Channel clearing
 - Vegetation monitoring
 - Track and pursue violations
 - River Care Guide booklet
 - CRMP Erosion Protection Program

LAGOON VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

- Assist with Lagoon Enhancement Plan Investigations (See Note 1)
- Expand Long-Term Lagoon Monitoring Program
 - Water quality/quantity
 - Vegetation/soils
- Identify Alternatives to Maintain Lagoon Volume

AESTHETICS

- Restore Riparian Vegetation (see above)

DRAFT

Note 1: Mitigation measures are dependent on implementation of the Lagoon Enhancement Plan by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the land owner and CEQA lead agency. Portions of the Enhancement Plan have been implemented by CalTrans as part of a “mitigation banking” project.

Table I-2
Summary of MPWMD Mitigation Program Accomplishments in 2013-2014

MITIGATION ACTION	MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 2013-2014
Monitor Water Resources	Regularly tracked precipitation, streamflow, surface and groundwater levels and quality, and lagoon characteristics between Los Padres Dam and the Carmel River Lagoon, using real-time methods at numerous data collection stations. Maintained extensive monitoring network, and continuous streamflow recorders below San Clemente Dam and other sites.
Manage Water Production	Developed and implemented multi-agency Memorandum of Agreement and quarterly water supply strategies based on normal-year conditions; worked cooperatively with resource agencies implementing the federal Endangered Species Act. Implemented ordinances that regulate wells and water distribution systems.
Manage Water Demand	From July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014, a total of 852 Water Permits were issued. 30 new residences and 679 residential Remodels/additions were permitted in the CAW system. There were 80 Non-Residential Water Permits issued for Remodels/Additions and Changes of Use in the CAW system. As of June 30, 2014, a total of 91.724 AF of water remained available in the areas served CAW, as described in Section IX. This includes water from pre- and post-Paralta Allocations and water added to a Jurisdiction's Allocation from Water Use Credit transfers and public retrofits.
Monitor Water Usage	Complied with SWRCB Order 95-10 for Water Year 2014.
Augment Water Supply	Long-term efforts to augment supply included: (1) Continued participation in the CPUC rate hearing process to review elements of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project (MPWSP); (2) Participated in meetings intended to resolve concerns about MPWSP construction, operations, financing, management and oversight; (3) Participated on Technical Advisory Committee to the Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority; (4) Operated Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Phase 1 and 2 projects in WY 2014; (5) performed pump test on second ASR Phase 2 injection well Seaside Middle School site; (6) Held regular coordination meetings with Cal-Am regarding needed infrastructure upgrades to deliver water supply to the ASR project wells at full capacity; (7) Conducted additional work related to alternative desalination plant sites; (9) Provided

MITIGATION ACTION	MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 2013-2014
	<p>technical support to the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (MRWPCA) for the Groundwater Replenishment Project (GRP) and received presentations by MRWPCA; (10) Participated in CPUC hearing process on Cal-Am related rate requests.</p> <p>Other ongoing activities included: (1) Served as member of both the Seaside Basin Watermaster Board and as the Technical Advisory Committee; (2) Delivered several database products to the Watermaster and its consultants under the District's contract for the required Seaside Basin Monitoring and Management Plan; (3) Continued participation on technical committee regarding removal of San Clemente Dam and associated sediment management.</p>
Allocate New Supply	Remained within Water Allocation Program limits.
Determine Drought Reserve	Rationing was not required due to maintenance of adequate storage reserve.
Steelhead Fishery Program	<p>The surface flow of the Carmel River dropped to 10 cfs at the Highway 1 Bridge on April 16, 2013. In response to this decline, District staff began full-scale rescues on April 19. Rescues were conducted over a five-month period, April 19 – September 12, 2013 between Highway 1 Bridge (RM 1.0) and Robinson Canyon Road Bridge (RM 8.5). An additional one-mile reach between Boronda Road Bridge and DeDampierre Park in Carmel Valley Village (RM 12.6-13.6) was also rescued in September as the drought worsened. During this period staff completed 82 rescue days, yielding a total of 42,805 steelhead . Compared to previous rescue seasons, the rescue total in the 2013 dry season was two and a half times greater than the 1989-2013 average of 16,713 fish rescued.</p>
Riparian Habitat Program	<p>Continued revegetation efforts at exposed banks with little or no vegetation located between Via Mallorca and Esquiline Roads; Contracted to collect channel profile data and limited cross section data from the Carmel River for use in maintaining a long-term record and comparing to the past and future data; Made public presentations showing MPWMD-sponsored restoration work over the past 24 years; Continued long-term monitoring of physical and biological processes along the river in order to evaluate the District's river management activities; Continued the annual inspections of the Carmel River from the upstream end of the lagoon to Camp Steffani; Walked the entire river to observe and record erosion damage, conditions that</p>

MITIGATION ACTION	MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 2013-2014
	<p>could cause erosion, riparian ordinance infractions, and the overall condition of the riparian corridor; Continued enforcement actions to address serious violations of District riparian ordinances; Carried out vegetation management activities; Developed an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan; Operated under Routine Maintenance Agreement with CDFW for MPWMD vegetation maintenance activities.</p>
<p>Lagoon Habitat Program</p>	<p>Provided technical expertise and data to multi-agency sponsors of lagoon restoration program; assisted Carmel Area Wastewater District to evaluate possible Lagoon augmentation with recycled water; facilitated Carmel River Lagoon Technical Advisory Committee meetings; pursued funding for the April 2007 <i>Final Study Plan for the Long-Term Adaptive Management of the Carmel River State Beach and Lagoon</i>; continued vegetation habitat monitoring; surveyed and analyzed four bathymetric transects; participated in interagency meetings regarding management of lagoon in winter storm events (see also steelhead efforts that benefit lagoon); conducted topographic, hydrology and wildlife surveys.</p>
<p>Aesthetic Measures</p>	<p>See Riparian Habitat Program measures.</p>

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