

# QUANTIFICATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY



Mitigation Project map, highlighting projects implemented at the Salton Sea as part of the Air Quality Mitigation Program led by the Imperial Irrigation District and funded by the QSA JPA.



Vegetation Enhancement at the southern shore of the Salton Sea near the Alamo River used as part of the Air Quality Mitigation Program to prevent exposed playa from becoming emissive.

## BACKGROUND

The Quantification Settlement Agreement Joint Powers Authority (QSA JPA) was formed under 2003 legislation to administer funding of environmental mitigation requirements related to the QSA water transfers. Specifically, the QSA JPA collects, holds, invests, and reimburses environmental mitigation costs incurred by implementing member agencies to address the distinct impacts related to the transfers. The QSA JPA is comprised of designated representatives from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), and the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) who serve as Commissioners and staff.

Under QSA-related legislation (specifically SB 654), the three water agencies, IID, SDCWA, and CVWD, have a responsibility to fund environmental mitigation related to the QSA up to \$133 million in 2003 dollars. Additionally, the three water agencies have paid \$30 million in 2003 dollars as seed money for the state's restoration program. The \$30 million was provided to CDFW as part of the Salton Sea Restoration Fund. That funding together with the \$133 million cap the three water agencies' financial obligations and liabilities for environmental mitigation and restoration as part of the QSA.

The state has a responsibility under the QSA-related legislation to fund mitigation costs that exceed \$133 million and a responsibility to address the larger issue of restoration at the Salton Sea.

## BUDGET AND ROLES

The QSA JPA Commission adopts an annual budget for the payment of environmental costs for QSA water transfer mitigation projects. The budget is developed by IID, which is responsible for implementing projects, in coordination with the Habitat Conservation Plan Implementation Team (IT), consisting of representatives from CDFW, IID, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). While IID leads implementation, the state chairs all QSA JPA meetings, SDCWA serves as the administrative and financial management arm, and CVWD's legal counsel serves as counsel to the JPA.



## IMPLEMENTATION: 2003 - 2017

For the first fifteen years of the QSA, the QSA JPA funding focused on providing mitigation water to the Salton Sea through an annual fallowing program implemented in the Imperial Valley. That fallowing program provided approximately 800,000 acre-feet of water to the sea from 2003 through 2017 to maintain salinity levels. This limited duration of mitigation flows then ended and the focus turned to on-the-ground permanent mitigation projects. Other mitigation projects during this time included a baseline study of covered species from the draft Habitat Conservation Plan, a population study of burrowing owls along IID right-of-ways, construction of a desert pupfish refugium, conservation programs for both burrowing owls and desert pupfish, construction of Phases 1 and 2 of a 1,000-acre managed marsh complex, and development of the Salton Sea Air Quality Mitigation Program.



Managed Marsh complex near the southeastern side of the Salton Sea constructed in three phases for habitat mitigation.

## IMPLEMENTATION: 2018-CURRENT

Since 2018, the QSA JPA has funded and IID has implemented an ongoing environmental mitigation program, both related to the Salton Sea and additional mitigation in the Imperial Valley.

### EFFORTS AT THE SALTON SEA INCLUDE:

- Annual shoreline monitoring of the Salton Sea
- Annual emissions estimate and proactive dust control plan
- Installation of 360° cameras at Anza Borrego, Vail Cutoff Drain, Red Hill Bay, and Bombay Beach
- Installation of stationary cameras on IID air stations
- Installation of mobile meteorological stations within the Anza Borrego Desert and at proactive dust control project locations
- Construction of 2,684 acres of proactive dust control projects, including 1,954 acres of surface roughening and 730 acres of vegetation enhancement around the Salton Sea

## ADDITIONAL MITIGATION EFFORTS IN THE IMPERIAL VALLEY INCLUDE:

- Ongoing desert pupfish monitoring and conservation program
- Ongoing burrowing owl conservation program
- Annual marsh bird surveys and selenium monitoring within Phases 1 and 2 of the managed marsh complex
- Construction of Phase 3 and completion of the managed marsh complex
- Selenium monitoring program within IID drains
- Annual seepage recovery vegetation monitoring
- Annual southwestern willow flycatcher monitoring
- Public Outreach and Education Program, including a third grade focused Design-An-Ad program with Imperial Valley schools and IV Alive! Magazine

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