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LAGOON GETS FACELIFT - Large vehicles at work restoring San Dieguito Lagoon. This is part of a project that aims to protect the area against storms and flooding. *Courtesy photo*

Lagoon restoration gets moving and reshaping

■ 3-year project

The idea behind the restoration is to create a natural, regular tidal exchange to

of water in the case of a big storm or flood.

"Instead of sediment being

Planning Board in favor of cell tower

By Jeff O'Brien
STAFF WRITER

CARMEL VALLEY — In its first meeting of 2007, the Carmel Valley Planning Board voted to support the design of a new cell tower that would replace the existing one at Torrey Pines High School.

Joe Parker, Mark Linman and Jon Dohm of Crown Castle Wireless Communications were on hand at the Jan. 9 meeting to present their latest design scheme.

"In our initial proposal, we had a three-legged structure with shields at the top that displayed the school logo," Linman said. "But in our initial meetings with the public, the general consensus is that residents prefer a more streamlined design that resembles the existing facility."



LAGOON GETS FACELIFT - Large vehicles at work restoring San Dieguito Lagoon. This is part of a project that aims to protect the area against storms and flooding. *Courtesy photo*

Lagoon restoration gets moving and reshaping

■ **3-year project aims to change sediment flow**

By Jeff O'Brien
STAFF WRITER

DEL MAR — As commuters on Interstate 5 have noticed, workers and large earth-moving equipment are reshaping the face of the San Dieguito Lagoon.

Southern California Edison is in charge of the three-year, \$100 million restoration project, which began Oct. 1.

The idea behind the restoration is to create a natural, regular tidal exchange to preserve the ecological processes in the area, such as fish and bird hatcheries.

According to Del Mar City Councilman Jerry Finnell, work is on schedule.

"They are clearing off certain sections and accumulating materials needed for construction of the new berms," Finnell said.

According to Samir Tanious, project manager with Southern California Edison, the goal behind the new berms is to redirect the sand and flow

of water in the case of a big storm or flood.

"Instead of sediment being disposed in the wetlands, it would flow through the channel and go all the way to the beach," Tanious said. "This will serve to protect the wetlands."

Tanious added that by the time the restoration is completed, more than 2 million cubic yards of earth will have been moved.

In the past, the lagoon's outlet to the ocean regularly became clogged, causing massive blooms of algae to spread

LAGOON

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into the backwaters. The resulting lack of nourishment and oxygen in the water caused a giant cesspool, which over the years had been killing marine life.

Tanious said crews are preparing land on the west side of Interstate 5 for bird nesting sites.

On the east side of the

freeway, a temporary disposal site is currently being prepared which would allow any sediment and runoff from project work on the west side to flow under the freeway and be removed.

The Lagoon Preservation Committee, a volunteer organization that has been advising Del Mar City Council, organ-

ized in 1974 with the goal of increasing awareness about the value of the San Dieguito ecosystem and restoring the natural state of the lagoon.

"When this project is complete, the oxygen levels in the water will return to normal, and that will make it possible for more fish to breed," said Jan McMillan of the San

Dieguito Lagoon Preservation Committee. "That, in turn, will attract more birds and maintain a balanced ecology."

Finnell said the environmental benefits of the lagoon restoration project are huge.

"A lot of fish and bird hatching occurs in that tidal basin, so it's important to preserve the area," he said.