



San Dieguito Project Media Contact: Kelly Sarber, (760) 613-5994
Southern California Edison Media Contact: Maureen Brown, (626) 302-2255

Wetlands Restoration Project Mobilizes to Dredge Inlet Sand Removed from the San Dieguito River Tidal Channel

DEL MAR, Calif., Oct. 3, 2014 -- The San Dieguito Wetlands Restoration Project lead, Southern California Edison (SCE), plans to excavate about 15,000 cubic yards of sand from the San Dieguito River channel and place it south of the river mouth for beach replenishment. Once completed, beach visitors will notice more ocean water flowing through the river channel as ocean tides bring in fish, plankton and nutrients via the river mouth into rare wetland habitats recently constructed or restored – tides which constantly reinvigorate the ecosystem.

Excavation approvals were provided by the city of Del Mar, Army Corps of Engineers and the California Coastal Commission. Mobilization of equipment will start the week of Oct. 13 with completion expected in late October. Equipment will be working in the area between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays, as needed. Equipment will be parked overnight on the southern side of the San Dieguito River next to the project site. For safety reasons, the trail on the south side portion of the San Dieguito River and west of the Coast Highway will be closed.

Excavating the San Dieguito River mouth inlet is one of the on-going maintenance activities for the restored wetlands and the timing is dependent on the volume of sand that builds up. Removing the sand will enhance the natural tidal flows between the Pacific Ocean and the hundreds of acres of new and existing habitat that depend on daily tidal flushing. It will also move sand that would normally remain in the channel onto the beach.

"The removal of the sand that's moved into the inlet channel will avoid potential degradation of water quality, and loss of biological resources within the tidal wetlands," said David Kay, SCE principal manager for environmental projects. "As part of our ongoing commitment, we will periodically move the sand out of the inlet channel and onto the beach, and monitor the beach for project effects."

The goal of the San Dieguito Wetlands Restoration Project, along with other companion environmental projects, is to offset any adverse impact to ocean ecosystems that was caused by the operation of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station cooling system owned by SCE and minority partner SDG&E. Since the restoration project was completed, nearby communities have embraced the new nature preserve, appreciating both the recreational aspects and the overall benefit to the region from creating and restoring rare, coastal estuary systems.

SCE and SDG&E hope to preserve, improve and create a variety of habitats to increase and maintain fish and wildlife, and to ensure protection of endangered species. Since construction started in 2006, there has been more than a tripling of bird species identified on the site, millions of baby fish born in the deep lagoon that acts as a fish nursery and colonization of native vegetation that now covers the project area. SCE and SDG&E provided grants that allowed trails to be constructed to allow the public to view and enjoy the new nature preserve and thousands of local school age students have visited the wetlands to learn more about the rare coastal estuary.

Additional information about the San Dieguito Wetland Restoration Project is available at www.sce.com/wetlands or by calling Kelly Sarber at (760) 613-5994.

About Southern California Edison

An Edison International (NYSE:EIX) company, Southern California Edison is one of the nation's largest electric utilities, serving a population of nearly 14 million via 4.9 million customer accounts in a 50,000-square-mile service area within Central, Coastal and Southern California.

About San Diego Gas & Electric

SDG&E is a regulated public utility that provides safe and reliable energy service to 3.4 million consumers through 1.4 million electric meters and more than 840,000 natural gas meters in San Diego and southern Orange counties. SDG&E is a subsidiary of Sempra Energy (NYSE:SRE), a Fortune 500 energy services holding company based in San Diego.

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