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Wetlands Restoration Project Enters Final Construction Stage

Project Team Mobilizes to Dredge San Dieguito River Tidal Channel

DEL MAR, Calif., Sept. 6, 2011 -- The San Dieguito Wetlands Restoration Project will enter its final phase of major construction in September, as project lead Southern California Edison excavates about 30,000 cubic yards of sand from the San Dieguito River channel and places it north and south of the river mouth for beach replenishment. Once completed, visitors will notice more salt water flowing through the channel as hundreds of millions of gallons of ocean water bring fish, plankton and nutrients via the river mouth into the newly created habitats, constantly reinvigorating the ecosystem.

On July 14, 2011, final inlet excavation approvals were given, with mobilization of equipment starting the week of Sept. 6, 2011 and completion expected in early October of 2011. Excavating the San Dieguito River mouth inlet is one of the final major construction activities planned for the restored wetlands. It will restore the natural tidal flows between the Pacific Ocean and the hundreds of acres of new and existing habitat that depend on daily seawater tidal influences. The last piece of construction will be to provide shoreline protection for businesses, homes and roads east of Jimmy Durante Bridge.

Minimizing interference with any migratory and endangered bird nesting activity is one of the most important components of the inlet excavation. Project biologists will work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The California Department of Fish and Game to monitor the site during construction to protect birds and fish. Scientists have documented nearly a tripling of bird species in the lagoon since restoration began in September 2006. This spring's abundance of grunion on Del Mar beaches delayed the final inlet work to September to allow the fish to spawn without interference.

"Once we remove the sand partially plugging the inlet channel, the tidal wetlands will be fully functioning and the daily ocean water flow will support the many acres of vegetation we have planted," said Patrick Tennant, Edison's project manager. "As part of our ongoing commitment, Edison will periodically move the sand out of the inlet channel and onto the beach, and monitor the beach for project effects."

"This is one of the most important components in the overall construction of the wetlands, since the aquatic life, vegetation and wildlife in the nature preserve are all connected and dependent on these daily salt water flows for their sustenance," said Pam Fair, San Diego Gas & Electric's vice president of Environmental, Safety and Support Services, and chief environmental officer.

“We truly appreciate the resources that both Southern California Edison and SDG&E bring to our goal of making the River Park one of the best urban locations where people can come to view nature,” said Dick Bobertz, executive director of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority.

The goal of the San Dieguito Wetlands Restoration Project, along with two companion environmental projects, is to offset any adverse impact to ocean ecosystems caused by the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. The plant uses ocean water for one of three cooling systems. Although innovative technologies prevent more than 94 percent of marine life near the plant’s intake system from being affected, the system does impact some small fish and fish larvae. SCE and SDG&E also hope to preserve, improve and create a variety of habitats to increase and maintain fish and wildlife, and to ensure protection of endangered species.

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. The utility’s area spans 4,100 square miles. Exceptional customer service is a priority of SDG&E as it seeks to enhance the region’s quality of life. 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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