

According to a November 2018 Orange County Register report (*“Crucial dredging at Bolsa Chica Wetlands could run out of money”*), “Money earmarked for dredging at the state reserve in Huntington Beach will be exhausted by 2020....When the inlet was opened in 2006 for the first time in more than a century, a trust fund was established to pay for periodic dredging. But sand migrating along the coast filled in the inlet, located at the south end of the wetlands, more rapidly than expected. The trust fund’s interest earnings have not been able to keep up”.

The California State Lands Commission has identified the Bolsa Chica wetland site in as an underfunded restoration project in need of additional funds to maintain the high value habitat that was created. Given its close proximity to the proposed desalination project area, the State Lands Commission has found Bolsa Chica would be an ideal candidate for this type of mitigation derived funding augmentation.

“Bolsa Chica wetlands is an example of a restoration project in need of a sustainable, long-term source of funds to maintain the high-value habitat that was created by the state,” said Bolsa Chica Conservancy CEO Patrick Brenden. “State Lands Commission funds dedicated to maintaining Bolsa Chica and its ocean inlet have been exhausted and the Commission is now forced to rely on an annual appropriation of state funds. This is not a sustainable solution,” he said.

Fortunately, there is a viable long-term solution. On July 30 2020 the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board is scheduled to renew its permit for the proposed Huntington Beach Desalination Project which includes a condition that facility owner Poseidon Water preserve, restore and enhance the Bolsa Chica wetlands for the operating life of the desalination plant. The tremendous significance of the opportunity is captured in a short video that can be found [here](#) or www.bolsachica.org > Save The Bolsa Chica Inlet.

Absent the implementation of Poseidon’s Bolsa Chica preservation plan, there is no identified long-term funding source to ensure this valuable coastal habitat is preserved and enhanced in the future. The desalination project now qualifies as providing multiple public benefits – a climate resilient, drought-proof drinking water supply and an environmental preservation project that will enhance the largest coastal wetlands complex in the Southern California Bight and one of the state’s critical Marine Protected Areas.

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