

SWCA

OXFORD RETENTION BASIN MULTIUSE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT FISH RELOCATION PLAN

July 2015

SUBMITTED TO

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**Fish Relocation Plan
for the
Oxford Retention Basin
Multiuse Enhancement Project
Los Angeles County, California**

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1 INTRODUCTION

SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) has prepared this Fish Relocation Plan (plan) for CDM Smith for the Oxford Retention Basin Multiuse Enhancement Project (project), located near the community of Marina del Rey, Los Angeles County, California (refer to Figures 1 and 2). This plan has been prepared to comply with conditions in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Streambed Alteration Agreement (#1600-2012-0248-R5) prepared for the project.

The intent of this plan is to describe how stranded aquatic species will be captured and relocated to suitable habitat outside of the project footprint during dewatering of the basin. Detailed tasks for fish relocation are described in further detail below (refer to Section 5, Fish Relocation Work Plan).

2 PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

The project consists of restoration and enhancement components to improve water quality, habitat quality, and recreational opportunities in and around the Oxford Retention Basin (ORB), a flood control facility in the unincorporated community of Marina del Rey. The ORB is located south of the intersection of West Washington Boulevard and Oxford Avenue, and is a tributary to Basin E of the Marina del Rey Harbor (harbor).

The ORB operates as a large detention pond that receives urban and stormwater runoff from the surrounding community of Marina del Rey. Stormwater inflow enters the ORB through two Los Angeles County Flood Control District storm drains—5243 and 3872. Water quality in the ORB is influenced by a number of factors, including urban runoff, poor circulation (during dry season conditions), high groundwater, and tidal inflows from the harbor through existing tide gates and a tunnel under Admiralty Way. Water quality conditions in the ORB have resulted in listing on the State 303(d) list of impaired waters for bacteria and toxins. During large storm events, the ORB is prone to overflowing onto adjacent Washington Boulevard (CDM Smith 2014).

The proposed project will include several improvements to the ORB to improve water and habitat quality, flood protection, aesthetics, and recreational opportunities. Portions of the project related to the aquatic function of the ORB include:

- Dewatering of the ORB and excavation of approximately 3,000 cubic yards of accumulated sediment along the bottom of the basin to restore capacity;
- Replacement of two existing tide gates used to regulate water entering and exiting the basin from the harbor;
- Construction of a berm between the tide gates into the basin and reprogramming the opening cycle of the new tide gates to improve water circulation in the ORB;
- Reconstruction of approximately 400 linear feet of slope along Admiralty Way near Storm Drain 3872 with geogrid or other approved material to stabilize underlying soils;
- Removal of approximately 400 non-native trees and 300 non-native shrubs and approximately 6,700 cubic yards of contaminated soils along the perimeter of the ORB (3,700 cubic yards and 3,000 cubic yards to be disposed of at Class I and Class III landfills, respectively) and replacement with clean imported fill and native plants;
- Installation of a steel-grated landing above the two tide gate inlet structures in the basin to provide safe access for trash rack maintenance; and,
- Construction of a permanent boat ramp near the outlet of Storm Drain 3872 to allow the Flood Maintenance Division and Department of Beaches and Harbors access to the ORB for routine maintenance, trash removal, and water quality monitoring.

Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map

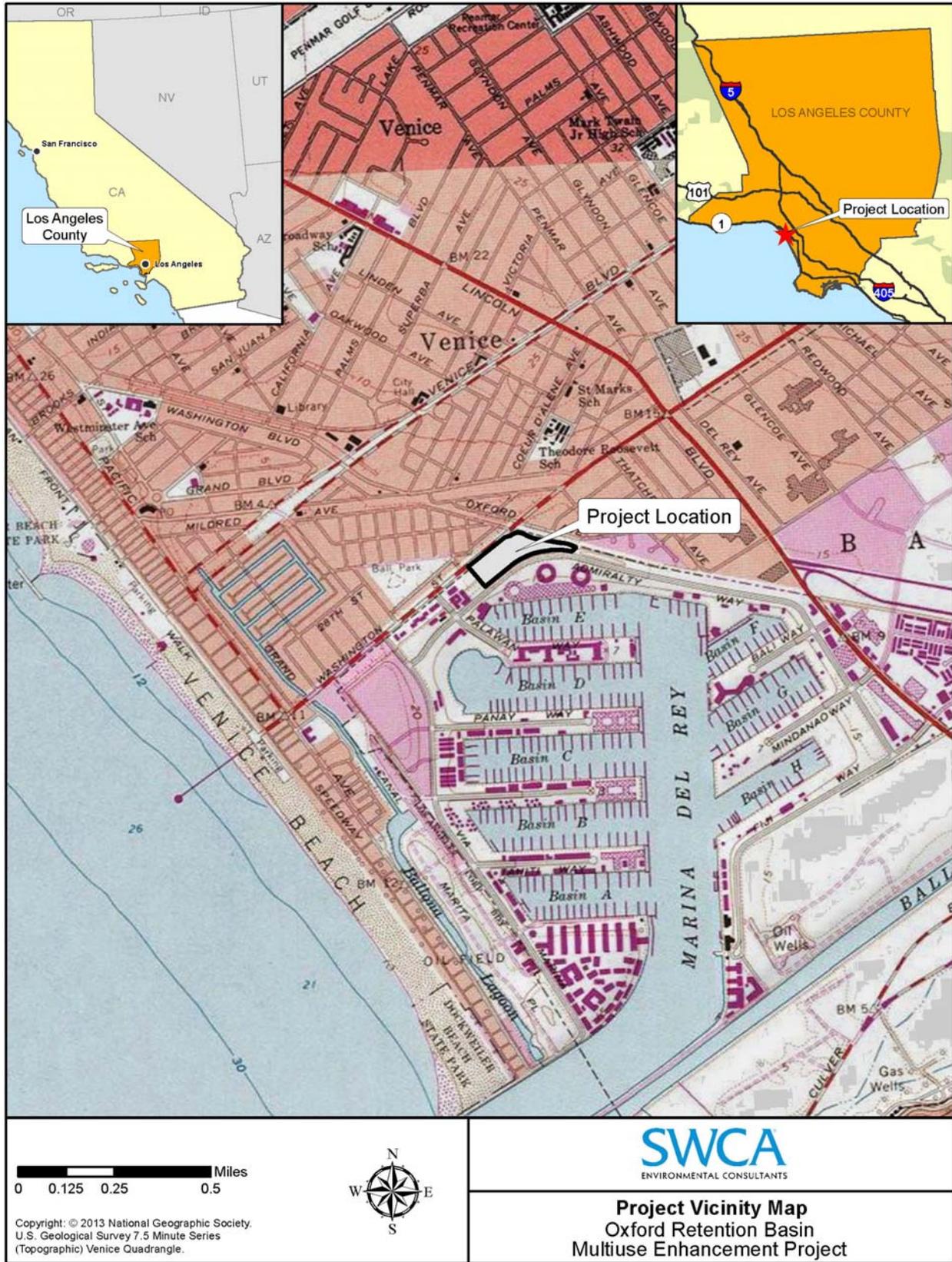


Figure 2. Project Location Map



3 AQUATIC SPECIES BACKGROUND

Several aquatic species surveys have been conducted in the ORB to support environmental review for the project. Based on a memorandum prepared by Entrix, Inc. biologists (Entrix 2010), surveys conducted in January and April 2010 identified the presence of several native and non-native fish species in the ORB. However, none of the species observed during these surveys are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service, or CDFW.

Surveys were conducted by visual observation, beach seining, and trapping around the edges of the ORB. Surveys in January 2010 resulted in capture and observation of mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*), shadow goby (*Quietula y-cauda*), and longjaw mudsucker (*Gillichthys mirabilis*). Surveys in April 2010 resulted in capture of mosquitofish, shadow goby, longjaw mudsucker, arrow goby (*Clevelandia ios*), cheekspot goby (*Ilypnus gilberti*), yellowfin goby (*Acanthogobius flavimanus*), and topsmelt (*Atherinops affinis*). CDM Smith biologists conducting recent (May and June 2015) preconstruction surveys and construction monitoring at the ORB have observed several round stingrays (*Urolophus halleri*) near the tide gates..

4 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

CDFW has regulatory authority over Waters of the State of California under Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code. Impacts to the bed or bank of a stream or lakebed within the state require application for a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA). SAA No. 1600-2012-0148-R5 was entered into by the CDFW and the LADPW in 2014 (amended 2015) to allow for modifications within the ORB and to provide measures to protect fish and wildlife resources.

Condition 2.27 of the amended ORB SAA states that:

“The Permittee shall have a qualified biologist inspect and relocate any stranded aquatic life as the level in the dewatering area drops. All reasonable efforts shall be made to capture and move all stranded aquatic life observed in the dewatering areas. Capture methods may include fish landing nets, dip nets, buckets and by hand. Captured aquatic life shall be released immediately in the closest body of water adjacent to the work site. This condition does not all[ow] for the take or disturbance of any State or federally listed species, or State listed species of special concern.”

5 FISH RELOCATION WORK PLAN

CDM Smith and SWCA biologists will conduct aquatic species relocation during dewatering activities at the ORB. Coordination between CDM Smith, SWCA, LADPW, and the construction contractor is expected to aid in efficient and safe operations. Fish collection and relocation will occur prior to and during pumping and drawdown of the water level in the ORB. No species of special concern or listed species have been identified in the ORB, and, as such, they are not anticipated to be captured and relocated. Fish will be removed from the ORB and relocated to nearby Basin E of the harbor. As water levels drop, biologists will utilize seine nets, dip nets, and hands to gather fish and/or move them to deeper water. Once water levels have dropped enough to work in the deepest part of the ORB near the tide gates, the biologists will capture fish, transfer them to containers fitted with aerators, and relocate them as quickly, safely, and efficiently as possible to Basin E. Additional protection measures employed during the fish relocation are summarized as follows:

- Fish collection and relocation operations will be conducted or overseen by a qualified biologist(s) who has been approved by CDFW.

- Fish will be handled with extreme care. To prevent additional stress from out-of-water handling, fish will be kept in water to the maximum extent possible during seining, netting, and transfer procedures.
- To minimize the time fish are kept out of water, and because no special-status species are anticipated to occur in the ORB, biologists will approximate numbers of fish that are collected and relocated. Exact numbers of each species relocated will not be recorded.
- Adequate water quality conditions will be maintained in water used to hold and transport fish. Coolers and/or buckets with battery-operated aerators will be used to circulate water and provide dissolved oxygen. Fish hold times will be minimized to the greatest extent feasible in all circumstances. Due to the proximity of the release location, it is expected that fish will not be held longer than 30 minutes.
- Fish will be released into nearby Basin E of the Marina del Rey Harbor. In order to minimize transport time, if water is present in the tunnel that connects Basin E to the ORB, fish may also be released into the tunnel and allowed to travel to Basin E.

Completion of successful relocation efforts will vary and are dependent on several factors including, but not limited to, seasonal surface and sub-surface hydrology, site constraints, construction actions, and fish use. CDM Smith and SWCA biologists will implement the above best practices and any others that become practicable in relocating fish so as to overcome these variables and allow for the most efficient and successful relocation possible.

6 CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are basic requirements identified by CDM Smith and SWCA to be adhered to by the construction contractor responsible for dewatering of the ORB that will be critical to successful implementation of this plan.

- Provide CDM Smith and SWCA with contact information for the project's construction crew lead and engineer prior to isolation to coordinate fish relocation.
- Provide CDM Smith and SWCA with projected weekly and daily construction scheduling information during the dewatering and fish relocation process.
- Provide CDM Smith and SWCA with dewatering plan details and information prior to collection and relocation activities.
- Coordinate with CDM Smith and SWCA in a manner that allows successful implementation of the methods outlined in this plan.

7 REFERENCES

CDM Smith. 2014. *Oxford Retention Basin Multiuse Enhancement Project Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan*.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2015. *Amended Streambed Alteration Agreement for the Oxford Retention Basin Multi-use Enhancement Project (# 1600-2012-0148-R5)*.

Entrix, Inc. 2010. Memorandum RE: Results of fish surveys at Oxford Basin on January 12 and April 27, 2010, and recommendations for restoration potential for fishes and other estuarine and marine life.

APPENDIX A: Photo Documentation



PHOTO 1:
View of northwest end of ORB from construction staging area between West Washington Blvd. and Admiralty Way.

Photo taken by CDM Smith on March 17, 2015.



PHOTO 2:
View of east end of ORB toward Marvin Braude Bike Path.

Photo taken by CDM Smith on March 17, 2015.



PHOTO 3:

View of tide gates at southwest end of ORB from construction staging area between West Washington Blvd. and Admiralty Way.

Photo taken by CDM Smith on March 17, 2015.



PHOTO 4:

View of round stingray from top of tide gates at southwest end of ORB.

Photo taken by CDM Smith on June 1, 2015.