Salton Sea Authority

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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"NORTH LAKE" SALTON SEA PLAN ENDORSED

Today, the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed moving forward with the so called "North Lake" plan to improve the Salton Sea.

The plan involves creating and managing an ocean-like lake in the North basin of the Sea by constructing a dam mid-way across the current Sea. In the South, extensive shallow water habitat would be created using stepped ponds.

The plan includes desalinization of Imperial Valley rivers, thus building on the concept originally proposed by US Filter. Filter proposed that restoration efforts be integrated with efforts to supply water to metropolitan Southern California. Such integration would be achieved by desalinating rivers in the Imperial Valley and using proceeds from selling that water to help fund improvements to the Salton Sea.

"U.S. Filter's concept generated a lot of excitement and interest in integrating water supply with the Salton Sea restoration," said Board Chairman Andy Horne, a member of the Imperial Irrigation District Board.

Riverside County Supervisor Roy Wilson, who made the motion endorsing the Plan noted that, "We have reviewed countless studies and proposals, now we have something we can move forward on. The North Lake concept comes closest to any that we have seen to meet wildlife and recreation objectives plus helping to satisfy Southern California water supply needs."

"This is an important first step in selecting a preferred project," remarked Imperial County Supervisor Gary Wyatt. "Our next challenge will be working with many others to ensure that we do not trip along the way."

An engineering/management company will be retained in the next couple of months to help the Authority and its partners in refining the concept and achieving consensus among legislators, state and federal government, environmentalists, and the local community on a detailed restoration plan.

While local residents applauded the Board's action today in support of the North Lake concept, one of their own, Ted Deckers, noted that they would still like to save the whole Sea, "but this plan involves compromises among all of the interests and for many of us, a smaller, but healthier, lake is an acceptable trade-off".

While there was much support for the plan in today's meeting, scientists and engineers cautioned that additional work is necessary to refine the plan.

A report prepared by Tetra Tech and the Salton Sea Science Office on the US Filter Concept, the North Lake concept and related water supply-Salton Sea alternatives can be found at http://www.lc.usbr.gov/saltnsea/what's_new.html

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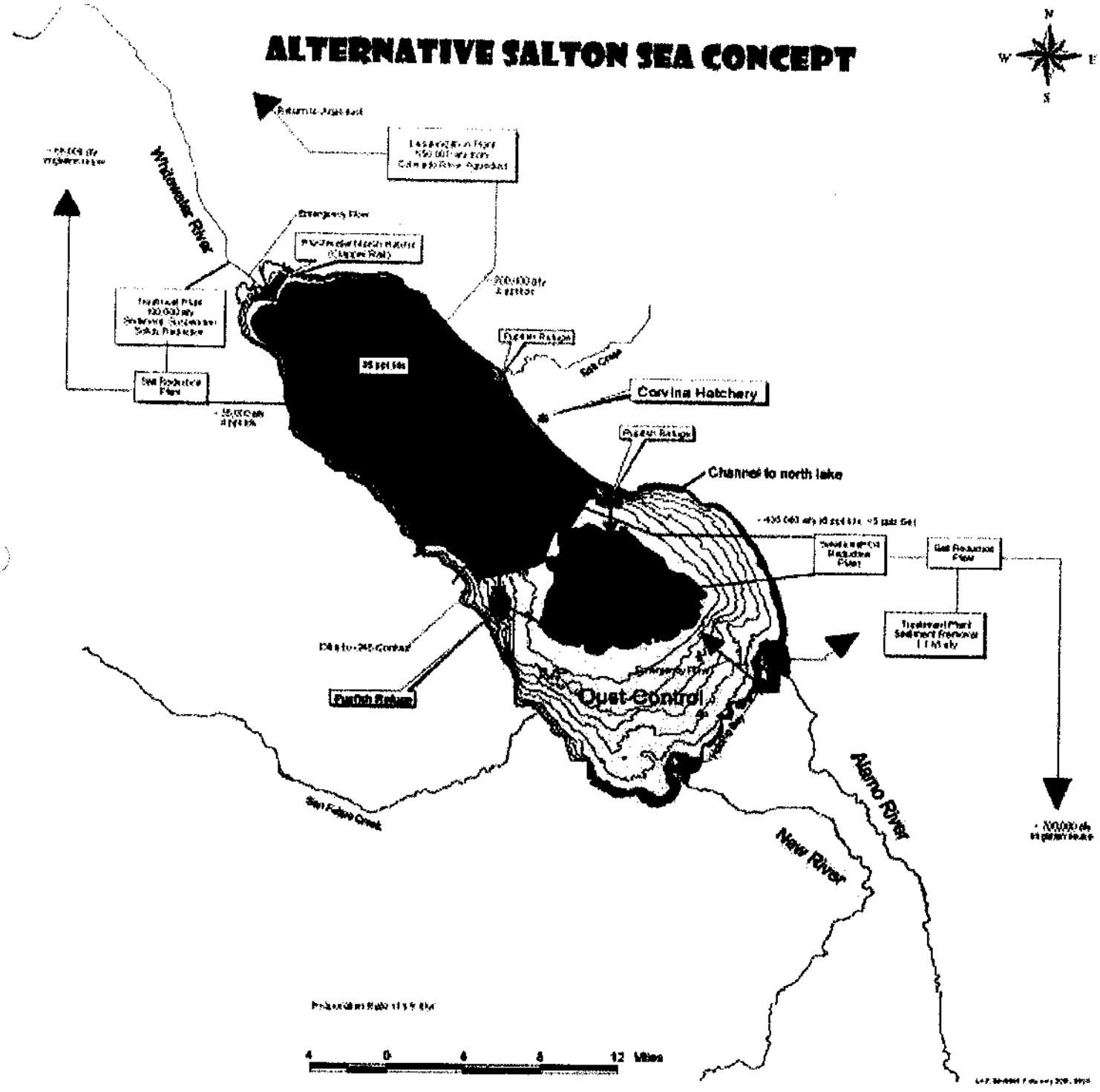

Conceptual Layout for Variation to the North Lake Proposal.