New River Improvement Project – Calexico Reach

Project Update

Jose L. Angel, P.E., March 2026

Background

AB 1079 (Pub. Resources Code Section 71103.5) required a Strategic Plan for NRIP

CalEPA appoints Technical Advisory Committee (2010)

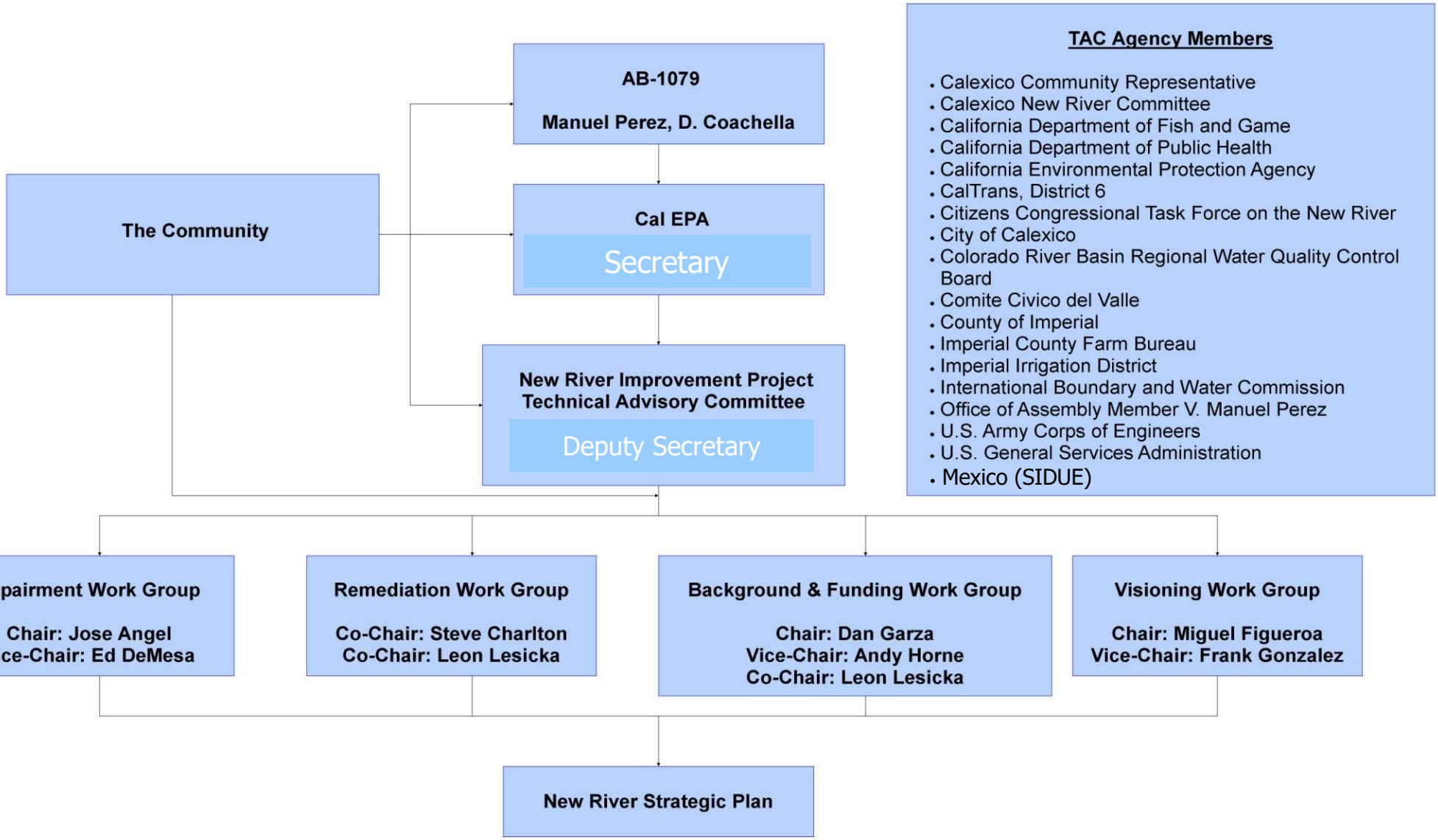
California-Mexico Border Relations Council releases Strategic Plan Dec. 2011

- Plan revised in 2016
- Plan envision River Parkway in Calexico
- Plan's remedies/strategies
  - Structural
  - Non-structural

The New River Improvement Project

A Project of the California Mexico Border Relations Council and the City of Calexico

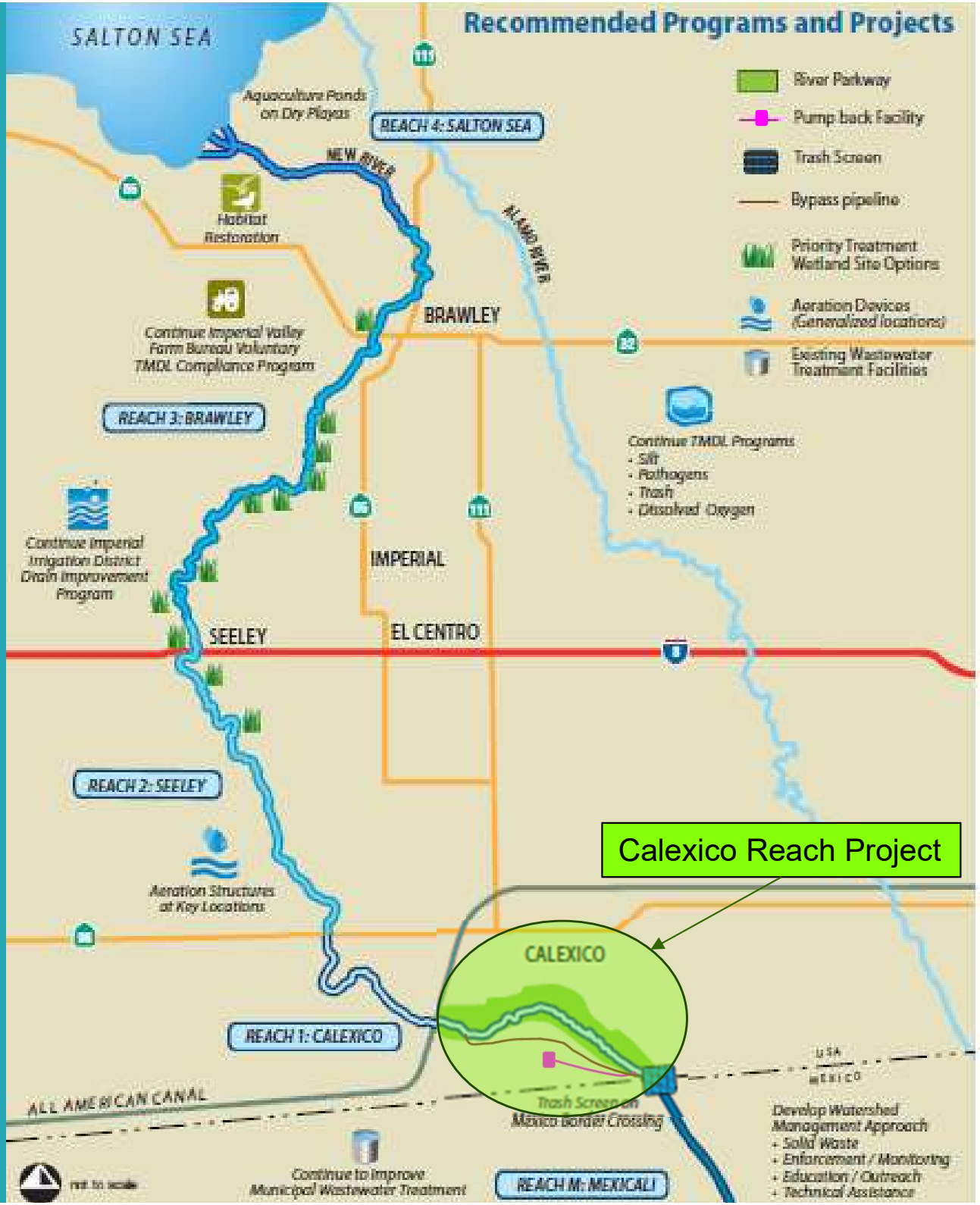
New River Improvement Project—Technical Advisory Committee



New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan

Key components

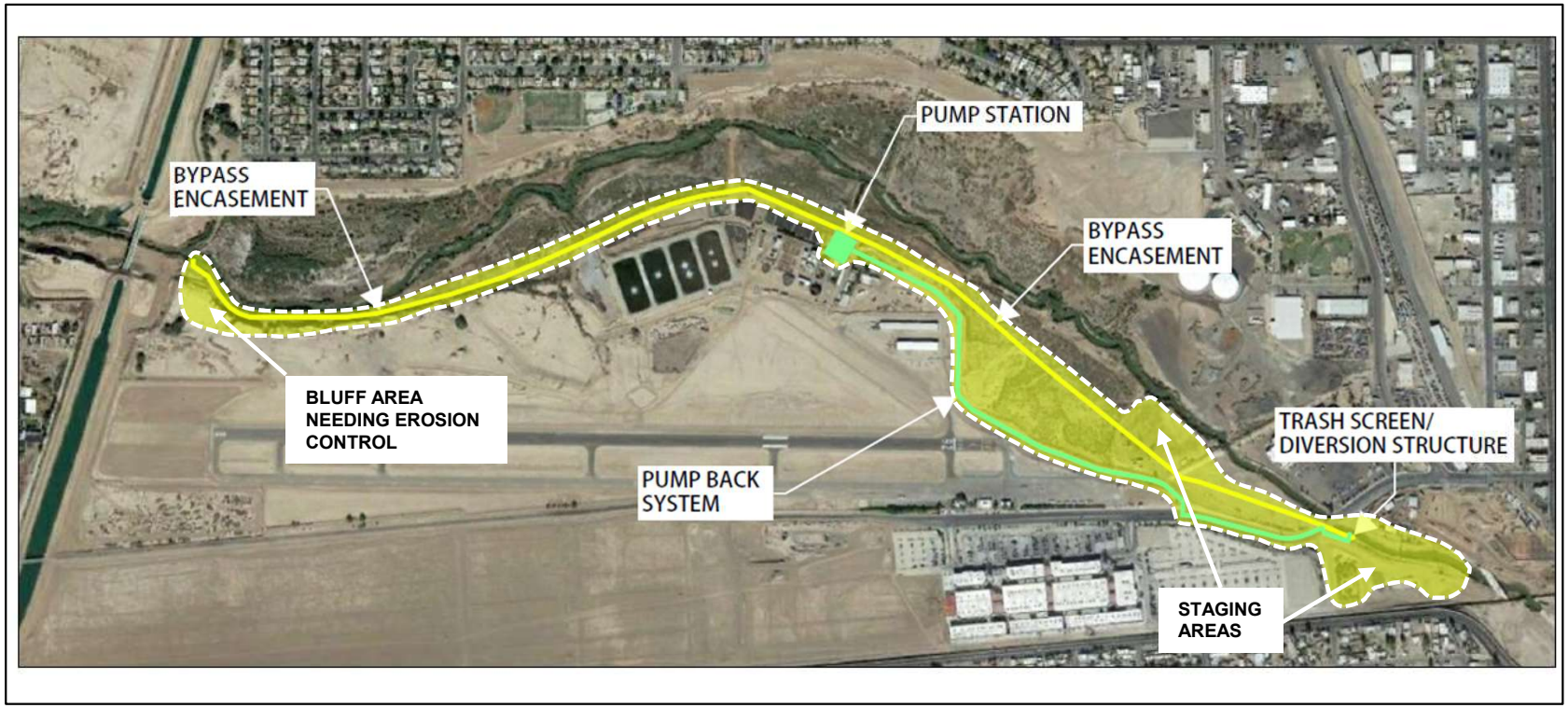
- Structural Controls
- Non-structural Controls



NRIP Calexico Reach - Project Components

- Trash Screen & Diversion Structure
- 72-in bypass pipe & Energy dissipater
- Pump-back station, forcemain, & outfall
- Drainage & Stabilization of Bluff Area

Fig.1—NRIP Calexico Reach Project Elements



Hands-on Team Members

California DWR
Funding Partner

City of Calexico
Project Lead

SWRCB
Funding Partner

Mountain Cascade, Inc.
Main Contractor

DCE
Construction Manager

Kumeyaay Indian Tribe
Cultural Resources Monitor

Third party Monitoring &
Reporting for CDFW Permit

Regulatory Agencies
- USACOE (Corps)
- SWRCB
- CRWQCB R7 (RWB)
- CDFW
- IC APCD

Project in Context

- Project main objective is to address public health threat
  - High priority for State, City, and other regional stakeholders, including Environmental NGOs
  - Serves a historically underserved, economically disadvantaged community
  - Federal government has not been able to ensure discharges of wastes from Mexico do not violate or contribute to violation of New River WQS in California (50 years and counting)
  - New River is severely polluted in the Calexico Reach
  - Considering its size, the most polluted river in California
  - Pathogens greatest threat to public health
  - Mexico encased "river" in Mexicali
- Natural Resources
  - No threatened or endangered species
  - Aquatic resources are very limited (mainly tilapia) and contaminated also
  - Vegetation in floodplain: tamarisk, Bermuda grass, iodine bush (~25% cover), very low quality
- Proposed area of trash screen and diversion structure
  - Highly disturbed and developed, Border Patrol has security screen across the River
  - Vegetation is periodically removed from the banks
- Upon completion, 1.5-mile River segment will meet its WQS

New River Flow

Water Source to New River in Calexico	Flow (cfs)	Notes
Pre-Project		
New River	Typical 60-120	Fluctuates and is expected to decline in the future as Mexico develops ways to reuse New River water. No US-Mexico water right Treaty
Post-Project		
New River	0-40	Flows greater than 160 cfs continue to be carried in New River
Treated Wastewater in Pump-back System	3.5 (average) 7.7 (peak)	Average of 2,500 acre-feet of water annually – exceeds ET rate of riparian vegetation

- 160 cfs of New River water diverted via the bypass encasement would be discharged back into New River east of the city
- Flows greater than 160 cfs continue to be carried in New River through Calexico

Project Environmental Permits

Permits for the City

- RWB CWA Sec. 401 Permit
- ACOE CWA Sec. 404 Permit
- RWB NDPES Dewatering Permit
- CDFW Sec. 1602 SBAA
- RWB Revised NPDES Permit for WWTP
- Agreement with USGS regarding gage station to record flows

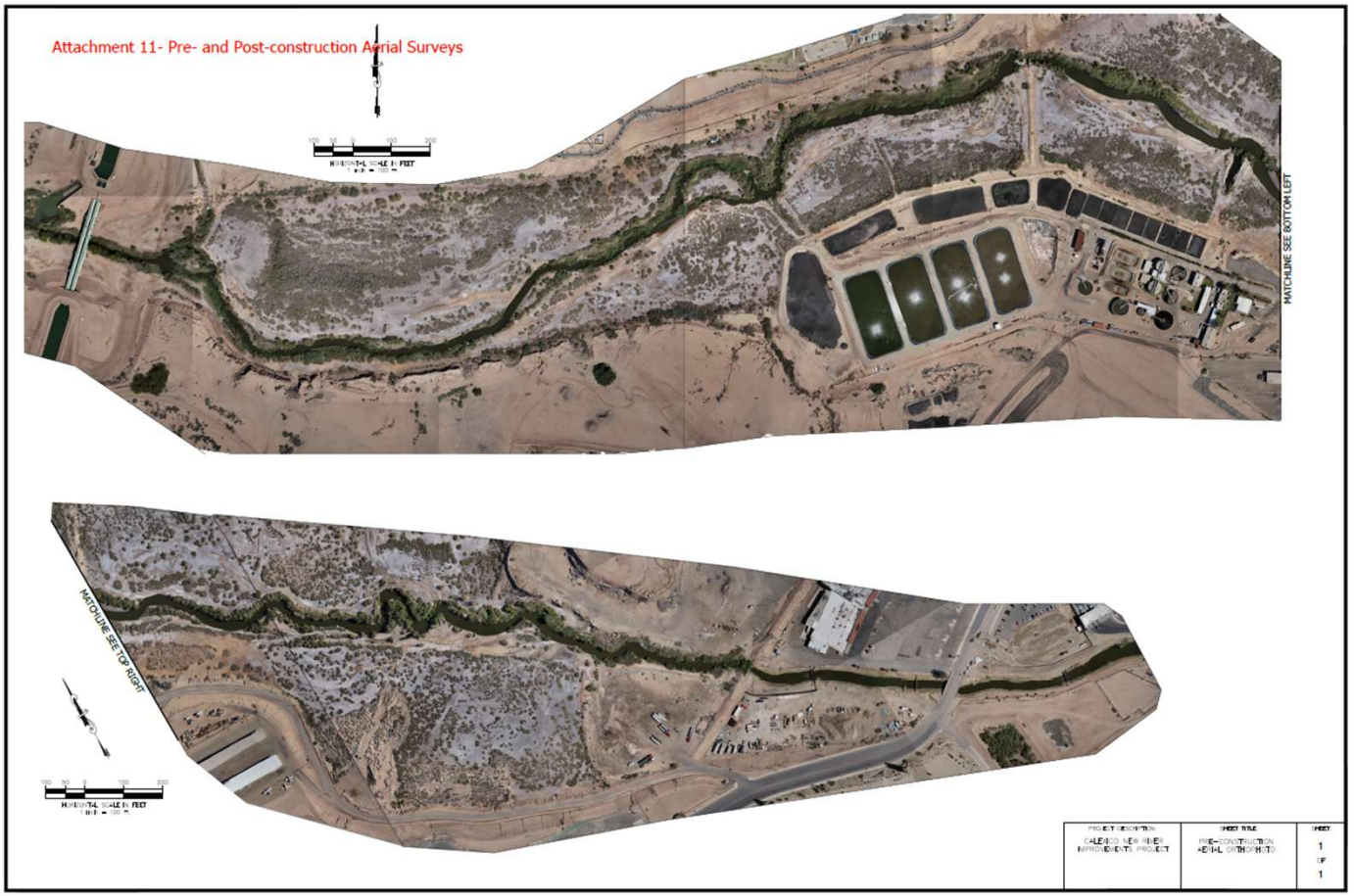
Permits for Mountain Cascade, Inc.

- SWRCB Stormwater Construction Permit
- Imperial County ACD Permit

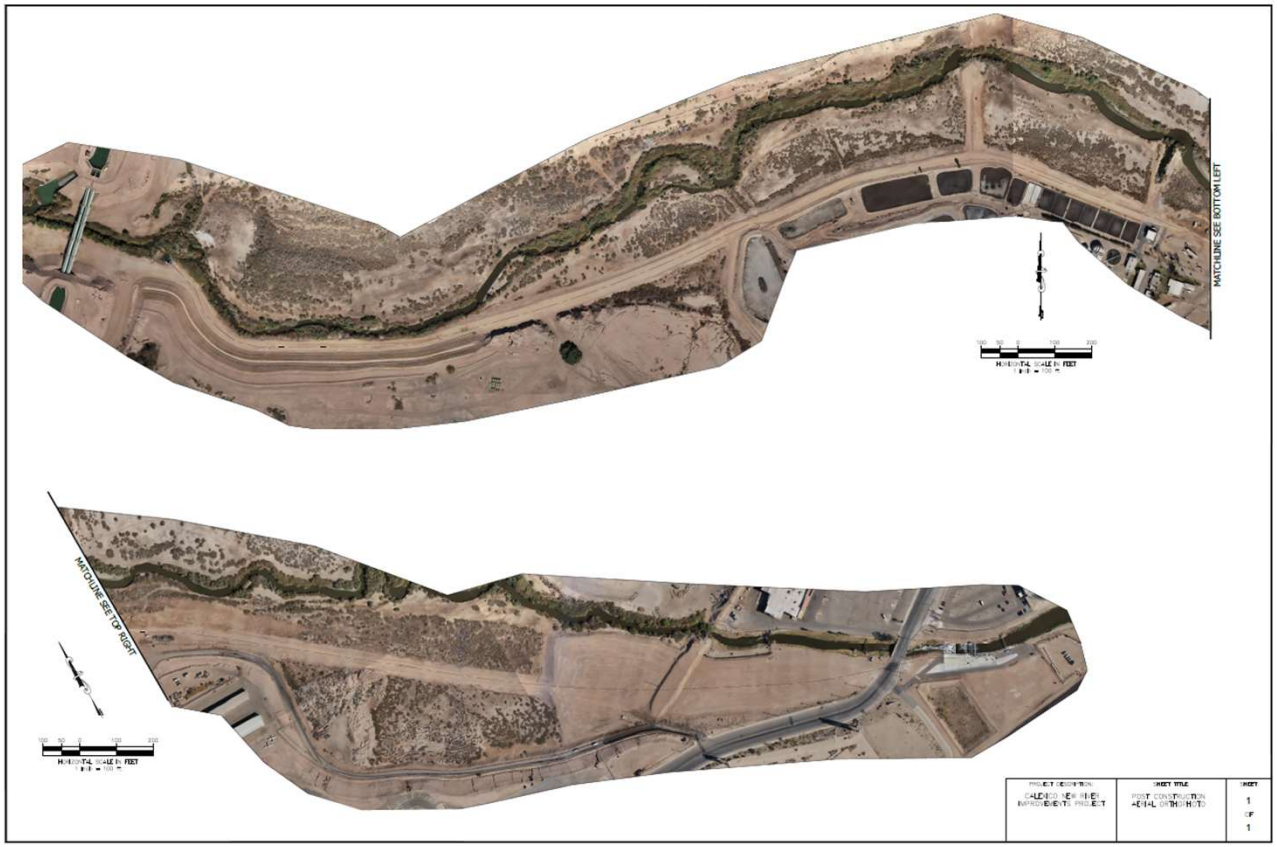
Project Status

- Project Funding ~ $46M
  - Completely State-funded project
    - DWR ~$28M
    - SWRCB ~$18M
- Construction completed
- Project fully operational

Pre-construction Aerial Survey



Post-construction Aerial Survey



Environmental Challenges

- Stormwater flows from Mexico
  - Serious damage and project delays
- New River trash from Mexico
  - Nuisance, overwhelms racking system during storms
- RWB CWA Sec. 401 Permit
  - Significant monitoring and reporting
- Dewatering Permit
  - Extensive monitoring and reporting
- ACOE CWA Sec. 404 Permit
  - Groundwater monitoring, quarterly vegetative surveys
  - Baseline report for Hydrologic and Vegetative Monitoring Areas
  - Management of groundwater & weather data
- Revised NPDES Permit for WWT
  - Antideg Analysis

Questions/Comments