

Corps, partners sign agreement to move forward on study to aid Salton Sea



Photo by Dena O'Dell

From left to right, G. Patrick O'Dowd, executive director, Salton Sea Authority; Col. Julie Balten, commander of the Corps' LA District; and Cindy Messer, chief deputy director, California Department of Water Resources, sign the Imperial Streams Salton Sea Feasibility Cost-Share Agreement during a Dec. 16 ceremony near the shores of the Salton Sea in Mecca, California.

BY DENA O'DELL
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MECCA, California — On a sunny December day near the shores of the Salton Sea, three agencies signed an agreement to collaborate on ways to aid the ailing lake.

Representatives with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, California Department of Water Resources and the Salton Sea Authority signed a cost-share agreement during a Dec. 16 outdoor ceremony at the North Shore Yacht Club in Mecca.

The agreement launches the “Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study,” a \$3-million, three-year study aimed at identifying potential ecosystem, flood-risk management or other land- and water-resource

projects and actions for the long-term restoration of the sea.

“This is an opportunity to develop viable and innovative solutions, in collaboration with our partners, for the Salton Sea community and its surrounding area,” said Col. Julie Balten, commander of the Corps' Los Angeles District. “We are excited to sign the agreement as it solidifies our commitment to this community and its people to gather information, define problems and opportunities, and potentially recommend federal restoration projects at the Salton Sea.”

The Salton Sea is facing multiple challenges. With decreased inflow, the lake is shrinking and rising in salinity. As a result, thousands of acres of lakebed are being exposed, and habitat has greatly diminished.

The Corps received funding to initiate and complete the study through the 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The agreement allows the Corps and its partners to split the cost of the study and work collaboratively on possible solutions.

“When we talk about the crucial times of investment in our nation's environment and water resource infrastructure, this study helps us to identify that path forward,” said Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, commander of the Corps' South Pacific Division, which oversees the Corps' LA District.

The federal funding reflects the administration's focus and priorities, Gant said, as it tar-

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Strengthening partnerships



Top three photos by Philipp Tintner, USACE HQ / Bottom photo courtesy of ASA Civil Works
 Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, along with Col. Julie Balten, commander of the Los Angeles District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Stephen Lewis, governor of the Gila River Indian Community, sign the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Renewable Energy Pilot Project Feasibility Cost-Share Agreement Nov. 29 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters building in Washington, D.C. The signing ceremony marks the Corps' initiation into a feasibility evaluation for the Gila River Indian Community's solar panels over canal pilot project.

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Happy holidays and happy New Year!

Hello, SPL Team!

I want to take this time to wish you all a happy holiday and a safe, prosperous New Year!

The Los Angeles District has had a busy year, and I want to say I am so proud of "each and every" one of you. Through trial, error and sheer fortitude, we continue to push through the challenges and continue to give this district 100 percent, every day, to accomplish our mission.

I see your hard work firsthand, as I travel to our project sites and continue to hear stories about the great work you are doing!

Through the work you do, you ARE making positive impacts in our communities for years to come. I couldn't be prouder to be the commander of such a professional and dedicated team!

Although the holidays are meant to be joyful, they also can be a challenging time



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN
 LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

for some. As a reminder, please always check on your teammates. You never know what someone else is going through and how much a smile and a "Hey, how are you doing?" could really make a difference. Remember we are: "One team, one fight!"

And speaking of making a difference, I want to remind everyone there is still an opportunity to 'give back' to those in need through the Combined Federal Campaign, now to Jan. 15. The CFC is the only federal campaign in which employees can donate to local, national or international charities via electronic payroll deductions or one-time donations. To learn more about the CFC, visit <https://givecfc.org>.

In just a few weeks, the South Pacific Division is adopting a new strategic vision: DELIVERING BOLD SOLUTIONS TO SERVE AND STRENGTHEN ALL

COMMUNITIES, which we will also incorporate at the LA District.

The challenges we face calls for **BOLD** solutions. Through **BOLD** solutions, we know our work will serve and strengthen diverse communities across our area of operations.

Speaking of operations, I want to send a special shoutout and happy holidays to those deployed in support of contingency operations or emergency response missions, both here and abroad. Thank you for all that you do and the sacrifices you make in support of our nation.

And lastly, just a reminder to please be safe if you are traveling for the holidays; and don't forget to designate a driver while celebrating with family and friends. Happy holidays! I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year!

Sincerely,

Col. Julie A. Balten

Around the District

"I like working for the Corps because we are always helping people in need."

Clinton is deployed to Duncan, Arizona, to oversee construction of a reinforced dike to protect the town's critical infrastructure, specifically a wastewater treatment station. Clinton is from Phoenix and has been with USACE for 12 years.



Clinton Griffin
 Quality Assurance Representative



Click the links below to find us on social media!



Corps joins Air Force to unveil new air traffic control tower

Plant 42, a component of Edwards Air Force Base, is described as 'center of the aerospace testing universe'



Photo by Dena O'Dell

Justin Gay, deputy district engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers LA District, speaks during a Nov. 30 ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the construction of a 160-foot air traffic control tower at Air Force Plant 42, Palmdale, California.

BY DENA O'DELL
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PALMDALE, California – From the top of a 160-foot air traffic control tower at Air Force Plant 42, one may understand why Brig. Gen. Matthew Higer, commander of the 412th Test Wing, Edwards Air Force Base, California, refers to the area as the 'center of the aerospace testing universe.'

Although primarily desert landscape with scenic mountain views off in the distance, the area has a storied history dating back to the 1930s, when a small airstrip was built there. It is now home to aerospace agency and industry giants, like NASA, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and others.

The Air Force unveiled the air traffic control tower during a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate its completion Nov. 30 in Palmdale. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, along with its contractor, Stronghold Engineering of Perris, California, oversaw the tower's design and construction.

The new tower includes updated technology and advanced features aimed at improving operational capability and safety for the Air Force and its mission partners at Plant 42. The construction contract was awarded in the fall 2020 at a cost of more than \$17 million.

Justin Gay, deputy district engineer for the

Corps' Los Angeles District, was one of several presenters during the event, which also included local and state dignitaries.

While it took some time to complete the design, Gay said, "quality is what it takes, and that's what we are shooting for always with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers."

He emphasized one of the significant points of the construction of the tower was more than 80,000 labor hours were worked with no lost-time incidents.

"However great or pretty a building is, what we are most concerned about is, 'do the folks that are building it go home every day,'" Gay said.

The significance of the ceremony couldn't have been more punctuated than with the rollout of the B-21 aircraft the same week at Northrop-Grumman, also located at Air Force Plant 42, Higer said.

"That is the latest in a very long line of things that have happened because of this installation and the capabilities here," he said. "When I see all of that at the center of the aerospace testing universe, I see a tremendous amount of awesomeness and partnership. This ceremony is a great example of that partnership."

During his presentation, Gay recognized several members of the LA District's team, including Chad Allen, the Corps' LA District resident engineer of construction at Edwards Air Force Base, who's office also provides

oversight for Plant 42 construction activities.

"The air traffic control tower was a significant achievement for the Los Angeles District, our Air Force Life Cycle Management Center and Air Force Plant 42 partners," Allen said. "The 160-foot structure would not have been constructed without a world-class U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' team and our contractor, Stronghold Engineering."

Allen also applauded the Corps' LA District's Contracting Division for supporting the team – led by Danny Carrasco, James Costantino and Lucia Carvajal – throughout the procurement phase; James Elsberry with the Corps' Sacramento District, who led the design team on the project; and the Corps' construction team, led by Doug Delaney, project engineer, and Sarah Coles, office engineer for the project, "who both provided exceptional onsite support resulting in less than a 3.5-percent cost growth and more than 80,000 labor hours worked with no lost time incidents," Allen said.

"I think we have a group here that can really appreciate the significance of what this tower means, the longevity of this particular plant and just the community at large," Gay said. "The longevity and the future history of how we support our nation's warfighters starts right here today."

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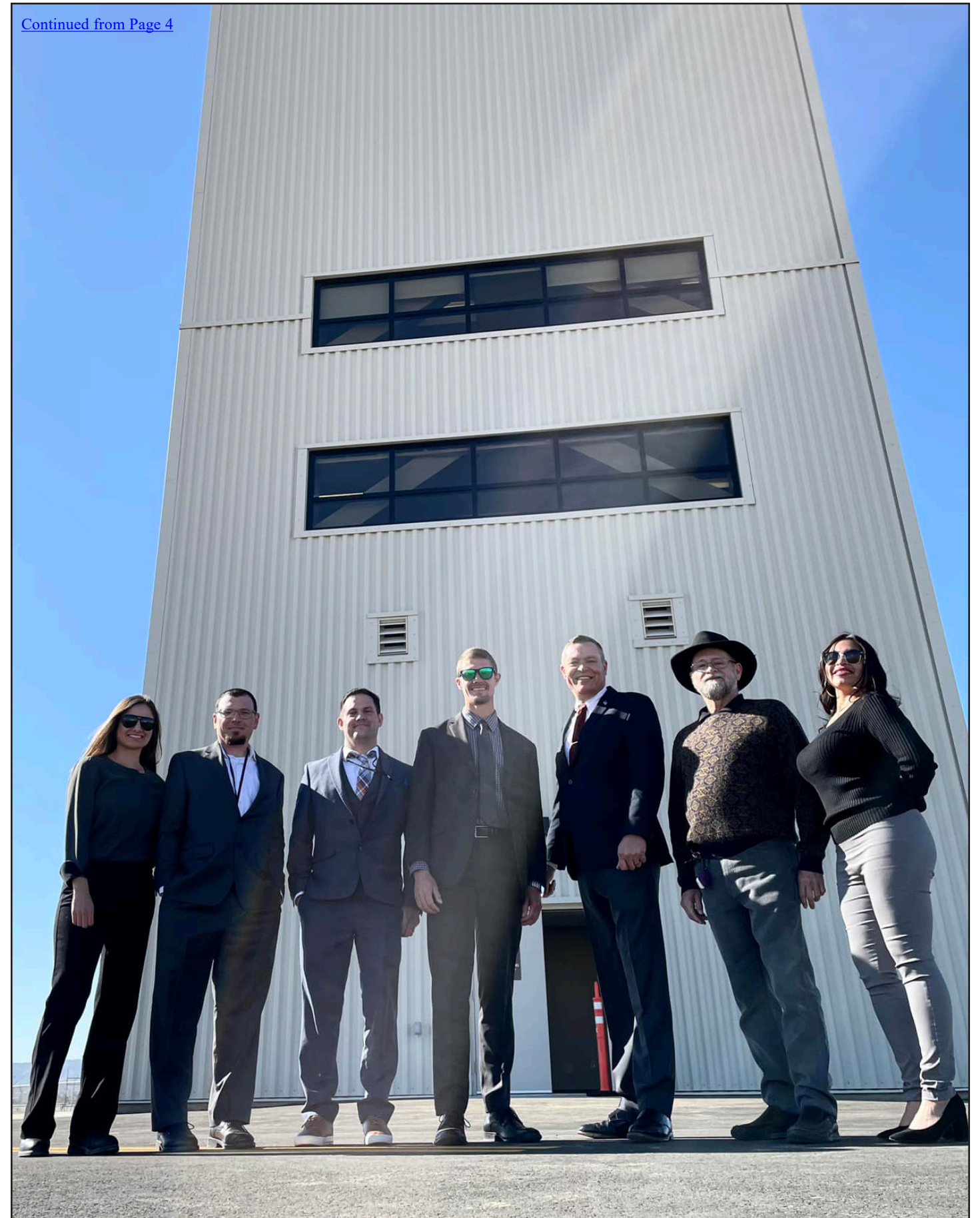


Photo by Dena O'Dell

Justin Gay, deputy district engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers LA District, third from right, along with other LA District representatives from the Corps' Palmdale Resident and Edwards Air Force Base offices, pose for a picture in front of the new air traffic control tower following a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the tower Nov. 30 at Air Force Plant 42, Palmdale, California.

YEAR IN REVIEW



Photo by Dena O'Dell

LA District Park Ranger Connie Chan Le, left, and LA District Biologist Jon Rishi, right, stop to take a picture of a California Poppy flower while hiking along a trail March 2 at the Mojave River Dam in San Bernardino County, California.

A contractor surveys the area Feb. 17 before dredging operations start for the day in Ventura Harbor. Though parts of the beach adjacent to the project were available for recreation -- such as surfing visible in this photo -- large sections of the beach were strictly off-limits to ensure the safety of residents and visitors.



Photo by Stephen Baack



Photo by Dan Collins

Col. Julie Balten, Los Angeles District commander, front right, discusses the successful completion of a flood-control project for Maricopa County with Michael Fulton, director of the Maricopa County Flood Control District, left, during an Oct. 25 visit to the New River Dam Outlet Channel in Florence, Arizona.



Photo by Stephen Baack

Bill Empson, Senior Dam and Levee Safety risk advisor with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Institute for Water Resources, center, provides updates to Al Lee, director of civil works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, second from right, during a tour of Prado Dam Aug. 23 in Corona, California.

An engineer safely ropes from the crest of Sepulveda Dam into the Los Angeles River channel March 22 in Van Nuys, California.



Photo by John Reese

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2022: A Year in Review



Photo by Dan Collins

Trevor Henry, project manager for the City of Flagstaff, foreground right, discusses the Rio de Flag Flood-Risk Management project with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division and Los Angeles District leaders during a tour of the project site April 5 in Flagstaff, Ariz.

RIGHT: Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Michael Connor, left, joins Maj. Gen. William “Butch” Graham, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, for a March 28 press conference at the Port of Long Beach, during which they discussed details of President Joe Biden’s fiscal year 2023 Army civil works budget.



Photo by Stephen Baack



Photo by Stephen Baack

LEFT: Col. Julie Balten, Los Angeles District commander, background left, briefs Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Michael Connor, background right, March 28 during an aerial tour of the Los Angeles area in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter with Josephine Axt, chief of planning and policy for the Corps of Engineers’ South Pacific Division, foreground left, and David Van Dorpe, then deputy district engineer for the LA District, foreground right. Maj. Gen. William Graham, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, sits just out of frame.

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Photo by John Reese

A tomol, a seagoing, heavy-planked boat, is carried from the beach over shoreline boulders to the “Reunite the Rock” event Aug. 20 at Morro Bay. The “Reunite the Rock” event marked the return of breakwater materials quarried from Morro Rock more than a century ago.

RIGHT: Col. Julie Balten, commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, joins local officials May 27 to cut the ribbon for the Old Town Creek Walk in Temecula, California. The Corps worked with the City of Temecula and the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District on the trail, which is part of a larger multi-purpose, multi-phase flood-risk-reduction and environmental-restoration project along more than seven miles of Murrieta Creek.



Photo by Stephen Baack



Photo by Stephen Baack

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, third from left, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, joins representatives from the Eastern Municipal Water District, the State Water Resources Control Board, the City of Menifee and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to “open the valve” on the Perris II Reverse Osmosis Treatment Facility in Menifee, California.

2022: A Year in Review



Photo by Jenn Rivo

Participants celebrate the placement of the last steel beam on top of the San Diego Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center building Oct. 25 at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Health Care System complex in San Diego.



Photo by Stephen Baack



Photo by Dena O'Dell

Brig. Gen. Curt Taylor, commander of the National Training Center, left, and Col. Jason Clarke, Fort Irwin garrison commander, right, get some assistance cutting the ribbon signifying the grand opening of the Fort Irwin Library March 9 at Fort Irwin, California.

LEFT: Eric Bush, chief of the Planning and Policy Division for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, center, asks questions during a July 6 briefing with Priyanka Wadhawan, Los Angeles System Restoration project manager with the Corps' LA District, second from right, about the LA River during a stop in Los Feliz.

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Photo by Stephen Baack

Jenn Rivo, project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Mega Projects Division, Department of Veterans Affairs Branch, talks to leaders from the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Veterans Affairs during a Feb. 23 site visit to construction areas at the VA San Diego Healthcare System in La Jolla, California.



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

ABOVE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Project Engineer David Silvertooth, left, and Quality Assurance Representative Clinton Griffin look out over a construction-reinforced embankment designed to protect critical infrastructure against flooding Oct. 5 in Duncan, Arizona. The embankment protects the town's wastewater treatment station from similar flooding events.



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

BELOW: Col. Antoinette Gant commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, South Pacific Division, right, and Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, former commander of the South Pacific Border District, left, case the colors during the district's inactivation ceremony Feb. 25 in Phoenix.



Photo by Dena O'Dell

Representatives from several local, state and federal agencies pose for a photo following a Dec. 16 signing ceremony for the Imperial Streams Salton Sea Feasibility Cost-Share Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, California Department of Water Resources and the Salton Sea Authority.

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gets investments in the nation’s water resources infrastructure, including the restoration of aquatic ecosystems.

“Today’s signing is the culmination of several years of work to bring together federal, state and local resources, at a significant level, to advance the long-term sustainable projects at the sea,” said G. Patrick O’Dowd, executive director of the Salton Sea Authority.

In addition to looking at ways to improve public health and the ecosystem of the sea, the study also will build on the Salton Sea Management Program’s Long-Range Plan document, released as a draft for public comment Dec. 15.

The draft Salton Sea Long-Range Plan was developed with support from tribal leadership, community-based organizations and local, state and federal agencies. It organizes public input into a framework that provides a foundation for the feasibility study and associated environmental review process.

“This long-range plan combines the collective guidance from these partners to develop a science-based evaluation framework for potential restoration actions for the sea,” said Cindy Messer, chief deputy director, California De-

partment of Water Resources.

During the feasibility study, the Corps and its partners will evaluate several alternatives to come up with the best solution for the sea.

Gant emphasized the solution is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and that the Corps is here to listen. She also noted with this new study and partnership, there is an opportunity

to combat the effects of climate change – not only at a local and regional level, but potentially at a national level.

“With the advancement of technology and design, along with the collaboration and commitment of knowledgeable partners, we have the power to create innovative solutions for our

[‘CEREMONY’ continued on Page 13](#)



Photo by Dena O'Dell

From left to right: Jerica Richardson, Plans Formulation branch chief with the Corps’ Los Angeles District; Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander; Cindy Messer, chief deputy director, California Department of Water Resources; and Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, commander of the Corps’ South Pacific Division, pose for a picture following a Dec. 16 signing ceremony for the Imperial Streams Salton Sea Feasibility Cost-Share Agreement in Mecca, California.

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nation’s toughest challenges, and this is definitely one of them,” she said.

First, and foremost, Gant said, this study really is about putting people first.

“It’s about finding the viable solutions to allow us to improve the health, as well as the safety and the environment of those who live here, who work in this area, and the people who will visit the Salton Sea in the future. More importantly, the people who were the ancestors here, who raised their families here ... and the future generations. That really is what this study is all about.”

Col. Julie Balten, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, speaks at a Dec. 16 signing ceremony for the Imperial Streams Salton Sea Feasibility Cost-Share Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, California Department of Water Resources and the Salton Sea Authority.



“We are excited to sign the agreement as it solidifies our commitment to this community and its people to gather information, define problems and opportunities, and potentially recommend federal restoration projects at the Salton Sea.”

— Col. Julie Balten,
LA District commander

Photo by Dena O'Dell



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Christmas Tree Safety



As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.



PICKING THE TREE

- » Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.



PLACING THE TREE

- » Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.
- » Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- » Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- » Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.



LIGHTING THE TREE

- » Use lights that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- » Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- » Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- » Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.



After Christmas

Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

FACTS

- ! **One** of every three home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes roughly **one in every four** of the fires.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

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National Fire Fighter
CORP.
nationalfirefighter.com
541-485-3566