

Council Accepts Grant To Study Restoration Of Colorado Lagoon

By Kurt Helin
Editor

Thanks to a state grant, a study will begin soon that will look for ways to clean up the water and environment at the Colorado Lagoon.

Tuesday night the City Council unanimously agreed to accept a \$200,000 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to pay for a restoration feasibility study of the lagoon. The grant allows Long Beach to move forward with the much-needed study without taxing the city's already stretched budget, City Council members said.

"This is the best thing to happen to the Colorado Lagoon in 50 years," said Michael Pauls, one of the founders of Friends of the Colorado Lagoon (FOCL).

His organization had made an application and pushed for this study, Pauls said.

The study will look into ways to improve the water and sediment quality of the lagoon, how to manage the storm water that flows into it and ways to use the lagoon as a location to teach youth about the importance of the environment.

The study will be overseen by Long Beach's Department of Public Works, but will be done by an independent firm. A request for bids is expected to go out soon.

Improving the ecology of the lagoon has been a high priority for a number of groups, from the Coastal Conservancy through FOCL, in the past couple of years.

FOCL has put together a master plan for the Colorado Lagoon that calls for some of the lagoon to become a wetlands area and natural habitat, while the rest would maintain the existing beach and would again become a place for people to swim, Pauls said.

One area the study will have to both look at and find ways to deal with is the storm drains that flow into the lagoon, specifically the proposed expansion of the Termino Avenue storm drain.

The Termino Avenue Drain Project has been at the center of a controversy for several years. It is a \$13 million expansion of an existing storm drain that starts near Redondo Avenue and Anaheim Street and eventually empties into Colorado Lagoon.

Project supporters said it improves the overall quality of water currently flowing into the lagoon and it relieves flooding in some neighborhoods. Opponents say during storms it will worsen problems at the lagoon and the project could be better.

FOCL is supportive of a project that is designed not to worsen problems at the lagoon, Pauls said. Currently, a second, court-ordered environmental report on the project is being put together by city staff.