

Cleaner Storm Water For Alamitos Bay

By Harry Saltzgaver

Executive Editor

An Australian filtration system is being installed next to Alamitos Bay in a demonstration of what likely will be the next generation of storm water treatment.

The CDS unit will treat water from storm drains in Belmont Shore and the Peninsula that previously went directly into Alamitos Bay. It is the first unit of its kind to be installed in Southern California.

The unit is being installed next to Leeway Sailing Center, on the western end of the Peninsula. It should be in operation within 30 days.

Paid for through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the \$250,000 unit is a prototype of filters to be used on the Termino Avenue Drain Project, according to Third District City Councilman Frank Colonna. The filter system has removed 85% to 90% of all solids and wastes from storm drain runoff in other locations, Colonna added.

“This is exactly the type of technology we’re looking for,” Colonna said. “It’s a major step for us just at this location. For the first time, we’ll be able to treat low-lying storm water before it gets to the bay. It’s a quantum leap ahead from what we have now.”

The system has no moving parts and works through the force of the water flowing into the bay. Water enters the unit and is forced by a weir into a separation chamber. That chamber creates a vortex of the water, spinning out the solids before allowing the water to move out through a screen.

Solids are collected in a sump below the water line. That sump will be monitored, Colonna said, but this type of unit is designed to be emptied four times a year. It can be modified to capture grease and oil as well.

The unit being installed can treat up to a cubic foot per second of water flowing through and can handle 500,000 gallons of water a day. It also performs well with low water flows, Colonna said.

Storm drains are the top problem for water quality in both the bay and at Colorado Lagoon. Capturing solids and contaminants such as oil is a large part of the plan for the proposed storm drain project into Colorado Lagoon.

Colonna and county officials, particularly Fourth District Supervisor Don Knabe, have worked for several years on a plan to build a new storm drain along the Pacific Electric right-of-way to both alleviate flooding and improve water quality in the lagoon. However, a neighborhood group called the Friends of Colorado Lagoon (FOCL) has opposed the plan, saying it would worsen the water quality.

FOCL successfully sued earlier this year to force the county to complete another Environmental Impact Review study before starting construction. That study is not expected to be done until mid-2003 at the earliest.

The work at Leeway is not physically connected to the Termino Avenue Drain Project