

Rincon Decommissioning Phase 2

Introduction and Background

Established in 1938, the California State Lands Commission (Commission) manages approximately 4 million acres of tide and submerged lands and the beds of navigable rivers, streams, lakes, bays, estuaries, inlets, and straits. These are often referred to as sovereign lands or Public Trust lands and stretch from the Klamath River and Goose Lake in the north to the Tijuana Estuary in the south and the Colorado River in the east, and from the Pacific Coast three miles offshore in the west to world-famous Lake Tahoe in the east; and includes California's two longest rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin. The Commission also manages lands that the federal government conveyed to the state (commonly known as school lands) and oversees the management of Public Trust lands legislatively granted in trust to over 70 local jurisdictions. The Commission also enforces the protections of the Public Trust Doctrine, the State's property rights, and important environmental quality and marine pollution prevention laws.

The Rincon facilities include Rincon Island, the connecting causeway, an 11-acre onshore facility, and offsite pipelines. Rincon Island is an artificial island offshore of Punta Gorda in Ventura County that was constructed in 1959 for the purposes of well drilling and oil and gas production. The island is located approximately 3,000 feet offshore and is connected to the coastline at Mussel Shoals via a causeway. The onshore facility is located 1.3 miles to the east of the island, at 5750 W. Pacific Coast Highway, Ventura, where onshore wells and processing equipment for both onshore and offshore oil production were located. (see Figure 1).

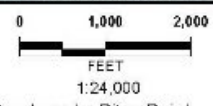
After the Rincon Island Limited Partnership declared bankruptcy, possession of the island and onshore site and the associated decommissioning responsibilities were returned to the State.

As part of Phase 1 of the decommissioning process, the Commission and its Contractor, Driltek, Inc., plugged and abandoned all 50 wells on the island and all 25 state onshore wells, and is completing ancillary site clearance and restoration activities onshore and on the island to prepare the sites for caretaker status until a decision is made as to the ultimate disposition of both sites. The plug and abandonment and site clearance activities are expected to be completed by June 30, 2021 (see Figure 2).

Phase 2 of the decommissioning process entails the preparation of a Feasibility Study, followed by the preparation of a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document. The information found in the Feasibility Study will be instrumental in deciding the appropriate level and scope of environmental review required under CEQA. This phase began in March 2021.



Source: USGS, Topo 7.5' Quad
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane California 4 FIPS 4000 Feet
 Note: This map was created for informational and display purposes only.



USGS 7.5' Quadrangle: Pitas Point
 Legal Description: T3N, R24W, Sec.7, 8, 17;
 T3N, R24W, Sec.12, 13

LEGEND:
 Project Site



padre
 associates, inc.
 ENGINEERS, GEOLOGISTS &
 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS

PROJECT NAME:
 RINCON ISLAND DECOMMISSIONING PROJECT
 VENTURA COUNTY, CA
 PROJECT NUMBER:
 2002-7861
 DATE:
 May 2021

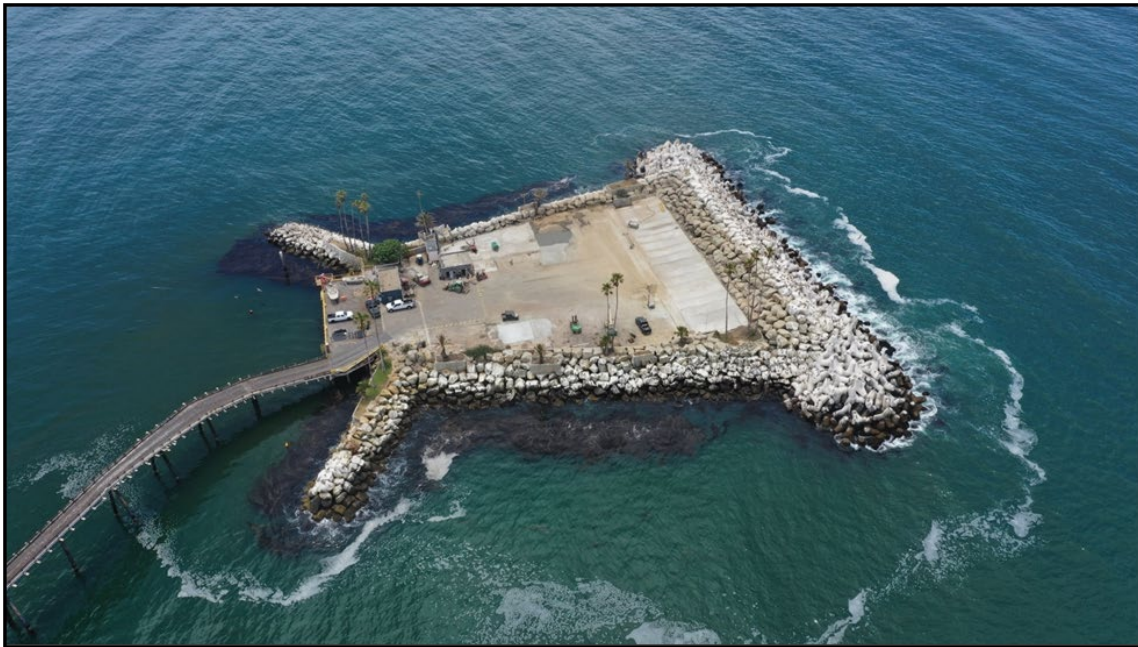
PROJECT LOCATION

FIGURE
 1

Figure 2. Rincon Island Prior to Phase 1 Decommissioning Activities



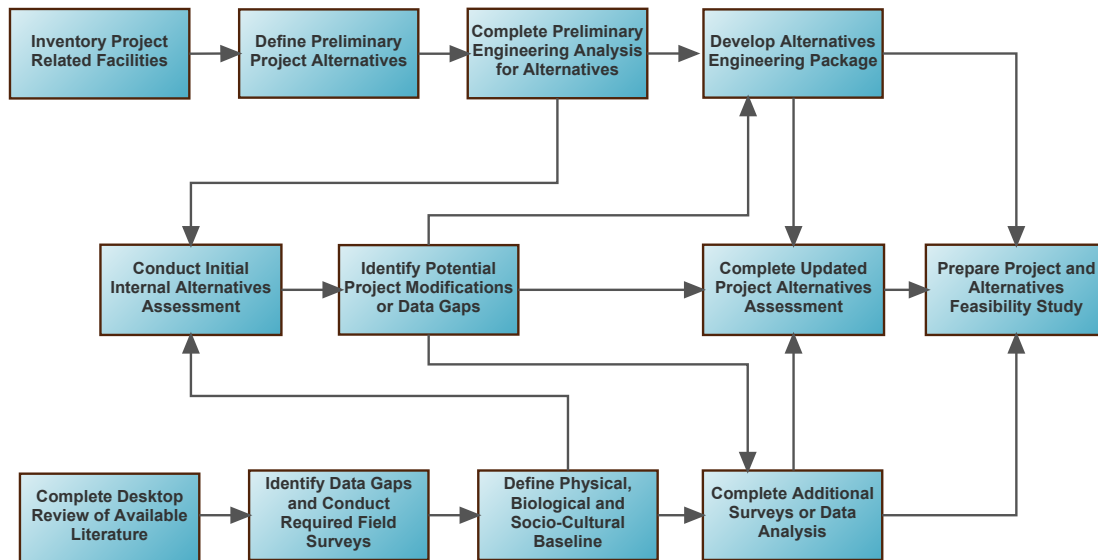
Figure 3. Rincon Island Near the End of Phase 1 Decommissioning Activities



Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study will include a detailed assessment of the Rincon onshore and offshore facilities (island, causeway, onshore facility site, and offsite pipelines), a review of disposition alternatives, and development of engineering-based procedures to implement the identified alternatives. The Study will address alternative dispositions as outlined below; however, the assessment will be structured to support either Removal, Reuse, or Reefing (The Three R's Approach). Alternatives will be reviewed as outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Feasibility Study Alternatives Review



The following alternatives will be fully described in the Feasibility Study, including an overview of the processes that would need to occur to implement these alternatives. Additional alternatives may be included based on public and agency input.

- Complete removal of the island and causeway, remediation and restoration of the onshore facility site, and decommissioning of offsite pipelines.
- Retention of the island, removal of the causeway (vessel-based access), remediation and restoration of the onshore facility site, and decommissioning of offsite pipelines.
- Retention of the island, repair of the causeway for long-term access, remediation and restoration of the onshore facility site, and decommissioning of offsite pipelines.
- For the purposes of CEQA, the No Project alternative (retain facilities in current condition).

The Feasibility Study will include several components including:

- A Desktop Study that reviews available engineering and structural reports available for the site.
- A Disposition Execution Plan that outlines the procedures, equipment and timing to complete the decommissioning of each of the individual facility components.
- A Bathymetric and Structural Survey of the island and surrounding seafloor.

- A Coastal Engineering Study to investigate the impact of various decommissioning alternatives on the coastal processes, including nearshore wave climate, circulation, littoral transport, and shoreline morphology, in the adjacent areas, and to assess the coastal hazards on Rincon Island and the stability of the island protective armor.
- A Marine Biological Study to characterize the fish and macro-invertebrate, marine bird and marine mammal use of the island.
- Site Assessment to determine the presence of hydrocarbon contamination on the island and onshore site.
- An Engineering Assessment to outline the methodology, equipment, and costs for potential removal alternatives.
- An Environmental Assessment that will outline environmental issue areas that will either impact the proposed alternatives or be impacted by these alternatives.

During the preparation of the Feasibility Study, the Commission and its contractor will conduct public workshops to engage and solicit input from interested parties. Consultation with federal, state and local agencies will be conducted to identify information and analysis needs as well as permitting requirements.

Public Outreach and Engagement

Public engagement and outreach remain a high priority during Phase 2 of the Rincon Island decommissioning efforts. In addition to public engagement efforts, the Commission will conduct targeted engagement and outreach to address potential environmental justice and tribal issues, per the Commission's policies. The Commission is committed to promoting equity and advancing environmental justice through inclusive decision-making that considers the disproportionate burdens on disadvantaged communities and tribal governments and communities.

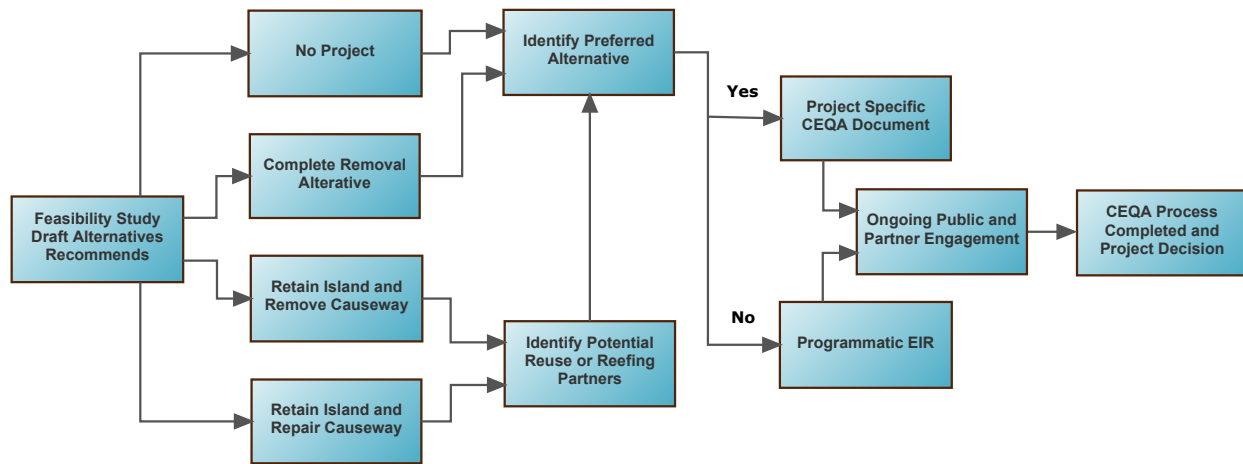
As part of the Commission's Phase 2 engagement effort, staff will facilitate a public planning workshop to gather input and comments related to the preparation of the Feasibility Study. Staff is also conducting targeted outreach to environmental justice organizations and has requested a list of tribal governments from the California Native American Heritage Commission. In addition to the public workshop, staff will work with environmental justice organizations and tribal governments to schedule individual discussions or listening sessions when requested.

Once the draft Feasibility Study has been released for public comment, staff will convene a Town Hall to present the draft study's findings and recommendations.

CEQA Analysis

Once the Feasibility Study has been completed, Commission staff will present a Feasibility Report, inclusive of a comprehensive assessment of potential environmental impacts to both onshore and offshore facilities associated with each alternative, to the Commission to determine if a single alternative should be the focus of the CEQA analysis or whether multiple alternatives should be assessed at the same level of detail (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. CEQA Review of Alternatives



Several key environmental issues will need to be assessed during the CEQA document preparation. Based on similar decommissioning projects, these issues will include:

- Aesthetic Impacts
- Air Quality/GHG Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials/Risk of Upset
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Noise
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Commercial Fishing
- Sea-Level Rise/Climate Change
- Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice

The CEQA analysis will need to address the short-term impacts associated with the decommissioning operations and potential long-term impacts associated with potential changes to the physical, biological, and socio-cultural environment at the sites.