

Channel Islands Neighborhood Council

Serving 1,900 homes on Channel Islands Harbor

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2020 Year-End Report

To catch you up, here's a brief summary of what **CINC** has achieved this year of COVID-19.

CINC did hold one public meeting January 23rd, featuring *Oxnard City Manager, Alex Nguyen* with about 100 in attendance. Since COVID, our Board and the MAC team have gone into "Zoom-Mania", working diligently and meeting weekly to move the harbor water quality issues forward. Engaging both CSUCI and UCSB have been two of our goals. UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science opted out of our project— as it was too broad and too long a program for their students to achieve in a single-year (March 25th).

January 6th MAC hosted Senator Feinstein's staff tour, of the harbor and farm fields discharging directly into Edison Canal.

March 30th—two of the four remote sensors were put back into the harbor at Seabridge and Westport to monitor dissolved oxygen levels in the harbor.

Edison Canal an Environmental Challenge

Photo from Westport Dec. 29th 2020, post First Flush



May 1st— Algae returns to C.I. Harbor. MAC asks residents to remove algae from around their docks

June—CINC approaches Center Point Energy's Chairman, John Somerhalder II, with a report on our Harbor Water Quality and the Edison Canal. *CPE is a publicly traded company that owns the Edison Canal.*

June— CINC approaches The Nature Conservancy's Peter Dixon. No reply at all from Mr. Dixon so if you know someone on the Board level, please reach out for us.

June 11th— MAC team presents at Hearing of the LA Water Board about what has happened to our harbor since the MGS Plant Closure.

October 28th— CINC Chair addresses the Board of VISIT OXNARD—CINC advocates for our harbor's water quality. Tourism for the harbor and beach community is a critical aspect to our City's future.

December 12th— CINC residents support the County Harbor Director and HBCA with an outstanding Toy and Food Drive at Fisherman's Wharf.

December 23rd—The City of Oxnard's manager Alex Nguyen and HBCA supported CINC / MAC in their VCAILG (Farm Bureau) public comment to the Water Board.



C.I. Harbor's Clean Water Team Shoots Training Videos

CINC Director Chuck Carter (Mandalay Bay) leads the training videos with MAC volunteers Jon Schwalbach (Westport) and Bob Chatenever (Seabridge)

The **QAPP*** is a very well documented written procedural manual we must follow to report on water testing of the C.I. Harbor and the Edison Canal.

***Quality Assurance Project Plan**—State of California
L.A. Water Board & City of Oxnard



MAC Faces Challenges for 2021

The MAC team has attempted to conduct a pilot project to open the flow back to the ocean near the GenOn power plant, but has met resistance by the City. We may be needing increased support from the public that includes letter writing and attending public meetings.

County Harbor's Development News

This summer County Harbor Director, Mark Sandoval formed the **Harbor Development Steering Committee**. CINC Chair Audrey Keller and HBCA Chair, Rene Aiu both sit on the County's Harbor Steering Committee. **YOU CAN ATTEND:** The County Harbor Director will host a public Zoom meeting on the plans put forward by the consulting firm, Sargent Town Planning for the future of the southern harbor planning (including but not limited to Fisherman's Wharf) and exciting new developments .



Zoom: January 28th 2021, 6-8 pm. Zoom Sign up at: <https://www.channelislandsharbor.org/visioning>

C.I. Harbor's QAPP is Approved by State Water Board

The volunteers of the CINC / MAC achieved a major goal Q4 2020—despite Covid, we met weekly via Zoom and met every three weeks with the City's Special District Staff, the Water Board Staff and ABC Consulting—**THE QAPP IS APPROVED!** We went through over 12 version changes in well over 12 months of focused attention. Why did we work so hard to get the QAPP for the C.I. Harbor water quality testing? Because we can't fix a water degradation problem, unless we test it, measure it and monitor it consistently using best scientific methods.

So here we are as year-end is upon us. Our water testing training has been limited to video based education by the state's expert. Thank you to our SWAMP water testing volunteer training pro Erik Burres. Because of Covid restrictions, we are limited to the number of trained water volunteers on the electric boat.

What is the QAPP and why it is critical to our harbor's future?

QAPP— Quality Assurance Project Plan— is an integrated system of management activities (i.e., planning, implementation, assessment, reporting, and quality improvement) that focuses on providing confidence in the data.

SWAMP—Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program— the development, implementation, and maintenance of the monitoring infrastructure (e.g., indicators, methods, quality assurance/quality control [QA/QC], and data management) necessary to support a robust monitoring program while also fostering data comparability and collaboration with monitoring partners.

Waterboard— State of California <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov>



Dec. 29, 2020 Commercial farmers aren't the best neighbors. Oxnard's fields covered in miles of plastic,

LA Regional Water Board requests public comments regarding the Farm Bureau—VCAILG for 2021-2026 Environmental Guidelines

Many of our residents responded to our call for public comments this holiday season. Thank you. The City of Oxnard also supported the CINC / MAC efforts. This is going to be the single most, harbor-changing environmental battle between big industrial farmers and the defenders of the C.I. Harbor. City support is critical. The farmers would prefer to keep doing what they've always done, dump (discharge) irrigation water, pesticides and nitrates into the Edison Canal—but our residents 1,900 homes (about 5,000 people) live directly on this harbor. This issue won't just go away, if we do nothing. Pollutants will build up in the harbor, sea life will no longer thrive, the harbor will smell of dead fish, algae will bloom and some will be toxic to humans. The farmers have to change their methods of letting fresh water runoff into sea water—we have a water shortage. Globally other countries have changed their farming practices to recycle their runoff. Why doesn't California legislators require best state-of-science to be implemented here? After all it was "government hired scientific studies" that claimed the MGS Power Plant was killing sea life, yet they never studied the harbor life that would be impacted if the power plants were closed. Our harbor's water degradation is a direct unintended consequence of the plants closure.

Winter's FIRST FLUSH—Not a good thing?

The first rain event of the season Dec. 28th hit the harbor with thunder, lightening and hail—not a gentle rain, but a real “gully washer”. In water testing, the measurements taken before and just after the first flush are critical to understanding and tracking pollutant levels. The MAC Clean Water Team was testing on Dec. 29th, with that limited equipment we had on hand. The City and the State’s Water Board team hadn’t quite gotten all the testing materials ordered and shipped, but the good news is that they are on their way.

Our “First Flush” certainly turned the 2,400 acres of farm fields to our north, into rivers which all drained directly into the Edison Canal and then into our harbor. Even the experienced surfers stay out of the ocean for three days after a huge rain. That’s because of anticipated bacterial levels are off the charts. In the C.I. Harbor, residents should use caution when coming into direct contact with the harbor water after a rain event.



First Flush December 29, 2020 Floating Debris Field. The L.A. Water Board considers trash and debris to be toxic to the water quality. Contributors are the homeless encampments waste both what you can see and bacterial waste you can't see. Scientists are truly concerned about it all.

The owner of the Edison Canal, **Center Point Energy—publicly trade as CNP (NYSE)**, has the responsibility to maintain and cleanup their property. CINC/MAC and the City of Oxnard is currently reaching out to the CPE team asking their management to remain committed to environmental excellence by engaging ongoing contracted canal clean-up teams.

Who is who and what role do they play in our harbor?

The State of California's EPA—Environmental Protection Agency funnels water related issues to their Water Boards. Ventura County, our harbor and the Edison Canal are under the jurisdiction of the **Los Angeles Regional Water Board**, officing in downtown Los Angeles. (The LA Water Board has become used to the MAC Team's consistent post at public comment, meetings in downtown LA and letter writing campaigns.)



Ventura County Public Works & the Harbor Department—Public Works is currently running a \$497,000 study of sourcing human fecal material (enterococci) found in Hobie and Kiddie Beaches near the harbor entrance/Silverstrand communities. Scientists believe the likelihood is high, that bacteria are arriving into the harbor from the Edison Canal Estuary from the discharge of the 2,400 acres of farm field irrigation. To prove it they will need another \$500,000 in 2021.

California Energy Commission—set the deadline 2021 for 18 power plants on the California Coast to be decommissioned because they discharged slightly warm water into the sea and marine life was impacted. Our Mandalay Generating Station— MGS was shut down first in the line in 2018 without any site-specific scientific study of the environmental impact of what would happen to the attached Edison Canal Estuary or the Channel Islands Harbor. (C.I. Harbor has become the canary in the coal mine as all regulatory and governmental eyes are on the environmental issues caused directly by the CEC mandatory shut down order.)

Aquatic Bioassay Consulting Laboratories Inc.—ABC is a toxicity testing and aquatic biological monitoring for over 30 years. Currently the contractor to the City of Oxnard and working on the harbor's water quality remote sensor monitoring stations in the harbor. Take a look at what the harbor sensors are monitoring weekly on the City website. <https://www.oxnard.org/city-department/publicworks/channel-islands-harbor-water-quality/>

Center Point Energy—CPE the owners of the Edison Canal from the MGS plant site at Harbor Blvd, south all the way to the Harbor Blvd. bridge (including the main channel) - crossing jurisdictions of both County and City. (It gets very confusing as to who is responsible if you don't know who owns the land. CPE is a publicly traded company based in Texas.)

Clean Water Team—CINC / MAC's Volunteer based harbor water testing team. Currently being trained by the State of California and engaging Environmental Studies CSUCI student's. The Clean Water Team is led by Mandalay Bay resident and CINC Board Member Chuck Carter.

The City of Oxnard's Public Works runs a division called "Special Districts" . **Special Districts** in the City are those HOAs that have CFDS or LMDs that pay to maintain their HOAs. (There are about 40 Special Districts in the City.) The residents of CINC are in one of those special districts. Since March 2018, Special Districts has been without a director—and filled with grossly overtaxed staff in charge of the harbor water quality issue as well as public areas like parks of the four HOAs that surround the northern harbor: Mandalay Bay, Harbour Island, Westport and Seabridge. Both Westport and Seabridge CFDs have Oxnard City Staff cost allocations for this position, yet they can't find a person that is the right fit. (The City has no budget item for the harbor and staff looks to the residents of the harbor to foot the bill(s) for the environmental study and clean up.

Ventura County Farm Bureau—VCAILG **Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group** represents the commercial farmers and 2,400 acres north and east of the Edison Canal.

The **Army Corps of Engineers** designed this C.I. Harbor and the Edison Canal in the 1950s to use the tide to deliver sea water north and the Mandalay Generating Station pumped the sea water in the canal (like a straw) to the power plant. The sea water was pumped into the power plant for cooling, then discharged out to sea at a pipe at the shoreline.