

'No-Otter' Zone Public Hearings Hold the Key to Southern Sea Otters' Future

MONTEREY, Calif., Sept. 26, 2011 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Otter Project today announces that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be conducting public hearings regarding the failed “No-Otter” Zone in Ventura, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz on September 27, October 4 and October 6, 2011 respectively.

“The upcoming public hearings on the failed ‘No-Otter’ Zone hold the key to the future of southern sea otters in California. After 24 years, citizens have a momentous opportunity to help remove regulations that have effectively kept southern sea otters on the endangered species list,” said Steve Shimek, Chief Executive of The Otter Project.

Since 1987, a “No-Otter” Zone has existed in Southern California extending from Point Conception near Santa Barbara in the north, to the Mexico border in the south.

These “lines- in-the-water,” brought about due to pressure from fishing and oil industry interests, have set back the natural range expansion of the southern sea otter into Southern California.

Following a 2009 legal action brought against the USFWS by The Otter Project and the Environmental Defense Center, a sixty day comment period ending on October 24, 2011 has been enacted to determine the future of the failed zone.

“What this experiment has shown us is that zonal management of sea otters simply doesn’t work. It’s fairly clear that the otters aren’t paying much attention to these ‘borders’ and the time has come to stop insisting that they should,” said Shimek.

The Otter Project encourages citizens to attend the public hearings and vocalize their support for the removal of the “No-Otter” Zone in Southern California.

“If you love otters and want this charismatic California icon to be around for generations to come – we need your support,” said Shimek. “The meetings will be crucial in ensuring that the interests of southern sea otters are heard and not held hostage to the whims of industry.”

The USFWS meetings will commence at 5:00 p.m. with a one hour information session followed by a public hearing between 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 27, 2011
Channel Islands National Park Auditorium
1901 Spinnaker Drive
Ventura CA 93001

Tuesday, October 4, 2011

Fleischman Auditorium
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
2559 Puesta del Sol
Santa Barbara CA 93105

Thursday, October 6, 2011
La Feliz Room
Seymour Marine Discovery Center
Long Marine Lab
100 Shaffer Rd
Santa Cruz CA 05060.

For more information visit freetheotters.org.

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The Otter Project

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