US Army Corps
of Engineers.

SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT

PUBLIC NOTICE

NUMBER: 24980S DATE: 10 August 2000

RESPONSE REQUIRED BY: 10 September 2000

Regulatory Branch
333 Market Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94105-2197

PERMIT MANAGER: Bob Smith Phone:(415) 977-8450/E-mail: rsmith@smtp.spd.usace.army.mil

1. **INTRODUCTION:** Granite Construction Company, P.O. Box 720, Watsonville, California 95077, (contact: Steve Grace, 831 763-6130) has applied for a Department of the Army permit to discharge fill incidental to the continued extraction of sand and gravel at their Metz Quarry in Chalone Creek, in Greenfield, Monterey County, California. This application is being processed pursuant to the provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344).

2. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project site is located off of Metz Road, approximately three miles east of Greenfield. The site is located within the Gabilan Range and within and adjacent to Chalone Creek. Chalone Creek is an ephemeral to intermittent stream with flow occurring only during major winter rainstorms. The extraction site has been an active sand and gravel quarry since the 1920's. Granite construction has operated the site since 1989. The entire site is approximately 476 acres and is situated within a three linear mile long section of the Chalone Creek wash and includes portions of the Topo Ranch, an active cattle ranch. The surrounding area includes undeveloped semiarid range land, with terraces interspersed among low hills covered sparsely with chaparral and coast live oaks.

Granite proposes to continue extracting up to 300,000 tons (current County use permit limit) of sand and gravel per year from 290 acres within the Chalone Creek wash. Extraction takes place within the banks of the wash (see attached drawings & photos) from just upstream of the Metz Road Bridge to a point approximately 1.0 mile upstream. No mining currently occurs upstream of the old bridge site (see drawing H-2). Processing and storage occurs on 32 acres adjacent to the wash, but out of Corps jurisdiction. No mining activity occurs during the winter months or when water is present. Stockpiled materials are used during the off season. No materials are removed from the river banks and a minimum fifteen foot setback from the banks is maintained to protect the creek banks and cliffs. Depth of extraction is not to exceed 15 feet. Granite's annual extraction rate for the past 5 years has been between 80,000 to 100,000 tons per year.

To reduce the risk of scour damage at the Metz Road Bridge, Granite must maintain a stream bed elevation of no less than elevation 218 under, and for a distance of no less than 50 feet up and downstream of the bridge. To asses scour, topographic elevation survey cross sections at fifty foot interval stations transverse to Chalone Creek centerline and for the length of the mining operation, and sections immediately below, upstream and downstream of the bridge are taken annually. The operation has a minimum 100 foot setback from the upstream face of the bridge.

3. **STATE APPROVALS:** Under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Section 1341), an applicant for a Corps permit must obtain a State water quality certification or waiver before a Corps permit may be issued. The applicant has provided the Corps with evidence that he has submitted a valid request for State water quality certification to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board. No Corps permit will be granted until the applicant obtains the required certification or waiver. A waiver shall be explicit, or it will be deemed to have occurred if the State fails or refuses to act on a valid request for certification within 60 days after the receipt of a valid request, unless the District Engineer determines a

shorter or longer period is reasonable for the State to act.

4. **PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:** The Corps of Engineers has assessed the environmental impacts of the action proposed in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190), and pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations, 40 CFR 1500-1508, and Corps of Engineers' Regulations, 33 CFR 230 and 325, Appendix B. Unless otherwise stated, the Preliminary Environmental Assessment describes only the impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) resulting from activities within the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers. The Environmental Matrix used in the preparation of this Preliminary Environmental Assessment is on file in the Regulatory Branch, Corps of Engineers, 333 Market Street, San Francisco, California.

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment resulted in the following findings:

a. IMPACTS ON THE AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM

(1) PHYSICAL/CHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Substrate - The substrate within the channel consists of recent alluvial deposits, mostly sand and some gravel. The major impact is the annual removal of the substrate. Given the ephemeral nature of the creek and the nature of the substrate, the loss of environmental characteristics and values is consider to be minimal.

Erosion Rate - A geomorphic investigation of the creek prepared for Granite in January 2000, found significant aggradation between 1975 and 1999 at the Metz Road Bridge. This would seem to indicate sediment deposition during floods is outpacing scour, even with ongoing instream mining upstream. The investigation report states this historic stability appears to be a consequence of the operations being located in a sediment deposition zone of the Chalone Creek alluvial fan and a backwater of the Salinas River. While increased scour is possible, historical evidence suggests that even with mining, impacts on erosion rates are minor.

(2) BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Endangered Species - No impacts to any federally listed endangered species have been indentified. However, should such an impact be identified, the Corps will initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service as required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Habitat for Fish, Other Aquatic Organisms, and Wildlife - The mining site is an unvegetated wash with a sandy substrate and intermittent flows in the winter. As such it has low habitat value for wildlife. Adverse impacts to wildlife habitat are considered to be minor.

b. IMPACTS ON RESOURCES OUTSIDE THE AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM

(1) PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Air Quality - Project activity would have minor, short-term impacts on air quality in the vicinity of the project site. Based on the relative minor size of the proposed project and limited to an evaluation of air quality impacts only within Corps of Engineers' (Corps) jurisdictional areas, the Corps has determined that the total direct and non-direct project emissions would not exceed the de minimus threshold levels of 40 CFR 93.153. Therefore, the proposed project would conform to the State air quality implementation Plan (SIP) for California.

(2) BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Riparian Habitat (Not in Corps Jurisdiction) - There are currently no trees within the mined area of the wash. Mulefat scrub is the dominant vegetation in the wash upstream of the mined areas. Granite has a tree replacement and revegetation plan to address tree-planting and site revegetation for areas affected by mining. Any native trees affected are to be replaced at a 5:1 ratio, nonnative trees at a 3:1 ratio. Tree planting sites are shown on the attached drawings. Given the lack of trees in the mined areas and the tree replacement plan, impacts to riparian habitat are considered minor.

(3) SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Mineral Resources - The project is a major source of aggregate for the area. With the booming economy the demand for aggregate is not likly to decrease. The project has a major beneficial impact supplying aggregate.

(4) HISTORIC - CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

The mining occurs within the banks of the Chalone Creek wash in recent alluvial deposits. The site has been mined since the 1920's. It is highly unlikely the mining site contains any historic or cultural resources.

c. SUMMARY OF INDIRECT IMPACTS

None have been identified.

d. SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

None have been identified.

e. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on an analysis of the information available, Corps of Engineers has determined that additional data is needed before the significance of the impacts upon the quality of the human environment can be determined. No decision regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) can, therefore, be made until the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed.

5. **EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES**: Evaluation of this activity's impact on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1344(b).

6. **PUBLIC INTEREST EVALUATION:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts which the proposed activity may have on the public interest requires a careful weighing of all those factors which become relevant in each particular case. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to authorize a proposal, and if so the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur, are therefore determined by the outcome of the general balancing process. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

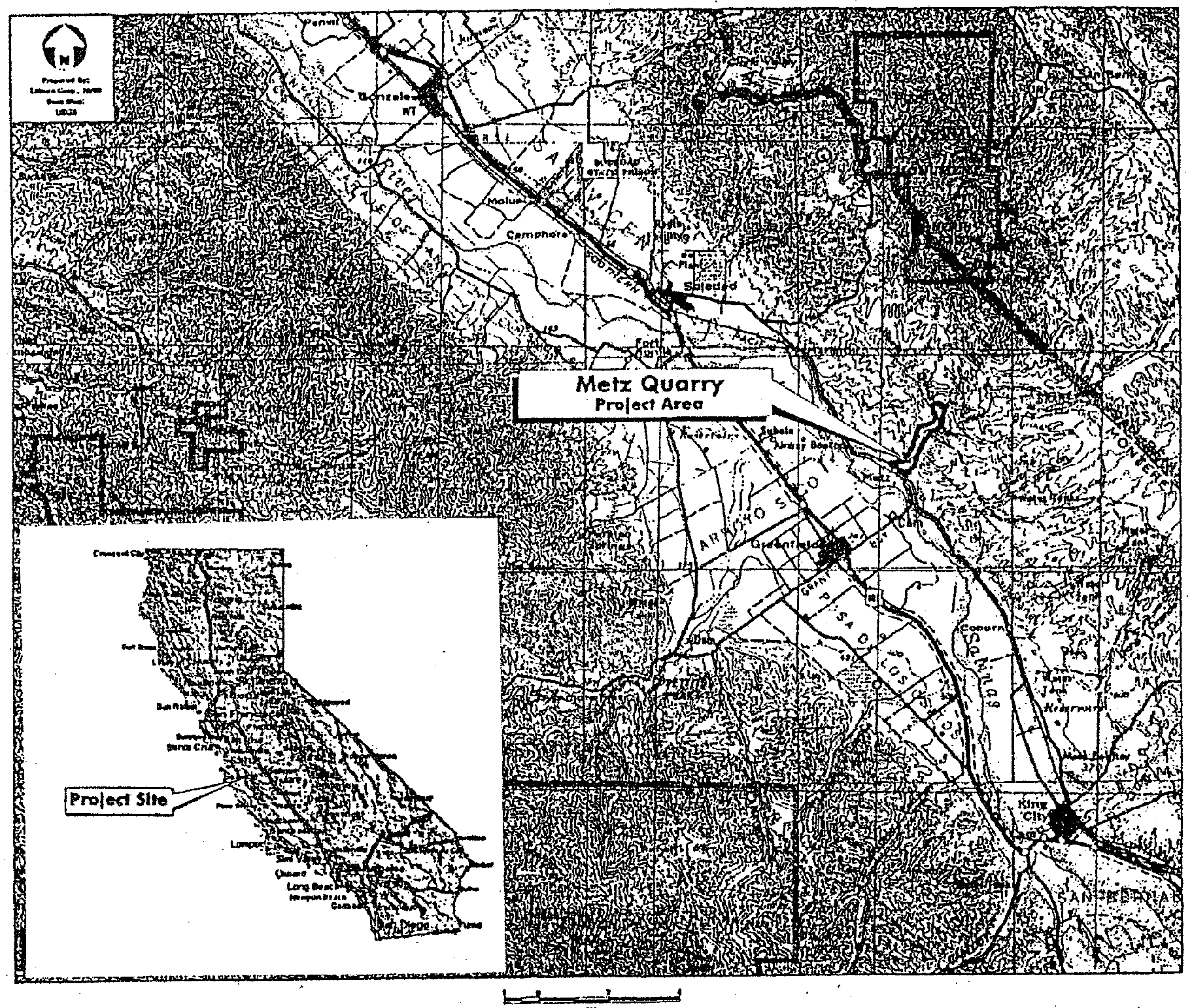
7. **CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS:** The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State and local agencies and officials, Indian Tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this

proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

8. **SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS:** Interested parties may submit in writing any comments concerning this activity. Comments should include the applicant's name, the number, and the date of this notice and should be forwarded so as to reach this office within the comment period specified on page one of this notice. Comments should be sent to the Regulatory Branch. It is Corps policy to forward any such comments which include objections to the applicant for resolution or rebuttal. Any person may also request, in writing, within the comment period of this notice that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Additional details may be obtained by contacting the applicant whose address is indicated in the first paragraph of this notice, or by contacting Bob Smith of our office at telephone 415-977-8450 bsmith@smtp.spd.usace.army.mil. Details on any changes of a minor nature which are made in the final permit action will be provided on request.

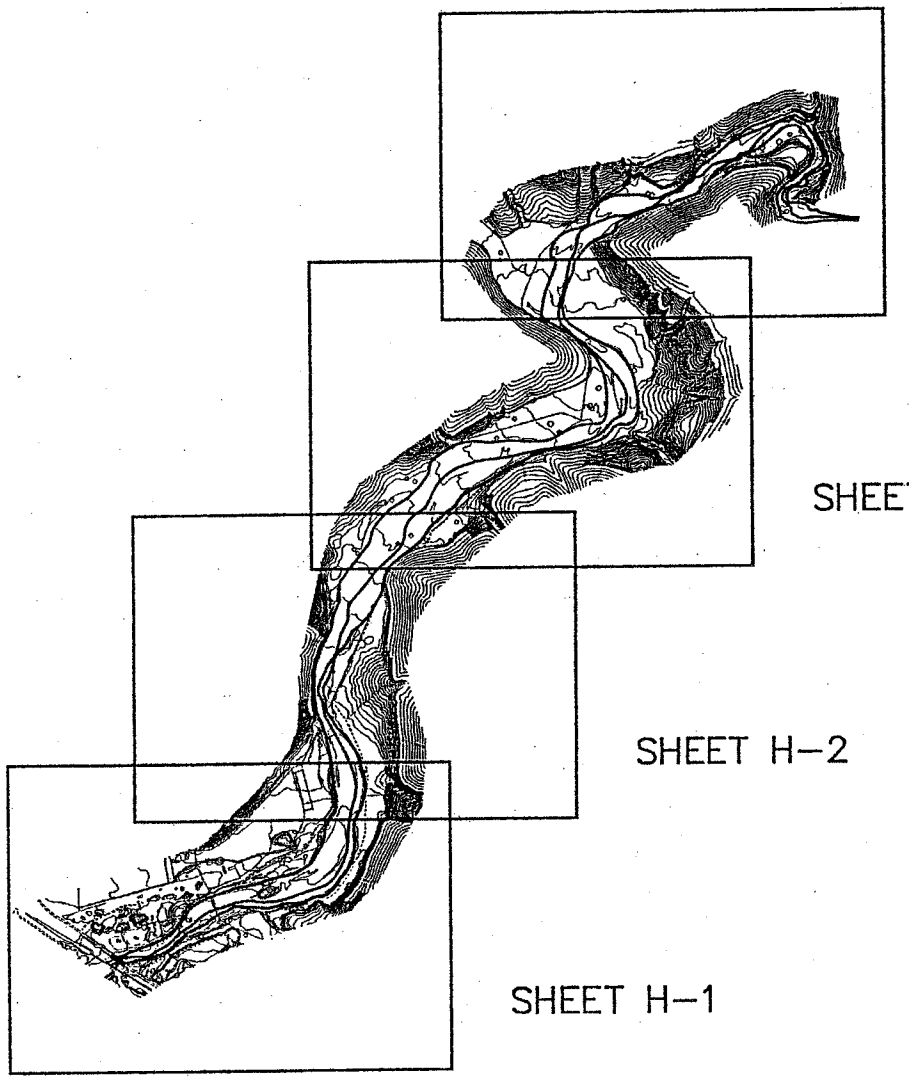
Metz Quarry

Monterey County, California



Vicinity Map

Granite Construction, Inc., Metz Facility
IN: Chalone Creek AT: Greenfield
COUNTY OF: Monterey STATE: California
1 August 2000



GRAPHIC SCALE

Rev.	Date	Description	By

Swanson Hydrology & Geomorphology
115 Limekiln Street,
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(831)-427-0288

CHALONE CREEK GRAVEL MINING PLAN

GRANITE CONSTRUCTION

Date 01-27-00
Scale AS SHOWN
Project 98-110

INDEX

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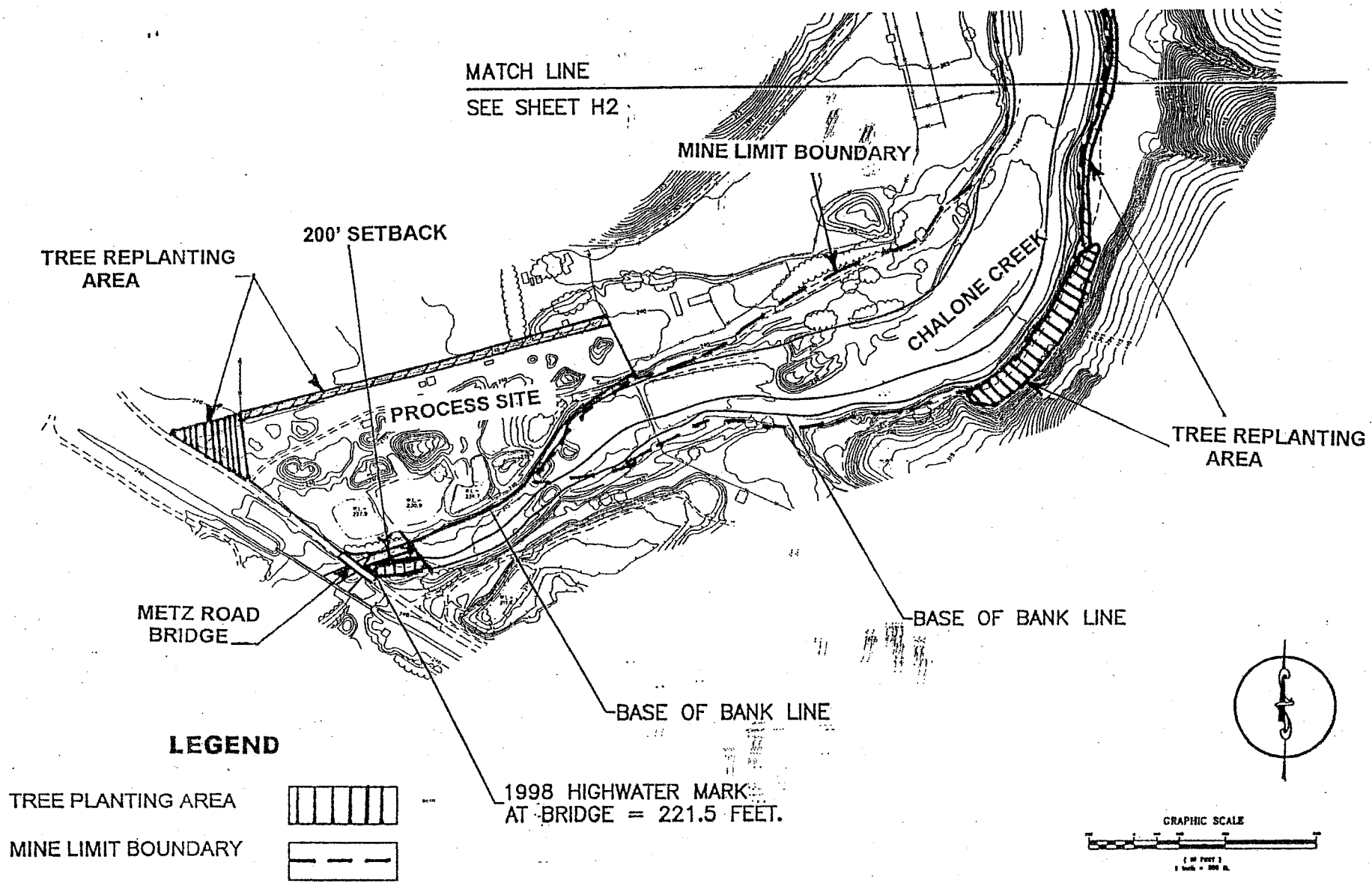
1 August 2000



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GRANITE CONSTRUCTION

Date 01-27-00
Scale AS SHOWN
Project 99-135

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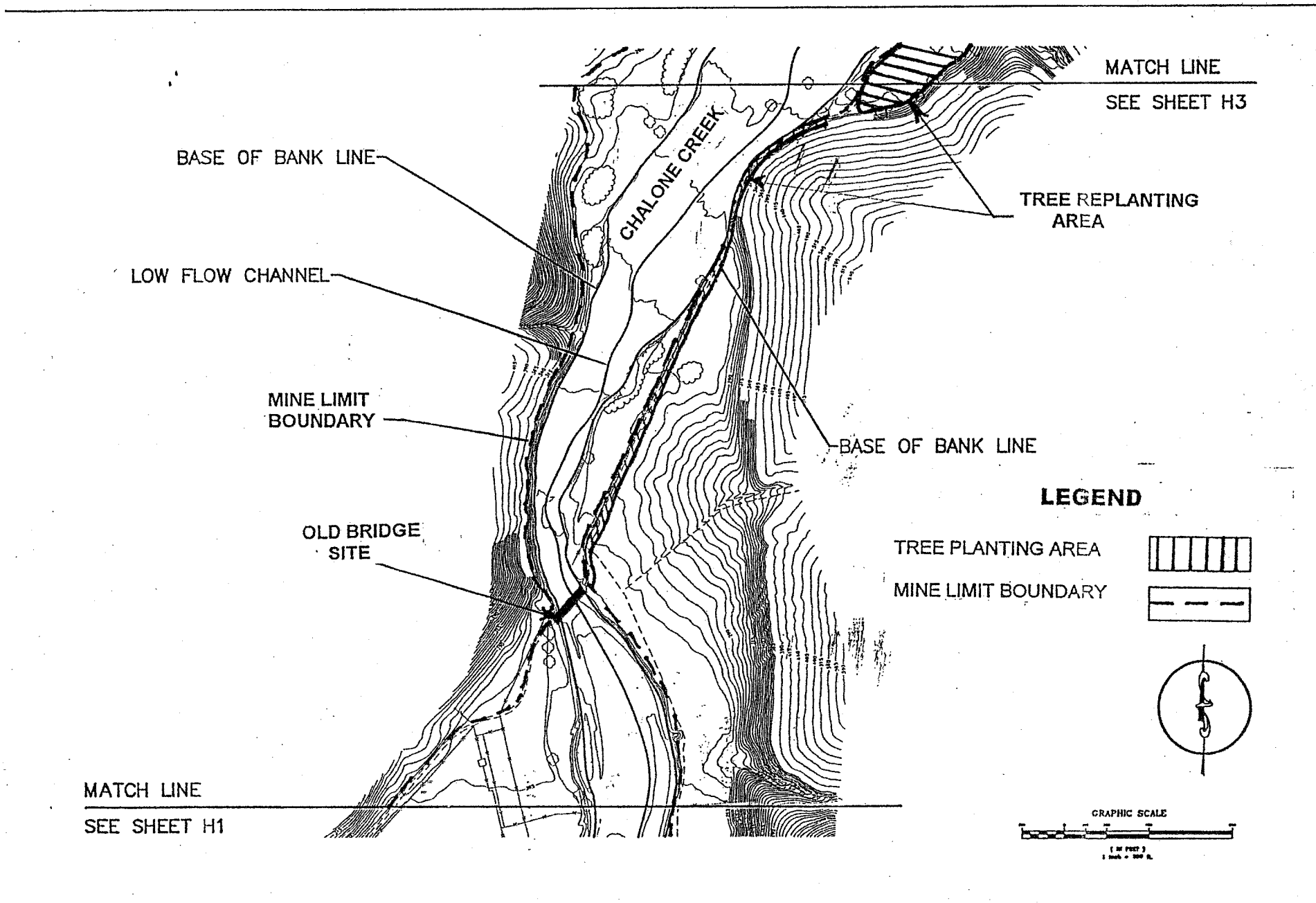

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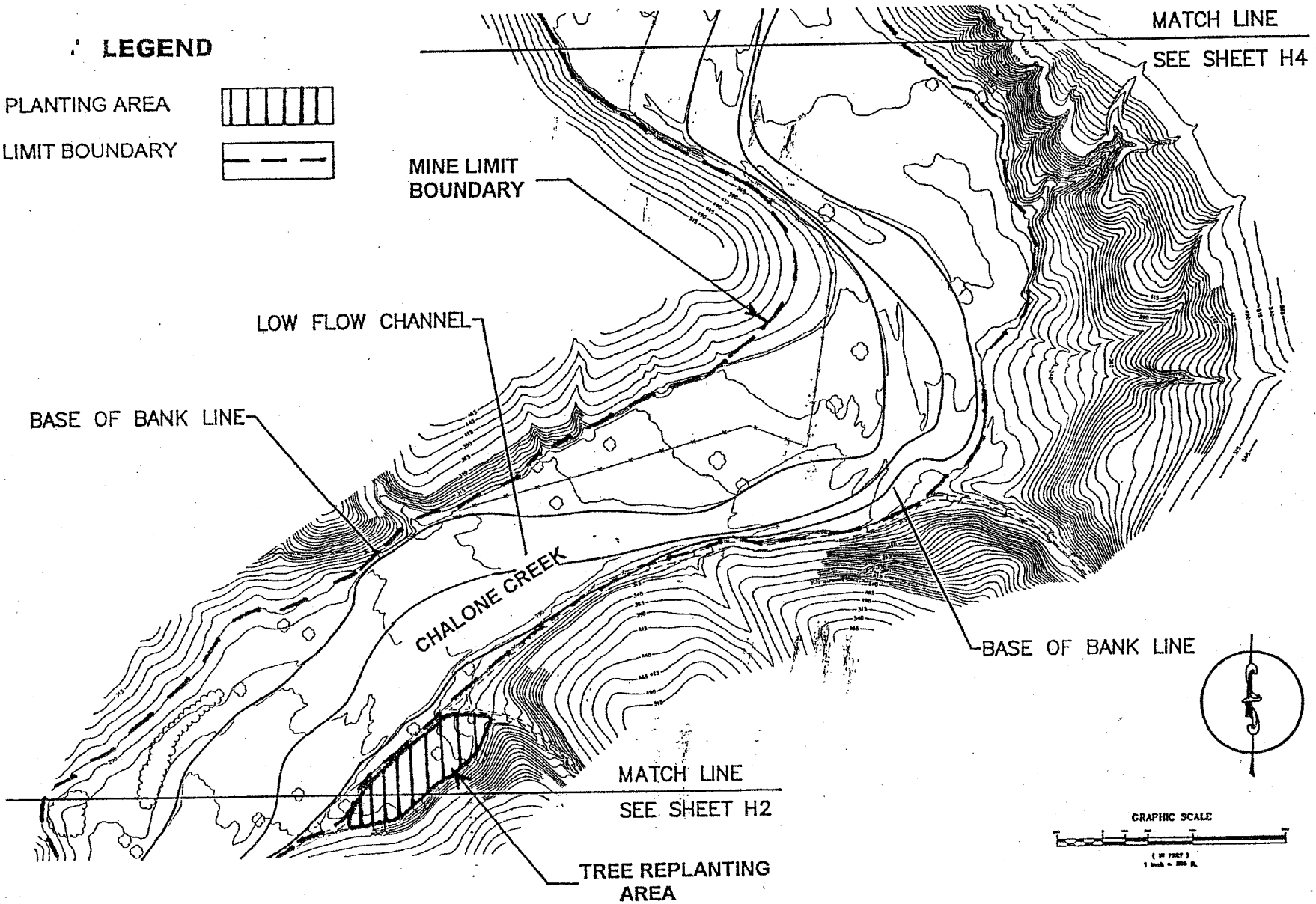

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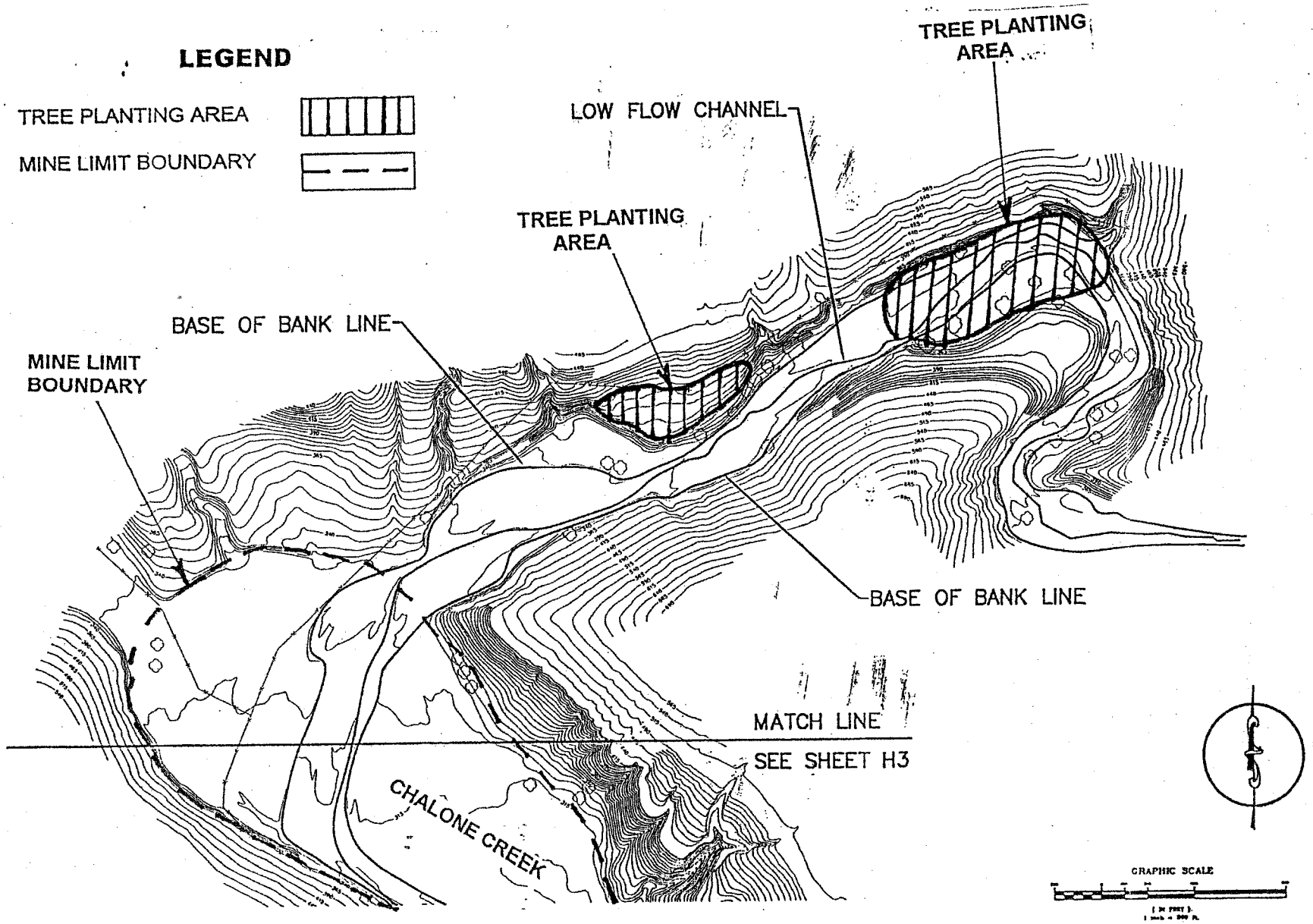

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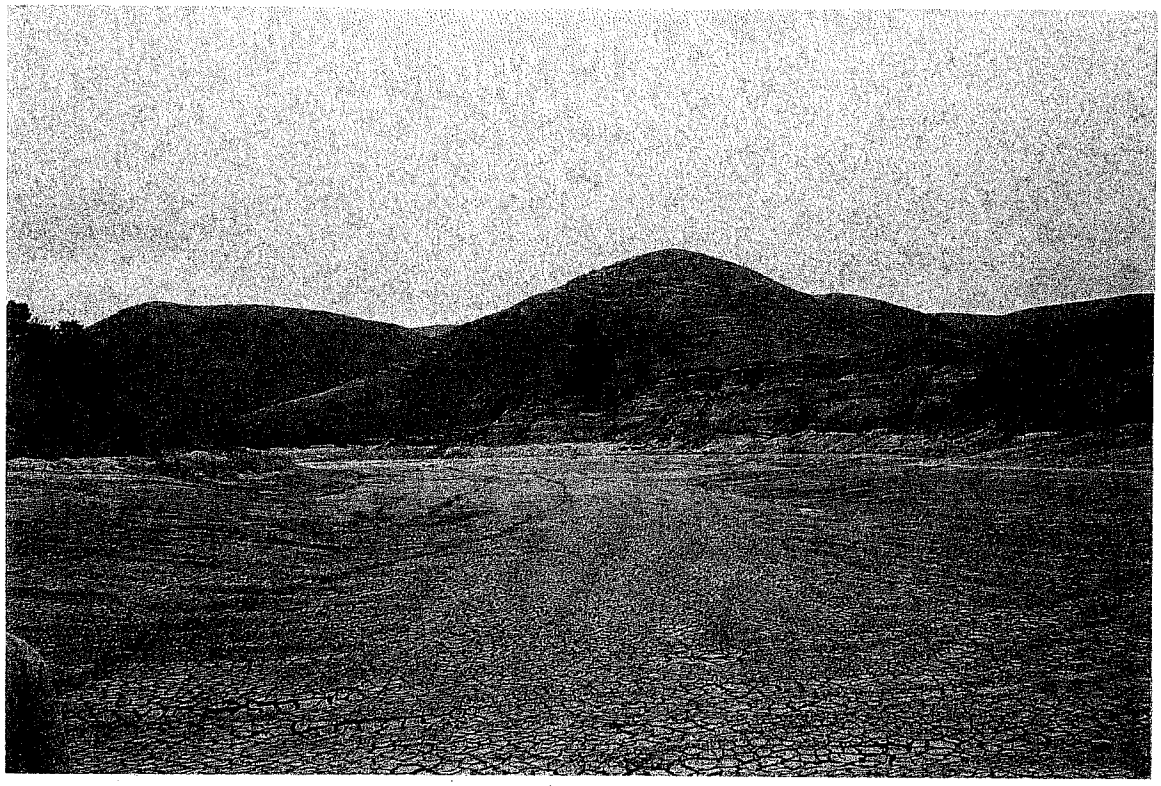
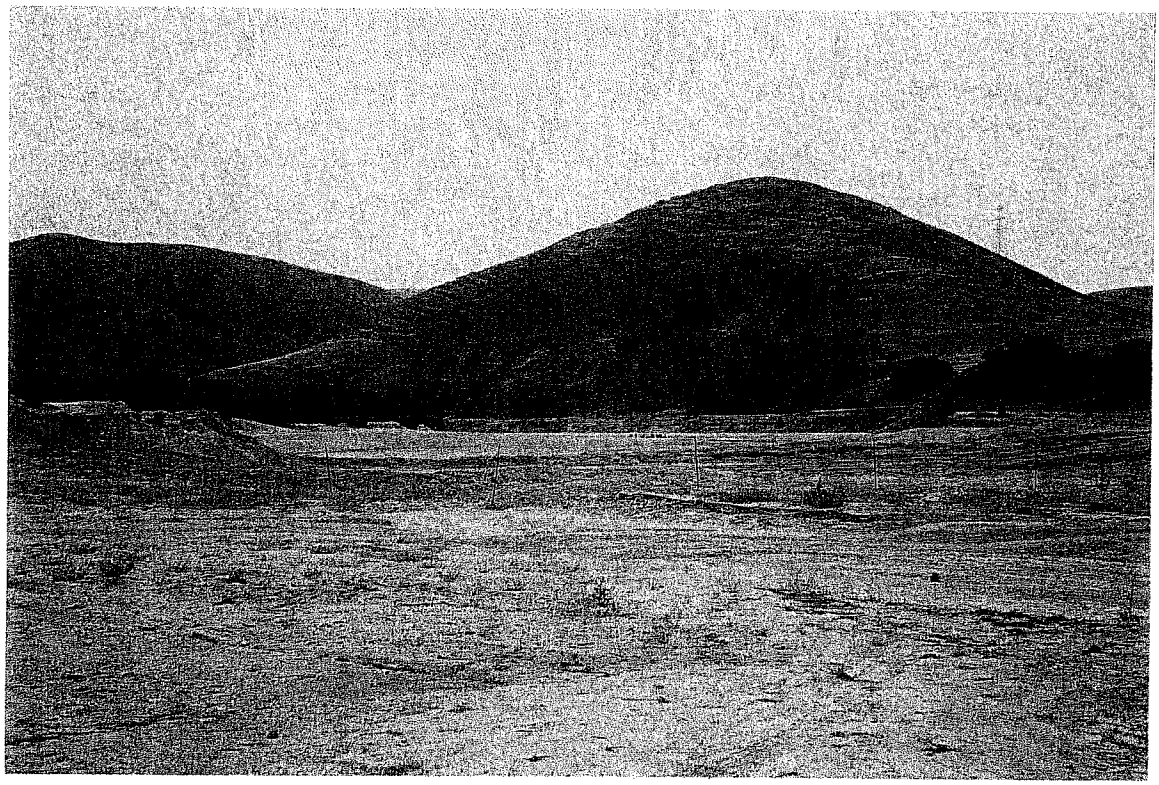


Photo 1. Extraction Area



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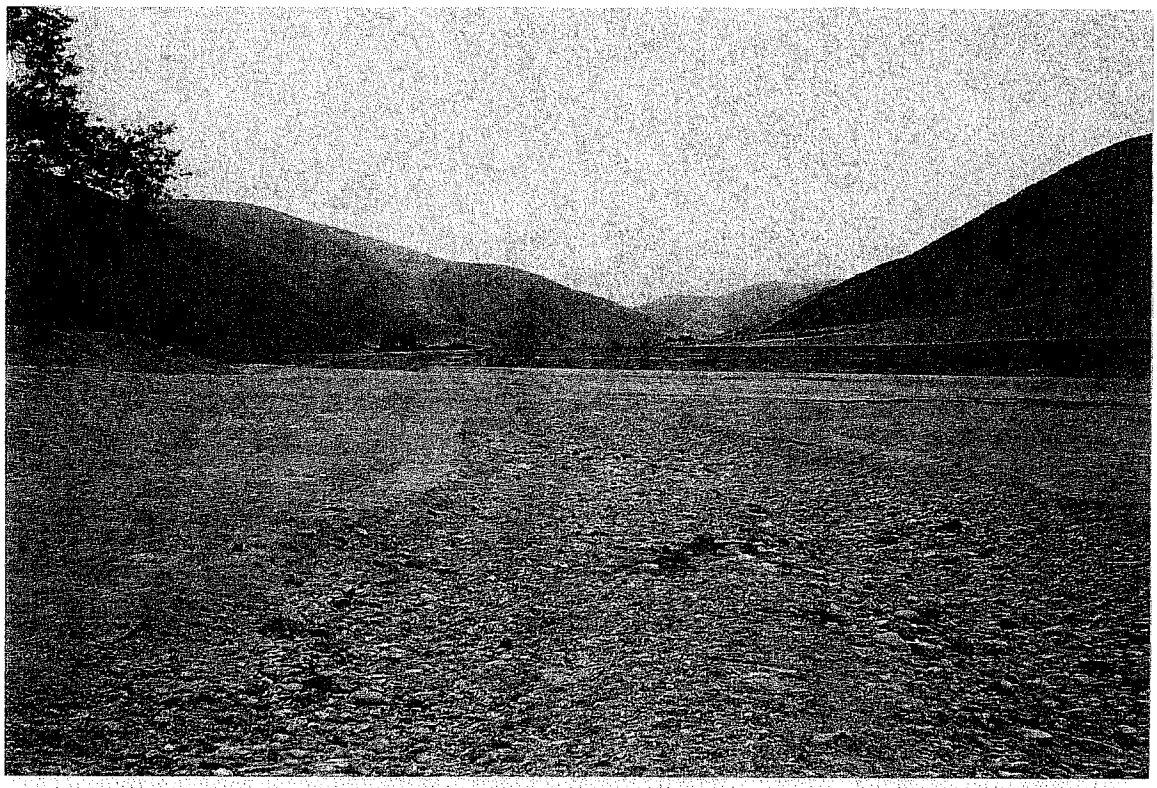

Photo 3. Extraction Area

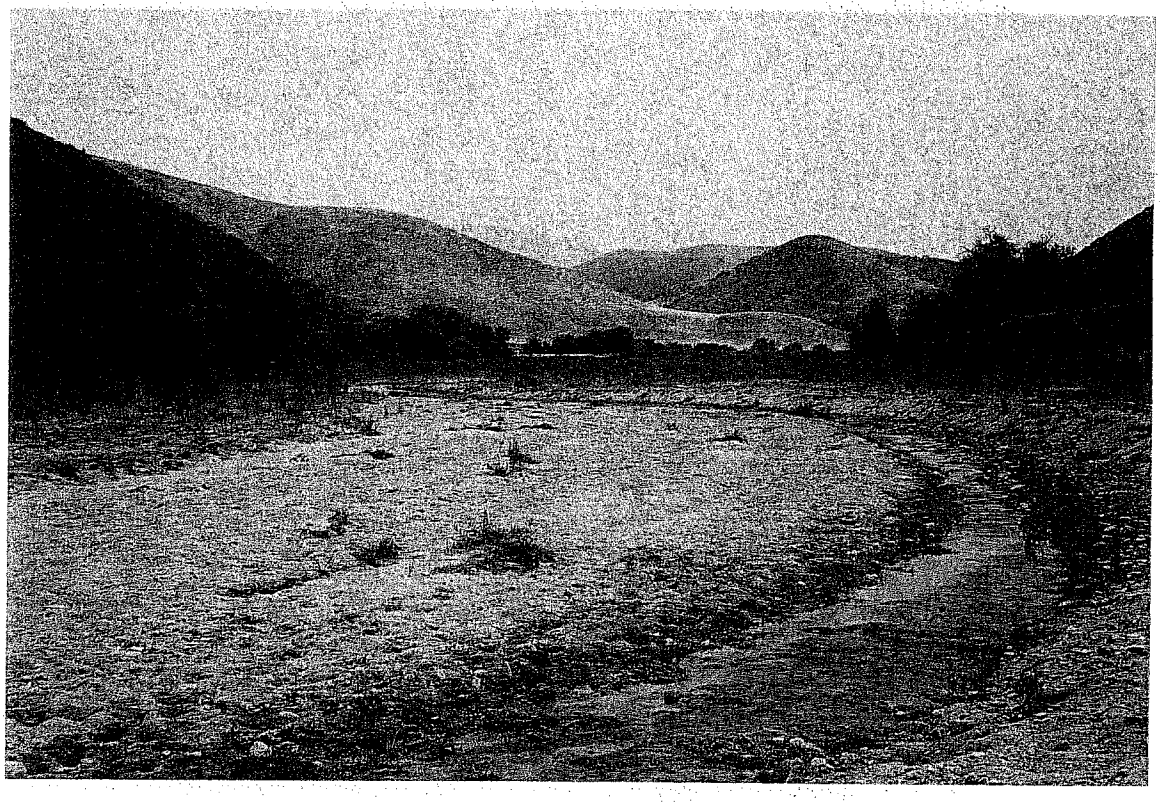

Photo 4. Undisturbed Area Upstream of Extraction