



US Army Corps
of Engineers.

SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT

PUBLIC NOTICE

NUMBER: 25095S

DATE: 15 May 2000

RESPONSE REQUIRED BY: 15 June 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: The Monterey County Water Resources Agency, 893 Blanco Circle, Salinas, California [(831)755-4860] has applied, on behalf of county farmers and landowners, for a Department of the Army permit to annually excavate sediment from approximately 2.5 miles of the Old Salinas River Channel in order to maintain channel capacity and gradient. The project is located south of Moss Landing, in Monterey County, California. This application is being processed pursuant to the provisions of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S. Code 403).

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Historically the Old Salinas River Channel (OSR) has provided drainage for both the Salinas River Lagoon and surrounding agricultural fields. The channel also serves as a receiver for discharges from subterranean tile drains which are installed to lower the local immediate water table. This table is influenced by tidal action as well as water levels in the lagoon and reduced flows due to restrictions in the OSR. The OSR is also a flood control channel passing water from the Salinas lagoon to Monterey Bay. Periodic removal of accumulated silt and sandbars that formed during wet periods was conducted by the MCWRA. Local property owners or their tenants maintain the banks free of vegetation in order to eliminate weeds and control rodent populations, both of which adversely affect the nearby crops. The applicant states that successful farming on lands adjacent to the OSR is highly dependent on maintaining flow capacity in the OSR and vegetation free banks.

As shown in the attached drawings, the proposed project area extends from the tide gate at the Salinas River, north to the confluence with Tembladero Slough, a distance of approximately 2.5 mile. The

existing vegetated area immediately adjacent to the Monterey Dunes Way bridge across the OSR is to remain undisturbed.

In 1998 the MCWRA and the property owners and growers established, in coordination with the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), management standards for the OSR. The channel base area, i.e., the area subject to periodic maintenance, was defined as being a maximum of 16 feet wide from toe of bank to toe of bank. A yearly inspection would be conducted to identify areas of the channel that have accumulated sand, sediment or vegetation. If the accumulation appears to restrict the normal flows or reduces channel base width to less than 16 feet the area would be dredged to restore channel capacity and width. Typically 1 to 2 feet of sediment would be removed. Work would be scheduled between April 1 and October 15.

Sediments to be removed from the OSR and surface soils in adjacent fields would be sampled and analyzed for persistent agricultural chemicals (DDT, Toxaphene, etc.) using EPA Method 8080. Test results would be submitted to the CCC and DFG prior to the start of work. If residual chemical levels in the OSR sediments are less than those found in adjacent fields, the dredged sediments may be placed on the adjacent fields if approved by the CCC and DFG. If residual levels are greater than those in the adjacent fields the sediments would be removed from the immediate area.

The following special conditions would apply:

- 1) In the area where the OSR is adjacent to the

Salinas River State Beach (near Potrero Road) all equipment shall be staged and operated from the east bank.

2) No spoils shall be deposited on marsh or dune vegetation on the west bank of the channel.

3) If entry into the Salinas River State Beach is needed the permittee shall obtain a permit from the Department of Parks and Recreation prior to beginning work.

4) Operations adjacent to the Salinas River State Beach shall be limited to weekdays to minimize conflict with public use on weekends.

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 is notified by this Public Notice that, unless he provides the Corps with evidence of a valid request for state water quality certification to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board within 30 days of the date of this public notice, the Corps may consider this application withdrawn. 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 documents used in the preparation of this Preliminary Environmental Assessment are 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 existing substrate in the channel would be removed, lowering bottom elevations by 1 to 2 feet. This would have a minor adverse impact on any infauna.

Currents/Circulation - Normal flow within the channel is controlled by the MCWRA operated slide gate on the Salinas River Lagoon. The gate is opened when the mouth of the Salinas River is closed by sand buildup, normally about eight months of the year. The slide gate is closed when the River flows into the ocean. Dredging the channel would allow higher capacity flows through the OSR without flooding adjacent fields during periods of moderate to heavy rainfall. This is considered a major beneficial impact.

Erosion/Sedimentation Rate - During dredging episodes the turbidity within the OSR would increase. Silt screens would be used to prevent sedimentation outside the work areas. With the use of sedimentation controls increases in sedimentation should be a minor adverse impact.

(2) BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Wetlands (Special Aquatic Site) - Although the majority of the OSR is unvegetated, wetland vegetation does occur sporadically within the OSR. Some of the vegetation would be removed by the channel dredging. It is likely

vegetation would reestablish itself. The loss of wetland vegetation is considered a minor adverse impact.

Endangered Species - The Corps has determined this project may affect the population of steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss*, native to the river, and will therefore conduct a consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act with the National Marine Fisheries Service. No impacts to any other federally listed endangered species have been identified at this time. 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 - Dredging of sediment from the OSR could have short term, adverse impacts on fish and fish habitat by temporarily increasing total suspended solids in the water column, and possibly decreasing dissolved oxygen levels during dredging operations. However conditions would likely return to predredging conditions shortly after completion of work. The removal of bottom sediments could also result in the removal of benthic organisms. These are considered short term minor to moderate adverse impacts

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) SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

Economics - Deepening the OSR would reduce the potential for flooding, erosion, and crop loss on adjacent farmland. This would be a major beneficial impact.

Prime and Unique Agricultural Lands - The OSR is surrounded by prime farmlands. Flooding in 1995 caused the loss of approximately 1,000 acres of crops. Increasing the capacity of the OSR would reduce the potential for flooding providing a major beneficial impact.

(3) HISTORIC - CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANTICIPATED CHANGES

The proposed activity would occur in a historic river channel and would remove material deposited in the last few years. It is highly unlikely any cultural properties exist in the channel. If cultural properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are identified during the work, the Corps of Engineers will coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer to take into account any project effects on such properties.

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 above identified impacts, a preliminary determination has been made that it will not be necessary to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the

subject permit application. The Environmental Assessment for the proposed action has however, not yet been finalized and this preliminary determination may be reconsidered if additional information is developed.

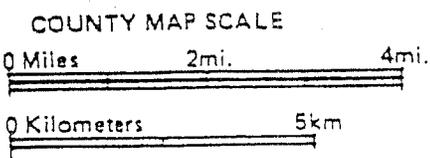
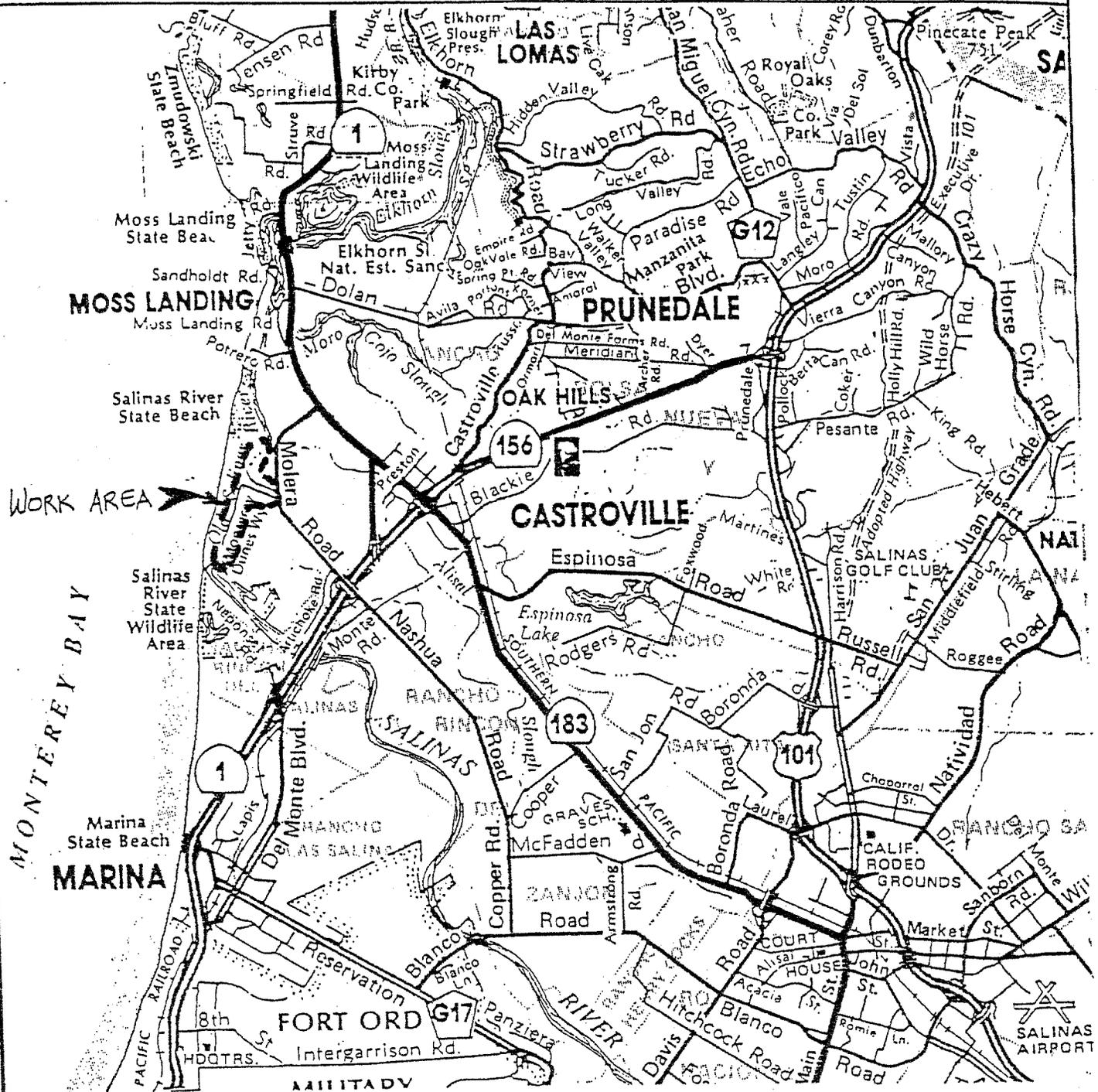
5. PUBLIC INTEREST EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts which the proposed activity may have on 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

Purpose: Provide standards for removal of channel and bank vegetation and accumulations of silt, sandbars, and other debris as may be required to maintain a clear channel.

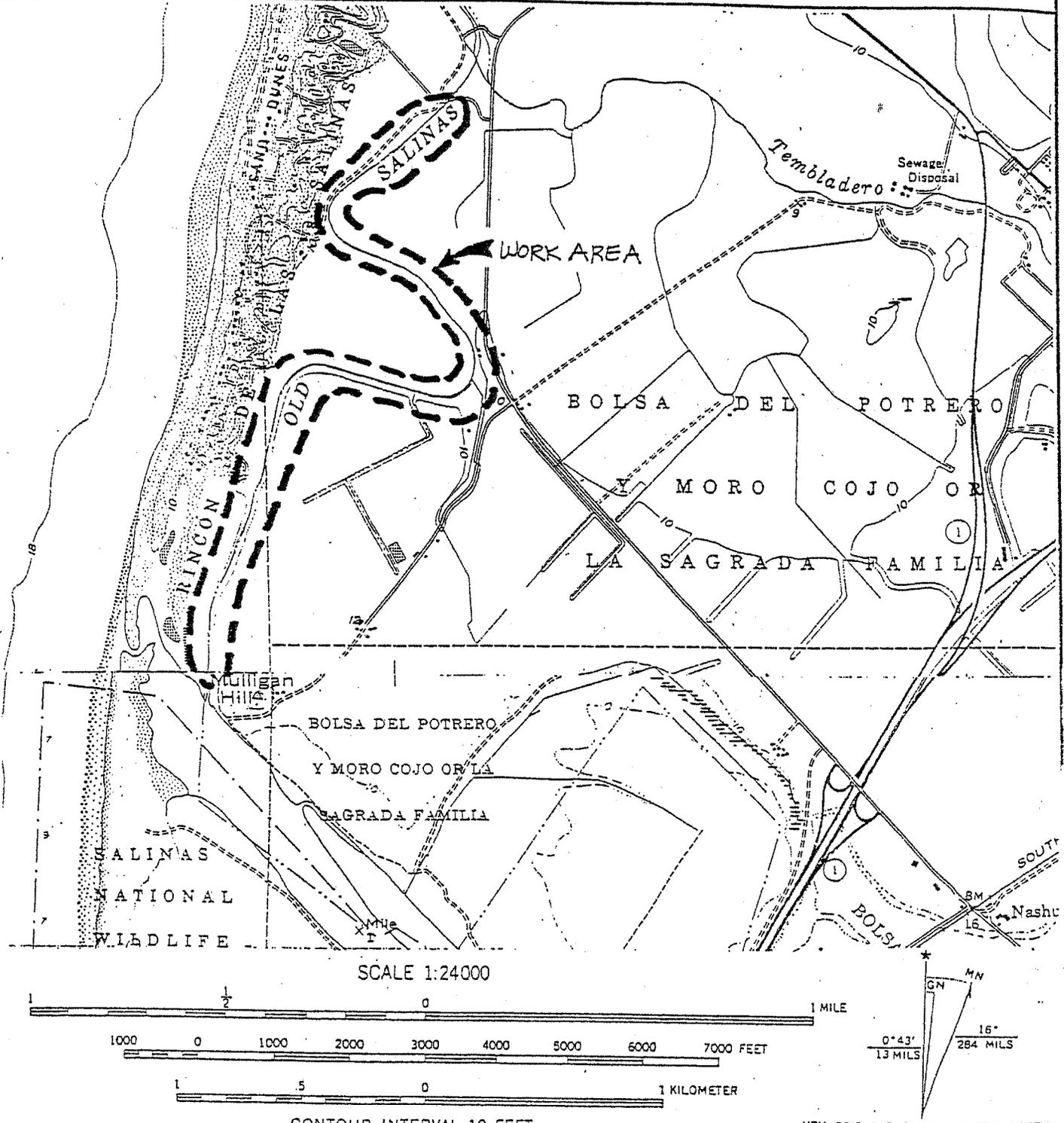


Location Map Castroville Area	Drawn By: D.P.	LEE & PIERCE inc. consulting engineers 546 Abbott St #20 Salinas, CA93901 Phone (408) 758-0096	Sheet No.
	Checked By: F.P.		1
	Ref: Date: 9-23-98		of 7 Sheets

OLD SALINAS RIVER CHANNEL POST-DREDGING MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

SEPTEMBER 1998

Purpose: Provide standards for removal of channel and bank vegetation and accumulations of silt, sandbars, and other debris as may be required to maintain a clear channel.



Prepared By: D.P.

Date 9-23-98

Checked by: F.P.

Date 9-23-98

U. S. G. S. 7.5 min Series Quadrangle Sheet
 Location Map Showing Work Area
 Old Salinas River Channel

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 Phone (408) 758-0096

Sheet No.

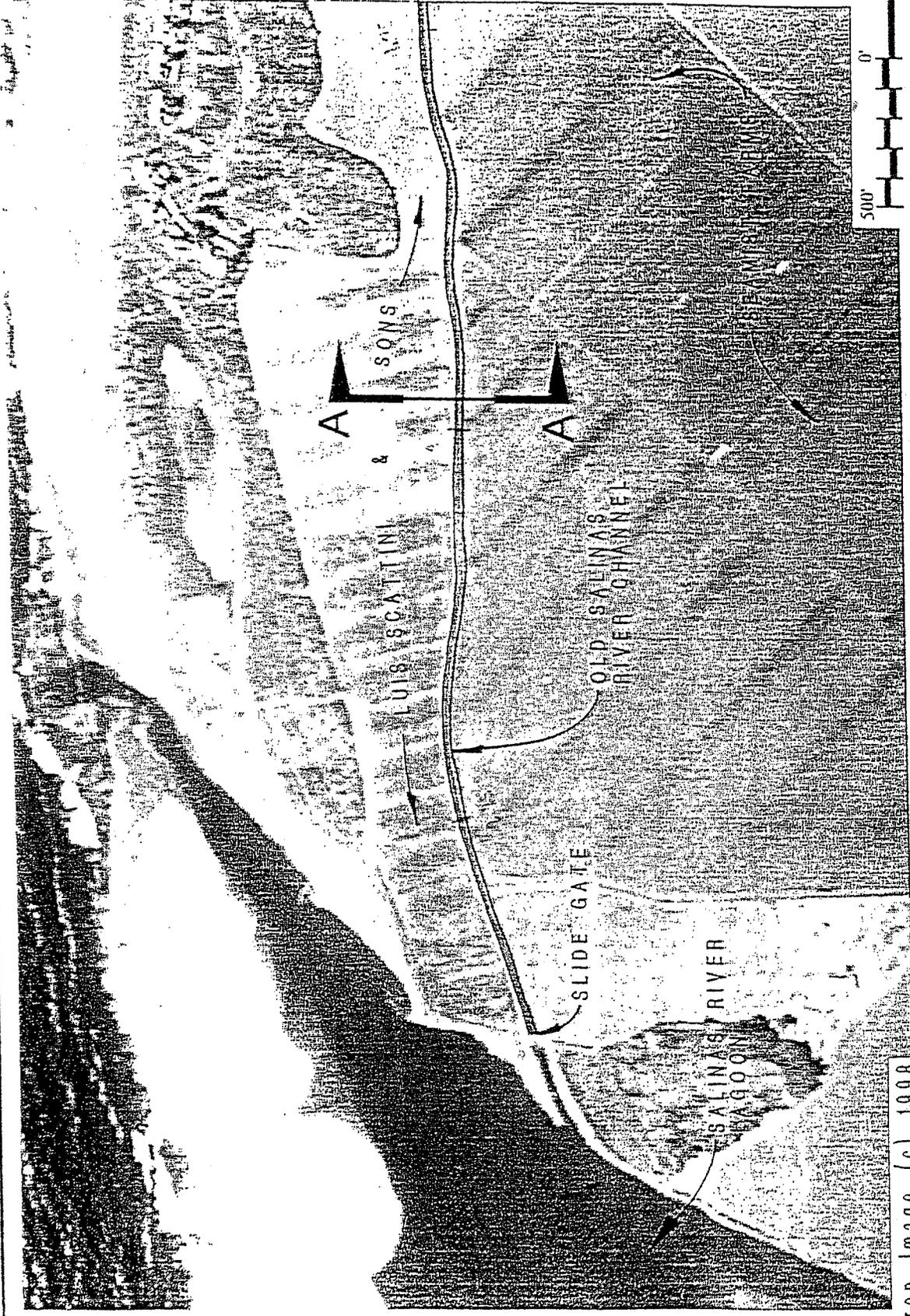
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OLD SALINAS RIVER CHANNEL POST-DREDGING MANAGEMENT STANDARDS



Crop Image (c) 1998

Site Plan Photo adr715_2.sc.049 - July 1998

Purpose: Provide standards for removal of channel and bank vegetation and accumulations of silt, sandbars, and other debris as may be required to maintain a clear channel.

Drawn By: LRM.

Checked By:

Date: 09-17-98

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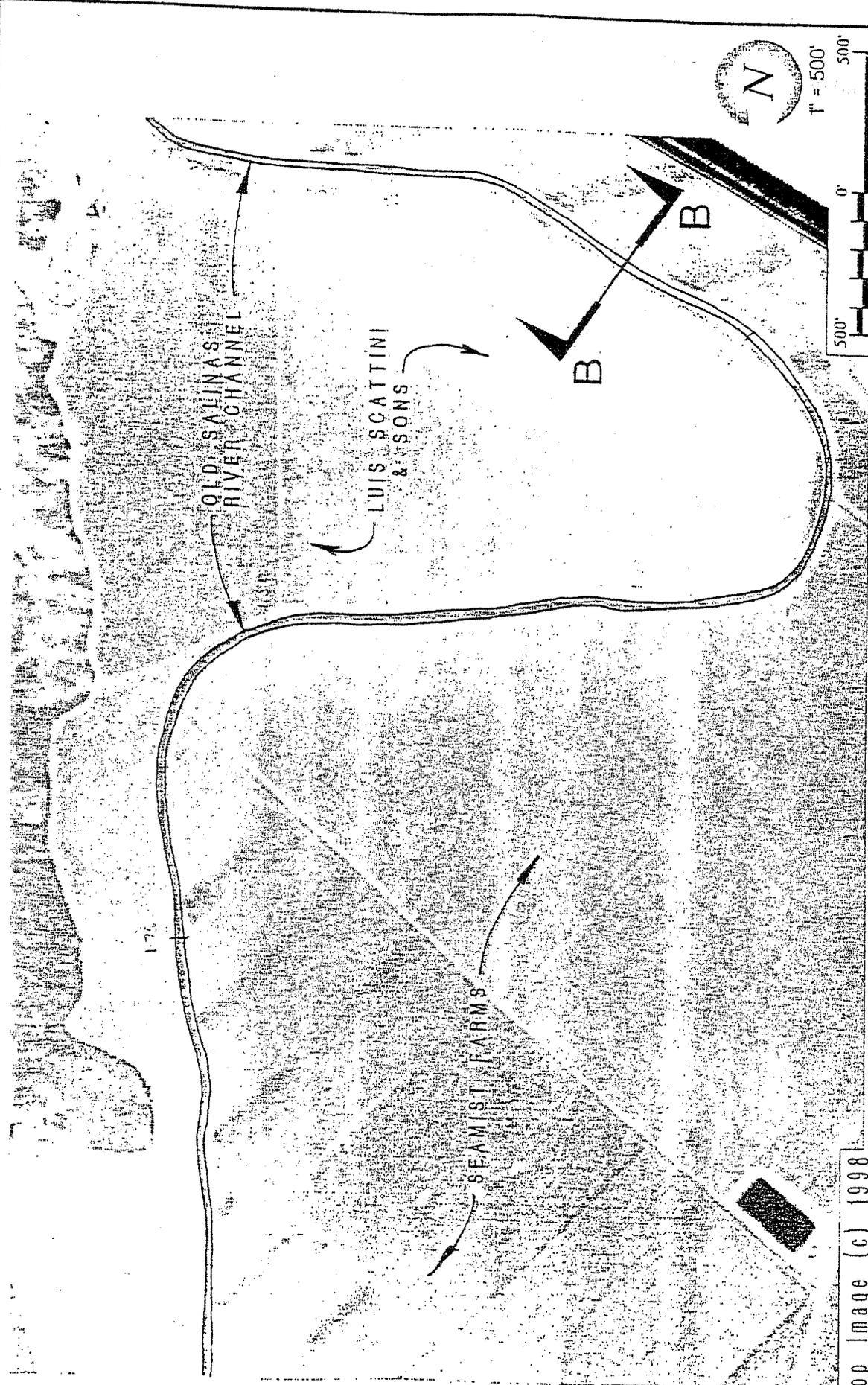
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Site Plan Photo adr715_2.sc.049 - July 1998

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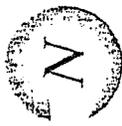
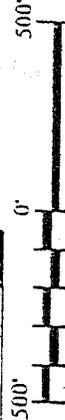
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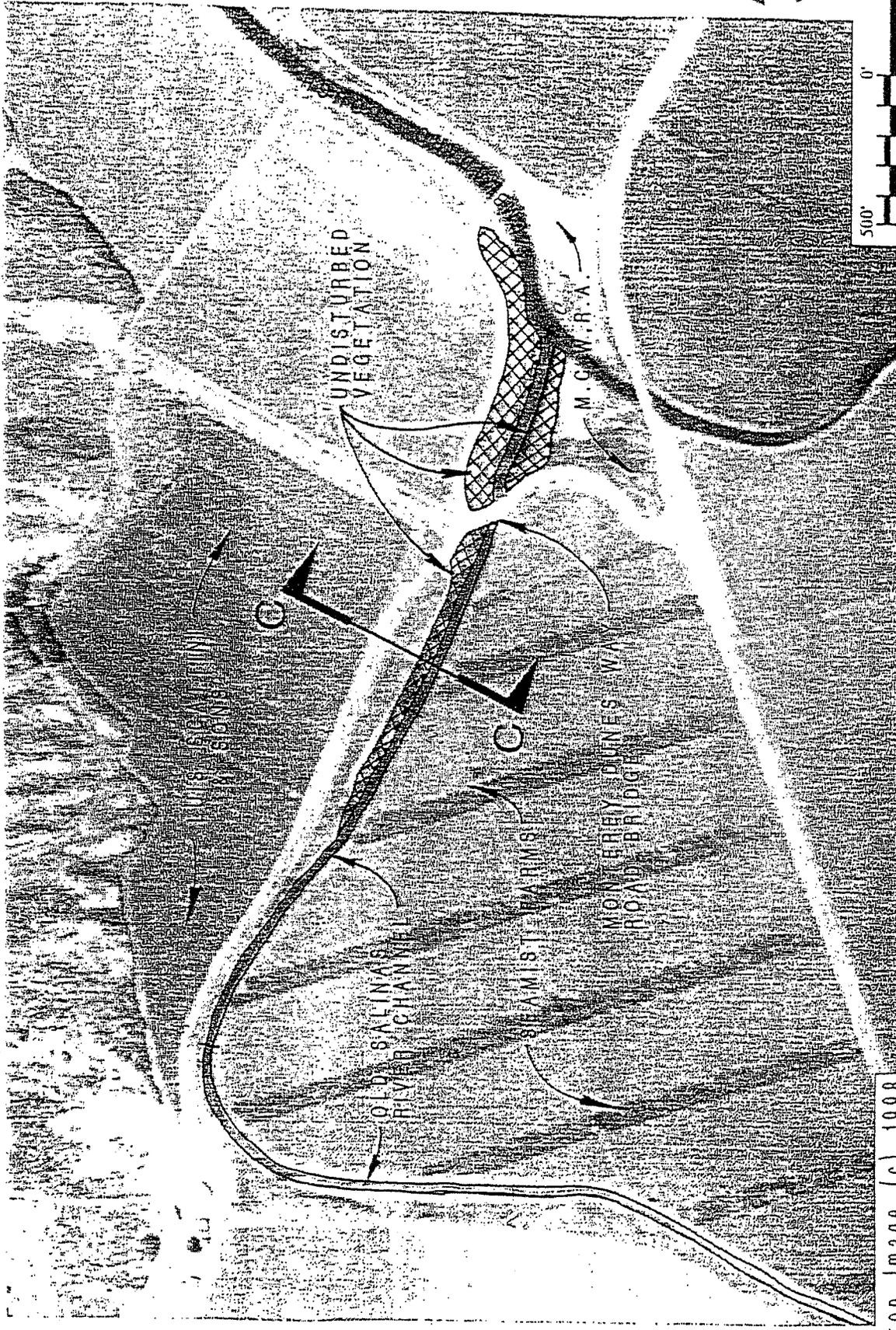
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1" = 500'





Crop Image (c) 1998

Site Plan Photo adr714_3.sc.005 - July 1998

Purpose: Provide standards for removal of channel and bank vegetation and accumulations of silt, sandbars, and other debris as may be required to maintain a clear channel.

Drawn By: LRM

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Date: 09-17-98

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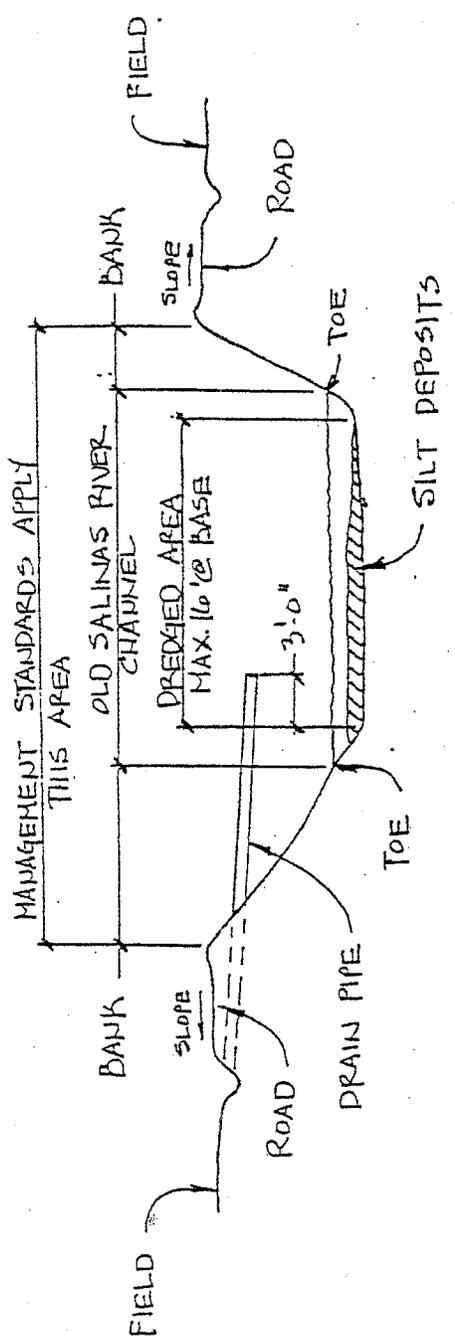
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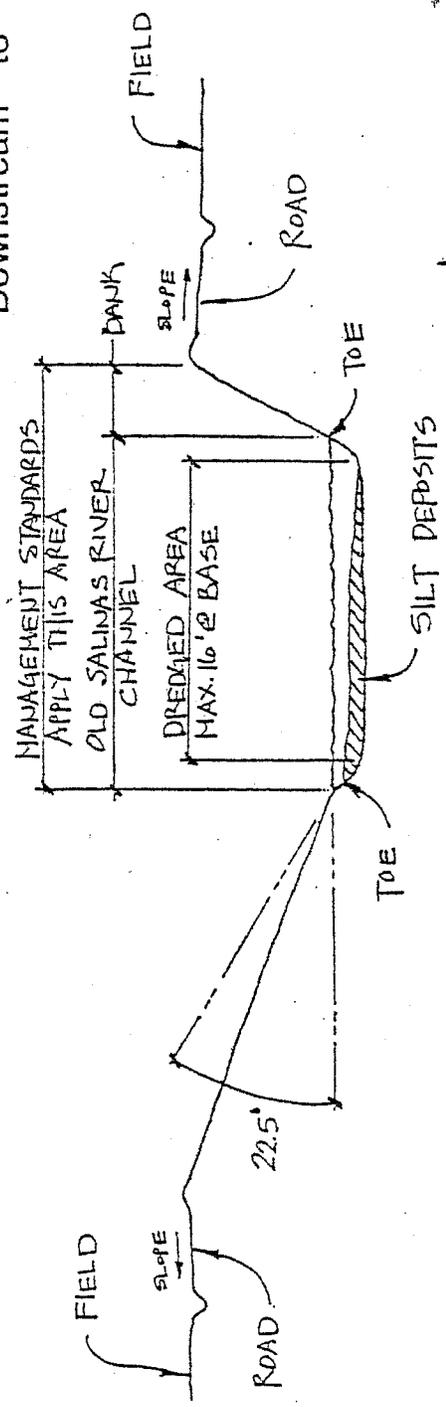
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Old Salinas River Channel Looking Downstream to Moss Landing



SECTION A - A

Old Salinas River Channel Looking Downstream to Moss Landing



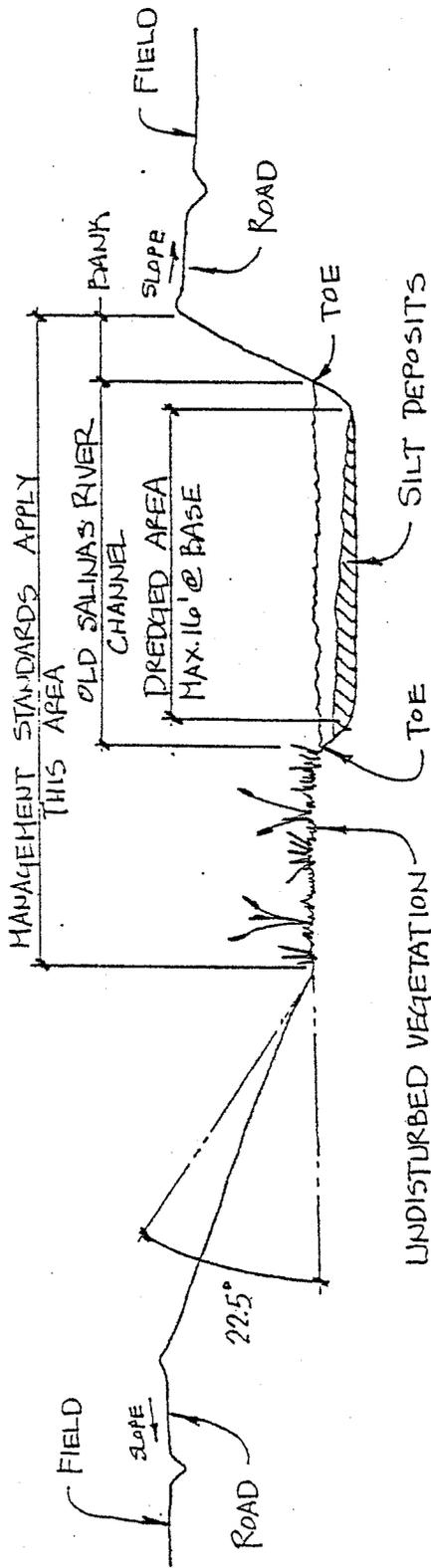
SECTION B - B

<p>River Sections Purpose: Provide standards for removal of channel and bank vegetation and accumulations of silt, sandbars, and other debris as may be required to maintain a clear channel.</p>	<p>Drawn By: L.P.H.</p>	<p>LEE & PIERCE inc. consulting engineers 546 Abbot St #20 Salinas, CA 93901 Phone (408) 750-0096</p>	<p>Sheet No. 6</p>
	<p>Checked By:</p> <p>Date: 3-18-97</p>		<p>of 7 Sheets</p>

OLD SALINAS RIVER CHANNEL POST-DREDGING MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

APRIL 1997

Old Salinas River Channel Looking Downstream to Tembladero Slough



SECTION C - C

River Sections

Purpose: Provide standards for removal of channel and bank vegetation and accumulations of silt, sandbars, and other debris as may be required to maintain a clear channel.

Drawn By: L.R.H.

Checked By:

Date: 3-12-97

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