Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Finding

To: Lizzy Hummel **Date**: July 17, 2026

California Department of Transportation

District 10 Local Assistance, Environmental MPS

Subject: Section 4(f) Minimal Impact Memorandum for the Walnut Grove Road over the Mokelumne River Bridge (29C-0131) Replacement Project

BRLS 5929(239)

The County of San Joaquin (County), in coordination with the County of Sacramento (Sacramento County) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to replace the existing Walnut Grove Road Bridge (also known as Millers Ferry Bridge), Bridge No. 29C-0131, over the north fork of the Mokelumne River (proposed project). The proposed project would receive funding from the Highway Bridge Program (HBP), which are funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as administered by Caltrans. The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for the proposed project is being, or has been, carried out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 326. The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable state and local laws for the proposed project is being, or has been, carried out by the County, who is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), in coordination with Sacramento County, who is a responsible agency under CEQA.

Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to describe potential impacts on public resources protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 49 USC 303, that may be associated with the proposed project. The project site is located approximately four miles west of Interstate 5, at the San Joaquin County and Sacramento County line, southeast of the community of Walnut Grove (Attachment A, Figures 1 and 2). The proposed project would replace the existing movable bridge, Bridge No. 29C-0131, where Walnut Grove Road crosses the north fork of the Mokelumne River.

Project Purpose and Need

The proposed project is needed because the existing bridge has a sufficiency rating (SR) of 56.1 and has been designated as structurally deficient (SD) per the Caltrans Structure Maintenance & Investigations, Local Agency Bridge List (July 2018). The existing bridge does not meet current design standards (previously identified as functionally obsolete). Caltrans has reviewed the preliminary details of the proposed project and supports a full replacement of the bridge.

The purpose of the proposed project is to replace the existing aging, more than 70 years, structure with a new movable structure that is consistent with appropriate and current design standards for roadway geometry, hydraulics, marine navigational requirements, and structural integrity.

Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) declares that:

> *"[I]t is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites."*
>
> *The Secretary [of Transportation] may approve a transportation program or project…requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance – as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge, or site – only if:*
>
> - *There is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and*
> - *The program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use.*

Section 4(f) further requires consultation with the Department of the Interior and, as appropriate, the involves offices of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in developing transportation projects and programs that use lands protected by Section 4(f).

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA), a federal transportation reauthorization bill signed into law in 2005, simplified the procedures for projects that would have *de minimis* impacts on Section 4(f) properties. An analysis is not required, and the Section 4(f) evaluation is complete once it is determined that the use of a Section 4(f) property would result in *de minimis* impacts. The definition of a *de minimis* impact, as set forth in 23 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Section 774.17, is as follows:

> *For parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, a <u>de minimis</u> impact is one that will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities qualifying the property for protection under Section 4(f).*

Responsibility for compliance with Section 4(f) has been assigned to Caltrans pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (23 USC 329) and CE Assignment (23 USC 326) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Project Description

This proposed project would replace the existing movable bridge with a new movable bridge on the same alignment, with the same function and capacity. The new bridge would be wide enough to accommodate two lanes of vehicular traffic with shoulders to meet safety and design requirements (similar to existing conditions). The bridge type for the movable structure would be a single-leaf bascule span with overhead counterweight.

The vertical profile of the proposed roadway and bridge would be controlled by requirements to provide adequate drift clearance to minimize openings for marine navigational traffic, provide adequate drift clearance under the bridge during flood events, maximize sight distance, and minimize footprint. The bottom (soffit) of the new bridge cannot be any lower than the bottom (soffit) of the existing bridge per requirements from FHWA, Caltrans, Reclamation District 38, and the U.S. Coast Guard. This fixed point combined with the new bridge type (Single-leaf Bascule Span with Overhead Counterweight) results in a roadway profile that would be raised slightly, three to four feet, from the existing roadway profile.

In a letter dated March 5, 2015 (Attachment B), the U.S. Coast Guard Bridge Section Chief of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, Mr. David Sulouff, specified that the minimum navigational clearances required for a fixed bridge (non-moveable) shall be 100 feet horizontal and 100 feet vertical for this proposed project. Horizontal clearance requirements will dictate the location of the piers supporting the proposed bridge. Vertical clearance is satisfied by providing a movable structure which will open to allow for taller marine vessels to pass.

Utility Relocation

There are above ground utilities identified to the west of the proposed project. These include Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) electric lines that run parallel to the existing roadway along the south side of Walnut Grove Road near the existing bridge, providing electrical power to the residence located southwest of the project site. The utility crosses Walnut Grove Road approximately 300 feet west of the existing bridge. There are no visible utilities west of this location. Power for the existing bridge is provided from a utility pole located northwest of the proposed project. The power line is then run underground through a submarine cable to the center pier of the bridge and under the navigational channel to the east bank of the river. There are no utilities on the east side of the bridge. There are communication lines and small utility lines at the east end of the existing bridge for controlling the existing warning gates. Relocation of these facilities would be required in order to continue operation during construction.

Right-of-Way

Temporary construction easements or rights of entry would be required from the properties on either side of Walnut Grove Road on both sides of the bridge. The proposed project is anticipated to require permanent right-of-way acquisition to accommodate the new bridge from one parcel east of the Mokelumne River (San Joaquin County, APN 069-020-19) and four parcels west of the

Mokelumne River (Sacramento County, APNs 156-0210-001, 156-0210-002, 156-0020-063, and 156-0010-054).

Construction Activities

Roadway and Marine Navigation Adjacent to the Section 4(f) Property

Walnut Grove Road would be closed during construction for up to 14 months, requiring an approximately 17-mile detour from one end of the bridge to the other. The detour would include Walnut Grove Road, Interstate 5, Twin Cities Road, River Road, and Walnut Grove-Thornton Road. Once construction is complete, Walnut Grove Road and the new bridge would be reponed to traffic.

River navigation would be maintained during demolition of the existing bridge. River navigation would require closure for up to 24 working days, approximately 5 weeks, to allow for final placement of the bascule leaf, approach spans, deck casting, balancing, and testing. The navigational channel would be reopened after the bascule leaf becomes operational.

Construction Activities on Section 4(f) Property

Construction activities within the Section 4(f) property would consist of the following activities:

- Removing vegetation, grubbing and clearing to accommodate the new bridge structure
    - Remove portions of trees, bushes, and landscaping in conflict with new construction. The areas around the work site would be cleared of vegetation and existing fencing which conflicts with proposed construction.
- Constructing roadway
    - Concurrent with construction of the bridge elements, the roadway approaching the new bridge would be constructed including placement of embankment fills, drainage systems and safety railings or barriers. This also includes the reconstruction of the ingress/egress from Walnut Grove Road to the levee maintenance road, including Dead Horse Island Road, to accommodate the new Walnut Grove Road profile.

Construction Schedule and Timing

Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to take between 12 months and 14 months to complete, pending a final construction plan. Construction is anticipated for 2029. All work within the Mokelumne River would be conducted in accordance with the permits issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (Fisheries), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB); permits would also be obtained from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Section 4(f) Use Evaluation

Section 4(f) Property

Historic Resources

A Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) was prepared for the proposed project. The existing bridge (No. 29C0131) was originally constructed in 1955 to replace an earlier movable bridge that was constructed in 1905. With regard to historical significance, the bridge is identified as a Class 5, "not eligible" for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). In addition, the HRER re-evaluated the bridge, in light of its rarity, and concluded the bridge is not eligible for listing on the NRHP. Therefore, the bridge is not considered a historic resource, thus, is not considered a Section 4(f) property.

In 2019, Giusti's Restaurant was located to the northeast of the bridge and was the oldest operating restaurant in the Sacramento River Delta. On September 9, 2021, a fire broke out at the restaurant and spread quickly, consuming the restaurant and surrounding buildings. Today, the buildings are no longer present. Therefore, Giusti's Restaurant is not considered a Section 4(f) property.

Old Walnut Grove-Thornton Road is associated with the original reclamation of the northern end of Tyler Island and the transportation corridor that crossed the Delta, including the original ferry and subsequent bridge resources in the area. This roadway is considered exempt from evaluation per Attachment 4 of Section 106 PA – Properties Exempt from Evaluation: Highway and Roadside Feature, isolated segments of bypassed or abandoned roads. Therefore, Old Walnut Grove-Thornton Road is not considered a Section 4(f) Historic Property.

Staten Island Preserve

The eastern approach of the bridge is adjacent to property owned by the charitable environmental organization, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), while the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) holds the conservation easement for the property. In 2001, TNC bought Staten Island (approximately 9,200 acres) to safeguard wetlands for migratory birds and provide wildlife-friendly farming practices. It spent $30 million in public grant funds approved by voters in Propositions 204 and 13. Also in 2001, TNC dedicated an exclusive and perpetual conservation easement to DWR for the Staten Island Preserve.

The conservation easement defines Multiple and Complimentary Benefits as: "agricultural land preservation, including the economic viability of agricultural operations; wildlife habitat protection; protection of a floodplain area from potential inappropriate and incompatible development; and potential role in future flood management and water management improvements."

Within the Staten Island Preserve conservation easement is a levee maintenance easement held by Reclamation District 38 for flood protection purposes. Within the levee maintenance easement, is an easement agreement to allow ingress/egress along the levee road to provide

access to Dead Horse Island (known as Dead Horse Island Road); this is the only point of access to Dead Horse Island. The Reclamation District relies on the bridge's functionality to utilize a barge with a crane that needs to pass through the existing moveable bridge for levee repairs due to flooding (Pers. Comm. Reclamation Districts Representative).

Staten Island Preserve harvested crops are often routed along Walnut Grove Road either east to Interstate 5, requiring no use of the existing Walnut Grove Road Bridge, or west over the Walnut Grove Road Bridge to the community of Walnut Grove, which allows connections to State Route 160 and/or Twin Cities Road. The economic viability of agricultural operations, while not entirely dependent on Walnut Grove Road Bridge, could be affected if the existing bridge malfunctions (i.e., the bridge is stuck in the open position, which would close Walnut Grove Road) (Pers. Comm. Steve; Pers. Comm. JB Morais).

The leftover plant material on the harvested agricultural fields of Staten Island Preserve is ground up as mulch providing a food supply for sandhill cranes and migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. These fields are also flooded to provide nightly protection from predators and an additional food supply of aquatic invertebrates for birds. As a consequence of promoting wildlife habitat through agriculture, Staten Island Preserve is a roosting site for approximately 15 percent of the Central Valley's sandhill crane population and hosts migratory birds including ducks, geese, and shorebirds (The Nature Conservancy 2023).

Within the proposed project area, there are actively farmed areas, levee maintenance roads, and Dead Horse Island Road. There are no agricultural wetlands within the proposed project area.

The Staten Island Preserve is considered a Section 4(f) Property because it meets the following criteria for a wildlife refuge:

- Staten Island is considered a publicly owned wildlife refuge because of the exclusive and perpetual conservation easement deed held by DWR;
- The major purpose of Staten Island is for refuge activities; and
- Staten Island is an important refuge for migratory birds and specifically the sandhill crane.

Use of Section 4(f) Property

Within the context of Section 4(f) properties, the term *use* is defined in 23 CFR 774. Specifically, a *use* occurs under any of the following circumstances:

- When land is permanently incorporated into a transportation facility;
- When there is a temporary occupancy of land that is adverse in terms of the statute's preservation purpose as determined by the criteria in 23 CFR §774.13(d); or
- When there is a constructive use of a Section 4(f) property as determined by the criteria in 23 CFR §774.15.

Staten Island Preserve

Staten Island Preserve qualifies as a Section 4(f) property, as discussed above. Walnut Grove Road traverses the northern tip of Staten Island. The replacement of the Walnut Grove Road Bridge over the Mokelumne River would result in raising the bridge deck and reconstructing access road connections leading from Walnut Grove Road to the levee maintenance road, including Dead Horse Island Road, on the San Joaquin County side. The reconstruction and realignment of the connections to the levee maintenance road, including Dead Horse Island Road, would improve safety and roadway sight distances by eliminating sharp turn angles and allowing levee management vehicles and other vehicles accessing Dead Horse Island to more safely turn on to and off of Walnut Grove Road from the private maintenance road. This would require the permanent acquisition of right-of-way from the Staten Island Preserve. This constitutes a *use* under Section 4(f).

Potential Impacts on Section 4(f) Property

Staten Island Preserve

As discussed above, the approximately 9,200-acre Staten Island is primarily agricultural fields, which are planted annually and harvested; the leftover plant material is ground up as mulch, thus providing a food supply for sandhill cranes and migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. These fields are also flooded to provide nightly protection from predators and an additional food supply of aquatic invertebrates for birds (The Nature Conservancy 2023). The island contains several roads, including Walnut Grove Road, North Staten Island Road, and Gas Well Road, along with unimproved agricultural roads that are used for equipment to access the existing agricultural crops.

The replacement of the Walnut Grove Road Bridge over the Mokelumne River would have the same alignment as the existing bridge and roadway. The bottom (soffit) of the new bridge cannot be any lower than the bottom (soffit) of the existing bridge per requirements from Reclamation Districts, and the U.S. Coast Guard. This fixed point combined with the new bridge type (Single-leaf Bascule Span with Overhead Counterweight) results in a roadway profile that would be raised slightly, three to four feet, from the existing roadway profile. Access to Dead Horse Island Road and the levee maintenance road, within the Staten Island Preserve property boundaries, and within the levee maintenance easement, would be realigned to conform to the new Walnut Grove Road profile and continue to provide safe access to Dead Horse Island Road, the only ingress/egress point for Dead Horse Island.

As a result, Table 1 identifies the proposed project's maximum permanent use of the Staten Island Preserve (Attachment A, Figures 3 and 4) while Table 2 identifies the existing and proposed activities for the 1-2 acres of Section 4(f) property use.

Table 1. Maximum Permanent Use of Section 4(f) Property

Permanent Use (acres)			Percent of Staten Island		Active Cultivation Use (acres)	Percent of Staten Island
Total	**Levee Maintenance Easement**	**DWR Conservation Easement**	**Total**	**DWR Conservation Easement Only**		
2.61	0.64	1.97	0.028%	0.021%	1.04	0.01%

Table 2. Activities of Section 4(f) Property

Acres	Existing Activities	Proposed Activities (Use)
1.04	Active cultivation	Vegetated embankment and stormwater/irrigation ditch with vegetation approved by CDFW
0.93	Fringe uses (grassy slope, stormwater ditch, earthen fill, and border)	Vegetated embankment with vegetation approved by CDFW
0.64	Levee Maintenance Easement with Levee Maintenance Road	Levee Maintenance Easement, Levee Maintenance Road, and vegetated embankment with vegetation approved by CDFW.

When identifying *de minimis* impacts on publicly owned parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, it is important to distinguish the activities, features, or attributes of a Section 4(f) resource that are important to protect from those that can be "'used' without adverse effects."

The permanent use of Staten Island Preserve, outside the levee maintenance easement area, (1.97 acres) would not significantly affect the existing activity of agricultural cultivation (approximately 9,200 acres), or the features and attributes associated with the amount of mulch as a food supply for sandhill cranes and migratory birds. It would also not significantly change the attribute and feature of flooding the land to provide nightly protection from predators and to provide additional food supply of aquatic invertebrates for birds. There are no agricultural wetlands within the project site. Therefore, the permanent use of the property would not change

wildlife conservation practices (attributes and features), agricultural practices (activities), nor would it affect access to these areas (attributes and features).

The areas identified for permanent use outside the levee maintenance area (1.97 acres, of which 1.04 acres are actively cultivated) are adjacent to the existing Walnut Grove Road, existing levee, existing Dead Horse Island Road, and levee maintenance road, and are primarily restricted to the ruderal grasslands and agriculture (Attachment A, Figure 3). Approximately 1.04 acres of the conservation easement land that is currently actively farmed would be used for a vegetated embankment to support the raised roadway leading to the proposed replacement bridge and an irrigation/stormwater ditch. Approximately 0.93 acres of conservation easement land currently containing a mix of fringe uses (grassy slope, stormwater ditch, earthen fill, and border) would be used for vegetated embankment. Finally, approximately 0.64 acres of conservation easement land is currently used for a levee and a levee maintenance road and is under an easement to Reclamation District 38. A portion of that 0.64 acres of land would be used for a new aligned levee maintenance access road (which includes Dead Horse Island Road), as well as vegetated earthen fill.

Upon construction completion, a plan will be implemented to revegetate construction disturbed areas to conditions similar to existing conditions. This would include revegetation with a native plant seed mixture. In addition, a planting plan would be prepared for riparian areas and approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The fill from the roadway can be revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native or approved non-invasive exotic species. The Restoration Plan would include performance standards for revegetation that allows for successful restoration of the onsite riparian areas. See "Section 4(f) Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features," below, for further detail.

The proposed project supports the purpose of the conservation easement for economic viability of agricultural operations by replacing the existing bridge with a new bridge. If the existing bridge were to remain in place there is a much greater risk of the bridge not being able to open and/or close. This would compromise the ability of the agricultural practices to transport materials or workers to and from the agricultural fields, as transportation partially relies on the bridge's functionality to transport materials or workers over the existing bridge when materials have a western ingress/egress. Therefore, the proposed project would maintain economic viability of agricultural operations similar to existing conditions for Staten Island.

Levee Maintenance/Dead Horse Island Road Easement

As previously mentioned, a levee maintenance easement is located along Dead Horse Island Road and the levee maintenance road, at the levee separating the Staten Island cultivation areas with the Mokelumne River (Attachment A, Figure 4). In order to support the purposes of this easement, which include levee access for maintenance and emergency repairs, as well as the levee function of reducing flood risk to Staten Island and other properties downstream, the bottom (soffit) of the new bridge would be maintained at the same level as the bottom (soffit) of the existing bridge, which sits above the 100-year base flood water surface elevation. This meets

the requirements from FHWA, Caltrans, Reclamation Districts, and the U.S. Coast Guard. This fixed point for the new bridge type (Single-leaf Bascule Span with Overhead Counterweight) provides adequate drift clearance over the design flood event, minimizes risk of flooding, and maintains the stability of the levees during flood events.

The proposed project supports the purpose of the conservation easement for flood protection by replacing the existing bridge with a new bridge. If the existing bridge were to remain in place there is a much greater risk of the bridge not being able to open and/or close. This would compromise the ability of the Reclamation District to repair levees because the Reclamation Districts rely on the bridge's functionality to utilize a barge with a crane that needs to pass through the existing bridge for levee repairs and maintenance (Pers. Comm. Reclamation District 38). Therefore, the proposed project would maintain flood risk similar to existing conditions for Staten Island. The levees would be higher at the proposed bridge which would also increase flood protection.

Public Outreach Summary

A Community Meeting and Public Presentation for the Walnut Grove Road (Millers Ferry) Bridge Replacement Project took place at the Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove on April 22, 2025. The meeting aimed to inform the public and stakeholders about the proposed project's current status, including the necessity for a replacement bridge, design details, anticipated costs and funding sources, the environmental planning process, proposed detours during construction, the expected construction start date, and the next steps in the project timeline. A Question-and-Answer session followed the presentation to address any questions from attendees.

Key concerns from the meeting included whether or not the proposed project would increase flood risk and impacts to the surrounding farming due to the length of the detour. A Type Selection Report was completed for the bridge type, which includes analysis for hydraulics. In addition, a Location Hydraulic Study Form and Summary Floodplain Encroachment Report were also prepared for the proposed project. The proposed project would not result in an increased risk of flooding.

A Community Impact Assessment Memorandum was completed for the proposed project, which includes analysis of the proposed detour for vehicular traffic (Caltrans, 2024).

This Section 4(f) De Minimis Evaluation is available for public review and comment from July 17, 2026 to August 17, 2026 and is available at: https://www.sjgov.org/department/pwk/bridge-engineering/walnut-grove-road-bridge-replacement.

Future opportunities for the public to review the proposed project, outside of the Section 4(f) De Minimis Evaluation, will occur during the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance process. Under CEQA, a draft environmental document will be prepared by the County, in coordination with Sacramento County, and will be circulated to the public for 30 days. After public circulation and consideration of public comments, the final environmental document will go to the San Joaquin County Board or Supervisor's for review and approval. After the County's

approval, the final environmental document will then go to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisor's for approval.

Alternatives

Avoidance Alternative

The No Build Alternative would leave the current Walnut Grove Road Bridge over the Mokelumne River as is. The No Build Alternative would not result in impacts because no construction would occur. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the proposed project and would result in the deficient, obsolete bridge remaining in place, increasing safety risks due to the potential of the bridge not being able to open and/or close. This would compromise the ability to repair the levees because the Reclamation Districts utilize a barge with a crane that needs to pass through the existing bridge for emergency levee repairs due to flooding. This would also jeopardize vehicular traffic because if the bridge did not have the ability to close, there would be no access across the river, resulting in an up to 17-mile detour for those on the Sacramento County side of the bridge trying to access the San Joaquin County side of the bridge.

Southern Alignment Alternative

Replacing the bridge south of the existing bridge with a 40-foot southern offset to align the new bridge with Walnut Grove Road was initially considered by Caltrans and the project development team (San Joaquin County, Sacramento County, and the design consultant). This design would require substantial new roadway approach work on either side of the bridge to eventually align with the existing Walnut Grove Road. When compared to the proposed project, this alternative would increase the permanent use of the Staten Island Preserve. The Southern Alignment Alternative would result in approximately 4.33 acres of right-of-way acquisition from Staten Island. Thus, the permanent use of Staten Island Preserve, including the levee maintenance area, would be 4.33 acres. This alternative was rejected by San Joaquin County and Sacramento County.

Northern Alignment Alternative

Replacing the bridge north of the existing bridge with a 40-foot northern offset to align the new bridge with Walnut Grove Road was initially considered by Caltrans and the project development team (San Joaquin County, Sacramento County, and the design consultant). This design would require substantial new roadway approach work on either side of the bridge to eventually align with the existing Walnut Grove Road. When compared to the proposed project, this alternative would increase the permanent use of the Staten Island Preserve. The Northern Alignment Alternative would result in approximately 4.23 acres of right-of-way acquisition from the Staten Island Preserve. Thus, the permanent use of Staten Island Preserve, including the levee maintenance area, would be 4.23 acres. This alternative was rejected by San Joaquin County and Sacramento County.

Other Alternatives Considered

A fixed (non-moveable) bridge was also considered during the proposed project's initial design stage. The Coast Guard's minimum navigational clearance requirements are 100 feet vertical and 100 feet horizontal for the proposed project. This fixed bridge type would have raised the bridge to accommodate for the 100 vertical navigational clearance; however, it would have required a substantial roadway vertical profile change. A fixed span bridge would include construction of a pier support, significant vertical profile increases, and roadway approaches of up to 3,000 feet on either side of the bridge to accommodate the bridge height. As a result, the right-of-way acquisition from adjacent properties, including from Staten Island, would increase as compared to the proposed project, to accommodate a new fixed bridge and roadway. In addition, the fixed bridge alternative would eliminate access to the levee access roads on both the east (San Joaquin County) and west (Sacrament County) sides of the bridge. A fixed bridge alternative would also eliminate Dead Horse Island Road on the east (San Joaquin County) side of the bridge. This would result in impaired abilities to maintain the levees, as access to the levee maintenance roads would be eliminated. It would also deny access to Dead Horse Island thus this alternative would eliminate access to the island and would indirectly convert agricultural land to non-agricultural land by eliminating access to actively cultivated areas in Sacramento County. The fixed bridge type would also potentially impact access to North Staten Island Road on the east and property access near the southern edge of Walnut Grove Road. Therefore, fixed-bridge types were not considered prudent and feasible alternatives and were not analyzed further.

Section 4(f) Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented prior to, during, and upon completion of construction to avoid and minimize potential impacts:

- All disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction contours and revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native or approved non-invasive exotic species.
- All construction materials would be hauled off-site after completion of construction activities.
- The project will minimize the effects of disturbance to the Mokelumne River and the adjacent riparian corridor. The project will revegetate areas of temporary disturbance within the project footprint with native riparian vegetation.
- A planting plan will be implemented as detailed in a Restoration Plan approved by CDFW. The Restoration Plan will include performance standards for revegetation that will ensure successful restoration of the onsite riparian areas.

Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Determination

San Joaquin County is proposing that the potential impacts of the proposed project on the Staten Island Preserve be determined to be of a *de minimis* level. Principal factors of this determination for the Staten Island Preserve are: 1) the portions of the preserve affected by the proposed project are located adjacent to the existing roadway; 2) the proposed action would not adversely affect the wildlife habitat features and attributes of the property that render the property eligible for Section 4(f) because the 1-2 acres of affected property would be converted to vegetated embankment or ditch, with revegetation approved of native plant seed mixture and a planting plan and see mixture approved by CDFW; 3) The proposed project would not change the attribute and feature of flooding the land to provide nightly protection from predators and to provide additional food supply of aquatic invertebrates for birds; 4) the proposed project would not impact agricultural wetlands because there are no agricultural wetlands present in the project site; and 5) the proposed project would not restrict the ability to provide wildlife conservation practices within the Staten Island Preserve nor would it affect access to those areas. The nature of proposed project-related activities to the future viability and use of the Staten Island Preserve as a Section 4(f) resource constitutes a *de minimis* level of impact.

Summary of Findings

Permanent adverse physical impacts to the State Island Preserve from the proposed project are anticipated to be minimal and restricted to areas along the existing roadway. Areas within the Staten Island Preserve that would be temporarily impacted by the proposed project would be returned to a condition that is consistent with that which was present prior to the implementation of the proposed project. Implementation of the proposed project would not significantly affect the use of the Staten Island Preserve as a Section 4(f) resource.

References

Personal Communication. Reclamation Districts Chris Neudeck, Reclamation Districts Representative on February 18, 2018 with Dennis Haglan regarding levee maintenance activities.

Personal Communication. Steve, public attendee, with the Project Development Team during the Community Meeting on April 22, 2025 regarding closing the bridge during construction and concerns on agricultural business.

Personal Communication. J.B. Morais, public attendee, written comment card received during the Community Meeting on April 22, 2025 regarding closing the bridge during construction and concerns on costs to farmers using the detour.

Caltrans. 2024. Community Impact Assessment Memorandum. May 14, 2024.

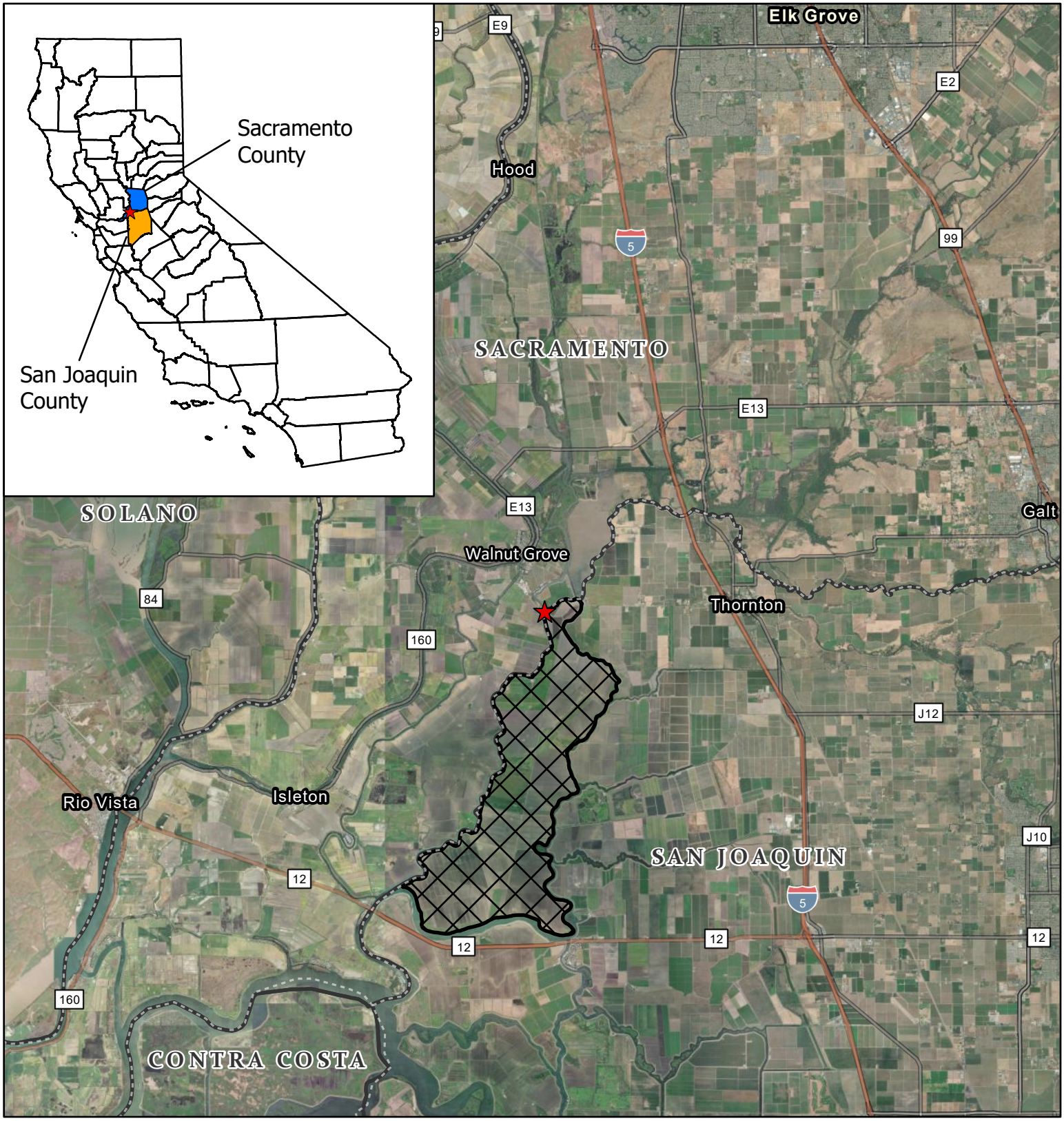
The Nature Conservancy. 2023. Places We Protect: Staten Island, California. Available Online: https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/staten-island/. Accessed June 9, 2023.

PAR Environmental Services, Inc. (PAR). 2022. Historical Resources Evaluation Report for the Walnut Grove Road over the Mokelumne River Bridge (29C0131) Replacement Project. Dated December 2022. Approved January 2023.

Attachment A

Proposed Project Maps

Regional Location



Walnut Grove Bridge Replacement Project
Sacramento County and San Joaquin County, CA

Figure 1

Legend

- Project Location
- Staten Island Preserve

0 3 Miles

N

Dewberry

Author: I. Ciraulo
Last updated on Monday, October 27, 2025

Path: U:\15007 - Walnut Grove Road Bridge - San Joaquin Co\400 Project Design Files\460 Environmental\Figures\GIS\APRX\Walnut Grove Fig 1 and Fig 2\Walnut Grove Fig 1 and Fig 2.aprx

Project Location

Walnut Grove Bridge Replacement Project
Sacramento County and San Joaquin County, CA

Figure 2

0 500 Feet

N

Legend

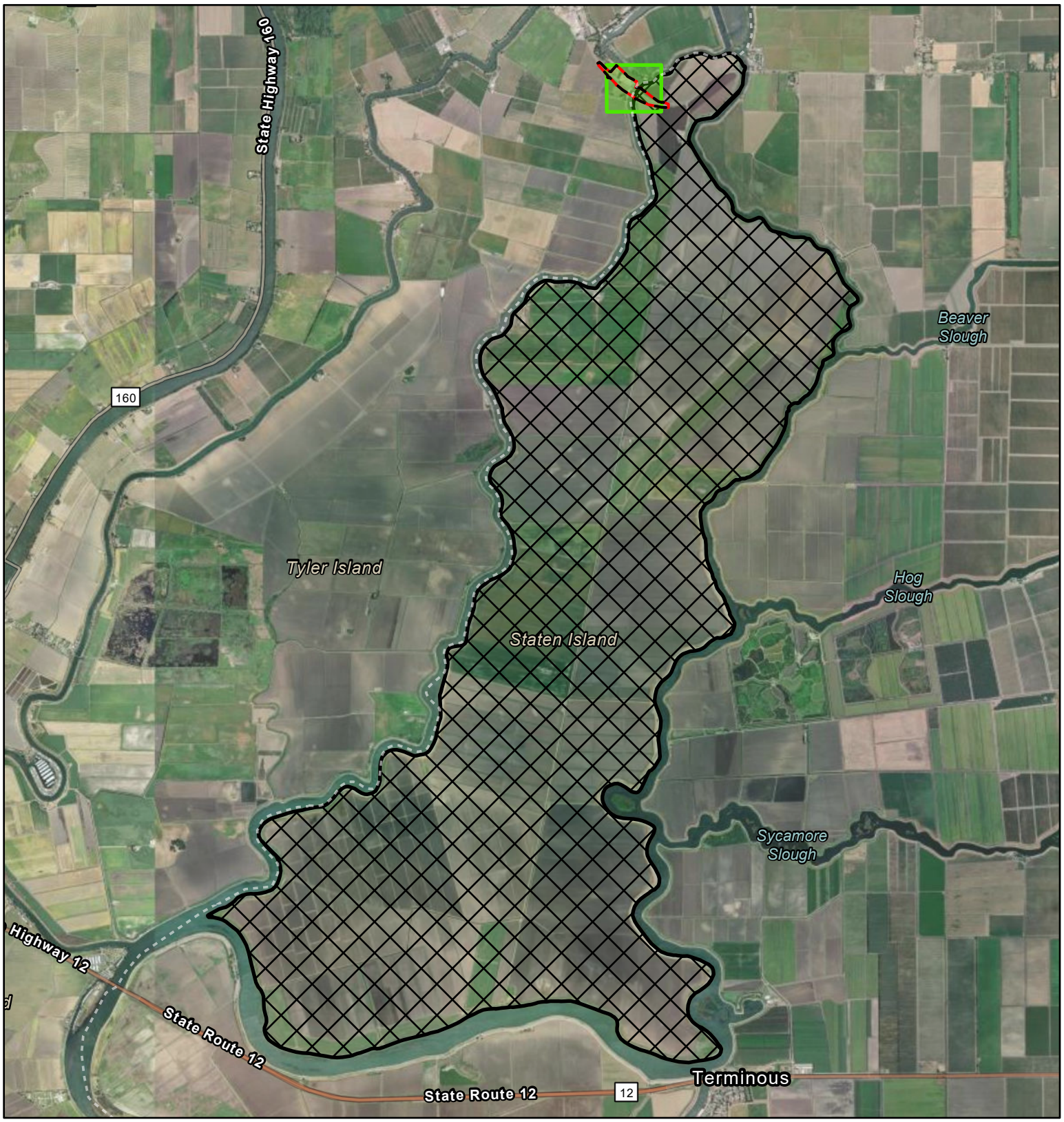
- Project Area
- Staten Island Preserve
- Parcels
- County Boundaries
- Proposed Bridge
- Proposed Roadway
- Proposed Cut/Fill Limits
- Staging Area

Dewberry

Author: I. Ciraulo
Last updated on Monday, October 27, 2025

Path: U:\15007 - Walnut Grove Road Bridge - San Joaquin Co\400 Project Design Files\460 Environmental\Figures\GIS\APRX\Walnut Grove Fig 1 and Fig 2\Walnut Grove Fig 1 and Fig 2.aprx

Staten Island Preserve



Walnut Grove Bridge Replacement Project
Sacramento County and San Joaquin County, CA

Figure 3

Legend

- Project Area
- Figure 4 and 5 View
- Staten Island Preserve

0 1 Miles

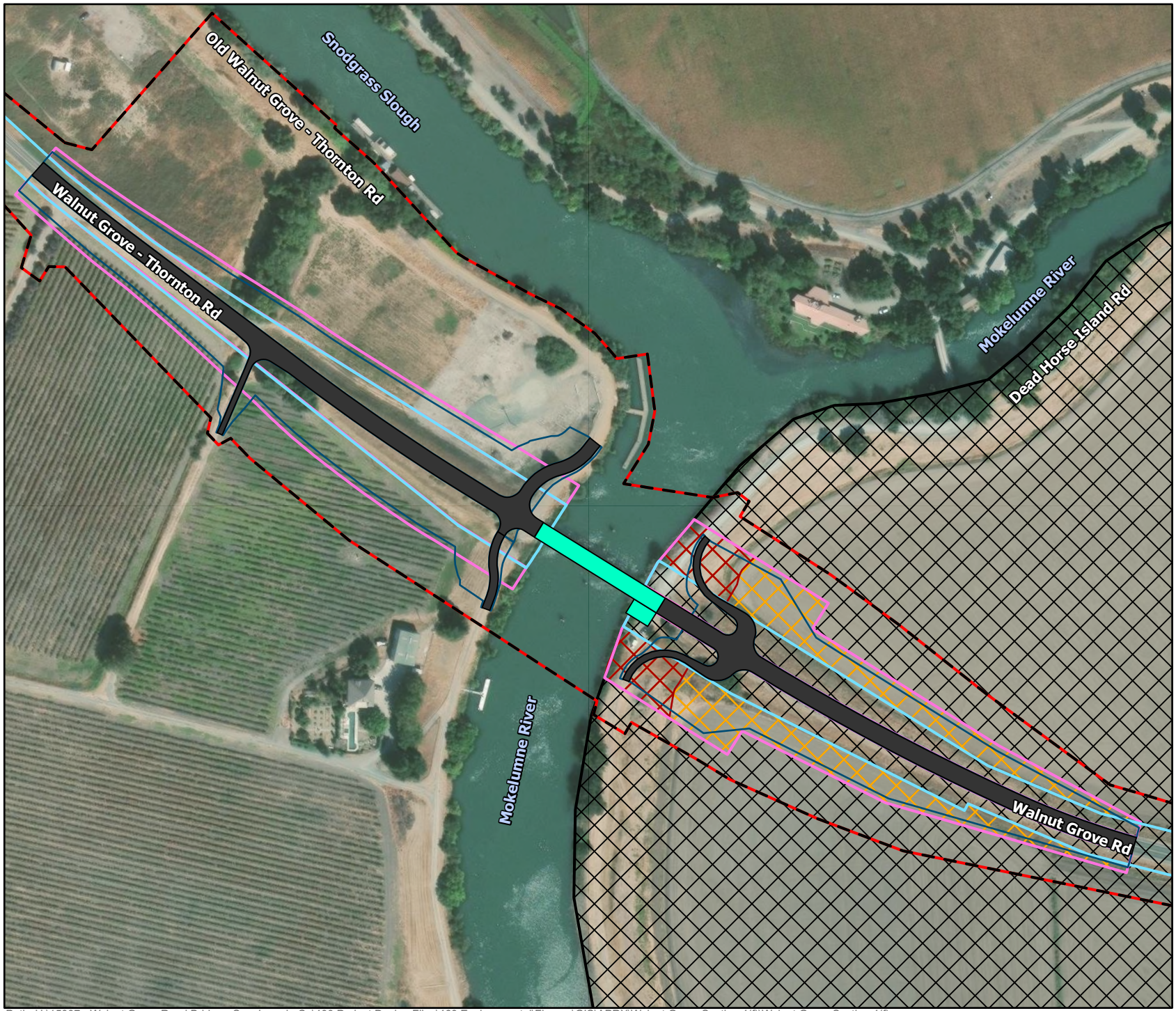
N

Dewberry

Author: I. Ciraulo
Last updated on Monday, October 27, 2025

Path: U:\15007 - Walnut Grove Road Bridge - San Joaquin Co\400 Project Design Files\460 Environmental\Figures\GIS\APRX\Walnut Grove Section 4(f)\Walnut Grove Section 4(f).aprx

Section 4(f) Proposed Permanent Use



Walnut Grove Road Bridge Replacement Project
San Joaquin County and Sacramento County, CA

Figure 4

Legend

- Project Area
- Staten Island Preserve

Proposed Permanent Use (2.61 acres)

- Section 4(f) Proposed Permanent Use (1.97 acres)
- Reclamation District's Levee Maintenance Easement area within Proposed Permanent Use (0.64 acres)

Proposed Project Details

- Proposed Bridge
- Proposed Roadway
- Proposed Cut/Fill Limits
- Existing ROW
- Proposed ROW Acquisition

N

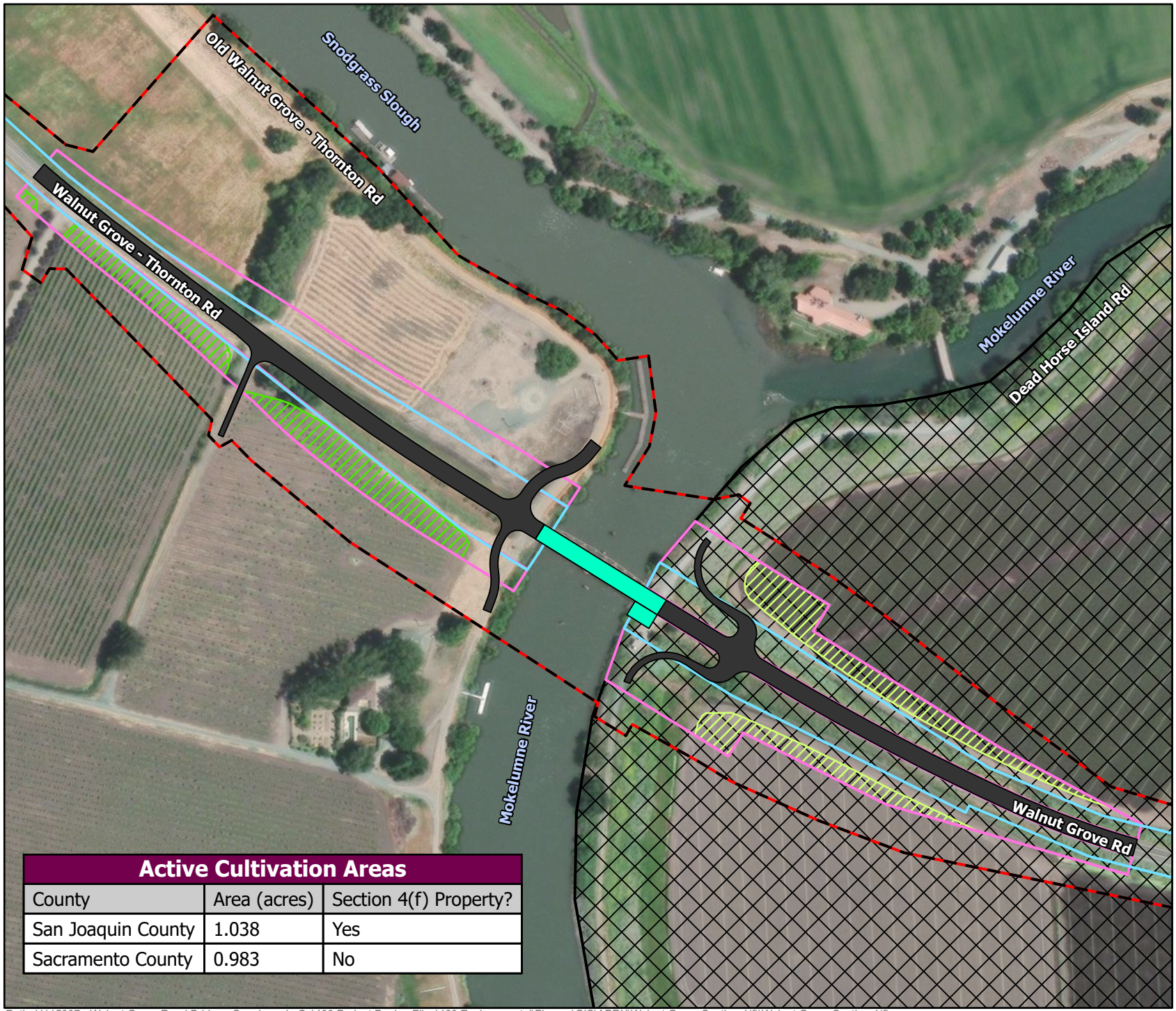
0 250 Feet

Author: I. Ciraulo
Last updated on Monday, March 30, 2026

Dewberry

Path: U:\15007 - Walnut Grove Road Bridge - San Joaquin Co\400 Project Design Files\460 Environmental\Figures\GIS\APRX\Walnut Grove Section 4(f)\Walnut Grove Section 4(f).aprx

Active Cultivation Areas



Active Cultivation Areas		
County	Area (acres)	Section 4(f) Property?
San Joaquin County	1.038	Yes
Sacramento County	0.983	No

Walnut Grove Road Bridge Replacement Project
San Joaquin County and Sacramento County, CA

Figure 5

Legend

- Project Area
- Staten Island Preserve

Active Cultivation Areas

- San Joaquin County
- Sacramento County

Proposed Project Details

- Proposed Bridge
- Proposed Roadway
- Existing ROW
- Proposed ROW Acquisition

0 250 Feet

N

Author: I. Ciraulo
Last updated on Monday, October 27, 2025

Dewberry

Path: U:\15007 - Walnut Grove Road Bridge - San Joaquin Co\400 Project Design Files\460 Environmental\Figures\GIS\APRX\Walnut Grove Section 4(f)\Walnut Grove Section 4(f).aprx

Attachment B

U.S. Coast Guard Letter Dated March 5, 2015

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard

Commander
Eleventh Coast Guard District

Coast Guard Island, Building 50-2
Alameda, CA 94501-5100
Staff Symbol: (dpw)
Phone: (510) 437-3515
Fax: (510) 437-5836

16591
Mokelumne River (12.1)
March 5, 2015

San Joaquin County, Public Works Department
Attn: Michael Selling, Deputy Director
1810 East Hazelton Ave
Stockton, CA 95205

Dear Mr. Selling:

We have learned that San Joaquin County may be considering replacement of the Millers Ferry Drawbridge over the Mokelumne River at mile 12.1 near Walnut Grove, San Joaquin County, California.

The General Bridge Act of 1946 requires approval of the location and plans for bridges over navigable waters of the United States, prior to commencing construction. The Mokelumne River is considered to be a navigable waterway of the United States for bridge administration purposes. The U. S. Coast Guard is the appropriate Federal agency to contact for bridge permitting issues.

We have conducted a review of navigational needs of the waterway and have determined that a proposed replacement bridge, on the same alignment, must provide a minimum of 100 feet of vertical clearance from Mean High Water to the lowest hittable part of the proposed replacement bridge and 100 feet of horizontal clearance, measured normal to the axis of the channel from the base of the eastern levee at Mean Low Water to the channelward face of the western in-water pier.

Proposed alternative alignments will require further review by the Coast Guard to establish navigational clearance requirements.

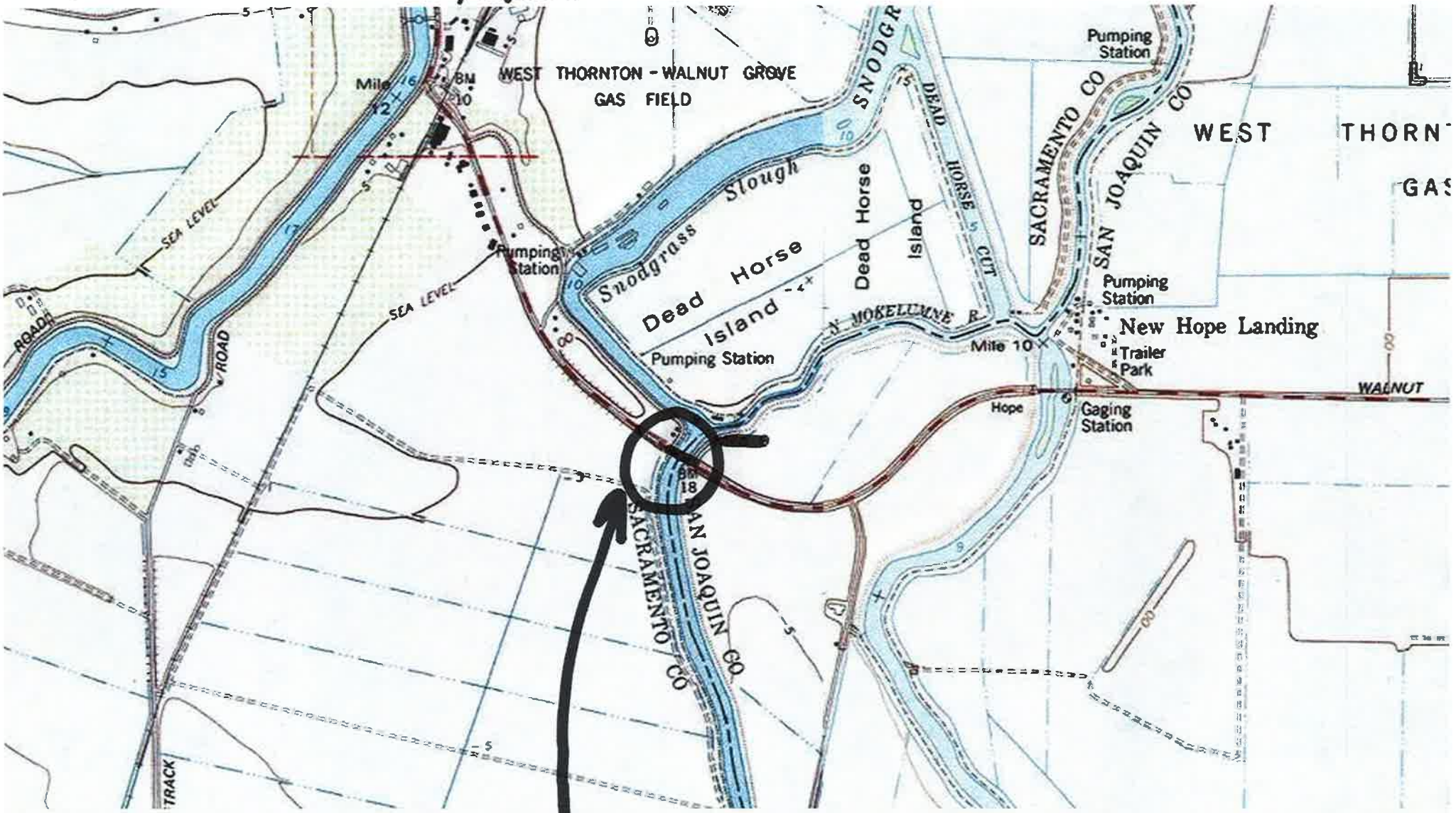
You may contact Mr. Carl Hausner, Project Manager at (510) 437-3515 to discuss this project.

Sincerely,

D. H. SULOUFF
Chief, Bridge Section
Eleventh Coast Guard District
By Direction of the District Commander

Enclosure: Locator Map

WALNUT GROVE



MILLERS FERRY DRAWBRIDGE
MILE 12.1
MOKELUMNE RIVER

ENCLOSURE ( )