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MP 150

**SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**STANISLAUS RIVER SALMONID HABITAT IMPROVEMENT
2000-2003 GOODWIN CANYON GRAVEL ADDITION
PROJECT**

**U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, California**

August 2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MID-PACIFIC REGION
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

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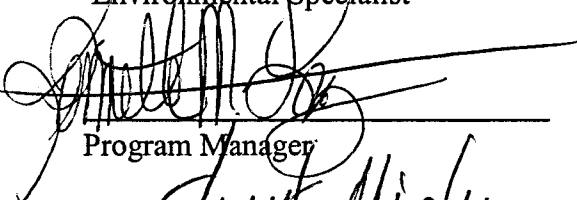
Recommended:


Environmental Specialist

Date:

8/4/00

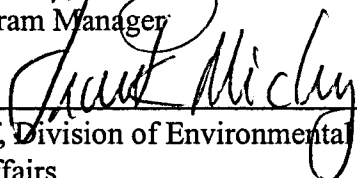
Recommended:


Program Manager

Date:

8/4/00

Approved:


Chief, Division of Environmental
Affairs

Date:

8/4/00

FONSI No.

00-07-MP

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) propose to replenish the coarse sediment supply to the Stanislaus River by introducing additional clean spawning-size gravels as needed into the river below Goodwin Dam from 2000 through 2003. This project is expected to improve the quality and quantity of spawning habitat for chinook salmon and other salmonids in the Goodwin Canyon reach of the Stanislaus River. In July 1997, Reclamation wrote an Environmental Assessment and signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (EA) for the initial placement of gravel in this reach. DFG added 2,000 tons of spawning-size gravel to 2 sites in October 1997, using a front-end loader. In August 1998, 1,000 tons of spawning-size gravel were added by helicopter to the another site in this Goodwin Canyon reach. Upon evaluation of the 3 sites, it was determined that the spawning gravel has diminished.

PROPOSED ACTION

Reclamation's specific action is purchasing gravel and contracting for helicopter(s). DFG will mechanically place the gravel and monitor the sites.

In September 2000, 1300 tons of spawning gravel will be delivered to one or two existing staging areas. A front-end loader will place 300 tons of gravel at one site any time from September 1 to September 15, 2000.

No later than September 15 in either 2000 or 2001, a helicopter will place 1000 tons of the above gravel at the same site that the helicopter had placed gravel in 1998.

DFG will inspect all 3 sites in 2001-2003 for gravel movement and changes in channel morphology as part of the existing monitoring program. If monitoring indicates the need for replenishing gravel at any of the 3 sites, additional gravel would be purchased and delivered, and placed during any of the years 2001-2003.

FINDINGS

Reclamation prepared an supplemental environmental assessment on the project in August 2000 which is incorporated by reference. The 1997 EA is also incorporated by reference. DFG is filing a categorical exemption for the project. The Mid-Pacific Region of Reclamation has found that the proposed action is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required for carrying out the proposed action.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. Equipment access, maintenance, refueling, parking and staging areas will be identified in

consultation with U. S. Corps of Engineers (COE) personnel prior to project construction. Construction specifications will prohibit any equipment in or near the river which might affect water quality. Project construction will be regularly monitored by DFG personnel to help insure environmental compliance.

2. Turbidity downstream from the project site will be kept to a minimum during construction. Only a slight, temporary increase in turbidity is expected. River flows at the time of construction will be low enough (200 to 500 cfs.) to allow disturbed fine sediment to quickly settle out of the water column.
3. DFG personnel will survey the project site prior to each phase of construction and flag areas to be avoided because of possible unforeseen damage to sensitive species or habitats. Should any plant species of concern be observed before or during construction, they will be flagged and avoid and consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and DFG will be initiated.
4. There will be minimal or no disturbance to staging areas and river banks. Minor trimming of vegetation along access areas may occur. Each year, after construction, disturbed banks and staging areas will be graded and seeded with native grasses to decrease erosion.
5. The proposed action will not adversely affect salmonids and the threatened Central Valley steelhead because the action will occur before September 15, which will be before the spawning season and after the incubation period.
6. All appropriate permits and access agreements will be obtained prior to construction. COE park officials will be consulted on all activities within park boundaries or involving riparian vegetation. Oakdale Irrigation District officials will be consulted on all activities influencing their facilities.
7. Trucks delivering gravel will temporarily increase noise levels, but levels will be within the levels of existing activities.
8. There are no archeological or historical resources within the project area.
9. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets.
10. The proposed action will not disproportionately affect minority and low-income populations and communities.

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this supplemental environmental assessment (SEA) is to provide additional environmental analysis for continuing the gravel addition project begun in 1997 in the Stanislaus River at Goodwin Canyon. The supporting documents for this SEA are the Bureau of Reclamation's Finding of No Significant Impact/Environmental Assessment (EA) on *Goodwin Canyon Gravel Addition Project* (July 1997) and the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Negative Declaration/Initial Study (IS) on *Stanislaus River Salmonid Habitat Improvement Goodwin Canyon Gravel Addition Project* (June 1997). These environmental documents analyzed the impacts of adding gravel to several sites on the Stanislaus River below Goodwin Dam to increase and improve chinook salmon, steelhead and native rainbow trout spawning habitat by restoring, at minimal cost, spawning gravels to an otherwise suitable spawning area in the Lower Stanislaus River. Figure 1 shows the general project vicinity.

The addition of 2,000 tons of spawning size gravel, to Phase 1 Sites 1 and 2 (Figure 2) in the Goodwin Canyon reach of the Stanislaus River, was completed in October 1997. A front-end loader was used. In August 1998, 1,000 tons of spawning size gravel were added by helicopter to the Phase 2 site in Figure 3 in this Goodwin Canyon reach. DFG biologists inspected this site in November 1998 and documented an increase from recent past years in chinook salmon redds. They also observed that gravel movement due to river flows occurred as expected with no adverse effects.

This SEA/IS describes additional gravel replenishment for the years 2000 to 2003 and provides additional impact analysis. All other aspects of the 1997 EA and 1997 IS are still valid.

SUPPLEMENTAL PROPOSED ACTION

Reclamation's specific action is purchasing gravel and contracting for helicopter(s). DFG would mechanically place the gravel and monitor the sites.

In September 2000, spawning gravel would be delivered to two or three existing staging areas. The gravel would be a washed, river-run gravel mix, with the same specifications as described in the 1997 EA. The truck route is Highway 120 to the South Shore Access and then a turn-off down an existing access road and storage area. 300 tons of the gravel would be delivered to

staging area 1 shown on Figure 2. A front-end loader would place this gravel at Site 1 on Figure 2. The 1997 EA and 1997 IS describe this method. This would occur any time from September 1 to September 15, 2000. 1000 tons of the gravel would be delivered to either the staging area shown in Figure 3 or staging area 3 in Figure 2. No later than September 15 in either 2000 or 2001, a helicopter would place this 1000 tons of the gravel in the gravel placement site in Figure 3. The helicopter procedure is described in the 1997 EA and 1997 IS.

DFG would inspect sites 1 and 2 in Figure 2 and the site in Figure 3 in 2001-2003 for gravel movement and changes in channel morphology as part of the existing monitoring program. If monitoring indicates the need for replenishing gravel at any of the 3 sites, additional gravel would be purchased and delivered, and placed during any of the years 2001-2003.

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

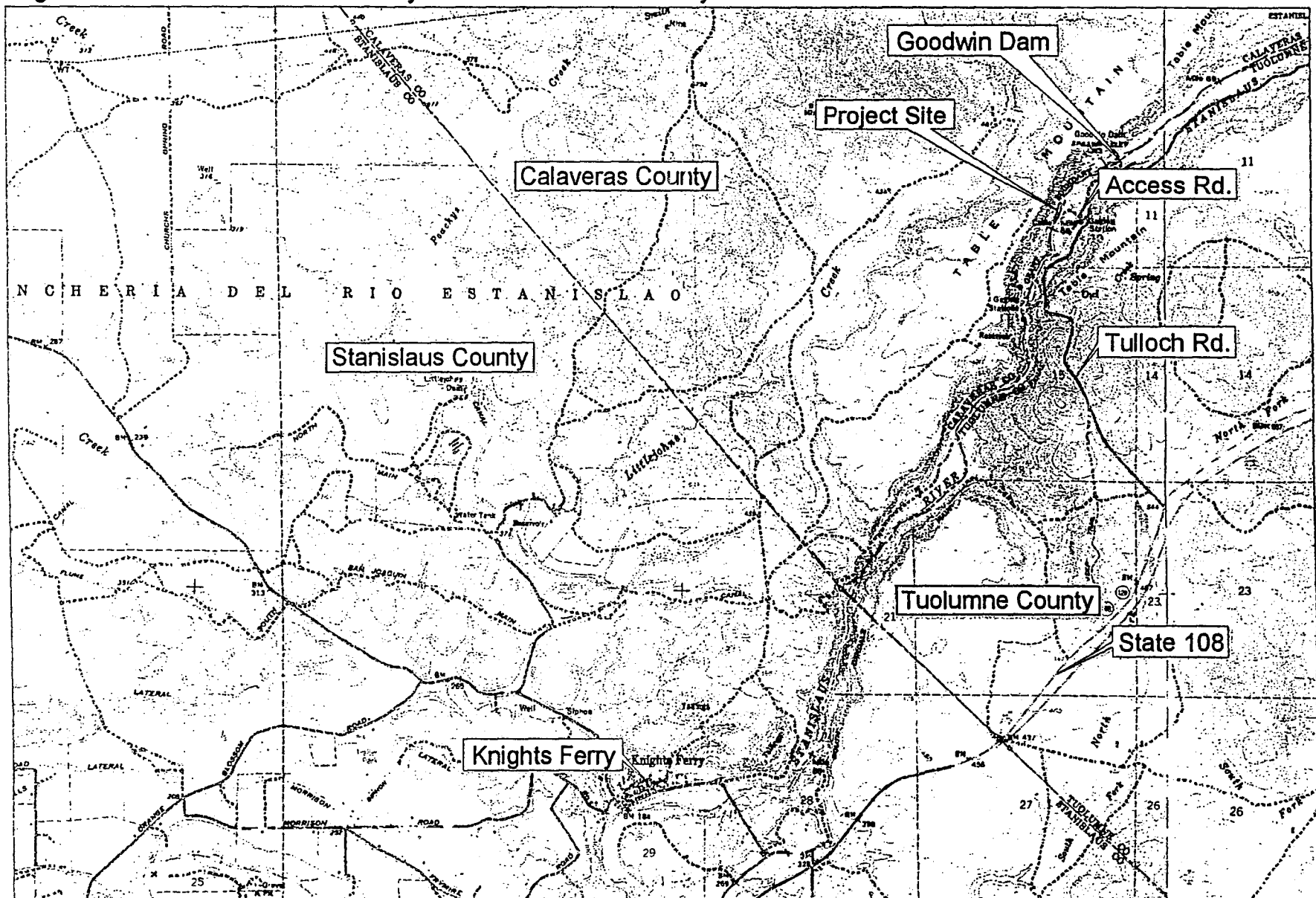
Staging Area 3

This area was not evaluated in the 1997 EA and 1997 IS. This area is an existing graded area used for parking and therefore no resources would be affected.

Fisheries

The Federal-listed threatened steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) has one of the more complex life histories of the salmonid species. They typically migrate to marine waters after spending 2 years in freshwater, and then typically return 2 to 3 years later to spawn as 4 or 5 year olds. They are capable of spawning more than once, but rarely spawn more than twice. Typically spawning in the Central Valley typically occurs from late December into April, and the eggs then incubate for 1.5-4 months. Juveniles then rear in fresh water for 1 to 4 years and migrate to the ocean as smolts. There is essentially one continuous run of steelhead in the Central Valley with peaks in September and February. The proposed action would not affect steelhead apart from restoration of spawning gravel, an essential habitat element, because the action would be confined to the late summer and early fall which would be well before the spawning season and well after the incubation period. Similarly, the project would not affect salmon.

Figure 1. Goodwin Canyon Gravel Addition Project



Base Image: Scanned USGS 7.5' quads, 1961, photorevised 1987 (Teale)

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 Miles

CA DFG R4 Salmon

S. Hanslip
June 19, 1998

Figure 2. Goodwin Canyon Gravel Addition Project Phase 1

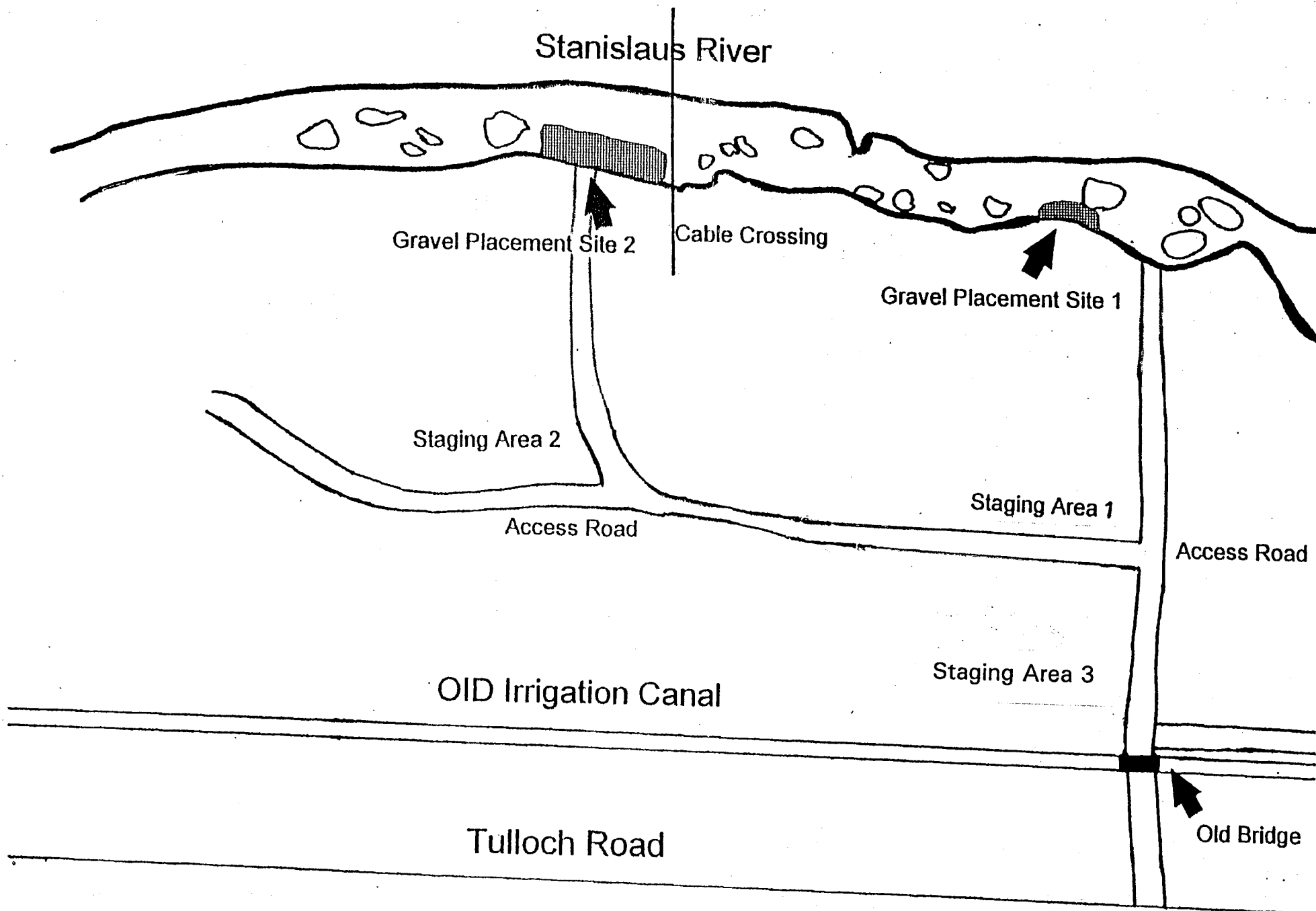
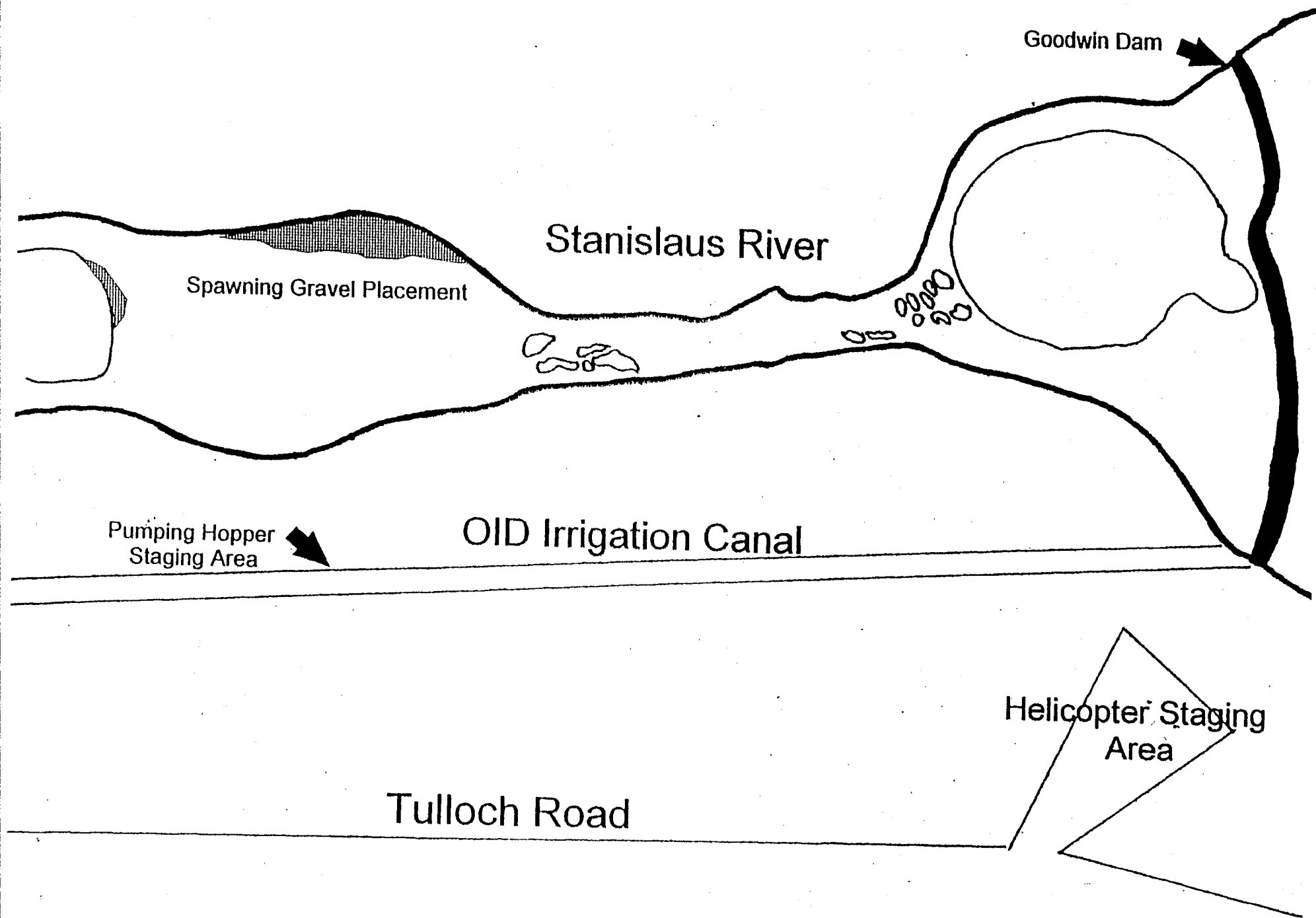


Figure 3. Goodwin Dam Gravel Addition Project Phase 2



CONSULTATION AND PERMITS REQUIRED

PERMIT	PERMIT OBTAINED	STATUS
Section 404, Clean Water Act, discharge permit with the Corps - General Permit	Yes	Existing permit 008 good until 2003
Stream Alteration Permit with DFG	No	Filed extension for '97-'98 permit #4-136-97. Permit will be written when DFG completes categorical exemption.
Section 401, Clean Water Act, water quality certification, with SWRCB - waver for water quality	Yes	1997 and 1998 waivers are still valid because project is a continuation of the previous work and the Section 404 permit is still good.
DWR Encroachment (on flood way of dam) with State Reclamation Board	Yes	State Reclamation Board issued permit in July. DFG shall notify the inspector's office at least 10 working days before start of work.
Corps Access permit (to access Corps property since it is a Corps park)	No	Existing permit being revised to include new staging area 3. Corps informally agrees with project.
Oakdale Irrigation District Access Permit	Yes	Renewed to 2003
State Lands Lease Agreement	Yes	Existing agreement is still valid. <i>Good until 7-26-04</i>
Endangered Species Act - FWS	Not needed	No effect.
Endangered Species Act - NMFS	Not needed	No effect.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

1. Equipment access, maintenance, refueling, parking and staging areas will be identified in consultation with U. S. Corps of Engineers (COE) personnel prior to project construction. Construction specifications will prohibit any equipment in or near the river which might affect water quality. Project construction will be regularly monitored by DFG personnel to help insure environmental compliance.
2. Turbidity downstream from the project site will be kept to a minimum during construction. Only a slight, temporary increase in turbidity is expected. River flows at the time of construction will be low enough (200 to 500 cfs.) to allow disturbed fine sediment to quickly settle out of the water column.
3. DFG personnel will survey the project site prior to each phase of construction and flag areas to be avoided because of possible unforeseen damage to sensitive species or habitats. Should any plant species of concern be observed before or during construction, they will be flagged and avoid and consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and DFG will be initiated.
4. There will be minimal or no disturbance to staging areas and river banks. Minor trimming of vegetation along access areas may occur. Each year, after construction, disturbed banks and staging areas will be graded and seeded with native grasses to decrease erosion.
5. The proposed action will occur before September 15 which will be well before the spawning season and after the incubation period for steelhead trout and salmon.
6. All appropriate permits and access agreements will be obtained prior to construction. COE park officials will be consulted on all activities within park boundaries or involving riparian vegetation. Oakdale Irrigation District officials will be consulted on all activities influencing their facilities.