

Isabella Lake Dam Safety Modification Project

Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment
for the

Permanent Relocation of the U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center, Kern County, California



April 22, 2021



US Army Corps of Engineers
BUILDING STRONG[®]

Lead Agency:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
South Pacific Division
Sacramento District



Cooperating Agency:
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Sequoia National Forest

Introductions and Orientation to WebEx

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Stephen Martinez, Program Manager

Art Kolodziejski, Project Manager

Hunter Merritt, Lead Planner

Yari Johnson, Environmental Lead

U.S. Forest Service:

Al Watson, District Ranger



Photo of original USACE project office under construction, c. 1950

Public Engagement Process

The public review period for the Supplemental Environmental Assessment #8 opened on **April 12, 2021, and will end on May 12, 2021.**

All comments received on the draft document will be considered and incorporated into the updated Final Supplemental Environmental Assessment, as appropriate.

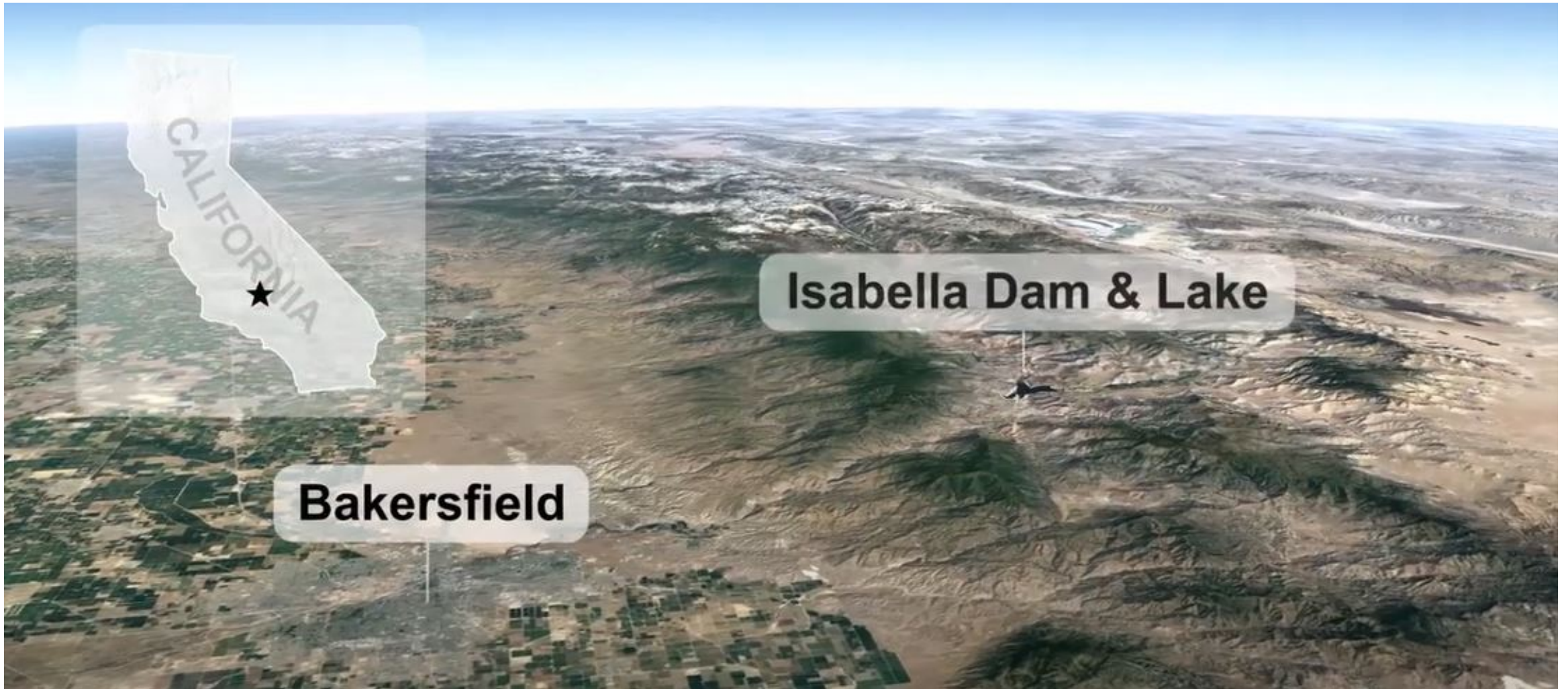
Please submit official comments relating to Supplemental Environmental Assessment #8 to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Attn: Yari Johnson (CESPK-PDR-P)
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA
95814

Or by email to isabella@usace.army.mil

General inquires can be directed to the Public Affairs Office at 916-557-5100

ISABELLA DAM(S) AND LAKE



For more information on the Isabella DSM Project, visit bit.ly/isabelladam

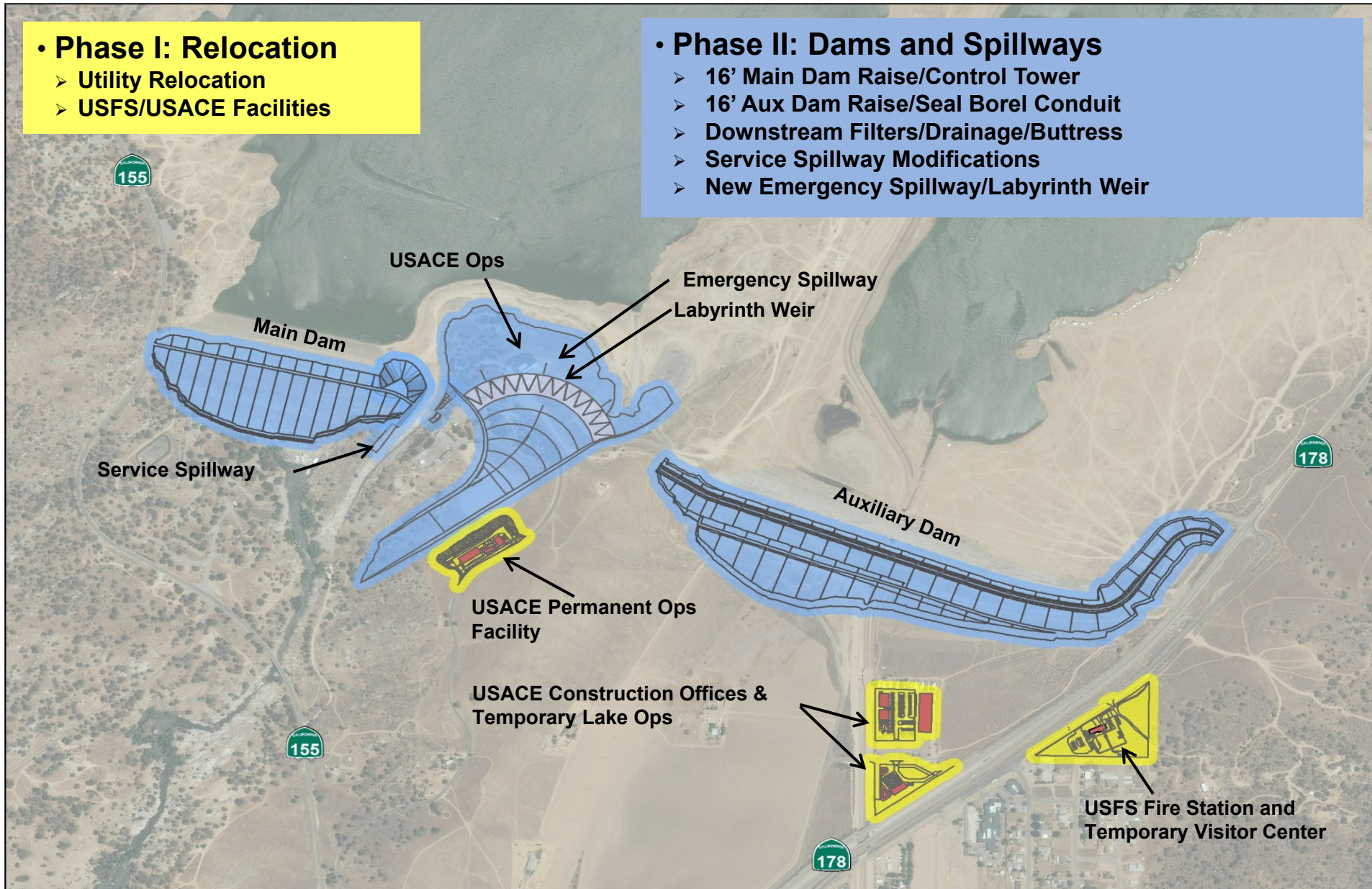
Isabella DSMP – Construction Phase I/II

• Phase I: Relocation

- Utility Relocation
- USFS/USACE Facilities

• Phase II: Dams and Spillways

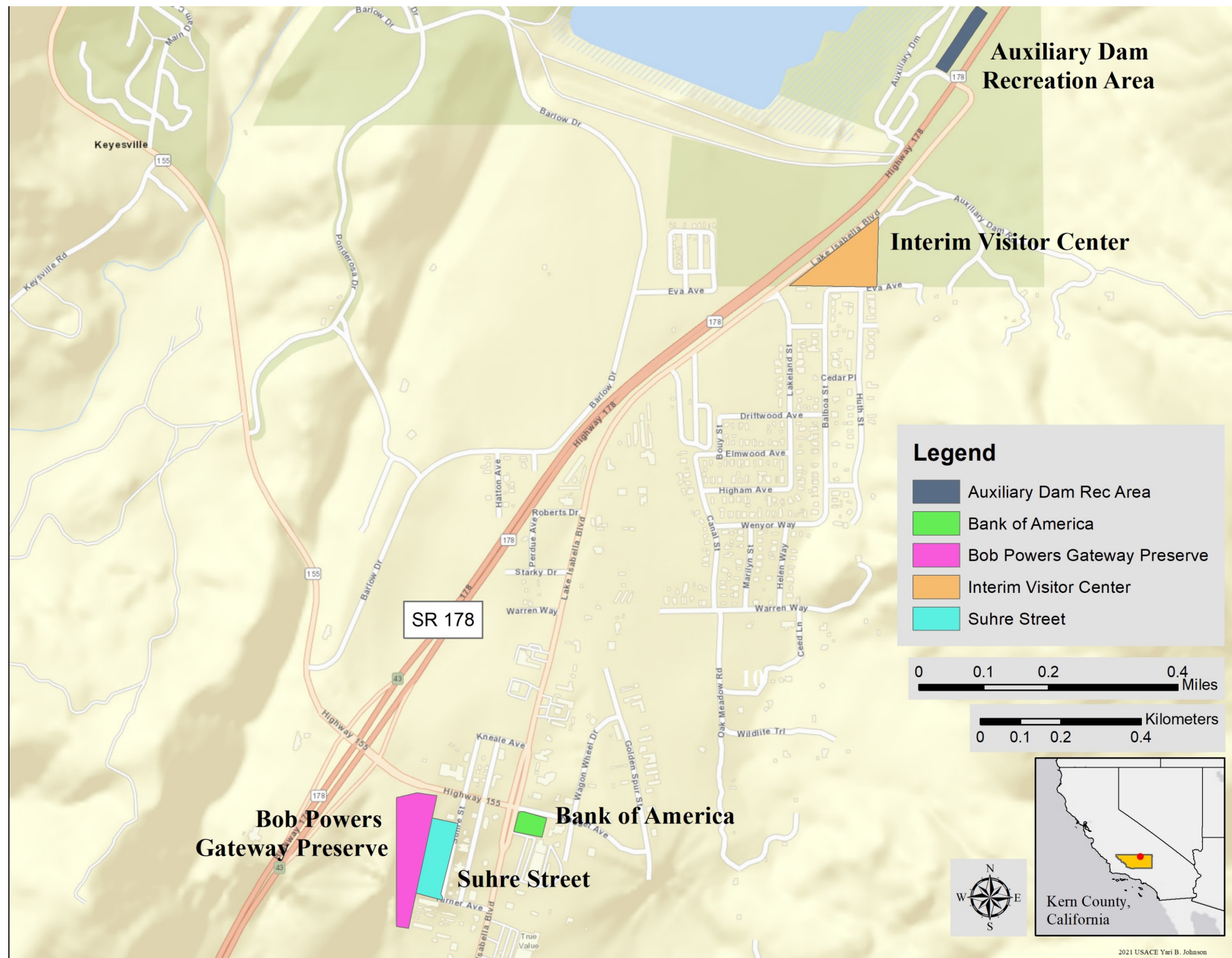
- 16' Main Dam Raise/Control Tower
- 16' Aux Dam Raise/Seal Borel Conduit
- Downstream Filters/Drainage/Buttress
- Service Spillway Modifications
- New Emergency Spillway/Labyrinth Weir



Alternatives for the permanent relocation

Proposed alternative locations:

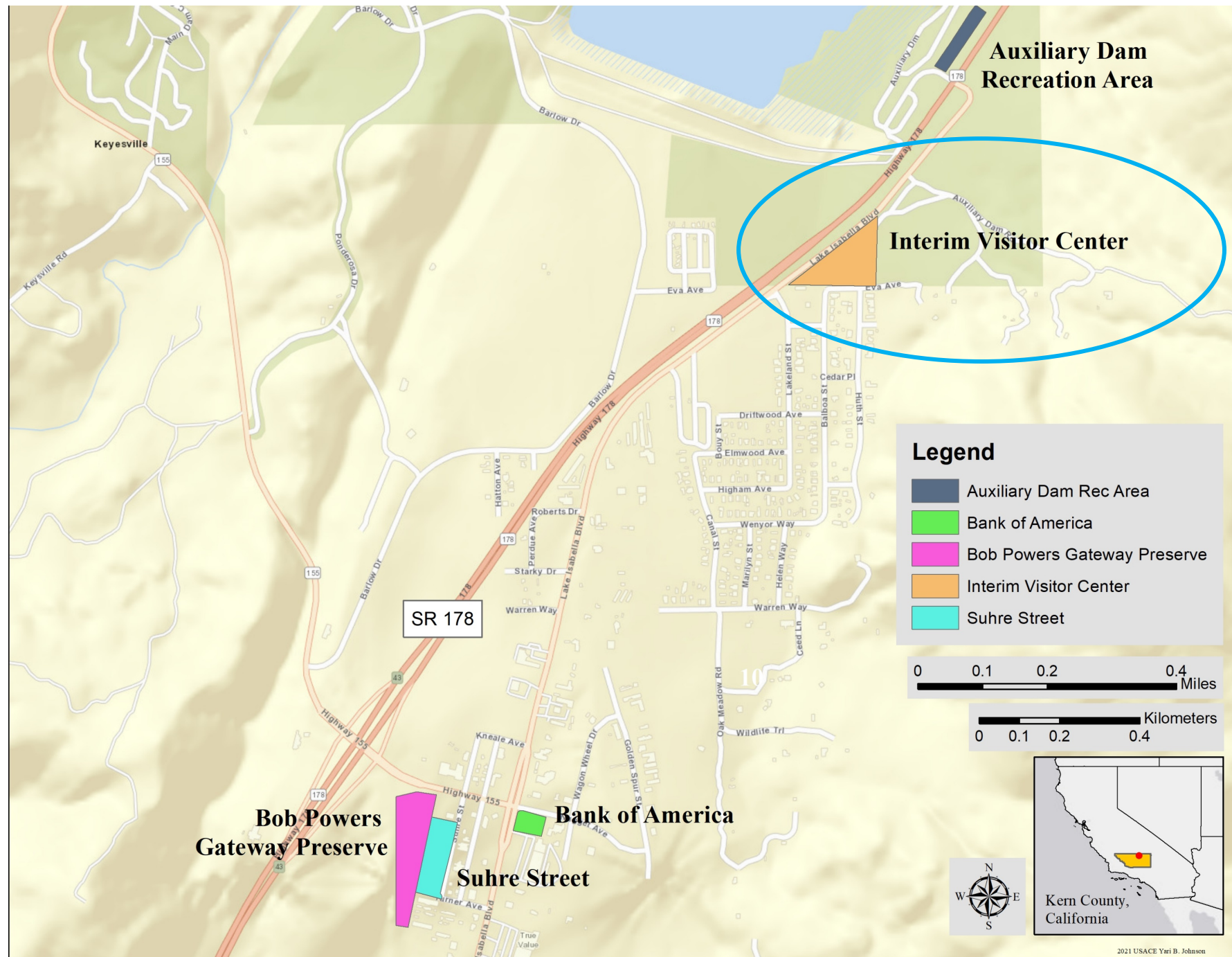
1. No Action
2. Improve Interim
3. Bank of America
4. Bob Powers Gateway Preserve
5. Suhre Street
6. Auxiliary Dam Rec Area



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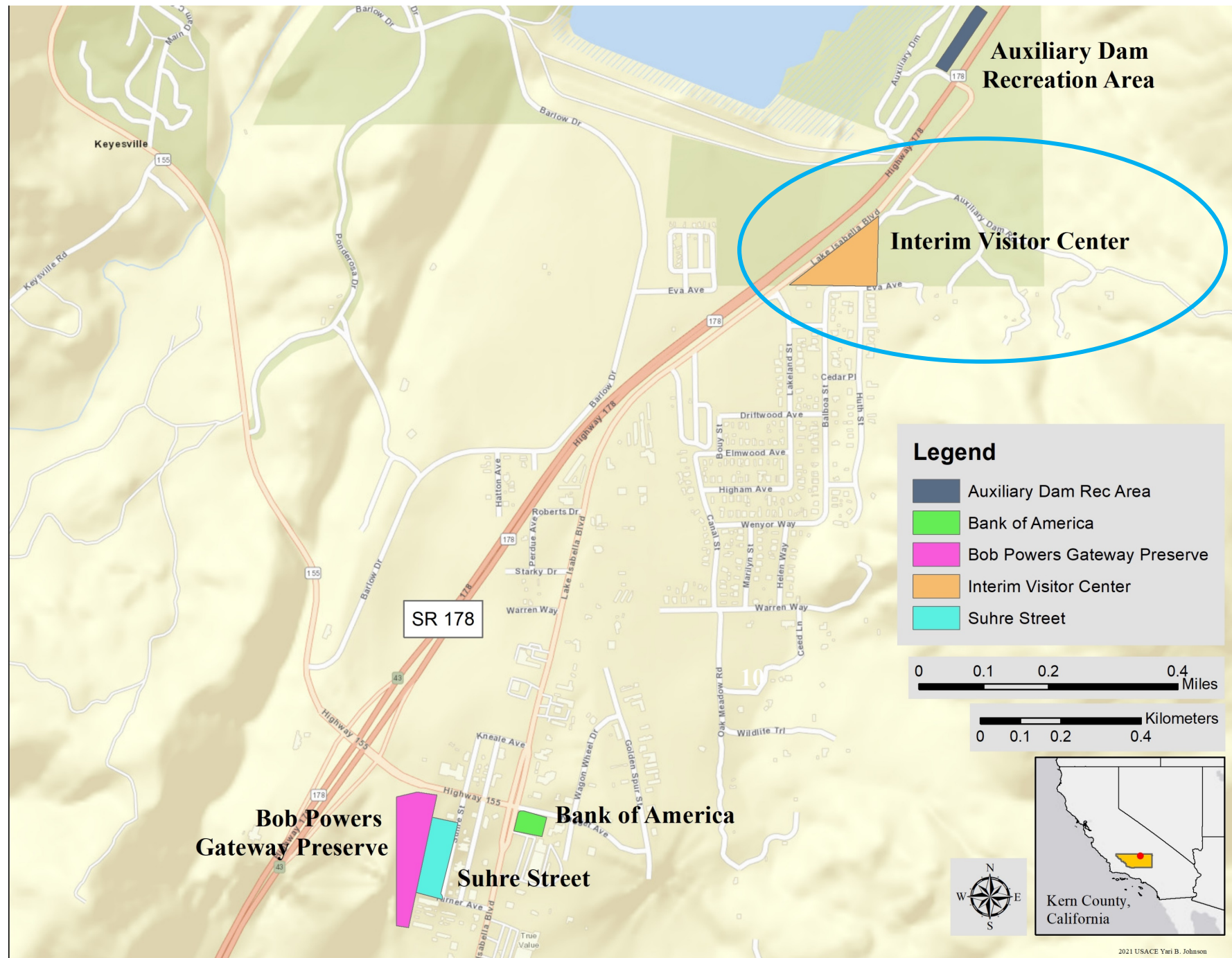
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No action does not = no support for the U.S. Forest Service. USACE is still committed to help maintain the level of service provided before interruption.



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Existing Interim Visitor Center & Fire Station



Existing Interim Visitor Center & Fire Station



Existing Interim Visitor Center & Fire Station



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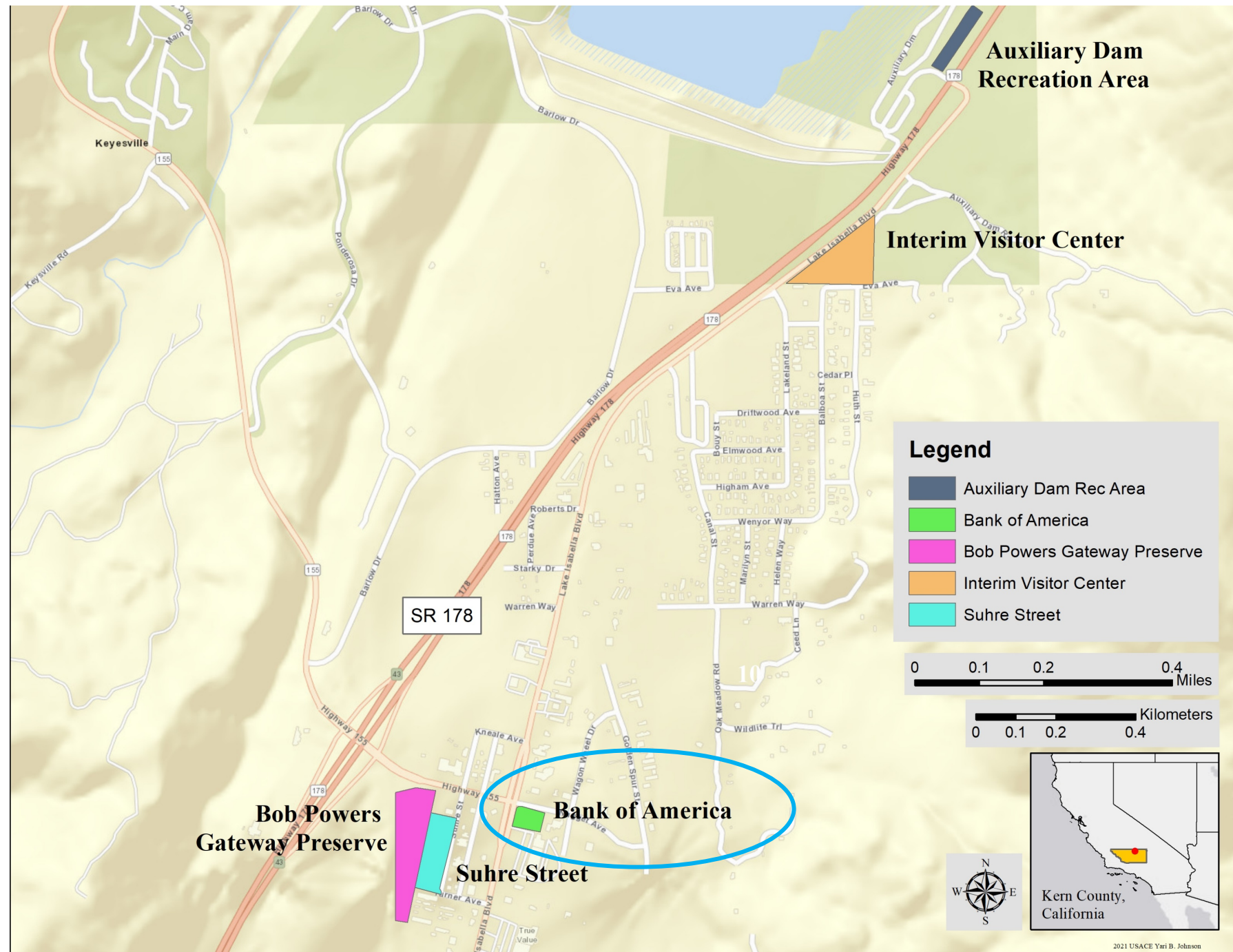
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Corps would make minor improvements to the existing site



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Bank of America



Bank of America



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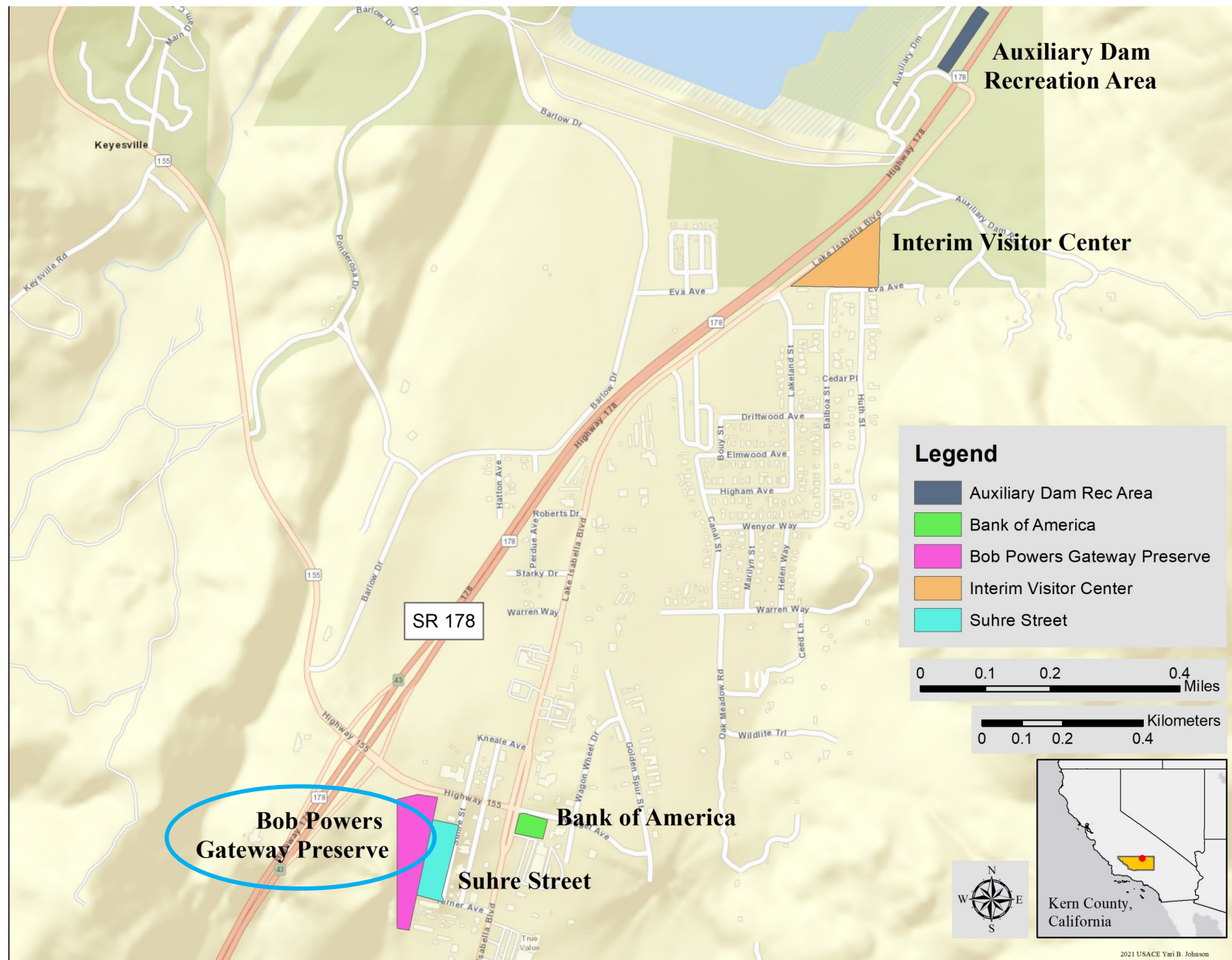
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Bob Powers Gateway Preserve



Bob Powers Gateway Preserve

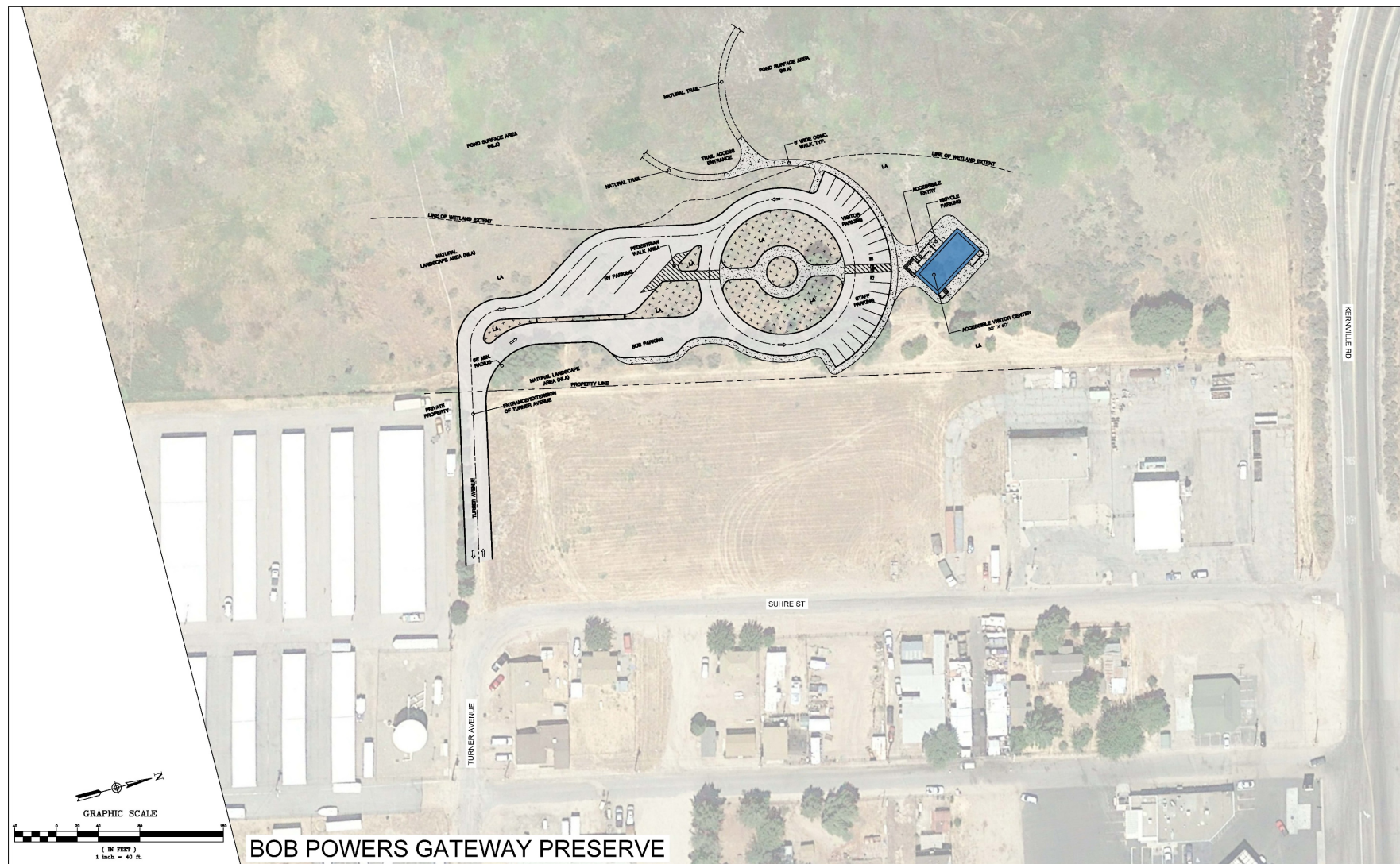


Bob Powers Gateway Preserve



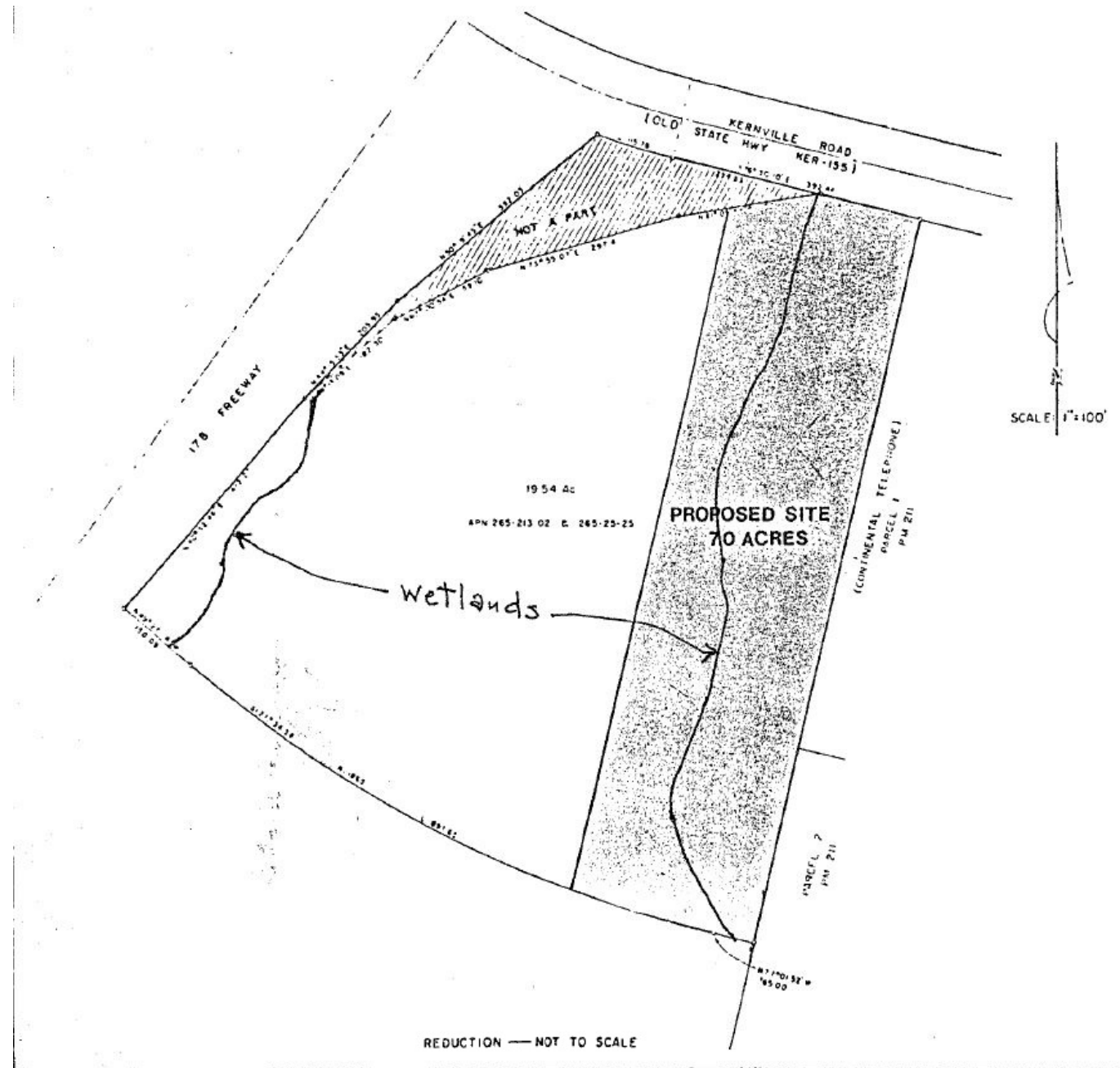
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Bob Powers Gateway Preserve Location:

Environmental Concerns



Wetland delineation c. 1988

Water Resources and Quality

The Corps conducted surveys in March 2021 to determine the accuracy of the 1988 wetland delineation.

Surveyors concluded that the site supports wetland plants and that constructing a visitor center with the current site design would impact wetland species and adjacent wetlands.

Reference: Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act
Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands



Vegetation and Wildlife

Alkali mariposa lily occurs along a unique soil moisture gradient at the Preserve (McCormick and Moss 2017). It is not common in the wettest areas of the site but tends to occupy the transition between these areas and the uplands (KRVHF 2011; McCormick and Moss 2017). The current visitor center design would permanently remove this sensitive native plant community.

Special Status Species

This alternative would result in the destruction of the one of the best subpopulations of the alkali mariposa lily.



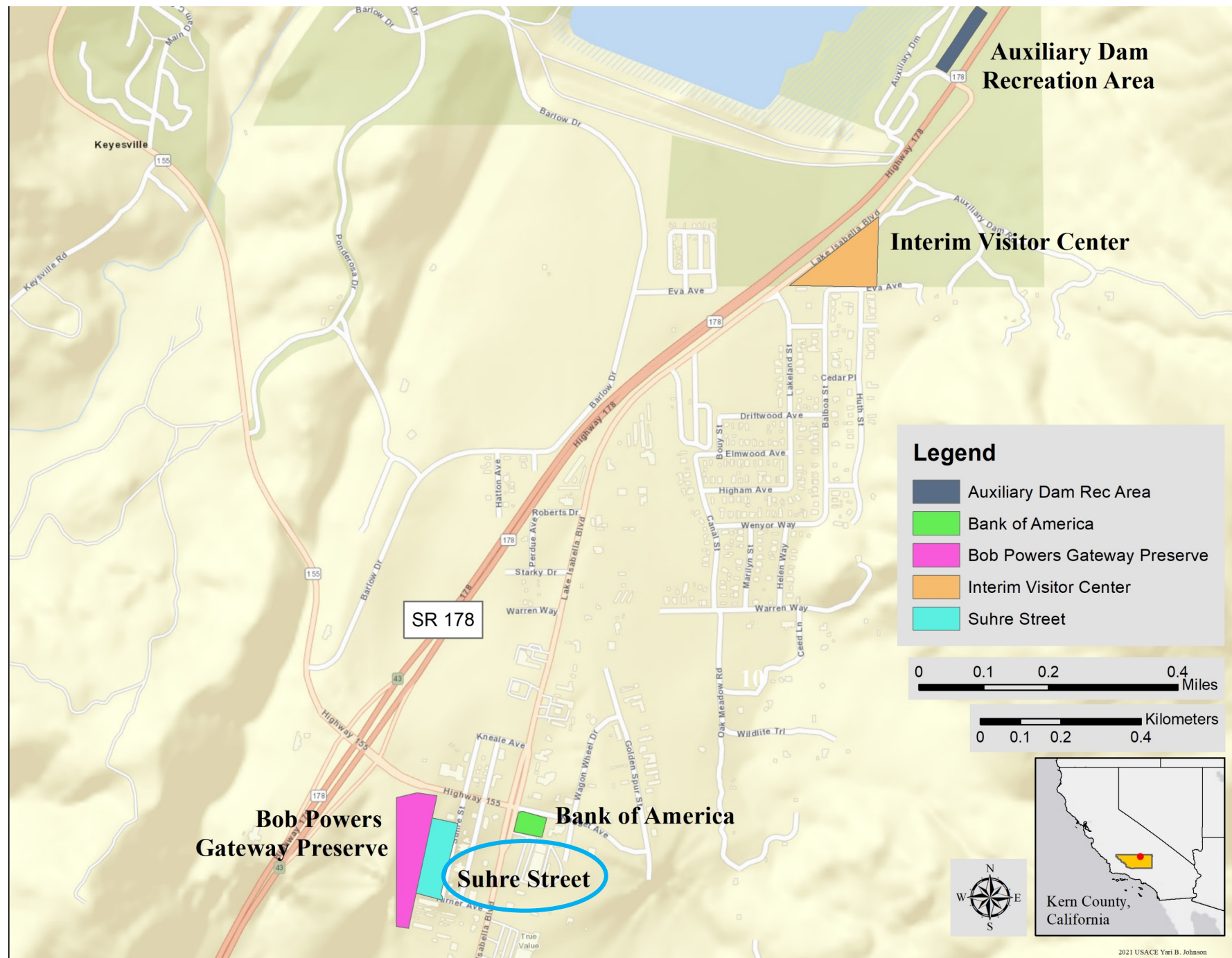
Alkali Mariposa Lily

Photo credit: Larry Cooperman 2018

<https://www.calflora.org/app/taxon?crn=1307>

Proposed alternative locations:

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5. **Suhre Street**
6. Auxiliary Dam Rec Area



Suhre Street



Suhre Street



Suhre Street



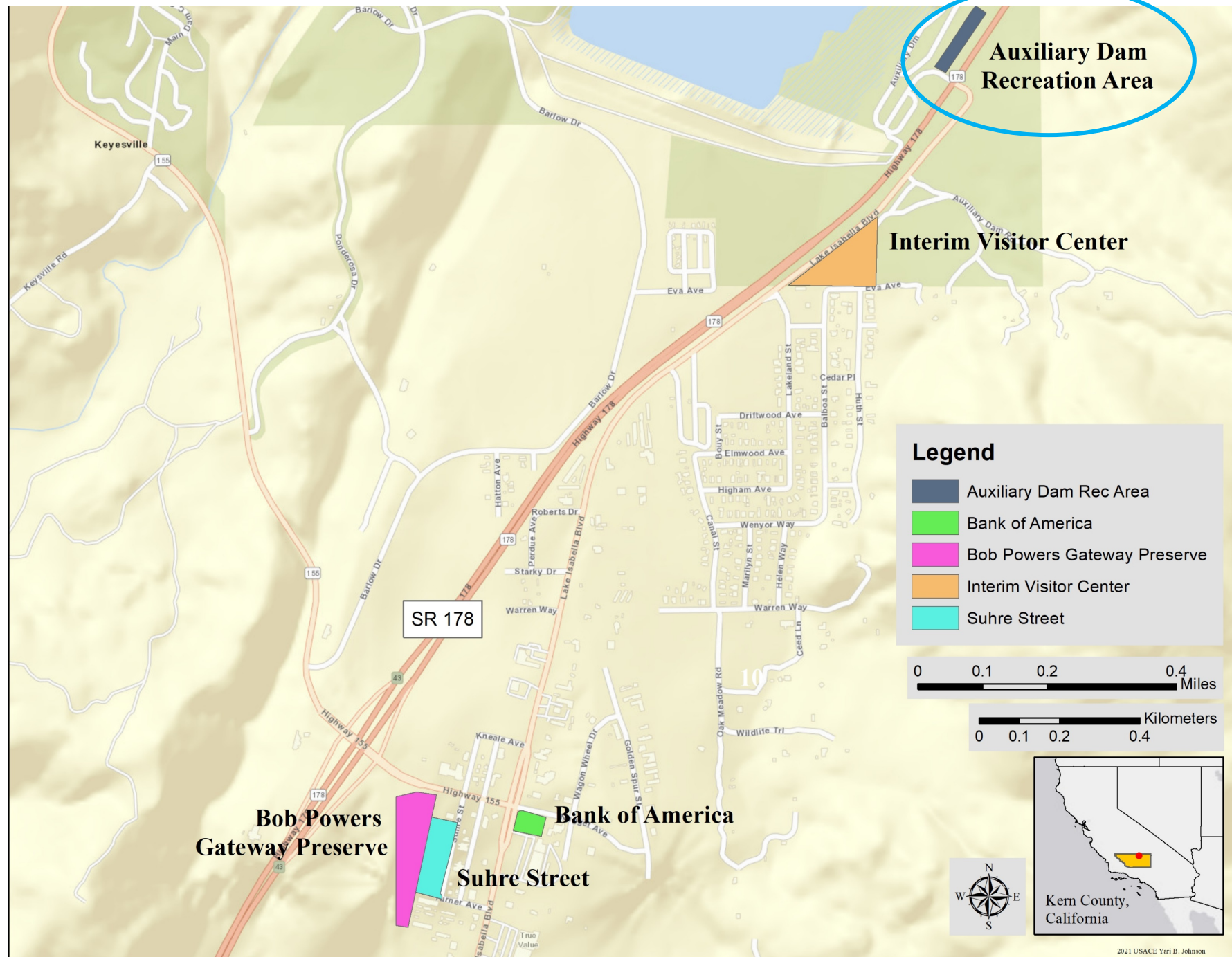
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Auxiliary Dam Rec Area



Auxiliary Dam Rec Area

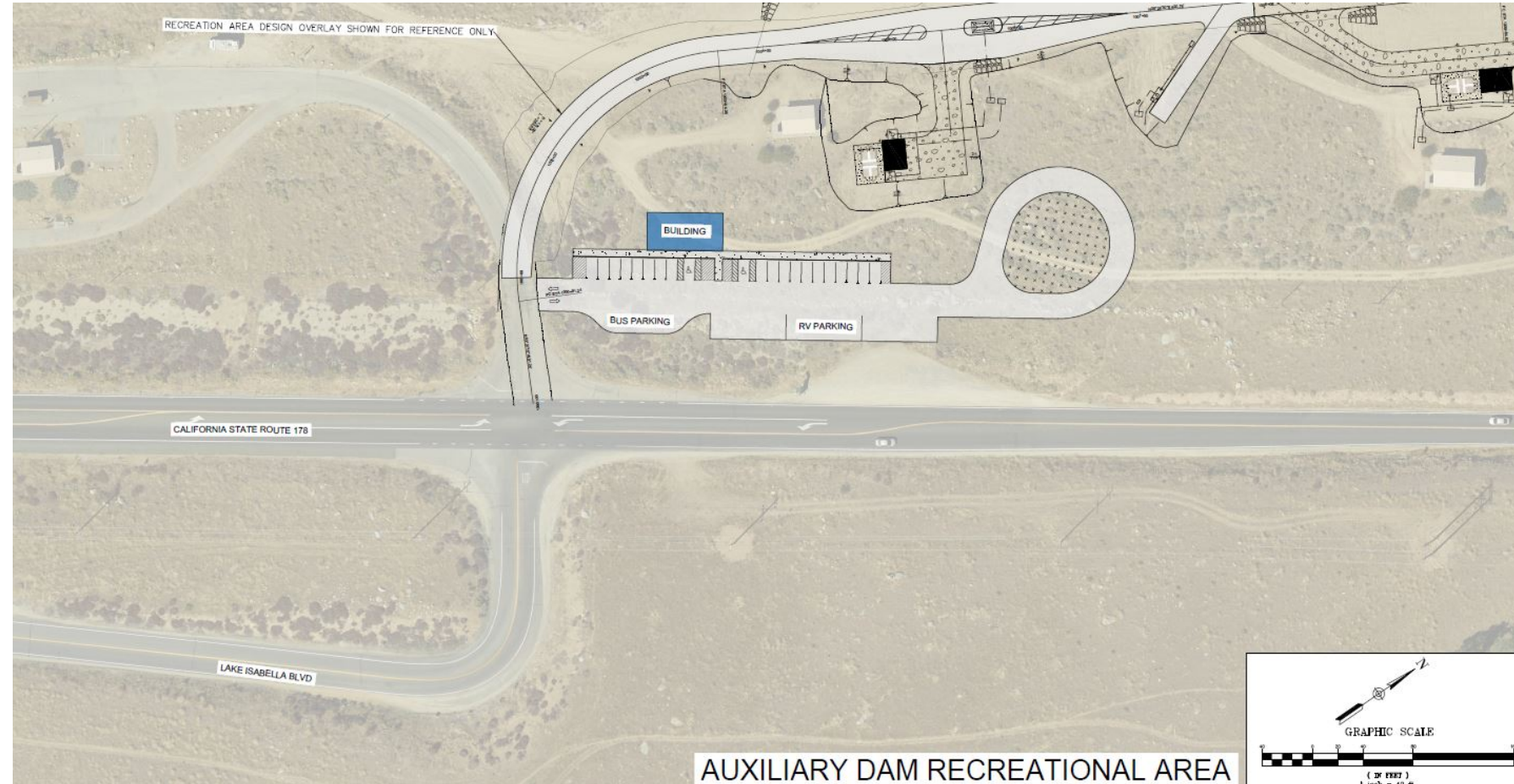


Auxiliary Dam Rec Area



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Results: Effects Analyses and Cost

Alternative	Vegetation and Wildlife	Special Status Species	Water Resources and Quality	Traffic and Circulation	Air Quality	Noise and Vibration	Climate Change
Improve Interim	No effect	No effect	No effect	<Significant	No effect	<Significant	<Significant
Bank of America	No effect	No effect	No effect	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant
Bob Powers Gateway Preserve	Significant	Significant	Significant	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant	Significant
Suhre Street	<Significant	No effect	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant
Auxiliary Dam	<Significant	No effect	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant	<Significant

Estimated construction costs for each alternative

	Estimated cost
Improve Interim	\$1,000,000
Bank of America	\$4,500,000
Bob Powers Gateway Preserve	\$9,000,000
Suhre Street	\$7,500,000
Auxiliary Dam Recreation Area	\$6,000,000

CAVEAT: Rough order of magnitude costs for comparing alternatives; only reflect capital costs of construction; actual construction costs have an estimated range of +/-25%. **The Government would also include long-term operations and maintenance costs when evaluating the economics of each alternative.**

Replacing in-kind services

Selection Criteria for Final Recommendation

Ability to Provide Equivalent Visitor Use Services/Operational efficiency – “...the ability of the proposed alternative to provide equivalent services...and, based on the staffing profile that USFS used prior to relocation, addresses staffing during peak and off-peak seasons, time to move staff to and from locations based on seasons and peak-use days, and security of the facility outside of business hours;”

Equivalent Access/Site Suitability – “...the location of the proposed alternatives in proximity to the visitors who will be using the resource, primarily recreationists coming to the area for day use, fishing, and camping, will be a factor in determining a recommendation;”

Compliance with Interagency Budgetary Procedures/Cost – “...the direct cost of construction at a site, operational and maintenance cost to the USFS, the transactional cost to purchase real property, and time to implement the proposed alternatives will be considered in determining a recommendation.”

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Questions? Comments?

Please use Chat or raise a “virtual hand” to ask a question.

If you have a comment, please state your name and affiliation.



Thank you!

- The Isabella DSM Team