



Public Notice

**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice Number: 200000412

Date: January 8, 2001

Comments Due: February 7, 2001

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Application for a Department of the Army permit under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States to construct a retail commercial center, as shown in the attached drawings.

APPLICANT:

California C & S Properties
1939 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612-3529

LOCATION: South of Auburn Boulevard, west of Sylvan Road in the City of Citrus Heights, Sections 26 and 35, Township 10 North, Range 6 East, in Sacramento County, California.

AREA DESCRIPTION: The project is located north and south of Arcade Creek. Arcade Creek bisects the project site from west to east. The site has been used illegally by off-road vehicles and for trash disposal. Surrounding land has been developed for single-family and cluster residential development. The Stock Ranch property is the City's largest undeveloped parcel.

The site consists of non-native grasslands with scattered vernal pools, some of which have been degraded by off-road vehicle use. Arcade and San Juan Creeks contain a substantial riparian habitat with an overstory dominated by valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and willow (*Salix spp.*). Three small tributary channels feed into Arcade Creek within the project area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Development of a retail commercial center in the area north of Arcade Creek (known as the Auburn Commerce District) is proposed for approximately 42 acres. The area south of Arcade Creek is proposed for single-family residential uses and a neighborhood park immediately east of Stock Ranch Road.

A 39-acre open space area would be set aside for habitat preservation and "passive" recreation. The open space area would include the Arcade and San Juan Creek riparian corridor, Tributary Drainage 1, Tributary Drainage 3, constructed detention and storage basins and a neighborhood park. A pedestrian bridge across Arcade Creek would be constructed to link land uses north and south of the creek.

The project includes plans for two detention basins to mitigate the increase in base flood elevations, as shown on Sheet 5. One basin would be constructed along the westerly boundary of the project, north of Arcade Creek, outside of the 100-year floodplain, and would provide mitigation for runoff from development on the north portion of the site. The second basin would be an off-stream storage basin located within the existing floodplain and open space area north of Arcade Creek. The off-stream basin will provide additional storage of floodwaters within the existing floodplain.

The Stock Ranch 117-acre project site includes 3.52 acres of jurisdictional waters as summarized below and shown on Sheet 3. Proposed land uses include 41.8 acres of commercial (Stock Ranch North), 36.2 acres of residential (Stock Ranch South), open space (Park, San Juan Creek, Arcade Creek, Tributary Drainages 1 and 3), and 39.0 acres as detention basins.

Table 1: Stock Ranch Jurisdictional Waters

<u>Wetland</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Size (sf)</u>
Tributary Drainage 1	Channel	8,300
Tributary Drainage 2	Channel	17,920
Tributary Drainage 3	Channel & Wetland Swale	27,395
Arcade Creek	Channel	60,600
San Juan Creek	Channel	10,500
Vernal Pool 1	Vernal Pool	2,320
Vernal Pool 2	Vernal Pool	360
Vernal Pool 3	Vernal Pool	375
Vernal Pool 4	Vernal Pool	11,050
Vernal Pool 5	Vernal Pool	5,580
Vernal Pool 6	Vernal Pool	700
Vernal Pool 7	Vernal Pool	2,015
Vernal Pool 8	Vernal Pool	1,955
Vernal Pool 9	Vernal Pool	1,555
Vernal Pool 10	Vernal Pool	475
Vernal Pool 11	Vernal Pool	1,650
Vernal Pool 12	Vernal Pool	400
Vernal Pool 13	Vernal Pool	250

Total = 153,395 square feet (3.52 acres)

Project construction will result in the loss of 0.94 acre of jurisdictional waters, consisting of 1,500 feet of Tributary Drainage 2 with a total area of 0.28 acre, and 13 vernal pools totaling 0.66 acre. The drainage appears to have been maintained for flood control over time as evidenced by the lack of vegetation in the bed and the uniform width of the drainage. Most of the vernal pools have been significantly disturbed by firebreaks, illegal operation of off-road vehicles on the site and disposal of trash.

One or two culverted road crossings will be located on Tributary Drainage 3, impacting a maximum of 4,500 square feet of channel (2,250 square feet per culvert). The road crossings would provide access to the single-family residential portion of the project. The conceptual locations of the culverted crossings are shown on Sheet 2.

A pedestrian bridge structure would be constructed across Arcade Creek and link the residential and recreational area (park) south of the creek to the Auburn Commerce District. A maximum of eight bridge piers (13' x 2' each) would be required for a total impact of 1,700 square feet. A maximum 7,700 square foot construction area beneath the bridge would be required to service the bridge structure. A typical bridge crossing is shown on Sheet 4. Finally, a 12-inch water line will be extended across the creek in an open-cut which would temporarily impact a maximum of 7,000 square feet. Taken together, the impacts associated with the bridge crossing and the extension of the waterline will not exceed 0.38 acres. The remaining acreage of jurisdictional waters will be preserved within a 39.0-acre open space area.

Mitigation for the loss of 0.28 acre of Tributary Drainage 2 would be provided by purchasing 0.28 riparian habitat credit at an off-site mitigation bank. The 0.66 acre of vernal pool losses would be mitigated by purchasing 0.66 vernal pool habitat credit. A Corps of Engineers' approved mitigation bank will be utilized to purchase credits. An on-site 39-acre open space area would be established, by means of a deed restriction, to preserve the Arcade Creek floodplain and riparian forest associated with it, as well as Tributary Drainage 1 and its associated riparian habitat. With the exception of culvert crossings, Tributary 3 will also be preserved.

The 39.0-acre open space area would be set aside for habitat preservation and passive recreation. Passive recreation would consist of a trail system along the south side of Arcade Creek that would connect to areas north of the creek via a pedestrian bridge across Arcade Creek. The trail system would connect commercial development from Stock Ranch North area to residential areas in Stock Ranch South. The trail system would not extend beyond 15 feet from the creek floodplain. Trails will be constructed of an all-weather surface and would be a minimum width of six feet. The trail system would be striped, signed, and separated from the creek by post and cable fencing.

Ownership of the open space area within Stock Ranch, along with the trail system, would be transferred from the property owner to Sunrise Park & Recreation District. The Sunrise Park & Recreation District would operate and maintain the open space and recreation amenities within the open space.

The applicant's agent has provided the following discussion on project alternatives:

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The Stock Ranch project consists of development and construction of a retail commercial center on approximately 42 acres south of Auburn Boulevard and north of Arcade Creek and single family residential units south of Arcade Creek. The commercial area is intended to capture large-format retailers and mid-size retailers. The project site design features 450,000 square feet that will accommodate up to two large-format retailers (80,000 square feet and greater), a variety of mid-size retailers (40,000 square feet to 80,000 square feet) and smaller retailers and restaurants (less than 40,000 square feet).

The property owner, California C&S Properties, has received interest from several large-format retailers, including a home improvement retailer. For the area north of the creek, the property owner is in contract with one large-format retailer and, along with the City, is in discussions with two other large-format retailers that are considering locating at Stock Ranch North.

- General Plan Framework

The Stock Ranch project site is designated in the Citrus Heights General Plan with the General Commercial General Plan Designation north of the creek (Stock Ranch North) and Single Family Residential Designation (Stock Ranch South) south of the creek. The General Commercial designation provides for retail uses, services, restaurants, professional and administrative offices, hotels and motels, mixed use projects, multi-family residences, public and quasi-public uses, which are the types of uses proposed for the project. The General Plan further designates the site as a retail node within the Auburn Boulevard corridor. The Single Family Residential General Plan designation allows for single family residential uses from one to eight units per acre.

The Citrus Heights General Plan includes goals and policies that direct that the Stock Ranch North property be developed with use that "enhance the City's economic base." General Plan Policy 17.2 promotes "uses in Stock Ranch that can be economically supported, are financially feasible and self-sustaining, and maximize fiscal benefits to the City."

- Environmental Impact Report

Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental impact report (EIR) was prepared to evaluate the impacts of the proposed Stock Ranch project and included an evaluation of the impacts described in this notice. The City was the lead agency for the Draft EIR, which was released in October, 2000. The 45-day public review and comment period ended on November 29, 2000.

- Economic Development Framework

Aimed at strengthening the City's economy, the City adopted two key programs that include direction for developing the Stock Ranch North site as proposed. In 1998, the City adopted the Citrus Heights Redevelopment Plan for a 558-acre redevelopment project area, which includes the Stock Ranch property. In 1999, the City adopted an Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan that outlines the City's approach to fulfilling its economic goals, including development of the Stock Ranch North site with commercial uses.

- Review Alternate Land Uses

In September 1999, the City conducted a strategic economic analysis for the portion of the project north of the creek to evaluate the suitability of office, light industrial, residential and commercial uses for the project site. The analysis concluded that the market momentum for office is for properties with a campus-like setting and a strong regional identity and the project site is not large enough to accommodate a campus setting or a range of user sizes. For residential uses, the analysis found that developing the site with large-lot single family homes was not the highest and best use and that the site's location adjacent to Auburn Boulevard north of the creek was not ideal for large-lot move-up residential development that the City desires. Instead, single family homes are planned south of the creek, adjacent to Tributary 3.

Finally, the analysis concluded that the Stock Ranch North site would be best utilized for retail commercial uses not found at other locations in the City. The analysis determined that the City captures a relatively low proportion of Building Materials sales per capita than that of the County as a whole or statewide. The analysis further determined that the project site would be suitable for home improvement and building materials sales.

The analysis identified the need for the City to strengthen its economic base in light of new retail development (The Galleria at Roseville, Creekside, etc.) in the City of Roseville. Retailers may be looking for new sites with more competitive features than current locations and other retailers not currently in the market may be seeking locations in which to open stores. The Strategic Economic Analysis concluded that this type of retail activity is likely to drive demand for retail commercial space at Stock Ranch.

Consistent with the General Plan, in September 1999, the Citrus Heights City Council identified the Stock Ranch North project site as suitable for providing the types of commercial needs beyond those provided locally, such as large-format retailers.

Recognizing that the City's revenues will be negatively impacted by retail development in other jurisdictions, the Council identified the opportunity to replace future lost revenue by developing the Stock Ranch North property with revenue-generating land uses. The types of revenue-generating land uses envisioned by the Council include large-format retailers and other types of uses not currently represented in the City. The City is currently under-served by large-format retailers (i.e., home improvement, general merchandise warehouse, etc.) and mid-size retailers.

- Alternative Sites for the Proposed Project

The City evaluated the ability to accommodate large-format users on other vacant parcels and existing retail commercial sites within the City and concluded that there were no vacant parcels of adequate size or existing commercial centers with vacancy to accommodate the proposed project.

The Stock Ranch North property is the only vacant parcel of its size within the City and there are no other vacant parcels that could be assembled to create a single site of appropriate size (minimum 35 acres) to accommodate the proposed project.

Currently, Citrus Heights has a strong regional and community-serving retail node at Sunrise MarketPlace (also known as Sunrise Mall and Birdcage Walk) on Sunrise Boulevard between Greenback Lane and Madison Avenue. Sunrise MarketPlace is a ten-block area along Greenback Lane between Birdcage Street and Fair Oaks Boulevard, and along Sunrise Boulevard between Madison Avenue and Arcadia Drive. The Sunrise MarketPlace area includes the Sunrise Mall, theaters, grocery store, department stores, restaurants and personal services. There are no vacancies of adequate size within Sunrise MarketPlace to accommodate the large-format retailers envisioned for Stock Ranch North.

North of Greenback Lane, there are commercial centers at the west and east corners of Sunrise Boulevard which include mid-size off-price retailers, restaurants and personal services. Neither of these centers includes adequate land space or vacancies within existing building in these centers to accommodate the large-format retailers envisioned for Stock Ranch North.

The Stock Ranch North property was identified as the ideal location for the proposed project for the following reasons:

1. The site's size relative to other vacant parcels in the market. The project is 129 acres and is the largest vacant parcel in the City of Citrus Heights.

2. The site is held under a single ownership, thereby eliminating the need for assembling smaller parcels under various ownerships.
3. The site is able to accommodate retail commercial users that do not fit into existing strip commercial configurations and retail areas in the City.
4. The project site is located with the City of Citrus Heights, which is considered a business friendly community with policy that supports retail uses at the site.

- Site Plan Alternatives

As a framework for developing site plans for the Stock Ranch North project, the City identified natural constraints and opportunities of the property such as topography, natural features, viewsheds, land use compatibility, and access. Using the constraints and opportunities mapping as a base, multiple site design concepts were prepared.

The project's objective of accommodating two large-format retailers required special site design consideration. The following requirements and assumptions were used in preparing site plan concepts:

1. A minimum of 380,000 square feet and a maximum of 450,000 square feet of retail commercial space;
2. Two large-format retailers of approximately 130,000 square feet each;
3. Non-overlapping parking fields that provide on-site parking for the project consistent with City Zoning Code;
4. Primary access from Auburn Boulevard at a signalized intersection near the center of the site;
5. Two secondary non-signalized accesses from Auburn Boulevard;
6. Views into the site from Auburn Boulevard such that visibility of the tenants in the southern portion of the site is not impeded by users along Auburn Boulevard;
7. Setbacks along the east and west sides of the parcel to minimize land use conflicts with adjacent residential uses;
8. Setbacks along the southern portion such that the developable area is outside of the 100-year floodplain.

During the course of site design, no fewer than twenty site plan alternatives were prepared. Site plan concepts were prepared by City staff, the City's consultants and the owner's design team and were presented at two public community meetings. Some of the site plan concepts result in impacts to the Tributary Drainage 2 while other concepts preserve vernal pools and Tributary Drainage 1 along the western property boundary.

There are no practicable site plan alternatives that result in preservation of both Tributary Drainages 1 and 2. In each of the concepts prepared, it was not possible to meet the project's stated objectives and to preserve all of Tributary Drainage 2. Given that Tributary Drainage 1 is considered to be of greater habitat value, the Proposed Site Plan, which preserves all of Tributary Drainage 1, is considered the least environmentally damaging alternative.

- Suitability of Residential Component (Stock Ranch South)

The residential component of Stock Ranch is planned east of Tributary 3, east of Stock Ranch Road. An existing single family residential subdivision (Beazer Homes) is located west of the

Stock Ranch South site. Stock Ranch Road, which extends northwest from Sylvan Road, will be extended north to its termination, south of Arcade Creek. Development of the residential uses proposed for Stock Ranch South is compatible with existing uses west of Stock Ranch Road. Construction of proposed residential uses would preserve Tributary 3. Two culverted crossings of the Tributary would be necessary to access the residential portion of the project from Stock Ranch Road, which would result in a maximum impact of 4,500 square feet of Tributary Drainage 3.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Species Surveys

Wet season protocol surveys for listed branchiopods were conducted by Gibson & Skordal in 1995 and 1996. No listed branchiopods were observed during the surveys. Reports providing the results of the surveys were submitted to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Gibson & Skordal also conducted elderberry surveys in the project area in the spring of 2000. No elderberries will be impacted by the proposed development.

Special status plant surveys in vernal pools were conducted in April, May, and June 2000. No special status plants were located during these surveys.

- Cultural Resources

A cultural resources survey and inventory was conducted for the site in 1984. The entire Stock Ranch area was examined and particular attention was given to the areas along Arcade Creek. Five small flake scatters were recorded along the margins of Arcade Creek. In 1988, the five loci of lithic flakes were determined to be surface remains only. The flakes were determined to be associated with short-term or limited activities related to food gathering. The sites were deemed to be of limited significance and mitigation was limited to standard precaution concerning the possibility of subsurface remains.

There are no known cultural resources on the project site. However, if any resources are encountered during development, the City will coordinate additional research by a qualified archaeologist and historian.

The District Engineer has made these determinations based on information provided by the applicant and on the Corps' preliminary investigation.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments on or before **February 7, 2001**. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in 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.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will 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, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

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.

If additional information is required, please contact the applicant's agent Jim Gibson, with Gibson and Skordal, at (916) 569-1830 or Mr. Justin Cutler, at (916) 557-5258.

Michael J. Walsh
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Enclosures: (5) Drawings