



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SACRAMENTO DISTRICT  
1325 J STREET  
SACRAMENTO CA 95814-2922

408 Permission Section

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ALTER A U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
PROJECT UNDER SECTION 408**

**TITLE:** Grand Island Levee Seepage Cutoff Wall.

**PUBLIC NOTICE COMMENT PERIOD:**

Begins: June 10, 2019

Ends: July 10, 2019

**REQUESTER:** In compliance with U.S.C. Title 33, Chapter 9, Subchapter 1, Section 408, Reclamation District 3 (requester) has requested permission through the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (non-federal sponsor of the federally authorized project) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to alter the Sacramento River Flood Control Project an existing federal flood risk management project, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1917.

**LOCATION:** The proposed project is located on the left (east) bank levee of Steamboat Slough, on the western border of Grand Island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, Sacramento County, California (Attachment 1).

**REQUESTER'S PROPOSED ACTION:** The proposed project is to repair approximately 1,250 linear feet of levee on the west side of Grand Island, to address critical seepage problems by constructing a cutoff wall. The cutoff wall would be constructed using one of the following typical cutoff wall construction methods: slurry-supported open trench, vertical or horizontal mixing, or vertical chain mixing. Materials used to construct cutoff walls consist of soil-bentonite, soil-cement-bentonite, and cement-bentonite. All the material combinations include water as a component.

Materials, equipment, and contractor facilities would require a staging area along the landside levee toe. Additionally, a temporary slurry-mixing pond would be located within the landside staging area; the pond would be constructed via a combination of excavating and using the excavated material to build containment dikes. Water for mixing of slurries would be transferred from Steamboat Slough; water would be pumped through a filter to avoid entrainment of fish or other aquatic wildlife.

Site preparation activities would include clearing ruderal plants, debris, and major voids or variability in the levee slope and temporarily demolishing the County road (Grand Island Road). Prior to constructing the cutoff wall, the levee would be degraded by 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the landside levee height (6 to 8 feet) to provide a working platform for construction and to reduce the risk of slurry loss through the levee.

During the proposed project, the Grand Island Road would be closed and a 24-hour/day detour would be required for approximately two to three months. The detour would reroute traffic around the perimeter of the island along Highway 160. Project construction would be expected to take three to four months. The proposed project would likely require 400 to 500 truck trips over a two- to three-week period. Various equipment mobilization and demobilization would require a total of 5 to 10 days and 30 to 50 truck trips.

Erosion control measures would be implemented during construction, and following construction, the levee would be reconstructed to its original geometry. The existing Grand Island Road would then be reconstructed to its pre-project section. Disturbed areas on the landside and waterside would be revegetated with native grasses, using hydroseeding methods.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED ACTION:** The proposed project area consists primarily of levee, which is characterized by ruderal herbaceous vegetation, and developed land (Attachment 2). Two native oak trees (*Quercus lobata* and *Q. wislizeni*) are located in the project area; other land cover types are ornamental cover and bare ground. The project site could provide habitat for nesting birds; however, conservation measures incorporated into the project design would avoid and minimize effects. For project activities conducted during the bird breeding season (February 1–August 15), a pre-construction nest survey would be conducted. The survey would include areas suitable for ground-nesting birds as well as trees, shrubs, buildings, or other structures suitable for nesting within 300 feet of the project area. If active nests (nests containing eggs or young) are identified, a no-disturbance buffer zone would be established around the nest using flagging, fencing, and/or signage as appropriate. No construction activities would occur within the buffer zone until a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged or that construction activities within the buffer zone are not disturbing the nesting birds. The width of the buffer zone would be determined by a qualified biologist in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife; recommended buffers are 500 feet for raptors and 100 feet for other birds.

Grand Island is a rural area with a generally low population density, the majority of Grand Island is zoned for agriculture. Walnut Grove, at the eastern end of Grand Island and located on the east and west banks of the Sacramento River, is the largest nearby community. To the north of the project area, there are eleven residences. Adjacent to and east of the project area, there is one residential building and an assortment of buildings, storage, and staging grounds related to agricultural operations. The traffic detour may increase drive times by up to approximately 20 minutes, including for drivers traveling from the residences near the north end of the project area accessing areas to the south. There would be an associated increase in vehicle distances traveled. There would be a localized and temporary increase in traffic on this section of Highway 160, particularly between Steamboat Slough Bridge to the north and the town of Ryde (near the junction of Highway 160 with State Route 220) to the east.

A cultural resources inventory report has been prepared for the proposed project and USACE will initiate consultation with Native American tribes and the State Historic Preservation Office pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**AUTHORITY:** The authority to grant permission for temporary or permanent use, occupation or alteration of any USACE civil works project is contained in Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, as amended, codified at 33 U.S.C. 408 ("Section 408"). Section 408 authorizes the Secretary of the Army, on the recommendation of the Chief of Engineers, to grant permission for the alteration or occupation or use of a USACE project if the Secretary determines that the activity will not be injurious to the public interest and will not impair the usefulness of the project. The Secretary of Army's authority under Section 408 has been delegated to the USACE, Chief of Engineers. The USACE Chief of Engineers has further delegated the authority to the USACE, Directorate of Civil Works and Division and District Engineers, depending upon the nature of the activity.

**LIMITS OF SECTION 408 AUTHORITY:** A requester has the responsibility to acquire all other permissions or authorizations required by federal, state, and local laws or regulations, including any required permits from the USACE Regulatory Program under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. Section 1344), and/or Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1413). In addition, an approval under Section 408 does not grant any property rights or exclusive privileges nor does it authorize any injury to the property or rights of others.

**EVALUATION FACTORS:** The decision whether to grant the requested permission for project alteration under Section 408 will be based on several factors. 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. Review of requests for alteration will be reviewed by a USACE technical review team considering the following factors:

1) Impair the Usefulness of the Project Determination. The review team will determine if the proposed alteration would limit the ability of the USACE project to function as authorized, or would compromise or change any authorized project conditions, purposes or outputs. In order for an alteration to be approved, the requester must demonstrate that the alteration does not impair the usefulness of the federally authorized project.

2) Injurious to the Public Interest Determination. Proposed alterations will be reviewed to determine the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, on the public interest. Factors that may be relevant to the public interest evaluation depend upon the type of USACE project being altered and the nature of the proposed alteration and may include, but are not limited to, such things as conservation, economic development, historic properties, cultural resources, environmental impacts, water supply, water quality, flood hazards, floodplains, residual risk, induced damages, navigation, shore erosion or accretion, and recreation. This evaluation will consider information received from the interested parties, including tribes, agencies, and the public. The benefits that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be compared against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to approve an alteration will be determined by the consideration of whether benefits are commensurate with risks

and by the net impact of the alteration on the public interest using the public interest factors.

3) Environmental Compliance. A decision on a Section 408 request is a federal action, and therefore subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental compliance requirements. While USACE is responsible for ensuring environmental compliance, the requester is responsible for providing all information that the Sacramento District identifies as necessary to satisfy all applicable federal laws, executive orders, regulations, policies, and procedures. NEPA and other analysis completed to comply with other environmental statutes (e.g. Endangered Species Act) should be commensurate with the scale and potential effects of the activity that would alter the USACE project. The Sacramento District will work with the requester to determine the requirements, which will be scaled to the likely impacts of the proposed alteration and should convey the relevant considerations and impacts in a concise and effective manner.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:** The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; tribes; and other interested parties regarding the Grand Island Levee Seepage Cutoff Wall, a proposed alteration to an existing federally authorized project. Comments received within 30 days of publication of this notice will be used in the evaluation of potential impacts of the proposed action on important resources and in the evaluation of whether the proposed alteration would be injurious to the public interest and/or would impair the usefulness of the authorized project. Only the specific activities that have the potential to occupy, use or alter the Sacramento River Flood Control Project will be evaluated. Please limit comments to the area of the alteration and those adjacent areas that would be directly or indirectly affected by the alteration to the Sacramento River Flood Control Project. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act.

**SUBMITTING COMMENTS:** Written comments, referencing the Grand Island Levee Seepage Cutoff Wall Project must be submitted to the office listed below on or before July 10, 2019.

Kaleigh Maze, Biologist  
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District  
1325 J Street, Room 1460  
Sacramento, California 95814-2922

Email: [Kaleigh.Maze@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kaleigh.Maze@usace.army.mil)

Attachments:

- 1) Vicinity and location maps
- 2) Habitat map

# Attachment 1 – Vicinity and Location Maps



**Figure 1.** Map of the proposed project vicinity.

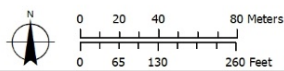
# GRAND ISLAND LEVEE SEEPAGE CUTOFF WALL PROJECT



## Project Area

- Stationing
- ⊕ Boring location
- ▭ Project Area
- ▨ Cutoff wall footprint

Map Sources:  
Cities, rivers, and roads: ESRI 2016  
Imagery: ESRI World Mapping Service

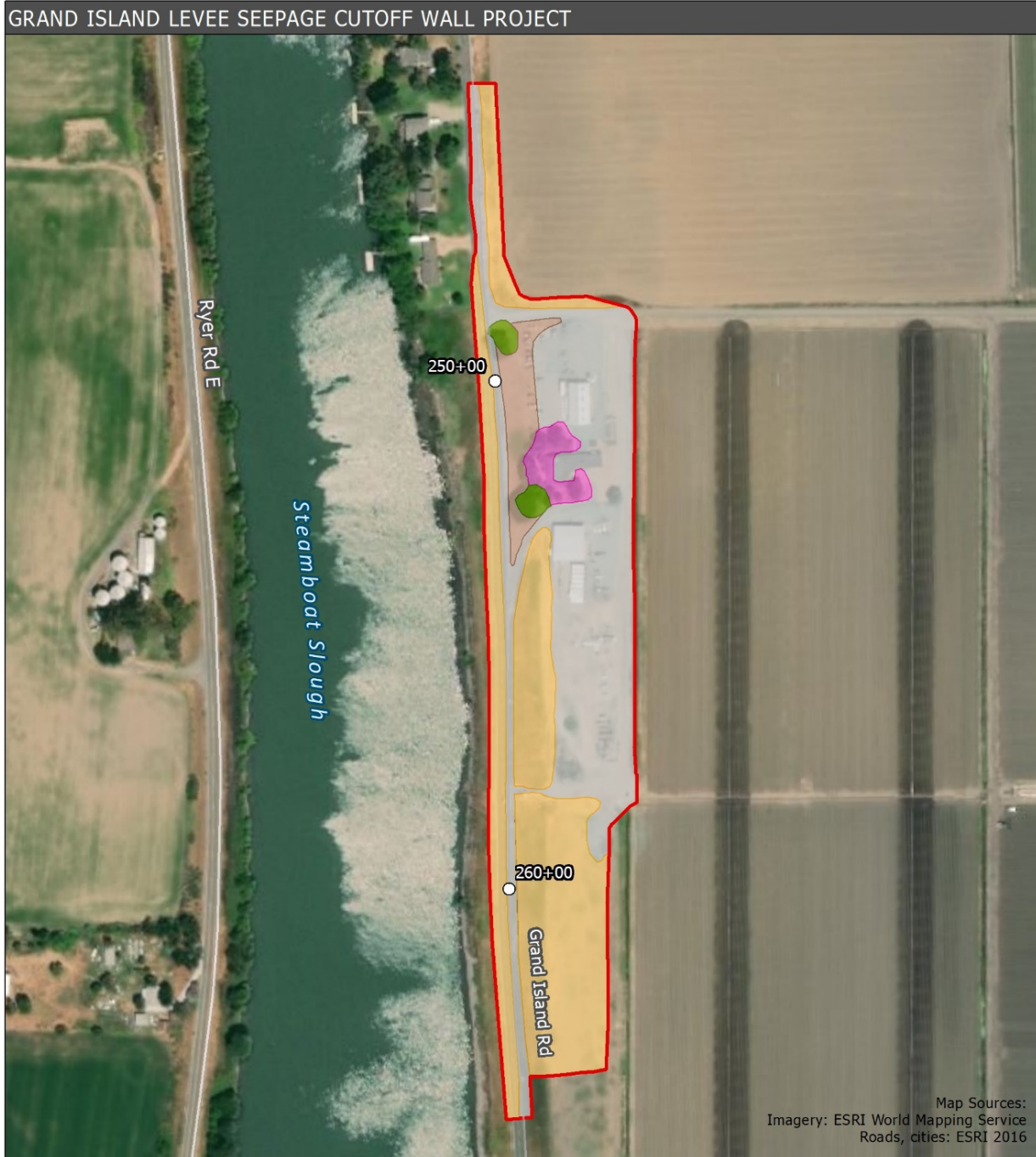


## Map Location










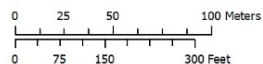
Figure 2. Map of the proposed project location.

## Attachment 2 – Habitat Map



### Land Cover Types

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|  Bare ground |  Ornamental         |  Project Area     |
|  Developed   |  Ruderal herbaceous |  Levee stationing |
|  Native oak  |  |  |



Stillwater Sciences

### Map Location

