

# Staff Report 41

**APPLICANT:**

---

Jean L. Scott and James C. Ross, as Trustees of The Jean L. Scott & James C. Ross Living Trust Dated June 19, 2017

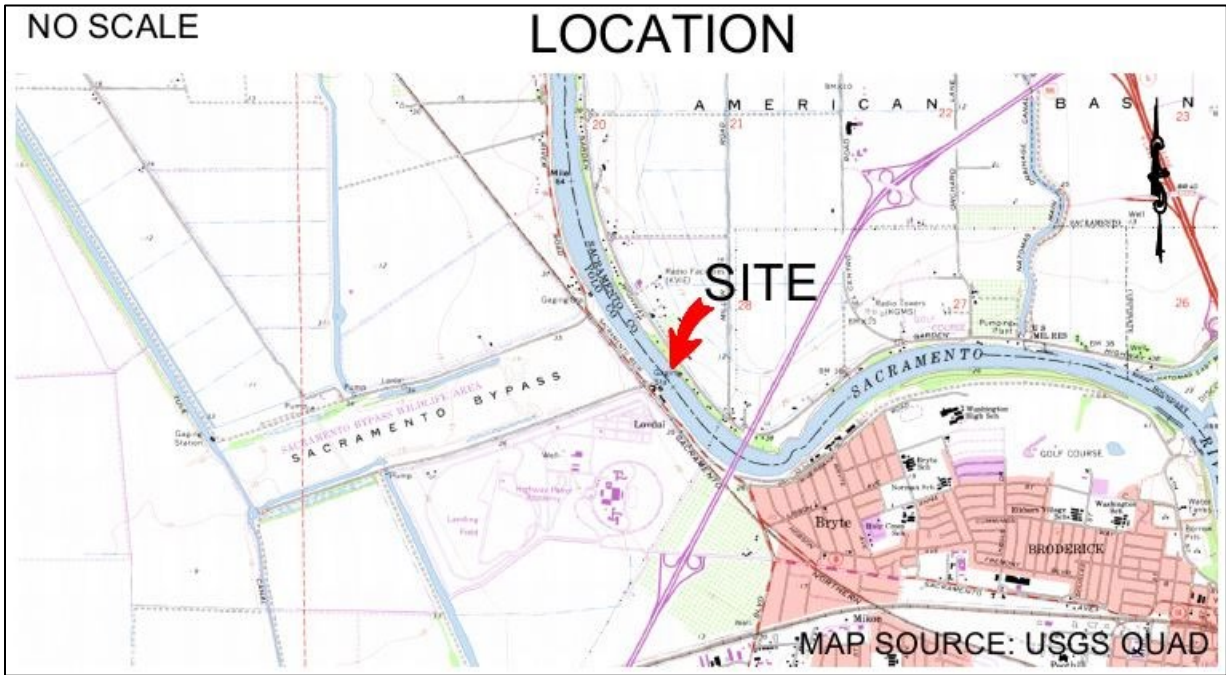
**PROPOSED ACTION:**

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use

**AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:**

Sovereign land in the Sacramento River, adjacent to 2331 Garden Highway, Sacramento, Sacramento County (as shown on Figure 1).

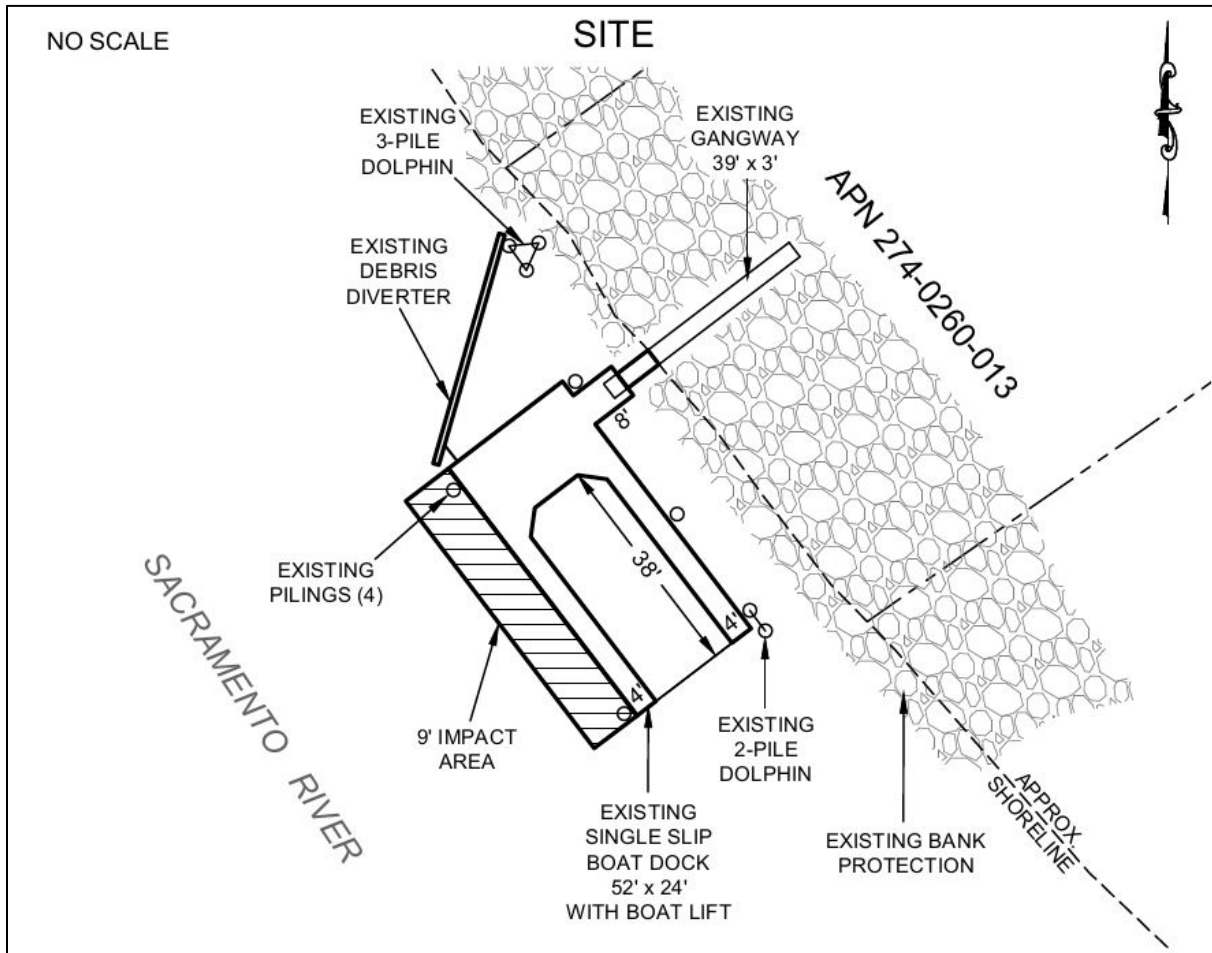
**Figure 1. Location**



**AUTHORIZED USE:**

Use and maintenance of an existing boat dock with boat lift, gangway, four pilings, one two-pile dolphin, one three-pile dolphin, debris diverter, and bank protection (as shown on Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Site Map**



NOTE: This depiction of the lease premises is based on unverified information provided by the applicant or other parties and is not a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

**TERM:**

10 years, beginning May 1, 2023.

**CONSIDERATION:**

\$530 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and \$213 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period beginning December 5, 2022 through April 30, 2023.

**SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:**

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

- Lessee agrees and acknowledges that hazards associated with sea level rise may require additional maintenance or protection strategies regarding the improvements on the Lease Premises.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

---

### **AUTHORITY:**

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6321, 6321.2, 6501.1, 6503.5 and 6505.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2000.

### **PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:**

On December 5, 2012, the Commission authorized a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use to James C. Ross and Jean L. Scott for the continued use and maintenance of an existing boat dock, ramp, four pilings, one two-pile dolphin, one three-pile dolphin, electrical conduit, and bank protection ([Item C28, December 05, 2012](#)). The lease expired on December 5, 2022.

The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use for the use and maintenance of the existing facilities. The facilities will be used for the docking and mooring of boats and facilitate recreational boating. Recreational boating is a water-dependent use that is generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust land (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5). The bank protection will protect the upland property and maintain and improve the integrity of the river, which will help protect the Public Trust resources for recreational and navigational use by the public. The existing and proposed improvements are located directly waterward of the upland property and will occupy a relatively small area of the river. The proposed lease will not interfere with navigation and does not substantially interfere with any Public Trust needs at this time or the foreseeable future.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and reserves an easement to the public for Public Trust-consistent uses. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove all improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition.

The proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities

thereon. The lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the State for the occupation of the public land involved.

**CLIMATE CHANGE:**

Climate change impacts, including sea level rise, more frequent and intense storm events, and increased flooding and erosion, affect both open coastal areas and inland waterways in California. The facilities are located on the Sacramento River, in a tidally influenced site vulnerable to flooding at current sea levels and at a higher risk of flood exposure given projected scenarios of sea level rise.

The California Ocean Protection Council updated the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance* in 2018 to provide a synthesis of the best available science on sea level rise projections and rates. Commission staff evaluated the “high emissions,” “medium-high risk aversion” scenario to apply a conservative approach based on both current emission trajectories and the lease location and structures. The San Francisco tide gauge was used for the projected sea level rise scenario for the region as listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Projected Sea Level Rise for San Francisco**

Year	Projection (feet)
2030	0.8
2040	1.3
2050	1.9
2100	6.9

Source: Table 13, [State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance: 2018 Update](#)

Note: Projections are with respect to a 1991 to 2009 baseline.

This effect could increase Sacramento River’s inundation levels within the lease area. In addition, as stated in [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) (California Natural Resources Agency 2018), climate change is projected to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters related to flooding, fire, drought, extreme heat, and storms (especially when coupled with sea level rise). In rivers and tidally influenced waterways, more frequent and powerful storms can result in increased flooding conditions and damage from storm-created debris as well as decreased bank stability and structure. Conversely, climate change induced droughts could decrease river levels and flow for extended periods of time. Climate change and sea level rise will further influence riverine areas by changing erosion and sedimentation rates. Flooding and storm flow, as well as runoff, will likely increase scour and decrease bank stability at a faster rate.

The floating boat dock and ramp will be adaptable to higher water levels allowing them to rise and fall with storms and droughts and increasing their resiliency to

some climate change impacts, but they may require more frequent maintenance or replacement to ensure continued function during and after storm seasons and to avoid dislodgement of the facilities. The pilings are fixed and therefore more vulnerable to sea level rise and frequent flood events. These structures may need additional fortification or repair and maintenance to ensure they do not become dislodged or degraded, as they could pose risks to public safety and navigation.

Regular maintenance, as referenced in the lease, may reduce the likelihood of severe structural degradation or dislodgement. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland are located in an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change, including sea level rise.

**CONCLUSION:**

For all the reasons above, staff believes the issuance of this lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

**OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:**

---

1. Approval or denial of an application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects a use of sovereign land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's Public Trust lands. If the Commission denies the application, the Applicant may be required to remove the boat dock with boat lift, gangway, four pilings, one two-pile dolphin, one three-pile dolphin, debris diverter, and bank protection. The lessee also has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.
2. This action is consistent with the "Leading Climate Activism" and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Areas of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

---

It is recommended that the Commission:

### **CEQA FINDING:**

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

### **PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:**

Find that the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the lease; are consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and are in the best interests of the State.

### **AUTHORIZATION:**

1. Authorize acceptance of compensation from the Applicant in the amount of \$213 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period December 5, 2022 through April 30, 2023.
2. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use to the Applicant beginning May 1, 2023 , for a term of 10 years, for the continued use and maintenance of an existing single slip boat dock, gangway, four pilings, one two-pile dolphin, one three-pile dolphin, debris diverter, and bank protection; annual rent in the amount of \$530, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.