

# Staff Report 28

**APPLICANT:**

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William R. Schomberg and Karen M. Schomberg

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

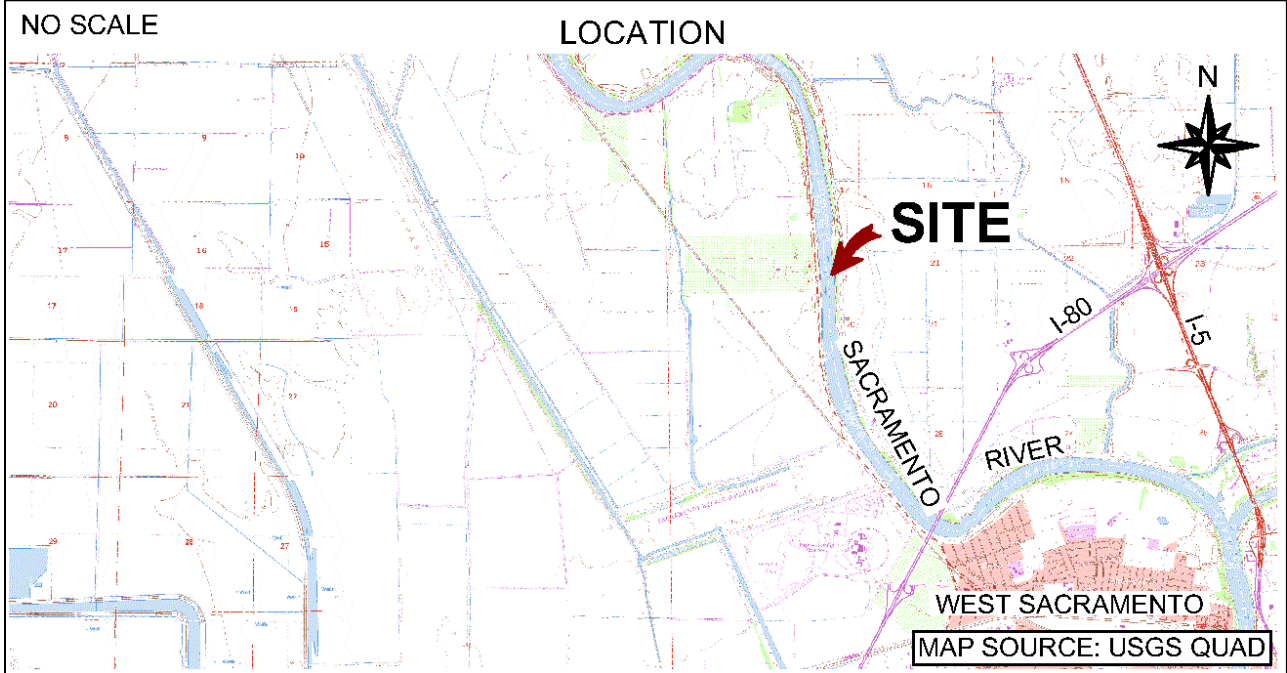
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Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use.

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

Sovereign land in the Sacramento River, adjacent to 3099 Garden Highway, near Sacramento, Sacramento County (as shown in Figure 1).

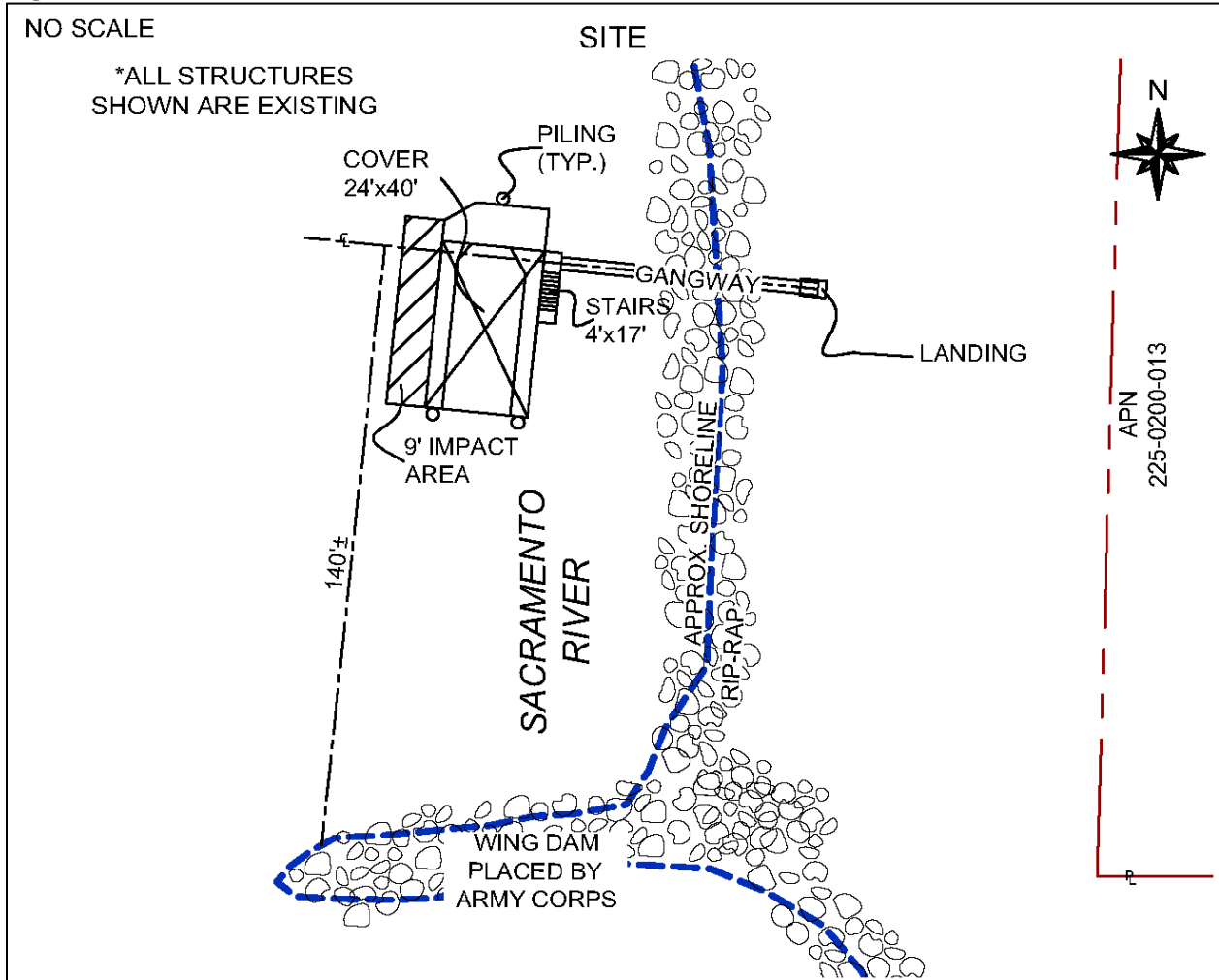
**Figure 1. Location**



**AUTHORIZED USE:**

Use and maintenance of an existing covered boat dock with boat lift, three pilings, gangway with stairs, electric and water utility outlets, and bank protection (as shown in 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 24, 2024.

**CONSIDERATION:**

\$518 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

**SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:**

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- Lessee agrees and acknowledges that the hazards associated with sea level rise may require additional maintenance or protection strategies regarding the improvements on the lease premises.

**STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

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**AUTHORITY:**

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6321, 6321.2, 6501.1, 6503, 6503.5, and 6505.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

**PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE’S BEST INTERESTS:**

On May 24, 2012, the Commission authorized issuance of a 10-year General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use to William R. Schomberg and Karen M. Schomberg, for an existing covered boat dock with boat lift, three pilings, gangway with stairs, electric and water utility outlets, portable personal watercraft dock, and bank protection ([Item 10, May 24, 2012](#)).

On February 7, 2017, staff conducted a review of the rent as called for in the lease and continued the rent amount of \$399 per year ([Executive Officer's Report, February 7, 2017](#)). That lease expired on May 23, 2022, however the Applicant continued to pay rent through May 23, 2024.

The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use, for use and maintenance of the existing covered single-berth boat dock with boat lift, three pilings, gangway with stairs, electric and water utility outlets, and bank protection. The Applicant provided evidence that the personal watercraft dock was removed from the Sacramento River. Based on information provided in the application and the Commission's records, the remaining subject facilities have existed at this location for many years.

The subject improvements are privately owned and maintained 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 facilities are located directly adjacent to the upland property and occupy a relatively small area of the river.

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 proposed 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 people of 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, below.

**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.

Sea level rise could increase the 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 combination of these projected conditions could increase the likelihood of damage and affect access to structures within the lease premises during the term of the lease. For example, the potential for more frequent and stronger storm events may expose the lease area structures to higher flood risks and cause facilities to be damaged or dislodged, presenting hazards to public safety as well as dangers for navigation within the channel. Conversely, prolonged drought conditions could lower water levels, exposing previously submerged structures to the elements and potentially leading to increased wear and tear on the pilings and dock within the lease area. Lowered water levels could also reduce navigability of the channel, thereby increasing hazards and impacting the function and utility of the lease area structures.

The covered floating boat dock with boatlift, electric and water utility outlets, and adjustable gangway are adaptable to variable 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. However, the three pilings, gangway with stairs, and bank protection are fixed and therefore may need additional reinforcement and possibly replaced to withstand higher levels of flood exposure and more frequent storm events.

The bank is vegetated, which provides additional stability and will reduce the amount of erosion and scour pressure experienced during future events because of the vegetation's underground root system. However, the bank remains at risk of accelerated deterioration from currents and floods and exposed portions of the existing protective structure could be vulnerable to future events. An alternative

bank protection strategy, such as bank restoration, may be required in the future to protect the anchoring points of the other structures in the lease premise and reduce flood impacts to the upland parcel (not within the lease area).

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 (not within the lease area) are 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 term of the proposed lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

**OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:**

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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 improvements and restore the premises to their original condition. The lessee 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:**

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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:**

1. Find that the existing and, for a limited period, continuing use of the existing covered boat dock with boat lift, three pilings, gangway with stairs, and electric and water utility outlets does not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location and is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine.
2. Find that the existing and, for a limited period, continuing use of the existing bank protection is not inconsistent with the Public Trust Doctrine and does not substantially interfere with the trust.
3. Find that issuing the proposed lease is in the best interests of the State.

### **AUTHORIZATION:**

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use to the Applicant beginning May 24, 2024, for the use and maintenance of an existing covered boat dock with boat lift, three pilings, gangway with stairs, electric and water utility outlets, and bank protection; annual rent in the amount of \$518, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.