

Staff Report 44

APPLICANT:

Leo H. Schuering Jr. and Eileen S. Schuering, as Trustees of the Schuering Family Revocable Trust, dated November 30, 1994

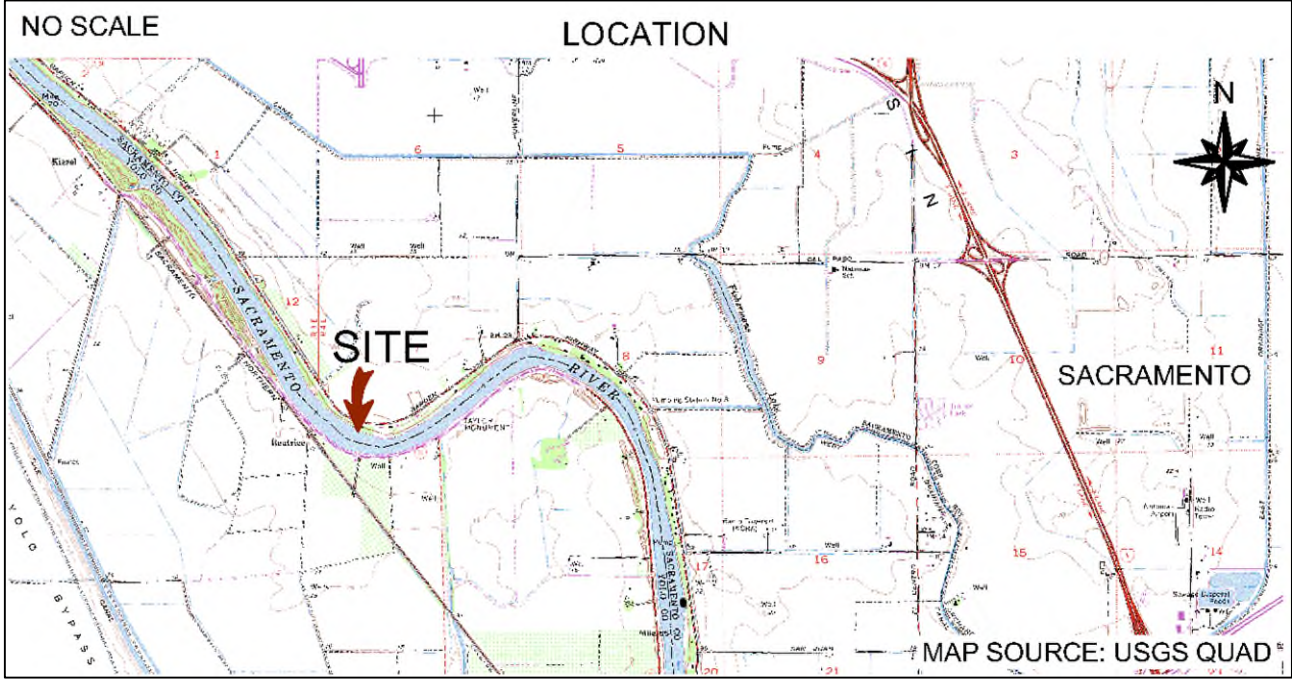
PROPOSED ACTION:

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

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in the Sacramento River, adjacent to 4475 Garden Highway, near Sacramento, Sacramento County (as shown in Figure 1).

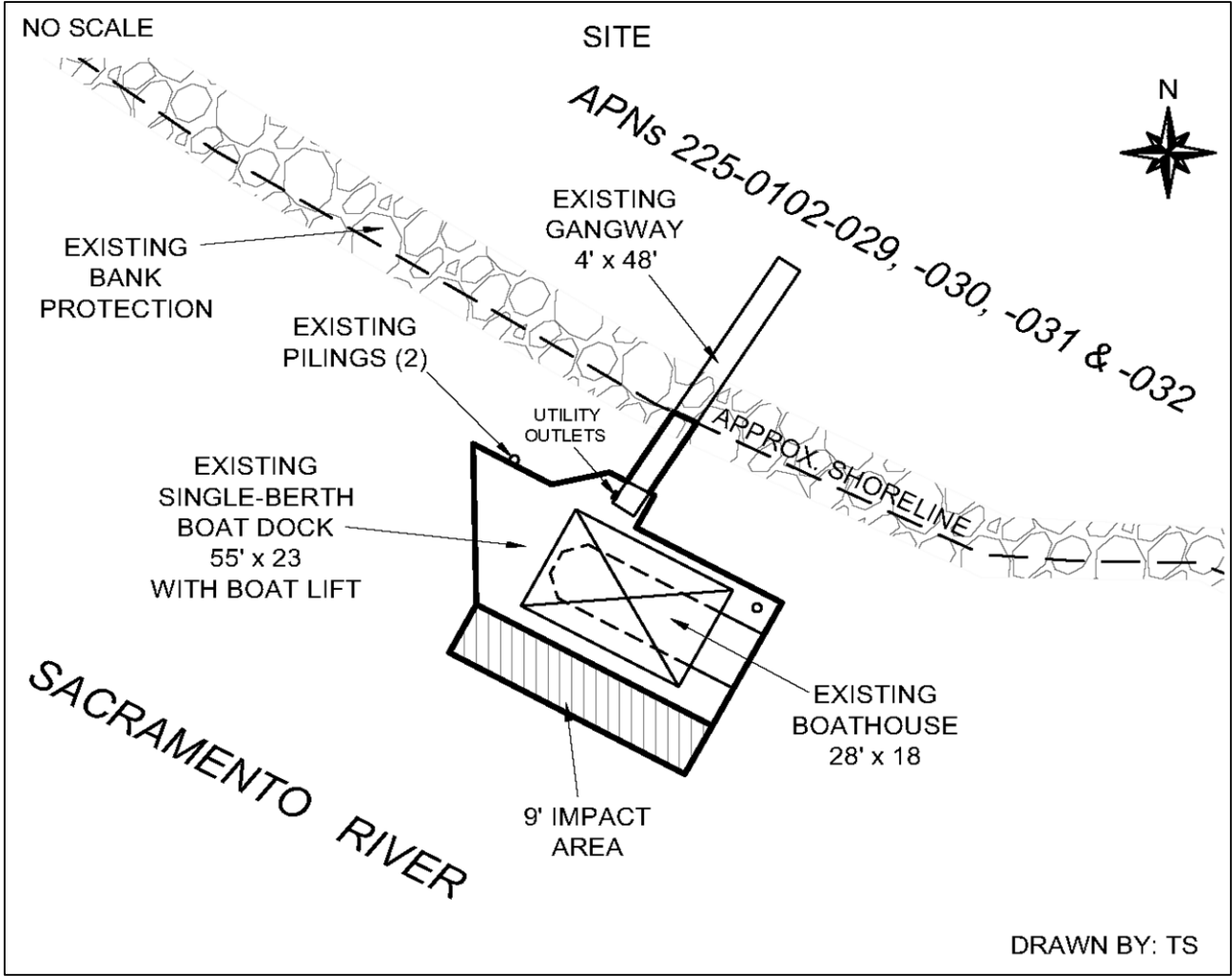
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Use of an existing boat dock, appurtenant facilities, 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 August 15, 2024.

CONSIDERATION:

\$513 per year, with annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and \$470 for the unauthorized occupation of State land prior to August 15, 2024.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- Lessee agrees the provisions of Section 3, Paragraph 11 shall also extend to the period of Lessee's unauthorized occupation of State-owned land from September 20, 2023 through August 14, 2024.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

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, section 2000.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

On September 20, 2013, the Commission authorized the issuance of a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use to Leo H. Schuering Jr. and Eileen S. Schuering, as Trustees of the Schuering Family Revocable Trust, dated November 30, 1994, for the use of an existing boat dock with a single berth boathouse and gangway previously authorized by the Commission, and the use of two existing steel pilings, boat lift, electrical and water utility outlets, and bank protection ([Item 14, September 20, 2013](#)). The lease expired on September 20, 2023.

The Applicant is now applying for a General Lease – Recreational and Protective Structure Use for the use of the existing boat dock, appurtenant facilities, and bank protection.

Staff recommends that the Commission accept compensation from the Applicant for the unauthorized occupation of State land in the amount of \$470 for the period prior August 15, 2024. The lease provisions regarding indemnity will apply from September 20, 2023, the date the prior lease expired, through August 14, 2024, the day before the beginning of the new lease ensuring the State is protected.

The Applicant owns the uplands adjoining the lease premises. The subject facilities are located directly waterward of this upland property, and the facilities occupy a relatively small area of the river. The subject boat dock and appurtenant facilities serve to 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 protects both the upland property and maintains the integrity of the Sacramento 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 will not interfere with navigation, nor substantially interfere with any Public Trust needs at this time or for 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 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.

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 the Sacramento River's inundation levels within the lease area. In addition, as stated in the [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 area 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. 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 floating dock with boathouse and boat lift, and the gangway are 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 and bank protection are fixed and therefore more vulnerable to sea level rise and more

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. While the bank is heavily vegetated, providing additional stability and reducing the amount of erosion and scour pressure experienced during future events because of the vegetation's underground root system, the bank remains at risk of accelerated deterioration from currents and floods and 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 and dislodgement. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland 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 believe approval of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, or for the term of the proposed lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the 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 as authorized by law. If the Commission denies the application, the Applicant may be required to remove the improvements and return 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 15061 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:

1. Find that the existing boat dock and appurtenant facilities 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 term of the lease.
2. Find that the existing and, for the term of the lease, continuing use of the bank protection does not substantially interfere with the trust.
3. Find that issuing the proposed lease is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

1. Authorize acceptance of compensation from the Applicant in the amount of \$470 for the unauthorized occupation of State lands for the period through August 14, 2024.
2. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning August 15, 2024, for a term of 10 years, for the use of a boat dock, appurtenant facilities, and bank protection; annual rent in the amount of \$513, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.