

# Staff Report 08

**APPLICANT:**

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City of Red Bluff

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

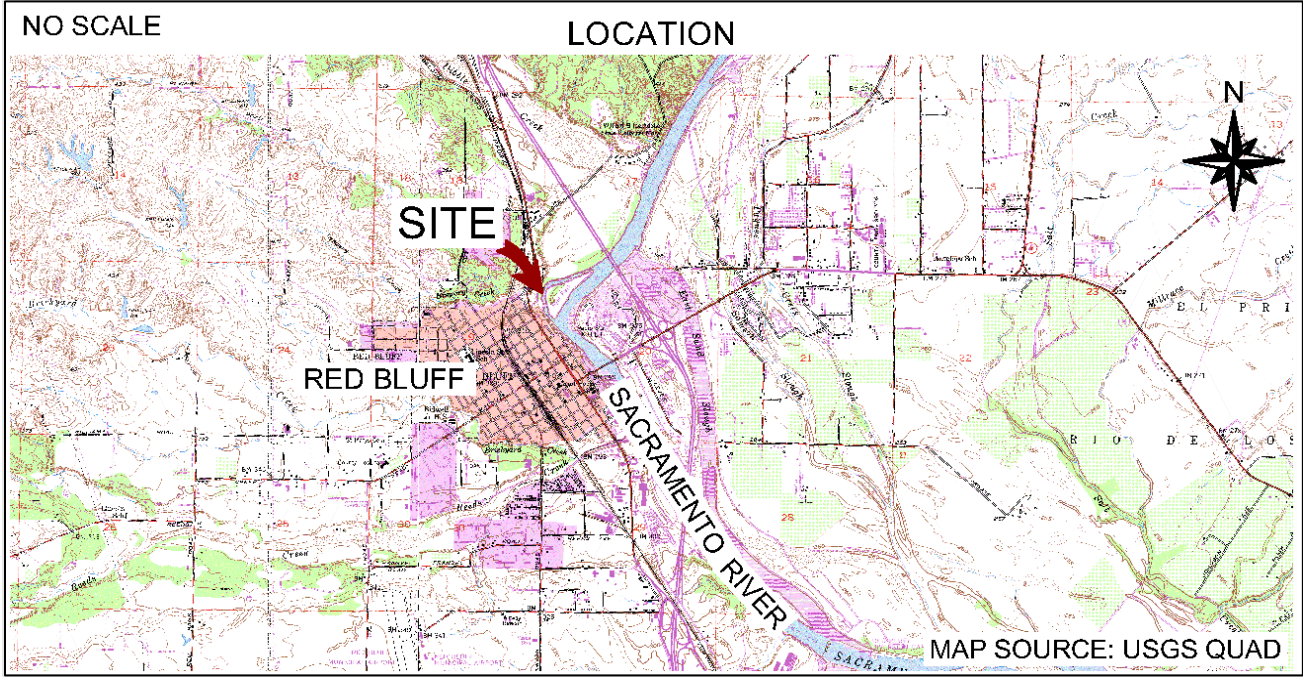
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Issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use.

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

Sovereign land located in a portion of the Sacramento River, known as Dog Creek Slough, adjacent to Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APN) 027-410-023 and 029-205-009, near Red Bluff, Tehama County (as shown in Figure 1).

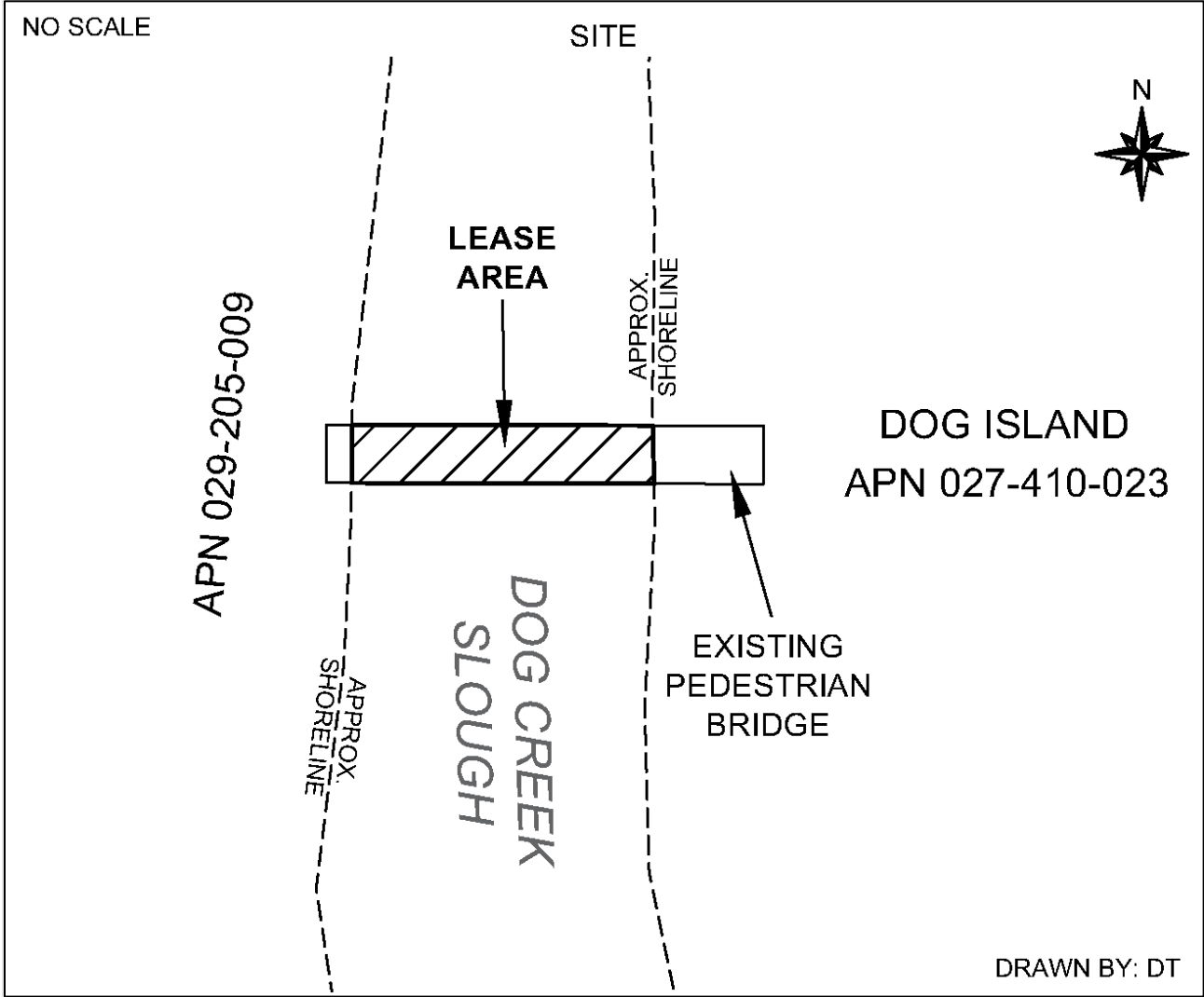
**Figure 1. Location**



**AUTHORIZED USE:**

Use of a pedestrian bridge (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:**

20 years, beginning June 23, 2026.

**CONSIDERATION:**

Public use and benefit, with the State reserving the right at any time to set a monetary rent if the Commission finds such action to be in the State’s best interests.

**SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:**

- Lessee shall indemnify, hold harmless, and, at the option of Lessor, defend Lessor from all damages, injuries, or claims arising from the installation, maintenance, or operation of Lessee's facilities on State lands, including any attached, suspended, or otherwise fixed to the improvements.

**STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

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**AUTHORITY:**

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

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

On October 25, 1973, the Commission authorized a 49-year General Lease – Public Agency Use, to the City of Red Bluff, for an existing footbridge ([Item 3](#)). The lease expired September 30, 2022.

The Applicant is now applying for a General Lease – Public Agency Use, for the use of an existing pedestrian bridge crossing Dog Creek Slough. The proposed lease will require the Applicant to indemnify the State for the entire period of unauthorized occupation prior to June 23, 2026, ensuring the State is protected.

The bridge is adjacent to Assessor's Parcel Numbers 029-205-009 and 027-410-023, located on Main Street. The bridge provides access to Samuel Ayer Park, also known as Dog Island Park, which offers trails for jogging, bicycling, fishing on the Sacramento River, and picnic areas for public use. The city schedules inspections on an as-needed basis following triggers, such as regional weather events, flood warnings, or safety complaints from park visitors. The last inspection was performed in January 2026. Staff also inspected in January 2025. The bridge may need minor cosmetic repairs, but is in good condition and working order.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 20-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and will have no significant impact on Public Trust-consistent uses or resources in the area. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove any improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition. The proposed lease requires the lessee

to indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE:**

### ***INTRODUCTION:***

The climate crisis is impacting California now. Likely impacts to the lease premises include, but are not limited to prolonged drought, extreme heat, lower streamflow, runoff and river levels, as well as changes to the intensity and timing of precipitation events. These impacts can exacerbate natural hydrological processes such as erosion, scour, and sedimentation. These impacts may affect the existing pedestrian footbridge subject to the proposed lease, located over the Sacramento River.

### ***DATA & PROJECTIONS:***

The changing climate is affecting California's weather patterns, leading to more severe droughts and floods. Warmer temperatures have led California to experience a megadrought from 2000 to 2022, measured as the driest 22 years in the past 1200 years, and more megadroughts are projected through the end of the century ([Fifth National Climate Change Assessment: Southwest Region, 2023](#)). Sustained droughts reduce streamflow and river levels due to increased evaporation, declines in snowpack volumes, higher-elevation snow lines, earlier snowmelt, and reduced overall runoff. These changes are pronounced in the Sierra Nevada, where the headwaters to many of the state's rivers are located. It is projected that temperatures in the Sierra Nevada will increase by six to ten degrees Fahrenheit on average by the end of the century, and the snowline will move 1,500 to 3,000 feet higher in elevation. It is projected that by 2100, the annual Sierra Nevada snowpack, a critical source of water supply to rivers, will decrease from today's average by 60 percent. Rivers will be drawn down farther as temperatures continue to rise and demand for water increases. Despite the region's increasing aridity, flooding from extreme precipitation events is projected to increase, attributed to earlier snowmelt, and more intense and frequent atmospheric rivers.

### ***ANALYSIS:***

The lease premises are likely to experience more extreme conditions over the lease term than in the past, due to climate change. Changes to the timing and amount of runoff from the higher elevations of the watershed will result in higher flood risks.

Bank stability may be compromised due to increased channel erosion and undercutting from more intense precipitation and floods. Conversely, drought could lower water levels for longer portions of the year and expose structures that were historically designed to be submerged to more air, wind, and heat.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To reduce the likelihood of adverse impacts to the lease premises and improvements, the lessee should consider several adaptation strategies to improve resiliency to climate change. Nature-based strategies such as planting or restoring vegetation (e.g., shrubs, trees, grass) along the river can provide flood and erosion risk management benefits. The footbridge may need to be inspected more frequently to monitor degradation from exposure, and, in some cases, be elevated or relocated away from frequently flooded areas. Any future construction or activities on State land would require a separate authorization from the Commission.

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.

**CONCLUSION:**

For all the reasons above, staff believe the issuance of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, and for the 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:**

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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. If the Commission denies the application, the Applicant may be required to remove the improvements. The Lessee has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.

2. This action is consistent with the “Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs” and “Leading Climate Activism” 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 14, section 15301.

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061.

## **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 14, section 15301.

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

Find that the proposed lease will not cause an unreasonable interference with the public rights to navigation, fishing, and commerce or cause an unreasonable interference with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the term of the lease; is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

### **AUTHORIZATION:**

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Public Agency Use to the Applicant, beginning June 23, 2026, for a term of 20 years, for the use of an existing pedestrian bridge; consideration being the public use and benefit, with the State reserving the right, at any time, to set a monetary rent as specified in the lease if the Commission finds such action to be in the State’s best interests.