Meeting Date: 10/21/26
Lease Number: 7989
Staff: L. Anderson

Staff Report 22

APPLICANT:

LeLand J. Rock and Paula J. Rock, Trustees of the Leland J. Rock and Paula J. Rock Revocable Trust

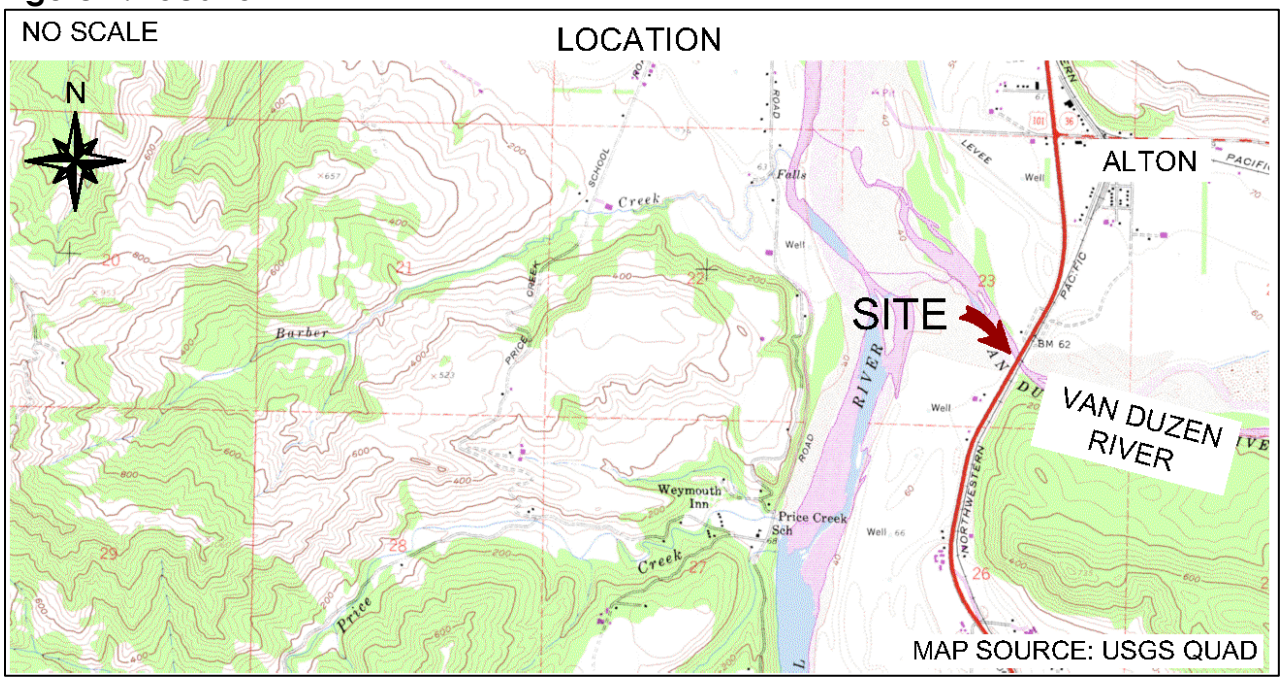
PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Right-of-Way Use.

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in the Van Duzen River, adjacent to Assessor's Parcel Number 201-261-009, near Alton, Humboldt County (as shown in Figure 1).

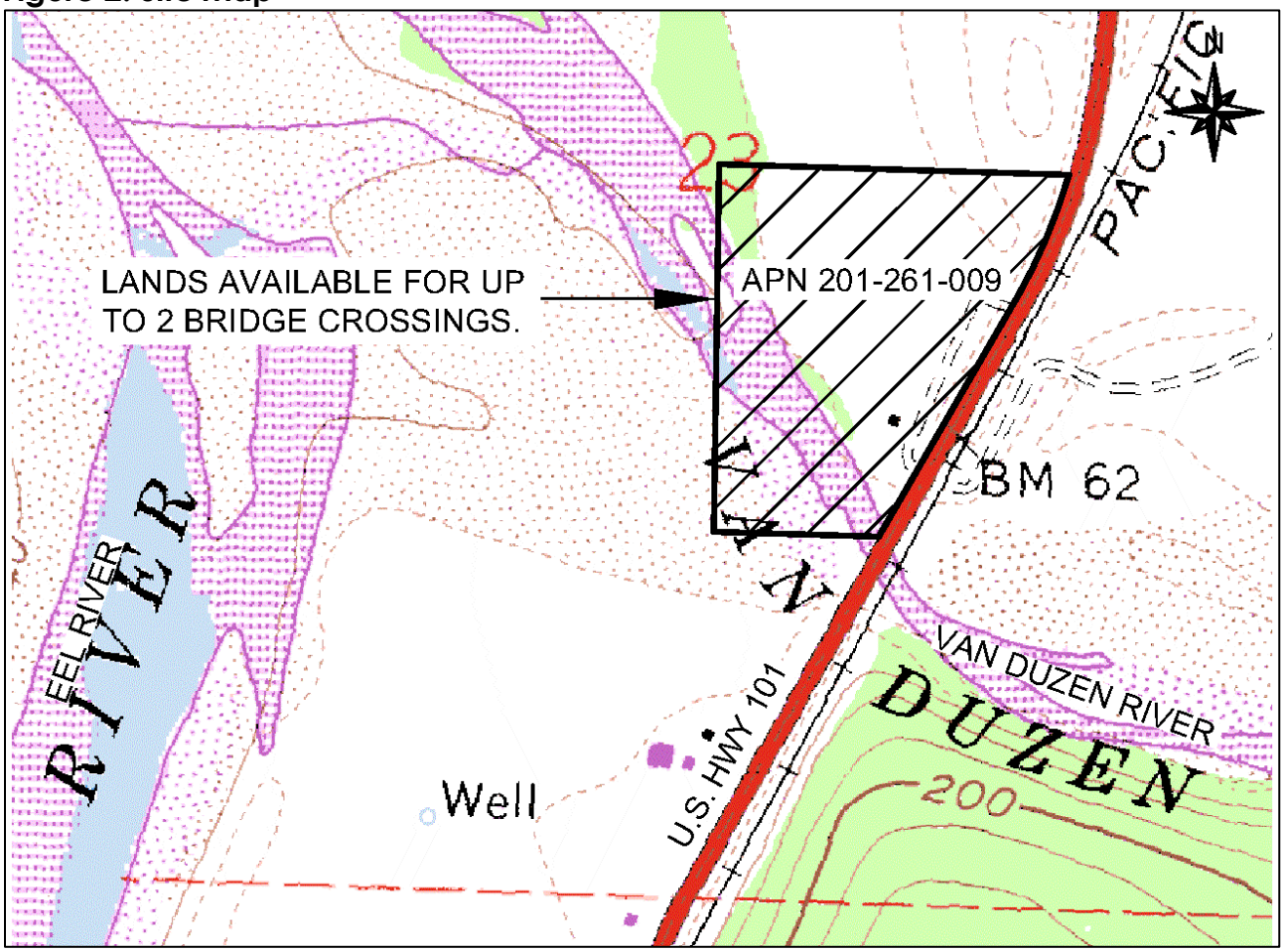
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Annual placement, use, and removal of up to two seasonal bridges (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 October 21, 2026.

CONSIDERATION:

$599 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.
- On an annual basis, the crossings may not be placed on the Lease Premises sooner than June 30 and shall be removed no later than October 15.
- At any time during the term of this Lease, Lessor shall not be liable for any damages to any fixtures or personal property, including any equipment, tools, or machinery on the Lease Premises.
- No refueling, repairs, or maintenance of vehicles or equipment will take place on the Lease Premises.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

AUTHORITY:

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

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

On April 29, 2020, the Commission authorized a 5-year General Lease – Right of Way Use to Leland J. Rock and Paula J. Rock, Trustees for the Leland Rock and Paula J. Rock Revocable Trust for annual placement, use, and removal of up to two seasonal bridges over the Van Duzen River (Item 16). The lease expired December 31, 2024. The Applicant is now applying for a new lease for the use of up to two seasonal bridge crossings. The seasonal bridges were placed in 2025 and 2026. Therefore, staff recommends the Applicant pay $1,079 for the unauthorized occupation of state land for the existing facilities for the period prior to October 21, 2026. The proposed lease will require the Applicant to indemnify the State for the entire period of unauthorized occupation, ensuring the State is protected. Staff recommends starting the new lease on October 21, 2026.

The bridges are seasonal and are placed annually as early as June 30 and removed no later than October 15. Installation of the bridges is based on regulatory agency requirements mandated by a letter of permission authorized by Humbolt County.

The bridge crossings provide a convenient and practical means of transporting gravel removed from gravel bars that accumulate as a byproduct of mining

activities in Humboldt County. The area surrounding the mining operations lacks development, which limits the number of permanent river crossings available to the industry. The topography is rugged making alternative routes impractical for the volume of gravel produced. Without the bridge, heavy trucks would need to be rerouted through Stafford or Scotia, which would increase fuel consumption, increase the burden on civilian infrastructure, and increase pollution exposure for civilians in Fortuna and Alton.

When placed, the bridges are tall enough to allow small personal craft under at varying water levels. Therefore, passage of canoes, kayaks, and other water-related activities in the Van Duzen River will remain unimpacted and available year-round. Warning signs will be posted when the bridge is in place advising of the impediment or risk to navigation or recreational activities.

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.

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:

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 will not be able to install 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 "Leading Climate Activism" and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Areas of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

3. The California Coastal Commission (CCC) prepared an environmental document pursuant to its certified regulatory program (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15251, subd. (c)) and granted Permit No. 1-25-0905 for this seasonal bridge installation and removal project on August 13, 2026. Staff has reviewed the document and determined that the conditions, as specified in the California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15253, subdivision (b), have been met for the Commission to use this document for its compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

4. This activity involves lands identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370, *et seq*., but the activity will not affect those significant lands. Based upon participation from the agency nominating such lands through the permitting process, it is Staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that the CCC Permit No. 1-25-0905 (the environmental document), prepared for this Project and adopted on August 13, 2026, by CCC pursuant to its certified regulatory program (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15251, subd. (c)), is a substitute document as provided by California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15252, subdivision (a), and that the Commission has reviewed and considered the information therein.

Find that the conditions described in the California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15253, subdivision (b), have been met for the Commission, acting as a responsible agency, to use the environmental document to comply with the requirements of CEQA. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15096)

Determine that the Project, as approved, will not have a significant effect on the environment.

SIGNIFICANT LANDS INVENTORY FINDING:
Find that this activity is consistent with the use classification designated by the Commission for the land pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq.

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 the Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the lease; and is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:
1. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Right-of-Way Use to the Applicant beginning October 21, 2026, for a term of 10 years, for the use of up to two seasonal bridges; annual rent in the amount of $599 with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than $1,000,000 per occurrence.
2. Authorize acceptance of compensation from the Applicant in the amount of $1,079 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period prior to October 21, 2026.