

TIJUANA ESTUARY TIDAL RESTORATION PROGRAM II PHASE I

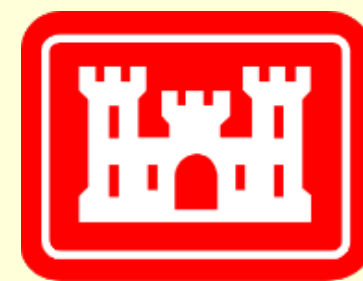
The meeting will begin shortly.



WELCOME

TIJUANA ESTUARY TIDAL RESTORATION PROGRAM II PHASE I (TETRP II PHASE I)

Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**



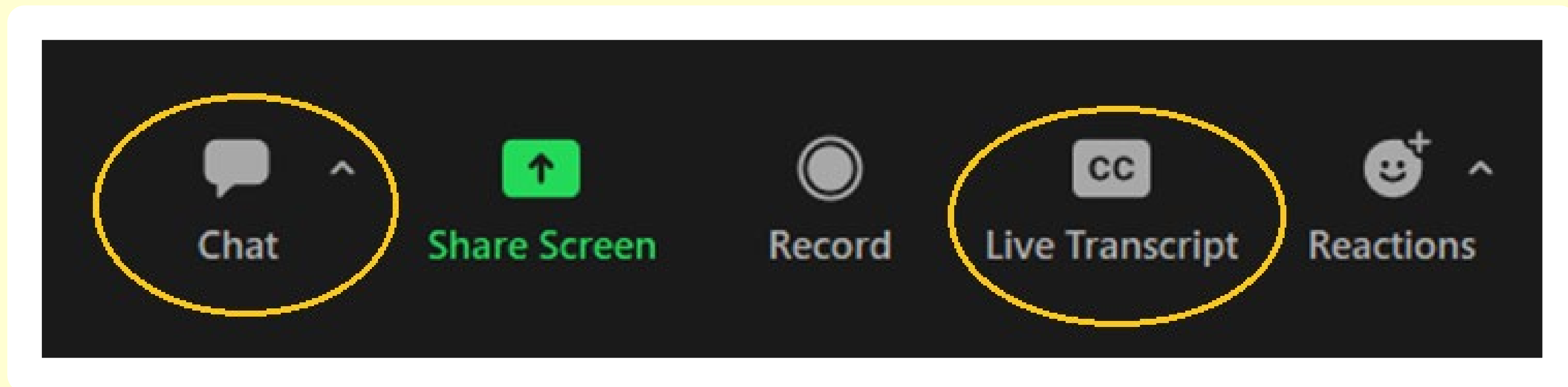
TIJUANA ESTUARY
TIJUANA RIVER
NATIONAL ESTUARINE
RESEARCH RESERVE



ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Closed captioning in English is available by clicking the CC/ Live Transcript icon in your Zoom window.

Please use the “Chat” feature if you need assistance or wish to ask a question. *Questions will be taken at the end of the presentation.*



HOUSEKEEPING

- Questions will be taken following the formal presentation
- Participants will be on mute
- This presentation will be recorded and posted at:
<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notice/>
- We will not be taking formal comments; your formal comments must be submitted in writing, as will be described at the end of the presentation.

MEETING OVERVIEW

PRESENTATIONS (40 minutes)

- Meeting objectives
- Project history, purposes, and objectives
- Restoration alternatives and associated impacts overview
- Environmental review process, including where to review the DEIR/EIS and how to provide your comments
- Next steps in the EIR/EIS process

ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS (remaining time)

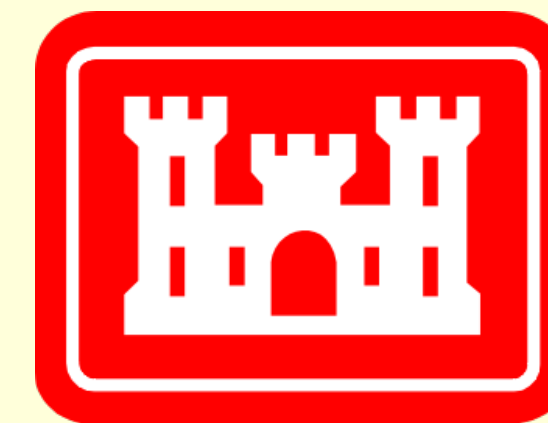
INTRODUCTIONS

CEQA & NEPA Lead Agencies for the TETRP II Phase I EIR/EIS

CEQA - California Department of Parks and Recreation

NEPA - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tijuana Slough National
Wildlife Refuge

NEPA Cooperating Agency - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



**US Army Corps
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INTRODUCTIONS

TETRP II PHASE I PROJECT PARTNERS

Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve • Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association • California Wildlife Conservation Board • California State Coastal Conservancy

ADDITIONAL PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

Nordby Biological Consulting • Anchor QEA • AECOM



INTRODUCTIONS

TETRP II PHASE I TEAM MEMBERS AND PARTNR JOINING TODAY

- Vicki Touchstone, Andy Yuen, and Brian Collins - USFWS
- Chris Peregrin, Lorena Warner-Lara, Marya Ahmad - CSP
- Mayda Winter, Jeff Crooks - SWIA
- Chris Nordby - Nordby Biological Consulting
- Cindy Kinkade - AECOM



MAIN OBJECTIVE OF TODAY'S MEETING

To Increase Your Understanding of the TETRP II Phase I Restoration Alternatives and the CEQA/NEPA Process by:

- Describing the restoration alternatives
- Summarizing the analysis and conclusions in the DEIR/EIS
- Explaining the public review process and how to provide your comments
- Providing an overview of the next steps in the environmental review process

TETRP II PHASE I - INTRODUCTION



The Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I (TETRP II Phase I) is a proposal to restore coastal wetlands in an area south of the Tijuana River main channel and north of Monument Road at the western end of the Tijuana River Valley.

TETRP II PHASE I – LAND MANAGERS



Most of the project site occurs within Border Field State Park, managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

The northernmost portion of the site occurs within the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

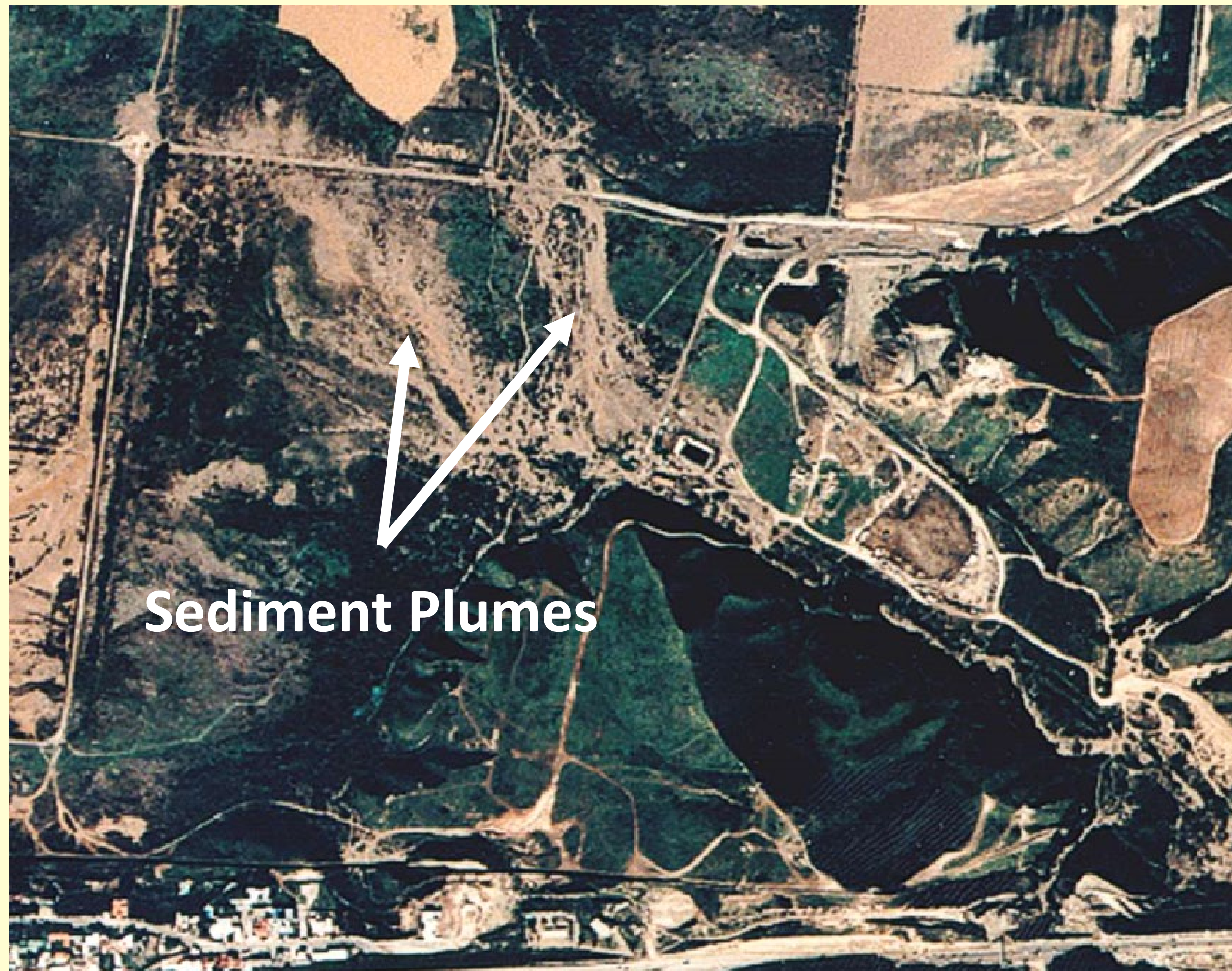
A HISTORY OF FLOODING AND SEDIMENTATION



Image from the early 2000s, sediment flows inundated large areas of Border Field State Park

Decades of sediment deposition from upstream transborder canyons and the sediment laden floodwaters of the Tijuana River have filled in portions of the Tijuana Estuary, converting sensitive coastal wetlands to nonnative uplands.

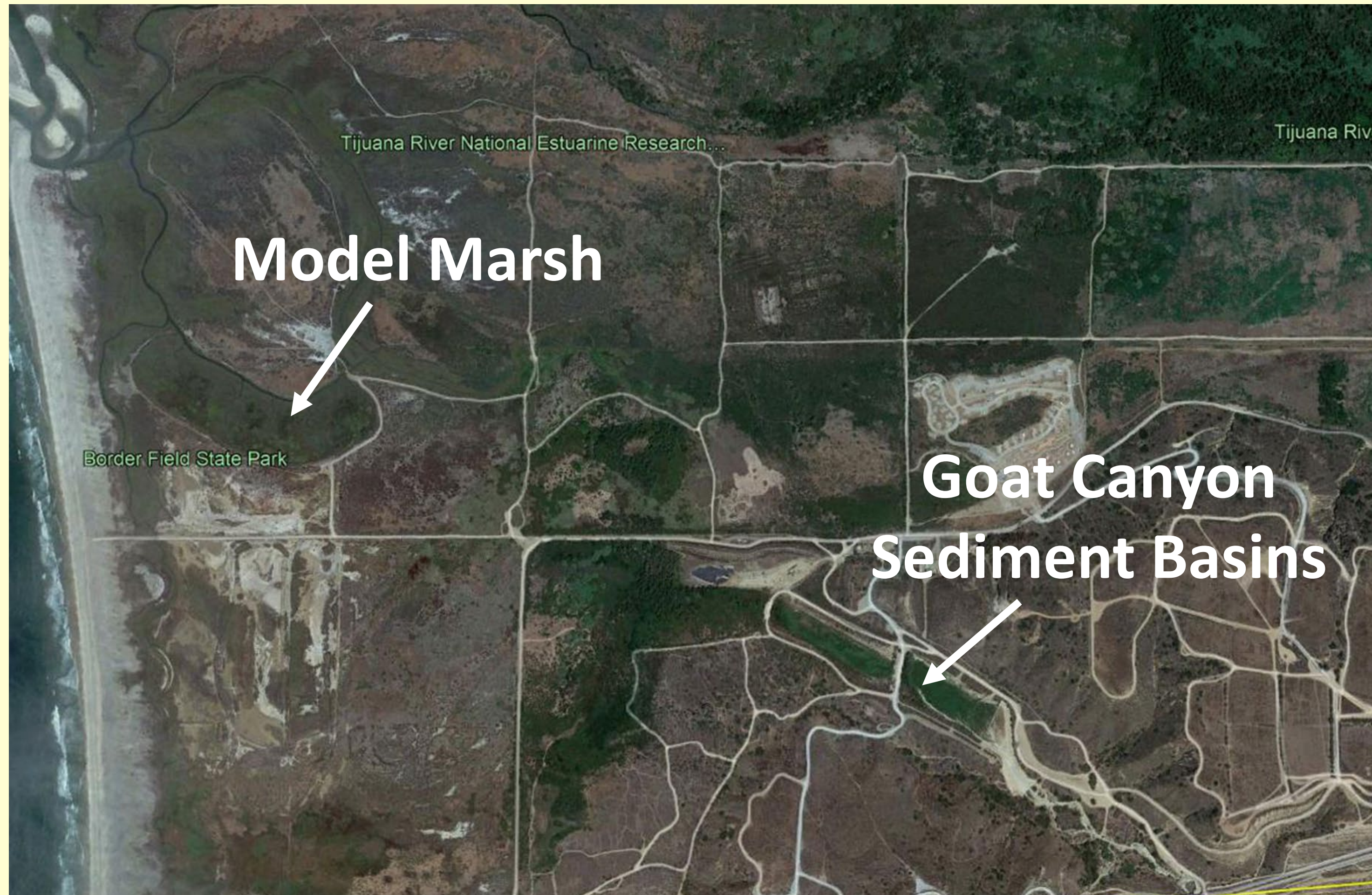
PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT



The extensive loss of coastal wetlands within the Tijuana Estuary since the mid-1800s, including a 50% decrease in subtidal and mudflat habitat and a 42% decrease in salt marsh vegetation, is the primary motivator for pursuing the implementation of TETRP II Phase I.

Sediment plumes created by floodwaters exiting Goat Canyon circa 2000

PROJECTS ALREADY COMPLETED IN THE TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY



TETRP II Phase I builds upon the successes of other projects in the Tijuana River Valley, including restoration of the 20-acre Model Marsh in 2000, and construction of the Goat Canyon sediment basins in 2005.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR TETRP II PHASE I

Project Purpose:

- To restore a portion of the southern arm of the Tijuana Estuary to intertidal wetlands and associated native uplands consistent with the *Tijuana Estuary – Friendship Marsh Restoration Feasibility Study (2008)*

Project Need:

- To address ongoing degradation of coastal resources and its effect on essential habitat for listed species, migratory birds, fish, and other aquatic organisms
- To improve water and habitat quality by increasing the tidal prism
- To maintain continuous tidal exchange and a healthy wetland ecosystem by removing sand from the closed river mouth on an as-needed basis

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF TETRP II PHASE I

- Increase the estuary's tidal prism by restoring 82 to 87 acres of coastal wetlands lost or damaged by sedimentation
- Maintain effective tidal flows and good water quality through improved tidal circulation and an open river mouth

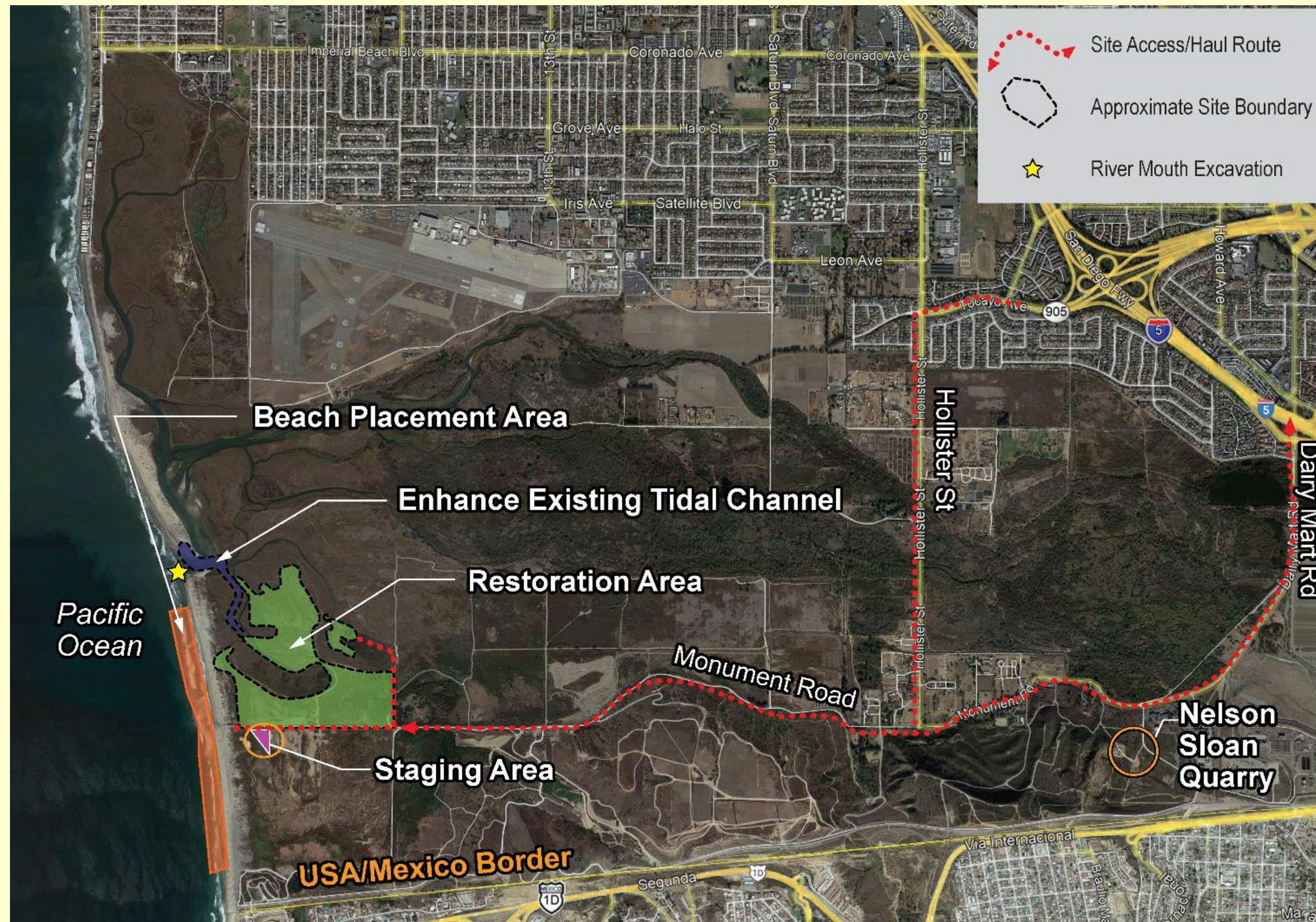


GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF TETRP II PHASE I (CONT.)

- Increase habitat for listed and sensitive coastal species
- Beneficially reuse excavated material to the extent feasible
- Incorporate research and adaptive management into project design, implementation, and monitoring



DEVELOPING A RESTORATION PLAN



Design Considerations

- Restore coastal wetlands, while preserving areas of native upland and wetland habitat
- Protect and/or enhance native habitats in and around the Model Marsh
- Establish upland areas to protect marsh habitat from future sedimentation
- Minimize impacts to visitors and residents

DEVELOPING A RESTORATION PLAN



Restoring Coastal Habitats

- Restore 82 - 87 acres of coastal wetlands, native uplands, and transitional habitats
- Select restoration areas near existing tidal channels
- Enhance major tidal channels and increase the tidal prism to improve tidal exchange at the river mouth

DEVELOPING A RESTORATION PLAN



Prioritize use of excavated soil for beneficial use

- Place sand on the barrier beach
- Restore native transitional and upland habitat south and east of the restored wetlands to provide protection from storm-generated sediment flows
- Consider use of some material for habitat restoration at the Nelson Sloan Quarry

CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

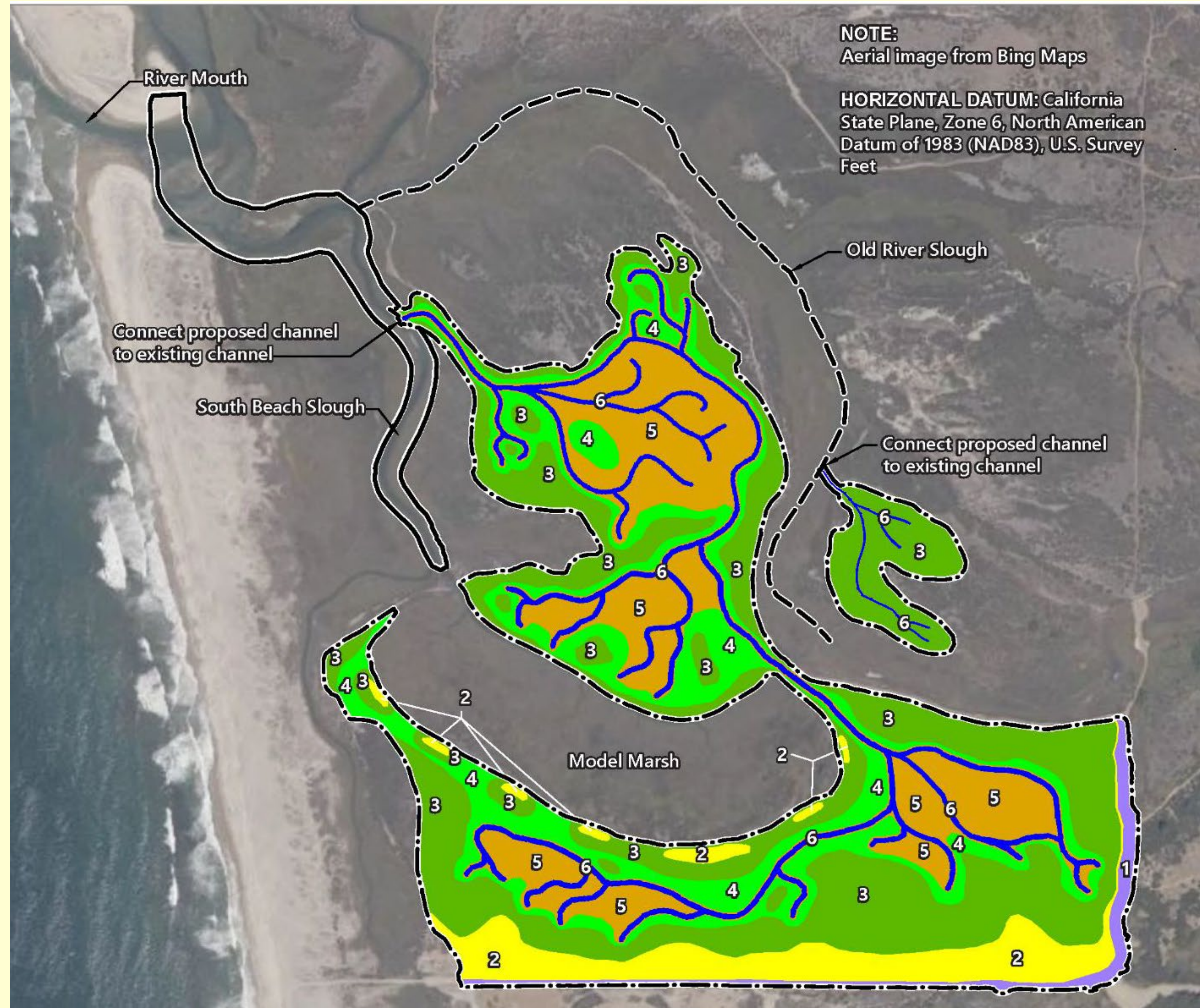


The dotted red lines depict the truck routes to be used for hauling excavated material offsite to the Nelson Sloan Quarry, landfills, and/or other destinations.

Minimize Impacts to Visitors and Residents

- Construction is limited to 7:00 am - 7:00 pm Monday - Saturday
- Truck routes were selected that minimize travel in residential areas
- Access to the beach will be maintained on weekends and holidays

RESTORATION PROPOSAL - ALTERNATIVE 1



Restore 75.2 acres of intertidal wetlands and 11.6 acres of native transitional and upland habitats, while preserving 0.5 area of adjacent native transitional habitat

LEGEND:

- Restoration Grading Boundary
- Channel Enhancement Boundary
- Old River Slough
- Habitat**
- 1 Upland
- 2 Transitional
- 3 Mid to High Marsh
- 4 Low Marsh
- 5 Mudflat
- 6 Intertidal Channel

RESTORATION COMPONENTS - ALTERNATIVE 1

RESTORE:

- 68.4 acres of coastal wetlands, including:
 - 18.0 acres of mudflat habitat
 - 15.6 acres of low salt marsh habitat
 - 34.8 acres of middle to high salt marsh habitat
- 6.8 acres of intertidal channel
- 11.6 acres of native transitional and upland habitat

PRESERVE:

- 0.5 acre of existing transitional and native upland habitat, generally to the north of the proposed restoration footprint

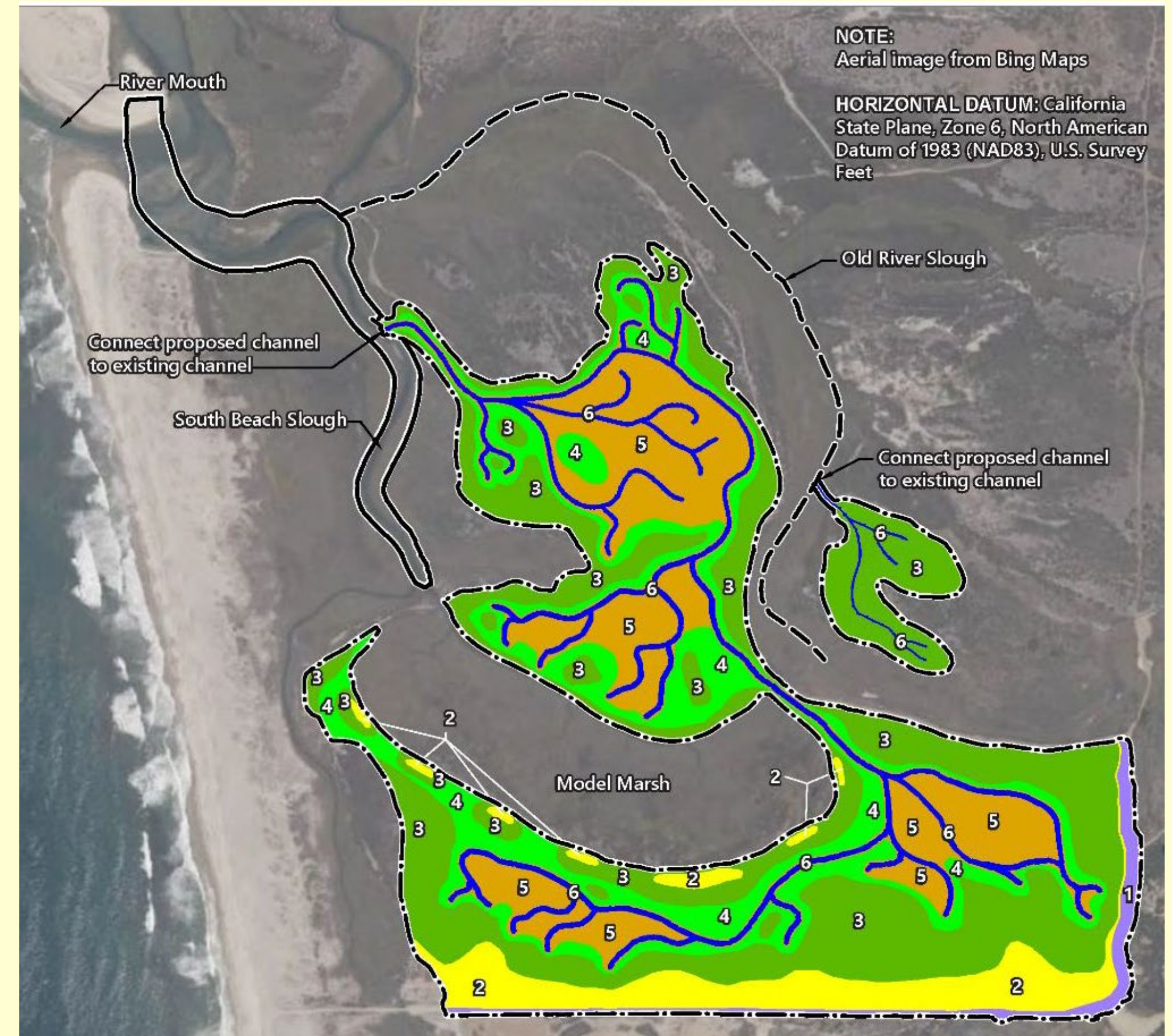
ADDITIONAL RESTORATION COMPONENTS - ALTERNATIVE 1

Increase the tidal prism by 1.5 million cubic feet

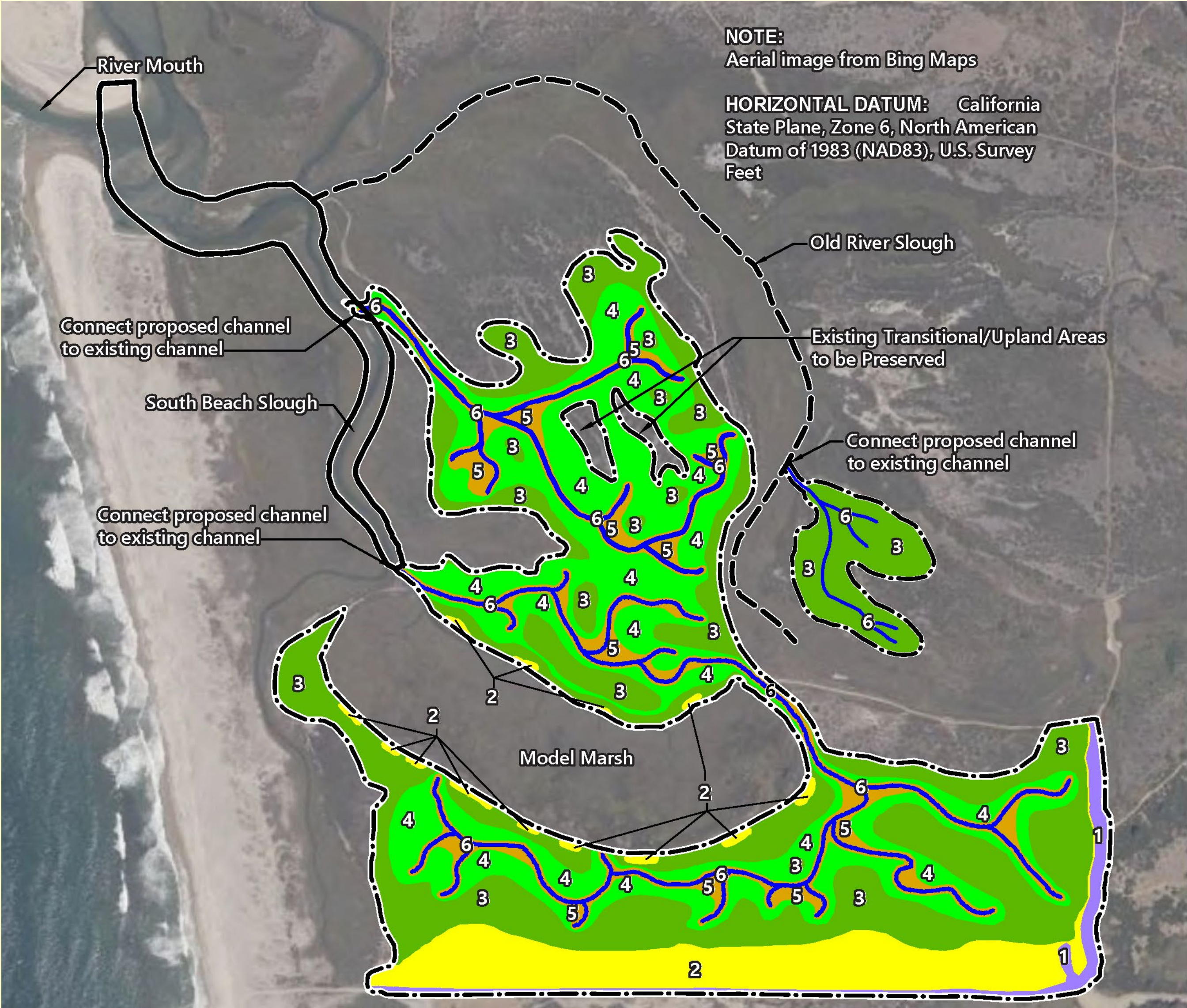
Facilitate tidal exchange with one connection to South Beach Slough and one connection to Old River Slough

Excavate 585,000 cubic yards (cy) of soil to create wetlands:

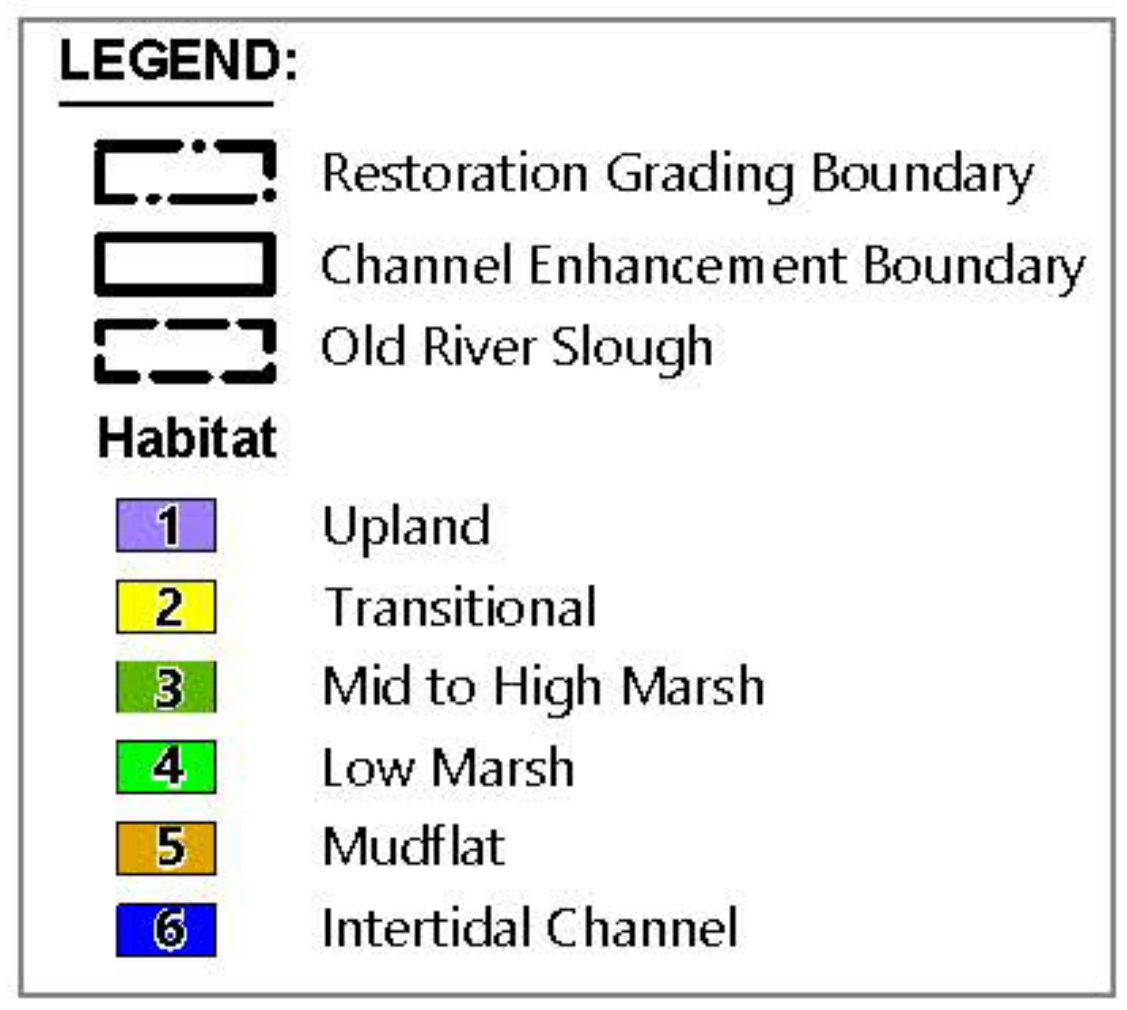
- Use at least 5,000 cy to create areas of transitional/upland habitat south and southeast of the restored wetlands
- Transport offsite and/or beneficially reuse (e.g., beach nourishment) the remaining 580,000 cy



RESTORATION PROPOSAL - PROPOSED PROJECT



Restore 67.9 acres of intertidal wetlands and 14.6 acres of native transitional and upland habitats, while also preserving 4.6 acres of existing native transitional habitat



RESTORATION COMPONENTS – PROPOSED PROJECT

RESTORE:

- 62.8 acres of coastal wetlands, including:
 - 6.4 acres of mudflat habitat
 - 22.9 acres of low salt marsh habitat
 - 33.5 acres of middle to high salt marsh habitat
- 5.1 acres of intertidal channels
- 14.6 acres of native transitional and upland habitat

PRESERVE:

- 3.5 acres of transitional and native upland habitat east of Model Marsh and 1.1 acres in the northern portion of the project site

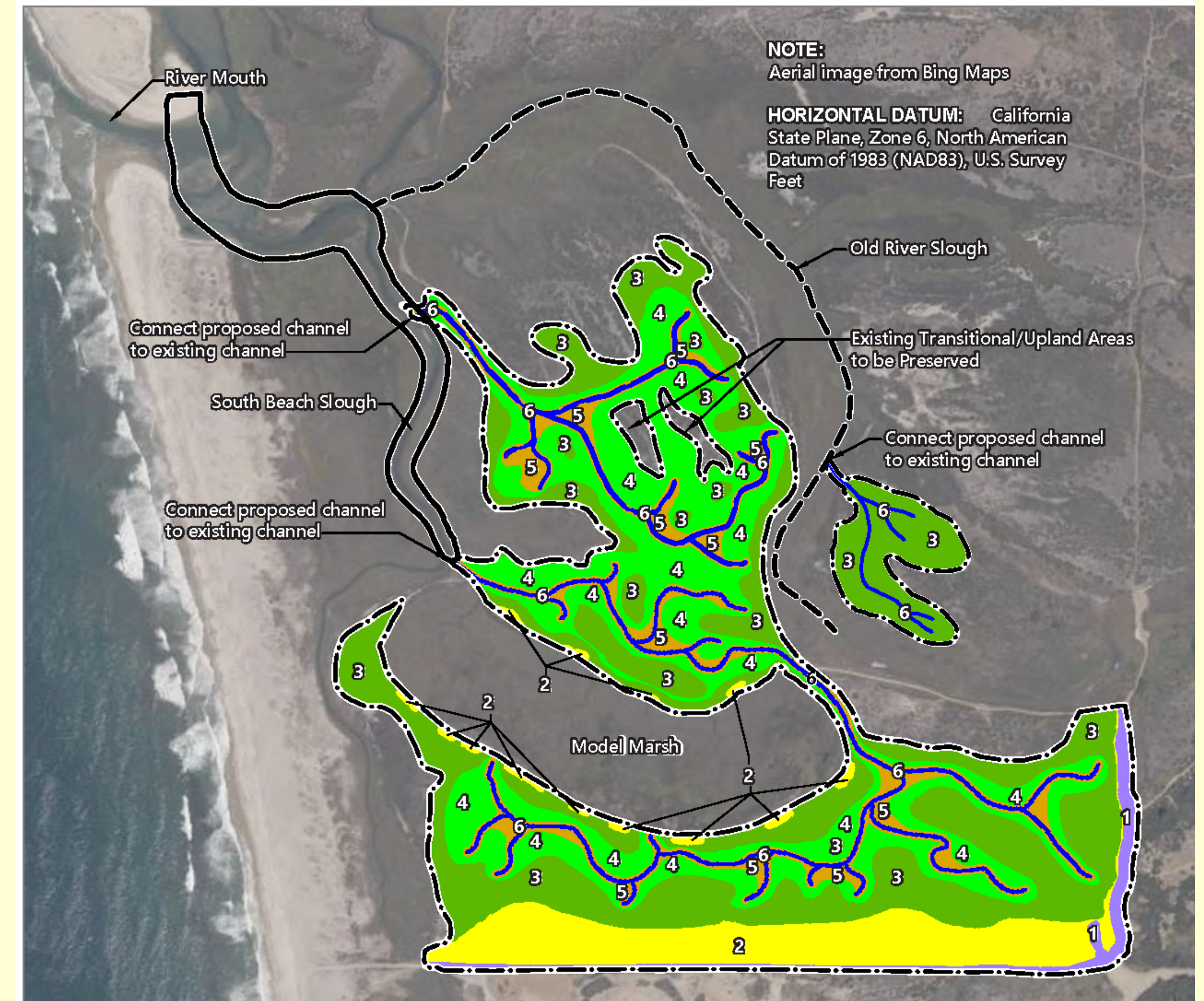
ADDITIONAL RESTORATION COMPONENTS – PROPOSED PROJECT

Increase the tidal prism by 1.9 million cubic feet

Facilitate tidal exchange with two connections to South Beach Slough and one connection to Old River Slough

Excavate 521,000 cubic yards (cy) of soil to create wetlands:

- Use at least 7,000 cy to create native upland and transitional habitat along the southern and eastern project boundary
- Transport offsite and/or beneficially reuse (e.g., beach nourishment) the remaining 514,000 cy



OUTCOMES COMMON TO BOTH ALTERNATIVES

- Restored coastal wetlands supported by a network of intertidal channels connected to the South Beach Slough and Old River Slough
- Increased wetland and upland habitat values within the project site
- Increased habitat values within the adjacent Model Marsh
- Improved upland and beach habitat values through reuse of excavated soil to the extent practicable
- Increased tidal exchange and stability of the river mouth
- Continued public access to the beach

DIFFERENCES IN HABITAT ACREAGES FOR EACH ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 1 - 86.8 acres restored

Mudflat - 18.0 ac

Low Salt Marsh - 15.6 ac

Middle/High Salt Marsh - 34.8 ac

Intertidal Channel - 6.8 ac

Transitional - 9.0 ac

Upland - 2.6 ac

Proposed Project - 82.5 acres restored

Mudflat - 6.4 ac

Low Salt Marsh - 22.9 ac

Middle/High Salt Marsh - 33.5 ac

Intertidal Channel - 5.1 ac

Transitional - 11.8 ac

Upland - 2.8 ac

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR A DRAFT EIR/EIS

Although the process differs slightly between the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the following actions related to a DEIR/EIS are required under both CEQA and NEPA:

- Inform the public and decision makers about the project and potential environmental impacts
- Provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on the environmental issues associated with project implementation
- Identify feasible ways to avoid or reduce environmental impacts
- Consider alternatives that reduce or avoid impacts
- Disclose any significant impacts to the environment

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Content of the DEIR/EIS:

Introduction

Project Overview

Alternatives

Affected Environment and
Environmental Consequences

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Comparison of Alternatives

Other CEQA/NEPA
Considerations

Agencies/Individuals Consulted

List of Preparers

References Cited

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Topics Addressed under Affected Environment/Environmental Consequences:

Land Use

Paleontological Resources

Recreation and Public Access

Visual Resources

Hydrology and Water Quality

Transportation

Coastal Processes

Air Quality

Hazardous Materials and Public Safety

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Biological Resources

Noise

Geology/Soils

Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice

Cultural Resources

Public Services and Utilities

Tribal Cultural Resources

Energy

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) PROCESS

Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR: Notification that an EIR will be prepared, as well as solicitation for early comments; scoping meeting

Preparation of Draft EIR: Takes into consideration public scoping comments

Public Review of the Draft EIR: The completed Draft EIR is issued for agency and public review and comment for a period of 45 days

Certify the EIR: Final document will include responses to comments and Findings/Statement of Overriding Consideration, as applicable

Notice of Determination: Notice filed with the State Clearinghouse following project approval; describes the project and expected impacts, if any.

CEQA

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) PROCESS

Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an EIS: Published in the Federal Register to solicit comments/initiate the scoping process

Preparation of Draft EIS: Takes into consideration all scoping comments

Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft EIS: Published in the Federal Register, which initiates the 45-day public comment period

Respond to Public Comments and Prepare Final EIS

NOA of Final EIS: Availability of Final EIS published in the Federal Register

Record of Decision: Issued no sooner than 30 days after NOA publication

NEPA

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Impacts/Adverse Effects

For both Alternative 1 and the Proposed Project:

- Under CEQA, impacts related to **water quality, biological resources, and air quality** would be significant and unavoidable during project construction
- Under NEPA, impacts related to **water quality and biological resources** would be considered significant effects during project construction

IMPACTS RELATED TO WATER QUALITY

Effects to Water Quality are Similar Under Both Alternatives

- Placing excavated material on the beach/swash zone could release pollutants at levels that exceed federal/state standards resulting in temporary significant impacts under CEQA and NEPA
- No change or degradation in wet weather water quality
- No change in storm flows or pollutant input
- No substantial increase in listed indicators despite the Tijuana Estuary's current listing as a State impaired waterbody

IMPACTS RELATED TO BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Effects to Breeding Birds are Similar Under Both Alternatives

Noise generated by construction and truck traffic within the project site and along Monument Road would significantly impact federally and state-listed special-status bird species, migratory birds, and non-special-status species if construction continues into the breeding season. Such impacts, if not mitigated, would be significant under CEQA and NEPA.

Avoidance of Impacts

Impacts could be avoided or minimized by:

- Restricting construction activities to outside the breeding season.
- Installing temporary noise walls where breeding birds could be present.

IMPACTS RELATED TO AIR QUALITY

CEQA

Both alternatives could have potentially significant impacts to regional air quality related to particulate matter generated during construction, with a potential for exceedance of daily thresholds for PM_{2.5} emissions and daily/annual thresholds for PM₁₀ emissions.

Neither alternative would conflict with the County's Regional Air Quality Strategy nor expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of construction-related emissions.

NEPA

No significant direct or indirect effects to air quality would occur, as emissions would not exceed established annual de minimis levels.

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WITH MITIGATION

Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scope of both alternatives to avoid potentially significant impacts under NEPA and/or CEQA to:

- Cultural Resources
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Hazardous Materials
- Public Safety

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS – RECREATION/PUBLIC ACCESS



The 0.5-mile Marsh Trail (a pedestrian-only trail) would be removed to accommodate wetland restoration.

Eliminating the Marsh Trail is not considered significant under CEQA or NEPA, as the existing North Beach Trail will continue to provide a similar trail experience, including a connection to the beach via the South Beach Trail.

REVIEWING THE DEIR/EIS

Review the DEIR/EIS online at:

<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>

Once at this site, scroll down to the section entitled:

Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II Phase I

REVIEWING THE DEIR/EIS

**Hard Copies of the DEIR/EIS
are Available for Review at these Locations**

Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center, San Ysidro Branch Library,
Imperial Beach Library, State Parks Southern Service Center,
State Parks San Diego Coast District Office

Addresses/phone numbers/office hours available at:

<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>

Scroll down to Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II Phase I

SUBMITTING YOUR COMMENTS ON THE DEIR/EIS

Submit Your Written Comments No Later Than October 3, 2022

Reminder: Only written comments will be accepted

Use any of the following methods to submit your written comments:

U.S. Mail: Brian Collins, USFWS, San Diego NWR Complex,
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista, CA 91910

Email: fw8plancomments@fws.gov; be sure to include “TETRP DEIS/EIR” in the email subject line

In-Person Drop-off: Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center,
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach.
Call 619-575-3613 to verify office days/hours

CEQA/NEPA TIMELINE

Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation	April 2021
Virtual Scoping Meetings	June 2021
Notice of Availability of Draft EIR/EIS	August 19, 2022
45-DAY COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE DEIR/EIS	AUG. 19, 2022 – OCT. 3, 2022
Notice of Availability of the Final EIS (NEPA)	January 2023
CDPR Deputy Director of Parks Ops Review & Action (CEQA)	January 2023
Record of Decision (NEPA); Notice of Determination (CEQA)	February 2023

NEXT STEPS:

- Preparation of Final Designs and Permitting
- Securing Funding for Implementation

TIME FOR QUESTIONS

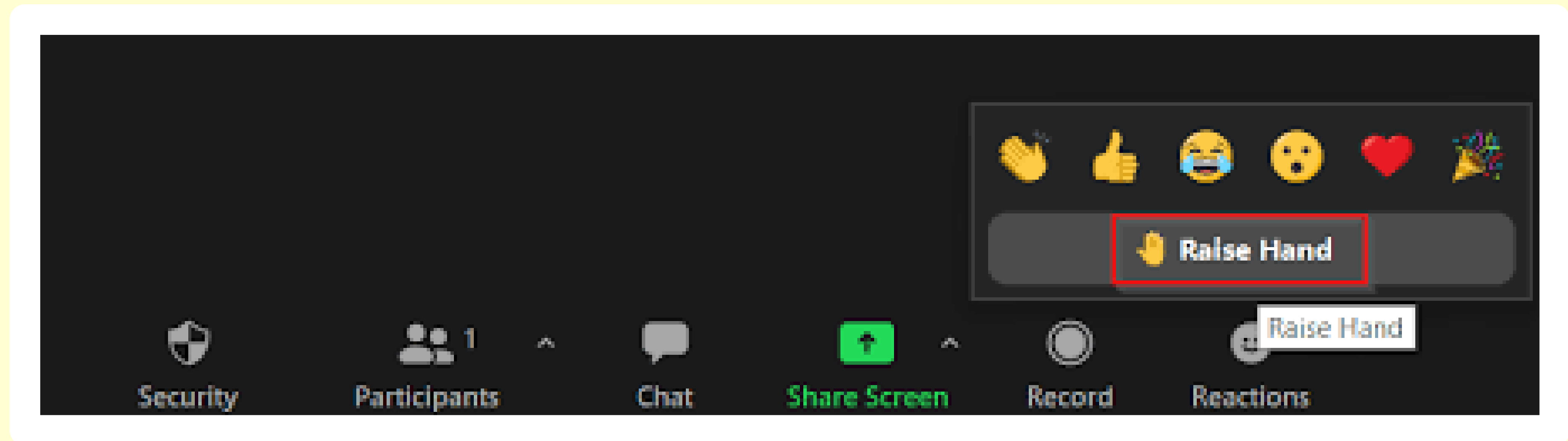
- Each Participant will be provided 2 minutes for asking questions.
- Once everyone has had an opportunity to ask their questions, if time remains, you may ask additional questions.
- Comments on the adequacy or accuracy of the DEIR/EIS must be provided in writing to become part of the formal record. Comments and questions from the public made at this meeting will not become part of the formal record. Responses from Team Members made at this meeting will not become part of the formal record.

For more information go to:

<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Use the “Raise Hand” feature during the question portion of the meeting.



TIME FOR QUESTIONS

00:00

- Each Participant will be provided 2 minutes for asking questions.
- Once everyone has had an opportunity to ask their questions, if time remains, you may ask additional questions.
- Comments on the adequacy or accuracy of the DEIR/EIS must be provided in writing to become part of the formal record. Comments and questions from the public made at this meeting will not become part of the formal record. Responses from Team Members made at this meeting will not become part of the formal record.

For more information go to:

<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>

REMINDER - COMMENTS DUE OCTOBER 3, 2022

Need More Information? Visit these websites:

<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/tijuana-slough>

U.S. Mail: Brian Collins, USFWS, San Diego NWR Complex,
1080 Gunpowder Point Drive, Chula Vista, CA 91910

Email: fw8plancomments@fws.gov; be sure to include
“TETRP DEIS/EIR” in the email subject line.

In-Person Drop-off: Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center (Wed – Sun)

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

For more information go to:

<https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>

**Questions? Contact Brian Collins, Refuge Manager, at
brian_collins@fws.gov or 760-431-9440 extension 273**

Additional project information is available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/tijuana-slough>