

EL DORADO COUNTY



DRAFT FEASIBILITY STUDY

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE SOUTH FORK OF THE
AMERICAN RIVER AT MOSQUITO ROAD BRIDGE



Prepared by the El Dorado County Community Development Administration,
Transportation Division

July, 2016

Contents

I. Introduction.....	2
II. Project Purpose	2
III. Project Background and Need	3
IV. Physical Environment	4
V. Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project Description	5
VI. Existing Public Access to Navigable River in Project Area	6
VII. Alternatives Considered	7
VIII. Preliminary Cost Estimates and Potential Funding Sources	8
IX. Coordination with Other Agencies	8
X. Conclusion and Findings	9
Exhibit A: Vicinity Map	10
Exhibit B: Project Location	11
Exhibit C: Mosquito Bridge Replacement – Preferred Alignment	12
Exhibit D: Existing River Access Conditions	13
Exhibit E-1: Existing River Access on Slab Creek Run	14
Exhibit E-2: Slab Creek Run Topography and Road Map	15
Exhibit F: Proposed Formal River Access on Slab Creek Run	16
Exhibit G1- G4: Photos.....	17
Exhibit H: Slab Creek Reservoir Powerhouse and Boat Access	21
Exhibit I: Slope Stability Map	22
Attachment A: Public Outreach and Response to Comments.....	23
Attachment B: Memorandum dated 12/08/15 Inviting Comments	28

I. Introduction

This study examines the feasibility of providing public access to the South Fork of the American River (SFAR) in El Dorado County, California, at the existing Mosquito Road Bridge in conformance with California Streets and Highways Code 991 and 84.5, due to the proposed construction of a new bridge across a navigable river.

California Streets and Highway Code 991 states that *“Before any bridge on a county highway is constructed over any navigable river, the Board of Supervisors, after a study and public hearing on the question, shall determine and shall prepare a report on the feasibility of providing public access to the river for recreational purposes and a determination as to whether such public access shall be provided.”*

California Streets and Highway Code 84.5 states: *“During the design hearing process relating to state highway projects that include the construction by the department of a new bridge across a navigable river, there shall be included full consideration of, and a report on, the feasibility of providing a means of public access to the navigable river for public recreational purposes”.*

II. Project Purpose

The El Dorado County Community Development Agency, Transportation Division (Transportation), received federal funds to replace the existing Mosquito Bridge located in a steep canyon of the SFAR, 6 miles north of U.S. Highway 50, and 2.3 miles south of the communities of Mosquito and Swansboro along Mosquito Road (See Exhibits A and B). The purpose of the Mosquito Road Bridge Project (Project) is to replace the existing Mosquito Road Bridge over the SFAR with a functional bridge that meets current design and safety standards.

The following technical studies for this project are underway and projected to be completed by the summer of 2016:

- Geotechnical Report
- Foundation Report
- Natural Environment Study
- Archaeological Survey Report
- Historical Resources Evaluation Report
- Cultural Area of Potential Effects
- Community Impact Assessment
- Visual Impact Assessment
- Noise Study Report
- Air Quality Conformity Analysis and Report
- Wetland Delineation Report

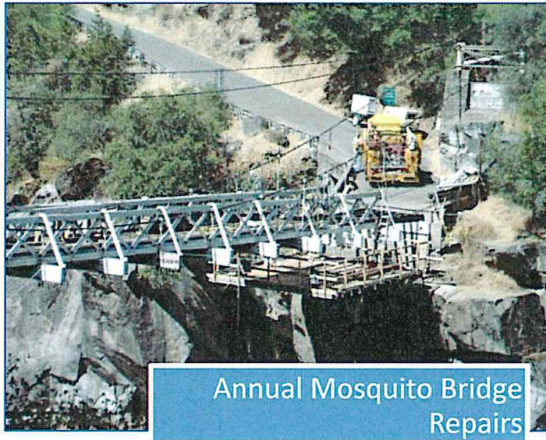
III. Project Background and Need

The original Mosquito Road Bridge, known as the “swinging bridge,” was built in 1876 linking the communities of Mosquito and Swansboro to Placerville on Mosquito Road; originally a wagon trail. In 1939, the bridge was largely reconstructed while maintaining the 1876 foundations.

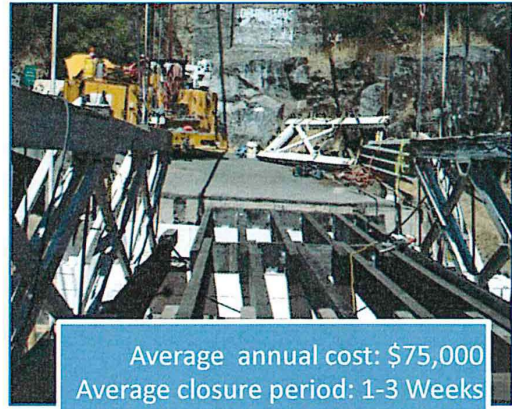
Mosquito Road is a narrow roadway that meanders through mountainous terrain and switchbacks in the steep SFAR Canyon. At the bottom of the canyon Mosquito Bridge spans the SFAR in a northwest-southeast direction, serving an average daily traffic (ADT) volume in 2015 of approximately 1,256 vehicles per day. The only other access roadway is Rock Creek Road to the north, with an ADT of approximately 220 vehicles. Due to the conditions of the existing bridge and bridge approaches, emergency and larger commercial vehicles and trucks are unable to cross the bridge. While Mosquito Road provides direct access to Placerville, Rock Creek Road provides a longer route via State Routes 193 and 49 (Exhibit E-2). Rock Creek Road can better accommodate varied types of vehicles, including first responders, but under high demands, such as during the 2014 King Fire, the windy narrow roadway with sharp turns is overtaken and traffic flow breaks down.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Association (FHWA) Highway Bridge Program (HBP) have rated the Mosquito Bridge structurally deficient and functionally obsolete with a sufficiency rating (SR) of 12.5 out of a possible 100. Those bridges appearing on the list with a sufficiency rating of less than 50 are eligible for replacement or rehabilitation due to their poor condition and the fact that such structures do not meet current design and safety standards. Roadway approaches to Mosquito Road Bridge are also sub-standard due to a narrow, steep roadway, five tight hairpin turns—one on the south canyon face (Placerville side), and four on the north canyon face (Mosquito/Swansboro side).

In current times, the bridge requires extensive maintenance resulting in a road/bridge closure of one to three weeks per year at an average annual cost of approximately \$75,000. The existing span across the river is a one-lane, 9-foot-wide, 160-foot long limited-capacity timber suspension bridge. The deck system and railing all consist of timber (See Photos 1-4 in Exhibit G). Those elements are supported on timber stringers that are attached at each end to vertical steel rods hanging from the main suspension cables. The existing bridge is posted to limit vehicle loads to 5 tons, along with vehicle size and dimensions. Trailers and large trucks are not permitted. Sharp, nearly 90-degree-angled turns onto the bridge and speeds across the bridge are generally less than 10 miles per hour (mph) due to the bridge’s narrow width.



Annual Mosquito Bridge Repairs

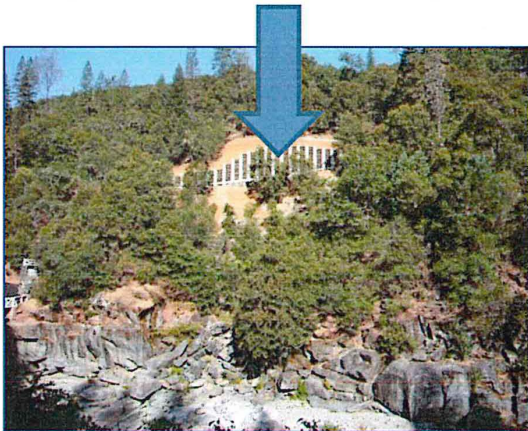


Average annual cost: \$75,000
Average closure period: 1-3 Weeks

IV. Physical Environment

The general topography at the existing Mosquito Bridge site is characterized by moderate slopes changing to very steep slopes in the densely vegetated, steep canyon area. (See Photos 1-4 in Exhibit G and the topographical map in Exhibit E-2). The river is heavily bounded by bedrock in the banks and channels and large boulders and sharp rocks on the slopes.

Due to the physical characteristics of the site, Mosquito Bridge is in an area with a history of landslides and sudden slope failures. The Draft Field Exploration Map in Exhibit I identifies the “slope instability” zones in the project area. Past landslides have closed Mosquito Road for protracted periods of time and have required the construction of repairs such as soldier pile walls and rock netting, to reopen the roadway. Most recently, a severe slide in 2006 led the County to declare an emergency and close Mosquito Road. With assistance from FEMA, the road was reopened in 2007 after completing a \$3,000,000 repair project. (See photos below).



Soldier Pile Wall Constructed in 2007

V. Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project Description

Various alternatives were examined for the bridge replacement project to determine the most direct route over the river with the least environmental impact. The preferred alternative found to satisfy all the goals and objectives of the project is a new bridge with a vertical profile approximately 400 feet over the river (Exhibit C). This preferred alternative is on the most direct alignment across the river with very little skew, resulting in a main bridge length ranging from approximately 1,150 to 1,250 feet. It is anticipated that the new bridge over the SFAR would be a three-span, cast-in-place pre-stressed concrete box girder-type bridge with a maximum span of approximately 550 feet.

To comply with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and El Dorado County standards, the lane widths for the new roadway segments and on the new bridge would be 12 feet. Due to the steep mountainous terrain and to maintain consistency with the existing roadway leading to and from the site, the roadway shoulder would generally include a 4-foot paved area plus a 1-foot graded area. A 5-foot paved shoulder would be provided on the bridge next to a concrete barrier and railing. With these features the new bridge would be approximately 37.5 feet wide (34 feet clear width).

The Project involves an approximately 2,000-foot realignment of the roadway. The departure from the existing roadway on the south involves approximately 575 feet of roadway approach to the nearly 1,200-foot-long bridge, then a 300-foot northerly roadway approach where the alignment converges back to the existing roadway. The proposed Project would eliminate substandard roadway approaches that currently restrict vehicle access to the bridge—the one switch-back turn on the Placerville side of the canyon and the four severe switch-back turns on the Mosquito/Swansboro side of the canyon. A detailed discussion of the proposed Project and the description of Alternatives will be provided in the Environmental document upon issuance.

Existing Bridge: The existing Mosquito Bridge is proposed to be removed after traffic is shifted onto the new bridge. The Highway Bridge Program does not fund a transfer use, and once the new bridge is in operation, the old bridge comes off the County bridge list. Any future effort by the County or other agency to keep the old bridge for pedestrian use would be handled as a separate project apart from the HPB funding.

Upon removing the existing bridge, the suspension span components would be disassembled without impacting the river. The concrete supporting towers, short steel frames, and other bridge substructure would remain in place as a reminder of the old bridge location. Barricades would be installed at the end of the old roadway on both sides of the river. Mosquito Road will remain; however the roadway segments on each side of the river are proposed to be controlled by gates located below existing driveway encroachments. The gates will be closed to public vehicle access once the new bridge is open for use.

VI. Existing Public Access to Navigable River in Project Area

Mosquito Road Bridge is located within an approximately 10 river mile Class IV-V navigable section of the SFAR known as the “Slab Creek Run” that extends from Slab Creek Reservoir to Chili Bar Reservoir. In this section, the river follows a deep forested canyon that is usually not “boatable” due to flow controls; managed by the Sacramento Municipal Water Utility District (SMUD) at the Slab Creek Reservoir approximately 3.6 miles above the Project site. Flows are released through the Slab Creek Powerhouse into the SFAR to meet the minimum flow requirements prescribed under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/docs/uppr/amrvr/uarp_ferc_license.pdf¹

Under a new FERC licensing agreement issued July 23, 2014, SMUD is required to provide recreational flow releases, ranging from 850 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 1,500 cfs for six days in no less than three events in the period beginning March 1 and ending May31.² Such releases accommodate expert Class IV-V whitewater boating on the Slab Creek Run. Due to drought conditions and environmental protections measures, the number of releases each year may vary depending upon snowpack conditions, water temperature, results of monitoring programs and other factors impacting river use, habitat and fish and wildlife protection.

SMUD currently provides informal river access at the “put-in” location of Slab Creek Run 3.2 river miles above Mosquito Road Bridge. Under the new licensing agreement, SMUD proposes to develop a recreation plan for upgrading and expanding existing recreation facilities, including upgrading the existing access facility at Slab Creek Reservoir and reviewing options to enhance or build boating “take-out” facilities below Mosquito Bridge.³ According to SMUD sources, the White House Powerhouse is no longer a viable boating take-out location due to vehicle access issues. An alternative site at the Rock Creek Powerhouse on property owned by the Bureau of Land Management is under review (Exhibit F).

The American Whitewater Association (AW) is a non-profit organization that serves as an advocacy group for whitewater recreation. On its website, AW states “*Mosquito Bridge is an alternate take out allows boating the steepest few miles (of Slab Creek Run) while avoiding Motherlode Falls and the easier water below. Unfortunately there are only 3 to 5 spaces at the bridge.....*” <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/147/>.

While Slab Creek Run is known in the recreational boating community as an expert Class IV-V whitewater run (during recreational releases), Mosquito Bridge is not an official boating take-out site or authorized by El Dorado County for public river access. As such, there are no public parking facilities or formal trails that lead to the river’s edge. In general the site is not conducive

¹ U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 148 FERC, 62,070, *Order Issuing New License, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Project no. 2101-084, Page 86, July 23, 2014.*

² Ibid, page 89.

³ Ibid, pages 59-60.

to supporting public access facilities due to steep vertically aligned slopes, rocky and dangerous terrain and geographical constraints. Additionally, as mentioned in the AW website, parking is extremely limited due to Mosquito Road narrowing to one lane at the bridge approaches.

During the re-licensing process, SMUD examined the Mosquito Road Bridge site for potential boating access and determined it to be an infeasible boating take-out location. SMUD concluded there are too many site constraints prohibiting the development of suitable vehicle parking or boater access from the river without extensive construction, excavation, environmental impact and cost. In an email dated December 15, 2015 to El Dorado County, SMUD stated it does not intend to develop the Mosquito Road Bridge site for recreational boating or other purposes, nor does the agency have plans to assume operations and maintenance responsibility for either the bridge or the adjoining road approaches to the existing bridge.

On December 8, 2015 Transportation reached out to stakeholders soliciting comments on the issue of river access within the vicinity of Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project. The invitation provided a project description and stated a river access feasibility study would be prepared as part of the proposed bridge replacement pursuant to CA Streets & Highway Code 991. Upon evaluating the written comments received, the Transportation prepared responses in conjunction with preparation of this Feasibility Study, provided in Attachment A.

VII. Alternatives Considered

The County has considered the following alternatives on the feasibility of providing access to the SFAR from the existing Mosquito Bridge site for recreational purposes in accordance with California Streets and Highway Code 991 and 84.5:

- A. Public river access at the existing Mosquito Road Bridge site on the Placerville (south) side of the SFAR.
- B. Access at the existing Mosquito Road Bridge site on the Mosquito (north) side of the SFAR.

Issues and potential impacts under Alternatives A and B include but are not limited to:

- a. El Dorado County owns a prescriptive easement for Mosquito Road, but does not own the property, or have rights to the areas outside of the paved roadway edges.
- b. El Dorado County does not own the land adjacent to the river, or have rights to the river, and as such it does not have the authority to grant access.
- c. There is no adequate location to provide parking at either approach to the bridge on Mosquito Road.
- d. El Dorado County would need to acquire private land or expand the existing prescriptive easement on Mosquito Road to provide parking at or near the bridge.

The closest feasible location is on the south side of the SFAR, approximately ½ mile from the bridge.

- e. Due to the steep, rocky slopes between Mosquito Road and the SFAR, constructing pedestrian access would be extremely difficult, dangerous and costly to build.
- f. Potential environmental impacts, protection of riparian habitats and best management practices will need to be considered and comply with local, state and federal regulations where applicable.
- g. Construction of a river access facility would require extensive maintenance and on-going costly repairs.
- h. River access facilities would likely be within the Dam Failure Inundation Zone of the Chili Bar and Slab Creek Dams.
- i. Construction of a path, stairway or any other associated facility would require review and permits from various agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, El Dorado County and others.

VIII. Preliminary Cost Estimates and Potential Funding Sources

The bridge replacement is funded through the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) and does not include funding for public access or the preservation and maintenance of the existing bridge. Therefore, detailed costs estimates were not prepared for the installation of a public facility at the existing Mosquito Road Bridge site. Based on the cost of the soldier pile wall constructed in 2007 on Mosquito Road, it can be assumed that construction of river access and parking/turn around facilities would entail a multimillion dollar project. The lack of buildable area would require cutting into the existing (unstable) slopes to develop facilities.

The project scope for providing access would vary based on negotiations with property owners and permitting agencies to determine the project location, access route, mitigation measures and accompanying facilities such as parking. Other considerations include the history of slides, risk factors and liability. Due to funding constraints under the Mosquito Bridge Project, future public access and maintenance efforts would be considered as separate projects and require separate funding sources. With limited funds for parks and recreation projects, the County would look to outside resources to fund a project, such as the California Department of Boating and Waterways Program.

IX. Coordination with Other Agencies

As previously mentioned, coordination with various agencies would be required to obtain the necessary permits to construct formal public access facilities. Such agencies may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- California Regional Water Quality Control Board

- United States Army Corp of Engineers
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish and Wildlife
- Forest Service

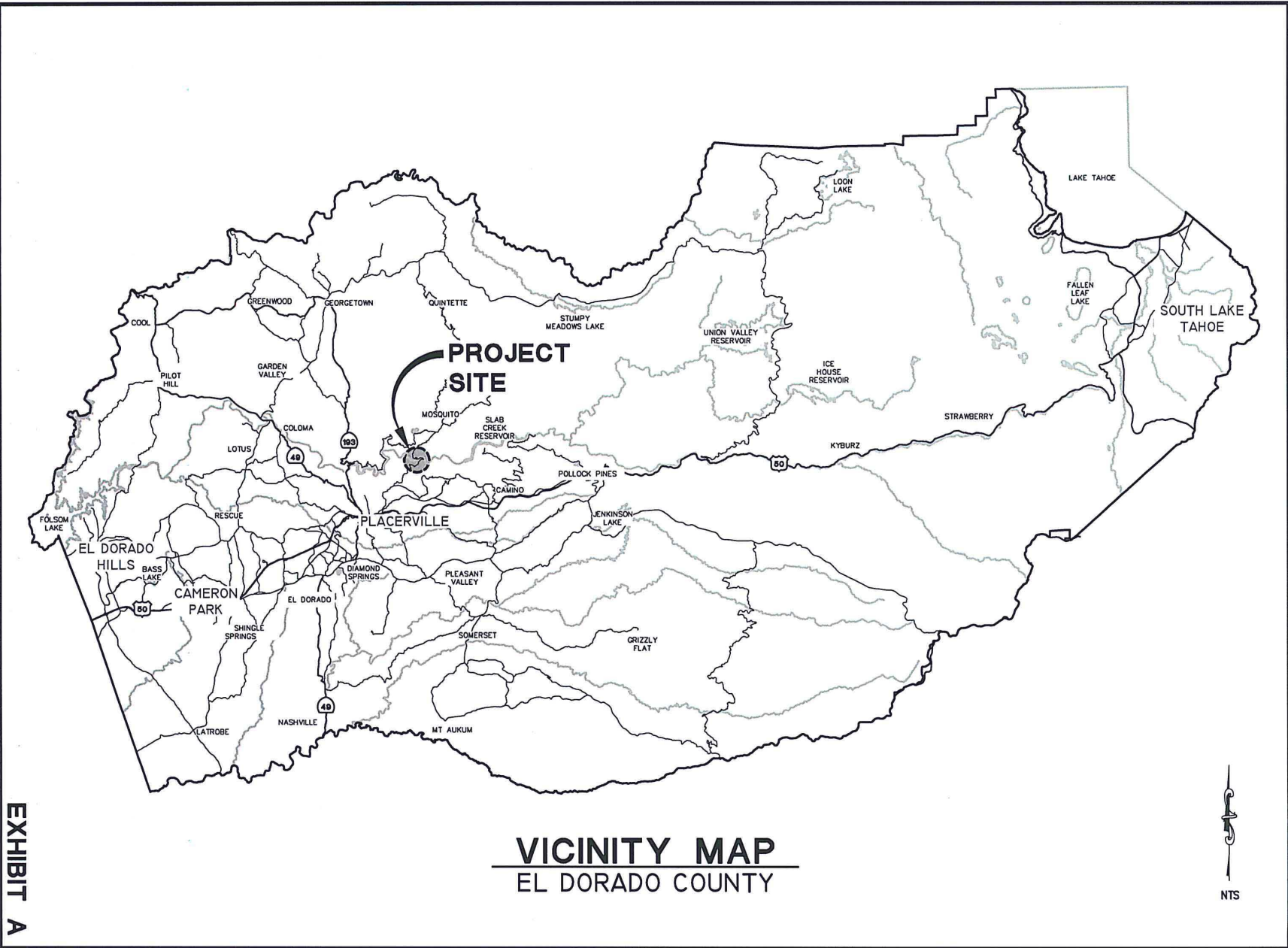
X. Conclusion and Findings

The combination of land acquisition, topographical limitations, dangerous conditions, environmental impacts, funding constraints and construction costs make the existing bridge site impractical for new public river access facilities. SMUD reached a similar conclusion when it examined the site as a potential take-out location to meet its license agreement. Any further discussions on the matter should include strong consideration of the physical limitations and geologic sensitivity of the site, along with the variations in high water mark levels and the lack of room for parking and safe turn-around areas.

Once traffic is shifted to the new bridge, the bridge approaches can be maintained by the County for limited restricted use for emergency vehicle access, utilities and maintenance. The estimated cost for maintaining both bridge approaches is approximately \$8,000 per year. Pedestrian access will not be restricted from above the gates. However, the County cannot authorize parking on private property.

As a result of the study and conclusions, the El Dorado County Transportation Division makes the following findings:

1. Due to physical constraints, potential environmental impacts, cost, safety, and other reasons cited in the Feasibility Study, it is not feasible or practical to construct additional public river access facilities as part of the Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project at the existing Mosquito Bridge.
2. River boating access facilities on the Slab Creek Run are already being developed by SMUD. Conditions under the new UARP licensing agreement require SMUD to develop a whitewater boating recreation plan for the SFAR below Slab Creek Dam which includes the provision of public recreational boating access and parking at Slab Creek Reservoir and at or near the White Rock Powerhouse.
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/water_quality_cert/docs/uppramrvr/uarp_ferc_license.pdf
3. For safety reasons, once traffic is shifted to the new bridge, vehicular access on the bridge approaches (below the gates) should be restricted to maintenance, fire protection and other service and emergency vehicles.
4. Once the new bridge is constructed, it will be feasible for pedestrians and boaters to continue using Mosquito Road.



VICINITY MAP
EL DORADO COUNTY

EXHIBIT A

PROJECT LOCATION

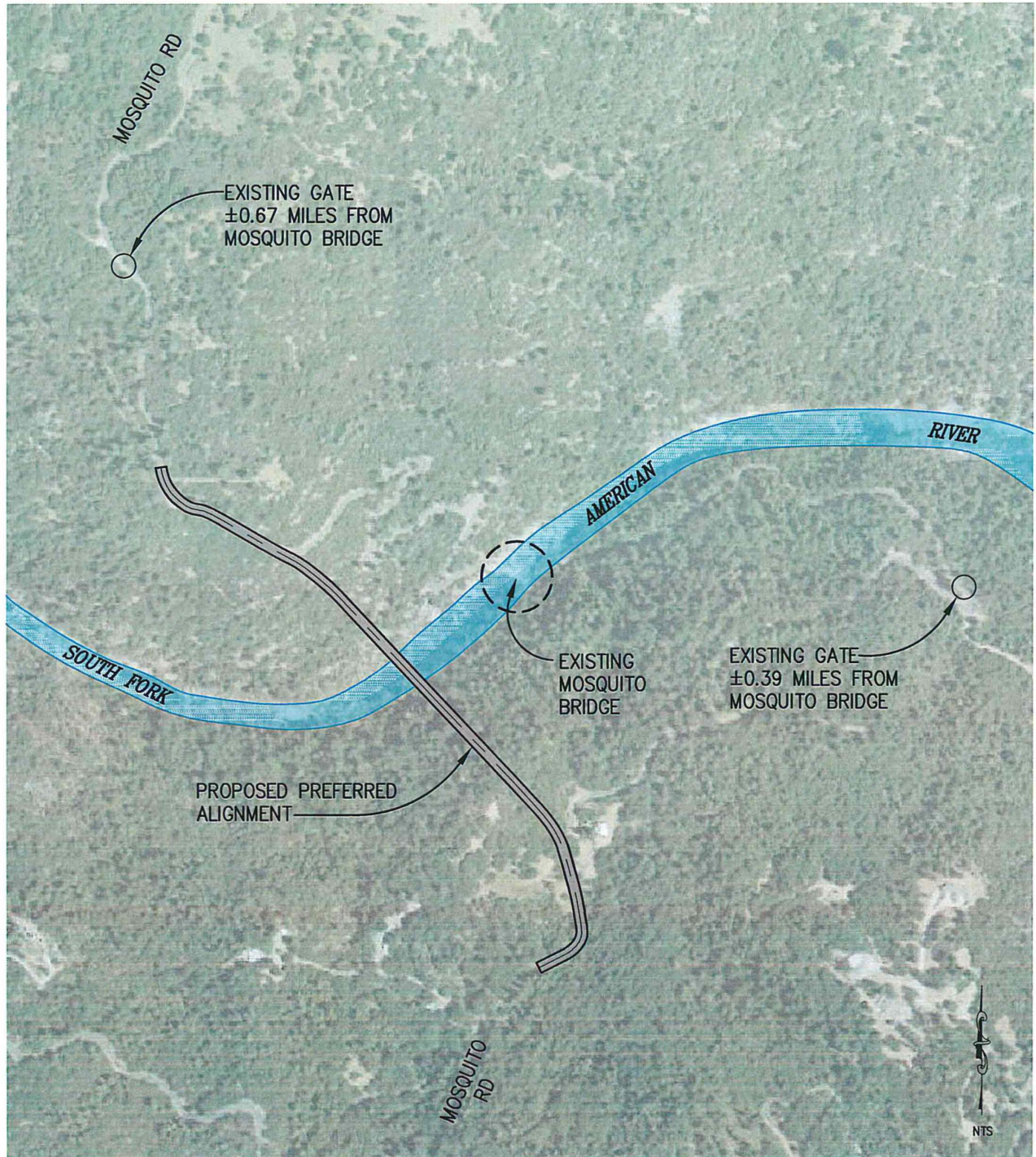
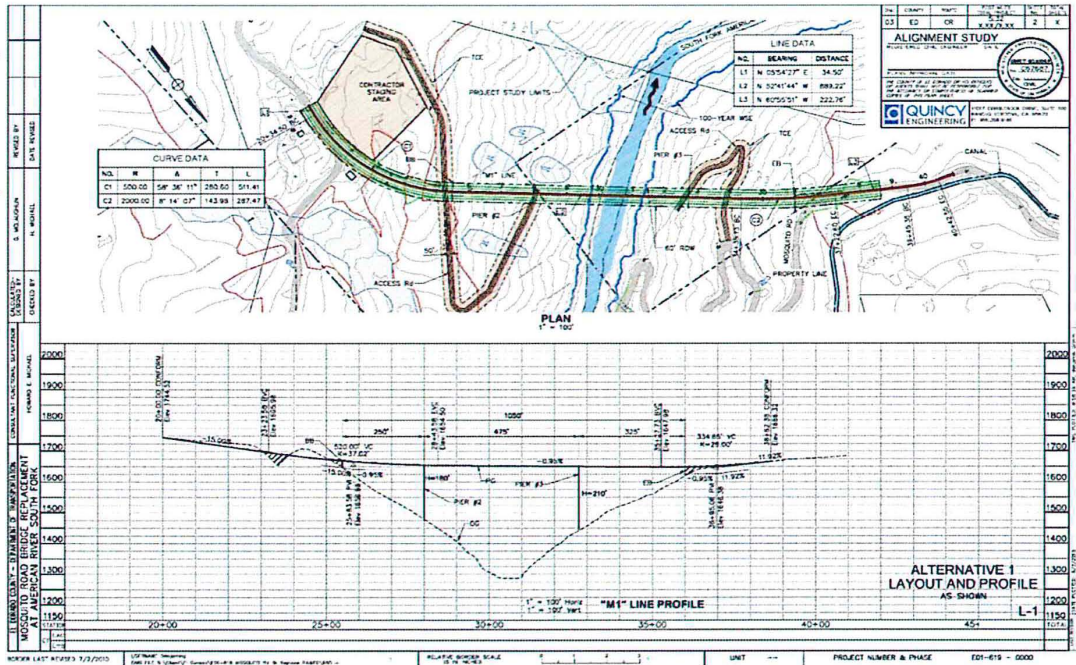
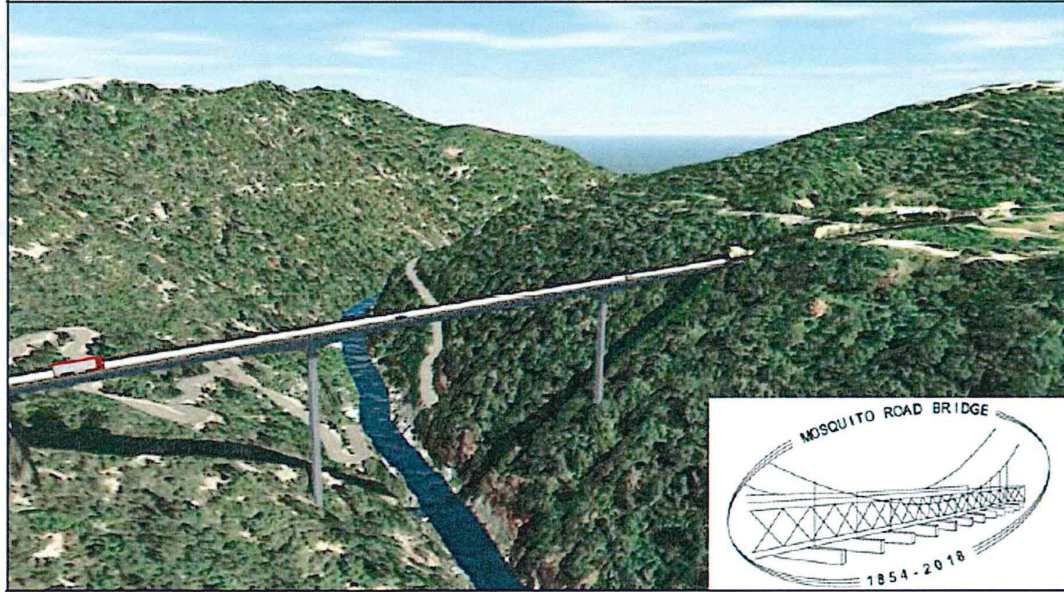
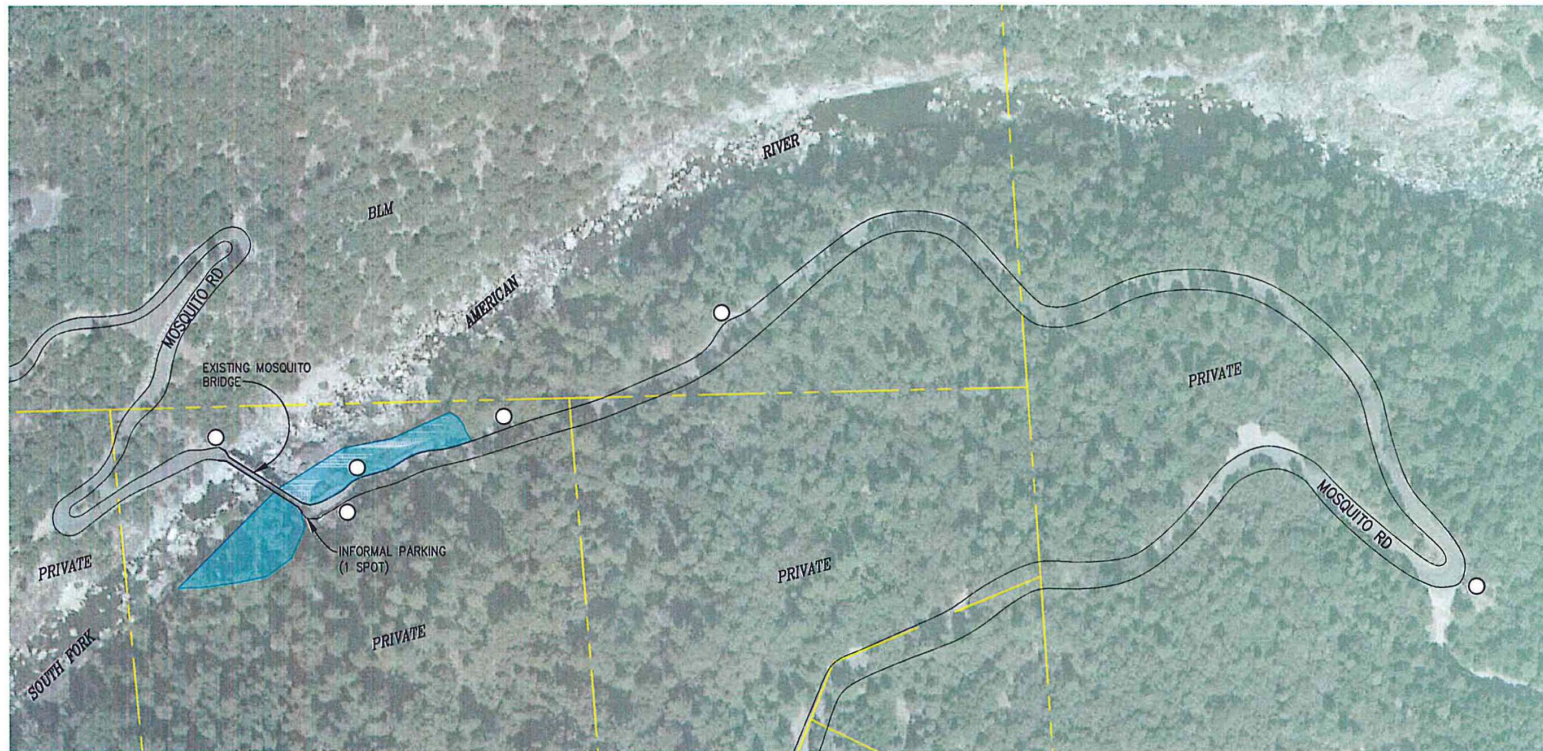


EXHIBIT B

Exhibit C: Mosquito Bridge Replacement – Preferred Alignment



MOSQUITO BRIDGE RIVER ACCESS CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDING OWNERSHIP



LEGEND

- — TURNOUTS - NO AUTHORIZED PARKING
- — INFORMAL BOATING TAKE-OUT AREA



EXHIBIT D

SLAB CREEK RUN - EXISTING RIVER ACCESS

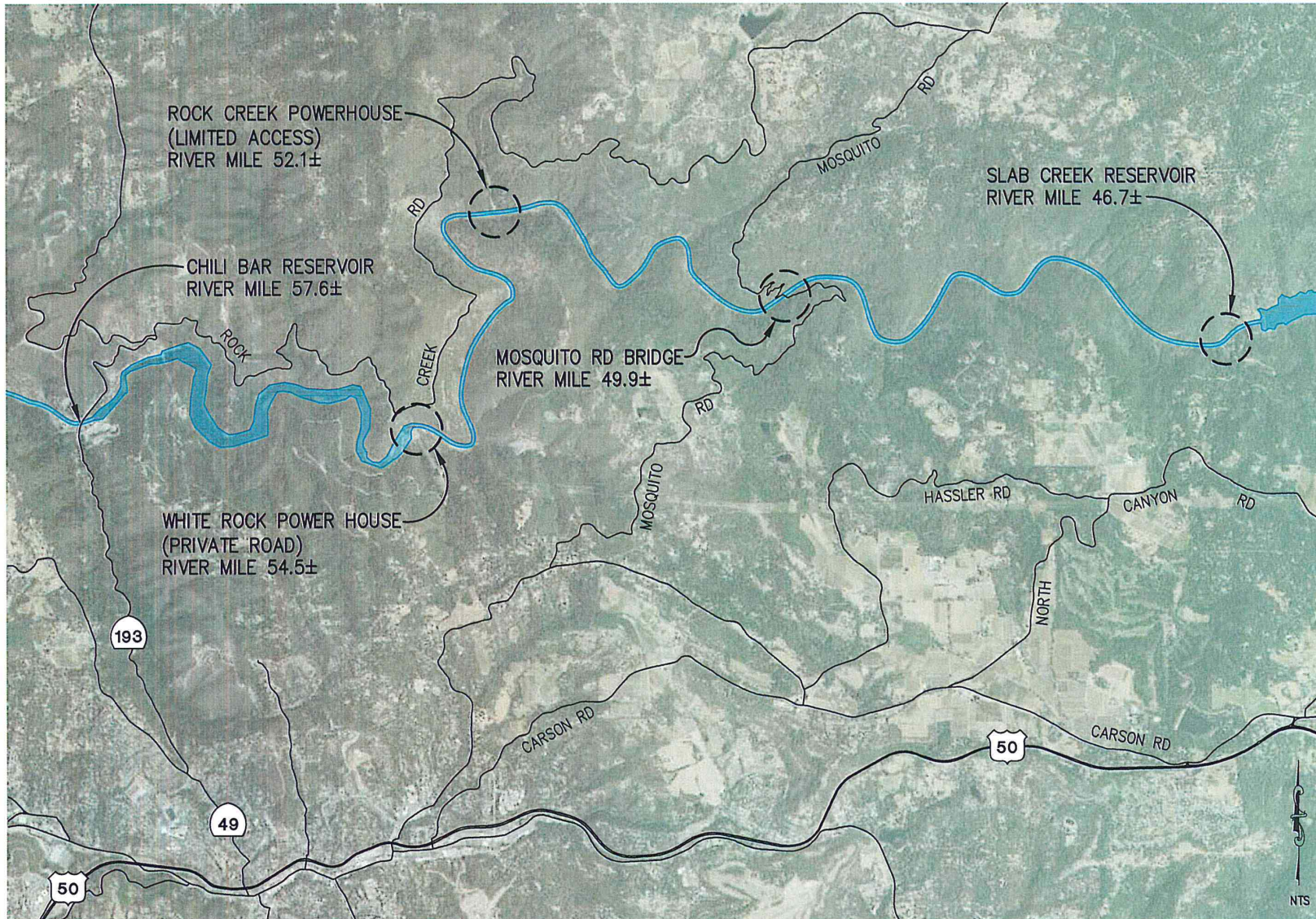
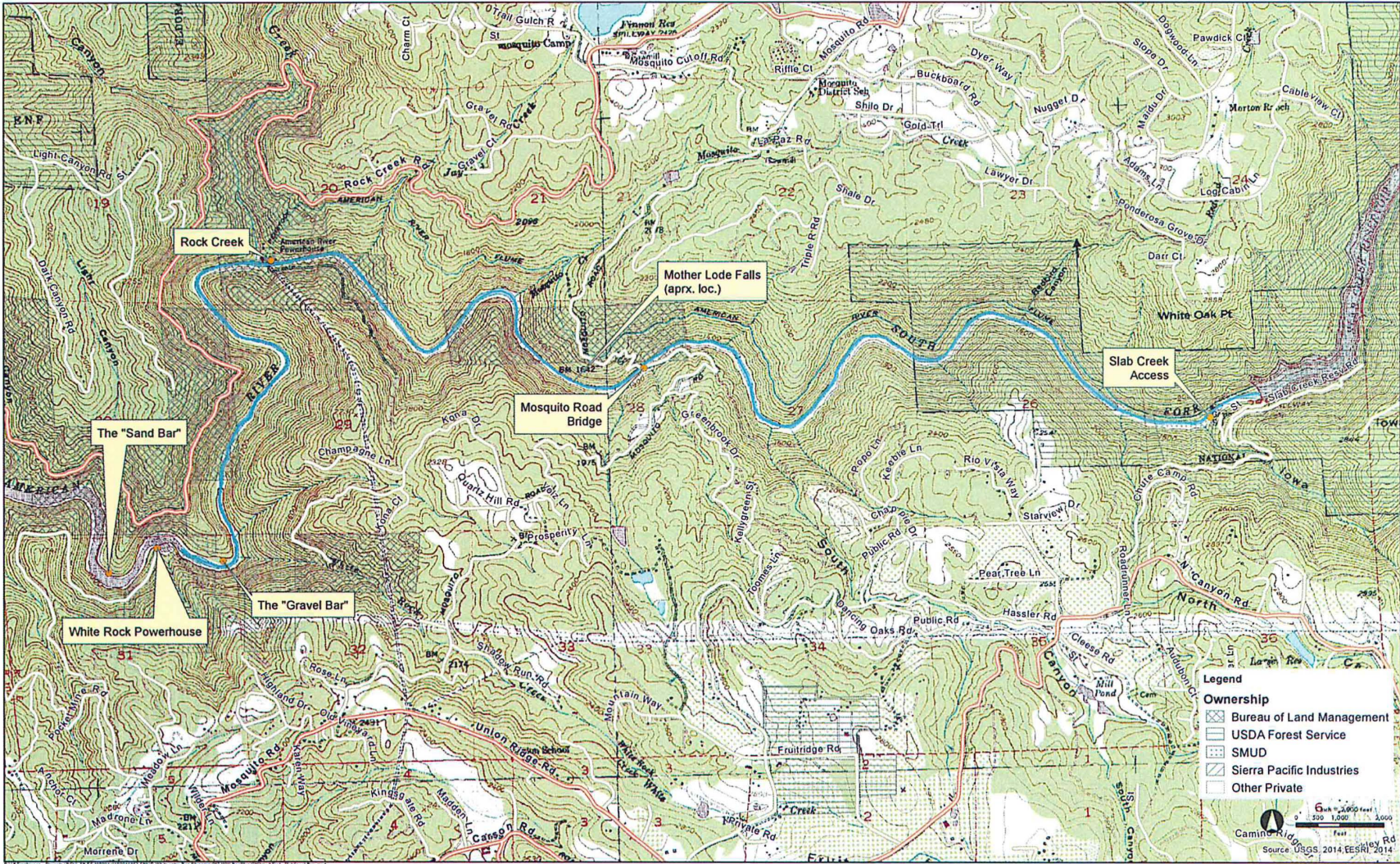


EXHIBIT E-2 : SLAB CREEK RUN TOPOGRAPHY AND ROAD MAP



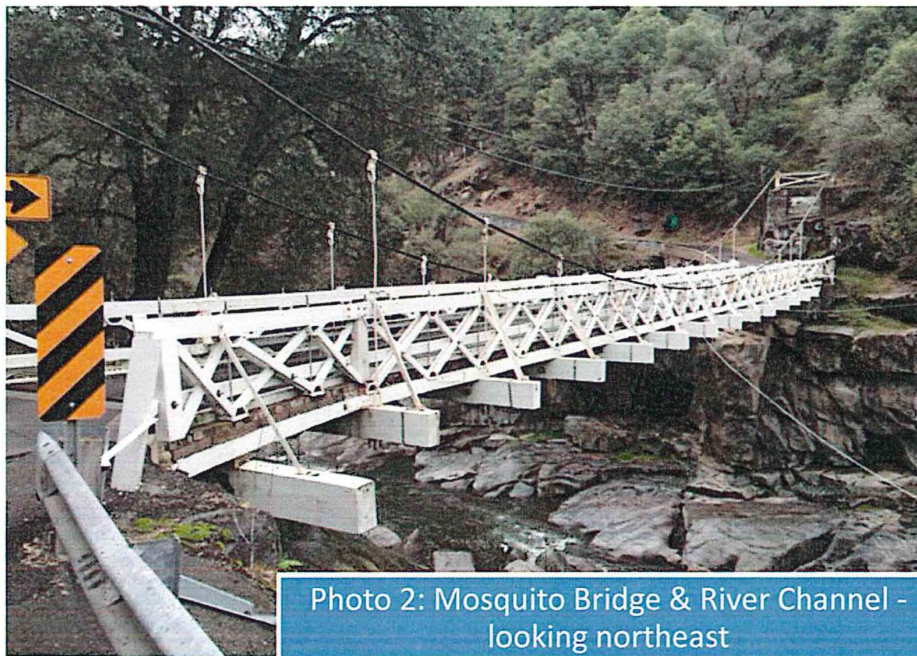
Map provided by SMUD

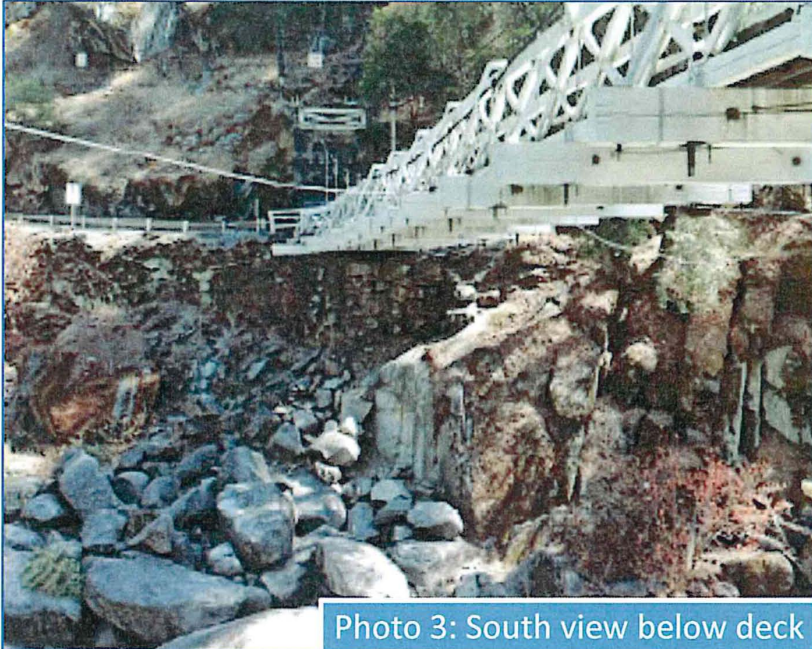
Exhibit E-2

SLAB CREEK RUN - PROPOSED RIVER ACCESS



Exhibit G1- G4: Photos





Left: View toward south (Placerville) side of the river channel. Scheduled releases bring water levels significantly higher than shown. To take-out, boaters portage by climbing up the bedrock

Photo 3: South view below deck

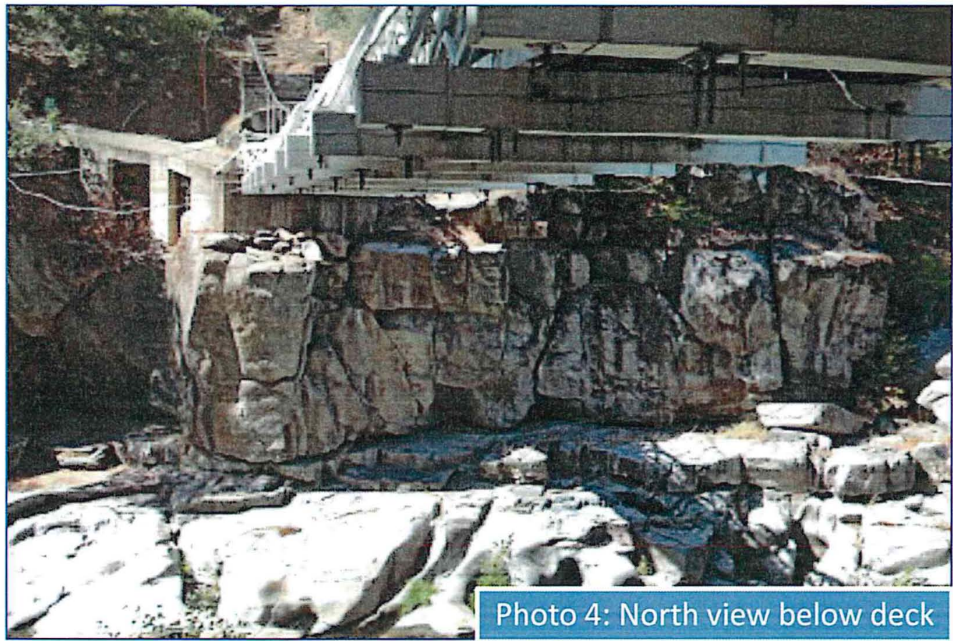
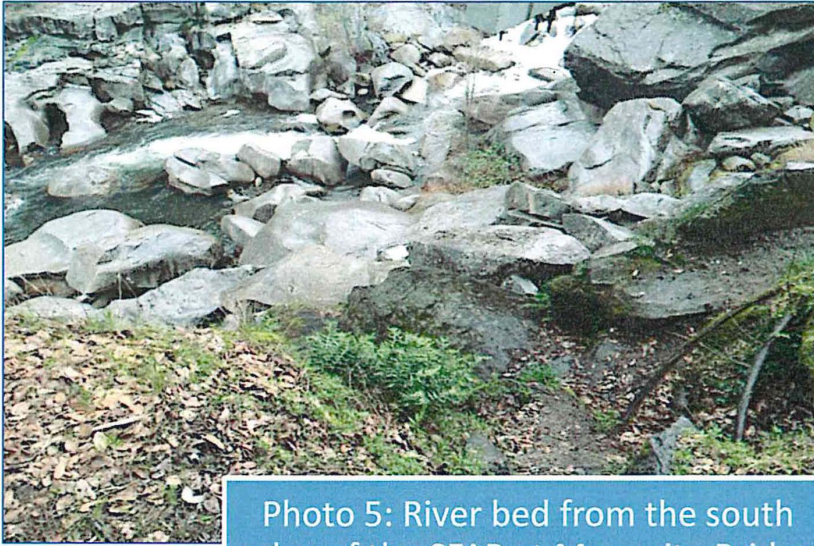


Photo 4: North view below deck



Left: Evidence of pathways on the southwest side of the bridge entrance. Pathways are extremely steep and dangerous; not suitable for public pedestrian access.

Photo 5: River bed from the south edge of the SFAR at Mosquito Bridge

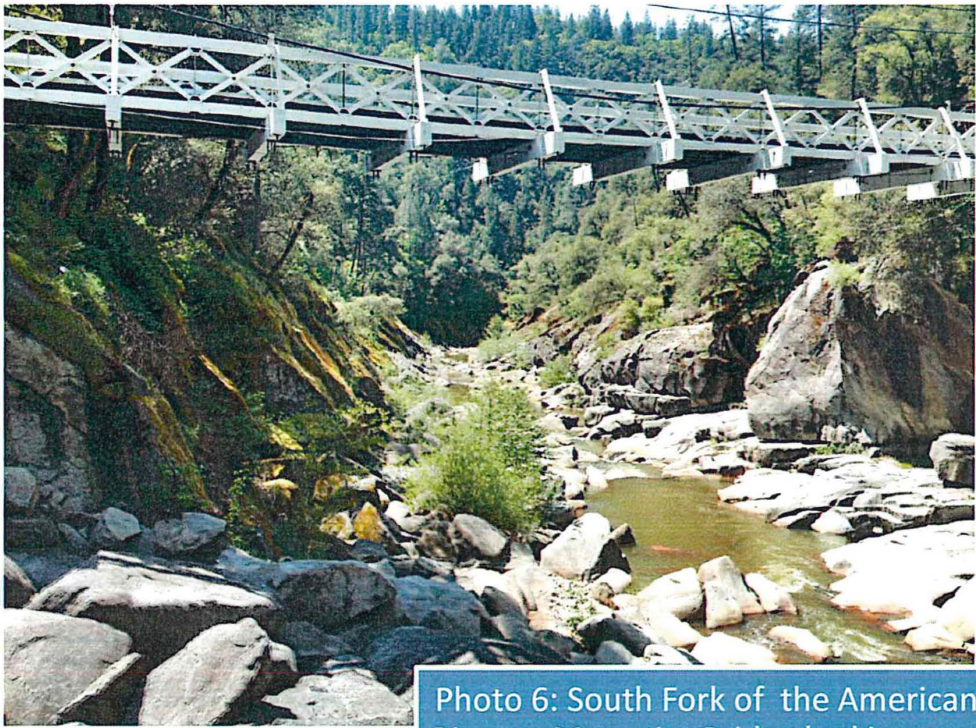


Photo 6: South Fork of the American River at Mosquito Bridge looking east

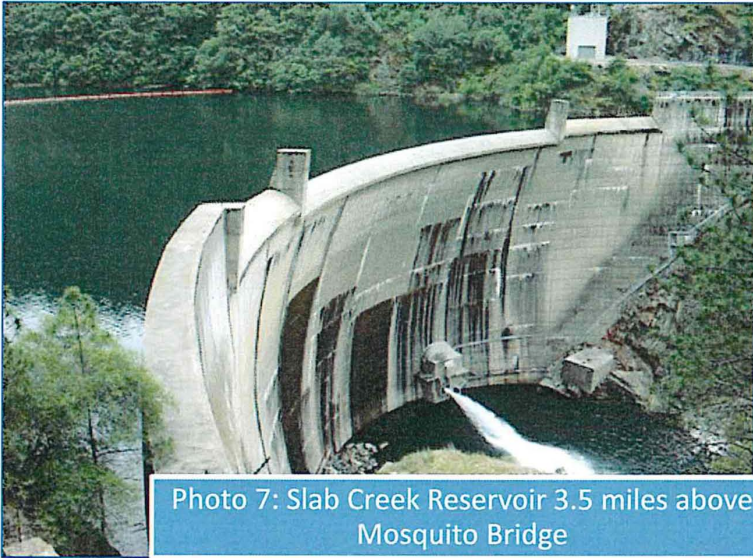
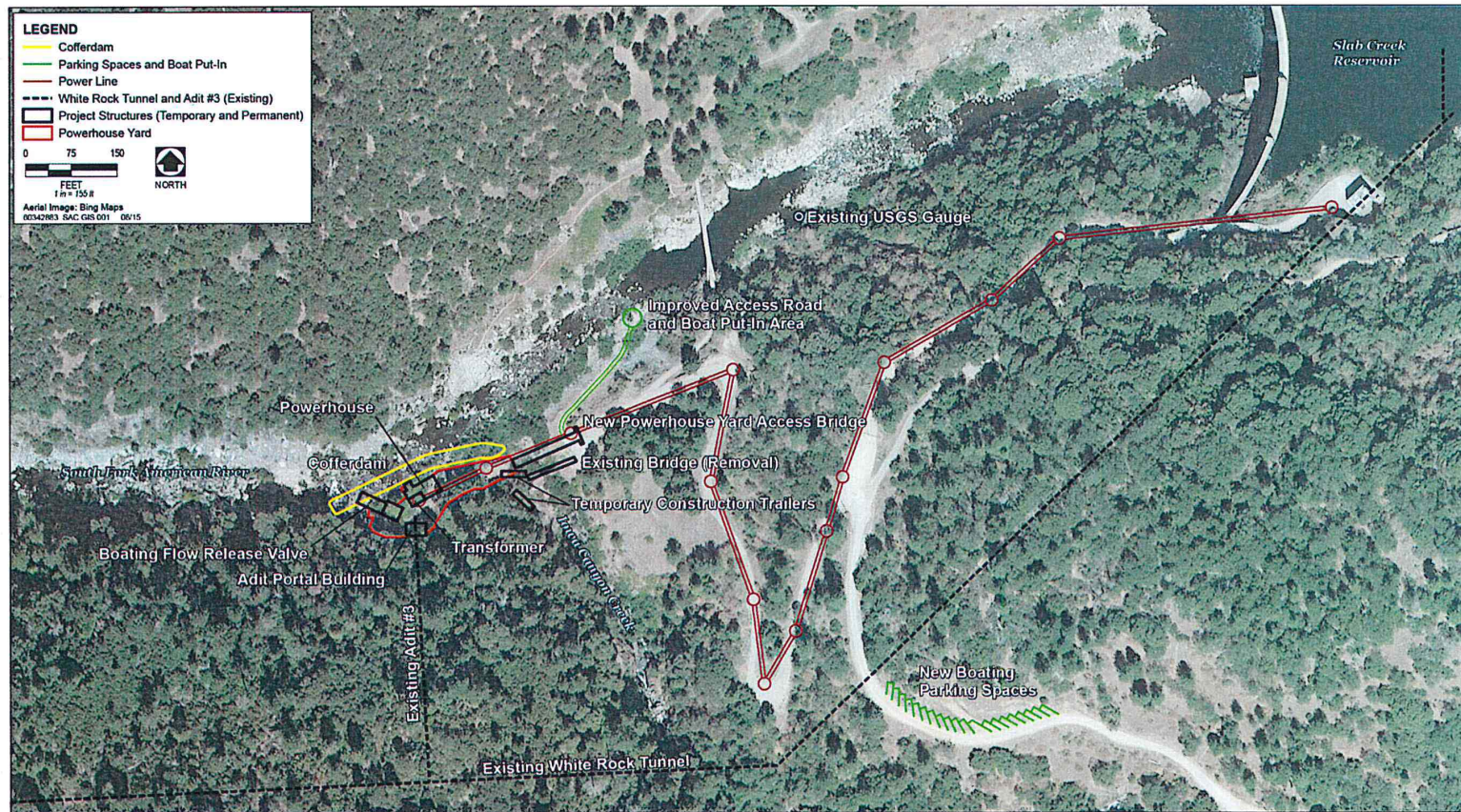


Photo 7: Slab Creek Reservoir 3.5 miles above Mosquito Bridge

Left: Slab Creek Reservoir (approximately 17,000 acre feet). According to SMUD past spills at Slab Creek Reservoir have been uncontrolled. Pending drought conditions, a new licensing agreement requires limited controlled releases for recreational uses starting in the spring of 2016.



Photo 8: South Fork of the American River during storm conditions



Source: AECOM 2015

Figure provided by SMUD

EXHIBIT H

Attachment A: Public Outreach and Response to Comments

Public Access to the South Fork of the American River at Mosquito Road Bridge Public Outreach and Response to Comments

Introduction

On December 8, 2015 the El Dorado County Transportation Division reached out to stakeholders soliciting comments on the issue of river access within the vicinity of Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project. (See Attachment B – Memorandum). The invitation provided a project description and stated a river access feasibility study would be prepared as part of the proposed bridge replacement pursuant to CA Streets & Highway Code 991. Upon evaluating the written comments received, the El Dorado County Transportation Division prepared the following responses in conjunction with preparation of the feasibility study to be presented to the County Board of Supervisors in August, 2016.

List of Commenters

A list of public agencies, organizations and individuals who provided comments on river access for the Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project is presented below along with a brief summary of these comments followed by responses.

● Commenter
● Public Agencies
● US Department of the Interior, National Park Service
● Private Organizations and Non-Profits
● Sacramento Municipal Utility District
● American Whitewater
● Private Individuals
● Mark Divittorio
● Brian Ginsberg
● Janet Hayes
● Darrick Hilbert
● Matthew Phillips
● Thomas Stuart
● Chris Tulley
● Jeff Wasielewski

Comment Summary and Responses to Comments

Public Agencies

1. U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service.

On December 15, 2014 National Park Service submitted a letter stated that, as a participant of the Upper American River Project, the section between Slab Creek Dam and White Rock Powerhouse is a

popular 7.5 mile Class IV-V whitewater run and there are few take-out options for boaters. With increased recreational flow days, there will likely be more boaters. The commenter referenced California Streets and Highway Code 991 and provided recommendations for the scoping process and implementation.

Response: A River Access Feasibility Study was prepared in conformance with California Streets and Highway Code 991. The study addressed recommendations in the comment letter including identifying existing boating access and current and future recreation within the Slab Creek reach/run. The study determined access within the bridge right of way is infeasible within the existing geographic constraints of the project area. The construction of parking and river access facilities would be considered a separate project due to funding limitations under the Federal Bridge Program and would require extensive excavation leading to unavoidable environmental impacts and costs.

Private Organizations and Non-Profits

2. Sacramento Municipal Water Utility District

The Sacramento Municipal Water Utility District (SMUD) submitted a comment letter on December 15, 2015, stating that SMUD does not intend to develop the Mosquito Bridge site for recreational boating or other purposes, and has no plans or desire to assume operations and maintenance responsibility for either the bridge or the adjoining road approaches to the existing bridge.

Response: Comments noted.

3. American Whitewater

American Whitewater (AW) submitted three comment letters dated November 18, 2014, July 27, 2015 and December 31, 2015. The latter was in direct response to the 12-09-15 invitation for comments on controlled river access. As an advocate of whitewater recreation, AW stated it would like to see public river access included in all bridge design alternatives for the Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project. AW described the new licensing and recreational release requirements and noted requirements for complying with California Streets and Highway Code 991. The commenter also stated AW is working with Caltrans on river access for the Highway 49 bridge replacement and suggested the County follow the same components when preparing a River Access Feasibility Study.

AW stated it does not support removing the existing Mosquito Bridge; citing such action would be inconsistent with screening criteria for preserving the community character. Options for river access during construction were requested to be considered. Under preferred scenarios AW suggested the following: (1) providing year round access to the river; (2) maintaining the existing bridge for pedestrian access; (3) providing year round vehicle access on the south side of the river; (4) exploring the possibility of additional parking at two locations; and (3) improving pedestrian access to the river from the bridge. Alternative scenarios were also suggested if year round access could not be provided.

On the issue of funding, AW noted an existing Cooperation Agreement between SMUD and El Dorado County that provides \$590,000 to be utilized by the County for purposes of road maintenance, watershed management, and other miscellaneous activities related to the UARP and its impacts on facilities owned or services provided by, or any resource or other interest within the jurisdiction of, the

County. AW suggested since SFAR below Slab Creek is well within the boundaries of the UARP it stands to reason that some of these funds could be utilized for maintaining river access at Mosquito Road.

Response: El Dorado County supports and provides for outdoor recreation facilities, including facilities that serve recreational boating. The County is also aware of the current FERC re-licensing agreement and the provision for recreational flows on the South Fork of the American River that will increase opportunities for boating the Slab Creek Reach.

Pursuant to Streets and Highway Code 991 and 84.5, a report on the feasibility of providing public access to the river for recreational purposes was prepared. After careful examination the report concluded that the existing Mosquito Bridge site is an infeasible formal take-out without incurring tremendous cost and environmental impact. Developing parking and public access facilities would require extensive right of way acquisition, and construction excavation which could potentially harm the riverine ecosystem and further destabilize steep and unstable slopes. The study points out that there are projects planned by SMUD to improve river access at the Slab Creek and White House or Rock Creek facilities.

El Dorado County proposes to remove the existing Mosquito Bridge from the County's inventory list when traffic is shifted to the new bridge. Efforts to preserve/maintain the existing bridge and provide public access would be treated as a separate project due to funding limitations within the Federal Bridge Program. Other entities and organizations are not precluded from submitting a proposal to take over the ownership, maintenance and liability of the existing bridge. The suggestion by AW and others to use funds from the Cooperation Agreement between SMUD and County for purposes of road maintenance, watershed management and other activities for preserving the existing bridge would have consequences to existing usage of funds and is the responsibility of the Board of Supervisors and SMUD decision makers. Mosquito Road is proposed to remain with restricted vehicle access and pedestrians will continue to be able to walk to/from the river.

Private Individuals

4. Mark Divittorio

The commenter submitted an email on December 30, 2015 with a request to improve conditions at the Mosquito Bridge take out.

Response: Comment noted. See responses under no. 3 above.

5. Brian Ginsberg

Mr. Ginsberg submitted an email on December 17, 2015 requesting considerations for parking and river access at the existing bridge site, with a preference for year round access. The commenter discussed the importance of the site for boaters/kayakers to have the option to take out at Mosquito Bridge to avoid Motherlode Falls below. The letter states future recreational releases will draw large crowds of paddlers which could potentially create parking issues and unsafe conditions if adequate parking is not provided.

Response: El Dorado County is aware some boaters / kayakers opt to take out at Mosquito Bridge to avoid Mother Lode Falls. Mosquito Road is proposed to remain with restricted vehicle access and pedestrians will continue to be able to walk to/from the river at their own risk.

6. Janet Hayes

Ms. Hayes submitted an email on December 20, 2015 stating support for retaining the Mosquito Road Bridge and providing year round vehicle access to the river, along with additional parking. Alternatively, the commenter suggested providing vehicle access in correlation with scheduled recreational flow releases with adequate turnouts and parking. Ms. Hayes also recommended using the annual funding from SMUD for maintenance of Ice House road could potentially be used for preserving the old bridge and providing river access facilities.

Response: See responses under no. 3 and 5 above.

7. Darrick Hilbert

The commenter submitted an email on December 21, 2015 stating he would like to see year round vehicle access on the south side of Mosquito Bridge, additional parking on both sides of the river and the existing bridge maintained as pedestrian walkway. If only seasonal access can be provided, Mr. Hilbert coordinating with scheduled seasonal recreational flow releases. If vehicle access is restricted, parking should be made available above the gates.

Response: See responses under no. 3 and 5 above.

8. Mathew Phillips

Mr. Phillips submitted emails on July 23, 2015 and December 23, 2015 stating support for bridge Alternative 1, high level bridge. The commenter stated the Slab Creek section of the South Fork of the American River possesses high quality rapids and is in high demand with expert whitewater enthusiasts. Mr. Phillips expressed that river access for recreational purposes is important and should be considered with high regard at Mosquito Bridge. A vehicle for emergency purposes should also be considered along with adequate parking.

Response: See responses under 3 and 5 above.

9. Thomas Stuart

The commenter submitted an email on January 1, 2016 stating that the maintenance costs associated with keeping the old bridge should be borne by the County and not by Mosquito residents. Mr. Stuart suggested looking toward the rafting industry for ways to fund the upkeep of the old bridge and stated the area will become a patrolling issue for the Sheriff and Fire Department with the influx of people who may come for recreational purposes.

Response: The Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project is funded by the Federal Highway Bridge Program, which does not provide funding for maintenance or preservation of the old bridge. El Dorado County agrees keeping Mosquito Road open would be challenging to monitor and patrol by the Sheriff's Department due to the difficulty to access and turn around.

10. Chris Tulley

On December 29, 2015 Mr. Tulley submitted an email in support of providing river access and maintaining the existing bridge. The commenter discussed the regional role and importance of whitewater recreation and expressed support for providing year round river access, additional parking on the south side of the river, maintaining the existing bridge for pedestrian use. The commenter stated

if only seasonal vehicle access or no vehicle access is provided, that parking and turnouts should be provided on both sides above the gates.

Response: See responses under no. 3 and 5 above.

11. Jeff Wasielewski

On December 20, 2015, Mr. Wasielewski submitted an email expressing interest in retaining access to the Slab Creek run on the SFAR and encouraged efforts to preserve and improve boater access on the south side of the existing Mosquito Bridge. The commenter also suggested using the annual payment from SMUD to the County to fund public access facilities.

Response: See responses under no. 3 and 5 above.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

<http://www.edcgov.us/DOT/>

PLACERVILLE OFFICES:

MAIN OFFICE:
2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5900 / (530) 626-0387 Fax

MAINTENANCE:
2441 Headington Road, Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 642-4909 / (530) 642-0508 Fax

LAKE TAHOE OFFICES:

ENGINEERING:
924 B Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 573-7900 / (530) 541-7049 Fax

MAINTENANCE:
1121 Shakori Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 573-3180 / (530) 577-8402 Fax

DATE: December 8, 2015
TO: Interested Agencies and Individuals
FROM: El Dorado County Community Development Agency, Transportation Division
RE: Invitation to Comment: Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project – Controlled River Access

El Dorado County received federal funds to replace the existing Mosquito Bridge located 6 miles north of U.S. Highway 50, along Mosquito Road at the South Fork of the American River. The bridge does not meet current standards such as load requirements and bridge width. Currently, the bridge requires extensive annual maintenance resulting in long term road closures. Structurally, the bridge is rated near the bottom of all state bridges with a sufficiency rating (SR) of 12.5 out of 100. Bridges with a SR of < 50 are eligible for replacement under the FHWA Highway Bridge Program (HBP). The HBP will not fund non-vehicular use. Therefore, the existing bridge may or may not be removed, depending upon whether or not a source of funding can be found to finance the ongoing, high cost of maintenance necessary to keep it open, even for pedestrian use. If such funding cannot be found, the existing bridge will be removed as required by the HBP.

Mosquito Road is a rural narrow roadway that meanders through mountainous terrain and switchbacks into the steep South Fork American River canyon that narrows to a single lane near the bridge on both roadway approaches. These approaches to the bridge include five tight hairpin turns—one on the south canyon face (Placerville side), and four on the north canyon face (Mosquito/Swansboro side). The 9 foot wide bridge is restricted to only small vehicles; larger vehicles, such as those of first responders, and trucks are physically unable to access the bridge.

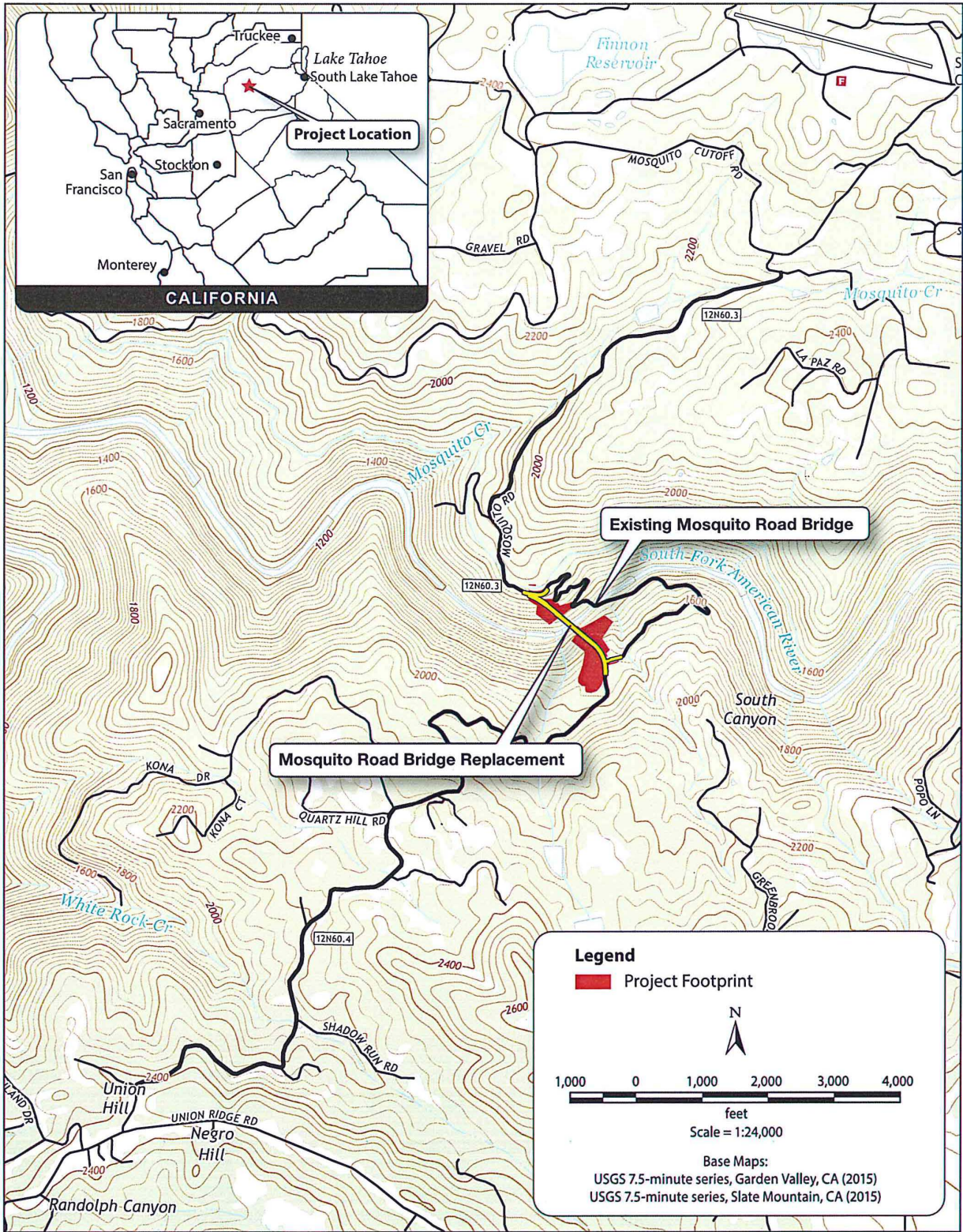
Due to reasons cited above, the County is considering a more direct crossing by raising the bridge profile approximately 400 feet, leaving the Mosquito Road approaches to the existing bridge no longer necessary to cross the canyon. The portion of Mosquito Road that leads to the existing bridge may or may not be abandoned, depending upon the interest in keeping it open on a limited basis or closed altogether. One option is to restrict this portion of the road to foot traffic, emergency and utility vehicles only. In this instance, however, minimal maintenance to the road would still be needed.

As a potential user/stakeholder to the old road on both sides of the river, the County is requesting your feedback as to preferences and your level of willingness to contribute to a share of the road maintenance.

Existing access to and from the river near the existing Mosquito Bridge is also the subject of a feasibility study the County will conduct as part of the proposed bridge replacement project pursuant to CA Streets & Highway Code 991.

Please submit your comments to me no later than December 31, 2015 using the contact information below. Thank you for your interest in the Mosquito Bridge Replacement Project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please be aware that you will have additional opportunity to comment on the project as a whole when the CEQA document is distributed to the public.

Janet Postlewait, Principal Planner
El Dorado County Community Development Agency
Transportation Division
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5993 / FAX (530) 626-0387
janet.postlewait@edcgov.us



**Figure 1
Location Map**