

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE SUNSET WEIR AND PUMPS FISH PASSAGE PROJECT

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies and Interested Parties

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) proposes the Sunset Weir and Pumps Fish Passage Project (Proposed Project), which would consist of the removal of Sunset Weir and the restoration of unimpeded flow and fish passage conditions for the Feather River channel; replacement of the Sunset Pump Station to operate at a lower surface water elevation; rehabilitation of existing pump discharge pipelines; installation and operation of new fish screens at the Sunset Pump Station; bank stabilization downstream of the weir; and modification of up to seven upstream irrigation diversions (within the existing weir backwater area) to address lowered water surface elevations after weir removal. The Proposed Project is located on the Feather River, approximately two miles southeast of Live Oak in Sutter County, California (see **Figure 1**). The weir is operated and maintained by the Sutter Extension Water District (SEWD) to maintain hydraulic head for SEWD's Sunset Pump Station. SEWD currently operates the Sunset Pump Station to supplement flows from Thermalito Afterbay, made necessary due to lack of capacity in the Sutter Butte Main Canal. The Pump Station also acts as a buffer to offset periodic flow delivery inconsistencies in the Main Canal and ensure that they can meet obligations to customers.

The final grade of the restored Feather River channel would be designed to provide a stable transition from upstream to downstream, reduce scour downstream, and provide channel stability. The fish passage component of the Proposed Project would be achieved by removing the weir and restoring the channel to match the natural grade. Passage improvements are intended to benefit all species; however, designs would focus on passage for Central Valley fall-run and spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, and southern distinct population segment green sturgeon.

The materials comprising the weir would be degraded (or removed) and the weir footprint would be restored to match the existing natural channel bed. Suitable portions of the weir material and material imported for the construction of temporary access and work areas may be used to stabilize the banks and partially backfill scoured areas immediately downstream of the current weir configuration, e.g., the deep hole in the river at the downstream edge of the weir. Following the removal of the weir, the banks adjacent to the weir may be graded so the channel cross-section is similar to the geometry of the channel upstream and downstream. Disturbed areas at the channel banks, and other areas determined to be at risk of erosion following removal of the weir, would be protected with rock slope protection. All other areas disturbed by construction and above the channel waterline would be protected by the establishment of non-woody vegetation.

Additionally, the Sunset Pump Station would be substantially modified such that the pumps operate optimally under free-flowing riverine conditions and allow SEWD to continue to divert water and meet their existing water supply obligations. This would involve replacing the pumps and replacing or slip-lining associated piping (as needed), constructing a new wet well and pump support structure, and installing contemporary fish screens that meet current state and federal fish protection criteria.

See **Figure 2** for an overview of the main project site. SEWD would operate and maintain the modified Sunset Pump Station, fish screens, and related appurtenances into the future. To construct the facilities, a temporary cofferdam would be installed within the Feather River, dewatering of the cofferdam will occur (with discharge of pumped flows returned to the Feather River), and a temporary pumping system would be installed within the Feather River and discharge to the Main Canal in order to maintain uninterrupted service to SEWD's customers.

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15163, a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be prepared to evaluate whether new significant effects would result from implementation of the Sunset Weir and Pumps Fish Passage Project, compared to the environmental impacts disclosed in the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) prepared by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) for the Statewide Restoration General Order (SRGO) for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide adopted August 16, 2022.

The PEIR evaluates the potential impacts of various types of restoration projects covered by the SRGO. The Proposed Project would meet the SRGO PEIR definition of a "Restoration Project," as it would result in a net increase in aquatic or resource functions through implementation of relevant protection measures listed in the SRGO PEIR. In addition, removal of the Sunset Weir and rehabilitation of the Feather River channel for improved fish passage, as well as installing contemporary fish screens that meet current state and federal fish protection criteria, is within the eligible projects type "Improvements to Stream Crossings and Fish Passage" as described in the SRGO PEIR.

The SEIR will evaluate potential project-specific and cumulative environmental effects associated with the Proposed Project, as well as alternatives to the Proposed Project, to the extent necessary to make the SRGO PEIR adequate for the Proposed Project. The SEIR will include evaluations to identify if the Proposed Project would have potentially significant impacts on environmental resources including but not limited to agriculture and forestry resources; air quality; biological resources; energy; greenhouse gas emissions; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; hazards and hazardous materials; recreation; tribal cultural resources; and utilities and service systems. In addition, the SEIR will describe how the Proposed Project is consistent with DWR's Climate Action Plan.

DWR is soliciting the views of interested persons, organizations, and agencies regarding the scope and content of the environmental information in connection with the Proposed Project. In addition, each responsible agency will provide DWR with specific detail about the scope, significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures related to each responsible agency's area of statutory responsibility that must be explored in the SEIR. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)(1)(B), responsible and trustee agencies should indicate their respective level of responsibility for the Proposed Project in their response.

This Notice of Preparation will be circulated for a 30-day public notice period beginning August 1, 2024, and ending August 30, 2024. At the end of the public notice period, DWR will consider all written comments received from interested persons, organizations, and agencies in preparing the environmental analysis to be included in the final EIR.

Please submit your written comments on the scope of the EIR at the earliest possible date, but no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 30, 2024, to:

California Department of Water Resources
Attention: Kevin Marr, Environmental Scientist
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Email address: Kevin.Marr@water.ca.gov
Subject: Comments on NOP for SEIR for Sunset Weir and Pumps Fish Passage Project

All comments received will be made available for public review in their entirety, including the names and addresses of the respondents. Individual respondents may request that their name and/or address be withheld from public disclosure. DWR will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. DWR will post NOP comment letters in their entirety on the DWR web page for the Proposed Project at <https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices>.

Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting will be held to receive written and oral input on the scope and content of the SEIR. The scoping meeting will be held on Thursday, August 15, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Yuba City Council Chambers, 1201 Civic Center Boulevard, Yuba City, CA 95993. The meeting can also be attended virtually; to join virtually, please register at the following link:
<https://bit.ly/SunsetWeirScopingMtg>.

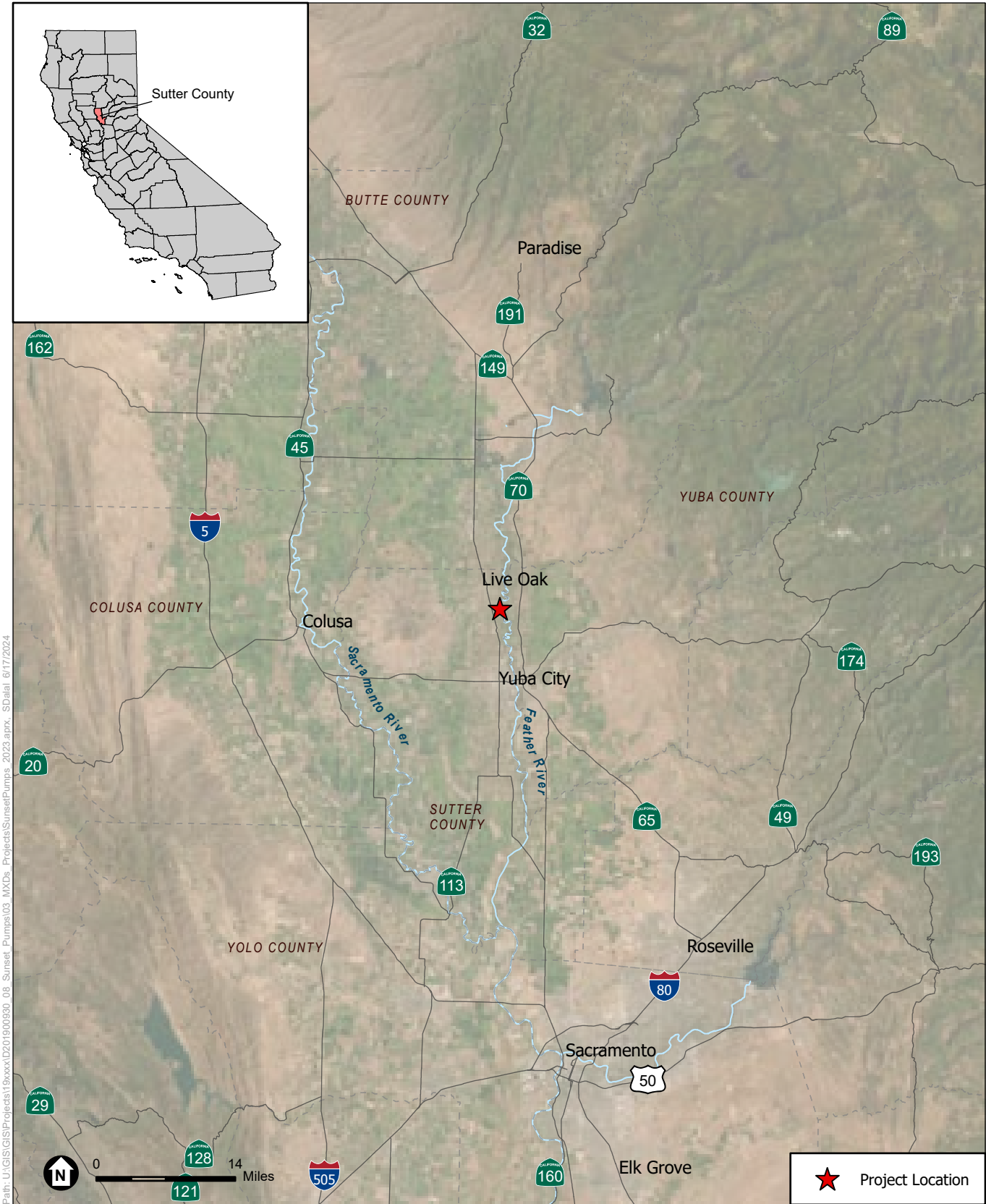
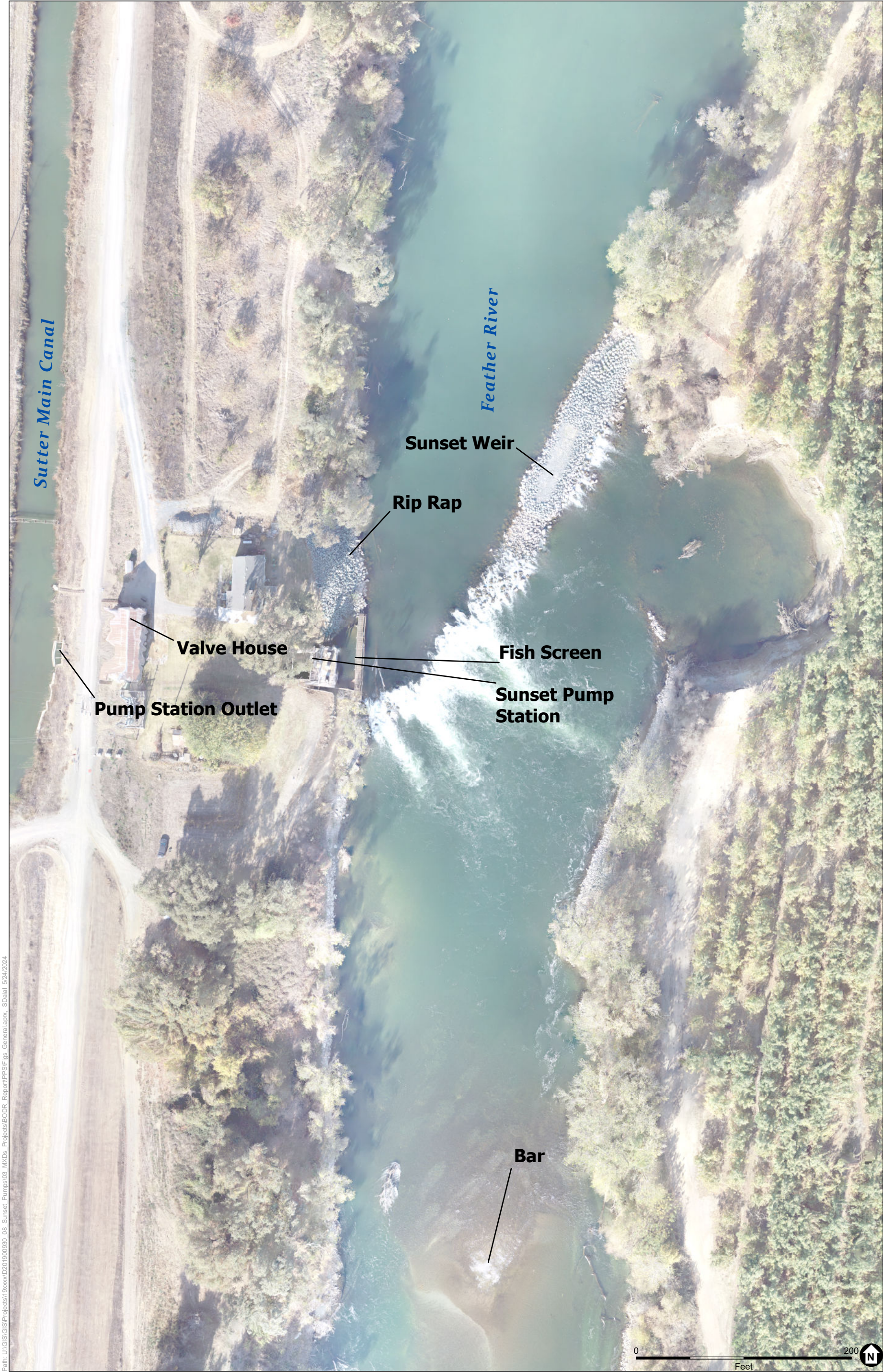


Figure 1
Regional Location



Path: U:\GIS\GISProjects\19xxx\1201900030_08 Sunset_Pumps\03_MXD\Projects\BODR_Report\PPS\Figs_General.aprx, SDat: 5/24/2024

Figure 2
Sunset Weir - Existing Conditions Overview