

**ADDENDUM TO THE MICHELSON WATER RECLAMATION PLANT
PHASE 2 & 3 CAPACITY EXPANSION PROJECT FEBRUARY 2006
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND THE SAN JOAQUIN FRESHWATER MARSH ENHANCEMENT PLAN
REVISED SEPTEMBER 1995
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Irvine revised and certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Enhancement Plan in September 1995 (SCH # 1994021027). This EIR analyzed the environmental consequences associated with implementation and construction of improvements included in the San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Enhancement Plan and associated projects, described in the report.

In February 2006, IRWD certified the FEIR for the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant (MWRP/plant) Phase 2 and Phase 3 Capacity Expansion Project (SCH # 2005051174). This project involved the expansion of the existing MWRP capacity using conventional activated sludge and gravity filtration processes to meet projected future IRWD recycled water needs. (The FEIR for the San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Enhancement Plan and the FEIR for the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant (MWRP) Phase 2 and Phase 3 Capacity Expansion Project are collectively referred to herein as the “FEIRs.”)

This addendum, prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and its implementing Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.), addresses construction of permanent flood protection facilities at the MWRP and associated facilities.

PROJECT LOCATION

The MWRP is located at 3512 Michelson Drive, City of Irvine, Orange County, California (see Figure 1- Regional Map). The IRWD property, containing both the MWRP site and the San Joaquin Marsh, is bounded by Michelson Drive, the San Diego Creek Channel, Campus Drive, and Carlson Avenue. The site is generally flat varying between 10 and 15 feet above mean sea level (msl). A 15 to 20 foot high earthen levee exists along the southeastern extremity of the plant separating the site from the San Diego Creek Channel. Access to the site is via IRWD’s private drive, Riparian View). The property is located in an area characterized by mixed land uses, including recreational, light commercial, institutional and residential use (Figure 2-Vicinity Map).

The plant contains office buildings, vehicle garages and other operational structures, as well as parking lots and treatment ponds. The San Joaquin Marsh contains wetland habitats, open water areas and riparian habitats. Between the IRWD plant, Campus Drive to the west and the riparian habitat to the north, are the duck ponds operated and maintained by IRWD. Southwest of the plant, within the Marsh, is an interpretive/learning center, which is operated by the Sea and Sage Audubon Society. Along the east side of Campus Drive is a flat upland, separated from the duck ponds by berms.

DESCRIPTION OF MODIFICATIONS TO PROJECT

IRWD has performed a preliminary evaluation of the potential flooding risks to the Plant, the IRWD San Joaquin Marsh Duck Club Campus, the San Joaquin Marsh pump station, and the University Lift Station (IRWD facilities), which are all located in the City of Irvine, south of the Interstate-405 freeway. The flood risk to these IRWD facilities is associated with the potential overtopping of the adjacent channel.

The channel presently flows from east to west along the southerly perimeter of the IRWD facilities, with the exception of the university lift station which is located downstream of MacArthur boulevard to the east of the channel. The channel is comprised of an earthen conveyance section with various degrees of vegetative growth along the channel embankments and bottom. The Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) has identified commitments in regard to the restoration of 100-year flood capacity in the San Diego Creek Channel. IRWD has determined that in addition to the protection that will be afforded by OCFCD's restoration and maintenance, it is desirable to have facility-specific permanent flood protection on IRWD's property.

IRWD plans to have the following permanent flood protection facilities in place at the MWRP and associated facilities (IRWD Floodwall Figure 3).

- IRWD proposes to construct permanent flood walls around the MWRP that will provide an estimated 200-year flood protection.
- The installation of slope reinforcement matting or similar functioning material to be situated between the MWRP and the IRWD San Joaquin Marsh Duck Club Campus for the purpose of protecting the San Diego Creek levee segment against erosion from overflow.
- The construction of permanent flood walls around the San Joaquin Marsh Pump Station and University Lift Station to provide increased flood protection.

The floodwall shall be designed so that the non-project portions of the channel would not experience adverse flooding effects due to the construction of the floodwall. When complete, the floodwall improvements shall allow for continued access to all facilities by means of removable floodwall segments.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This construction of the floodwall does not modify the impact analysis of the two referenced Environmental Impact Reports. The modification of the project to include permanent flood protection facilities will have no significant adverse environmental impacts.

To ensure that no significant environmental impacts would occur, the permanent flood protection facilities would adhere to all environmental commitments and mitigation measures included in the previously certified FEIR's for the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant Phase 2 & Phase 3 Expansion Project and San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Enhancement Plan.

AESTHETICS

The plant contains office buildings, vehicle garages and other operational structures, as well as parking lots and treatment ponds. The marsh consists primarily of a series of diked ponds, upland and riparian zones, and freshwater marsh thick with cattail and bulrush vegetation.

No scenic highways are located within the project vicinity. No recreational facilities would be built or expanded as a result of the proposed permanent flood protection facilities. Facilities would not extend into public neighborhood or regional parks.

The permanent flood protection facilities site is located within the existing boundaries of IRWD's property and on an OCFCD easement. The permanent flood protection facilities would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. Rather, the proposed change within the project site would provide a visual barrier to the Plant. With the mitigation measures incorporated in the FEIR's, the permanent flood protection facilities would have a less than significant impact on aesthetic resources.

AIR QUALITY

There will be a minor increase in some potential effects identified in the two FEIR's, due to the additional construction activities related to the construction of the floodwall improvements. The construction period is estimated at six to nine months. With the mitigation measures incorporated into the projects pursuant to the FEIR's, these effects will be reduced to less than significant.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The permanent flood protection facilities would occur entirely within the existing footprint of IRWD's property and on an OCFCD easement. No acquisition or alteration of additional land would be necessary. All work would occur along existing dirt roads, along areas devoid of vegetation or within landscaped areas. No native vegetation removal would occur as part of the project. Therefore, no direct or permanent impacts to sensitive plant species, sensitive plant communities, or jurisdictional waters would result due to the proposed permanent flood protection facilities.

San Diego Creek is located adjacent to the project site but no direct impacts would occur to San Diego Creek. San Diego Creek is a flood control channel and all un-vegetated open water within the channel and inflow and outflow structures are mapped as flood control channel.

There will be a minor increase in potential effects identified in the FEIR's, due to the additional construction activities related to the construction of the floodwall improvements. Impacts associated with the proposed flood protection facilities would be mitigated according to existing biological mitigation measures (MM's) included in the FEIR's. As a result, potential impacts will be less than significant.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

In 2001, the Chambers Group conducted a test program at archaeological site CA-ORA-196/H in Irvine, Orange County to determine whether intact cultural deposits would be impacted by the construction of a road accessing the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant (MWRP) located in the San Joaquin Marsh area of Irvine, south of Michelson Drive. The proposed permanent flood protection facilities are not in the location of the recorded archaeological sites. Therefore, as a result of the environmental commitments listed in each FEIR and incorporated into the proposed permanent flood protection facilities, other potential impacts will be less than significant.

There will be a minor increase in potential effects identified in the FEIR's, due to the additional construction activities related to the construction of the floodwall improvements. The construction period is estimated at six to nine months. As a result of the environmental commitments incorporated into the projects pursuant to the FEIR's, potential impacts will be less than significant.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

There will be a minor increase in environmental impacts due to the additional construction activities related to the construction of the floodwall improvements. The construction period is estimated at six to nine months. With the environmental commitments and mitigation measures incorporated into the FEIR's, these effects will be reduced to less than significant.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Environmental commitments (EC) were established in the MWRP FEIR to serve as a backup measure of protection to the Orange County Flood Control District's (OCFCD) future restoration of 100 year flood protection to the San Diego Creek channel. IRWD has determined in addition to the protection that will be afforded by OCFCD's restoration and maintenance, it is desirable to have facility-specific permanent flood protection facilities on IRWD's property.

The permanent flood protection facilities would result in less than significant impacts to hydrology and water quality, requiring no mitigation. Adherence to the environmental commitments listed in the EIR would reduce potential impacts to hydrology and water quality to less than significant.

NOISE

Indirect impacts could potentially occur to birds nesting in habitat/vegetation adjacent the work area as a result of light, noise and other construction related disturbance. Sensitive wildlife that could potentially be impacted by light, noise and other construction related disturbances include least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. Potential indirect impacts will be reduced to less than significant by limiting construction activities to the period outside of the bird nesting season or alternatively, by implementing existing environmental commitments specified in the FEIR's.

When complete, the floodwall improvements shall allow for continued access to all facilities by means of removable floodwall segments. The permanent flood protection facilities would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

The proposed permanent flood protection facilities would have no significant impacts to land use. It is consistent with the City of Irvine General Plan and zoning designations for the site. The proposed permanent flood protection facilities are not related to land use, and no new impacts would occur.

GROWTH INDUCING

No housing or commercial facilities were related to the permanent flood protection facilities. No modification to land use or zoning designations to permit new residential or commercial development would occur.

The proposed permanent flood protection facilities would not create any significant impacts regarding population, employment and housing. No impacts to population and housing resources would occur as a result of the proposed permanent flood protection facilities.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

There will be a minor increase in potential effects identified in the FEIR's due to the additional construction activities related to the construction of the floodwall improvements. The construction period is estimated at six to nine months. With the environmental commitments and mitigation measures incorporated into the projects pursuant to the FEIR's, these effects will be reduced to less than significant.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The proposed permanent flood protection facilities will not have an adverse effect on the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or result in the need for new or physically altered government facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives.

There will be a minor increase in potential effects identified in the FEIR's, due to the additional construction activities related to the construction of the floodwall improvements. The construction period is estimated at six to nine months. As a result of the environmental commitments incorporated into the proposed permanent flood protection facilities, potential impacts will be less than significant, requiring no mitigation.

DETERMINATION

Based on the information and analysis in this addendum, and pursuant to section 15162 of the state CEQA guidelines, the District has determined that:

1. There are no substantial changes to the project that will require major revisions to the FEIR's due to new, significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of impacts identified in the FEIR's;
2. Substantial changes have not occurred in the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken that will require major revisions of the FEIR's to disclose new, significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of the impacts identified in the FEIR's; and
3. There is no new information of substantial importance not known at the time the FEIR's were certified that shows that the project will have any new significant effects not discussed in the certified FEIR's or a substantial increase in the severity of the impacts identified in the FEIR's, or that mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not feasible, or that are considerably different from those analyzed in the FEIR's, would substantially reduce one or more significant effects.

Figure 1 - Regional Map

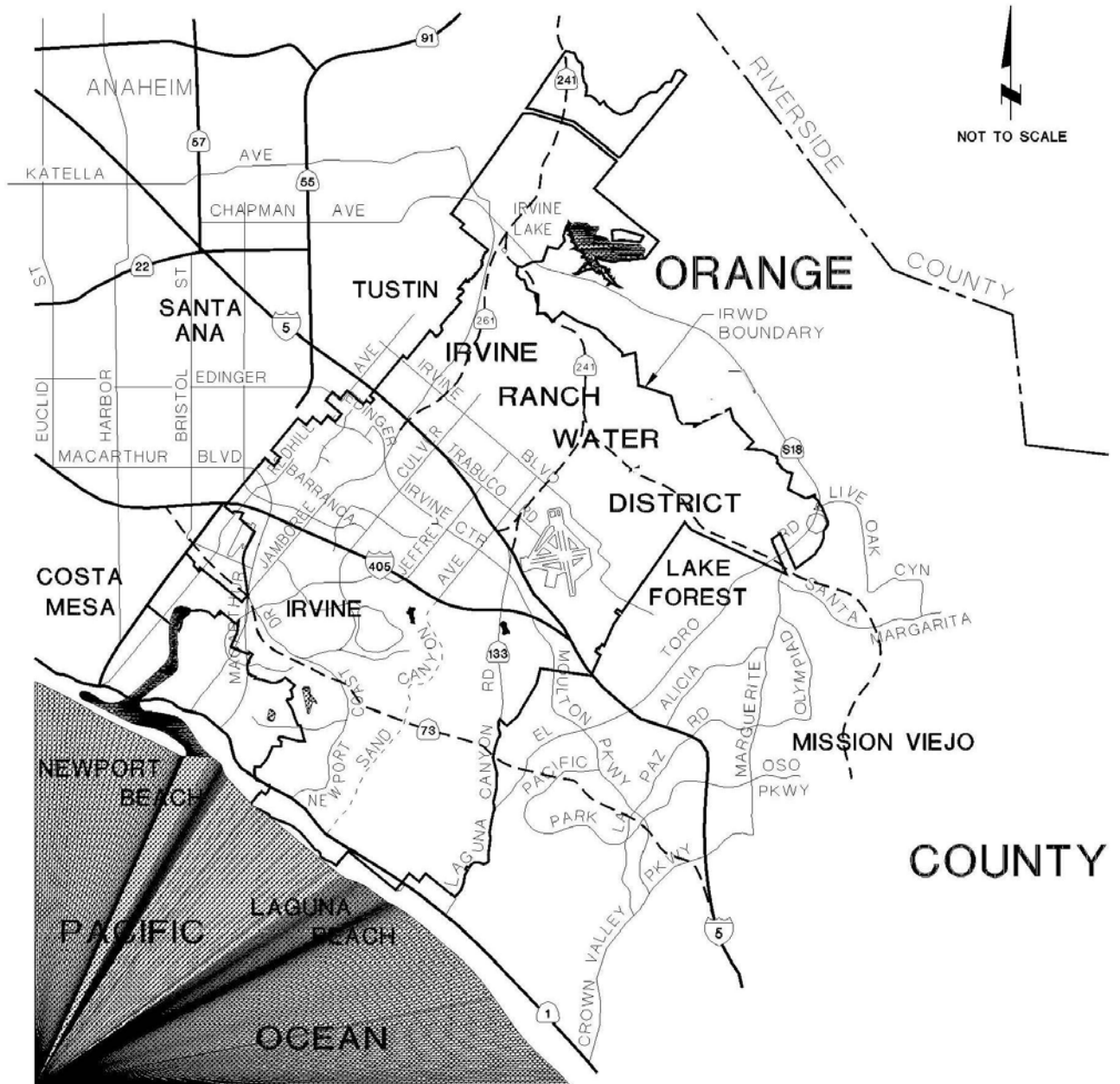
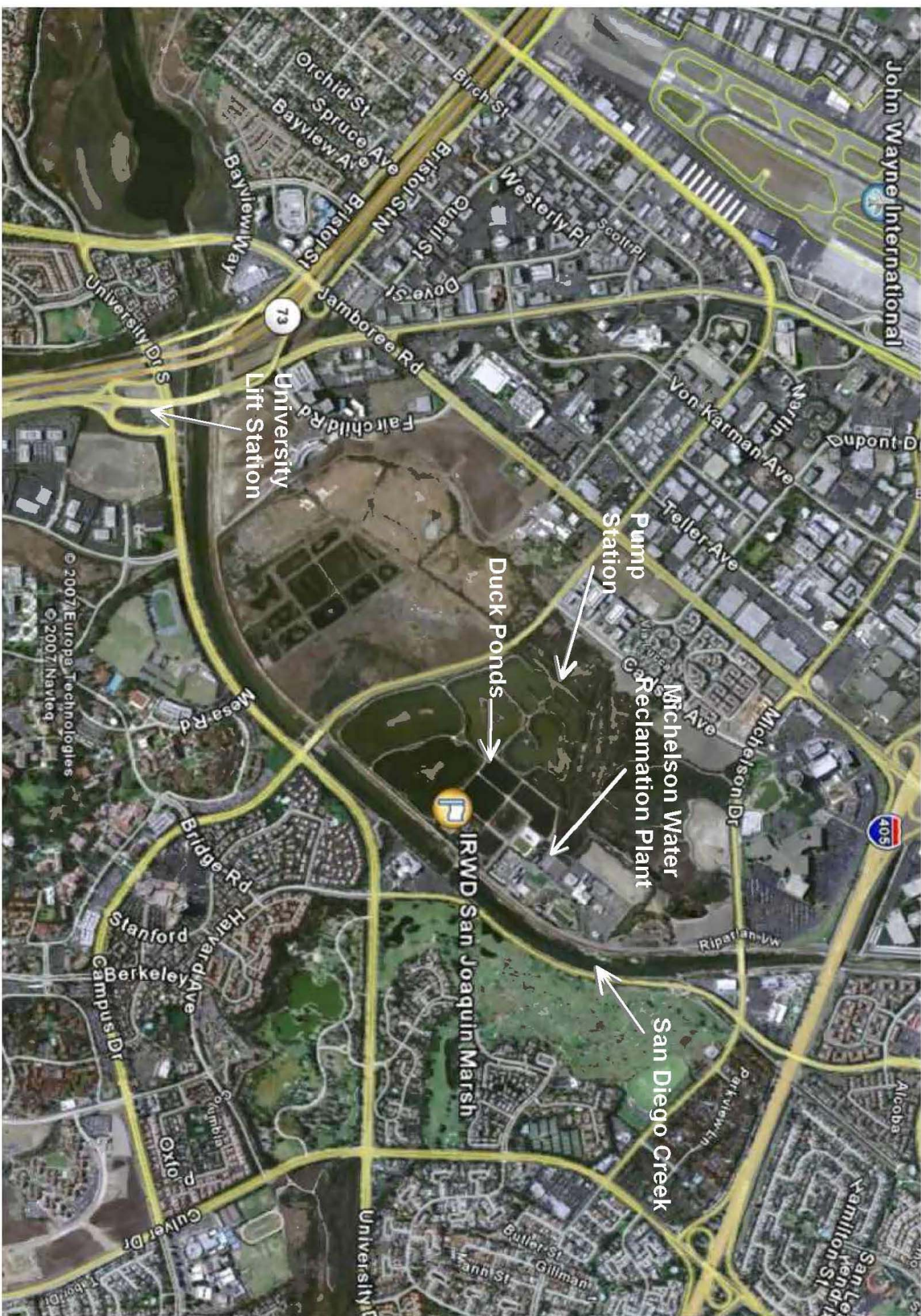


FIGURE 1

LEGEND

———— IRWD BOUNDARY

Vicinity Map Figure 2



IRWD Floodwall Figure 3

