US Army Corps of Engineers®
Albuquerque District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application Number: SPA-2014-00102-ABQ
Date: May 15, 2014
Comments Due: June 16, 2014

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) San Felipe Priority Sites: Phase 2 Downstream Project in Sandoval County, New Mexico, which would result in permanent impacts of approximately 2.0 acres and 7.0 acres of temporary impacts to waters of the United States in or adjacent to the Rio Grande. In addition, 0.18 acres of wetlands will be permanently impacted by the proposed project. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States (U.S.).

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LOCATION: The proposed project is located within and along the Rio Grande at the Pueblo of San Felipe (the Pueblo) in Sandoval County, New Mexico. The San Felipe reach of the Middle Rio Grande from river mile (RM) 216 to RM 210.0 has 10 priority sites. The three downstream sites, RM 210.3, RM 210.1, and RM 210.0, are located on two consecutive bends upstream from the Angostura Diversion Dam.

The combination of the RM 210.3, RM 210.1, and RM 210.0 sites as one project allows the agencies to evaluate the combined effects of the three projects which are located between two consecutive river bends and provide a more holistic design. The

RM 210.3 priority site is immediately east from the upstream bend site on the opposite bank. The upstream bend passes through the RM 210.1 priority site; and the RM 210.0 priority site is located on the southern end of the downstream bend.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Priority Site RM 210.0 is located on the east bank of the river and immediately upstream from the Angostura Diversion Dam. The jetty jacks that line the bank have been intermittently flanked along the approximately 500 feet of the site

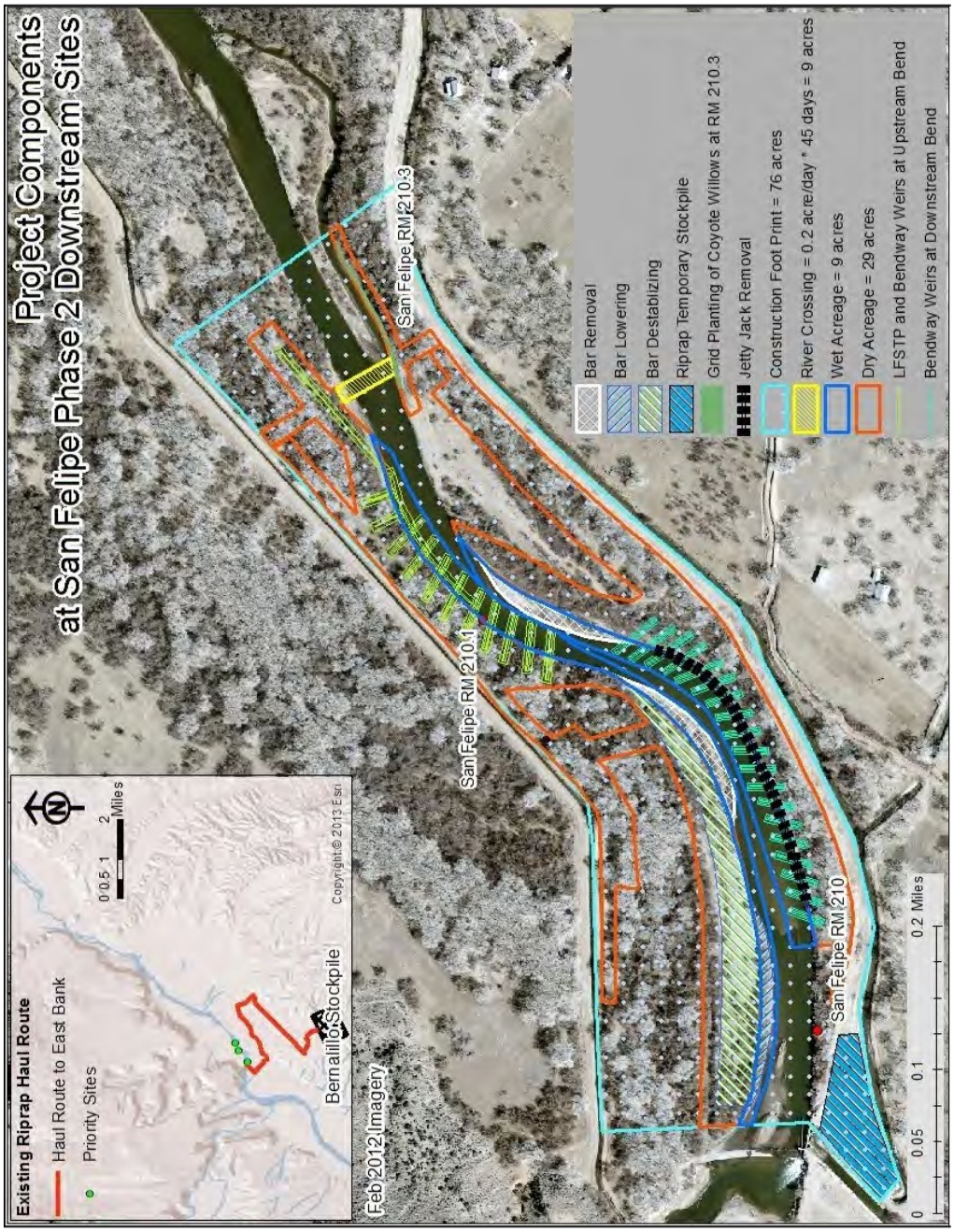

Figure 1: Project Components at San Felipe Phase 2 Downstream Priority Sites

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that is located within the pool upstream of the Angostura Diversion Dam. At some locations within the site, the bank retreat is approximately 10 to 20 feet (ft). Priority Site RM 210.1 is located on the west bank of the river. In general, the bank has retreated about 80 ft between 1985 and 2006. Given the very sandy nature of the bank materials, the primary mode of bank erosion is probably fluvial entrainment, but there is evidence of tension cracks and slump failure, suggesting that bed scour may be occurring as well during sustained high flows. Priority Site RM 210.3 is located on the east bank of the river. The jetty jacks that line the left bank of the secondary channel on the east side of the mid-channel bar have been intermittently flanked along the approximately seven-hundred-foot-long site.

Applicant Preferred Alternative: In 2011, a multi-disciplinary project team was formed to initiate the process of providing bank protection at these three sites. While individual alternative concepts were evaluated for each of the sites, their close proximity on two consecutive bends made it practical to combine them into one comprehensive project and also facilitated the evaluation of adverse impacts between sites for the final design. The BOR's selected preferred alternative is a combination of the longitudinal fill stone toe protection (LFSTP) and bendway weir alternatives coupled with the removal and/or destabilization of bars.

UPSTREAM BEND – SITES 210.3 AND 210.1

On the upstream bend, installation of LFSTP will require removal of approximately 0.6 acres of the opposite point bar in order to maintain the current river width at the 500-cfs baseflow. To minimize the probability of the point bar redepositing, nine bendway weirs will also be installed along the west bank of the upstream bend. The bendway weirs will help to redirect higher velocities away from the west bank toward the point bar. This helps the river self-maintain its width. Eddies between the bendway weirs may also encourage areas of different depth and velocities, which may provide favorable conditions for aquatic species. The excavated bar material or sediment removed during reduction of the west side vertical banks will be used to fill areas behind the crest of the LFSTP and in between the bendway weirs to create a floodplain bench. This anticipated area of about 0.3 acres will be planted with coyote willow to further help reduce velocities near the west bank.

DOWNSTREAM BEND – SITE 210.0

On the downstream bend, the heavily vegetated bar on the west bank will be destabilized (4.1 acres) and lowered (0.6 acres). This will create a wider floodplain at higher flows and reduce hydraulic pressures against the eastern bank. There are bankline and tieback jetty jacks within the footprint of the bendway weir field along the downstream bend. These will be dismantled and stockpiled at a location agreeable to both BOR and the Pueblo of San Felipe for future use by the Pueblo or removed offsite for proper disposal.

The riprap volume used for bendway weir and LFSTP construction is expected to be between 19,000 cubic yards [cy] and 28,500 cy. Riprap used in the project may be temporarily stockpiled near the project sites (between 3.0 acres and 5.0 acres) while construction activities are occurring.

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Access to the project area will be on the east bank via State Highway 313 and the northern operation and maintenance (O&M) road for the Las Huertas Creek. From here the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) O&M roads for Angostura Diversion Dam and the western O&M road for the Algodones Riverside Drain will be used to access the project sites. Construction equipment will access the west bank via a river crossing. The river crossing will be selected in a shallow area with sufficient coarse bed material. Maintenance of the river crossing during construction may be required to move displaced coarse bed material back into the crossing path. It is expected that there will be about 870 roundtrip crossings with a maximum of 1300 roundtrip crossings to transport the equipment and material for the west bank protection during construction. It is anticipated that it will take two15-ton articulated trucks 45 days to transport riprap material across the river through the river crossing. Highway vehicles can access to the project area using existing roads through the Pueblo of San Felipe.

The applicant's preferred alternative would result in permanent impacts of approximately 2.0 acres and 7.0 acres of temporary impacts to waters of the United States in or adjacent to the Rio Grande. In addition, 0.18 acres of wetlands will be permanently impacted by the proposed project.

Alternatives. The following alternatives were developed and/or evaluated for Site 210.0: No Action, Fill Topographical Depression with Earthen Fill; Fill Topographical Depression with Rock; Trench-Fill Riprap at Toe of Levee; Rock Revetment - Spot Locations Only; Riprap Revetment - Full Bank; and Removal of Vegetation and Lowering of West Bank Attached Bar.

The following alternatives were developed and/or evaluated for Site 210.1: No Action; Longitudinal Stone Toe Protection (LSTP) with Bank-Shaping and Native Plantings; Bendway Weirs; Spur Dikes; Trench-Filled Riprap in Floodplain; Riprap Revetment; and Open Side Channel on East Bank Attached Bar.

The following alternatives were developed and/or evaluated for Site 210.3: No Action; Close Head of Eastern Side Channel; Close Eastern Side Channel with V-Notch Rock Weir; and Trench-Fill Riprap in Floodplain.

Due to their proximity and because modifications at one of the sites will have impacts on the other sites, the three sites were combined into sets of project actions to allow additional assessment of two combined alternatives. These combined alternatives are built from the previously developed and assessed alternatives and include additional features at a location between the priority sites. These combined alternatives include the following: (1) Bendway Weirs and Cut Material from West Side of Island and (2) Longitudinal Stone Toe Protection and Cut Material from West Side of Island.

The first of the alternative combinations includes bank stabilization through a series of river bends using bendway weirs, coupled with bar removal. This plan would place the weirs in the bend at Site 210.1 to divert flow away from the toe of the west bank, and would add weirs along the bend on the east bank between site 210.1 and site 210.0 to divert flow from the east bank. The weirs, typically 100-ft long, would extend into the

river and be spaced approximately 100 ft apart. The top of the bendway weirs would be set at the 2-year event water-surface elevation. The exact configuration of the weirs, spacing, horizontal limits, and rock size would be defined in the final design. The width of the channel would be maintained by removing the bars opposite Site 210.0 and Site 210.1. The bar material may be placed over the top of the bendway weirs to create a lower floodplain terrace.

The second of the combined alternatives includes bank stabilization through a series of bends using LSTP, coupled with bar removal. LTSP would be placed along the west bank at Site 210.1, and along the east bank between site 210.1 and site 210.0. The width of the channel would be maintained by removing the bars opposite Site 210.0 and Site 210.1. The bar material may be placed behind the toe stone to create a lower floodplain terrace. Willows would be layered into the fill behind the LTSP to provide additional erosion protection and habitat. Woody debris piles could also be anchored to the top of the rock section for added habitat. From the top of the rock section, the existing bank would be cut back at a moderate slope to the existing floodplain. The slope would be varied along the bank to create a more natural setting.

PROJECT PURPOSE: Based on the available information, the basic project purpose is the protection of infrastructure. The overall project purpose is to protect existing infrastructure from damage as a result of flooding and erosion. The BOR's stated project purpose is to provide flood and bankline protection for existing infrastructure and private property at the selected priority sites (up to the 25-year event, equaling 9,700 cfs). In addition, requirements specified in the 2003 Biological Opinion addressing BOR's river maintenance activities must also be met.

PROPOSED MITIGATION: Compensatory mitigation will be required for permanent impacts to wetlands. It is estimated that this project will permanently disturb approximately 0.18 acres of wetlands. A minimum of 0.23 acres of wetlands will be created to compensate for losses via natural regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation and planting of at least 3,600 willows in two separate locations.

Areas used for staging/temporary stockpiling of construction material and depression fill areas along the levee toes will be reseeded following the conclusion of activities at the project areas during the monsoon season. A seed mix for reseeding will be selected by Reclamation biologists and approved by the San Felipe Pueblo.

The permittee will also be required to monitor the mitigation site and reseeded areas annually after construction for five years and to submit annual monitoring reports to the Corps. The determination of success of the mitigation rests solely with the Corps.

WATER QUALTIY CERTIFICATION: The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Dallas, Texas. Section 401 requires that any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance. For any proposed

activity on Tribal land that is subject to Section 404 jurisdiction, where the tribe does not have water quality certifying authority, the applicant will be required to obtain water quality certification from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: The project is located in the active floodplain and the area has been surveyed for historic properties. No cultural remains were found and the Pueblo has informed BOR that there are no Traditional Cultural Properties in the project area. Based upon these findings, BOR has completed its Section 106 process.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The BOR has reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's latest published version of Federally-listed endangered and threatened species located in Sandoval County, New Mexico to determine if any listed species or their critical habitat may occur in the proposed project area. The BOR has also conducted a fish survey of the project reach in an effort to identify any Rio Grande silvery minnows. None were found as a result.

The BOR has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project may affect, but will not likely adversely affect any Federally-listed endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat that are protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Regardless, the BOR has informed the Corps that they will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding compliance with the ESA.

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FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT: The Corps is sending a copy of this public notice to the local floodplain administrator. In accordance with 44 CFR part 60 (Flood Plain Management Regulations Criteria for Land Management and Use), the floodplain administrators of participating communities are required to review all proposed development to determine if a floodplain development permit is required and maintain records of such review.

COMMENT SUBMITTAL AND DEADLINES:
The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal.

All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before **June 16, 2014,** which is the close of the comment period. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to:

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Please note that names and addresses of those who submit comments in response to this public notice may be made publicly available through the Freedom of Information Act.

DISTRICT ENGINEER
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Maps and Drawings Attachments:

Figure 2: Staging and Site Access Map
Figure 3: Typical LFSTP Cross Section
Figure 4: Typical Bendway Weir Cross Section at Downstream Bend
Figure 5: Areas of Bar Removal, Lowering, and Destabilizing
Figure 6: Extension of Jetty Jack Removal at Downstream Bend
Figure 7: Typical Cross Section of Floodplain Bench at Upstream Bend
Figure 8: Grid Planting of Coyote Willows at RM 210.3
Figure 9: Areas of Reseeding

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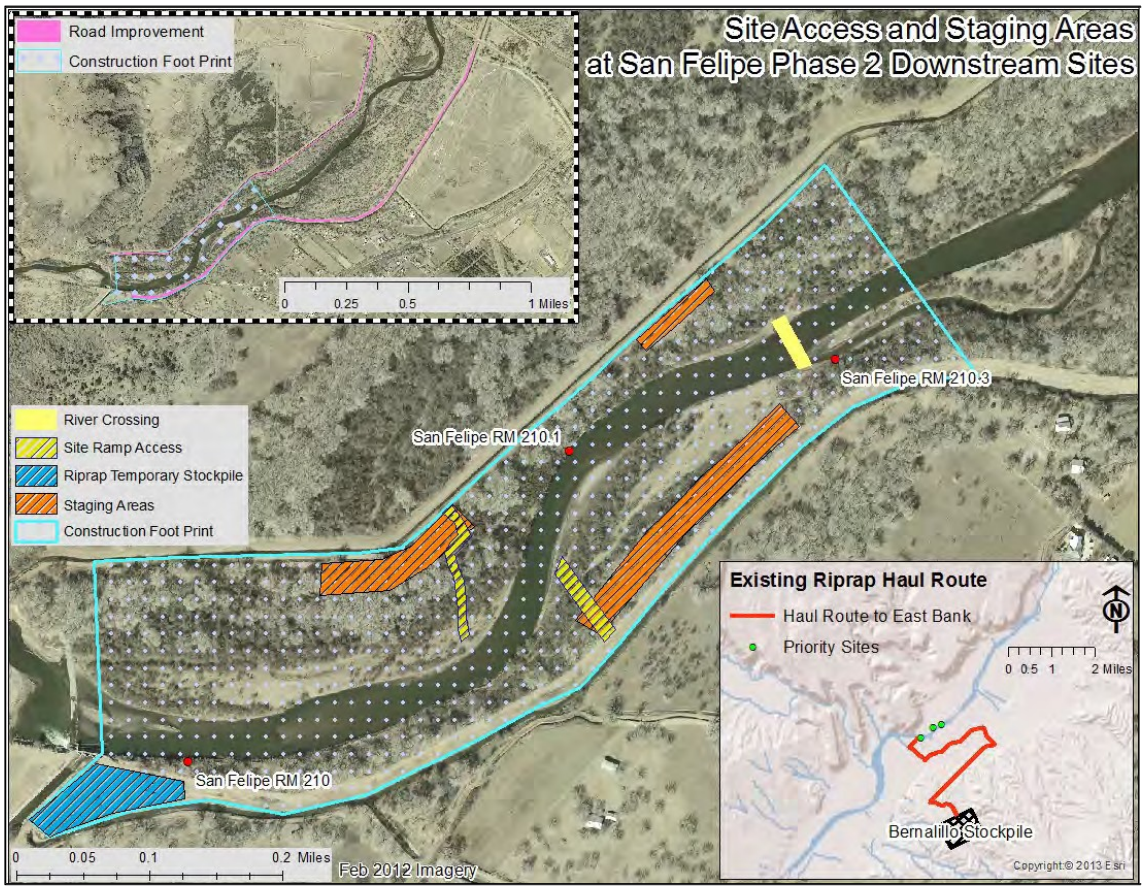

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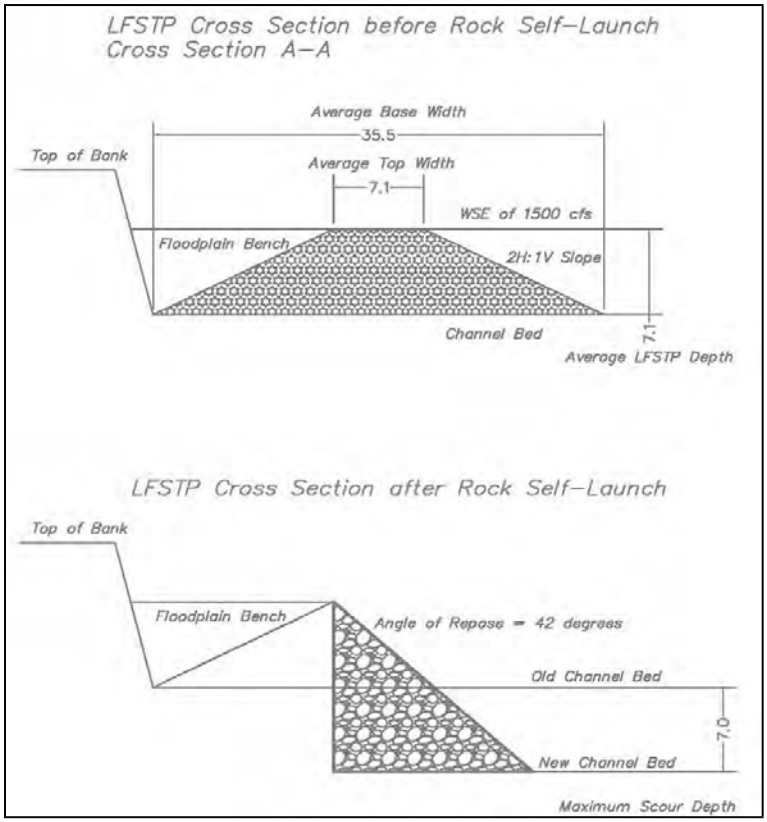
Figure 3: Typical LFSTP Cross Section



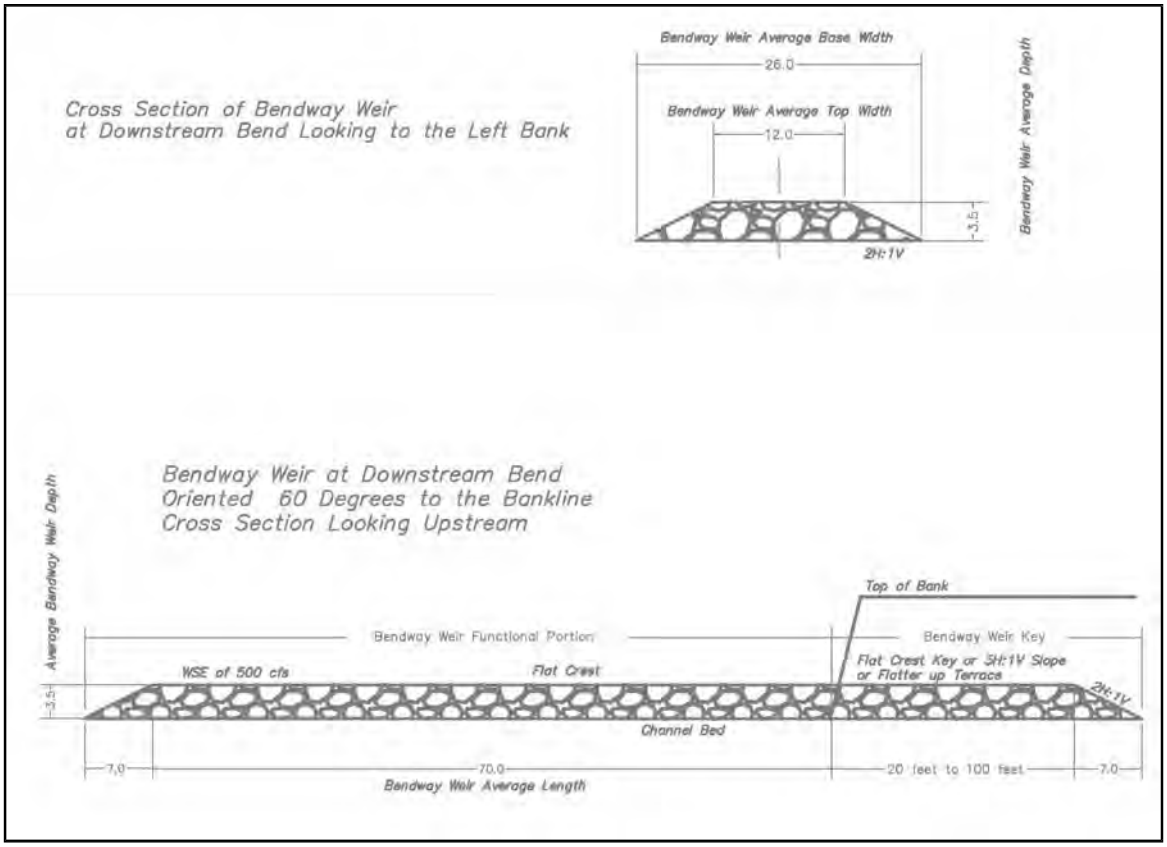
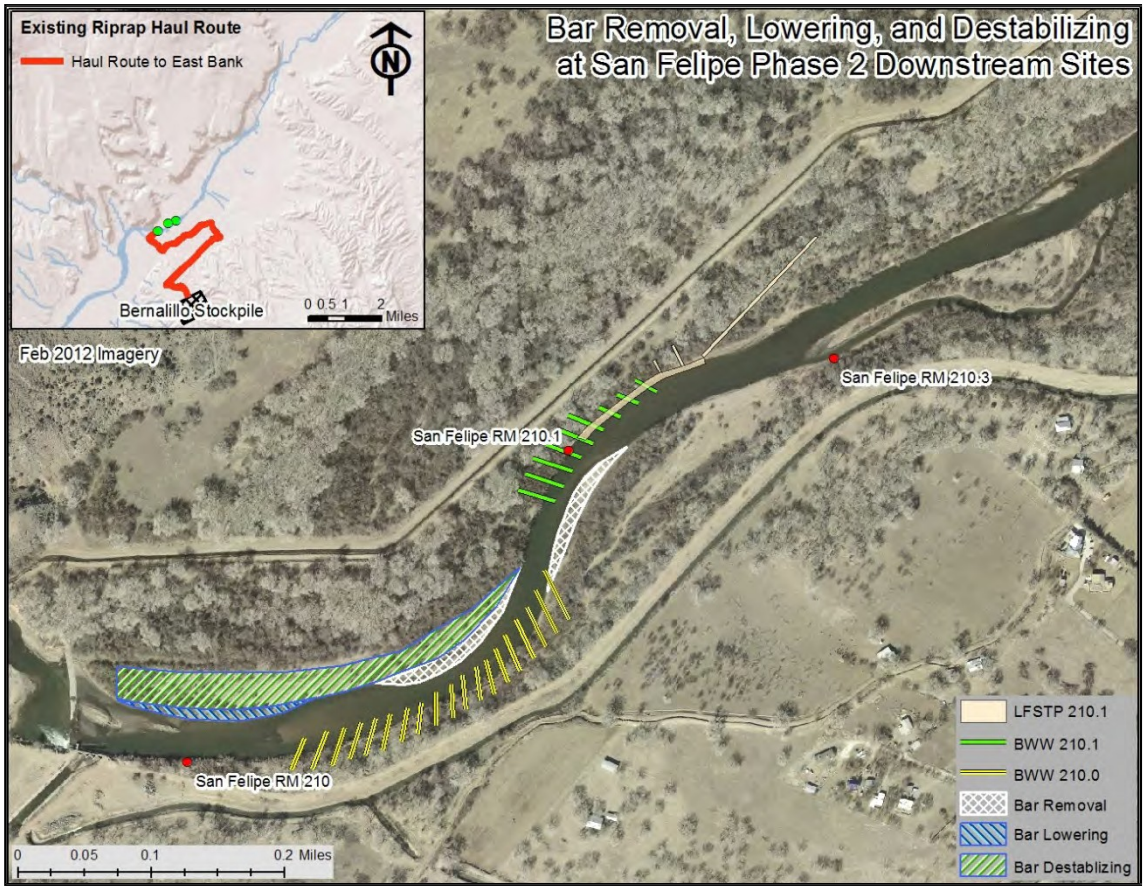


Figure 4: Typical Bendway Weir Cross Section at Downstream Bend

Figure 5: Areas of Bar Removal, Lowering, and Destabilizing



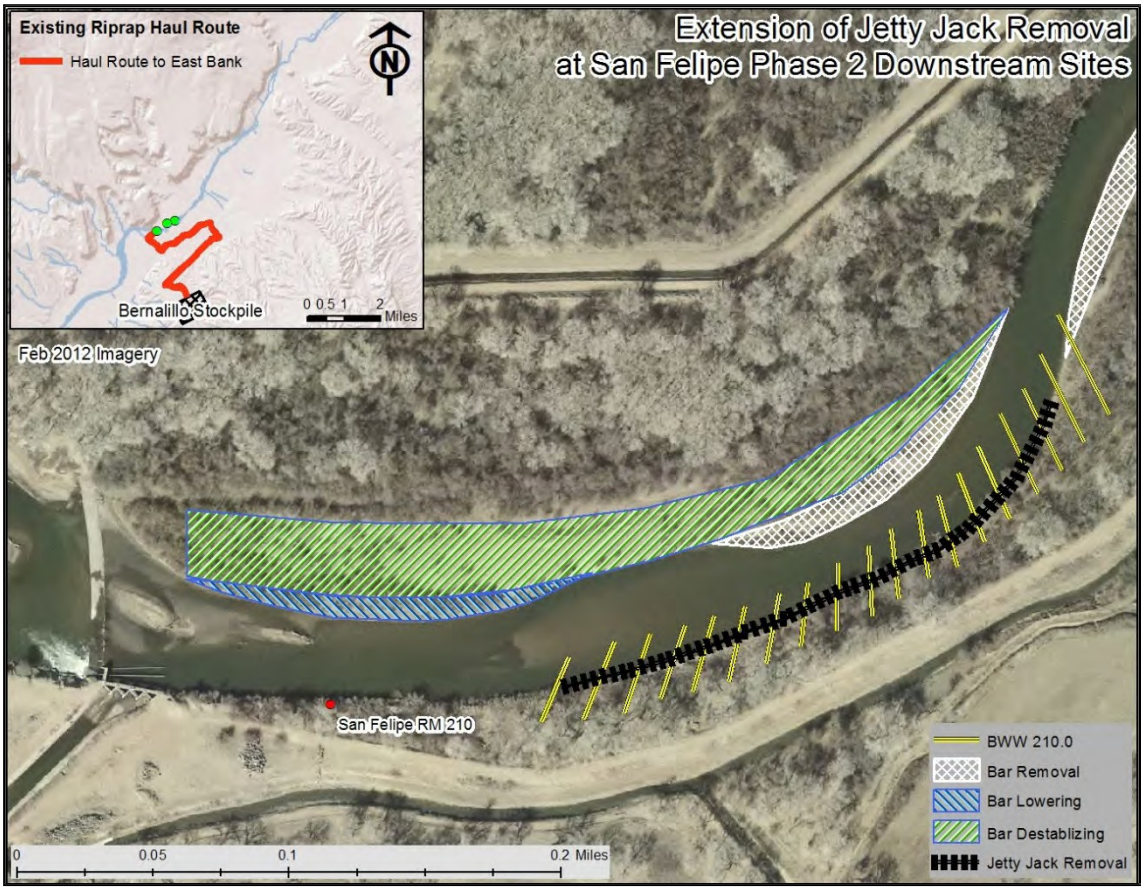


Figure 6: Extension of Jetty Jack Removal at Downstream Bend

Figure 7: Typical Cross Section of Floodplain Bench at Upstream Bend

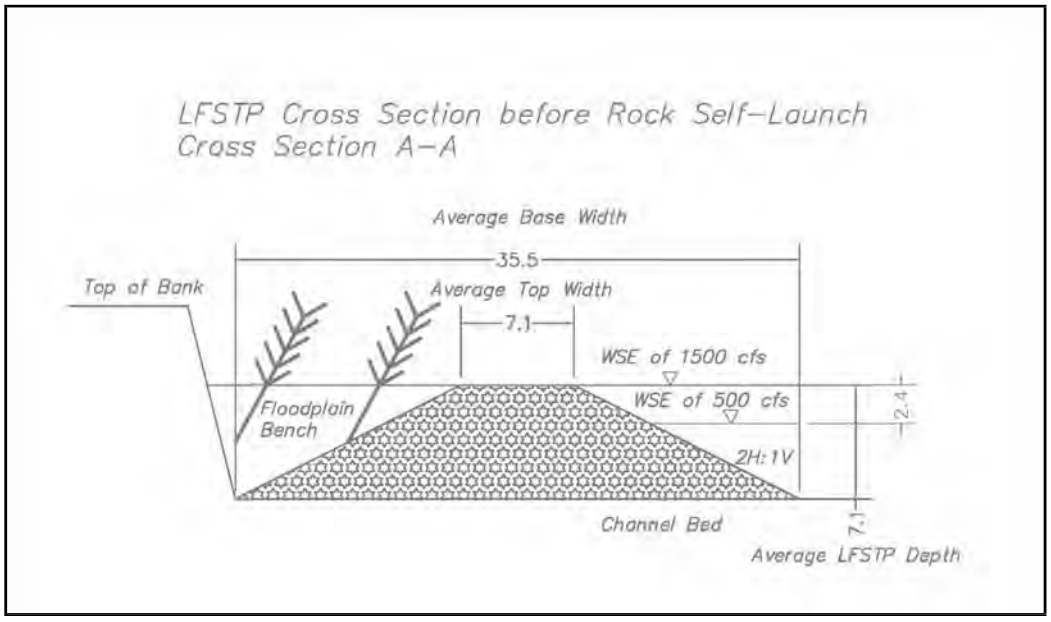


Figure 8: Grid Planting of Coyote Willows at RM 210.3

Figure 9: Areas of Reseeding