Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Interlake Tunnel and Spillway Modification Project

Draft Environmental Impact Report Public Meeting

Agenda

- Introductions
- Purpose of this meeting
- Project history
- Project purpose and benefits
- Project overview
- Anticipated environmental effects
- How to comment
- Next steps

Introductions

Lead agency and project sponsor:

Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Consultant team:

COWI – Program Manager

Phénix Environmental Planning – Environmental Program Management and QA Review

McMillen – Design and Engineering

ICF – EIR Preparer

Purpose of this meeting

MCWRA has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate and disclose the potential environmental effects from construction and operation of the Interlake Tunnel and Spillway Modification Project pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

An EIR is an informational document that must be considered before approval or disapproval of a project; it is intended to provide public agency decision makers and the public in general with:

- detailed information about the effect which a proposed project is likely to have on the environment
- to list ways in which the significant effects of the project might be minimized
- and to indicate alternatives to such a project

The purpose of this public meeting and circulation of the Draft EIR is to provide agencies and interested individuals with the opportunity to comment on or express concerns regarding the information presented in the Draft EIR.

Purpose of this meeting

Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR and Initial Study

- MCWRA prepared and published an NOP and Initial Study on April 28, 2016
- 49 federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, organizations, and members of the public provided scoping comments

Draft EIR available on MCWRA's website:

MCWRA considered scoping comments and prepared a Draft EIR, now available for review at:
http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/government/government-links/water-resources-agency/projects-facilities/interlake-tunnel/

Hardcopies available for in-person review:

Monterey County Water Resources Agency 1441 Schilling Place, North Building Salinas, CA 93901	Paso Robles City Library 1000 Spring Street Paso Robles, CA 93446

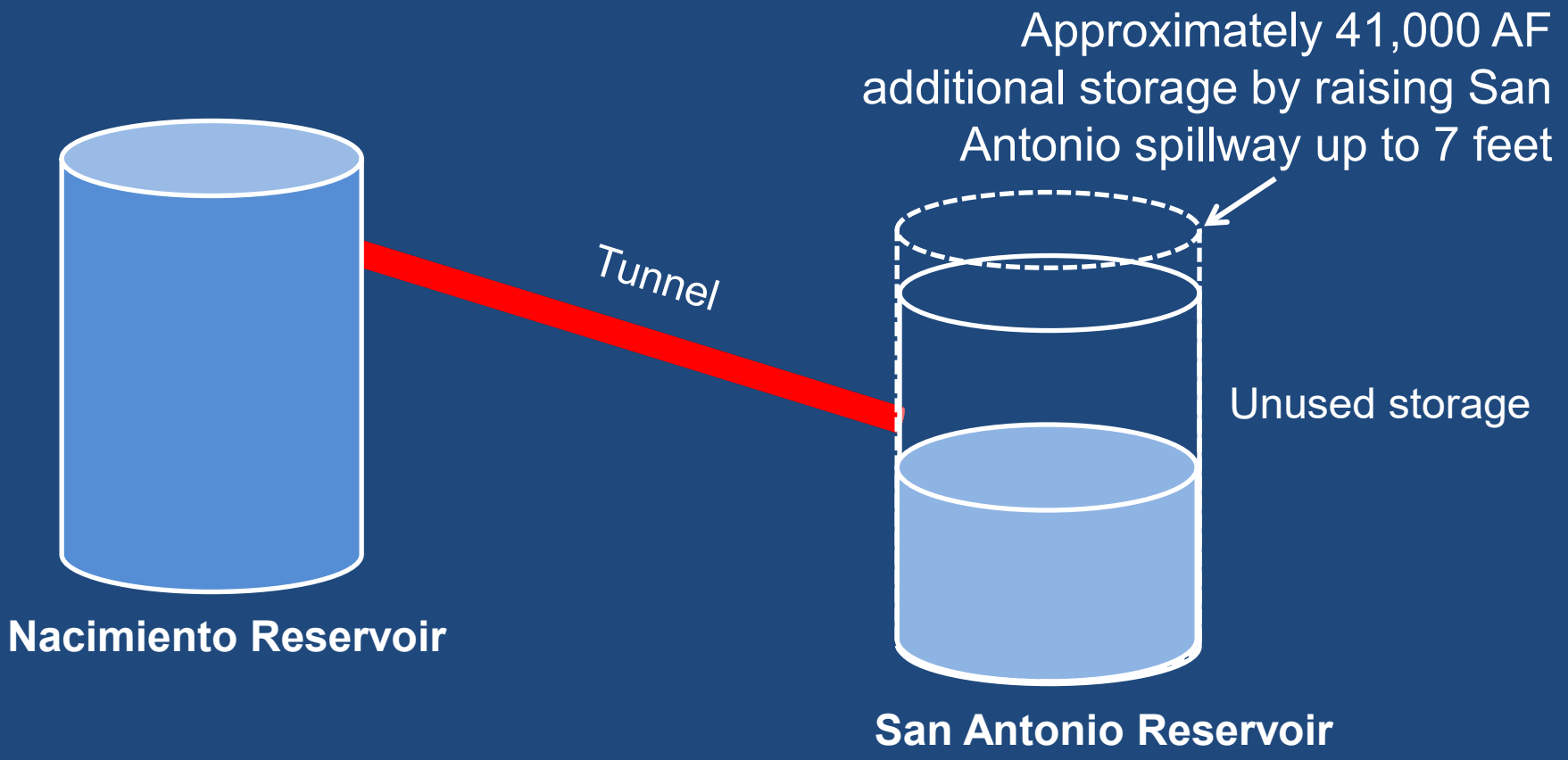
Project Description

Project History

- Nacimiento and San Antonio Dams completed in 1957 and 1967 are managed for flood control, water storage, and recreation
- Unused storage in San Antonio often occurs when Nacimiento is at capacity and making flood control releases
- Project proposed in the late 1970's to better manage flood and conservation flows
- Project included in the 1991 MCWRA Water Facilities Capital Plan and 2013 Greater Monterey County IRWMP
- Urgency for the project was revitalized in 2014 due to the multi-year drought

Project Purpose

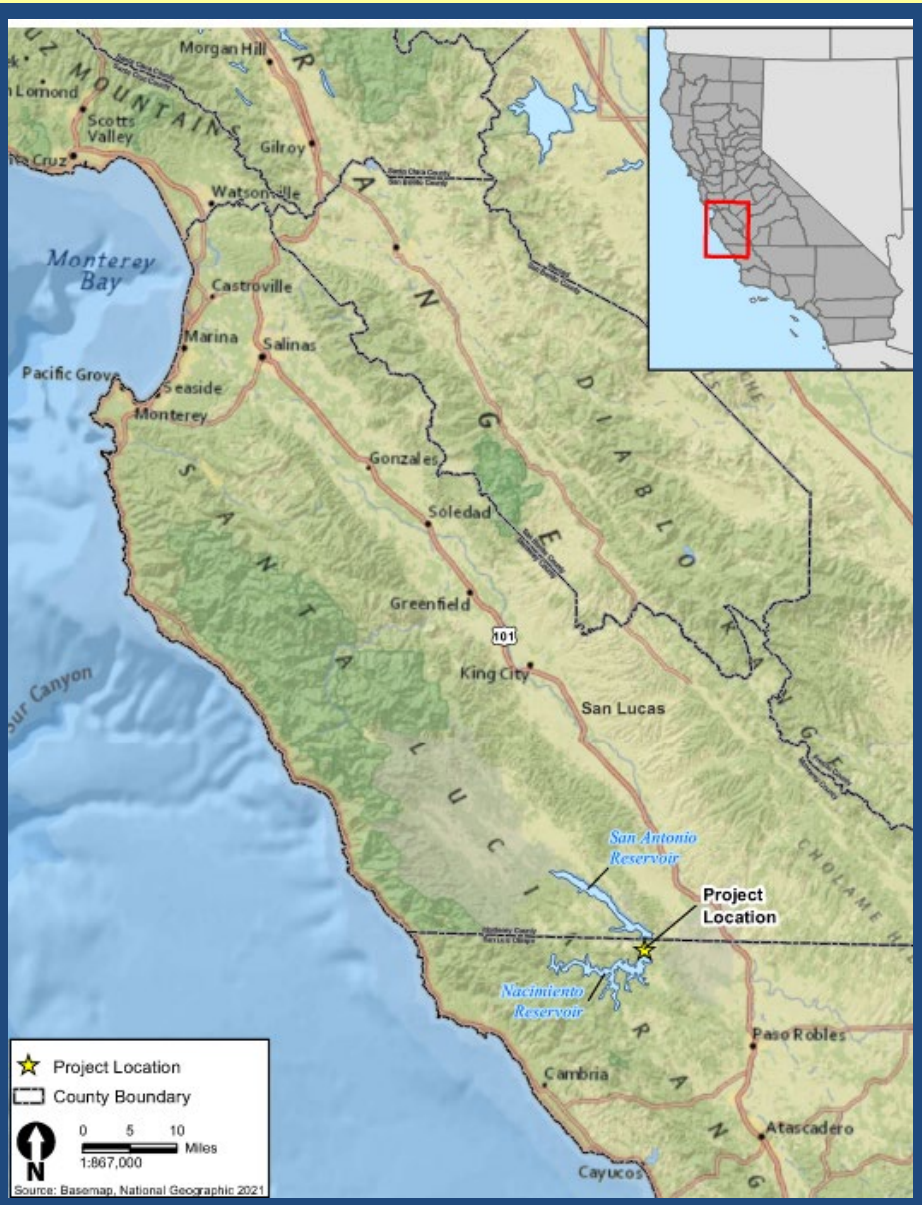
- Nacimiento fills 3x faster than San Antonio
- San Antonio has unused storage
- Reduce frequency of flood control releases from Nacimiento by moving water to San Antonio



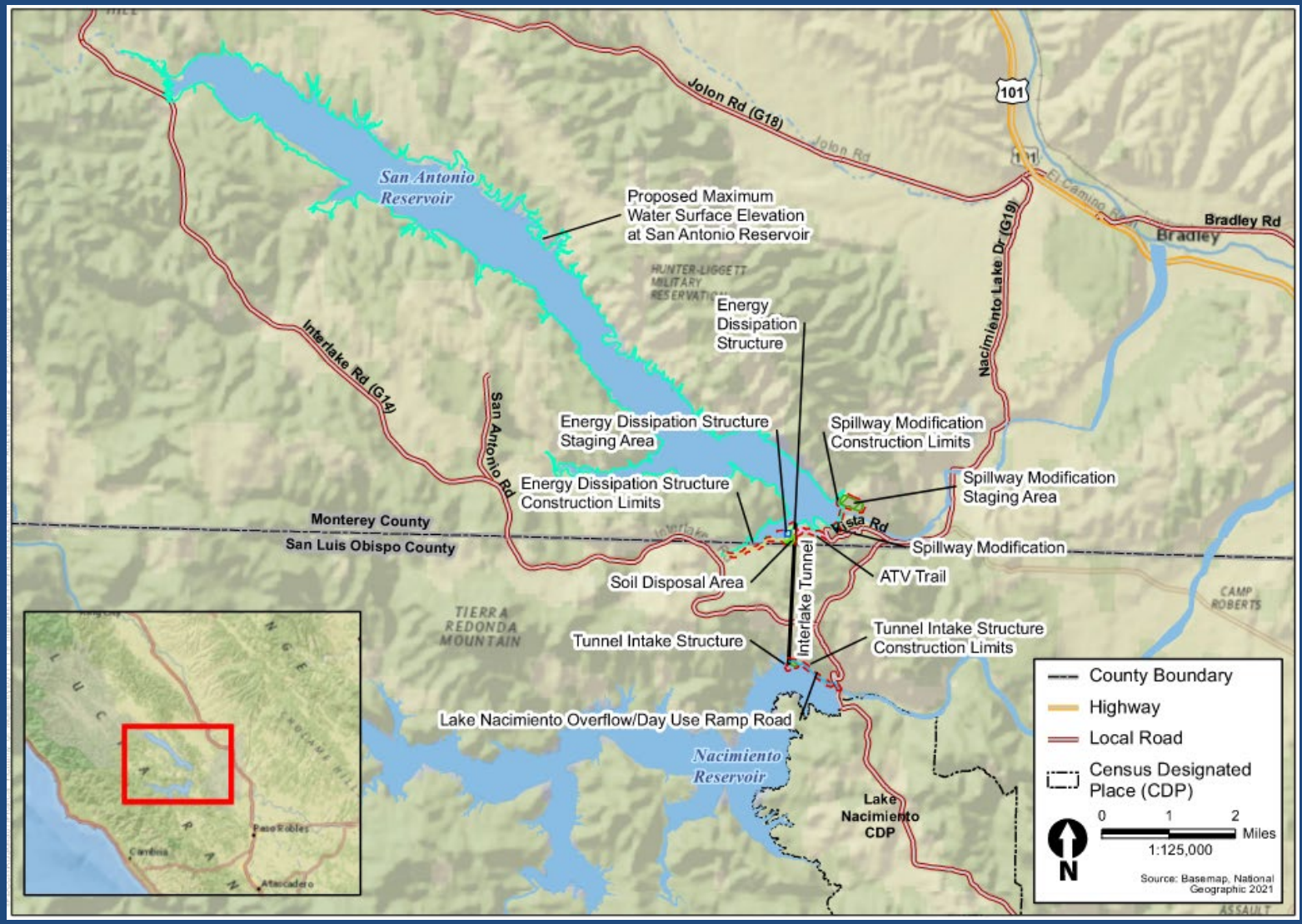
Project Benefits

- Minimize flood control releases through the Nacimiento Dam spillway and reduce associated downstream flood damage.
- Increase the overall surface water supply available from Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs by maximizing the opportunity for water to be collectively stored in the reservoirs.
- Improve the hydrologic balance of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and reduce seawater intrusion.
- Continue to meet downstream environmental flow requirements for South-Central California Coast steelhead.
- Minimize the impact on existing hydroelectric production.
- Preserve recreational opportunities in the reservoirs.
- Protect agricultural viability and prime agricultural land.

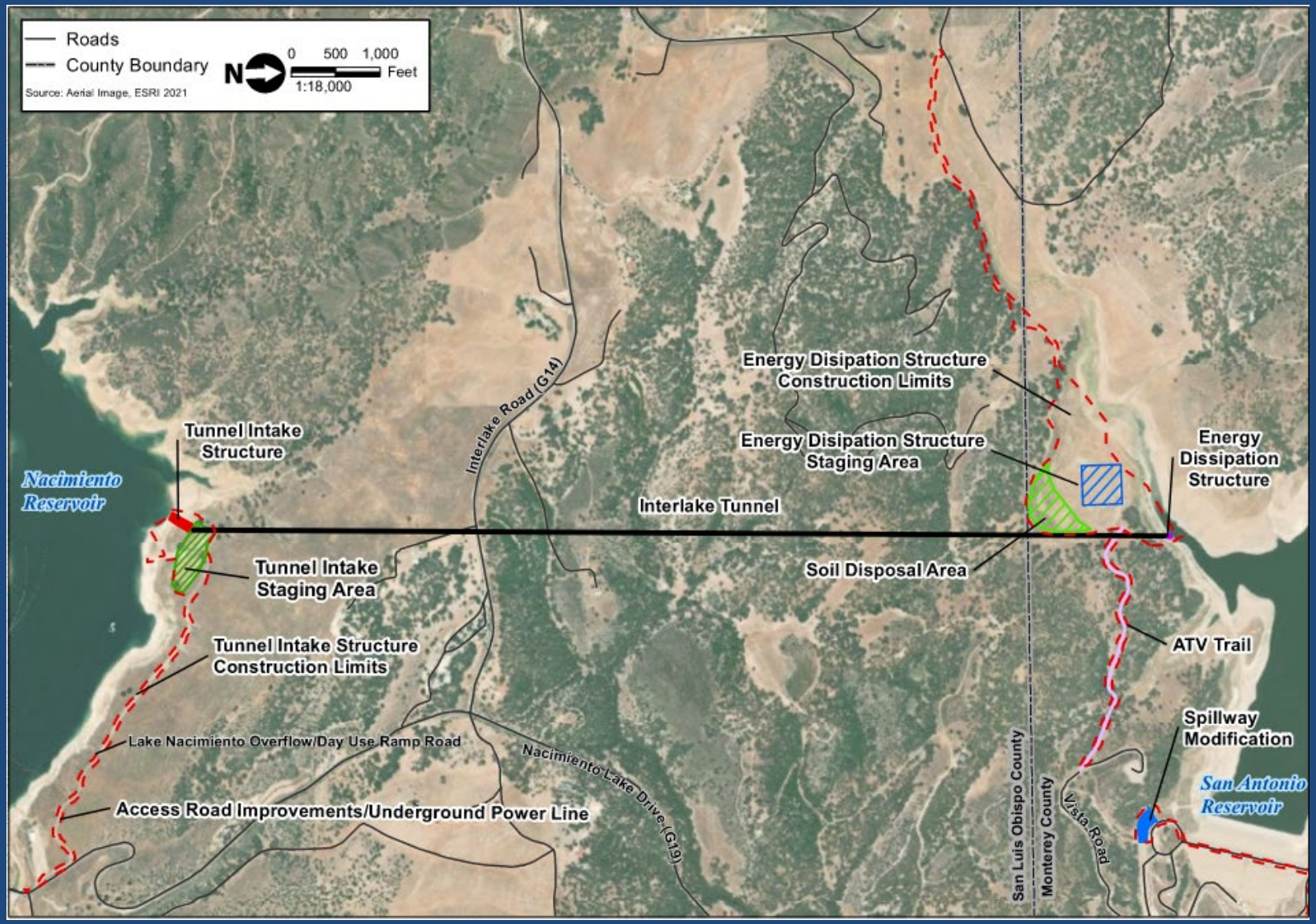
Project Overview



Project Overview

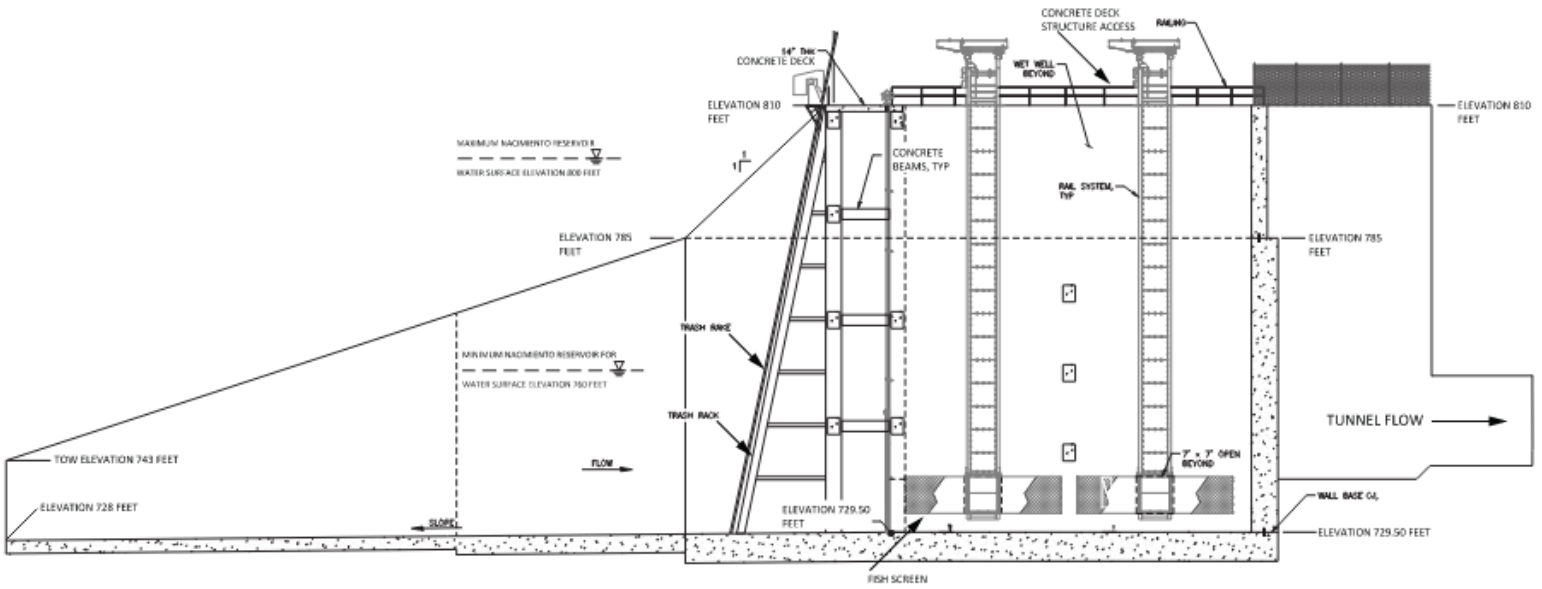


Proposed Project Components



Intake Structure

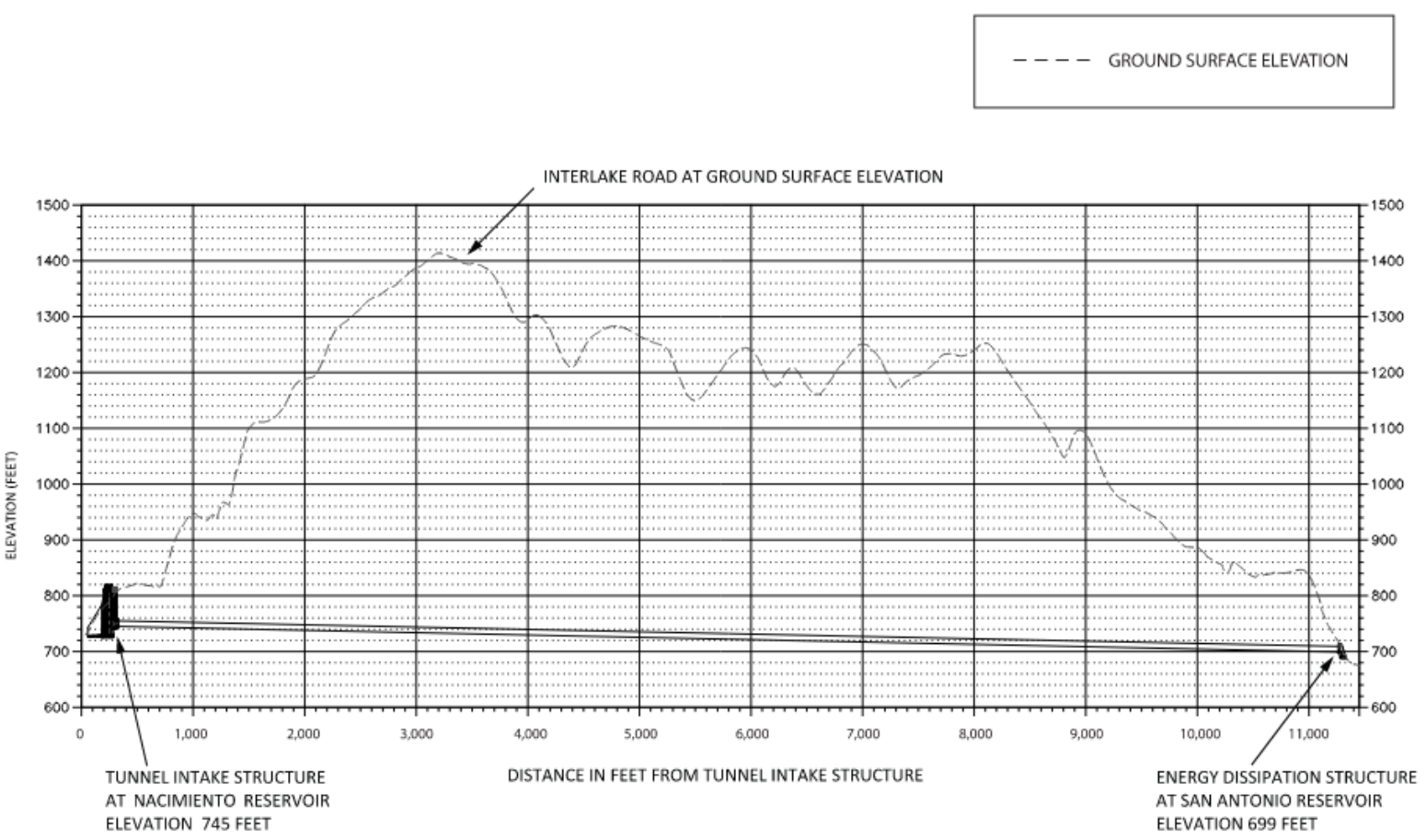
Intake Structure



Vertical datum = NGVD29

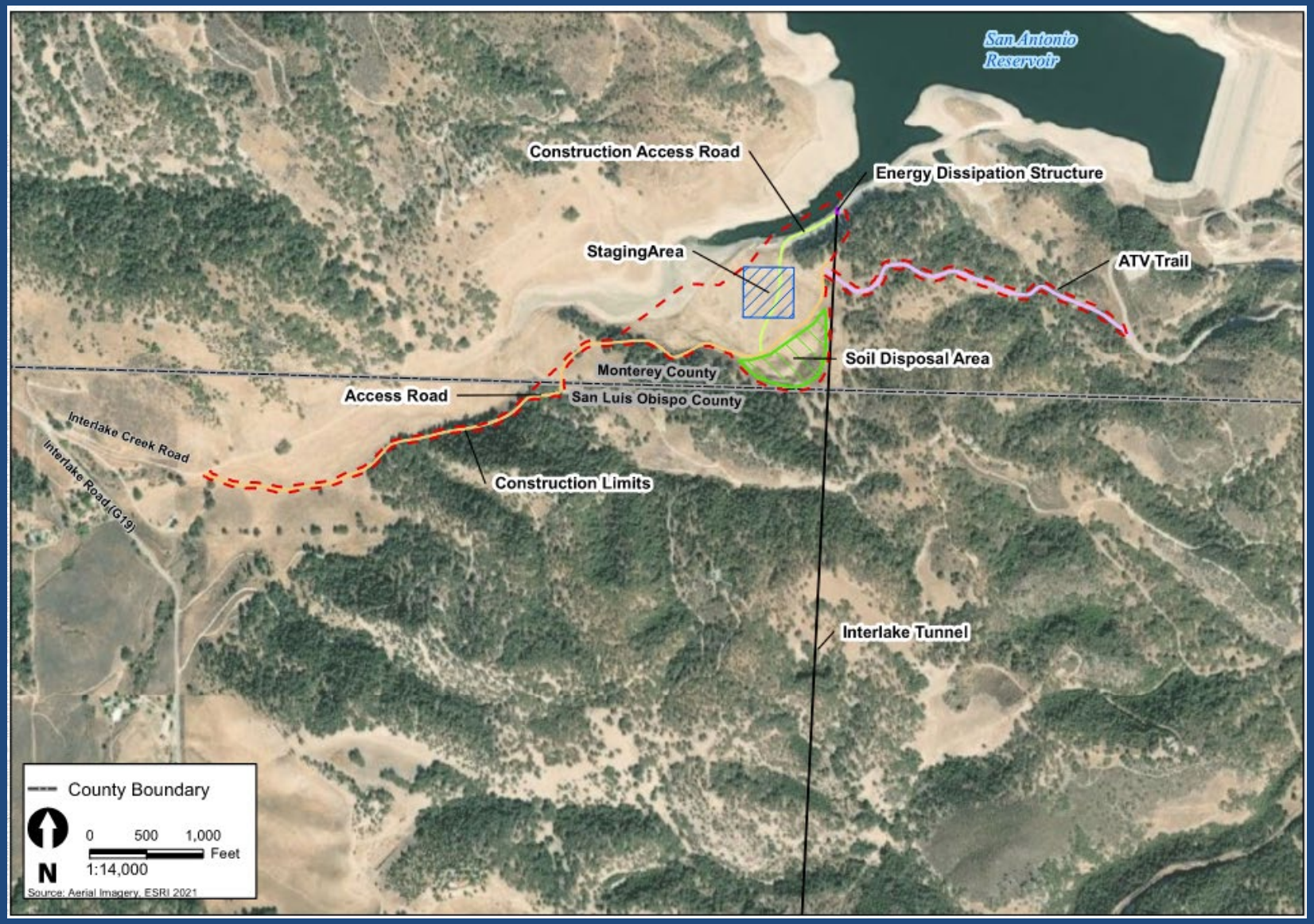
Source: McMillen Jacobs Associates, 2020a.

Tunnel Profile

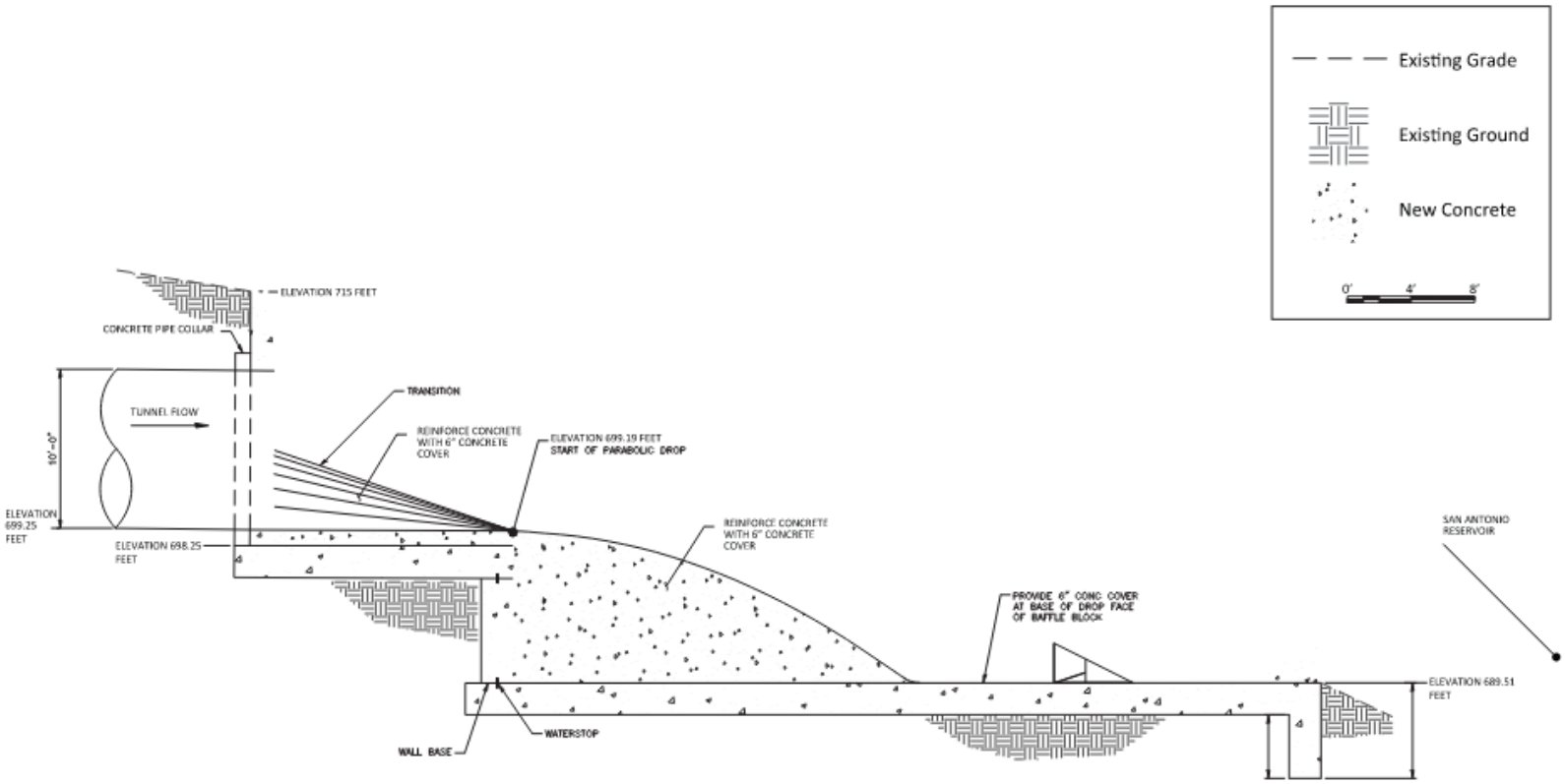


NOTE: X AND Y-AXIS ARE NOT TO THE SAME SCALE
Vertical datum = NGVD29
Source: McMillen Jacobs Associates, 2020a.

Energy Dissipation Structure



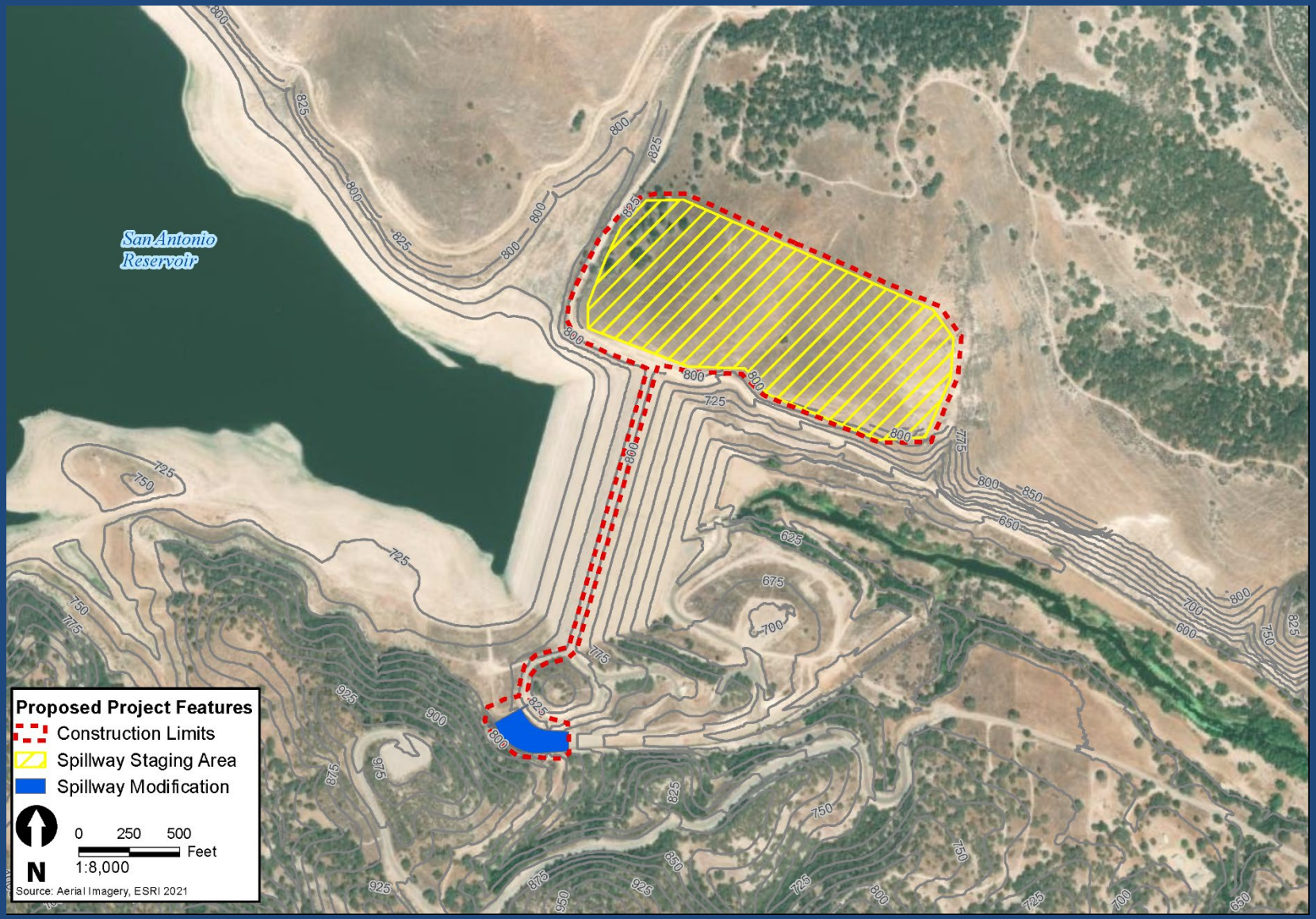
Energy Dissipation Structure



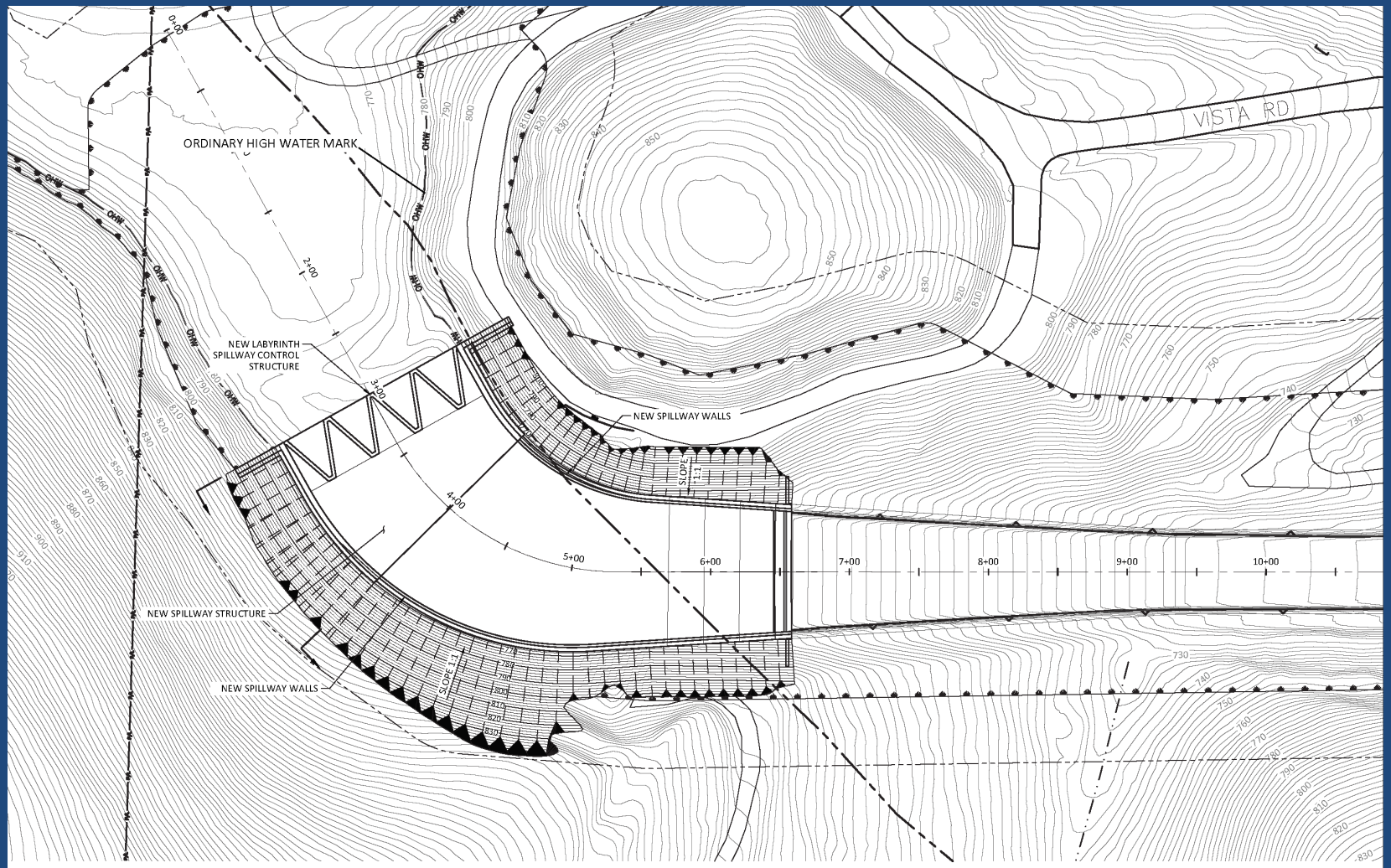
Vertical datum = NGVD29

Source: McMillen Jacobs Associates, 2020a.

San Antonio Spillway Modification



San Antonio Spillway Modification



Source: McMillen Jacobs Associates, 2020b.

Tunnel-Only Alternative

Tunnel-Only Alternative would include:

- Interlake Tunnel
- Tunnel Intake Structure at Nacimiento Reservoir
- Energy Dissipation Structure at San Antonio Reservoir

Tunnel-Only Alternative would not include construction of San Antonio Reservoir Spillway Modification and associated increase in maximum water surface elevation

Draft EIR Overview

Anticipated Environmental Effects

Construction of the proposed project would result in:

- the potential for soil erosion
- the potential to disturb or otherwise damage paleontological resources
- temporary and permanent impacts on plant and wildlife habitat through direct conversion and indirect effects (such as water quality impacts and noise)
- potential to disturb or damage archaeological resources, human remains, or tribal cultural resources
- potential for accidental release of small amounts of hazardous materials
- release of air contaminants and greenhouse gases

Mitigation has been identified to reduce these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels

Anticipated Environmental Effects

Operation of the proposed project could result in:

- periodic changes in flood hazard conditions and altered erosion and siltation conditions
- impacts to prime agricultural farmland due to infrequent changes in flood conditions and altered erosion and siltation
- reduced electrical energy production from the existing hydroelectric facility at Nacimiento Reservoir

Mitigation has been identified to reduce these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels

Anticipated Environmental Effects

Operation of the proposed project could result in:

- periodic impacts on plant and wildlife habitat through increased inundation at San Antonio Reservoir and changes in releases downstream of the reservoirs
- potential to disturb or damage archaeological resources, human remains, or tribal cultural resources through periodic inundation at San Antonio Reservoir
- potential to interfere with vehicle movement and emergency response along local roadways during periodic inundation at San Antonio Reservoir

Mitigation has been identified to reduce these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels

Anticipated Environmental Effects

Mitigation has been identified to reduce these potential impacts to less-than-significant levels

Due to time constraints we will not describe each measure; however, they are detailed in each resource section of the EIR.

Beneficial Effects

Agricultural Resources:

- Project would increase overall surface water supply
- protect agricultural viability and prime agricultural land
- improve hydrologic balance of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin
- reduce seawater intrusion

Recreation:

- Project would enhance recreational opportunities at San Antonio Reservoir

Beneficial Effects

Biological Resources:

- benefit riparian habitat in the lower reaches of the San Antonio River
- enhance fish productivity in San Antonio Reservoir
- enhance adult steelhead migration in Salinas River downstream of Soledad
- enhance juvenile steelhead rearing habitat in Nacimiento and San Antonio Rivers from increased summer flows
- benefit resident fish populations (including special-status species, such as Monterey roach and Monterey hitch) from increases in summer flows
- benefit Tidewater goby, especially spawning adults
- benefit steelhead smolts in the Nacimiento River and Salinas River reaches upstream of Soledad
- benefit steelhead smolts migrating through the lagoon

Beneficial Effects

Hydrology and Water Quality:

- increase the overall surface-water supply available from Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs by maximizing the opportunity for water to be collectively stored at the reservoirs
- minimize flood control releases from the Nacimiento Reservoir spillway
- reduce associated downstream flood damage
- increase groundwater supplies and recharge
- improve the hydrologic balance of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin

Next Steps

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Process

- 49-day Draft EIR public comment period – January 20th, 2023 through March 10th, 2023
- Substantive comments received on the Draft EIR will be addressed in the response-to-comments section of the Final EIR
- MCWRA will publish a Final EIR in summer 2023

How to Comment

Comment card

Complete and turn in a comment card at tonight's meeting

Mail

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