

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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JANUARY 27, 2000

TO: COASTAL COMMISSIONERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: PETER DOUGLAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JAMES RAIVES, FEDERAL CONSISTENCY COORDINATOR
MARK DELAPLAINE, FEDERAL CONSISTENCY SUPERVISOR

RE: UPDATE ON U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS MAINTENANCE
DREDGING OF MARINA DEL REY (CD-22-99)

A. Background. On June 10, 1999, the Commission concurred with a consistency determination submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for maintenance dredging of the entrance and main channels of Marina del Rey Harbor (CD-22-99) (Attachments 1-3). The project also included nearshore disposal of clean sandy material at Dockweiler and Redondo Beach, and disposal of contaminated material at Pier E, Slip 2, at the Port of Long Beach. The Corps proposed to dredge up to 500,000 cubic meters of sediment from the north, south, and central navigation and entrance channels of the harbor.

During its review, the Commission raised a water quality/marine resource concern about turbidity and potential associated resuspension of contaminants at the dredging site. The Corps modified its project to provide additional monitoring and best management practices should monitoring indicate a problem.

B. Dredging Status. As of January 26, 2000, the Corps had dredged a little over 266,000 cubic meters (cu.m.), 80% of which is considered contaminated. Earlier this week, the Corps increased the rate of production by bringing in a second dredge; however, under no circumstances would both dredges be working in contaminated areas. The second dredge is scheduled to leave around Feb. 6, 2000. If the weather allows and equipment remains in good working order, the Corps will complete the dredging well before March 15, 2000, which is the environmental window during which it is authorized to dredge.

C. Water Quality Monitoring. With assistance from Heal the Bay, the Corps is monitoring turbidity levels within the marina during the dredging operations. Turbidity levels are used as an indication of possible contamination impacts from the dredging operation. The monitoring has indicated that the Corps exceeded the turbidity levels twice in October and once in November. The Corps implemented best management

practices (i.e., the scows were not allowed to overflow, and operations were slowed) and turbidity was back to normal on the following days. From December 7 - 17, 1999, however, Heal the Bay monitored an increase in turbidity on five occasions. Even though the Corps implemented best management practices, the problem persisted. The elevated turbidity during this period is a concern to Commission staff and it is investigating the issue, in coordination with the Corps, EPA, the RWQCB, and Heal the Bay. In response to these concerns, the Corps has agreed to perform more detailed water quality monitoring and research additional best management practices.

On October 24, 1999, and again on December 17, 1999, when turbidity exceeded ambient conditions by more than 20%, water samples were collected and tested for heavy metals. Samples were collected at 100 meters downstream of the dredge, and at a control site. The concentration of contaminants in these samples appears to be very low. However, there is not enough data at this point to make any accurate conclusions. If the Corps supplements the water quality monitoring, this additional information may allow a better correlation between turbidity and water chemistry levels.

This matter was brought to the Commission's attention at the January 11, 2000, meeting in Santa Monica. The Commission staff has been involved in subsequent conversations with the Corps and other interested parties, including Heal the Bay, EPA, the RWQCB, and the Los Angeles County Dept. of Beaches and Harbors. The discussions have focused on the following issues:

1. the feasibility of use of closed buckets, silt curtains, variations in bucket size, and other turbidity-reducing measures to minimize turbidity; and
2. the need for additional water quality sampling to further delineate the level of contaminants being resuspended in the water column in areas exceeding turbidity standards, in order to determine whether turbidity is, in fact, causing problems.

Through these discussions, the Corps has agreed to perform additional water quality testing (at least two samples within the turbidity plume to characterize the contaminant levels). The Corps will also provide additional information concerning the feasibility of alternatives to reduce turbidity. Finally, the Corps will collect any background data or studies available on the water quality impacts from resuspension of contaminated sediment caused by dredging projects.

D. Procedures. The Commission's review of this project is being carried out under Section 930.44 of the federal consistency regulations. This section provides in part that:

(b) The State agency shall request that the Federal agency take appropriate remedial action following a serious disagreement resulting from a State agency objection to a Federal activity which was:

(1) Previously determined to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the State's management program, but which the State agency later maintains is being conducted or is having a coastal zone effect substantially different than originally proposed and, as a result, is no longer consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the State's management program The State agency's request must include supporting information and a proposal for recommended remedial action.

E. Conclusion. In its original concurrence with this project, after dismissing the use of silt curtains in this situation, the Commission concluded:

Because of the additional costs and timing delays caused by the silt curtains, it is likely that the Corps would not completely dredge the contaminated material from the harbor. Therefore, the recreational boating issues caused by the existing shoals and the continued issues from disposal of contaminated sediment would not be resolved for the near future. It is possible that the Corps will be required to dredge this area in the near future raising new water quality issues and disposal site complications. However, the Port of Long Beach disposal site will not be available and the Corps would probably pursue another site that is not as protective of coastal resources as the proposed site. The Environmental Protection Agency has evaluated this issue and has reached conclusions similar to the Commission's However, in coordination with the Commission, EPA, and Heal the Bay, the Corps has improved its monitoring and provided for a tiered mitigation should monitoring indicate a problem. The mitigation tiers include using a closed bucket, discharge of return water at the ocean floor rather than at the surface, and slowing down of work. The type of mitigation depends on the results of the monitoring, the effectiveness of the measure, and the source of resuspension. With these measures, the Commission finds that the proposed project will protect water quality resources.

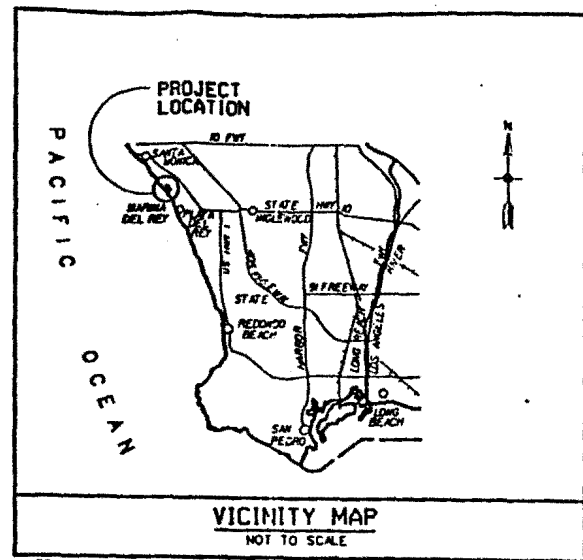
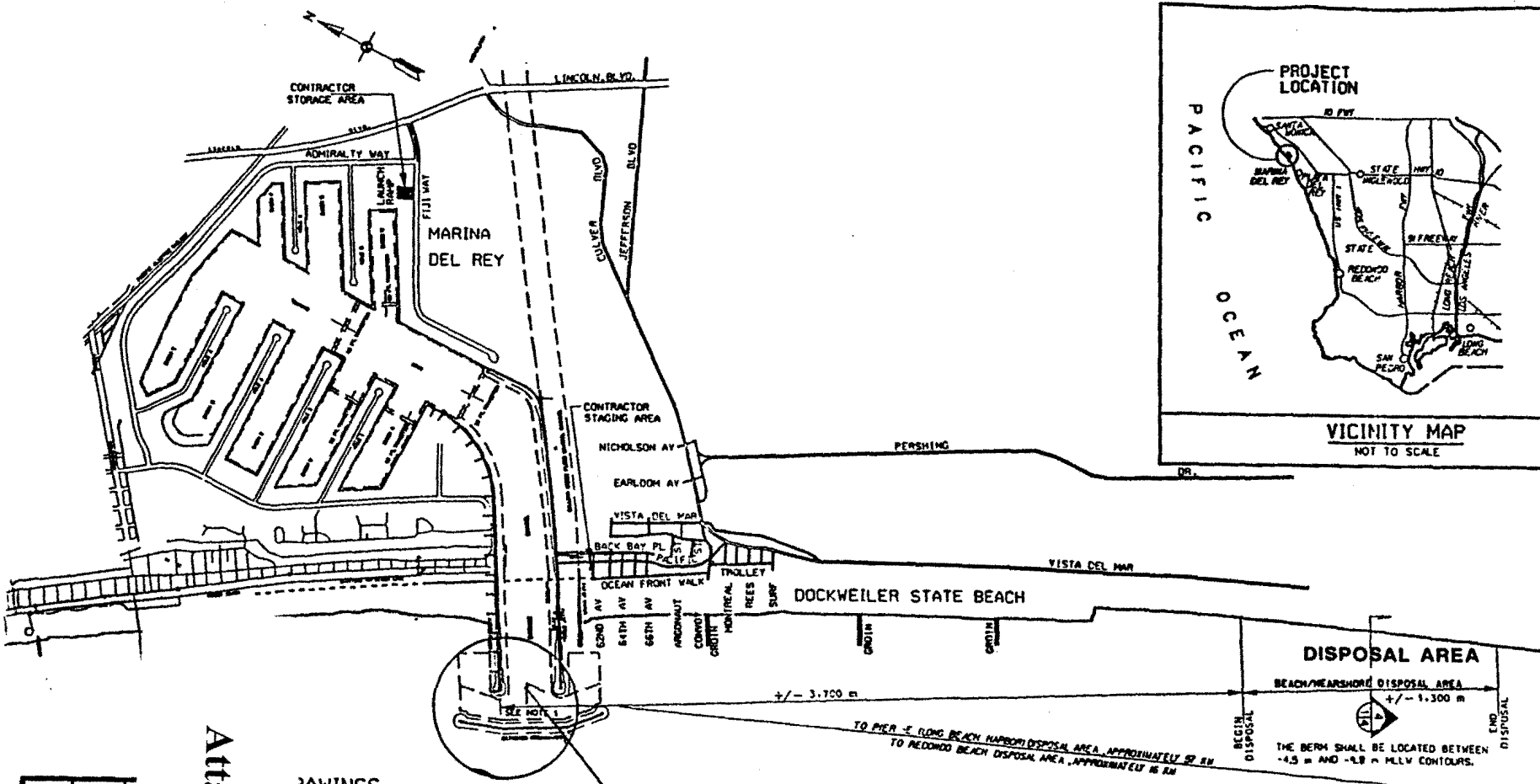
The Commission therefore concludes that the proposed dredging and disposal of contaminated sediments from Marina del Rey, as modified, is consistent with the water quality and marine resource policies of the CCMP (Sections 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act).

The Commission staff believes that occasional exceedances of turbidity standards by itself does not warrant discontinuance of dredging and losing the opportunity to remove the contaminants from the marine environment. Furthermore, the Corps has committed to taking the necessary water quality samples and analyzing them to enable a determination of the connection between turbidity and resuspension of contaminants. This information will greatly assist in the understanding of the consequence of turbidity and the need for reducing it. With

this commitment, the Commission staff concludes that there is no basis for the Commission to find that the project is not being carried out in a manner consistent the maximum extent practicable with the California Coastal Management Program.

Land Use/Federal Consistency/Staff Reports/2000/CD-22-99 M del Rey review

MAINTENANCE DREDGING MARINA DEL REY, CALIFORNIA



Attachment 1

DRAWINGS

- 1. AND
- 2. ING PLAN
- 3. DISPOSAL AREA
- 4. EA

SHEET NO.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

DREDGE AREA

LOCATION MAP

NOT TO SCALE

NOTES:

1. SEE SHEET 2 FOR THE AREAS TO BE DREDGED.
2. SEE SHEET 4 FOR TYPICAL DISPOSAL SECTION.
3. SEE THE CONTRACTING OFFICER FOR THE LOCATION AND SIZE (AREA) OF THE CONTRACTOR STORAGE AREA.

THIS PROJECT WAS DESIGNED BY THE LOS ANGELES DISTRICT OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS. THE DRAWINGS OF THIS PROJECT REGISTRATION DESIGNATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS APPEAR ON THESE PROJECT DOCUMENTS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT AS REQUIRED BY 49 CFR 110.1-1.0152.

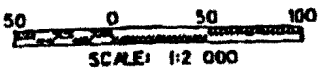
SIGNATURES AFFIXED HEREON INDICATE OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF ALL THE DRAWINGS IN THIS SET.

U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT
MARINA DEL REY

CD-22-99



N 551,400



N 551,700

DETACHED BREAKWATER

Attachment 2

CD-22-99

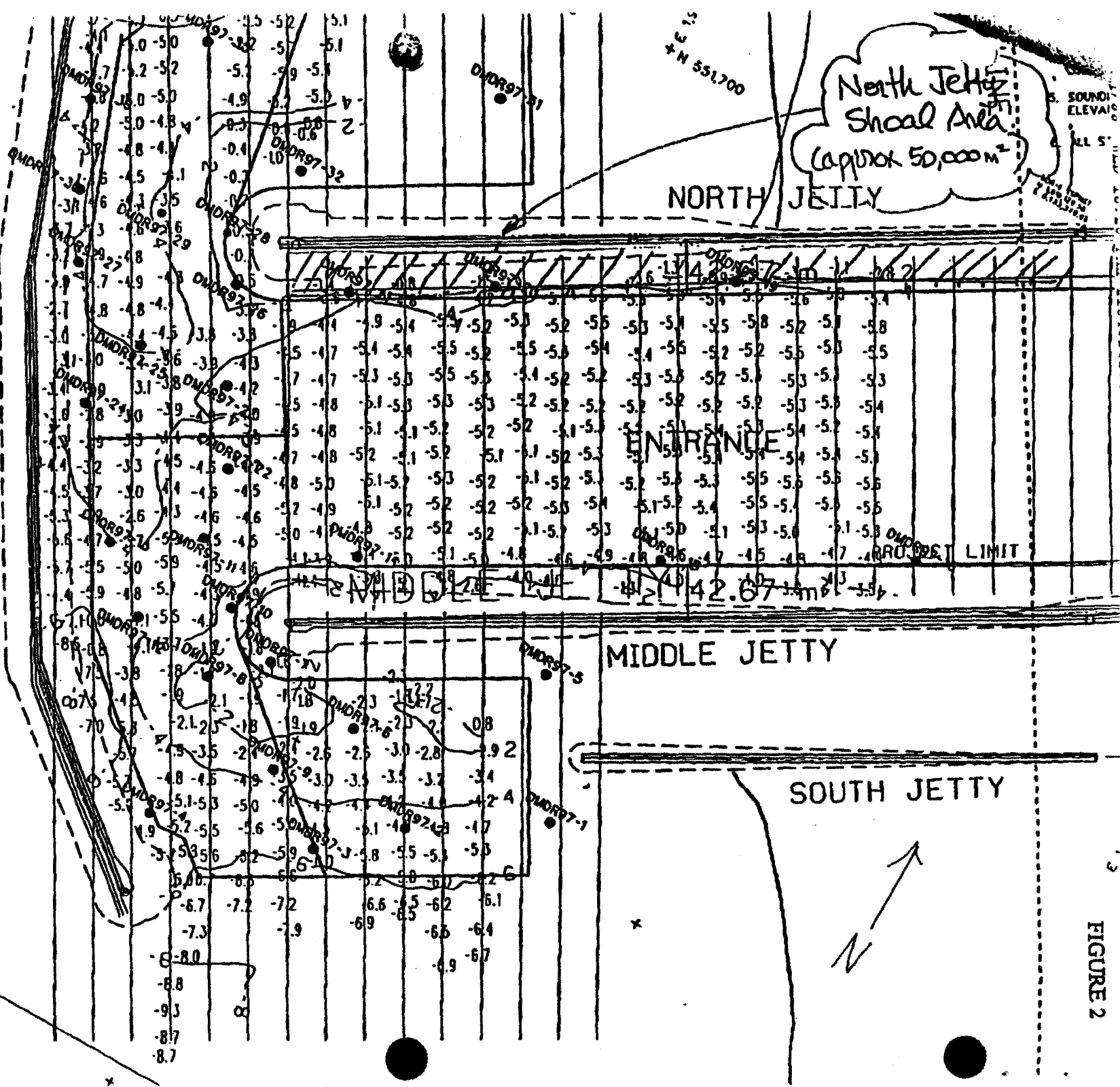
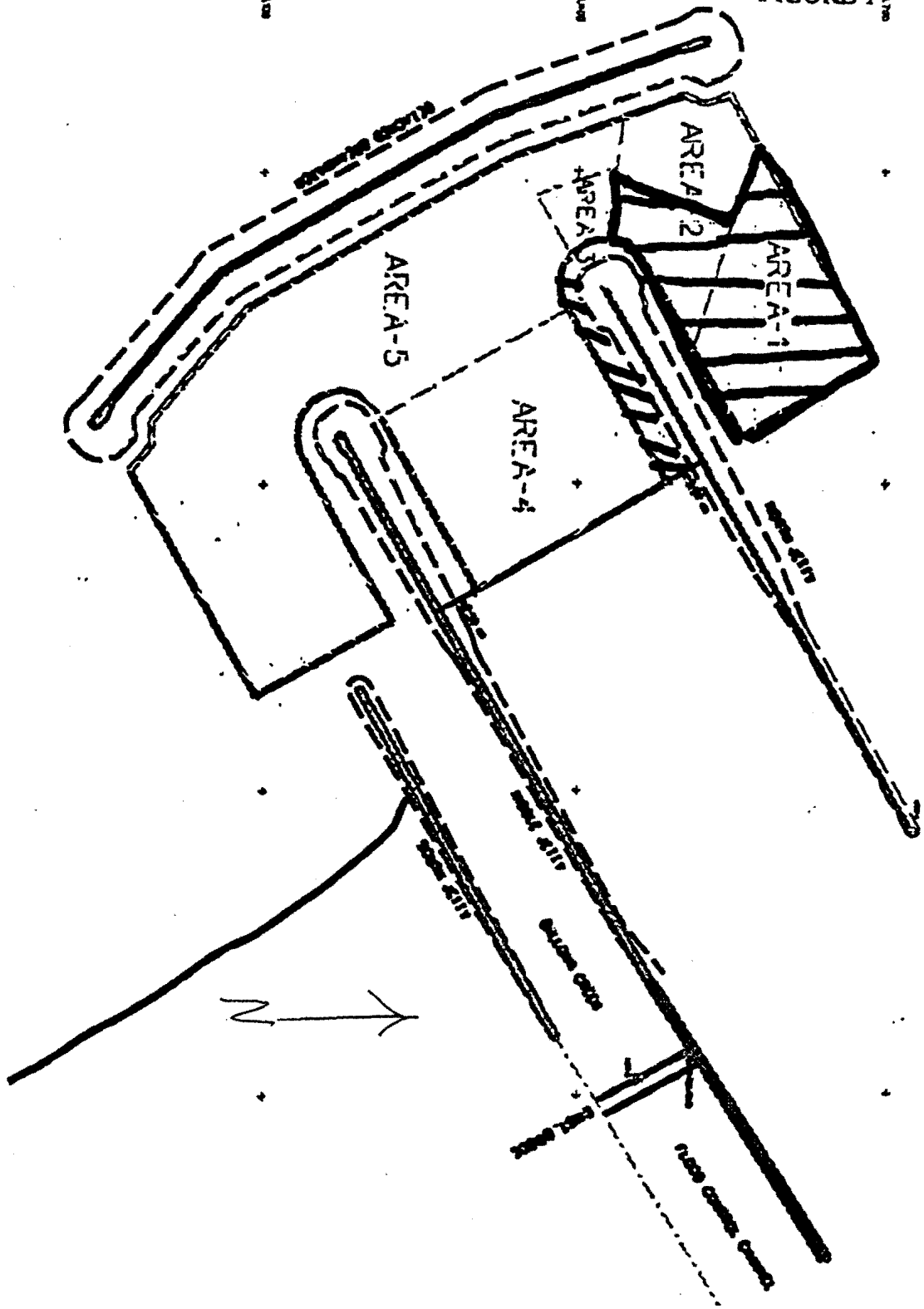




FIGURE 1



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Attachment 3

-  SLIP 2
-  BEACH COMPATIBLE

APPLICATION NO.
CD-22-99

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