

County: **San Joaquin**
 USGS Quad: **Woodward Island**

Thomas Guide Location
 SF Bay and Delt
 NOAA Chart: **18661 Sacramento & San Joaquin River**

Latitude N
 38 01.8
 Longitude W
 121 29.7

Last Page Update : 7/1/1996

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Columbia Cut extends 1.5 miles connecting the San Joaquin Channel (Head Reach) with Middle River. It is bordered by Medford Island to the north and McDonald Island to the south. Columbia Cut has a Berm Island dividing most of its length to the Middle River confluence and a large channel island at its confluence with the San Joaquin. These islands have high ecological value as freshwater marsh and riparian shrub scrub. Levees are ripped with emergent vegetation pockets. Currents can be strong here. Draft is good throughout length.

SEASONAL and SPECIAL RESOURCE CONCERN

All marsh areas are of "A" priority at all times. Special Status Species are present: from September to December there are modest numbers of Delta smelt (FT/SE) in this area; birds: black rail; rare plants occur in this site.

RESOURCES OF PRIMARY CONCERN

The primary issue at this site is the high ecological value of marsh islands, particularly the island at the north end which supports black rails. The aquatic environment supports diverse freshwater community. Also this is an important oil dispersion/transport channel to/from Mildred Island and the south delta.

Black rail (ST) occurs here. Other bird species which occur here are typical Delta waterbirds and marsh birds.

Other vertebrates are typical aquatic and semi-aquatic mammals, reptiles and amphibians of the Delta. Western pond turtle may occur here.

This area has modest occurrence of Delta smelt during fall/winter. Juvenile and adult striped bass are typical as are warm water species.

Only one Special Status plant Species has been recorded here: Mason's lilaeopsis. California hibiscus and Suisun marsh aster may also occur on larger channel island here.

CULTURAL, HISTORIC, and ARCHEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITIES

Contact the California Dept of Parks and Recreation - Office of Historic Preservation (Eric Allison (916) 653-9125), and the Northwest Information Center, (Bryan Much, Sonoma State College (707) 332-1117) for specific information on historic or cultural resources in this area.

KEY CONTACTS: Trustee (T); Entry/Owner/Access (E); Cultural (C); or Other Assistance (O)

Type	Name / Title	Organization	Phone
	John Henderson F/W Biologist	US Fish & Wildlife Service, Environmental Contam	(916) 414-6595
	Eric Larson	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Bay/Delta	(707) 944-5528
E	Chris Neudeck	Mandeville Island Reclamation District	(209) 946-0268
OEL	Dab Nomellini President	Central Delta Water Agency	(209) 465-5883

ADDITIONAL SITE SUMMARY COMMENTS:

2-952 -A Site Strategy - Columbia Cut

County and Thomas Guide Location

SF Bay and Delt San Joaquin

NOAA CHART

18661 Sacramento & San Joaquin River

2-952 -A

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CONCERNS and ADVICE to RESPONDERS:

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Oil issues here are oiling of marshy vegetation and penetration into riprap. This is also a significant route for spill spread. There are many important ecological resources in this reach of river and upstream sites where oil may be carried on tides and currents. The intent is to limit the free movement of oil into and through this site by exclusion and collection booming. Oil issues within the site are oiling of marshy vegetation and penetration into riprap. Minimize disturbance of vegetation and creatures. Do not tie boom to trees on the levee.

HAZARDS and RESTRICTIONS:

Aerial traffic beware of power wires. Slips, trips and falls. Deep water except at margins.

SITE STRATEGIES

Strategy 2-952.1 Objective: Exclude oil from entering or leaving Columbia Cut at the mouth (at San Joaquin R).

Set exclusion-diversion booms across each mouth at Head Reach. Anchor one end near the Medford levee and anchor other end along Head Reach shore of unnamed tule island. Do the same on south side to close channel on McDonald Island side. Leave a trailing boom length to maintain seal during tidal vacillations. Back with sorbent boom as necessary. Set protective sorbents between hard boom if oil threatens from Head Reach. Wind wash and strong currents can be a problem, requiring back-up strategy (see .3).

Strategy 2-952.2 Objective: Exclusion booming at junction with Middle River.

Set 900' of 9x9+ diversion-exclusion boom across mouth of Columbia Cut. Anchor one end near McDonald levee and the other near the Medford levee. Back with sorbent.

Strategy 2-952.3 Objective: Exclusion/Collection backup strategy for Head Reach end: exclude and divert for collection, under prevailing wind and current pattern.

Set 1500' 9x9+ diversion/exclusion boom at a diagonal across Columbia Cut just south of unnamed tule island. Angle to promote collection at appropriate shore under prevailing wind conditions.

Table of Response Resources

strategy number	harbor boom	swamp boom	Other boom type	sorb boom	Anchoring no	Boat type and gear	Boom boat	Skiffs punts	Skimmers No	Type	Special Equipment or kinds	comment	staff deploy	Staff tend
2-952.1	0	1000		2000	4	4/25/DANFORTH	0	2					4	
2-952.2	900			900	3	3/15/danforths	1	1					5	
2-952.3	1500				4	4/25lbs/danforths	1		1	SSS				

LOGISTICS

DIRECTIONS: to site (by land and/or by water, to nearest launch ramp and are access permits required.)

Key access to site is by boat, from Stockton Deep Water Channel at R12 or R16 through Head Reach. Vehicle access is very restricted: private levee roads via convoluted routes: Hwy 4 to Inland Dr to McDonald Rd to private bridge or ferry to McDonald Island or I-5 to 8-mile road to private ferry to Medford Island. Columbia Cut extends 1.5 miles connecting the San Joaquin Channel (Head Reach) with Middle River. It is bordered by Medford Island to the north and McDonald Island to the south.

LAND ACCESS: LEVEE ROADS ARE GOOD WHEN DRY

WATER LOGISTICS: deep draft, except near shore

Limitations: depth, obstruction

Launching, Loading, Docking and Services Available: Nearest boat launch and marine service is 8-mile road. Additional marine facilities are at Bethel Island or at the mouth of the Mokelumne.

FACILITIES, STAGING AREAS, POSSIBLE FIELD POSTS AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:

Good deployment sites and facilities are at marinas above: rental boats, fuel, restaurants, water, and some camping and lodging. Consider the 8-mile road area as an area deployment site. Lower Jones Tract levees are another deployment area.

COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS:

ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL COMMENTS:

