



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applicant:
Kelso Vidal
California Department of
Transportation, District 5

Published: 16 March 2026
Expires: 15 April 2026

San Francisco District
Permit Application No. SPN-2010-00024
Waddell Bluffs Maintenance Talus Removal Project

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The San Francisco District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §403). The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments from the public regarding the work described below:

APPLICANT: Kelso Vidal
California Department of Transportation, District 5
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

AGENT:

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The project would affect the Monterey Bay which is part of the Pacific Ocean. The project area is located between postmiles 36.4 and 37.5, on State Highway 1, approximately 8 miles north of the Town of Davenport, at the Waddell Bluffs, in Santa Cruz County, California; at Latitude 37.0970° and Longitude - 122.2794°.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The project site features coastal bluffs composed of the Santa Cruz Mudstone, which consists of weak, fractured, and interbedded mudstones and siltstones. The bluffs are unstable and subject to constant erosion from rock falls and slides, leading to the formation of large talus slopes at their base. There is a long history of Caltrans maintenance crews removing talus material out of the highway and disposing it along the ocean slope. In the 1970s, Caltrans began obtaining permits from various agencies to continue the on-going maintenance operation of talus disposal.

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: Maintain a safe highway for public use.

Overall: Maintain safe and open conditions on State Highway 1 by keeping the roadway clear of eroding talus debris.

PROPOSED WORK: The applicant requests authorization to annually discharge up to 30,000 cubic yards of talus from the Waddell Bluffs into the Pacific Ocean. The talus would be deposited onto the beach below the high tide line to allow wave action to disperse the talus. Each year, during September and October, Caltrans crews would collect talus material from a ditch that has been excavated along the east side of State Highway 1 at the base of the Waddell Bluffs and move the material by truck to a bench above the beach for stockpiling. During the winter season, when storms and waves provide optimum conditions for dispersal, the material would be pushed over the edge of the bench onto the beach. The winter wave action would then break down the material and carry it away from the shoreline. No material would be placed near the mouth of Waddell Creek.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment:

- Implementation of best management practices for protecting water quality;
- Discharge of talus material would be limited to late fall to allow winter storms to disperse the material;
- Activities would be restricted to daylight hours from October 15 through December 31;
- Storage of talus materials in stockpiles and berms would be limited to the greatest extent feasible.
- Berms would be limited in height, length, and width to the greatest extent feasible and shall not obstruct beach/ocean access points'
- Collected materials would be deposited on the bluffs, revetments fronting the bluffs/parking lot, and the beach. Materials shall be deposited in the manner that has the least adverse impacts on coastal resources.
- Only the amount of material that accumulates at the base of the bluff to the inland side of the highway in the project area since the previous year removal would be removed and deposited. The total quantity of talus materials deposited seaward of the highway would not exceed 30,000 cubic yards in any single year, unless prior authorization is granted.
- At the completion of activities in any given year, all pullout areas would be graded to ensure they provide maximum useable and flat public pullout space

and to minimize impacts to public views from the highway and pullouts as much as possible

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION: The applicant has provided the following explanation why compensatory mitigation should not be required: the fill discharge is expected to be dispersed from the beach during the winter storms.

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

The Corps is evaluating the undertaking for effects to historic properties as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This public notice serves to inform the public of the proposed undertaking and invites comments including those from local, State, and Federal government Agencies with respect to historic resources. Our final determination relative to historic resource impacts may be subject to additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer, federally recognized tribes and other interested parties.

The District Engineer's final eligibility and effect determination will be based upon coordination with the SHPO and/or THPO, as appropriate and required, and with full consideration given to the proposed undertaking's potential direct and indirect effects on historic properties within the Corps-identified permit area.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The Corps has performed an initial review of the application, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Section 7 Mapper, and the NMFS Critical Habitat Mapper to determine if any threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, as well as the proposed and final designated critical habitat may occur in the vicinity of the proposed project. Based on this initial review, the Corps has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project may affect species and critical habitat listed below. No other ESA-listed species or critical habitat will be affected by the proposed action.

Western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) and designated critical habitat for this species.

Tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) designated critical habitat.

Pursuant to Section 7 ESA, any required consultation with the Service(s) will be conducted in accordance with 50 CFR part 402. Caltrans is the lead Federal agency for ESA consultation for the proposed action. Any required consultation will be completed by Caltrans.

This notice serves as a request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service for any additional information on whether any listed or proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or critical habitat may be present in the area which would be affected by the proposed activity.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996, the Corps reviewed the project area, examined information provided by the applicant, and consulted available species information.

The Corps intends to initiate Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation separately from this public notice. A separate EFH consultation package will be sent to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The Corps will not make a permit decision until the consultation process is complete.

Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NAVIGATION: The proposed structure or activity is not located in the vicinity of a federal navigation channel.

SECTION 408: The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Water Quality Certification may be required from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The geographic extent of aquatic resources within the proposed project area that either are, or are presumed to be, within the Corps jurisdiction has not been verified by Corps personnel.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical 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, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act or the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. A permit will be granted unless its issuance is found to be contrary to the public interest.

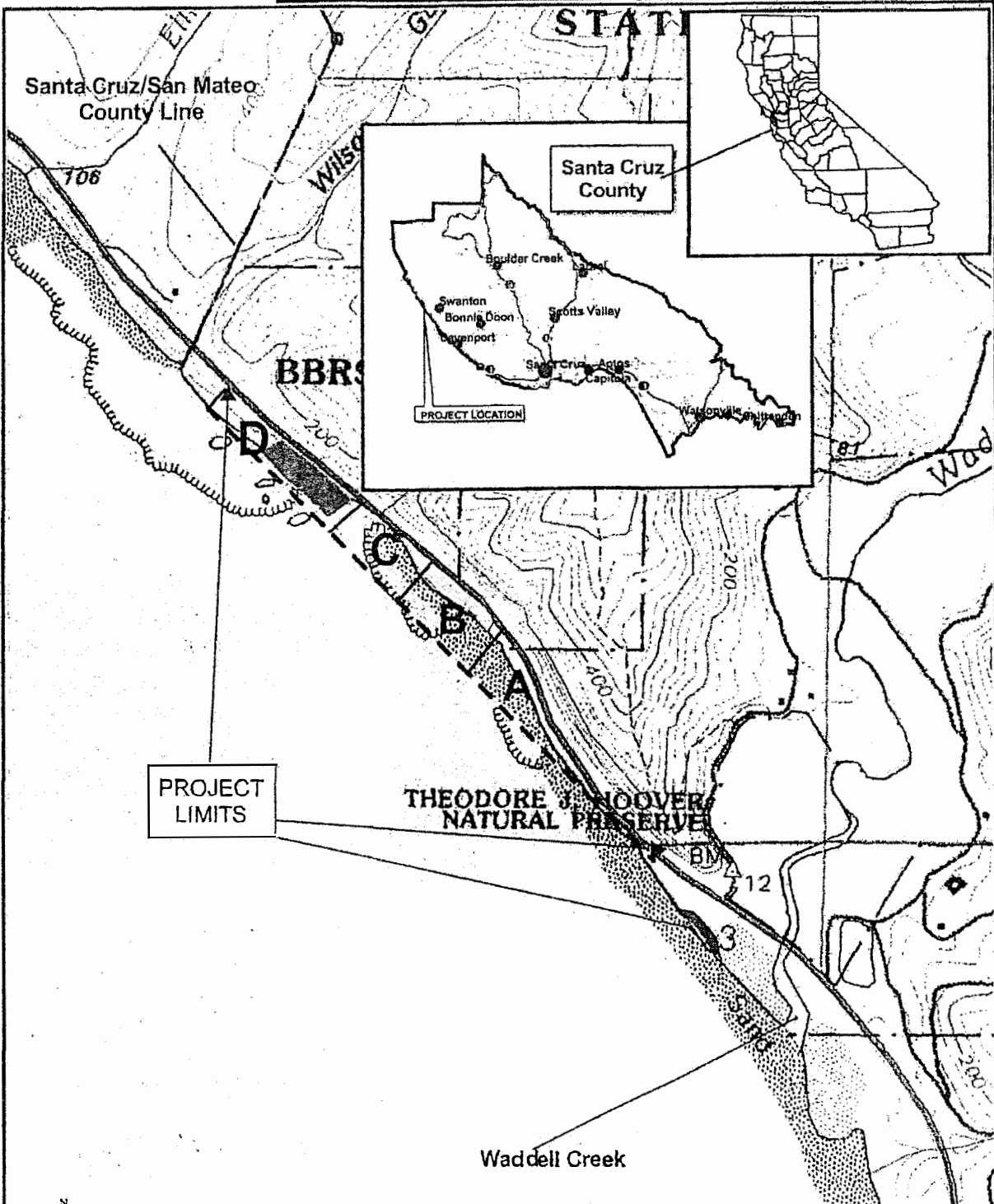
COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether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

The San Francisco District will receive written comments on the proposed work, as outlined above, until April 15, 2026. Comments should be submitted electronically via the Regulatory Request System (RRS) at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs> or to Frances Malamud-Roam at Frances.P.Malamud-Roam@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, Attention: Frances Malamud-Roam, Regulatory Division, CESP-N-RGS
450 Golden Gate Avenue, 4th Floor
San Francisco, California 94102.

Please refer to the permit application number in your comments.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing will be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.

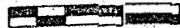
WADDELL BLUFFS ROCKFALL Vicinity Map

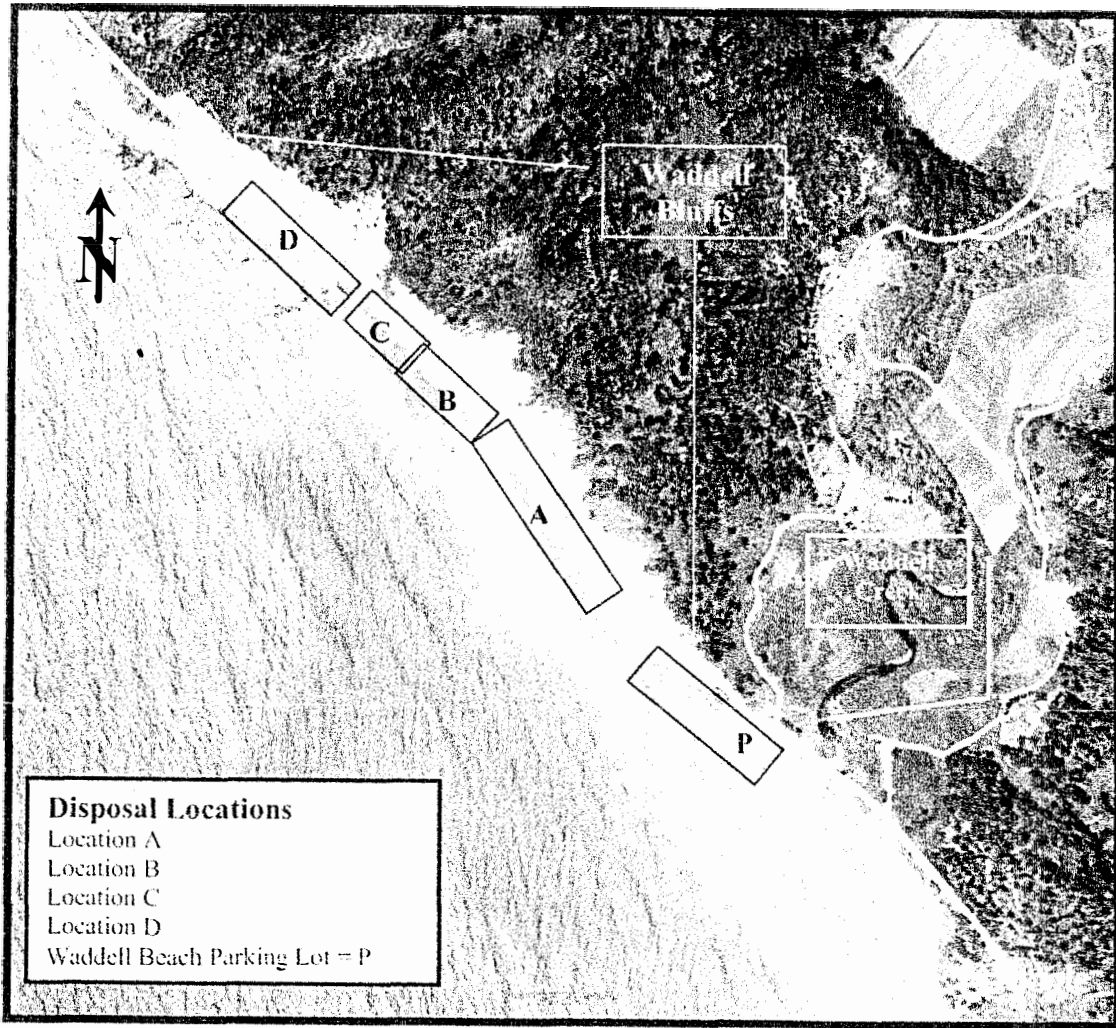


PROJECT
LIMITS



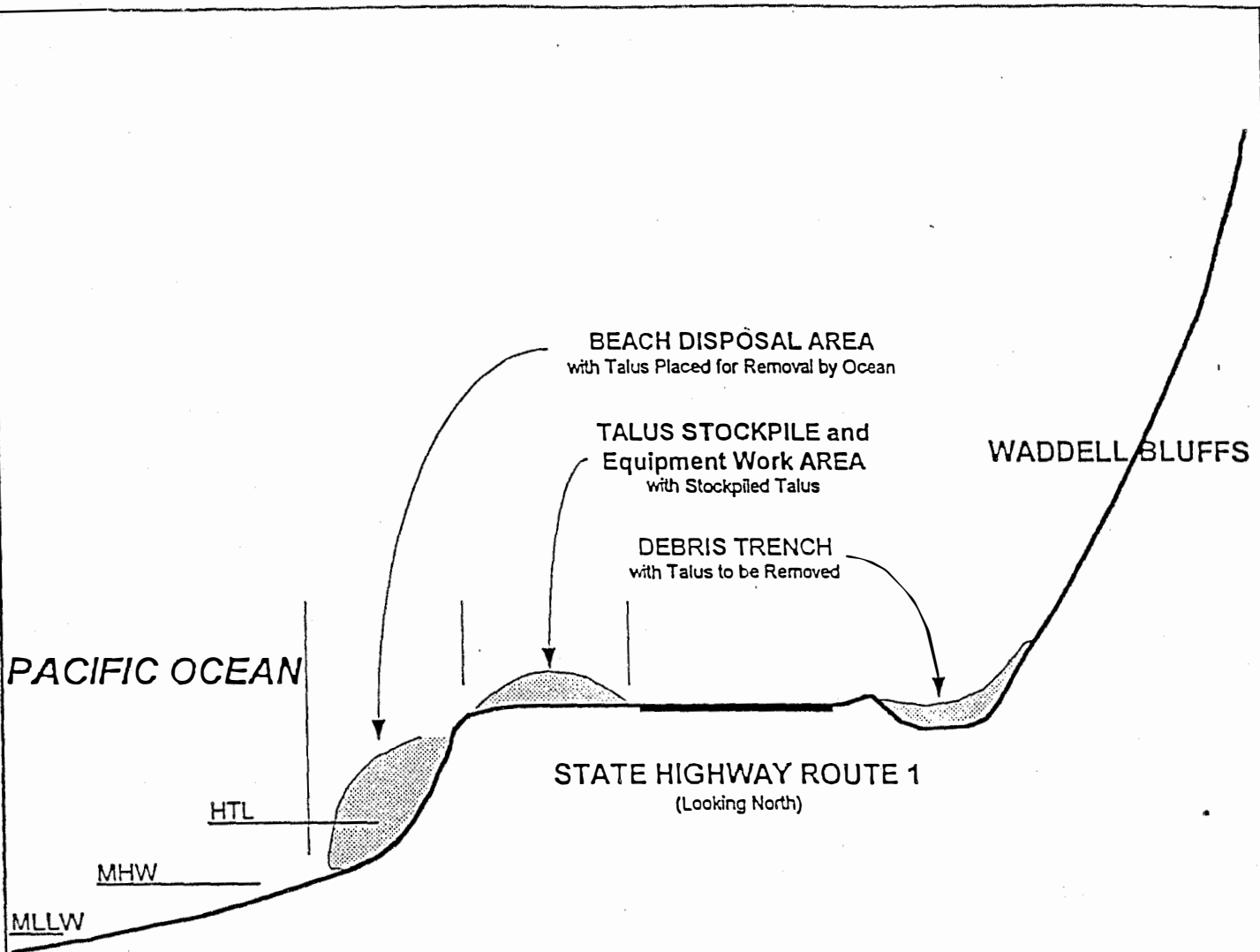
100 0 100 200 Meters





Aerial view of the Waddell Bluffs talus disposal area and approximate locations of approved disposal sites.

File No. 10-00024
CALTRANS
Waddell Bluffs Talus Disposal
Santa Cruz County, CA
SHEET 2 of 3 Date 13 MAR 2026



TIDAL BENCH MARKS

High Tide Line (HTL)	9.8'
Mean High Water (MHW)	5.3'
Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW)	0.0'

NOT TO SCALE

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 CALTRANS
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 Santa Cruz County, CA
 SHEET 3 of 3 Date 13 MAR 2026