MINUTE ITEM
This Calendar Item No. 24
was approved as Minute Item
No. 24 by the State Lands
Commission by a vote of 3
to 0 at its 08/30/89
meeting.

CALENDAR ITEM

24

A 34

S 25

08/30/89
W 40174 PRC 7331
Willard

APPROVAL OF A GEOLOGICAL SURVEY PERMIT
INYO COUNTY

APPLICANT: Great Basin Unified Air Pollution
Control District
157 Short Street, Suite 6
Bishop, California 93514

AREA, TYPE LAND AND LOCATION:
State sovereign lands of Owens Lake Bed in Inyo County.

LAND USE: One pair of drill holes will be constructed in each of three locations:

Location 1: Section 18, T17S R38E, MDM, Inyo County.
Location 2: Section 16, T16S R37E, MDM, Inyo County.
Location 3: Section 17, T16S R37E, MDM, Inyo County..

TERMS OF PROPOSED PERMIT:
Initial period: Two years on Owens Dry Lake, Inyo County.

PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS, FEES AND EXPENSES:
Filing fee of $25. Additional fees are waived due to the public benefit.

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PROPOSED PROJECT:

The Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) proposes to rotary drill three pairs of exploratory wells to a maximum depth of 700 feet, on the northeast portion of Owens Lake bed to determine the extent and confinement of the various aquifers under the dry lake bed. In addition, two pairs of wells may be drilled on adjacent lands owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. No new roads will be constructed. Existing roads will be improved by grading and compacting. Gravel fill may be required in areas with poor stability. Well pads, approximately 50 feet square may be required to assure rig stability. Pads would be constructed of fill soils approximately two to four feet above existing surface.

Each pair of wells will consist of one producing well and one monitoring well. During drilling of monitoring wells, formation samples will be retained for lithologic analysis. Upon completion of drilling, the well will be logged for geophysical information. The well will be outfitted with PVC pipe and two or three piezometers so as to serve as a multiple completion monitoring well. Producing wells will be outfitted with 16-inch steel casing and pump-tested at various rates up to 1,600 gallons per minute.

Information obtained from this geological survey will be utilized to determine adequacy of subsurface water to supply a sprinkler system for reduction of particulate air pollution from Owens Dry Lake. Commission staff will have access to drill sites at all times. All data obtained will be made available to the Commission within 30 days. Upon termination of the two-year term of the geological survey permit, all wells will be properly abandoned, unless further approval or use has been authorized by the Commission. Abandonment procedures shall be in accordance with the State Department of Water Resources Bulletin 74-81 entitled Water Well Standards: State of California, dated December 1981.

STATUTORY AND OTHER REFERENCES:

A. P.R.C.: Div. 6, Parts 1 and 2; Div. 13.

B. Cal. Code Regs.: Title 2, Div. 3; Title 14, Div. 6.

AB 884: 02/18/90.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. A Negative Declaration was prepared and adopted for this project by the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District. The State Lands Commission's staff has reviewed the document and believes that it complies with the requirements of the CEQA.

EXHIBITS:

A. Land Description.
B. Site Map.
C. Negative Declaration.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION WAS PREPARED AND ADOPTED FOR THIS PROJECT BY THE GREAT BASIN UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT AND THAT THE COMMISSION HAS REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN.

2. DETERMINE THAT THE PROJECT, AS APPROVED, WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

3. AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF A GEOLOGICAL SURVEY PERMIT TO THE GREAT BASIN UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS ON (1) SECTION 18, T17S R38E, MDM, INYO COUNTY; (2) SECTION 16, T16S R37E, MDM, INYO COUNTY; (3) SECTION 17, T16S R37E, MDM, INYO COUNTY, ON STATE SOVEREIGN LANDS ON OWENS DRY LAKE BED.

EXHIBIT "A"

W 40174

LAND DESCRIPTION

Three parcels of State Sovereign Land in the dry bed of Owens Lake, Inyo County, California. described as follows:

PARCEL 1

Section 18, T17S, R38E, MDM.

PARCEL 2

Section 16 , T16S, R37E, MDM.

PARCEL 3

Section 17, T16S, R37E, MDM.

END OF DESCRIPTION

PREPARED AUGUST 11, 1989 BY BIU 1.

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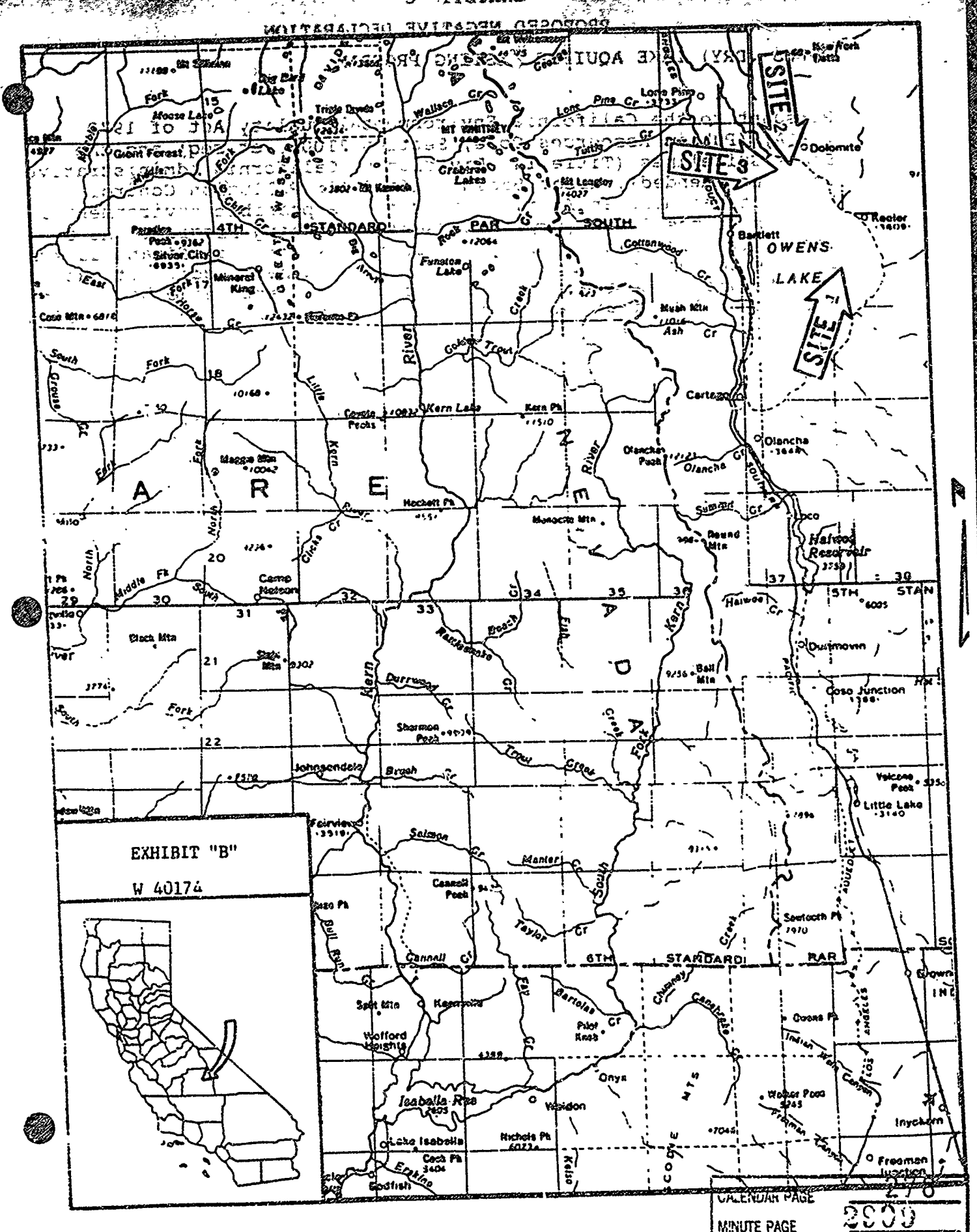

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PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

OWENS (DRY) LAKE AQUIFER TESTING PROGRAM

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq) and the State Guidelines (Title 14, Division 6, California Administrative Code, as amended), Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District has made an Initial Study of the possible environmental impacts of the Owens (Dry) Lake Aquifer Testing Program. As a result of this Initial Study, we do not expect significant adverse impacts to sensitive species, or hydrologic resources. If such impacts are identified at a later date when tests have begun, the project will be modified or mitigations will be proposed to reduce the impacts to insignificance.

Location:

The Owens (Dry) Lake Valley, approximately five miles S. of Lone Pine, in Inyo County, California, (Hydrologic unit number 18090103, State of California Hydrologic Unit Map, 1978).

Project Description:

See attached description and Figure 1.

Intital Study:

See attached checklist, project impact description, and Figure 2. They indicate the potential environmental effects from these exploratory well tests.

Findings

The proposed program should be issued a Negative Declaration because all issues identified in the Initial Study are insignificant or can be mitigated. Therefore, these tests will not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment.

Any person may object to dispensing with preparation of an EIR on the proposed tests, or may respond to the findings contained in the Initial Study. Information related to the project is on file at the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District at 157 Short Street, Suite 6, Bishop, California, 93514; (619) 872-8211. Any person wishing more information may inquire at the District office during regular business hours.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

GBUAPCD Board Chairman

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OWENS (DRY) LAKE AQUIFER TESTING PROGRAM

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will consist of drilling five exploratory wells on the eastern portions of the Owens (Dry) Lake bed. Figure 1 indicates the proposed locations for the five exploratory wells. The exploratory wells will be drilled sequentially beginning with the proposed well location nearest the existing Sulfate Well. Each well will take approximately one week to complete. Well locations may be slightly altered based on information obtained from each previously drilled well or due to access problems.

No new roads will be constructed to gain access to the proposed locations. However, improvements to the existing roads will be necessary to allow access. The existing road running along the power line running approximately east to west across the northern portion of the lake bed will be improved by grading and compacting. Some gravel fill may be required in areas with poor stability. The road (old Hwy 136) that runs along the north eastern shoreline (3600' contour) of the lake bed will require small migratory sand deposits to be removed down to the existing asphalt road bed.

Well pads may be constructed if necessary to assure rig stability during drilling. If pads are constructed they will be approximately 50' by 50' square. Pads will be constructed of fill soils raised approximately two to four feet above existing surface. Well locations not requiring pads will require surface disturbance over approximately the same amount of area (50' by 50').

Wells will be completed to a depth of from 250 feet to 1000 feet depending on the aquifers and geologic profile encountered during the drilling operation. Drilling will consist of installing surface casing to a sufficient depth to avoid loss of the well integrity during the deep hole drilling operation. A blow-out preventer will be used during the drilling process to control aquifer pressure conditions if encountered. All wells will be drilled with the intent that the wells will be cased (8") and completed as production wells should a sufficient aquifer condition be encountered. If sufficient aquifer conditions are not encountered the well will be cased and used as an observation well.

Wells suitable for future production pumping will be pumped for a two day period to test the aquifer capabilities. Observation wells will be monitored during this period for pressure changes to better understand the aquifer conditions. Longer term pumping will take place on the proposed well located near the Sulfate Well to further understand the production capabilities of the previously identified aquifer in the Keeler area. The existing Sulfate Well and / or UMETCO Wells will be used as observation wells for the short and long pumping tests. Water pumped from the pumped well will be placed in the pond currently adjacent to the existing flowing Sulfate Well. Excess water may reach the center of the lake during the long term pumping test.

A long term pumping test may be completed on one of the wells drilled on the northern portion of the lake bed should an aquifer be encountered. Water from this test will be allowed to run to the south following the natural drainage of the lake bed.

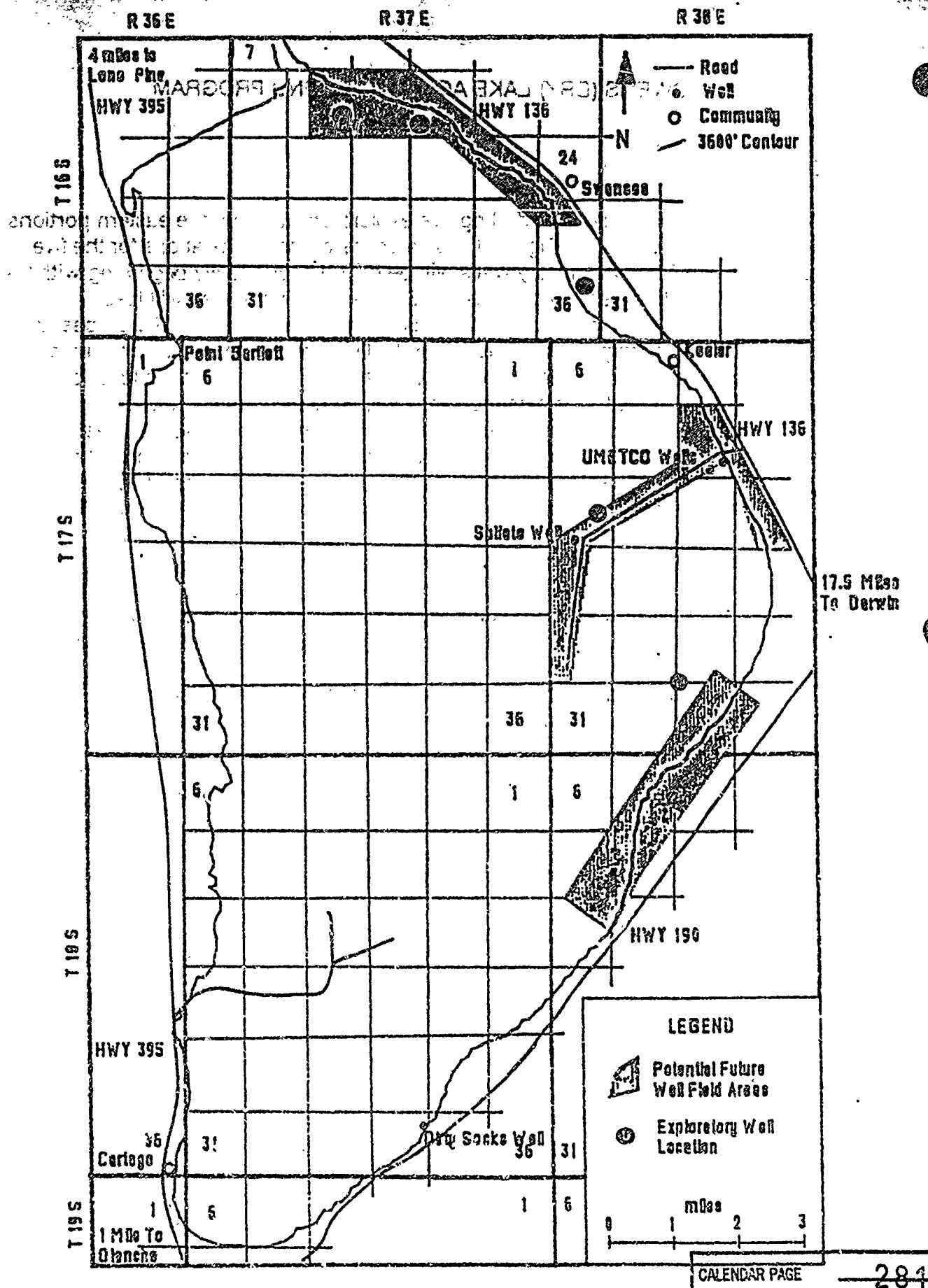

Figure 1

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM
(To Be Completed By Lead Agency)

I. Background

1. Name of Proponent GREAT BASIN UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

2. Address and Phone Number of Proponent
157 Short Street, Suite 6
Bishop, CA 93514 (619) 872-8211

3. Date of Checklist Submitted July 10, 1989

4. Agency Requiring Checklist NOT APPLICABLE

5. Name of Proposal, if applicable OWENS (DRY) LAKE AQUIFER TESTING PROGRAM

II. Environmental Impacts

(Explanations of all "yes" and "maybe" answers are required on attached sheets.)

	Yes	Maybe	No
1. Earth. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Unstable earth conditions or in changes in geologic substructures?	___	___	X
b. Disruptions, displacements, compaction or overcovering of the soil?	___	___	X
c. Change in topography or ground surface relief features?	___	___	X
d. The destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?	___	___	X
e. Any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, either on or off the site?	___	___	X
f. Changes in deposition or erosion of beach sands, or changes in siltation, deposition or erosion which may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed of the ocean or any bay, inlet or lake?	___	___	X
g. Exposure of people or property to geologic hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, ground failure, or similar hazards?			X

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	Yes	Maybe	No
2. Air. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Substantial air emissions or deterioration of ambient air quality?			X
b. The creation of objectionable odors?			X
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?			X
3. Water. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Changes in currents, or the course of direction of water movements, in either marine or fresh waters?			X
b. Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X
c. Alterations to the course or low of flood waters?			X
d. Change in the amount of surface water in any water body?			X
e. Discharge into surface waters, or in any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X
f. Alteration of the direction or rate of flow of ground waters?			X
g. Change in the quantity of ground waters, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations?			X
h. Substantial reduction in the amount of water otherwise available for public water supplies?			X
i. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding or tidal waves?			X
4. Plant Life. Will the proposal result in:			X
a. Change in the diversity of species, or number of any species of plants (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X

	Yes	Maybe	No
b. Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of plants?	____	____	X
c. Introduction of new species of plants into an area, or in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?	____	____	X
d. Reduction in acreage of any agricultural crop?	____	____	X
5. Animal Life. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds, land animals including reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms or insects)?	____	____	X
b. Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of animals?	____	____	X
c. Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?	____	____	X
d. Deterioration to existing fish or wildlife habitat?	____	____	X
6. Noise. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Increases in existing noise levels?	____	____	X
b. Exposure of people to severe noise levels?	____	____	X
7. Light and Glare. Will the proposal produce new light or glare?	____	____	X
8. Land Use. Will the proposal result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area?	____	____	X
9. Natural Resources. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Increase in the rate of use of any natural resources?	____	____	X
10. Risk of Upset. Will the proposal involve:			
a. A risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation) in the event of an accident or upset conditions?	____	____	X

	Yes	Maybe	No
b. Possible interference with an emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan?	___	___	X
11. Population. Will the proposal alter the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?	___	___	X
12. Housing. Will the proposal affect existing housing, or create a demand for additional housing?	___	___	X
13. Transportation/Circulation. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Generation of substantial additional vehicular movement?	___	___	X
b. Effects on existing parking facilities, or demand for new parking?	___	___	X
c. Substantial impact upon existing transportation systems?	___	___	X
d. Alterations to present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?	___	___	X
e. Alterations to waterborne, rail or air traffic?	___	___	X
f. Increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians?	___	___	X
14. Public Services. Will the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas:			
a. Fire protection?	___	___	X
b. Police protection?	___	___	X
c. Schools?	___	___	X
d. Parks or other recreational facilities?	___	___	X
e. Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	___	___	X
f. Other governmental services?	___	___	X
15. Energy. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Use of substantial amounts of fuel or energy?	___	___	X

	Yes	Maybe	No
b. Substantial increase in demand upon existing sources or energy, or require the development of new sources of energy?	___	___	X
16. Utilities. Will the proposal result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:	___	___	X
17. Human Health. Will the proposal result in:			
a. Creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard (excluding mental health)?	___	___	X
b. Exposure of people to potential health hazards?	___	___	X
18. Aesthetics. Will the proposal result in the obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or will the proposal result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?	___	___	X
19. Recreation. Will the proposal result in an impact upon the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities?	___	___	X
20. Cultural Resources.			
a. Will the proposal result in the alteration of or the destruction of a prehistoric or historic archaeological site?	___	___	X
b. Will the proposal result in adverse physical or aesthetic effects to a prehistoric or historic building, structure, or object?	___	___	X
c. Does the proposal have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values?	___	___	X
d. Will the proposal restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?	___	___	X
21. Mandatory Findings of Significance.			
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate			

	Yes	Maybe	No
important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	___	___	X
b. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals? (A short-term impact on the environment is one which occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future.)	___	___	X
c. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project may impact on two or more separate resources where the impact on each resource is relatively small, but where the effect of the total of those impacts on the environment is significant.)	___	___	X
d. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	___	___	X

III. Discussion of Environmental Evaluation
(Narrative description of environmental impacts.)

IV. Determination
(To be completed by the Lead Agency.)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. ☐

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED. ☒

I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required. ☐

7/10/89
Date

Ellen Hardebeck
Signature Ellen Hardebeck, District Officer

For GREAT BASIN UNIFIED A.P.C.D.

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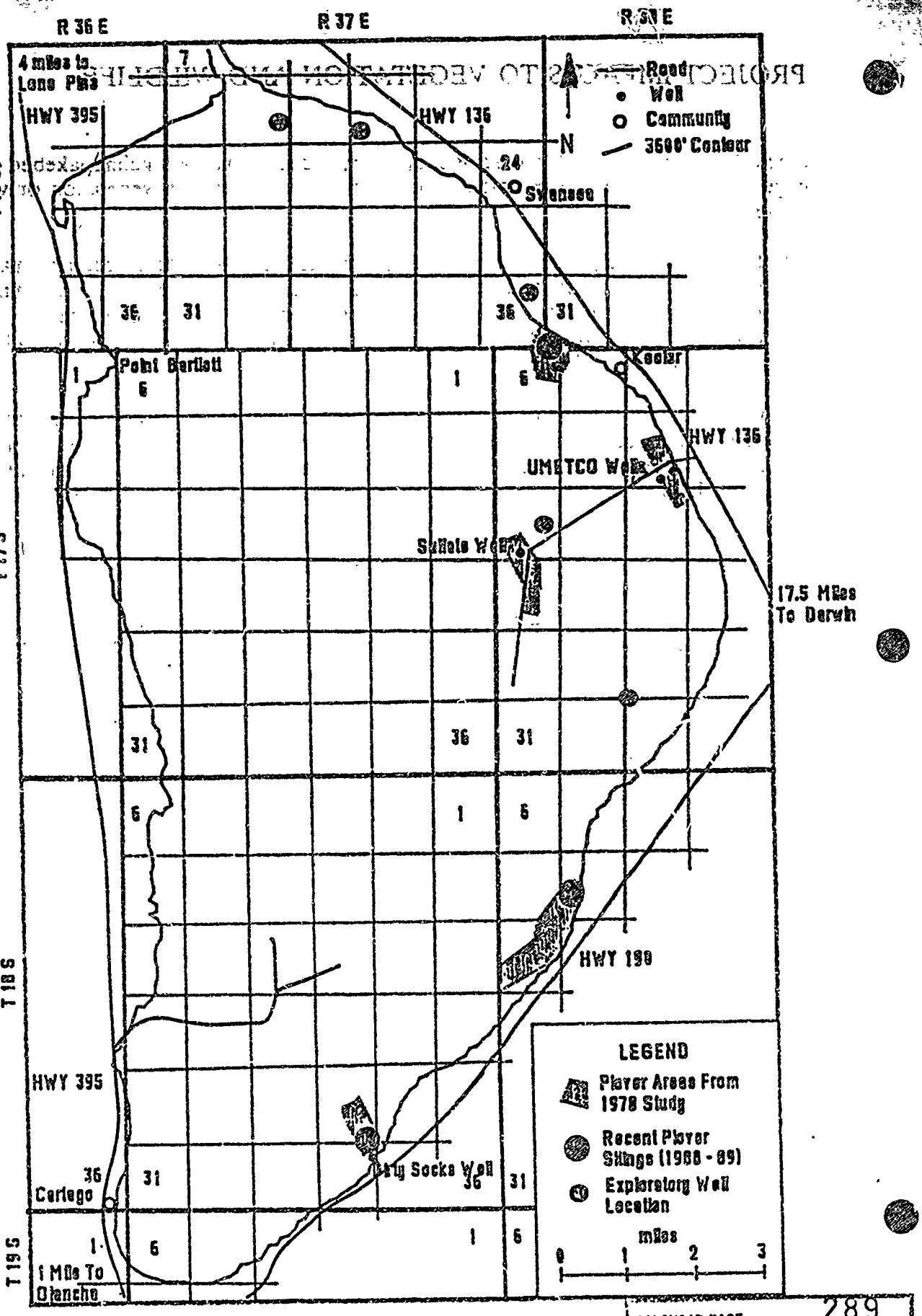
PROJECT IMPACTS TO VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

Since the exploratory well project is short-term and sited on the alkaline lakebed or on the edge of existing roads, the potential for significant impacts on vegetation or wildlife is limited.

The lakebed is largely barren of plant life, although there are some reed and marsh grass communities near springs and seeps. A plant community survey that we commissioned previously from a local plant ecologist found only common and resilient species. The only effect on these plants from the exploratory wells would be positive in the form of spillover water from the test wells.

Of the few animal species using the lakebed, the Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) nesting near springs and seeps is of special concern to the California Department of Fish and Game (presently a candidate species for Federal Listing under the Endangered Species Act). In 1978 a report on "The Breeding Status of the Snowy Plover in California" summarized the survey results of R. P. Henderson and Gary W. Page in the spring of that year. At that time the breeding population of Snowy Plovers at Owens (Dry) Lake was the largest they counted (499 individuals) in the interior of California. Ten years later the area was re-surveyed (G. Page, pers comm) and had declined to less than half of the earlier population. There are some indications that other breeding sites have increased their populations with this reduction at Owens (Dry) Lake. Nevertheless, the lakebed remains a significant breeding area.

We will continue to be in communication with Snowy Plover researchers and intend to structure our test project so that there is no net effect to the breeding population. The amount of space disturbed by the testing will have no measureable effect on the large amounts of nesting area available on the lakebed. With regard to potential noise and human activity near water areas, we will conduct the drilling and disruptive activities during non-breeding times. The test wells should clarify our understanding of the extent and confinement of the various aquifers under the lakebed. Although our initial goal is to learn what water might be available for dust control measures, we also want to provide a net increase in wetland areas from any water management projects involved in later projects. Ultimately we expect to increase the feeding habitat of Snowy Plovers, and hope that the breeding population will increase to higher levels.



SNOWY PLOVER LOCATIONS ON EAST SIDE OF OWENS LAKE

Figure 2