

Scoping Information

Proposal for Nampa and Meridian Irrigation District (NMID) Ridenbaugh Canal Headworks Modernization Project Boise, Ada County, Idaho

The Nampa and Meridian Irrigation District (NMID) has been selected by the Bureau of Reclamation for a U.S. Department of the Interior Water Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow (WaterSMART) grant to modernize their headworks facility in the Boise River for the Ridenbaugh Canal. This information package summarizing NMID's proposal is being sent to the potentially interested and/or affected parties by Reclamation to share information and to seek public input.

Why Am I Receiving This Scoping Notice?

Actions undertaken or funded by Federal Agencies must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences. Scoping is one step of the NEPA process in which agencies seek input from those who may have an interest in or be directly affected by a proposed project. You can help us identify important issues and concerns regarding this proposed project by providing your written comments during this scoping period which will run from October 1-31, 2024.

What is the Ridenbaugh Canal Headworks Facility?

The Ridenbaugh Canal headworks facility serves as the diversion point for up to 550 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the Boise River to enter into the Ridenbaugh Canal. It was constructed in the 1930s and is located in the Boise River just upstream of the Eckert Road bridge and Barber Park (shown on the attached Map 1). The existing diversion structure spans the entire Boise River and connects into elevated/stabilized abutment structures on both the right and left bank.

The west side of the project area is located on NMID property and contains the intake to the Ridenbaugh Canal which is comprised of a sediment wall, wing walls, trash rack, and intake gates. The east side of the project area is located on City of Boise Parks and Recreation property which consists of open land with a small stream/wetland complex. Trout Unlimited has a conservation easement through the small stream/wetland complex. A portion of the eastern project area is proposed for the future City of Boise Alta Harris Park. The full project area and structures described are shown in the maps attached to this scoping information document.

What is the Current Condition of this Facility?

The infrastructure proposed to be modernized is nearing the end of its intended useful life and its ongoing age-based deterioration presents increasing maintenance needs and operational safety

hazards. NMID contracted for an evaluation of the existing headworks facility based on common engineering practice, which identified the following issues requiring correction:

- Concrete, metal, and wooden components of the diversion structure, sediment wall sill, and intake gate structure are displaying the effects of freeze/thaw cycles and general deterioration from over 80 years of operation.
- Seepage is occurring under the intake gates wing wall structure which places the integrity of the walls in question.
- Scour occurring at the downstream edge of the diversion structure and around the right abutment which places the reliability of the diversion structure in question.
- The deteriorating condition of the headworks facility is causing a continually increasing maintenance effort and creates more dangerous working conditions for NMID operators.
- Existing operations have historically altered the water elevation in the river above the current diversion structure to facilitate the diversion of water into the Ridenbaugh Canal. To increase water surface elevations required for diversion during the irrigation season (April 1-October 31), NMID staff must install and remove stop logs manually from a wooden walkway into the diversion structure, which is slow, imprecise, and dangerous.

What is the Proposed Action?

Reclamation proposes to provide WaterSMART grant funding for NMID to modernize their headworks facility in the Boise River for the Ridenbaugh Canal. This modernization project would include the following elements (shown on the attached Map 2):

- Demolish the existing diversion structure piers and maintenance walkway, sediment wall maintenance walkway, 220 feet of the sediment wall next to the original headgates and radial gates (remainder of the sediment wall to remain in place), trash rack, original headgates and radial gates wing walls, east side (right bank) abutment and other infrastructure.
- Remove rock and concrete debris at the existing diversion structure and along the banks of the Boise River. The floor slab of the existing structure would remain in place as a grade control to reduce the risk of impacts from scour immediately downstream from the new diversion structures and to minimize potential for impact to the existing bridge downstream from the new structure (Eckert Road).
- Clear vegetation along the main river channel banks in the area of the proposed new headworks facility.

- Install new headworks facility consisting of the following (shown on the attached Map 2):
 - Concrete diversion structure upstream of the existing diversion structure with automated overpour gates on the west half and a fixed crest ogee weir on the east side of the diversion structure
 - Sediment basin upstream from the entrance to the canal with a stop log structure at the entrance
 - Sediment bypass gate to discharge natural sediment load back to the Boise River
 - Automated self-cleaning trash rack between the sediment basin and the entrance to the canal
 - Headworks facility control building in the upland area on the west side
 - Access ramp on the west side into the sediment basin
 - Reroute of existing access road on the east side (existing access road would be restored to surrounding conditions)

- Plant native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species along the Boise River in disturbed areas.

- Stabilize the project area post-construction, using Best Management Practices.

Some of the construction activities would occur below the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) of the Boise River, potentially in adjacent wetlands, and upland properties on both the east (right bank) and west (left bank) side of the project area. The proposed project would not modify the existing project's purpose and need, water surface elevations in the Boise River at this location, or any existing surface water diversion rights.

Why is This Project Being Considered?

The modernization project would remedy the existing issues noted in the engineering evaluation and listed above. It would also address associated operational safety hazards. In addition to extending the life of the project, headworks modernization would provide additional benefits and address other issues of concern summarized below:

- In its current configuration, manual installation and removal of the wooden stop logs from a wooden walkway is required of NMID operators which creates a safety hazard. Automating the diversion structure operation would remove this hazard while improving response time and debris management to flood flow releases and other upstream flow changes in the Boise River.

- Modernizing the diversion structure would reduce the time, fuel consumption, and safety risks associated with manual adjustment of the diversion by NMID staff.

- Better managing the diversion structure pool would reduce operation loss and improve administration of water diversion.

When and How Would This Project Occur?

The project would be scheduled to be constructed over a two-year period, with construction below the OHWM taking place in two separate phases during low-water periods (generally October through April; the exact timing would be dependent on water flows in the Boise River) of the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 water years. Each year of construction would involve the installation of a cofferdam on one or the other sides of the river channel and temporarily dewatering that part of the Boise River channel within the project area to facilitate construction activities below the OHWM while flows would be diverted to the other side of the river channel. Construction and staging in the upland parts of the project area (identified on the attached Map 3) would occur year-round. Following construction, operation of the Ridenbaugh Canal headworks would continue to result in overall water surface elevations and diversions as they have historically occurred.

Are Any Other Alternatives Being Considered?

The proposed actions described in this document are the result of a preliminary feasibility study that was undertaken from 2023 to 2024 which examined numerous potential actions to address the current conditions of this facility as noted above. This alternatives analysis evaluated seven different headworks facility configurations; the Proposed Action detailed above was selected based on maximized structure functionality, least effort for operations and maintenance, and providing the greatest level of safety for NMID staff and the general public.

Reclamation will develop an Environmental Assessment which will include consideration of the Proposed Action Alternative and a No Action Alternative. Additional alternatives could be developed in response to issues identified throughout the NEPA process.

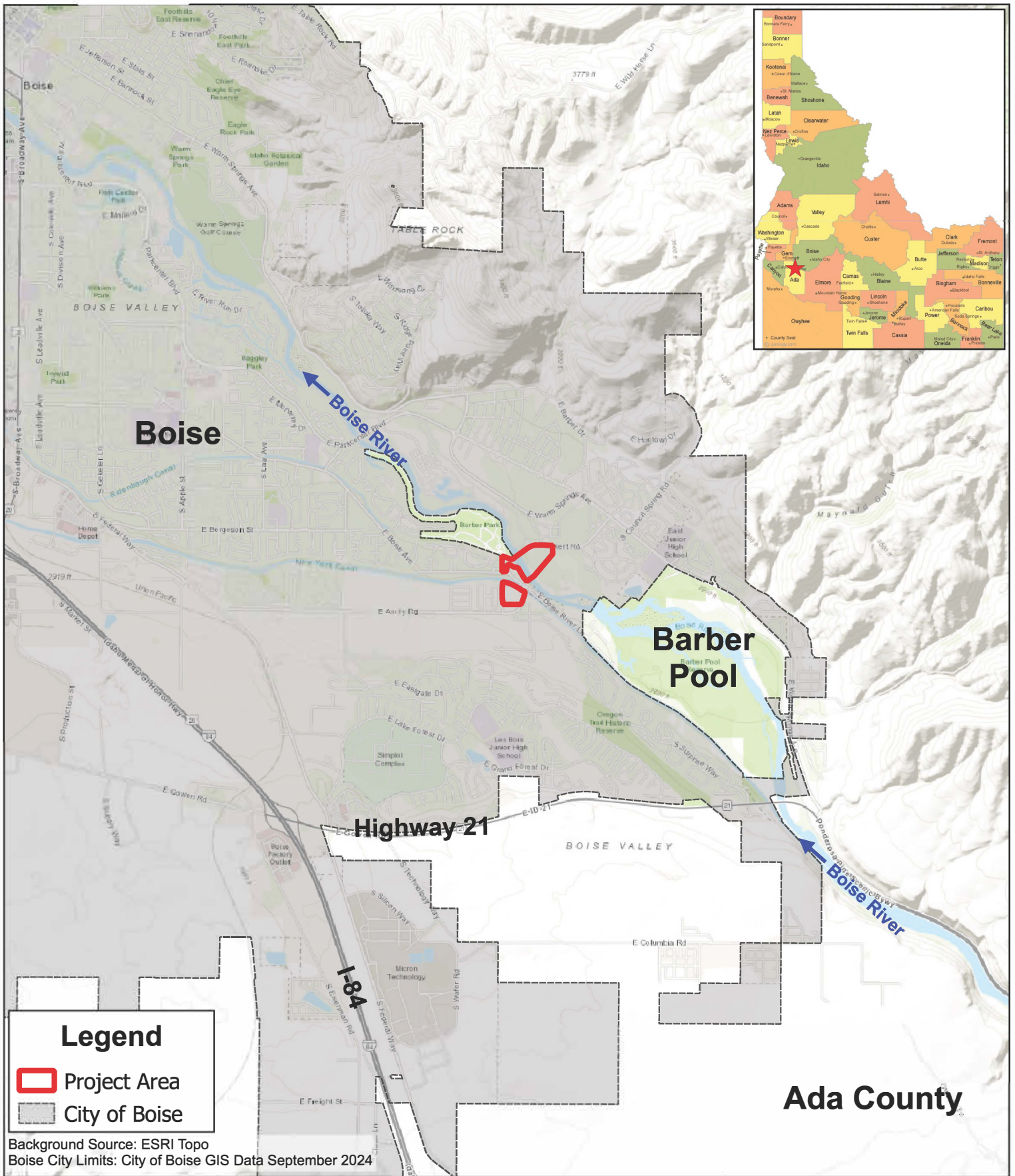
I Have a Comment – How Do I Provide It?

Written comments can be submitted electronically by emailing them to sra-nepa-comments@usbr.gov. They can also be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Ms. Amy Goodrich
Natural Resource Specialist
Snake River Area Office
Bureau of Reclamation
230 Collins Road
Boise, Idaho 83702

How Long Do I Have to Submit Comments?

Public involvement is encouraged throughout the NEPA process; however, your comments can best be used if they are provided before October 31, 2024.



Map 1: Project Area Vicinity

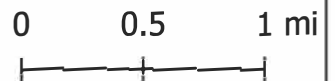
NMID Ridenbaugh Canal Headworks Modernization

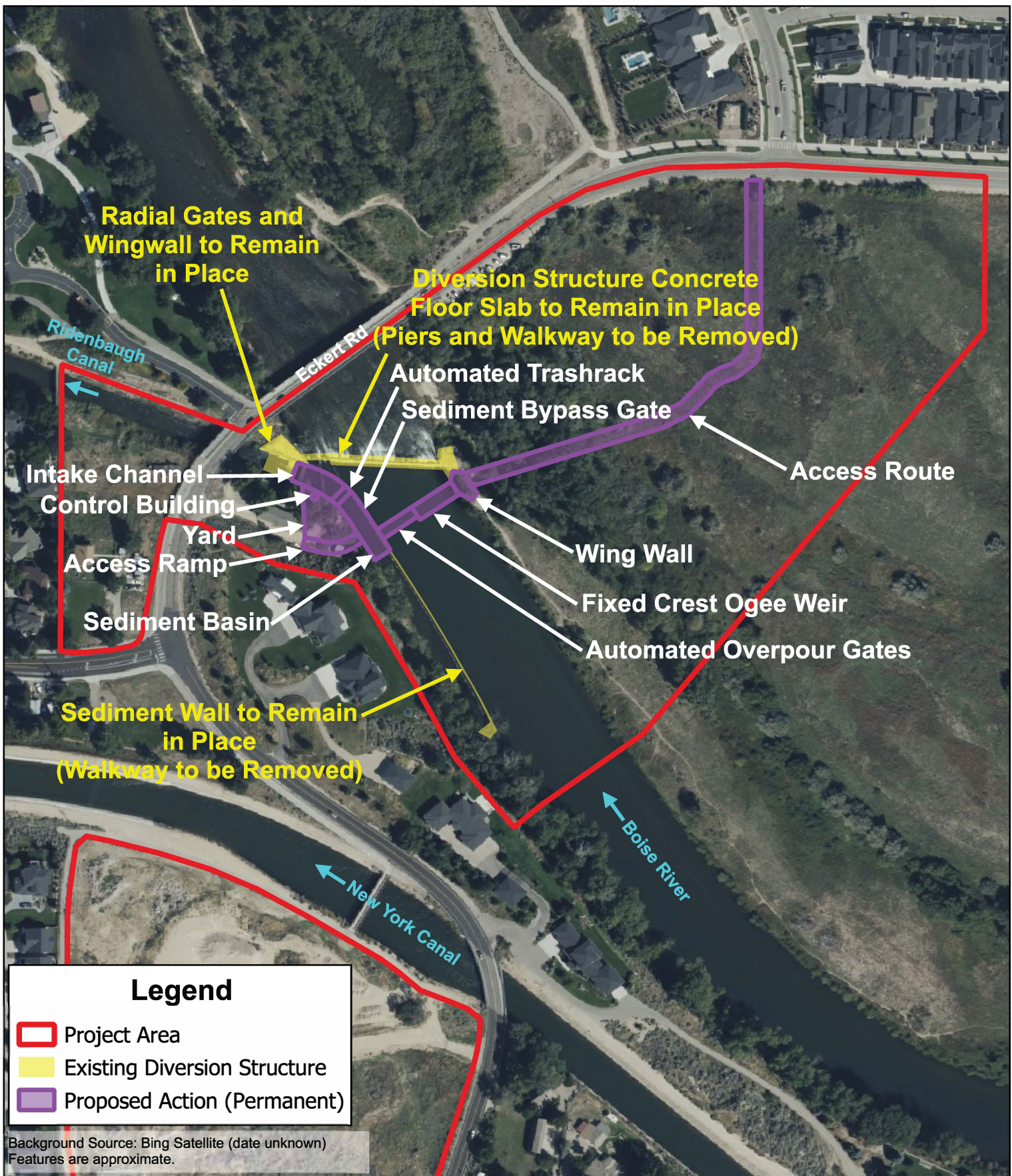
Boise, Idaho (Ada County)

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Radial Gates and Wingwall to Remain in Place

Diversion Structure Concrete Floor Slab to Remain in Place (Piers and Walkway to be Removed)

Automated Trashrack
Sediment Bypass Gate

Intake Channel
Control Building
Yard
Access Ramp

Access Route

Sediment Basin

Wing Wall

Fixed Crest Ogee Weir

Automated Overpour Gates

Sediment Wall to Remain in Place (Walkway to be Removed)

Eckert Rd

Ridenbaugh Canal

New York Canal

Boise River

Map 2: Proposed Action Elements

NMID Ridenbaugh Canal Headworks Modernization

Boise, Idaho (Ada County)

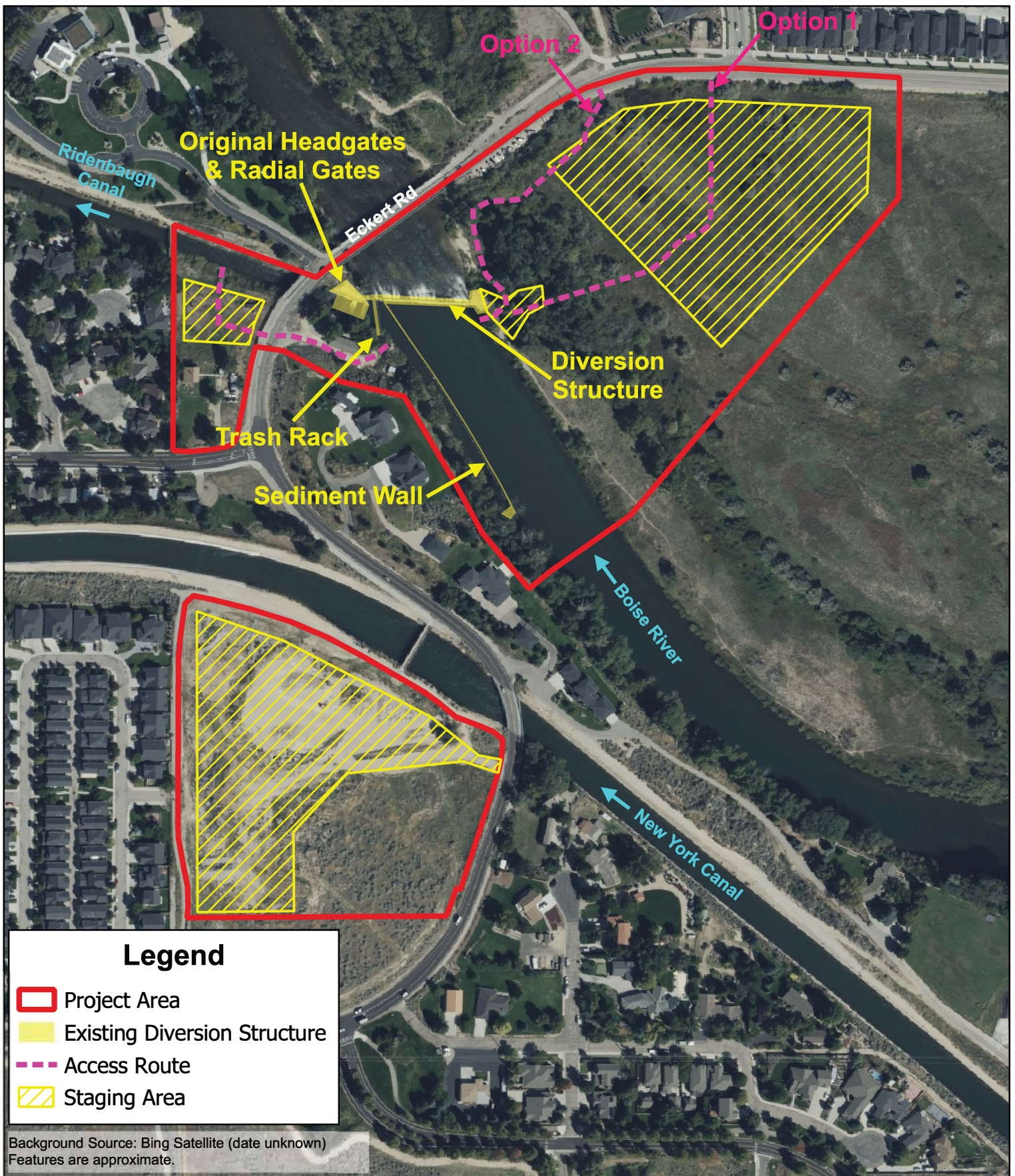
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0 125 250 ft



Legend

- Project Area
- Existing Diversion Structure
- Access Route
- Staging Area

Background Source: Bing Satellite (date unknown)
 Features are approximate.

Map 3: Staging and Access

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