State of California
THE RESOURCES AGENCY
Department of Fish and Game

HABITAT INVENTORY AND WILDLIFE SURVEY OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA COASTAL WETLANDS, 1978[1/]

APPENDIX D
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY[2/]

by
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Graduate Student Assistant

1/ Job Final Report, Job V-1.1, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, Project W-54-R-10 (August 1978), Nongame Wildlife Investigations

2/ This phase of survey funded by Department of Fish and Game functions: Planning Branch, Coastal Planning; and Region 3, Field Services, Wildlife Management.

APPENDIX D

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

On June 28 and 29, 1978, 20 creek mouths along the San Luis Obispo coastline were briefly surveyed to identify wildlife habitat values. In the cursory survey, 17 of these areas were found to have very little marsh vegetation and small, if any, lagoon areas. Eight of these areas are distinguished from the rest by having a well-developed marsh or are areas of biological importance. These eight areas are described below. The location, size, and type of the 20 wetlands are listed in Table D-1. Appended are maps showing the dominant plant species of each marsh and their approximate distribution.

General Habitat Description of Marshes Along the San Luis Obispo Coastline

Few areas have any tidal salt marshes; "high" marshes consisting of many salt tolerant species (Jaumea, Jaumea carnosa; salt grass, Distichlis spicata; alkali heath, Frankenia grandifolia; and pickleweed, Salicornia virginica) constituted the bulk of marsh vegetation along this coast. Brackish water marshes were found in scattered patches along the creeks and in denser stands around ponds (such as Pico Pond by Pico Creek). Bulrushes (Scirpus californicus and Scripus acutus) were the dominant plant species, with other bulrush species (S. americanus and S. robustus) and spike-rush (Elocharis sp.) often interspersed.

Most creeks had well-developed beaches at the mouth, with a concomitantly high number of people using these areas.

Wildlife Values

An adequate assessment of wildlife value of each wetland was not possible in this brief survey period. Only bird use was examined in this inventory. As would be expected in late June, only small numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds and other water associated birds inhabited these wetlands. Greater variety and abundance would be expected during fall and spring migrations and during the winter season. The mouth of Arroyo de la Cruz appears to be the most important coastal wetland for avifauna among the 20 areas that were surveyed in the county. In summer, recreational use of the other areas is high owing to the sandy nature of their creek mouths; this disturbance depresses the wildlife value of these small wetlands.

Areas of Special Interest

Arroyo de la Cruz

Of all the smaller San Luis Obispo lagoons, Arroyo de la Cruz furnishes the most important wildlife habitat because of its relatively large size and its undisturbed nature. The area of the lagoon is 4 ha (10 ac). Many species of water associated birds use the lagoon (Table D-2).

Dominant plants of the 0.2 ha (0.5 ac) brackish water marsh are Scripus californicus and cattails (Typha sp.).

The lush willow stands along the creek banks also provide habitat for a rich array of songbirds and other upland birds.

Arroyo del Oso, Arroyo del Corral and Adobe Creek

It appears that the marshes of these areas are seasonal and have limited wildlife value. Adobe Creek has a small lagoon which may attract some migrating and wintering waterfowl and shorebirds.

Pico Creek

Pico Creek receives far too much human use to attract much wildlife. The small Scirpus pond may provide nesting areas for Virginia and sora rails, but none was found on this survey.

San Simeon Creek

San Simeon, like Pico Creek, is overrun with people, especially during the summer months; a campground is on the north side of the creek. In the winter, though, San Simeon Creek may get considerable use by waterfowl.

Just south of San Simeon Creek is a marsh that appears at first glance to be pasture land. Actually, salt grass dominates this 10 ha (25 ac) flood plain, with other species, such as spike-rush, pickleweed and brass-buttons (Cotula), intermingled.

Villa Creek

This area has some potential for wildlife use. There is a small pond and 3 ha (8 ac) brackish water marsh near the creek. This area is not open to the public, so it probably gets little human use. East of the marsh is a 5 ha (12 ac) reservoir.

San Luis Obispo Creek

The mouth of this creek is relatively large and may be valuable in winter for migrating waterfowl. There is little marsh vegetation and the golf course that lines its banks is the source of considerable disturbance. Human disturbance is also apparent at Avila State Beach at the creek mouth.

TABLE D-1

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED
COASTAL WETLANDS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Map No.	Wetland Area	7.5 Min Quad Range & Township Numbers	Marsh-type & Size
D-1	San Carpoforo Creek	Burro Mtn. R6E, T25S, Sec. 15 & 16	No marsh, sand and gravel/riparian
D-2	Arroyo de la Cruz	Piedras Blancas R6E, T25S	10 acre lagoon, 1/2 acre brackish marsh/riparian
D-3	Arroyo del Oso	" "	1/2-1 acre brackish marsh
D-3	Arroyo del Corral	" "	Small pond, 1-2 acre brackish marsh/willow
D-4	Adobe Creek	San Simeon R7E, T26S	2 acre lagoon, 1/2 acre brackish marsh/willow
D-5	Broken Bridge Creek	" "	Small lagoon, 1/8 acre brackish marsh
D-5	Little Pico Creek	San Simeon R8E, T26S	1/8 acre brackish marsh
D-6	Pico Creek	Pico Creek T27S	3 acre lagoon, 2 acre pond, 1/8 acre brackish, 1/2 acre fresh water marsh
D-7	San Simeon Creek	Cambria R8E, T27S	4 acre lagoon, 25 acre brackish-high marsh (south of creek), willow
D-8	Leffingwell Creek	" "	7 acre fresh (seasonal marsh)
D-8	Santa Rosa Creek	" "	4 acre lagoon, 5 acres seasonal fresh, 2 acres brackish/salt marsh/ willow
D-9	Villa Creek	Cayucos R9E, T28S	12 acre pond (n. of Villa Creek), 8 acres brackish marsh

TABLE D-1 (continued)

Map No.	Wetland Area	7.5 Min Quad Range & Township Numbers	Marsh-type & Size
D-10	Cayucos Creek	Cayucos R10E, T28S	1 acre lagoon, patches of marsh vegetation/willow
D-10	Little Cayucos Creek	" "	No marsh
D-10	Old Creek	" "	5 acres high salt marsh (Jaumea, Distichlis) and 1/8 acre brackish marsh
D-11	Morro Creek	Morro Bay North R10E, T29S	Patches of brackish marsh (and willow)
D-11	Toro Creek	" "	No marsh
D-12	Islay Creek	Morro Bay South R10E, T30S	Small patches brackish marsh vegetation and willow
D-13	San Luis Obispo Creek	Pismo Beach R11E, R12E, T31S	15 acre lagoon, 1/8 acre brackish/salt marsh
D-14	Pismo Creek	Pismo Beach R12E, T32S	5 acre lagoon, patches of brackish marsh

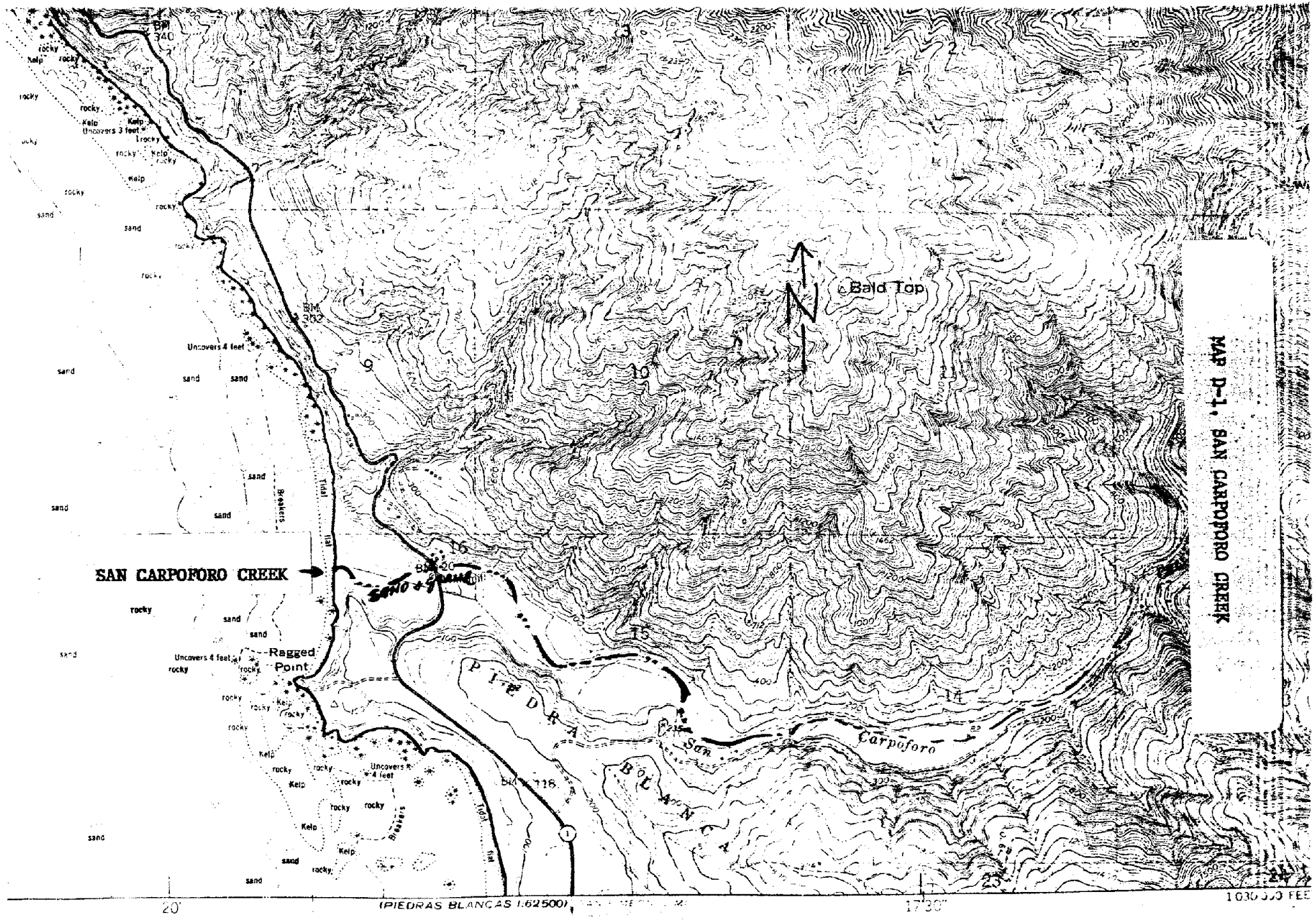
*Lagoon=marine zone

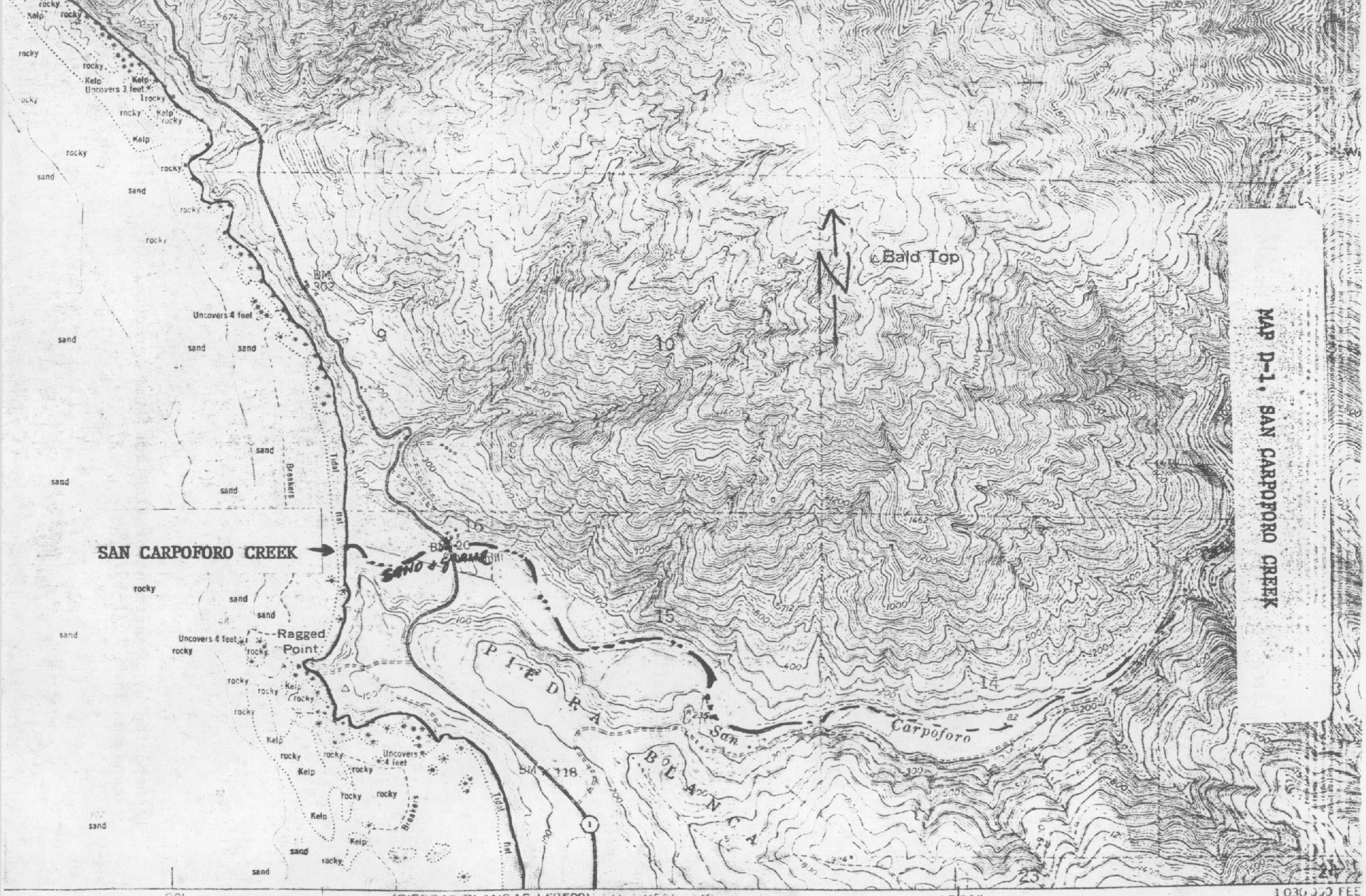
TABLE D-2

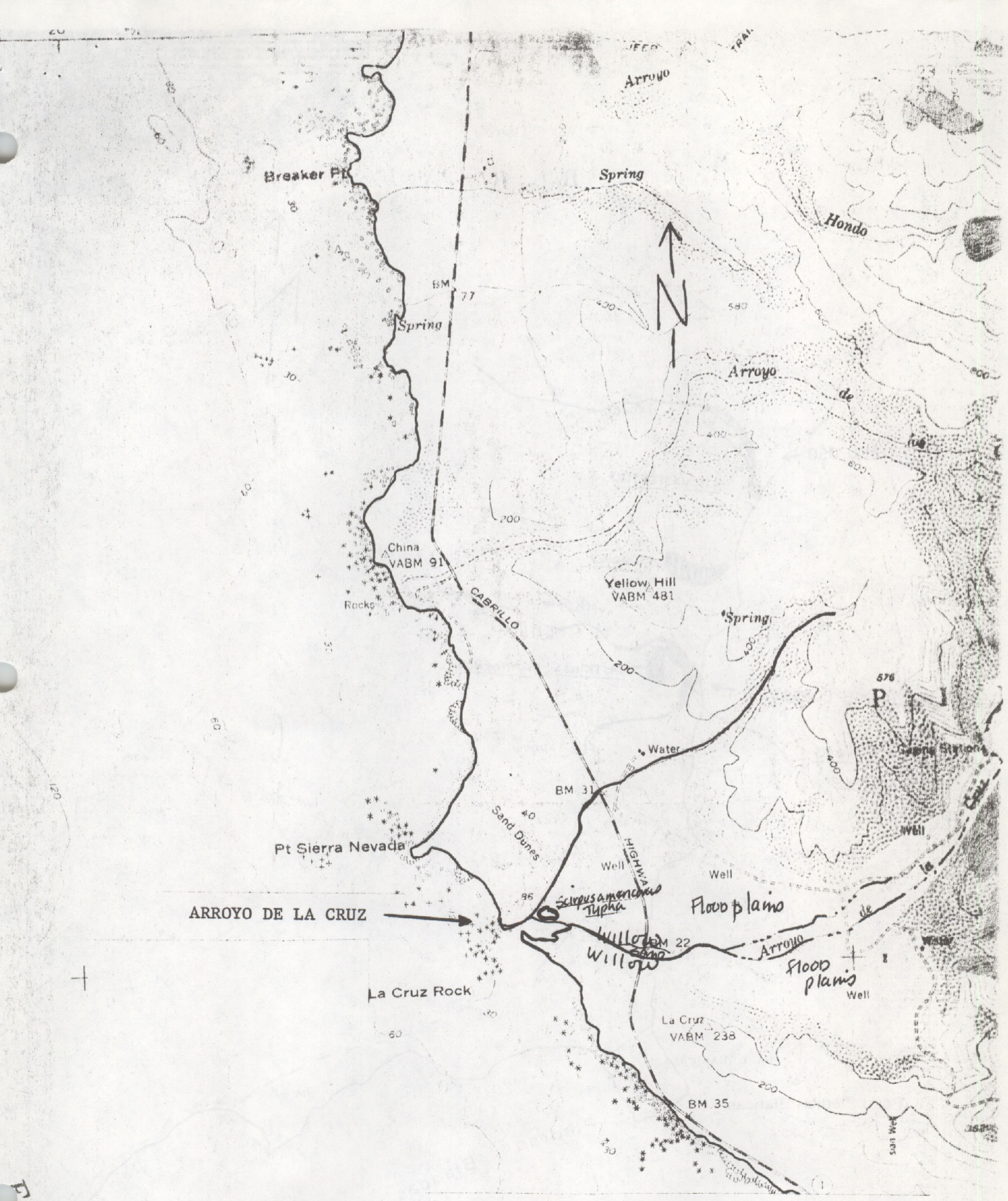
Water Associated Birds and Raptors - Arroyo de la Cruz[1/]

Grebes	- Eared grebe
	- Horned grebe
	- Pied-billed grebe
Cormorants	- Unidentified species
Herons	- Great blue heron
	- Great egret
	- Snowy egret
	- Black-crowned night heron
Waterfowl	- Mallard
	- Green-winged teal
	- Cinnamon teal
	- Common goldeneye
	- Common merganser
	- Pintail
	- Blue-winged teal
	- Northern shoveler
	- Bufflehead
Raptors	- Red-tailed hawk
	- American kestrel
	- White-tailed kite
Coots, gallinules	- American coot
	- Common gallinule
Shorebirds	- Killdeer
	- Long-billed curlew
	- Greater yellowlegs
	- Willet
	- Dowitcher species
	- Northern phalarope
	- Common snipe
	- Spotted sandpiper
	- Lesser yellowlegs
	- Western sandpiper
	- Marbled godwit
Gulls, terns	- Herring gull
	- Heermann's gull
	- Caspian tern
	- Western gull

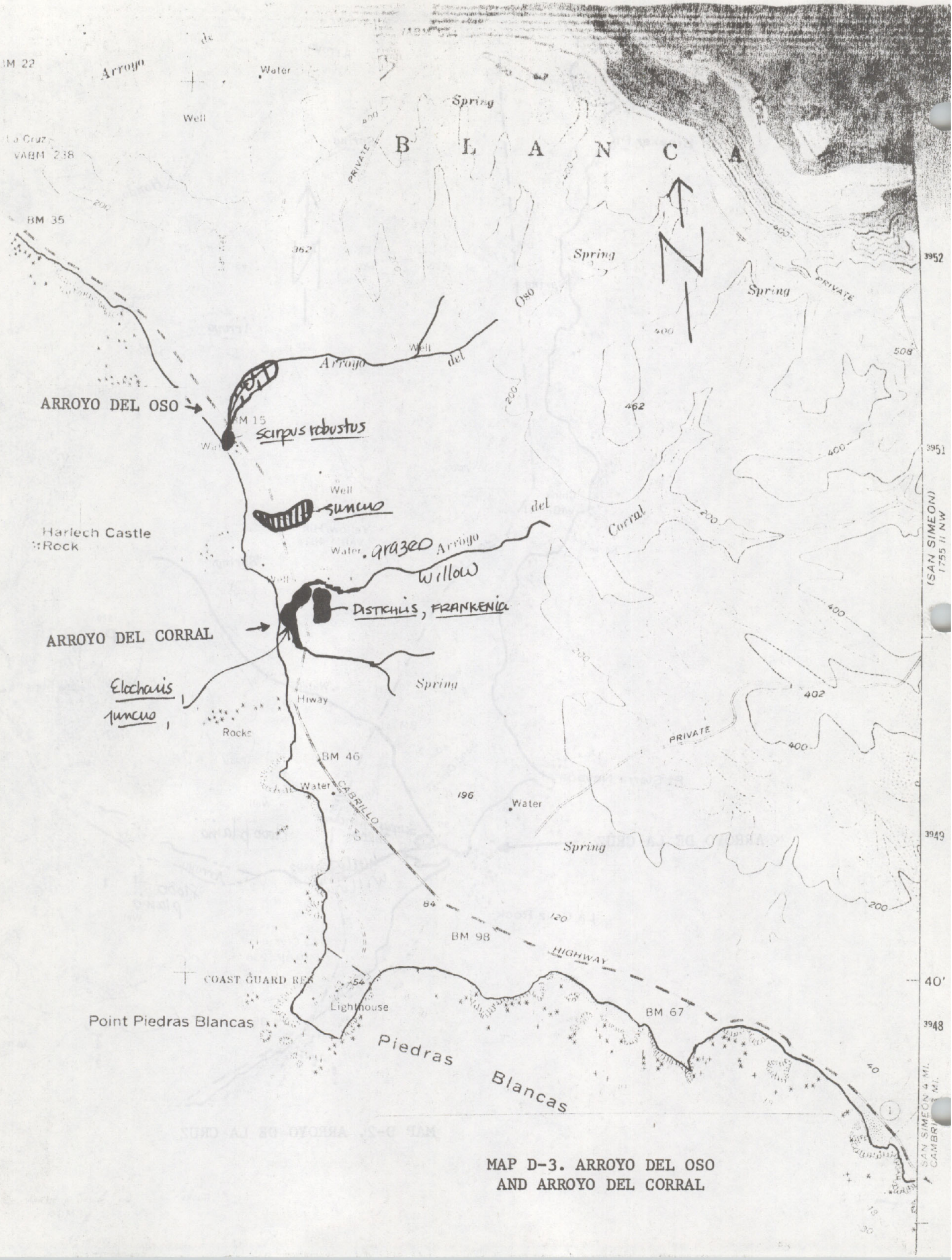
1/ Reported by Department of Fish and Game personnel in censuses from 1971-1973.


MAP D-1, SAN CARPOFORO CREEK
Bald Top
SAN CARPOFORO CREEK
Ragged Point
Piedra Blanca
San Carpoforo
Uncovers 4 feet
Uncovers 3 feet
Kelp
rocky
sand
Breakers
Tidal flat
20'
17'30"
(PIEDRAS BLANCAS 1:62500)
SCALE 1:24000


MAP P-1, SAN CARPOFORO CREEK
SAN CARPOFORO CREEK
Ragged Point
Bald Top
PIEDRA BLANCA
San Carpoforo
Uncovers 4 feet
Uncovers 3 feet
Kelp
rocky
sand
Breakers
Tidal flat
BM 362
BM 118
20'
17'30"
(PIEDRAS BLANCAS 1:62500)
SCALE 1 24000
1 MILE

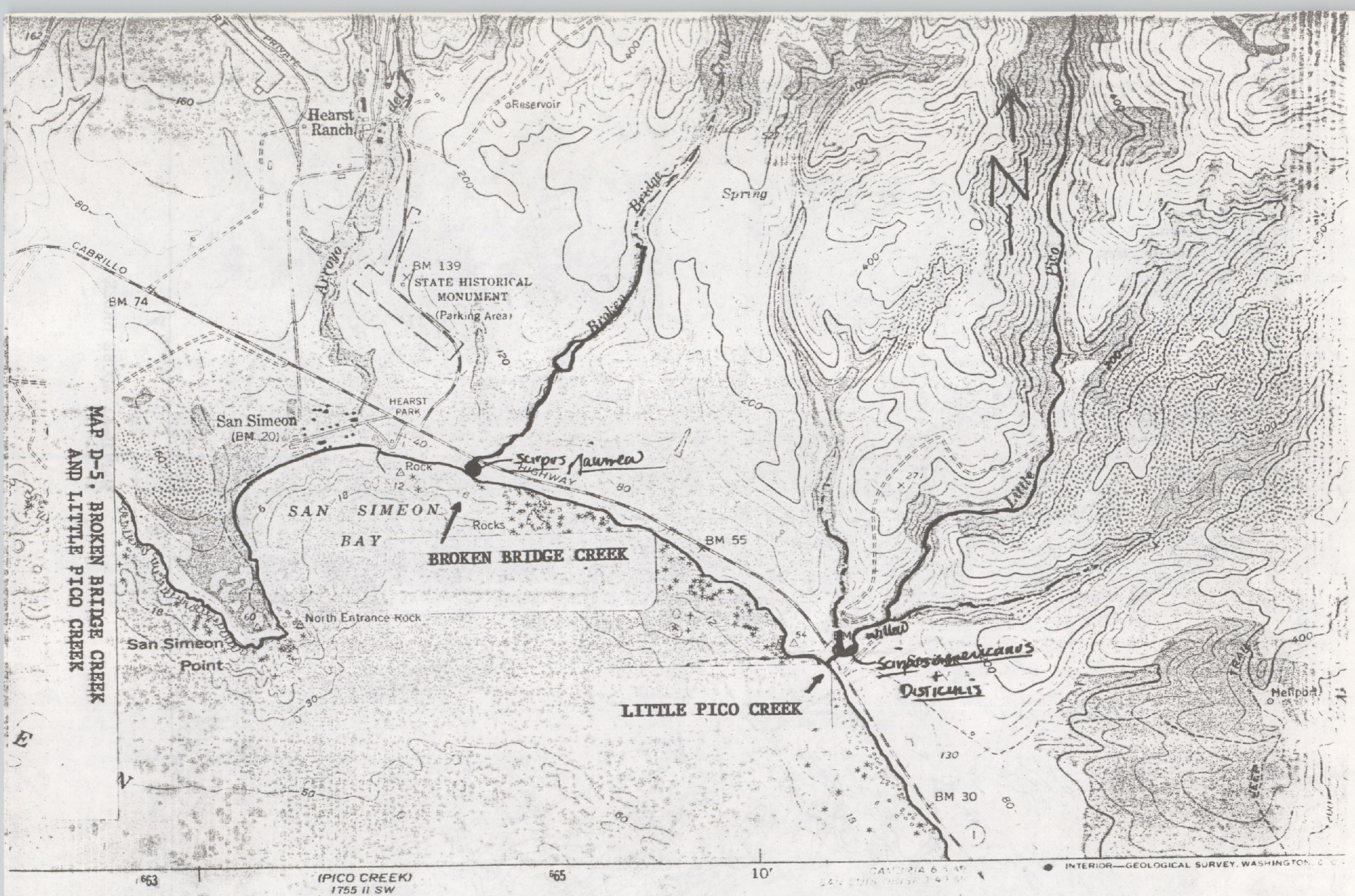


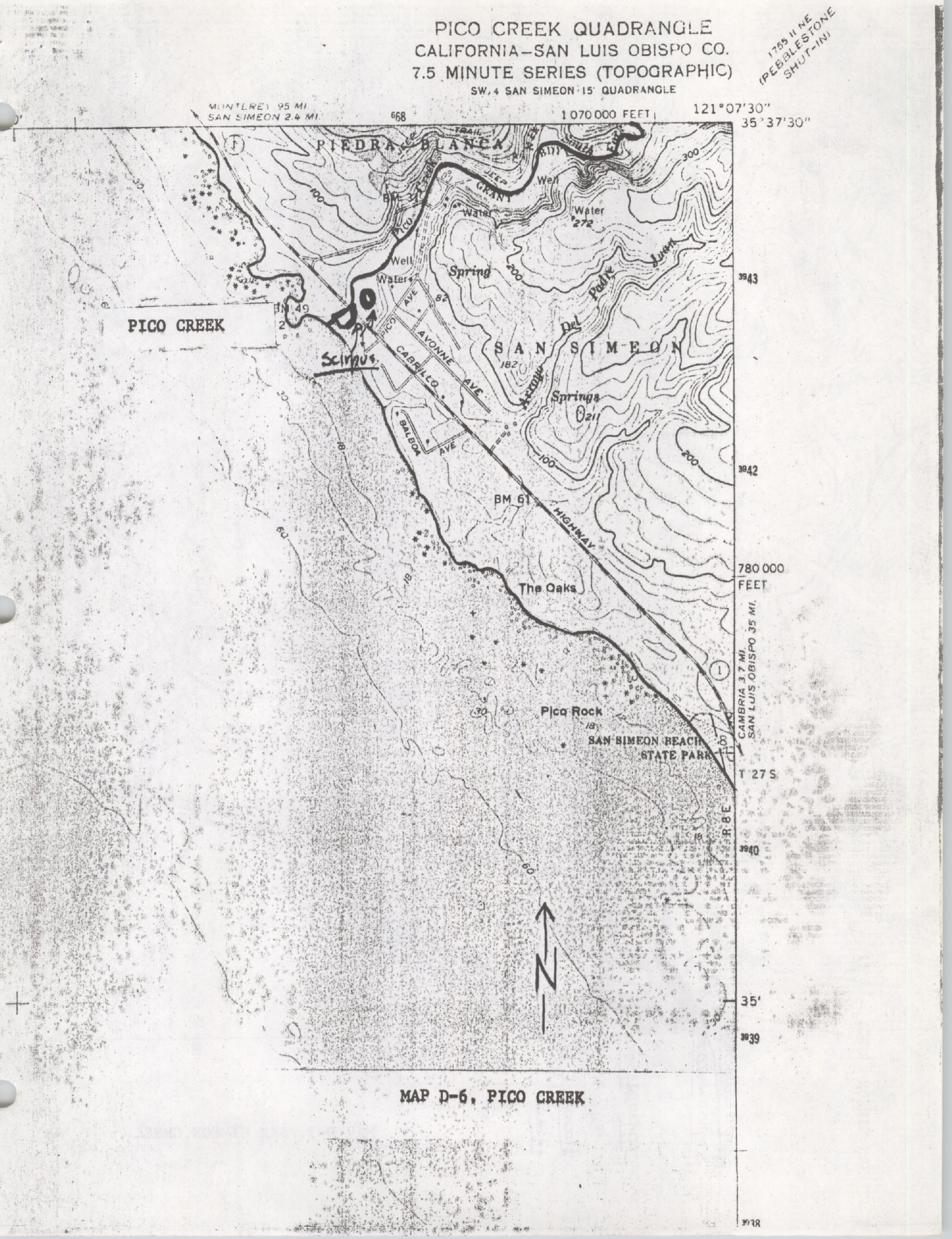
MAP D-2. ARROYO DE LA CRUZ



MAP D-3. ARROYO DEL OSO
AND ARROYO DEL CORRAL

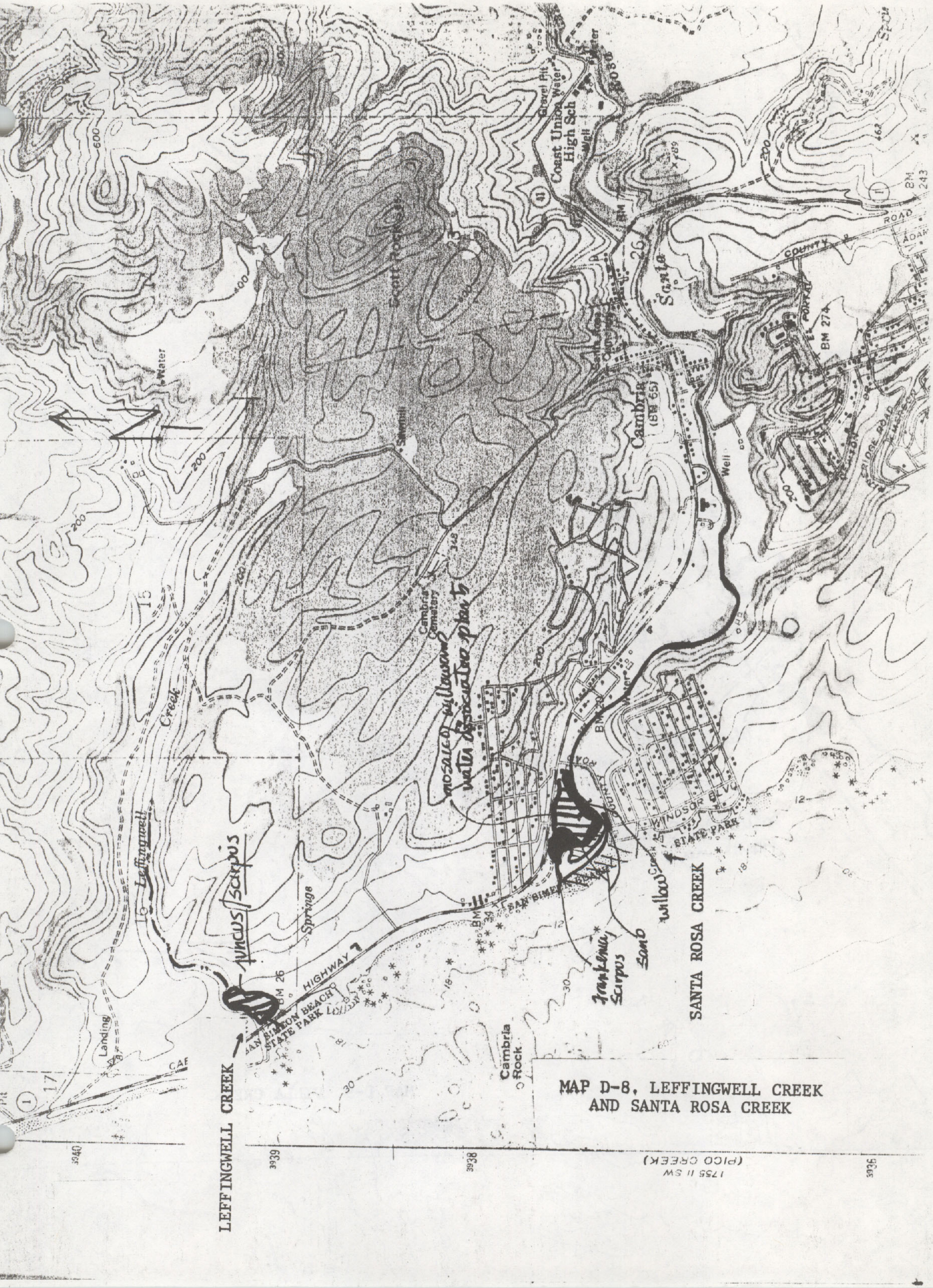
MAP D-4. ADOBE CREEK


MAP D-5, BROKEN BRIDGE CREEK AND LITTLE PICO CREEK
Hearst Ranch
Reservoir
Spring
Broken Bridge Creek
Arroyo
CABRILLO
BM 74
BM 139
STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT
(Parking Area)
HEARST PARK
San Simeon
(BM 20)
Rock
HIGHWAY
SAN SIMEON BAY
Rocks
BROKEN BRIDGE CREEK
BM 55
North Entrance Rock
San Simeon Point
LITTLE PICO CREEK
BM 30
Little Pico Creek
Hellport
(PICO CREEK)
1755 II SW
SCALE 1.24000
1 MILE
7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER
CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
ROAD CL
Medium-duty
Unimproved

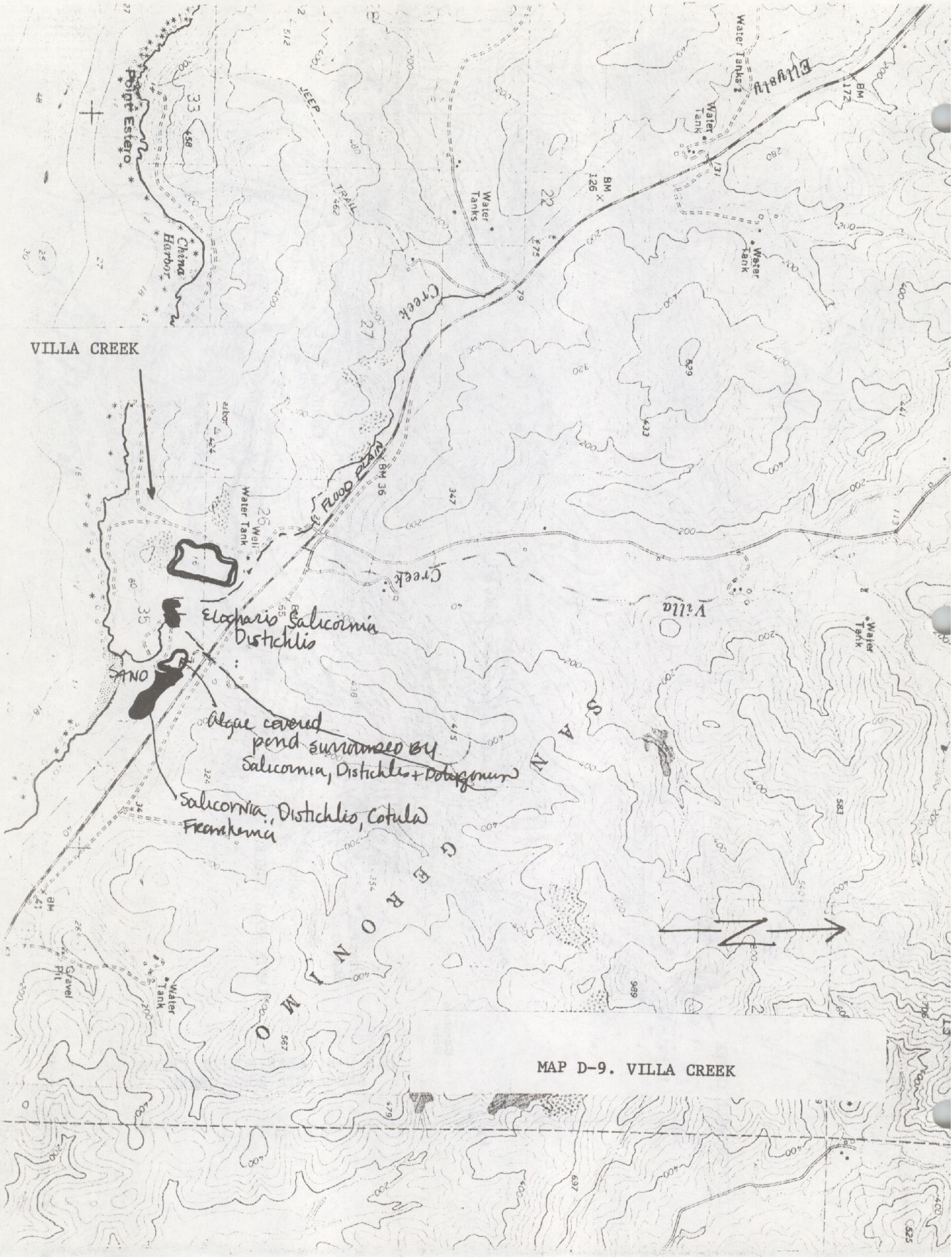


MAP D-6, PICO CREEK

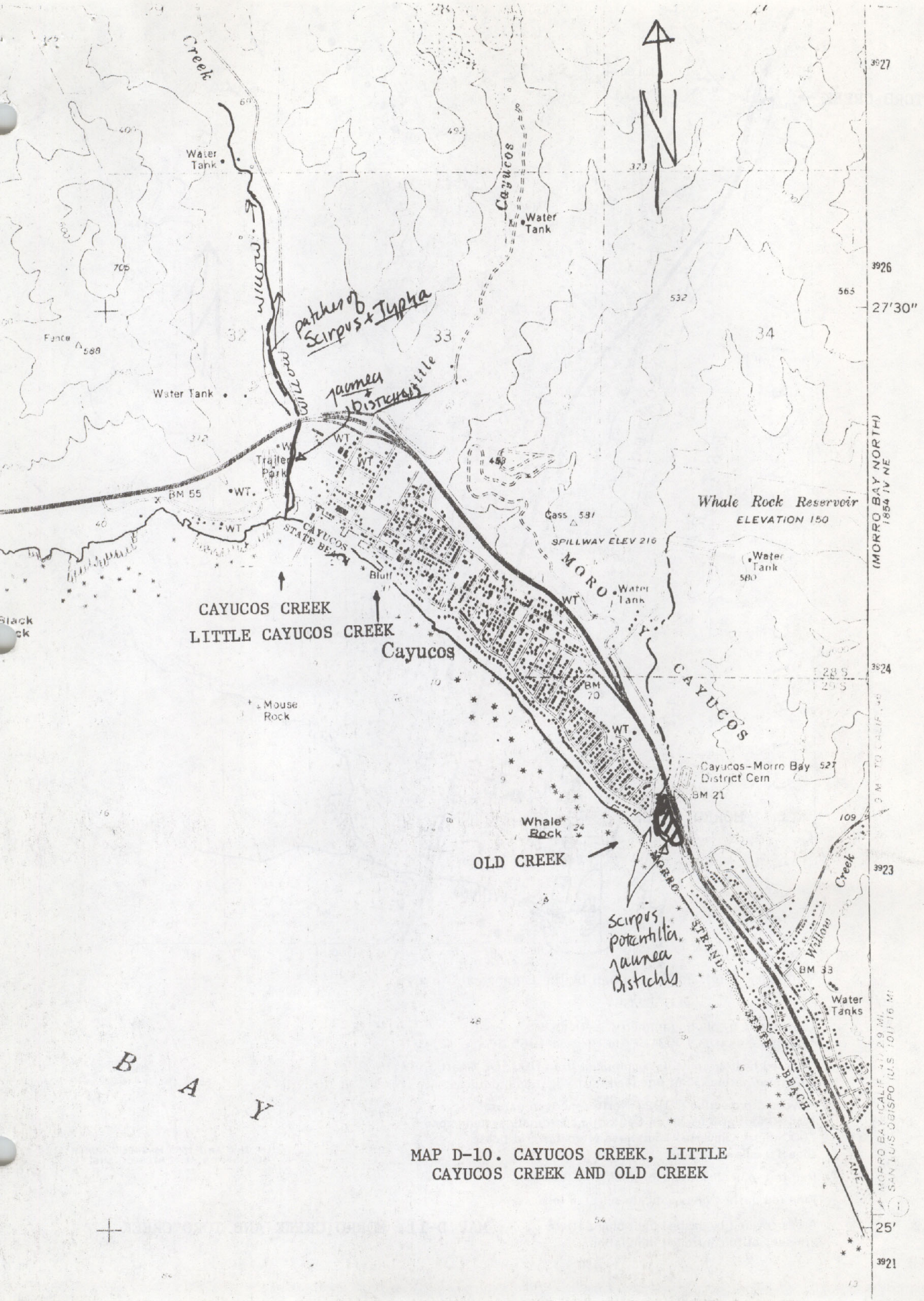

SAN SIMEON CREEK
Scirpus californicus
+ Scirpus americanus
Campground
SAN SIMEON BEACH
STATE PARK
Well
Gravel Pit
BOUNDARY
GRANT
Spring
T 27 S.
Scirpus californicus
Distichlis
Elocharis, Salicornia
Jaunea..
Landing
Leffingwell
Creek
Water
CABRILLO
SAN SIMEON BEACH
STATE PARK
HIGHWAY
BM 26
Springs
Sawmill
Cambria Cemetery
Scott Rock
Cambria Rock
BM 34
SAN SIMEON BEACH
COUNTY
BM 20
Water
Creek
Coast Union High Sch
Well
Santa Rosa Cemetery
BM
Cambria
(BM 65)
Santa
11
10
9
15
26
41
35'
3940
3939
3938
400
200
600
MAP D-7. SAN SIMEON CREEK



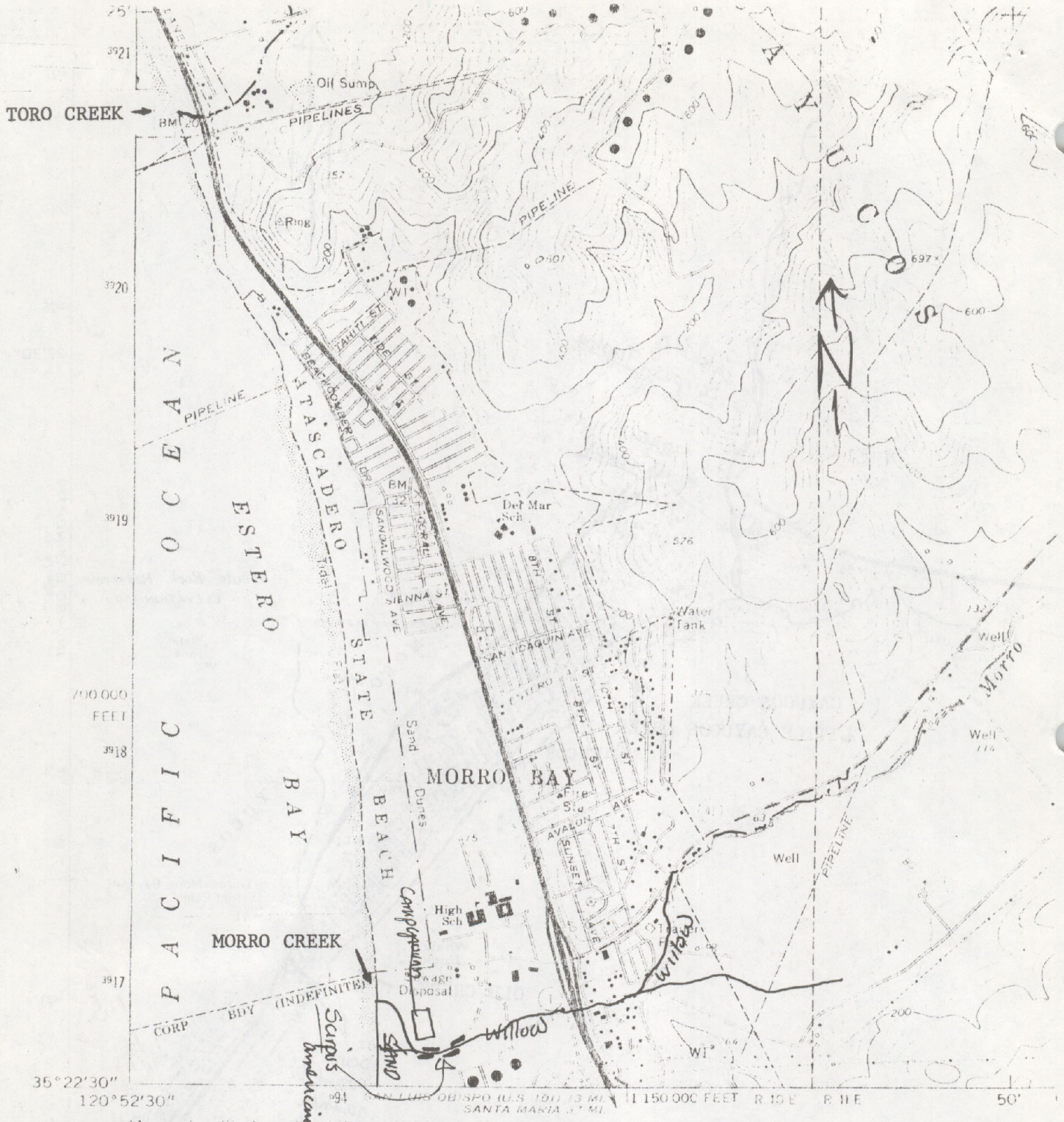
MAP D-8. LEFFINGWELL CREEK AND SANTA ROSA CREEK



MAP D-9. VILLA CREEK



MAP D-10. CAYUCOS CREEK, LITTLE CAYUCOS CREEK AND OLD CREEK



(MORRO BAY SOUTH)
1954 IV SE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1965

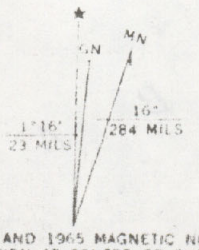
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 5387 (1963)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate system, zone 5
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 10, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landm

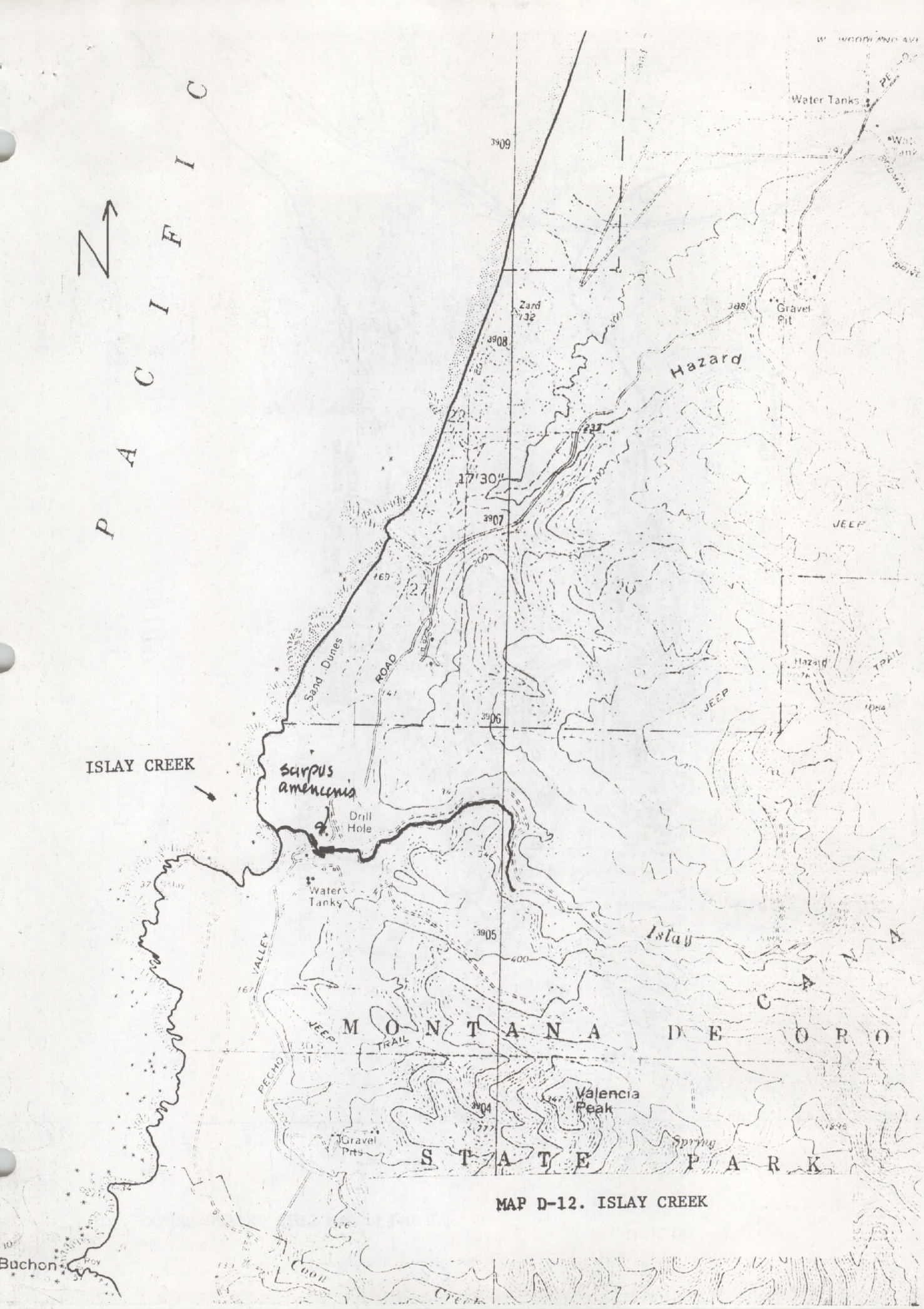
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fenc

Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation

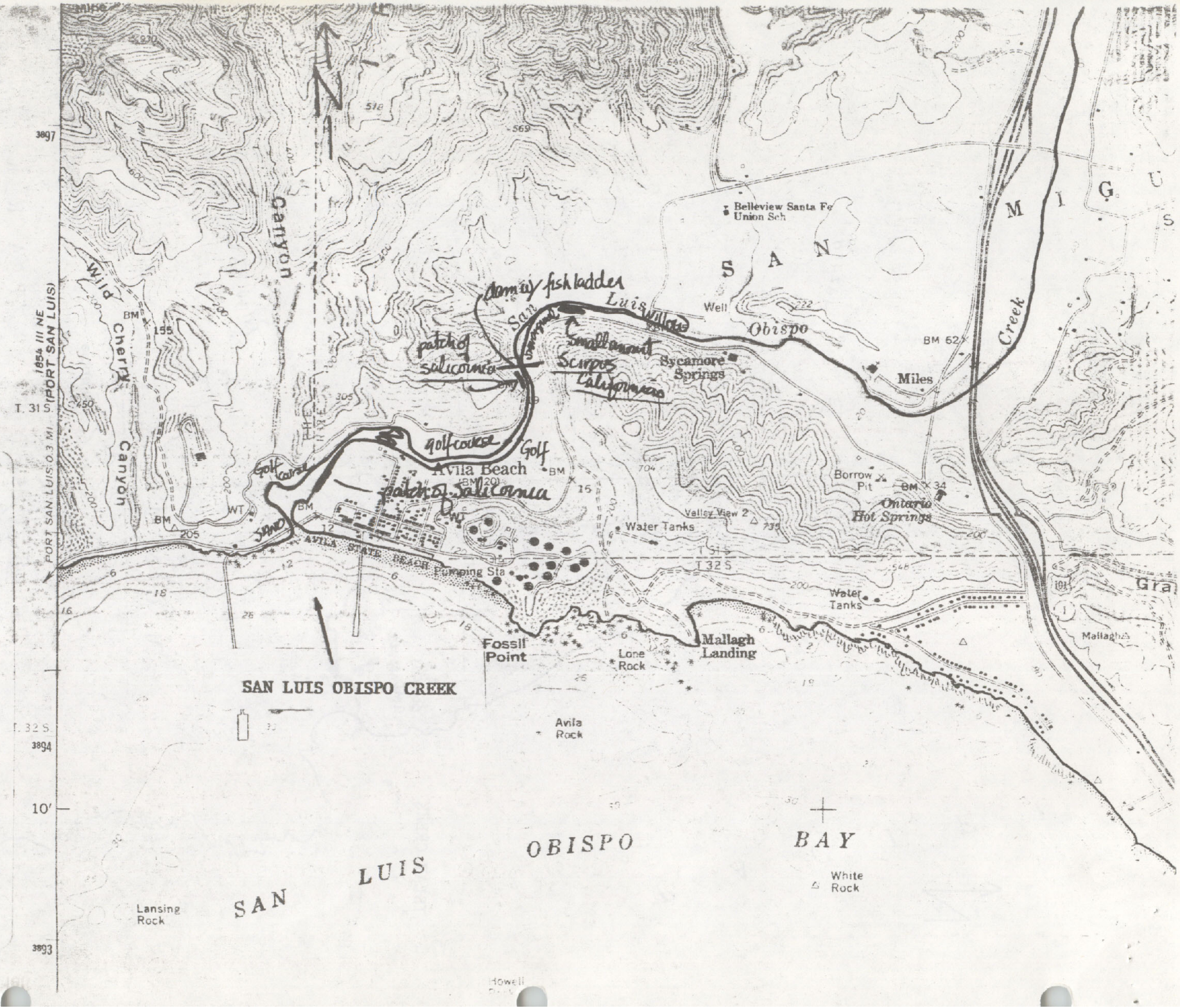


UTM GRID AND 1965 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

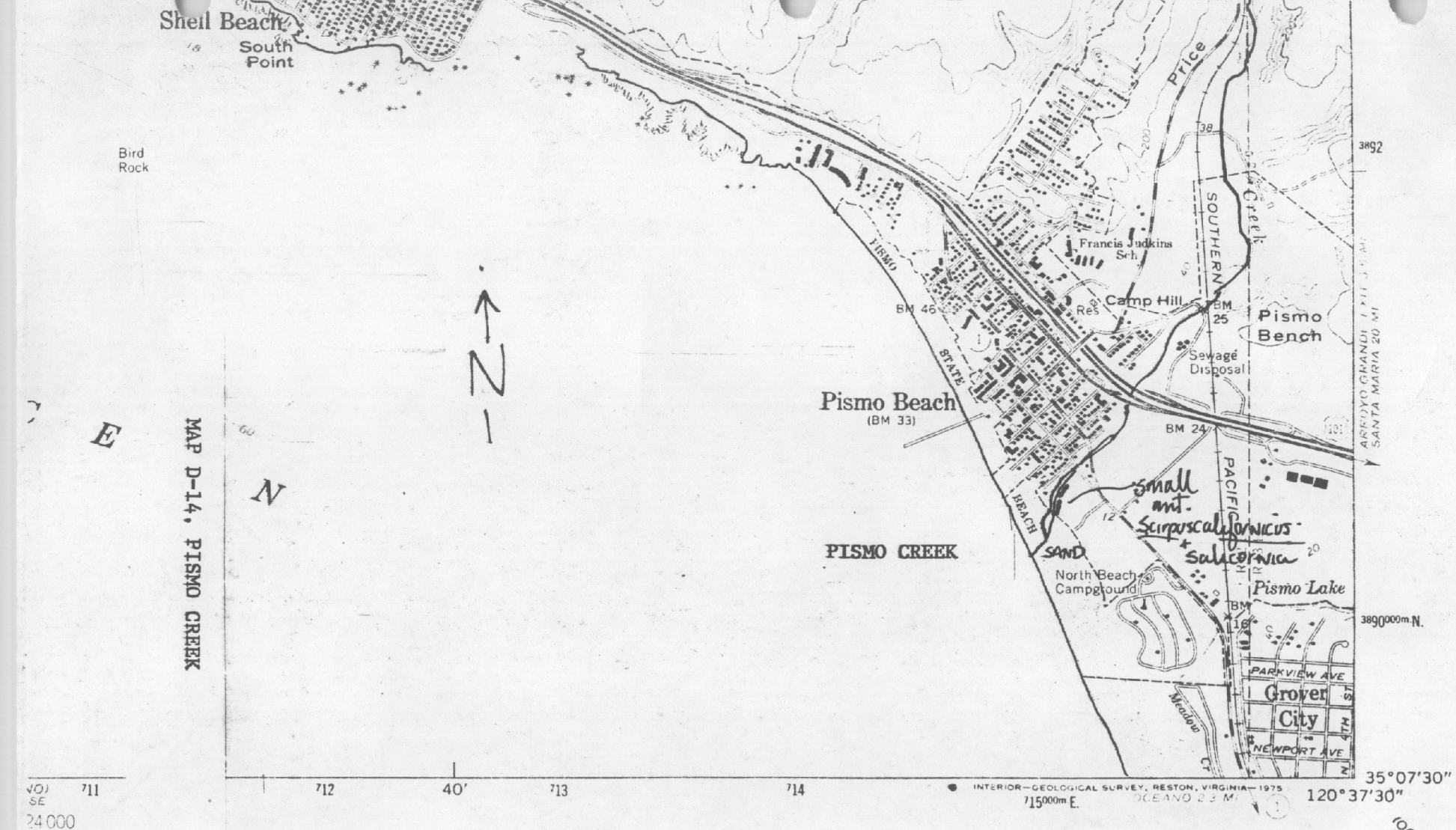
MAP D-11. MORRO CREEK AND TORO CREEK



MAP D-12. ISLAY CREEK



MAP D-13, SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK



INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1975

24 000

VAL 40 FEET
T 20-FOOT CONTOURS
ICAL DATUM OF 1929
— DATUM IS MEAN LOWER LOW WATER
ROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
APPROXIMATELY 4 FEET

AL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
COLORADO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
ND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PISMO BEACH, CALIF.

NW/4 ARROYO GRANDE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3507.5—W12037.5/7.5

1965

AMS 1854 II NW—SERIES V895