

REPORT ON THE ROGUE RIVER MOUTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

At the request of Mr. John Gharrett an inspection of the proposed disposal area on the north shore of the Rogue River mouth just west of the bridge (U.S. 101) was made November 18, 1948. This proposed disposal area is approximately 300 X 1500 feet in extent and is located above the meander line. It is marshland with characteristic flora, the whole area being dotted with standing pools of stagnant fresh water. An approximate two foot clay shelf separates the marshland from high tide line in a broken line for the length of the disposal area. At low tide a narrow beach is exposed, about 20 feet in width on the average, and is composed of coarse pea gravel interspaced with patches of sand, the gravel gradually giving way to sand as you approach the low tide mark.

Gold Beach's Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Cy Leland, was first contacted in search of information of possible bay clam populations existing within the mouth of the Rogue River. Not having heard of any such populations he referred to a Mr. Frank Colvin, tackle shop owner and long time resident. Mr. Colvin confirmed Mr. Leland's statement that he had not heard of or seen any clam populations of any kind within the tide-water range of the Rogue River. Above tidewater there apparently exists a species of fresh water mussel.

After these two interviews and miscellaneous questions to other residents an inspection of the proposed disposal area was made. A detailed search of the beach in question brought into view no shellfish life of any consequence, in fact no population of shellfish (clams, shrimp, or any other shellfish) however small was found. Evidence of former populations was also lacking. The inspection was concluded about 6:00PM. (Corrected

low tide was -1.0 ft. at 7:45PM)

It is interesting to note that brackish water probably does not extend any farther upriver than five miles as seen by the fact that fresh water mussels can be found at that point. A short tidewater distance such as the Rogue River has is not conducive to clam larvae sets.

The mouth of the river is apparently constantly shifting. According to Mr. Colvin the mouth has shifted northward a quarter of a mile since last year at this time. This shifting sand is of course not advantageous to bay clam populations as a condition such as this would not allow a population to establish itself even if the set were available.

In reference to the turn-around basin one whole side extends nearly the full length of the proposed disposal area. This would of course destroy any clams that might be existing below low tide mark.

Crabbing in the river is at this time negligible and has not been an industry in the past.

Conclusion:

It is our opinion that no harm will be done to the shellfish interests of the state on the area in question by the fulfillment of the proposed dredging program.

Roger Tollefson
Lowell D. Marriage
Biologists

Submitted Dec. 1, 1978