

Salmon River Launch Ramp Proposal



Landing Craft at Salmon River Boat Launch Ramp, July 2005

This proposal seeks to provide the City of Gustavus with a launch ramp facility in the Salmon River that will meet both the commercial and recreational needs of the community for the next 20 to 30 years.

**City of Gustavus, Alaska
Mayor Sandi Marchbanks
July 14, 2005**

Salmon River Launch Ramp Proposal Summary

Purpose and need:

- Our 1960's era dock in Icy Passage is **structurally impaired** and **functionally obsolete**
- The **only** break/bulk freight carrier that would come to our dock is now out of business.
- Gustavus **no longer** has direct freight service from Seattle
- Freight now comes to Juneau, then is broken down and delivered by open landing craft
- All freight must now be unloaded at our dilapidated Salmon River launch ramp, our **only** freight receiving facility until our dock is replaced.
- Gustavus has **no** all tide boat harbor.
- The Salmon River is the **only** protected area for boat moorage and landing craft freight delivery.
- This launch ramp must now support a five (5) fold increase in landing craft use to fulfill **all** the freight needs of the City of Gustavus and Glacier Bay National Park.
- Local sawmills have **no** facility to off load logs and **no** way to ship products.
- The sports and charter fishing fleet depends upon this launch ramp for subsistence and tourist activities.
- The Salmon River Launch Ramp is decrepit due to heavy use and is nearly unusable.

Relevant Gustavus Strategic Plan High Priorities:

- Replace the obsolete Icy Passage dock with a new facility for freight and ferry service
- Replace Salmon River Launch Ramp
- Reduce power and freight rates
- Support small timber sales and local milling
- Clean up the Salmon River Boat Harbor

Salmon River Launch Ramp Business Plan:

- This project provides for two (2) ramps; a sports/charter boat ramp and a commercial freight delivery ramp and a provision for a Ramp Barge area.
- The City will take conveyance of the land now owned by the State of Alaska
- The City will supply land survey, engineering, environmental and permitting costs for the project
- The City will assume the maintenance and operating cost of the facility
- The City is seeking funding for the project totaling \$1,300,000

Conclusion:

- The delivery of freight to this community is dependant upon this facility
- The charter/sports fishing fleet depends on this facility for access to all fishing, hunting and recreational opportunities.
- This is the only feasible location for the facility, environmentally, logistically and economically
- The City will accept ownership responsibility and maintenance and operation expenses

Gustavus has lost its Seattle freight service. This loss drastically impacts the economic viability of our community. Our freight rates have risen nearly 300% since 1998 and the use of Juneau landing craft will increase our already high freight rates. Increased freight rates, coupled with 51 cents per kilowatt power rates will have a detrimental impact on our citizens and our economy.

Salmon River Launch Ramp Proposal

Purpose and Need

Since Gustavus does not have an all-tide boat harbor, the Salmon River estuary has provided the only sheltered moorage and offloading facilities for small boats accessing Icy Strait. Its single boat ramp, built over a decade ago by local volunteers, occupies a site used by the community since WWII. This ramp has been increasingly pressed into service for offloading landing craft and small barges, but until recently our main break bulk freight offload facility has been across the Gustavus dock in Icy Passage. The Salmon River ramp is now decrepit and on the verge of being unusable.

In recent years, break-bulk freight carriers willing to serve us across our equally decrepit 1960's era trestle style dock have dwindled to a single company, Western Pioneer. In recent years, six million dollars of freight has come across the structure annually supplying all of Gustavus and 95% of Glacier Bay National Park's needs. Western Pioneer suddenly announced that it intends to go out of business and the last freight delivery was June 21st, 2005. No other freight carrier intends to pick up this route and we have no Alaska Marine Highway service. Therefore, all the materials that once were delivered across the Gustavus Dock now must be shipped to Juneau in containers, be broken down, and brought to Gustavus aboard landing crafts or small barges that come into the Salmon River on high tide. This will further damage the already frail launch ramp and will dramatically escalate the ramp's already considerable importance as an economic lifeline for the City of Gustavus. We estimate the launch ramp will need to accommodate a five-fold increase in just commercial landing craft use alone as well as the use by charter and sport fishermen.

Tourism is the main driver of the Gustavus economy of which the sports/charter fishery is an important component. The year round population of Gustavus is 430 but nearly doubles during the tourist season as summer residents and workers return. The City of Gustavus has about 30 sports/charter vessels in the fleet registered with the City. Most of these boats are secured on mooring and anchors in Icy Passage because we have no all tide, protected harbor. These boats are susceptible to summer westerly winds with a 25 miles fetch from Cross Sound. At least one charter boat per season drags anchor in rough weather and either hits another boat or ends up on the beach.

Charter boat captains indicate that they would use a new launch ramp for several purposes; to move boats from Icy Passage when foul weather threatens if tides permit, to safely fuel their vessels and to more adequately clean and maintain their crafts. The present ramp is often occupied by landing craft delivering freight preventing sports/charter fisherman from pulling or launching their boats when necessary.

At present the State of Alaska is the owner of the land on which this launch ramp is situated and the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) is the manager. The City of Gustavus is currently working with DNR and the Corps of Engineers to temporarily repair the present ramp. This requires obtaining the necessary permitting including right of entry. Once this repair is accomplished we will pursue a long term, permanent solution. This includes conveyance to the City of Gustavus, through the Public and Charitable lands provision AS 38.05.810, all the property both uplands, tidelands and submerged lands on which the Salmon River Boat Harbor

launch ramp is located. We have already begun planning for funding and construction of a new facility that will meet our needs. This will allow vessels to be hauled and launched and landing craft to transfer vehicles and freight. A ramp barge would also be part of this facility to accommodate barges for larger projects and log transfer vessels for local saw mills. Its location would be north of the proposed launch ramps, thereby protecting these ramps from some of the river's current. Our strategic plan identifies diversification of Gustavus economy as an important goal and in particular it points to the support of the Pt. Couverden timber sales to small local mills. These small mills must have an adequate log transfer platform to be viable. Locally produced wood products become more important with loss of freight service from Seattle.

Location

The location of this new facility would be 20 yards north of the present ramp on the east side of the Salmon River. This allows use of the existing ramp while the new one is under construction. This is only about ¼ mile from Icy Strait in a silt-underlain sandy estuary that does not appear to be a critical spawning area for any species of salmon. This is the traditional launching location used by Gustavus residents and construction companies since the early 1940's. Road access is already present. Although DNR now manages this property, it is the City's intent to accept conveyance to the City after we receive our incorporation entitlement land through AS 29.65.030.

Alternatives considered

1) Use of Glacier Bay National Park Service facilities.

The launch ramp at Bartlett Cove is the only other facility of this type that is linked to Gustavus by road. The Park Service has formally stated to Mayor Marchbanks that their facilities cannot be used by commercial entities, nor is their ramp built to accommodate heavy equipment and landing craft. Even if it were available, Bartlett Cove is 16 water miles past Gustavus and may involve some of the roughest water in Icy Strait which at times these flat bottomed landing craft would be unable to navigate. Use of Barlett Cove would add time to a freight run and increase the already staggering cost of freight. Vessels entering Glacier Bay National Park all need a permit to enter those waters and during the summer when freight is the greatest, permits are not available.

2) Other sites in Gustavus

There are no other hardened beach sites in Gustavus capable of handling landing craft unloading traffic. The beach flanking the dock in Icy Passage (seaward of Tracts A & B) is soft sand, has a very flat slope and is exposed to strong westerly swells that periodically makes unloading by small craft unsafe and logistically difficult. Modifications to the beach in this area that would be necessary to accommodate landing craft and small barge unloading is an unacceptable conflict with current recreational use. A permanent facility of the type necessary may not be permitted under terms of the covenants associated with the Deboer/State of Alaska settlement for Tract A & B. The beaches along this portion of Icy Passage are so gentle of slope that an approach to the launch ramp would need to be almost ¼ mile in length or a basin of the same length would need to be excavated into the ever shifting sand. More sheltered sites further east along Icy Passage are not accessible by road, are mostly owned by the Nature Conservancy and are dedicated to habitat and recreational use, and would require construction of up to three miles of approach road to get to and transit across the long mud flats. Road construction costs would add greatly to the cost of the project and would likely be prohibitive.

Business Plan

The City of Gustavus has recently adopted its strategic plan in which replacement of the Icy Passage dock and the Salmon River Launch Ramp are the top priorities in the Capital Projects and Infrastructure Category. Top priorities in the Economic Category are reduction of power & freight rates, and support for small timber sales and local saw mills. Therefore, a recreation/sports/charter fishing ramp, a commercial launch ramp and a ramp barge all fit into the strategic plan and have wide community support, especially considering our recent loss of Seattle freight service. Use of the Salmon River launch ramp is tide dependant and leaves only a 2-3 hour window of use per tide. Two launch ramps would allow for the increase of commercial traffic caused by the necessary use of landing craft to deliver all the freight and still allow charter and sports fisherman to use a separate ramp while freight is being unloaded. The addition of a ramp barge site to serve as an unloading area for large equipment, rock for road improvement and the transfer of logs for small mills would complete the facility. While this proposal would meet many of the needs of Gustavus residents and businesses for the next 20 to 30 years this is not a viable, permanent solution for delivery of all freight. The City will also continue the search for funding to replace our Icy Passage dock to accommodate various freight carriers and Alaska Marine Highway vessels.

Constructing the entire project at one time would be most cost effective. Permitting and the hiring of a project manager would occur just once, not three times. Thus, this business plan will be structured around the concept of *one project, consisting of two launch ramps and a ramp barge landing.*

Permit process--\$15,000 (offer exists to donate some or all of this effort from Icy Strait Environmental Services with support from Alaska Coastal Engineering.)

Includes:

404 (Army Corps permit)

Title 16 (fish permit)

NEPA Process Permits (National Environmental Protection Agency)

Assist City with land acquisition/right of entry issues:

ILMA (Interagency Land Management Agreement with DNR)/conveyance

Interim Use Agreement and Right of Entry

Survey of Parcel 3 and tidelands--\$20,000—This cost will be borne by the City of Gustavus

Assistance from Icy Strait Environmental Services and Alaska Coastal Engineering to delineate tidelands necessary for short term and long term launch ramp projects

Design cost--\$100,000 Design the short term and long term project (**offer exists to donate this effort from Alaska Coastal Engineering with support from Icy Strait Environmental Services**)

Administrative costs--\$50,000

Includes hiring of a project manager

Construction costs--\$1,250,000

Includes:

- Sports Fishing/recreation launch ramp--\$500,000
- Commercial launch ramp--\$500,000
- Ramp Barge Landing--\$250,000

Total project cost--\$1,435,000

The City of Gustavus has secured a conceptual design (included in this proposal) and has begun working with an engineer to provide biddable plans, specifications and the above estimates for construction. City of Gustavus will provide permits, land and design portions of project development process (~\$135,000). This leaves a budget/fiscal requirement to construct the entire facility of ~\$1,300,000.

The City is beginning to seek funding and the support necessary for the construction of this facility from and through the following entities:

1. **Sports Fishing/recreation launch ramp:**
 - A. Alaska Department of Fish & Game/Sports Fisheries—Dingell-Johnson funds
Gustavus is on the list for 2007-2008 Dingell-Johnson funding.
 - B. DOT/PF—STIP list project # 4879.(from 2003-2004) We ask that this project be considered a priority and funded due to our critical need.
2. **Commercial Launch Ramp—**
 - A. DOT/PF—Gustavus is currently on the STIP list with project #4879. We request that this project be funded because of our loss of Seattle freight service and need to use the Salmon River for freight delivery until replacement of our Icy Passage dock.
 - B. USDA/Rural Development grant
 - C. Denali Commission (transportation funds)
3. **Ramp barge facility**
 - A. Tongass National Forest Economic Recovery Grant Program
Filing period from this grant starts in spring of 2006
 - B. USDA/Rural Development grant
 - C. Denali Commission (transportation funds)

Other possible contacts include:

1. **Commissioner of DOT/PF—Mike Barton**
2. **DCED Deputy commission—Al Clough**
3. **Assistant Commissioner DOT/PF—Mal Menzies**
4. **DCED mini-grants**
5. **U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA**
6. **S.E. Conference**
7. **Alaska Congressional Delegation**
8. **Office of the Governor**
9. **Alaska State Legislative Delegation**

The City of Gustavus will assume ownership responsibility for the facility as well as Maintenance and Operation.

Estimated M& O--\$5,000 yearly

Maintenance will be paid for through collection of user fees to be kept in escrow for M&O for this facility only.

The City understands that this project may require matching funds. These would come from the proposed donations, survey costs paid by the City, local donations including some from other City of Gustavus sources.

Conclusion

All aspects of this proposed project are in place except monies for its completion.

1. The City of Gustavus desperately needs this launch ramp/barge ramp facility, **the only way for Gustavus to receive freight until our dock is replaced.**
2. This ramp has to meet the freight needs of the City and Glacier Bay National Park and continue to serve the local community and its tourist, sport and charter fishing industries.
3. The location is the most suitable environmentally, logistically and economically.
4. The City will accept ownership and responsibility for the project and the land that this facility will be located on.
5. The City will be responsible for M&O of the facility.
6. The City would be responsible for necessary matching funds if required.

Gustavus presently has no direct freight service from Seattle, and we won't have this service until our Icy Passage Dock is replaced. We will be able fix the present launch ramp temporarily, but DNR has informed us that we need to take ownership of harbor land and develop a permanent long- term plan. We will be experiencing, at least, a five-fold increase in landing craft use from Juneau to our launch ramp facility in order to deliver our needed freight.

Since 1998, when we lost our first break-bulk freight carrier (AOTA), our freight rates have risen 300 percent and now that the last carrier willing to serve Gustavus (Western Pioneer) has gone out of business, we are faced with even greater rate increases and lower quality (palletized open deck cargo) service, all of which will further impede the stability and growth of our economy. A new launch ramp facility is the only option the City of Gustavus will have for the offloading of freight until we can secure funds to replace our structurally impaired and functionally obsolete 1960's era dock so that we have a facility to accommodate containerized freight carriers and Alaska Marine Highways System (AMHS) vessels.

City of Gustavus

Sandi Marchbanks, Mayor

P.O. Box 1

Gustavus, Ak 99826

907-697-2288 Sandi Marchbanks, Mayor

907-697-2422 Diane Klawunder, Marine Facilities Committee

907-697-2287 Greg Streveler, Marine Facilities Committee

907-697-2451 City Clerk

Resolution of the City of Gustavus, Alaska
Resolution No. 2005-13

A Resolution confirming the intent of the City Council of Gustavus to select and acquire, through Alaska Statute (AS) 38.05.810 and 38.05.825, all the land presently described as Parcel #3 which includes the Salmon River Boat Harbor, the road to the harbor facility, and the launch ramp including adjacent tide and submerged lands.

WHEREAS, the City of Gustavus is entitled to the selection of Parcel #3 through the Public and Charitable Land provision under the AS 38.05.810;

WHEREAS, the boat harbor provides for the vital functions and recreation of the citizens of the city;

WHEREAS, the launch ramp within the Salmon River has become our only means of providing freight delivery to our citizens and our businesses;

WHEREAS, Parcel #3 is large enough to provide boat trailer and vehicle parking for residents and to provide a staging area for the on and offloading of barge and landing craft freight which is an essential part of life within the City of Gustavus;

WHEREAS, the Dept. of Natural Resources, (DNR) the present manager of Parcel #3 will provide the City of Gustavus with a temporary 'Right of Usage' permit to rehabilitate the harbor ramp, providing that a long term solution for the construction, maintenance and operation of a permanent facility is being planned,

AND NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Gustavus will accept the conveyance of Parcel #3 in its entirety including adjacent tide and submerged lands immediately after the conveyance of its Municipal Entitlement.

PASSED and APPROVED by the Gustavus City Council this 14th day of July, 2005.

Mayor Sandi Marchbanks

Attest:
Clerk [Signature]



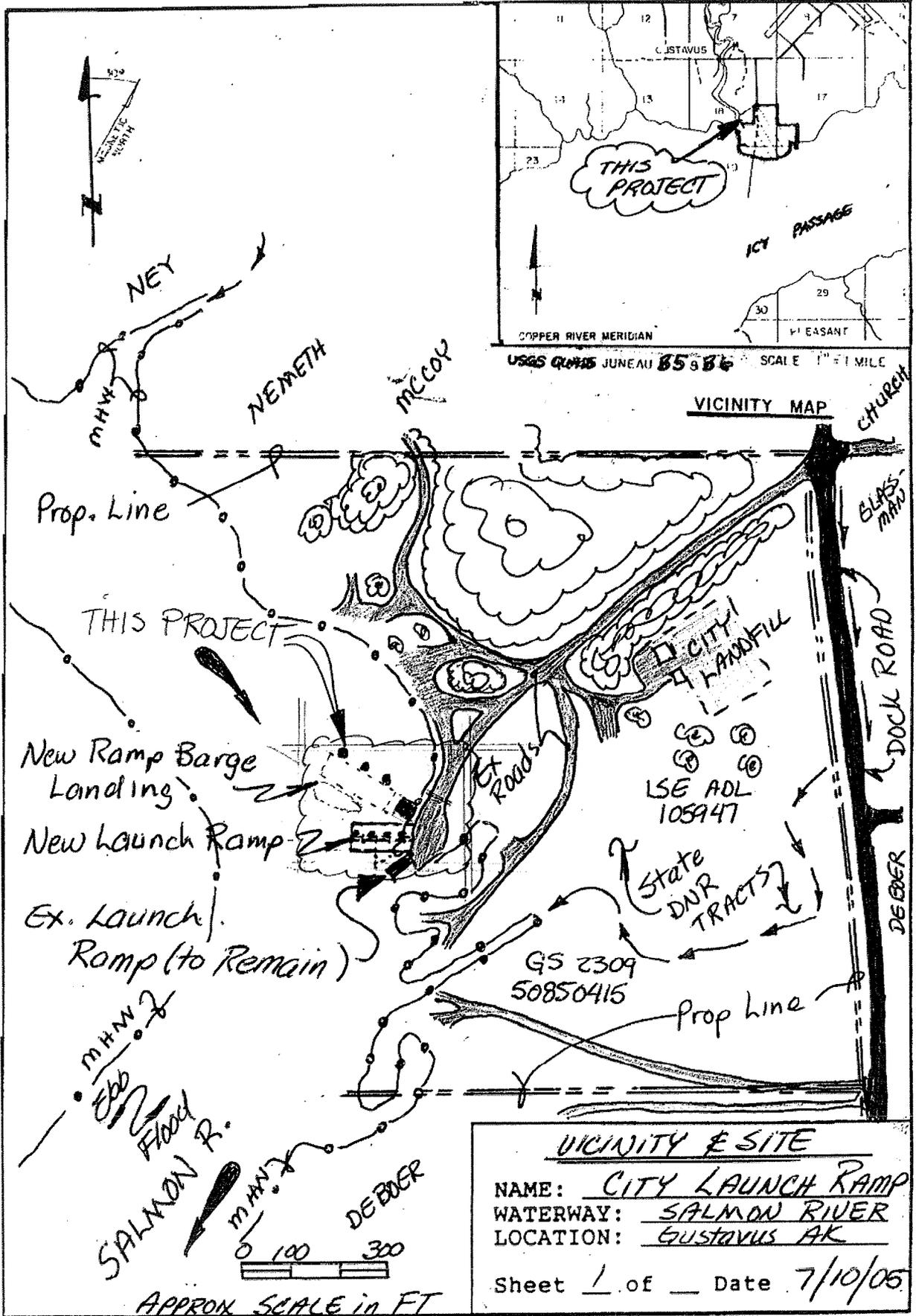
After losing all freight delivery at our Icy Passage Dock, freight for all of Gustavus and 95% of the freight for Glacier Bay National Park must arrive by landing crafts at this aging, tide dependent launch ramp in the Salmon River. Sport and Charter fishing vessels and landing crafts all compete for the opportunity to use this very busy launch ramp. Safety has always been a concern but it seems paramount now with the increased volume of freight.

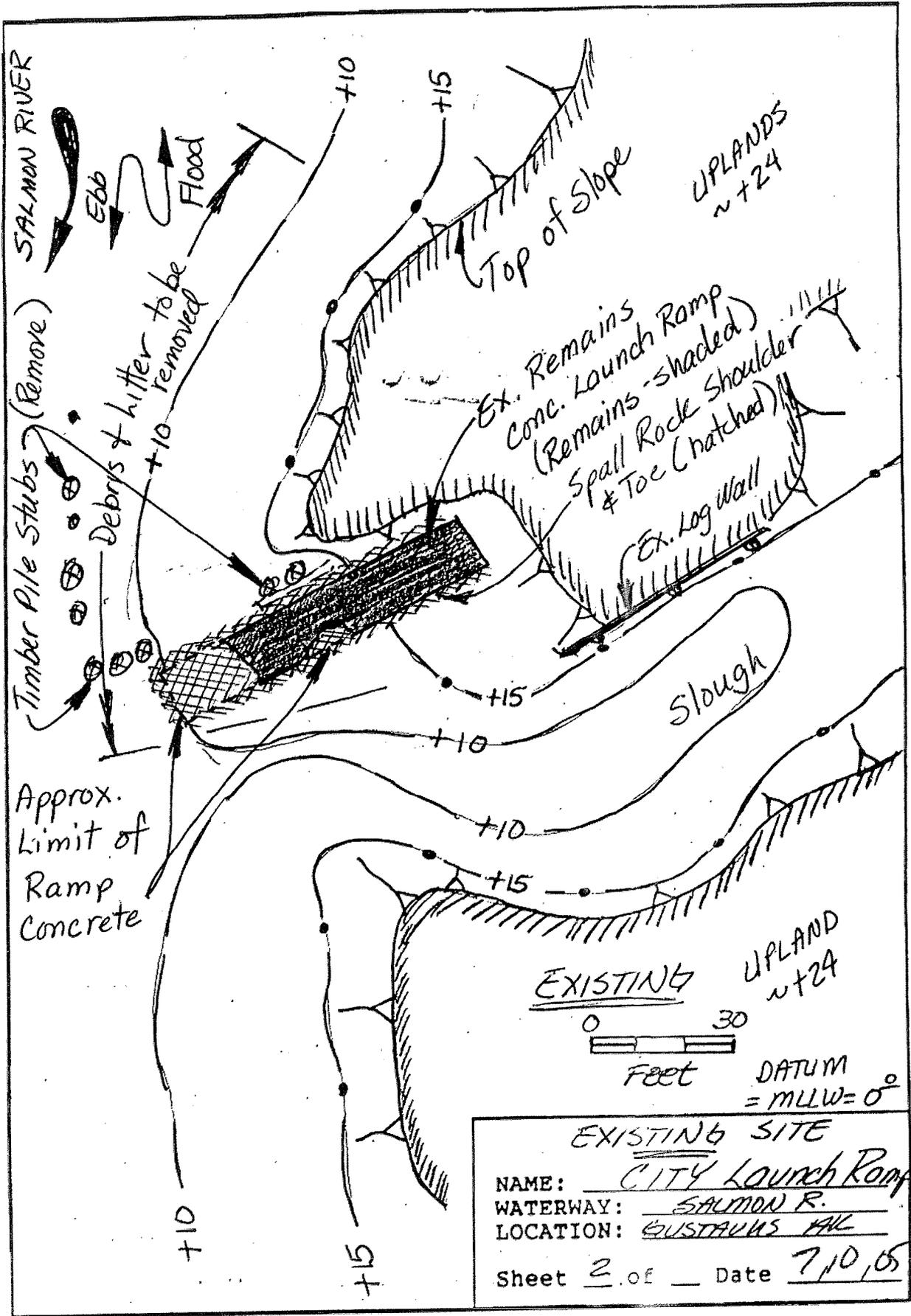




The Salmon River Launch ramp is usable only at high tide. Shown here at low tide the deterioration and inadequate nature of this facility is evident.







SALMON RIVER

Ebb
Flood

Timber Pile Stubs (Remove)

Debris & litter to be removed

+10

+15

Top of Slope

UPLANDS
~ +24

Ex. Remains
Conc. Launch Ramp
(Remains - shaded)

Spall Rock Shoulder
& Toe (hatched)

Ex. Log Wall

Slough

Approx.
Limit of
Ramp
Concrete

+10

+15

+15

+10

+10

+15

EXISTING

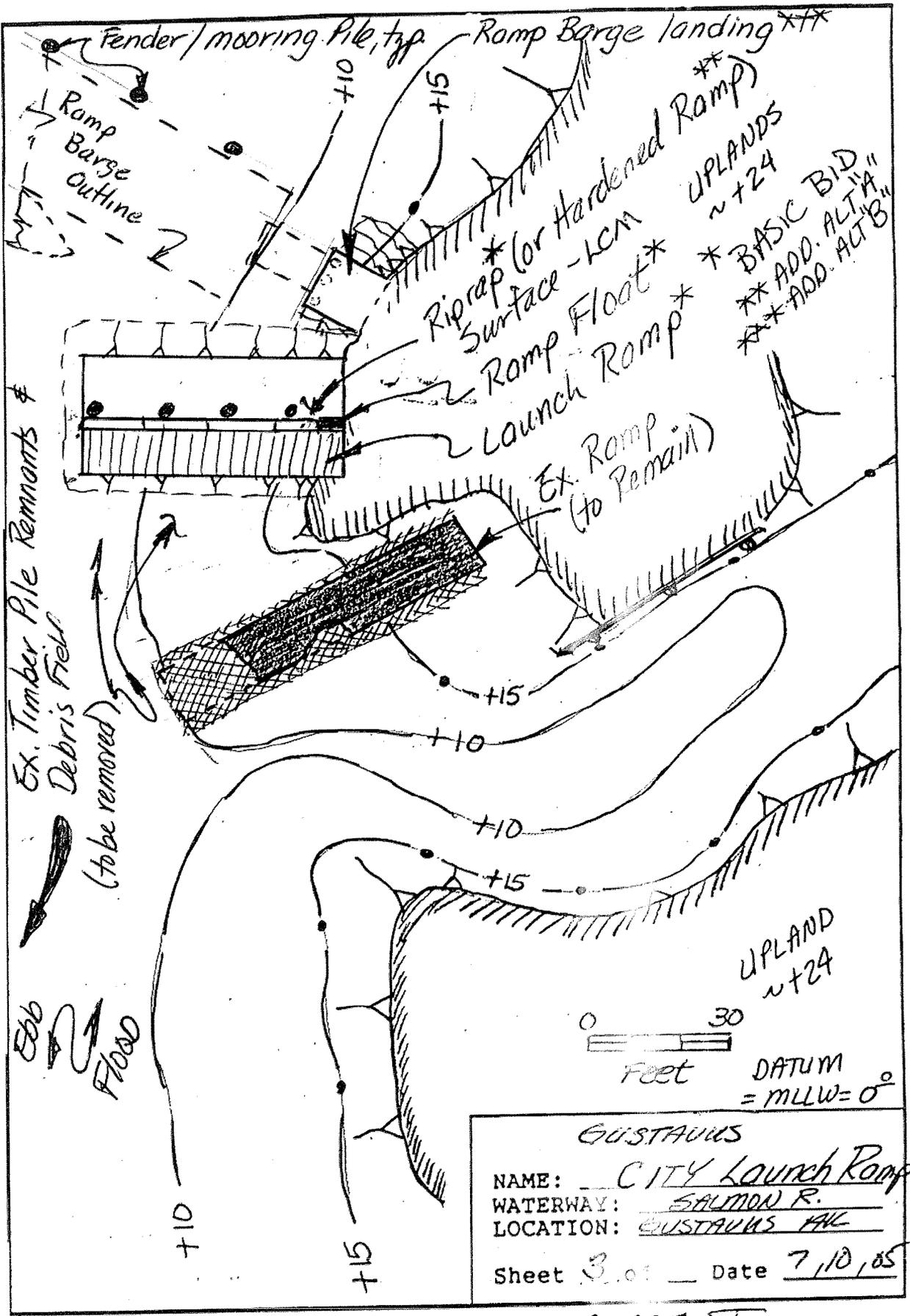
UPLAND
~ +24

0 30

Feet

DATUM
= MLLW = 0'

EXISTING SITE
 NAME: CITY Launch Ramp
 WATERWAY: SALMON R.
 LOCATION: GUSTAVUS PAL
 Sheet 2 of Date 7/10/05



** BASIC BID
 ** ADD. ACT. A
 *** ADD. ACT. B

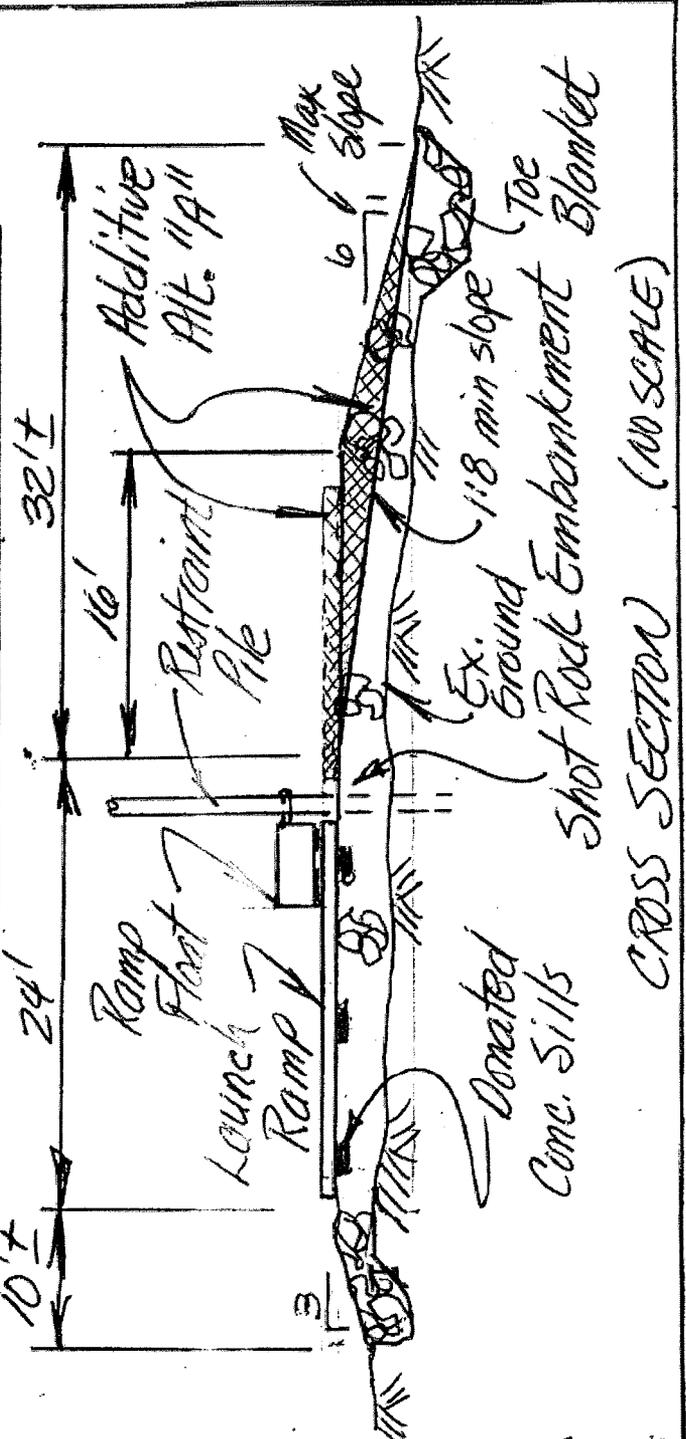
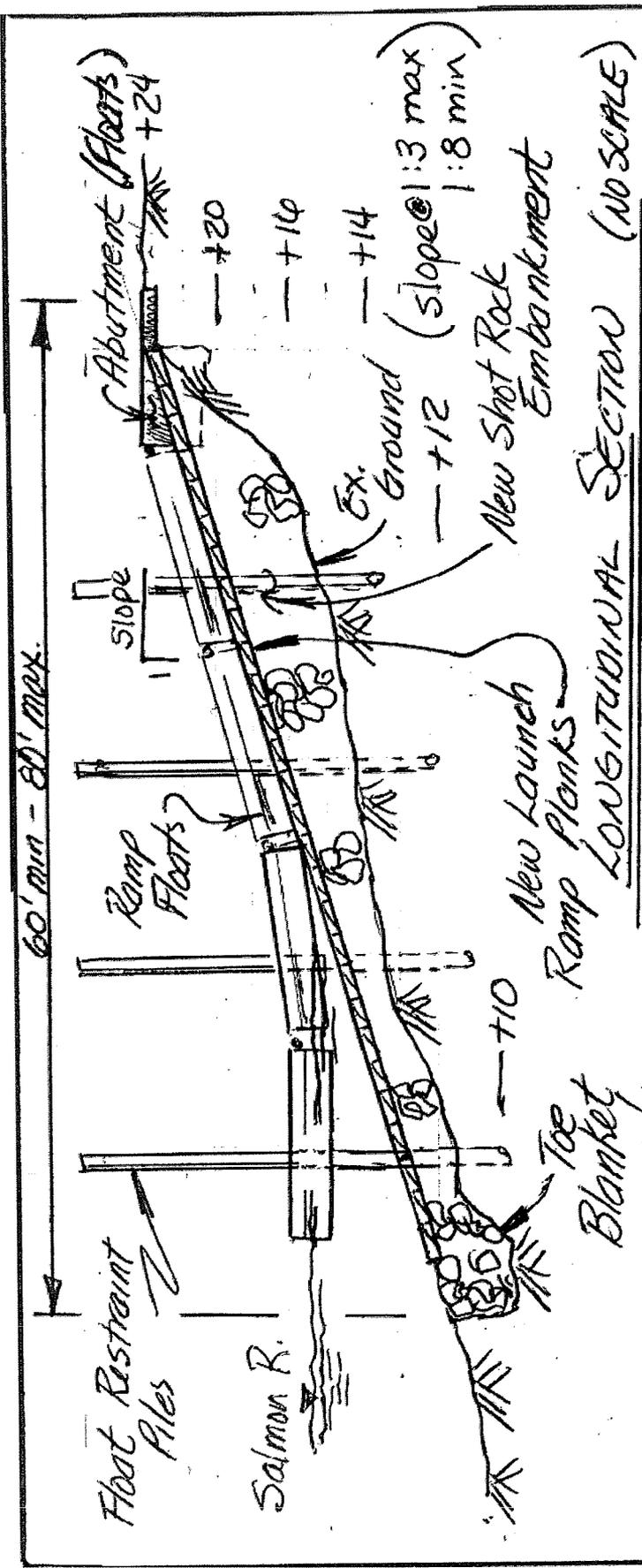
UPLAND
 ~+24

0 30
 Feet

DATUM
 = MLLW = 0'

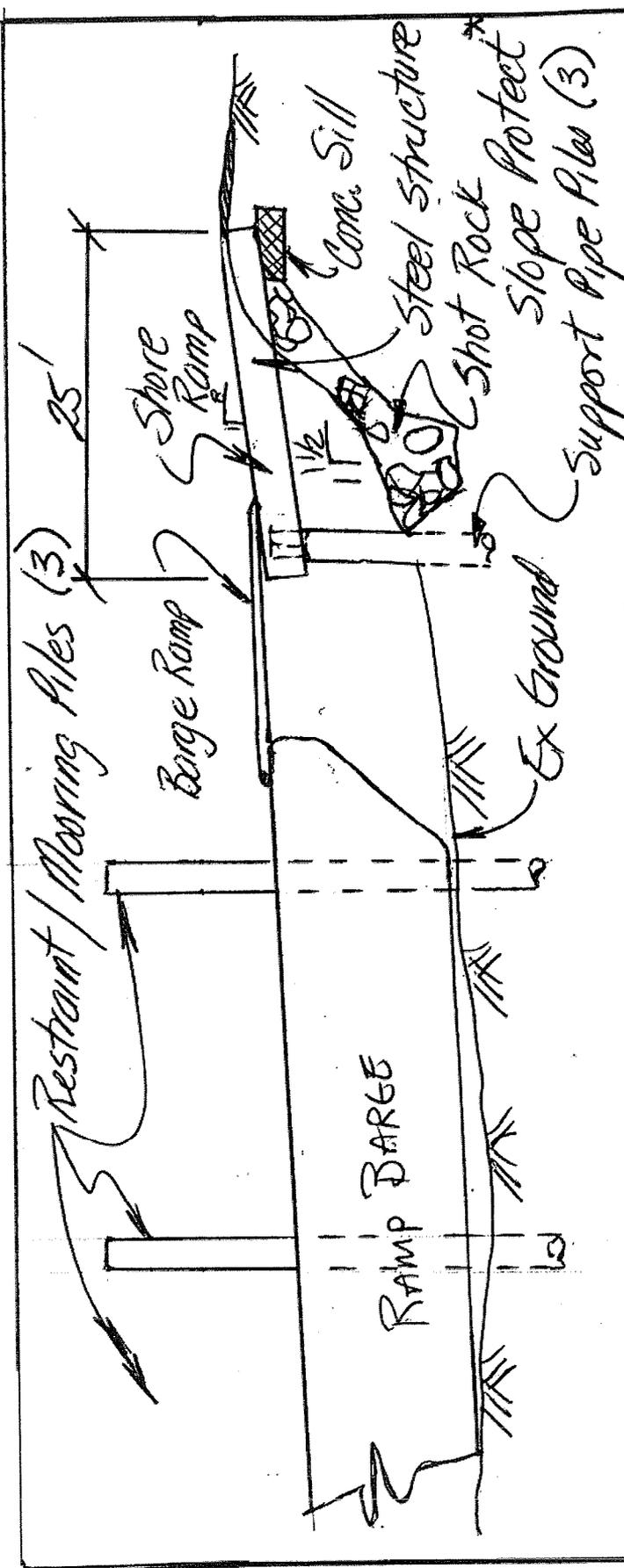
GUSTAVUS
 NAME: CITY Launch Ramp
 WATERWAY: SALMON R.
 LOCATION: GUSTAVUS FALL
 Sheet 3 of Date 7/10/05

PHASE II

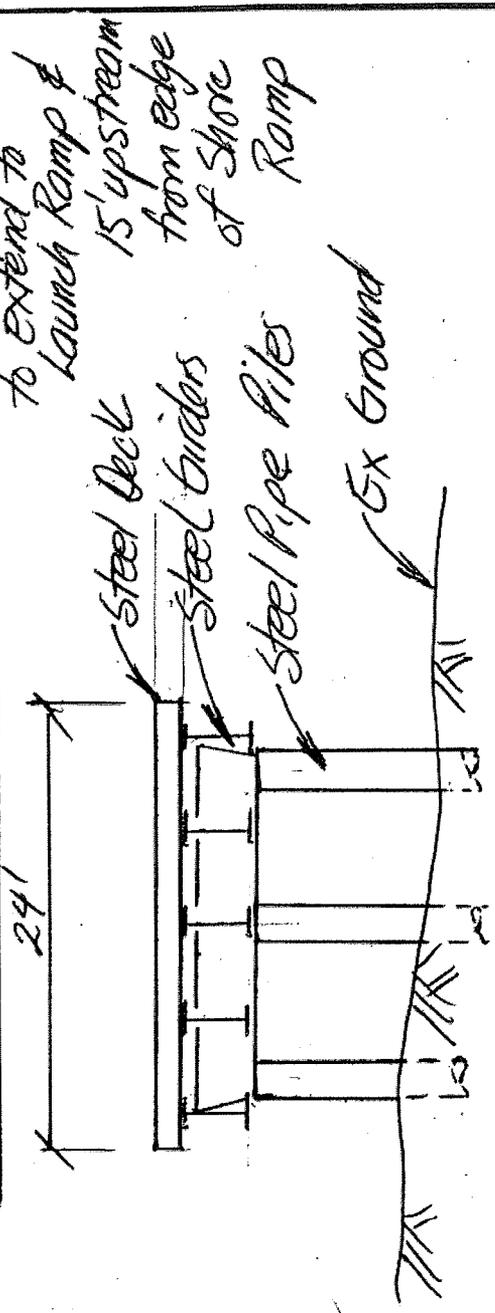


BASIC BID + ADD. ALT "A"

GUSTAVUS
 NAME: CITY LAUNCH RAMP
 WATERWAY: SALMON RIVER
 LOCATION: GUSTAVUS AK
 Sheet 4 of ___ Date 7/10/05



(ANSWER) LONGITUDINAL SECTION



CROSS SECTION (NO SCALE)

ADD. ALTERNATE "B"

GUSTAVUS
 NAME: CITY LAUNCH RAMP
 WATERWAY: Salmon River
 LOCATION: GUSTAVUS AK
 Sheet 5 of Date 7/10/05

PHASE II