

**SACRAMENTO RIVER ECOLOGICAL FLOWS STUDY:
HEC-RAS CROSS SECTIONS AND MATCHING STAGE-
DISCHARGE CURVES FOR USE IN THE
SACEFT V.2 MODEL OF RIPARIAN INITIATION**

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Technical Memo

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Executive Summary

Bed topography data from three cross sections (RM 192, 183, and 172) on the Upper Sacramento River, and their respective stage-discharge rating curves were used in the Sacramento River Ecological Flows Tool (SacEFT) v.1 to model cottonwood seedling initiation. Similar topographic and stage-discharge data were desired from additional locations. Cross section bed topography and related stage-discharge rating curves were developed from an existing HEC-RAS hydraulic model for the same three sites (RM 192, 183, and 172) and the results were compared with the initial data from SacEFT v.1. There was relatively good agreement between the original data and the data generated from the HEC-RAS model. The HEC-RAS model was then used to generate bed topography and related stage-discharge relationships for an additional nine sites on the Upper Sacramento River between River Miles 210 and 160. This memorandum documents the work done and the data developed for the nine additional sites.

Background and overview

One of the primary recommendations by an advisory group on riparian dynamics modeling in SacEFT v.1 was to increase the representativeness of cross section profiles, stage-discharge relationships, and default parameter values associated with SacEFT's riparian initiation indicator (FC1). Any modeling that allowed cross sections of sufficient resolution along the channel face and floodplain could be used, if paired stage-discharge relations were available. Studies reported in this memo explored possible HEC-RAS cross-section and stage-discharge inventories to include more representative index locations; that is, to include sites beyond the classic point bars at RM 192, 183, and 172. In support of this effort, preliminary analyses of a HEC-RAS cross section at RM 192 suggested that the HEC-RAS cross sections were of adequate resolution and were adequately comparable to the cross sections that were used in EFT v.1 (ESSA, TNC, Stella, et al. conference call; Figure 1). The two other cross sections from SacEFT v.1 (RM 183 and 172) were analyzed in a similar manner and showed similar agreement between the cross sections taken from HEC-RAS and the ones measured by TNC (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Comparison of EFT v.1/HEC-RAS XS data

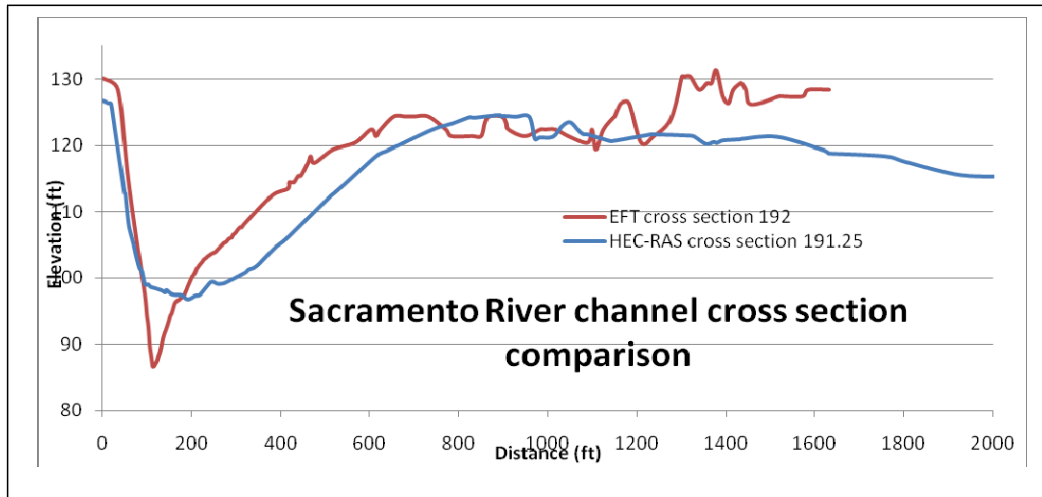


Figure 1 Cross section 192: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS XS data.

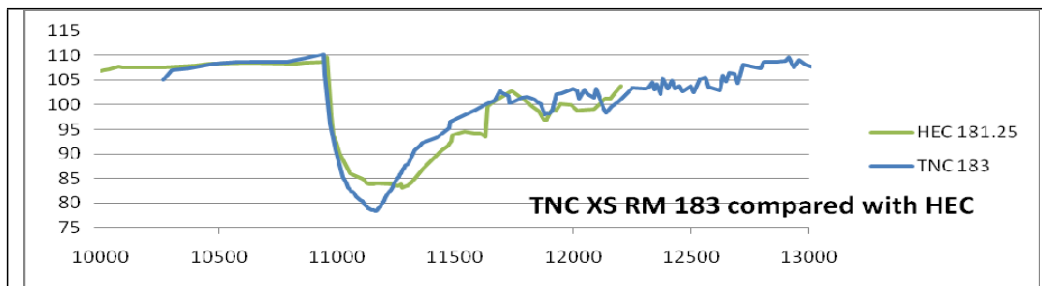


Figure 2 Cross section 183: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS XS data.

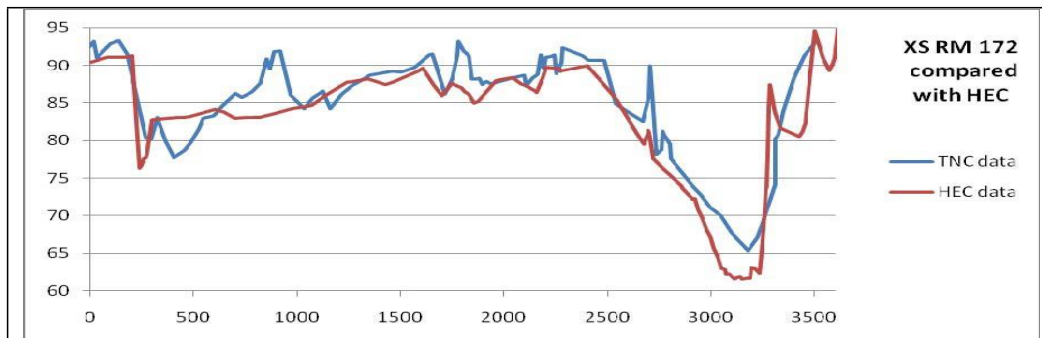


Figure 3 Cross section 172: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS XS data.

In order to match cross section locations as accurately as possible, GIS layers were visually inspected with DWR river mile designations for the locations of the TNC cross sections, and visually matched with the same locations on the HEC-RAS geometry-graphic (Appendix 1).

Comparison of EFT v.1/HEC-RAS stage-discharge rating curves

The data that were available in the HEC-RAS model for each cross section included data that could produce a stage-discharge rating curve based on model runs performed for selected flows. In a phone discussion with an informal advisory group (Alexander, Larsen, Golet, Henderson), there was a question about the precision of the HEC-RAS modeled flows to produce useable rating curves. In order to investigate this issue, the rating curves for the three sites that were used in the EFT v.1 and the corresponding HEC-RAS modeled rating curves were plotted and compared on the same graph.

HEC-RAS flows were modeled from 5000 to 79,000 cfs (and up to 150,000, although this was not plotted in the following figures). The range of interest is roughly limited to the range between 8,500 and 80,000 cfs (Clint Alexander, pers. com.). Graphs of these data are shown in the following figures (Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6).

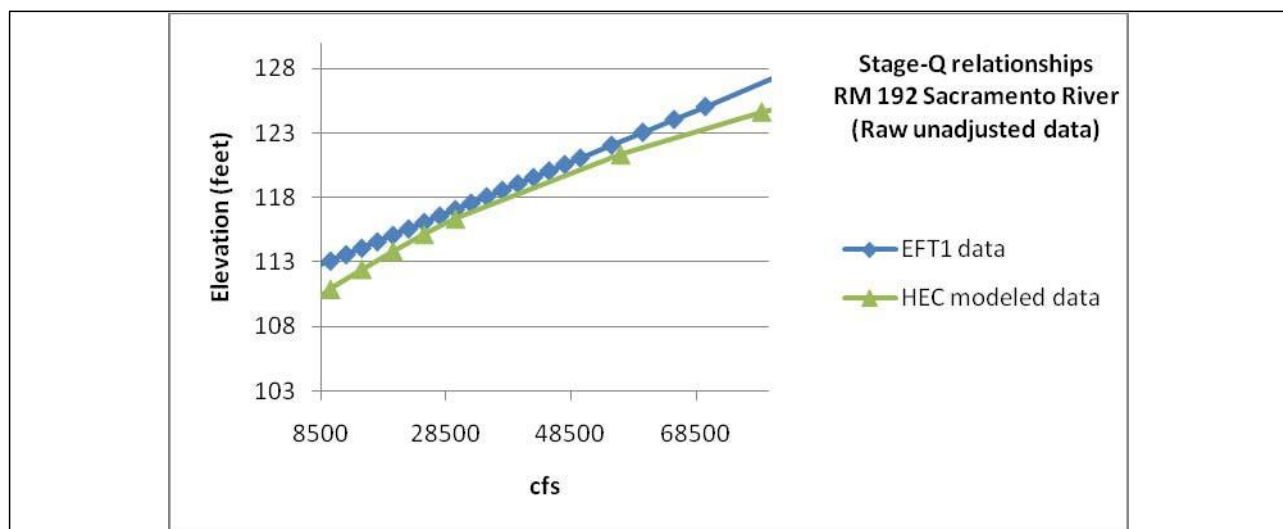


Figure 4 Cross section 192: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS stage-Q rating curve data.

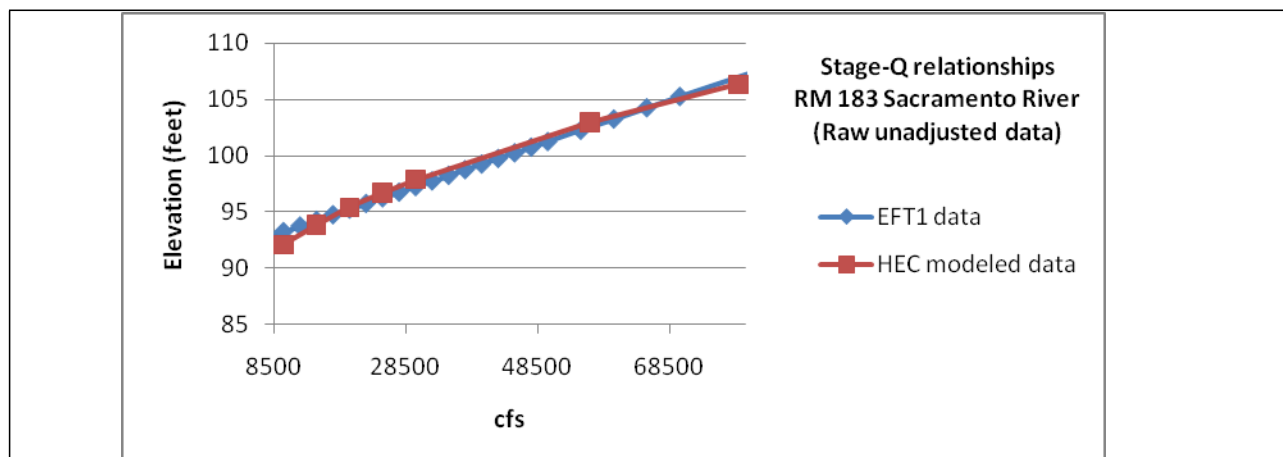


Figure 5 Cross section 183: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS stage-Q rating curve data.

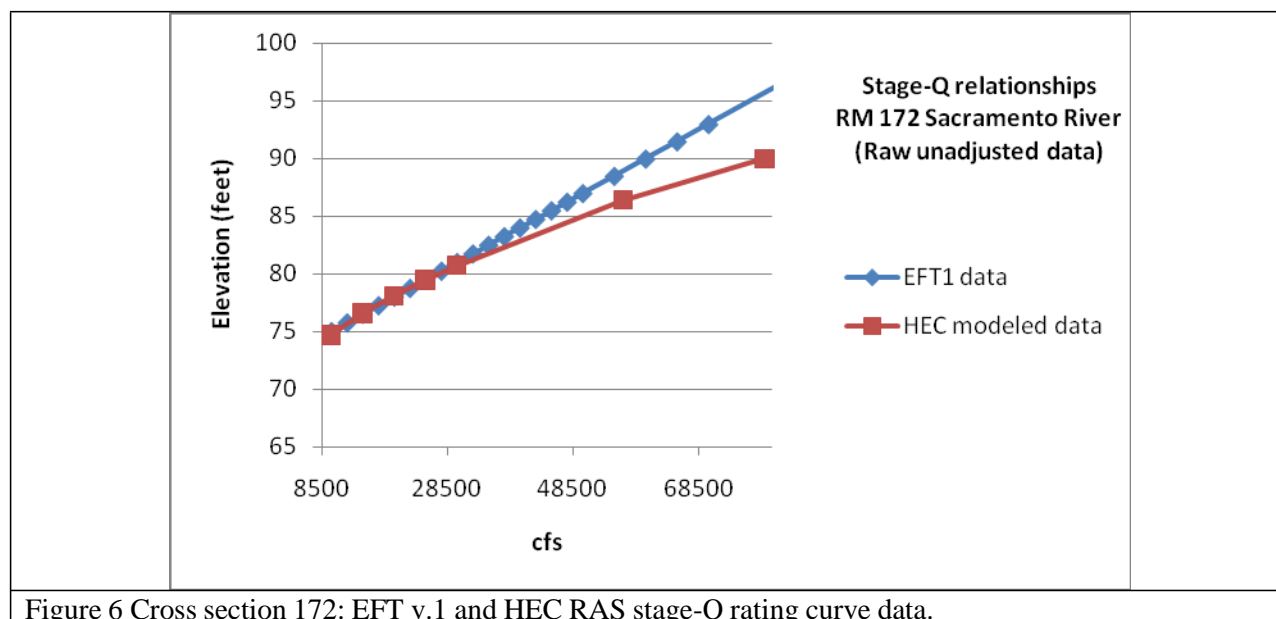


Figure 6 Cross section 172: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS stage-Q rating curve data.

The results of comparing the stage-discharge relationships (rating curves) as derived in these two different ways show that the EFT1 data were exact linear regressions, where the linear approximation was derived from observed data. For a brief discussion of these observed data, see Appendix 3. The HEC-RAS rating curves tend to be exponential, with the slope decreasing with increasing discharge, which is characteristic of observed stage-discharge rating curves.

New cross sections and rating curves generated using HEC-RAS

Cross section locations were chosen based on discussions with an advisory group, and subsequent consideration of EFT v.2 needs. Most of the sites were chosen from a table provided by the advisory group (Appendix 2).

The sites that were depicted with the HEC-RAS data are not exact representations of sites that exist in the field today. The data from the HEC-RAS model consist of measured cross section bed topography from a former time period (still not identified¹) and the **modeled rating curves that correspond to the observed bed topography**. It would be inappropriate to use the modeled rating curves with any other data than the ones for which they were derived – i.e. the cross section bed topography used in the HEC-RAS model, although some agreement is possible where the cross section bed topography matches (such as the test cases RM 192, 183, and 172).

The matched pairs of 1) cross-section bed topography data (from the model) and 2) modeled-rating-curves are good representations of the hydraulics at a complex point bar cross-section on this reach of the Sacramento River. The specific data (from the model) do not represent exact cross sections that may be on the river today; they do represent the flow-topography dynamics of representative cross sections from another time. Our comparisons showed that the cross sections that were originally measured by TNC (RM's 192, 183, and 172) can be well approximated by cross sections from the HEC-RAS model that was used for developing the data at the nine additional locations. Furthermore, our comparisons with the TNC

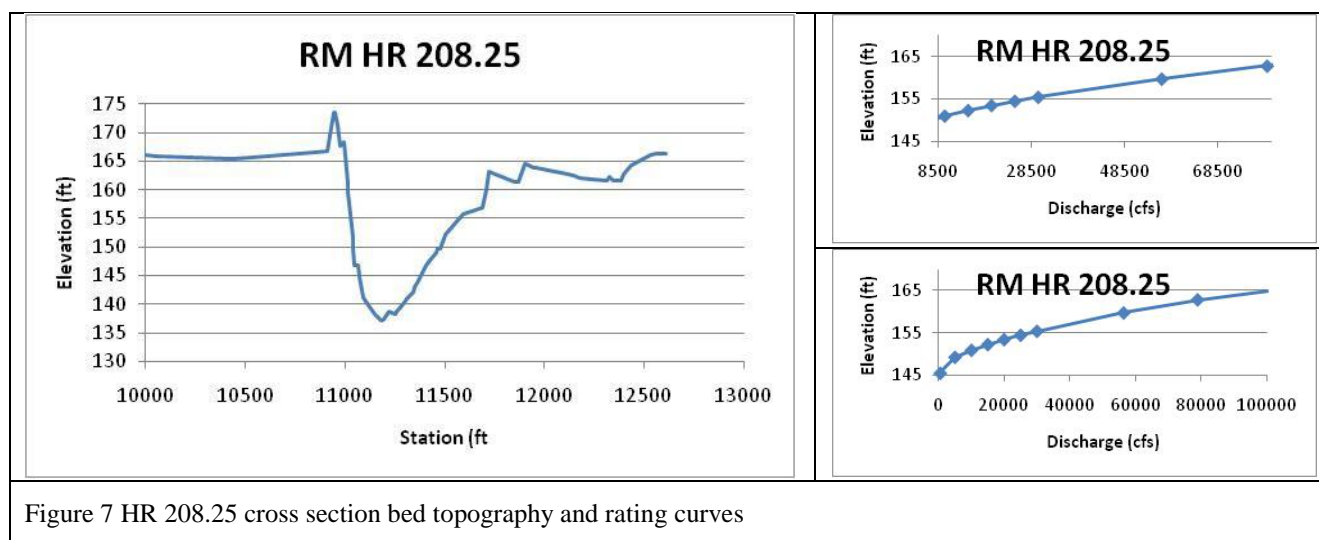
¹ Note: to date, the exact metadata for the HEC-RAS data has not been identified (pers. Com. USACE, Sacramento District). It has been suggested that the data are post 1995 (Sacramento San Joachim Rivers Comprehensive Study) and pre-2007 (pers. Com. USACE, Sacramento District).

data also showed that the modeled rating curves linked with modeled cross sections appear to represent the flow-discharge relationship quite well.

In spite of the agreement at the three test sections, one conclusion of this reasoning is that it would not be effective to try to match the modeled data exactly to TNC or other contemporary field data. The modeled sections and *related* rating curves typify dynamics of point bars that are typical of this section of the river, but the modeled data may not exactly match currently existing cross section data.

A corollary to this conclusion is that it is not necessary, nor perhaps even most effective to use the exact locations that were chosen by the advisory work group for developing data from the model (Appendix 2). Although the majority of the nine sites were chosen from the advisory group data, in hindsight, this might not have been most effective. In many cases, the advisory group ignored sites with active point bars and good cottonwood activity because the sites were not on public land, and were therefore not easily accessible (Appendix 2); they also chose based on the fact that they were on public land although the sites were not the most representative of the cottonwood dynamics. With the current modeling effort, public access is not an issue. In the cross sections taken from the model, at least 2 (HR165 and HR164) were not first-choices taken from the advisory group list. The locations of the cross sections, both in the GIS format (and nomenclature) and in the HEC-RAS format and nomenclature are all shown in Appendix 4.

What is important for the purposes of modeling in the EFT v.2 are the cross sections and the associated rating curves, which are included in the following figures.



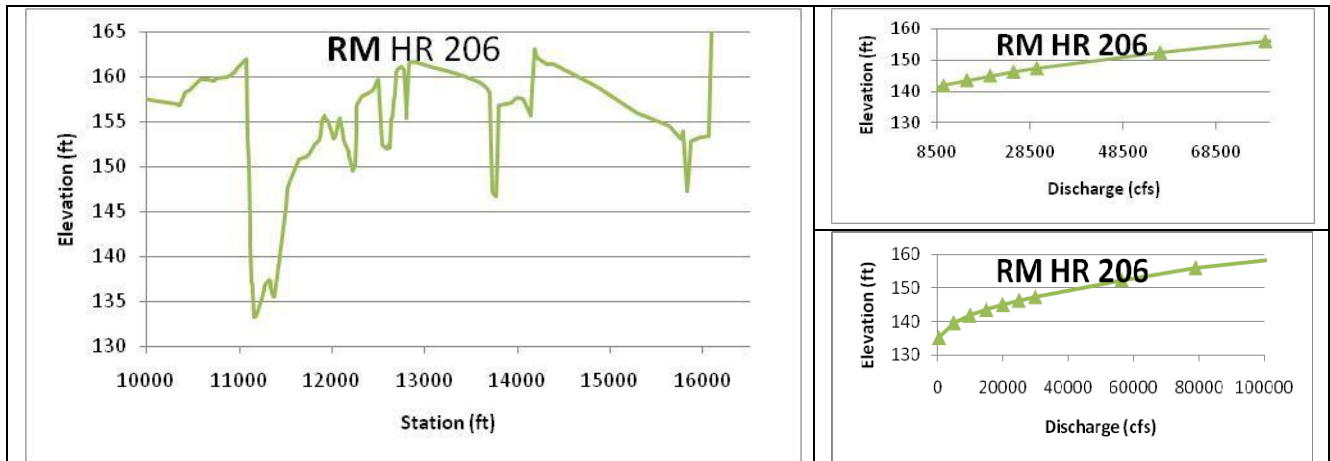


Figure 8 HR 206 cross section bed topography and rating curves

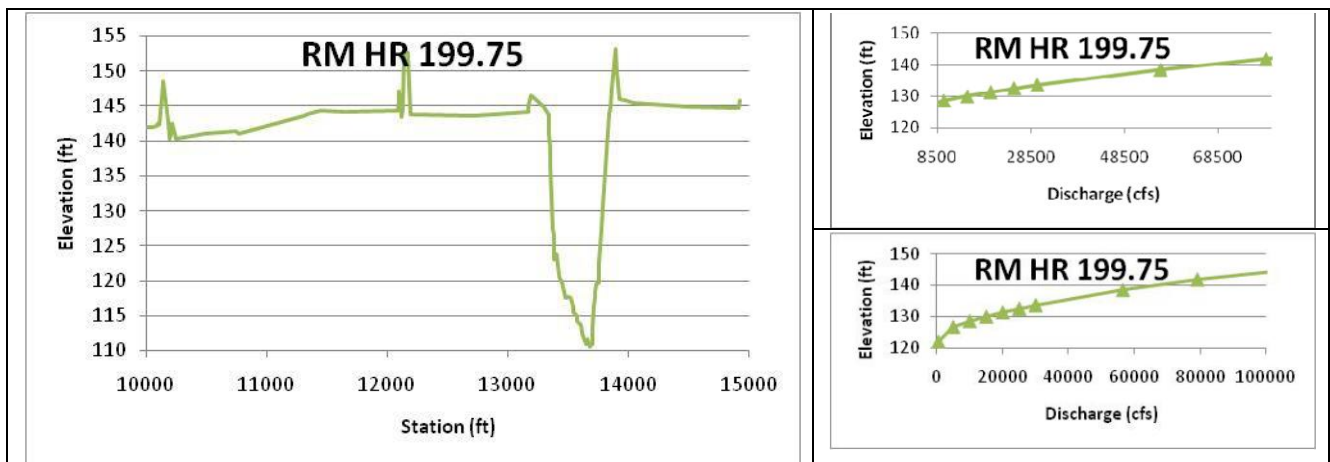


Figure 9 HR 199.75 cross section bed topography and rating curves

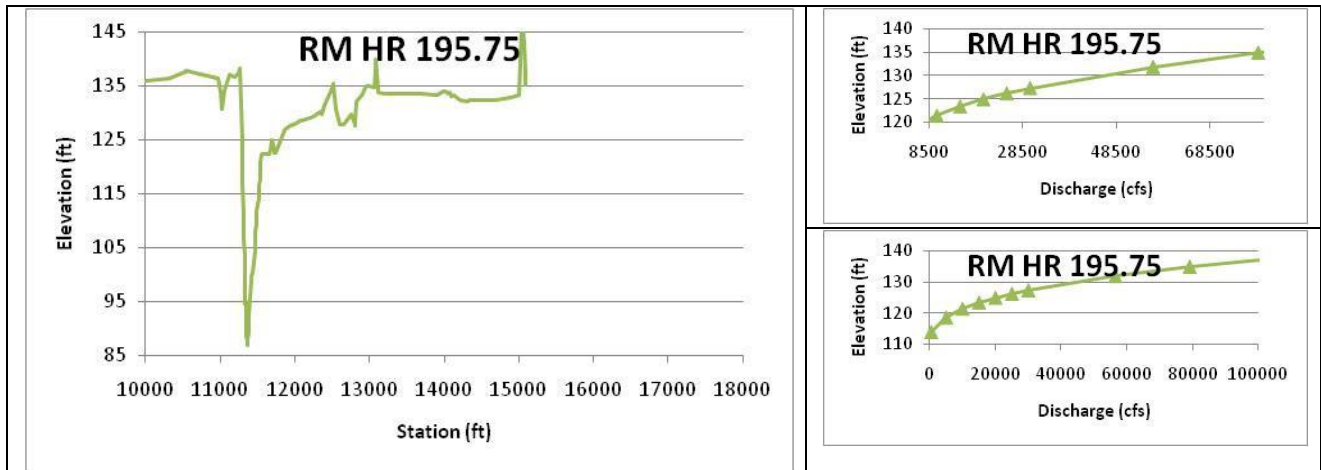


Figure 10 HR 195.75 cross section bed topography and rating curves

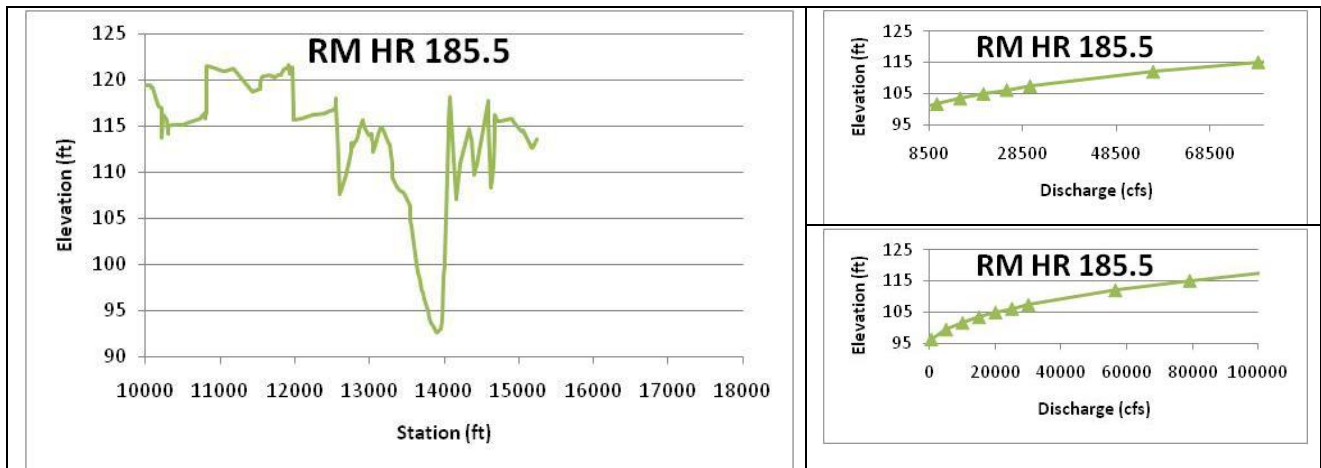


Figure 11 HR 185.5 cross section bed topography and rating curves

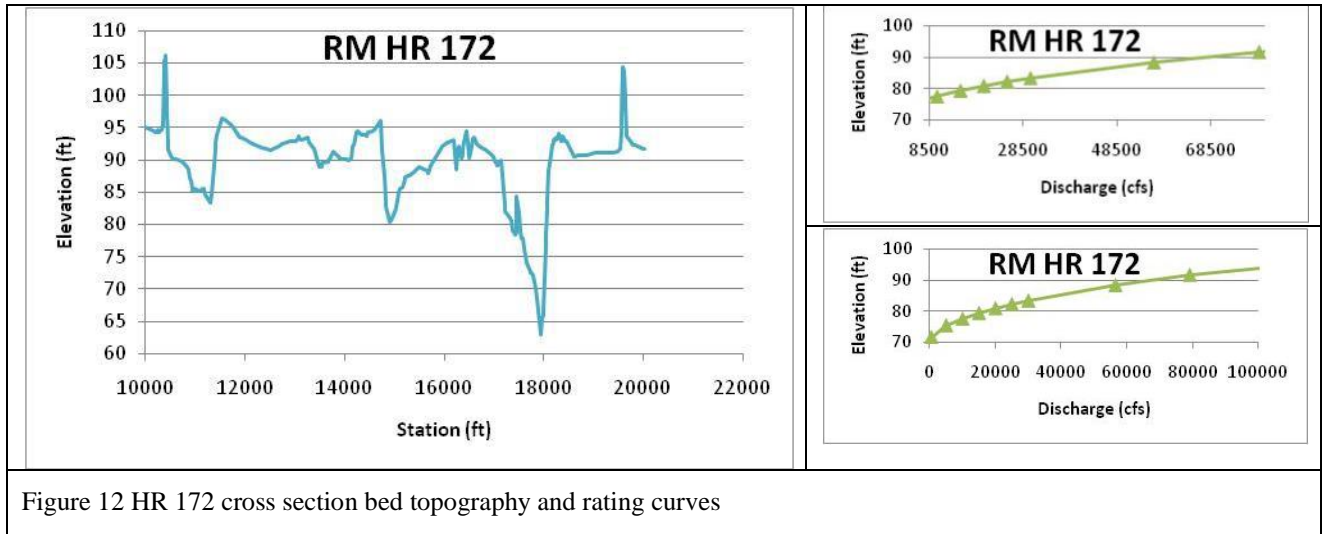


Figure 12 HR 172 cross section bed topography and rating curves

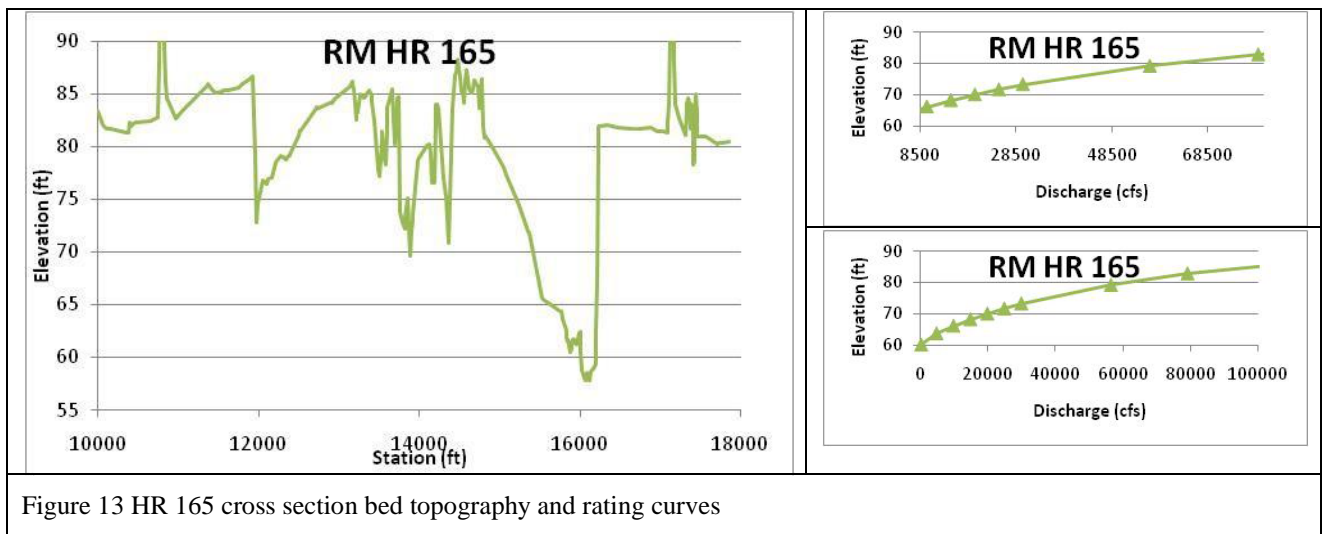


Figure 13 HR 165 cross section bed topography and rating curves

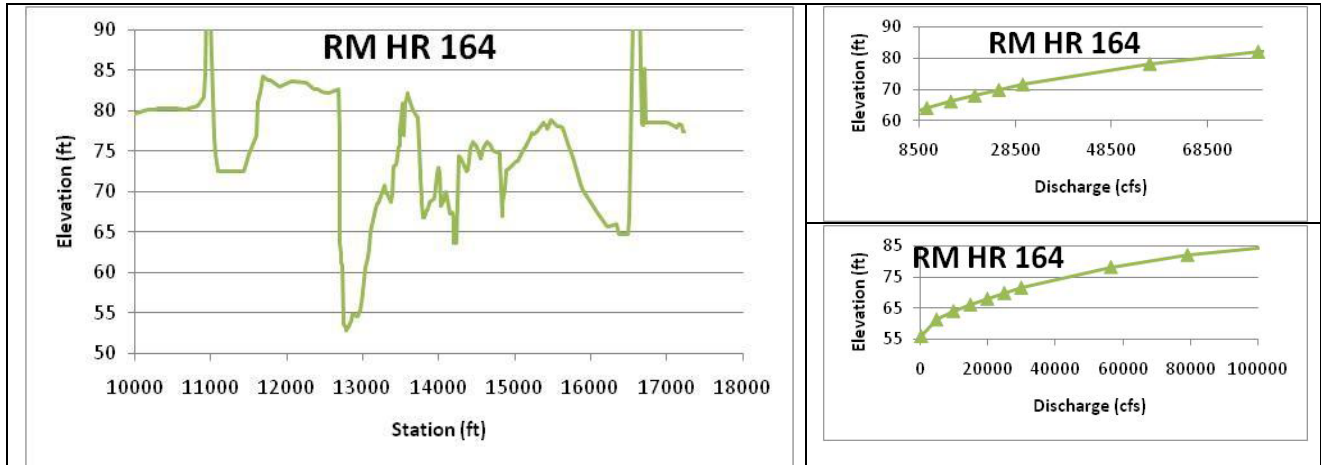


Figure 14 HR 164 cross section bed topography and rating curves

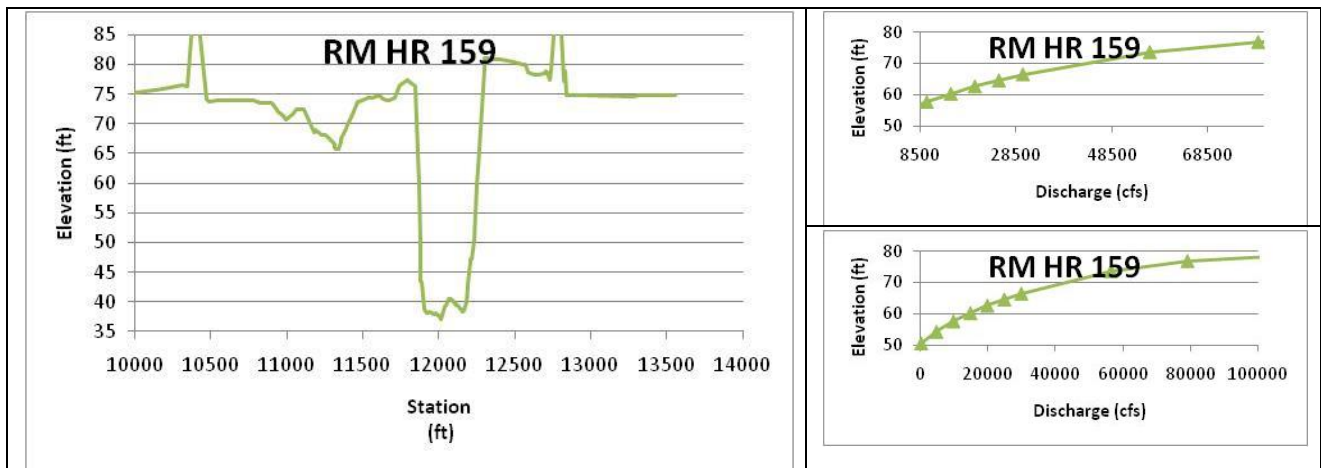


Figure 15 HR 159 cross section bed topography and rating curves

Discussion and summary

Based on a comparison of the quantitative data from cross sections at RM 192, 183 and 172, taken from SacEFT v.1, our hypothesis is that the HEC-RAS stage-discharge relationships, linked with their corresponding cross section bed topography data, are an adequate representation of the actual relationships that exist in the field for the purposes of EFT modeling of cottonwood recruitment on the Sacramento River.

In order to test this hypothesis, the HEC-RAS *modeled* stage-discharge relationships for the cross-sections at RM 192, 183, and 172 could be used in EFT v.1 cottonwood recruitment modeling and the results compared with the results based on the existing (linear) stage-discharge relationships currently in EFT v.1. This is essentially a sensitivity analysis. If the results are the same, it suggests that both methods are equal in their impact on the EFT cottonwood modeled results. If the results differ, it is possible the HEC-RAS modeled stage-discharge relationships provide a better approximation of the real-world situation than the linearized rating curves originally used in EFT v.1. A third EFT v.1 run could be made using the observed (TNC) stage-discharge relationships. In this case, a shift, which was discovered between the observed data and the previously-used linear EFT v.1 relationship needs to be investigated before using the observed data in the model (pers.com. Clint Alexander).

In summary, cross section bed topography and related stage-discharge rating curves were developed from an existing HEC-RAS hydraulic model for nine sites on the Upper Sacramento River. These data are to be used in SacEFT v.2, along with data from the original cross sections from SacEFT v.1 (RM 192, 183, and 172) to model riparian vegetation seedling initiation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Cross section locations RM 192, 183, 172 River Mile 192

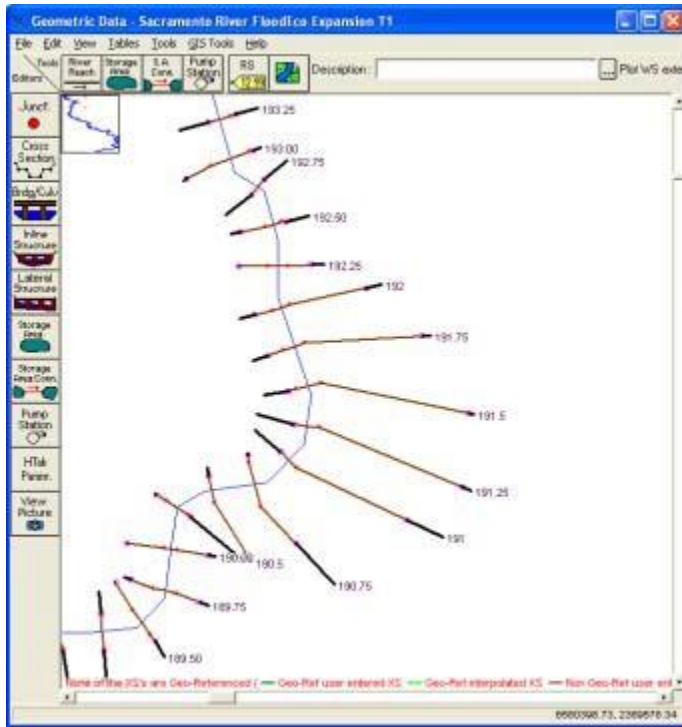


Figure 16 GIS 192 location on HEC-RAS map

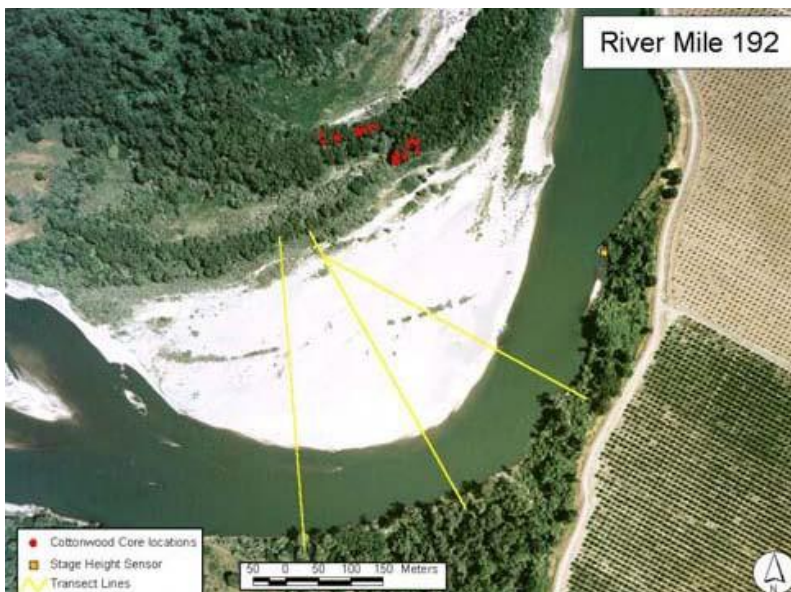


Figure 17 GIS 192 cottonwood sites

River Mile 183

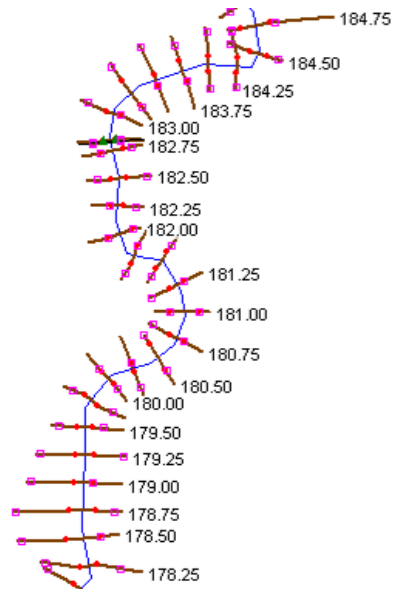


Figure 18 GIS 183 location on HEC-RAS map

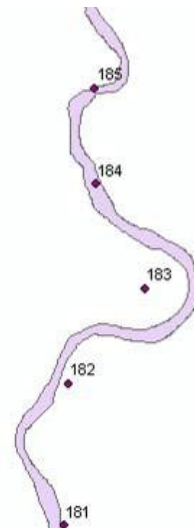


Figure 19 GIS 183 GIS location

River Mile 172



Figure 20 GIS 172 location on HEC-RAS map

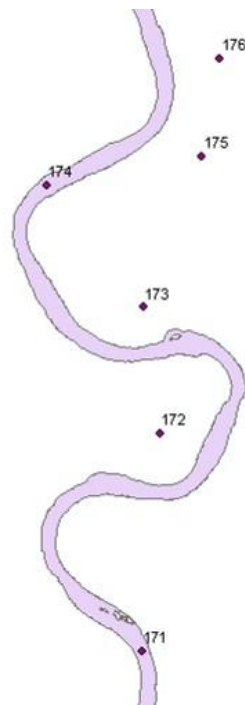


Figure 21 GIS 172 GIS location

Appendix 2 Potential study site list from cottonwood advisory work group (Stella et al.)

Assesment of point bars and straight reaches that have Cottonwood Present :														
Sites highlighted in Blue are those that meet the search criteria in Stella's Protocol and are on public land														
River Mile	Bank	Channel Cut-off	Multiple Cottonwood Forest bands using height class	Floodplain Age variety	Geomorp hic History	Public Land?	Land Access	Agency-Contact	Rip Rap (present, historic removed , never present)	NOTES	EWL NOTES	#	HEC RAS name	
239 R		No	Only 1 height class		Straight channel, no bare substrate	Yes-Todd Island Unit	River only	BLM: 530-224-2100						
237 R		Yes	Yes-2	Yes	Bare substrate, arc veg, abandoned channel	Yes-Todd Island Unit	Public access River only	Beareu of land management, Redding CA 530-224-2100						
236 L		Maybe there is an abandoned channel	Yes-2 (3rd small patch on DS end of point bar)	Yes	Bare substrate, meandering reach	No-Private land, no ownership record in GIS layer	No, would need to contact land owner							
235 R		No	Yes-2 (younger patch is small)	Yes	meandering reach	Yes-Mooney Unit SRNWR	Public Access-River only	USFWS-530-934-2801			NO HEC ANALYSIS AVAILABLE			
235 L		Yes	Yes-2 (younger patch is small)	Yes	meandering reach	Yes-Sacramento Bar								
234 L		Yes	No	Yes	meandering reach	Yes-Sacramento Bar				Looks like it is a restoration site?				
233 R		No	Yes	Yes	bare substrate, meandering reach, forest bands	Yes-Ohm Bar Unit	Public- No Access	USFWS-530-934-2801			NO HEC ANALYSIS AVAILABLE			
232/233 L		No	Yes- 2 smaller patches of younger	Yes	bare substrate, meandering reach, forest bands	No-Private land	Private-Would need to contact land owner							
231 R		No	Yes- Just 1 height class- large patches	Yes	bare substrate, meandering reach, forest bands	Yes-Flynn Unit	Public-River Only Access	USFWS-530-934-2801			NO HEC ANALYSIS AVAILABLE			
231 L		No	Yes- 2 class heights	No	meandering reach	No-Private	Private-Would need to contact land owner							

230 R		No	Looks like a restoration site										
229 L		No	No-1 height class present-small	No	Straight channel, no bare substrate	Yes-North Mill Creek Boat Launch	Public						
228 L		Maybe-small backwater that could be remnant abandoned channel	No-1 height class present, large patches	Yes	meandering reach	Yes-Heron Island Unit	Public-River Only Access	USFWS-530-934-2801					
227 R		Yes											
227 R		No	Yes-3 height classes present	Yes	meandering reach	No-Private Land	Private-Would need to contact land owner						
225 L		No	No-1 height class. Large patches	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate	No-Private Land	Private-Would need to contact land owner						
224/225	R	No	No-1 height class	Yes	straight reach	No-Private Land	Private-Would need to contact land owner						
224 L		No	No-1 height class	Yes	straight reach	No-Private Land	Private-Would need to contact land owner						
223 L		Yes	No-1 height class, large patches		meandering, channel cut off	No-Private Land	Private-Would need to contact land owner						
222 R		No	No-1 height class	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate	No-Private Land	530-897-6370						
221 R		No	1 height class, small patches	Yes	meandering reach	Yes-Kopta Slough	Public-No Access	State Land Commission Sacramento River: 530-897-6370					
220 L		No-tributary	3 height classes present	Yes	meandering reach	No-Private	Private-Would need to contact land owner						

190 R	No	Multiple forest bands, large CW stands	Yes	abandoned channel	Private Point Bar-Phelan Island surrounding	Private- Would need to contact land owner						
190 L	Yes	Multiple forest bands, large CW stands	Yes	abandoned channel	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner						
189 L	No	small patch of CW	Yes	meandering reach	Public-Murphy's Slough, Golden State Island	Public-River Only Access	Central Valley Flood Protection Control Board					
189 R	No	Multiple forest bands	Yes	meandering reach	Public- ?	Public Land not sure about access	?					
188 L	No	Multiple forest bands, large CW stands	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner						
187 R	No	Large CW stands	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, bands of veg	Public-Shannon Slough Unit	Public-River Only or levee road walk	DFG:916-358-2900		POSSIBLE	5	185.5	
186 R	No	Large CW stand on bar ~ 28 acres	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Public-Jacinto Unit	Public-River Only	USFWS-530-934-2801		POSSIBLE		hold	
185 L	No	CW stand on bar ~ 11 acres	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Public-Dead Man's Reach	Public-River Only	USFWS-530-934-2802		POSSIBLE		hold	
185 R	Maybe?	2 CW stands- Large	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner						
183 L	No	multiple bands	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner						
183 R	No	multiple bands	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Public-Ord Bend Unit	Public-River Only	South Ord Bend USFWS: 530-934-2802 and Ord Bend DFG: 916-358-2902	TNC CW Pilot Study Site	DONE			

181 L	No	1 large CW stand ~ 41 acres		relatively straight	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner				
180 R	Maybe- abandoned channel	1 large CW stand- 92 acres		meandering reach	Public- Jacinto Unit	Pulic- River Only	DFG:916-358-2900			
179 L	Some CW further from river may be from channel cut off	1 large stand on point bar- ~42 acres	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner				
178 R	No	1 large CW stand on point bar- ~40 acres		meandering reach, bare substrate	Public- Llano Seco Island Unit2	Public- River Only	USFWS: 530-934-2801		POSSIBLE	hold
173 L	No	1 Lrge CW stand- ~ 80 acres on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Public- The Nature Conservancy	Public- No access	TNC: would need to contact the Chico office		POSSIBLE	6 172
172 R	No	Large CW stand ~70 acres on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Public- Central Valley Flood Protection Control Board	Public- No Access ?	TNC CW Pilot Study Site		DONE	
171 L	No	Large CW stand on Point Bar ~ 50 acres	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner				
170 R	Yes				Public- Beehive bend					
169 R	No	Large CW stand ~50 acres	Yes	bare substrate, small point bar, relatively straight	Public- Site 79 F	Public- River Only	Central Valley Flood Protection Control Board		POSSIBLE	hold
169 R	No? (Maybe old cutoff)	Large CW stand ~60 acres	Yes	bare substrate at DS end of point bar- some backwater (maybe old abandoned channel?)	Public- Sul Norte Unit	Public- No Access	USFWS: 530-934-2801			

167 R	No	~ 25 Acres of CW on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, bands of veg	Public-Packer Unit	Public-Road Access	USFWS: 530-934-2802			POSSIBLE		hold
166 L	No	~ 50 acres of CW stand on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, arc shaped veg	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner				in similar vicinity	7	165
165 R	No	No- there is an abandoned channel farther back	Yes	~ 100 acres of CW- some CW may be from an channel cutoff around the abandoned channel	Public- Drumhell Unit	Public- River Only	USFWS: 530-934-2801			in similar vicinity	8	164
162 R	No	~ 20 acres of CW stabd on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, veg bands	Public- Princeton South	Public- River Only	DFG:916-358-2900			POSSIBLE		hold
161 R	No	~ 20 acres of CW on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, veg bands	Public- Princeton Boggs Bend	Public- River Only	DFG:916-358-2901			POSSIBLE		hold
161 L	Yes	Multiple CW bands		channel cut-off, abadoned channel	Public- Princeton Southeast	Public- Road Access	DFG: 916-358-2901					
159 R	No	Multiple pathces of CW on point bar	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, veg in bands near water edge	Public- Stegemen Unit	Public- River Only	DFG: 916-358-2901			POSSIBLE	9	156
158 L	No	multiple patches of CW		meandering reach, bare substrate, veg in bands near water edge	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner						
156 L	No	multiple patches of CW	Yes	meandering reach, bare substrate, veg in bands near water edge	Private	Private- Would need to contact land owner						

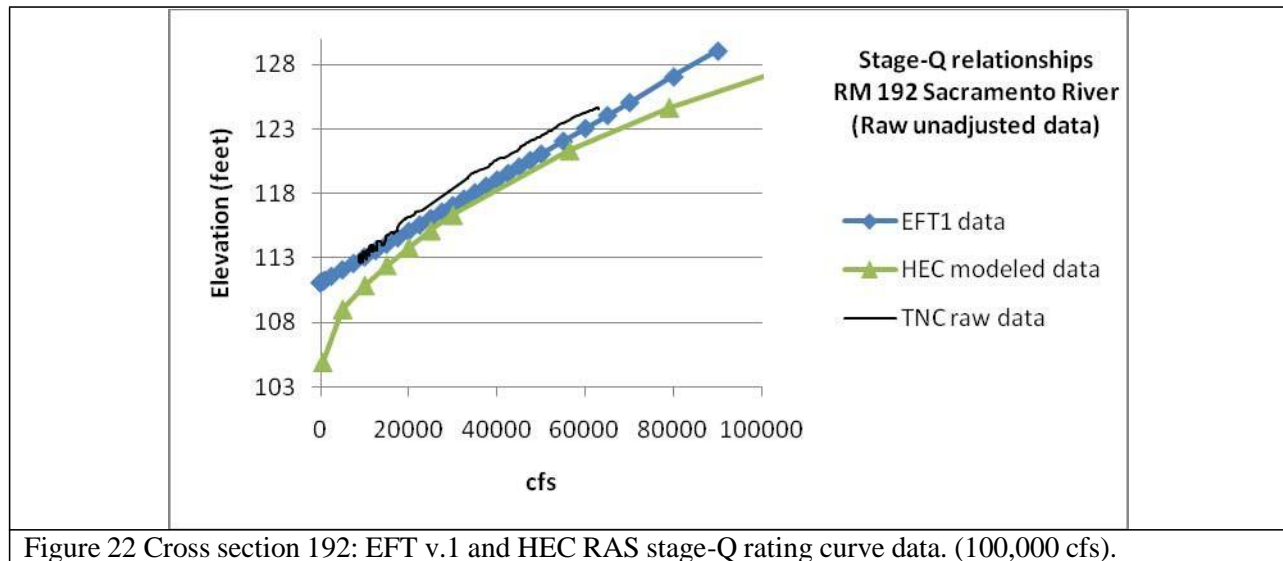
Appendix 3 Stage-discharge rating curves

For the current comparisons, the observed data were obtained from TNC (Mike Roberts, pers. Com.) and the same graphs were plotted with the observed data (as provided) also included (Figure 25, Figure 26, and Figure 27).

What is not clear in the comparison of the EFT1 (linearized data) and the TNC raw data is the offset that is observed in all cases. For RM 172, the TNC notes say “RM 172 site is relative to an arbitrary datum.”

Stage-Q relationships on the Sacramento River, and indeed on most rivers, tend to be non-linear, and the shape of the rating curve depends on the shape of the cross section. Such rating curves tend to increase at a greater rate at lower elevations, because there is a pool with steep sides, and tend to taper off at higher flows as the flow goes more onto the floodplain. This is the general shape of the stage-discharge relationships produced by the HEC-RAS modeling.

Note that the EFT rating curves were intended to be used in the 8500 to 80,000 cfs range, where the observed rating curve is relatively linear except for XS 172. The linear approximations of EFT1 are not effective for relatively low flows (0 to 5000), as shown in the rating curves that include these flows (see Appendix 3: Figure 22, Figure 23, and Figure 24). The “0” flow in the EFT stage-discharge (linear) relationship is consistently well above the observed deepest part of the pool.



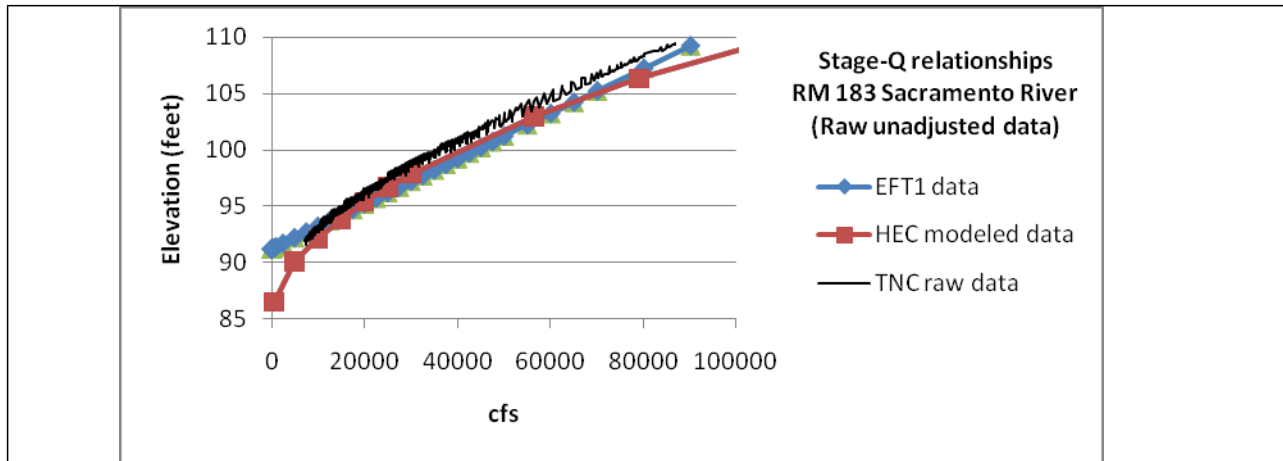


Figure 23 Cross section 183: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS stage-Q rating curve data. (100,000 cfs).

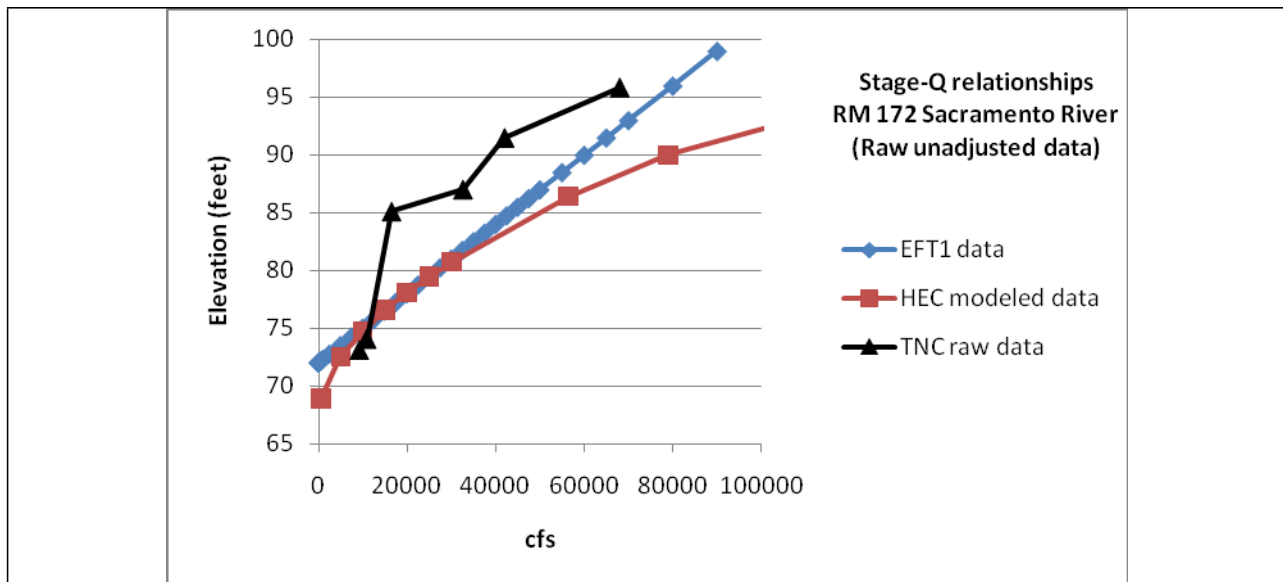


Figure 24 Cross section 172: EFT v.1 and HEC RAS stage-Q rating curve data. (100,000 cfs).

These data were also plotted showing only data for the range of discharge that was of interest.

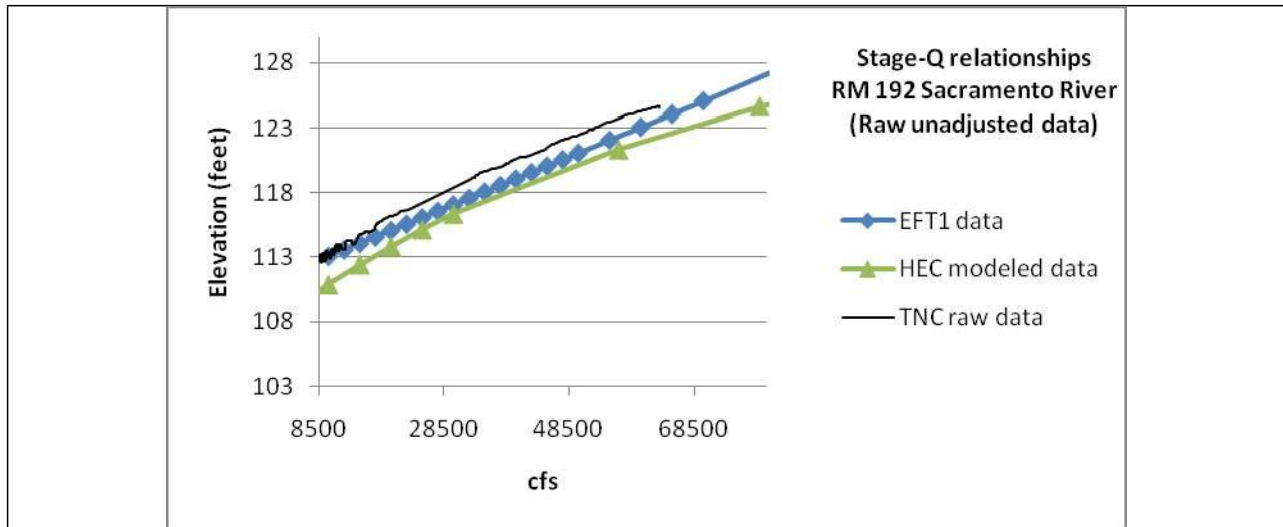


Figure 25 Cross section 192: EFT v.1, HEC RAS, TNC stage-Q rating curve data. (100,000 cfs).

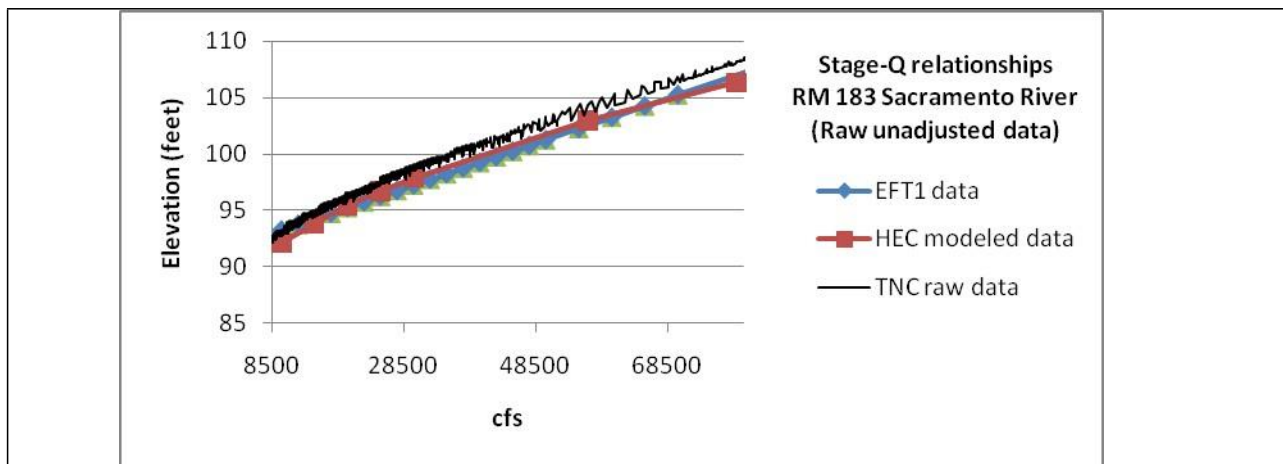


Figure 26 Cross section 183: EFT v.1, HEC RAS, TNC stage-Q rating curve data. (100,000 cfs).

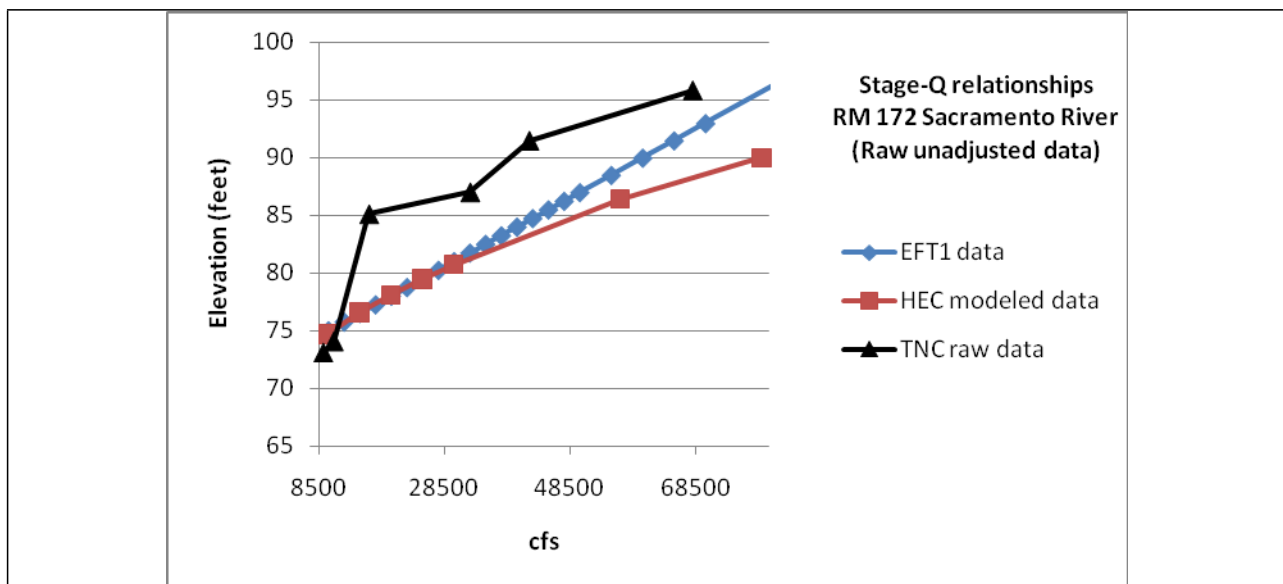
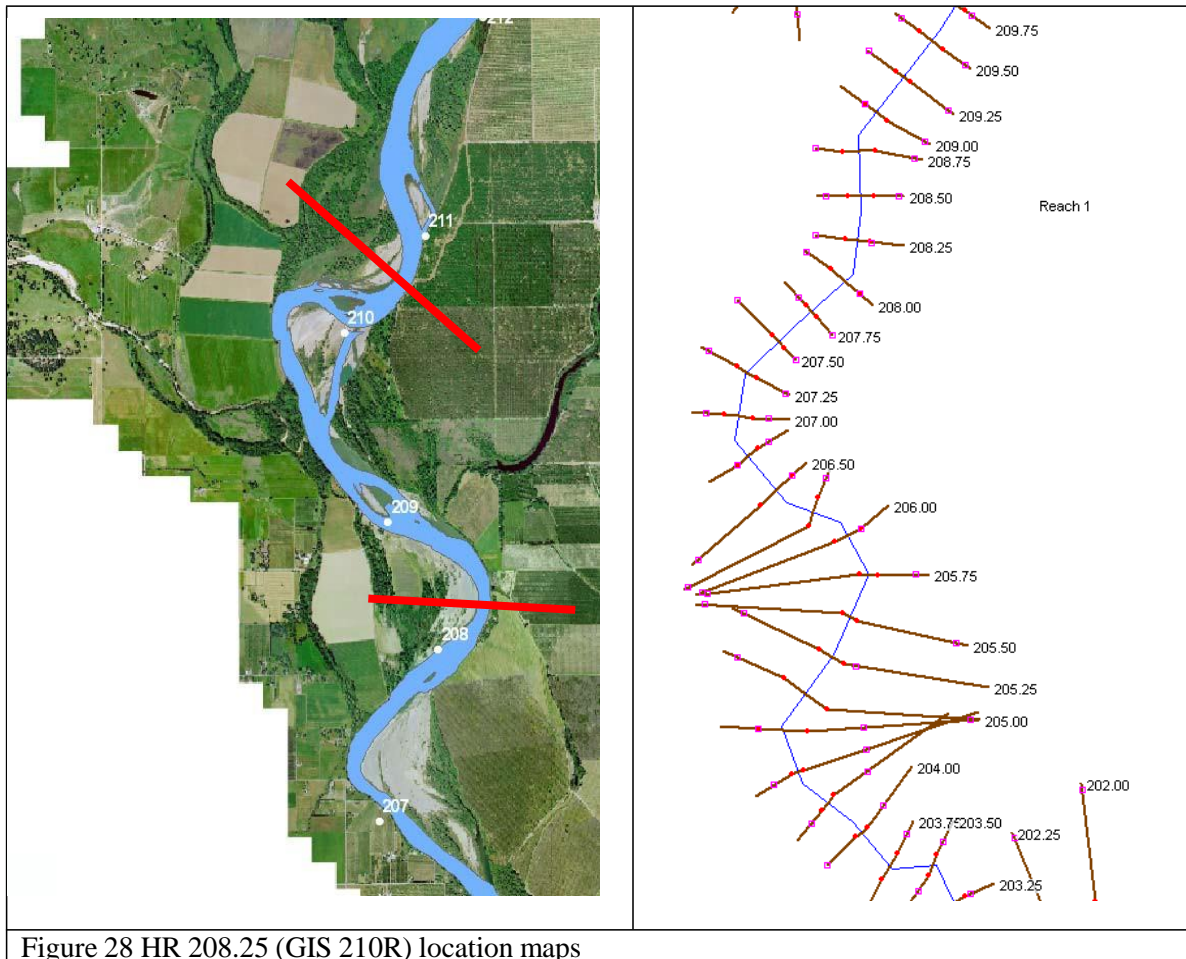


Figure 27 Cross section 172: EFT v.1, HEC RAS, TNC stage-Q rating curve data. (100,000 cfs).

Appendix 4 Detailed data from each new site

The HEC-RAS model used slightly different river mile designations than the GIS data from which the original cross sections at RM 192, 183, and 172 were derived. The locations were matched by visual inspection of both sets of maps. The nomenclature gives both locations. “GIS” refers to the GIS mapping, and “HR” refers to the HEC-RAS mapping locations.

HR 208.25 (GIS 210R)



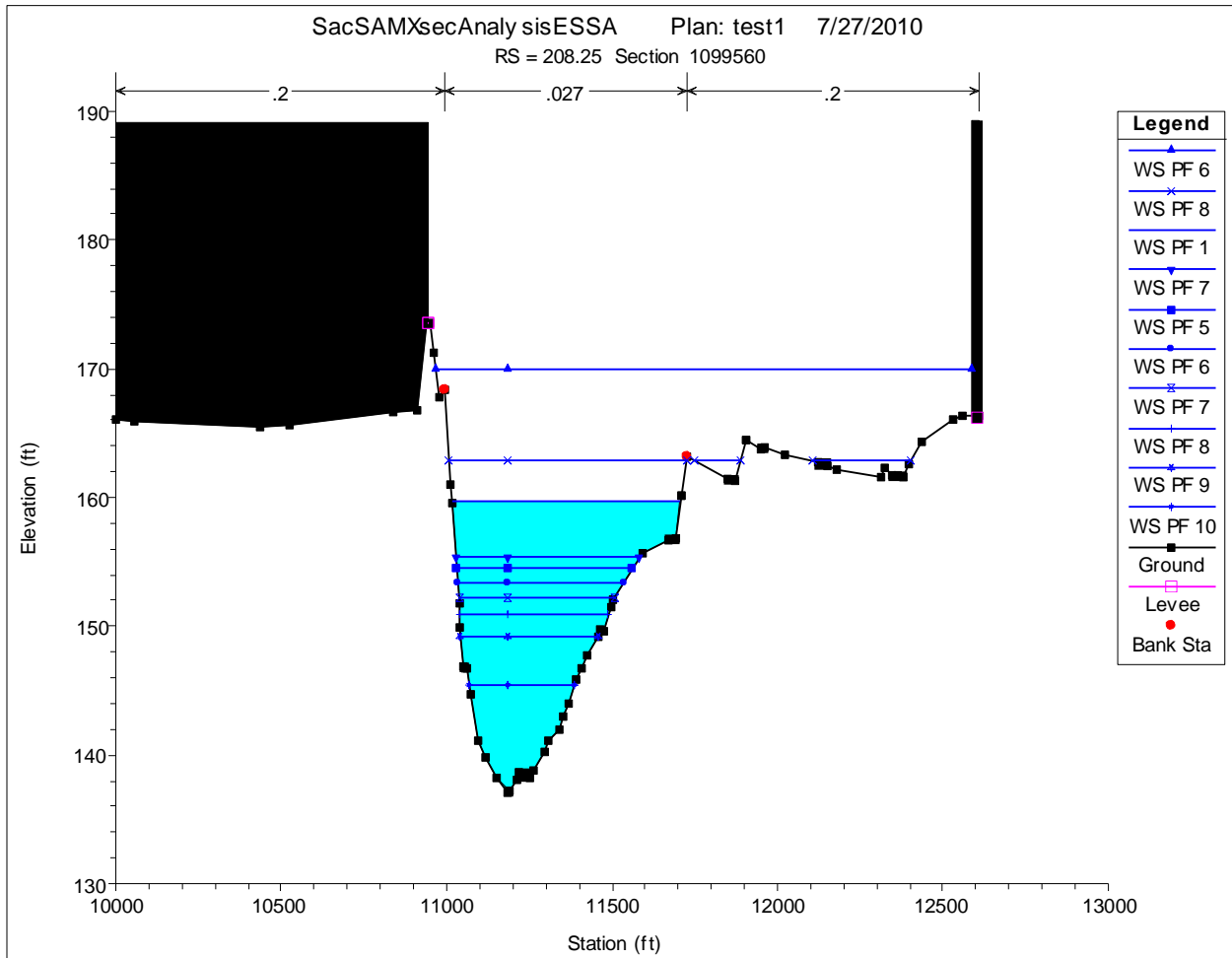


Figure 29 HR 208.25 HEC-RAS cross section plot

HR 206.00 (GIS 209R)

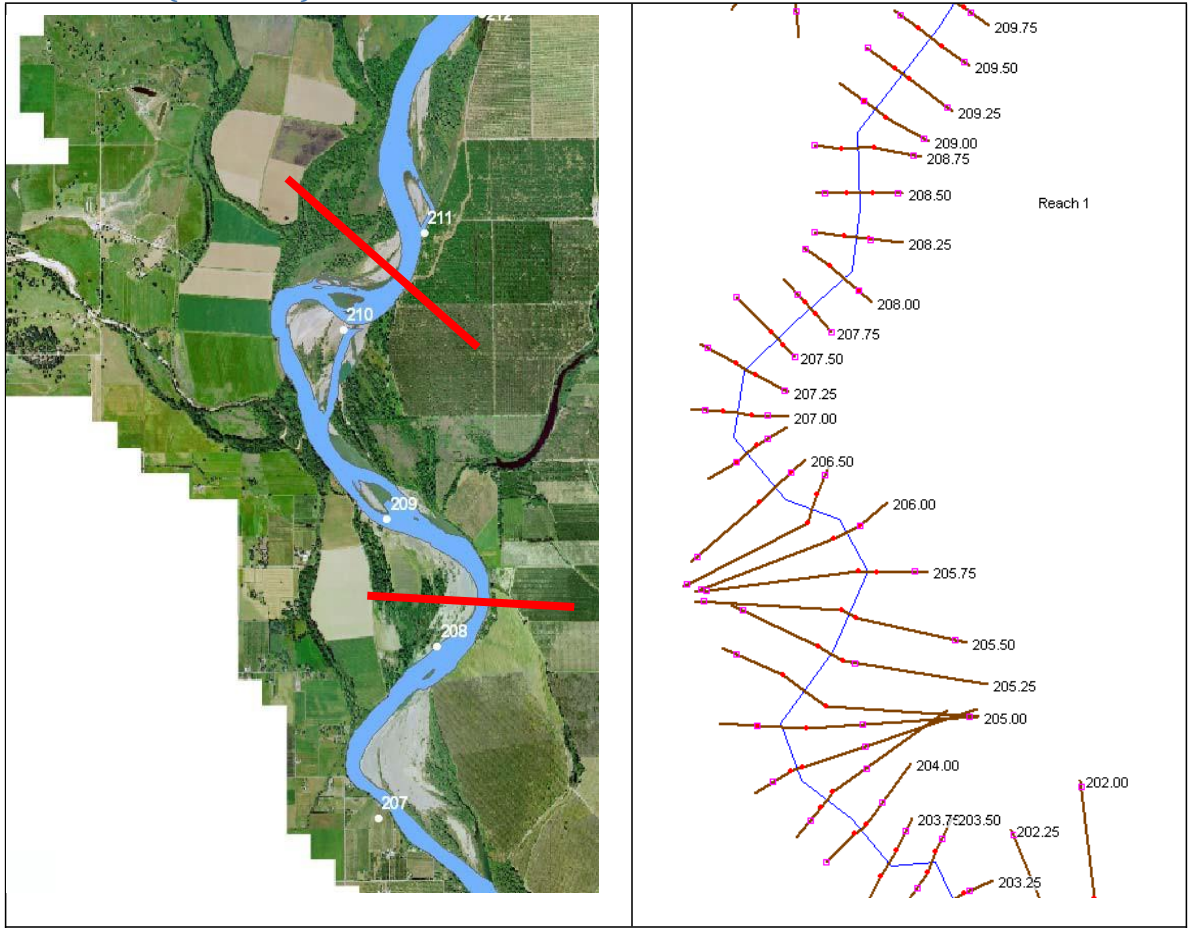


Figure 30 HR 206.00 (GIS 209R) location maps

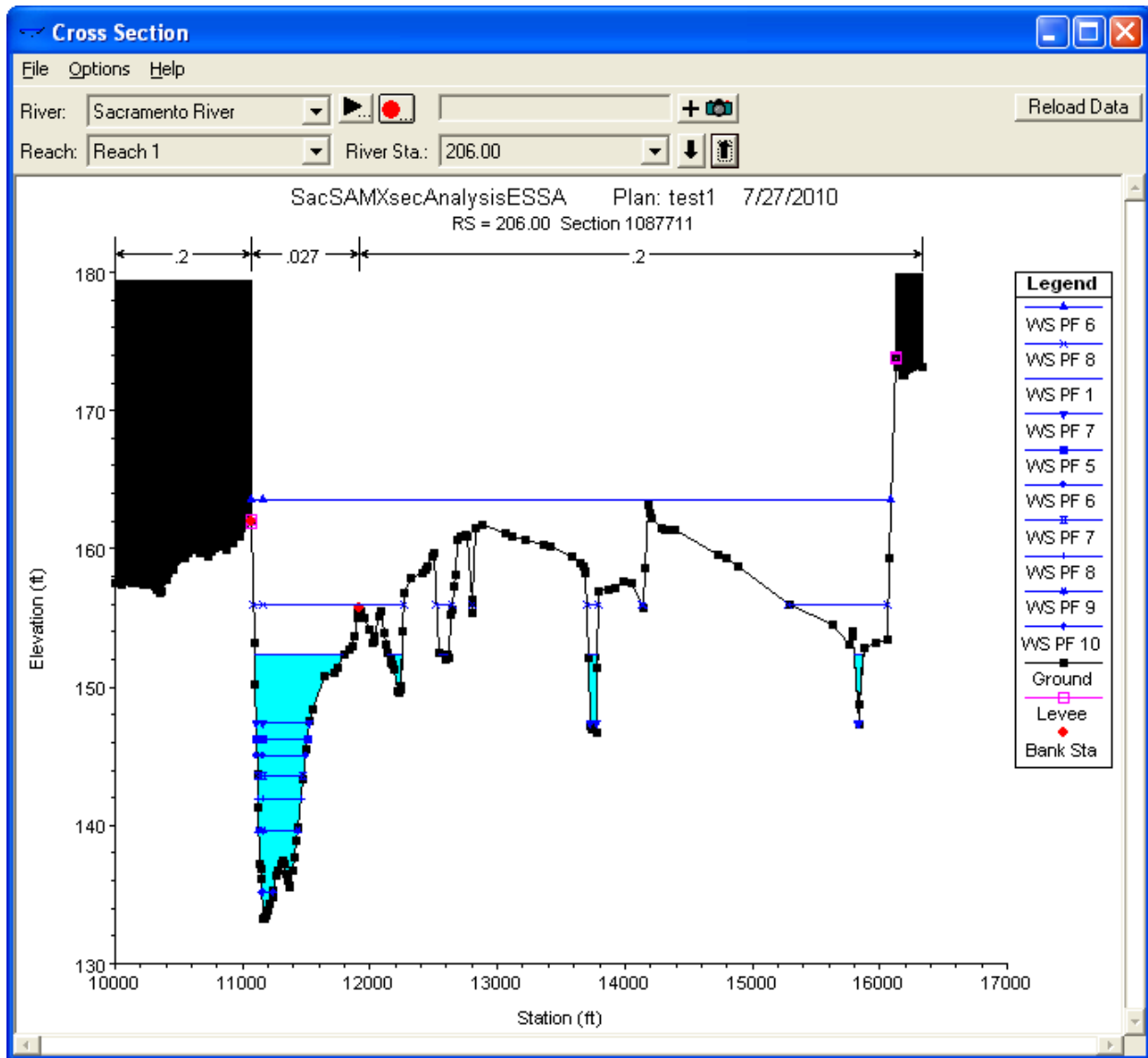


Figure 31 HR 206.00 HEC-RAS cross section plot

HR 199.75 (GIS 201L)

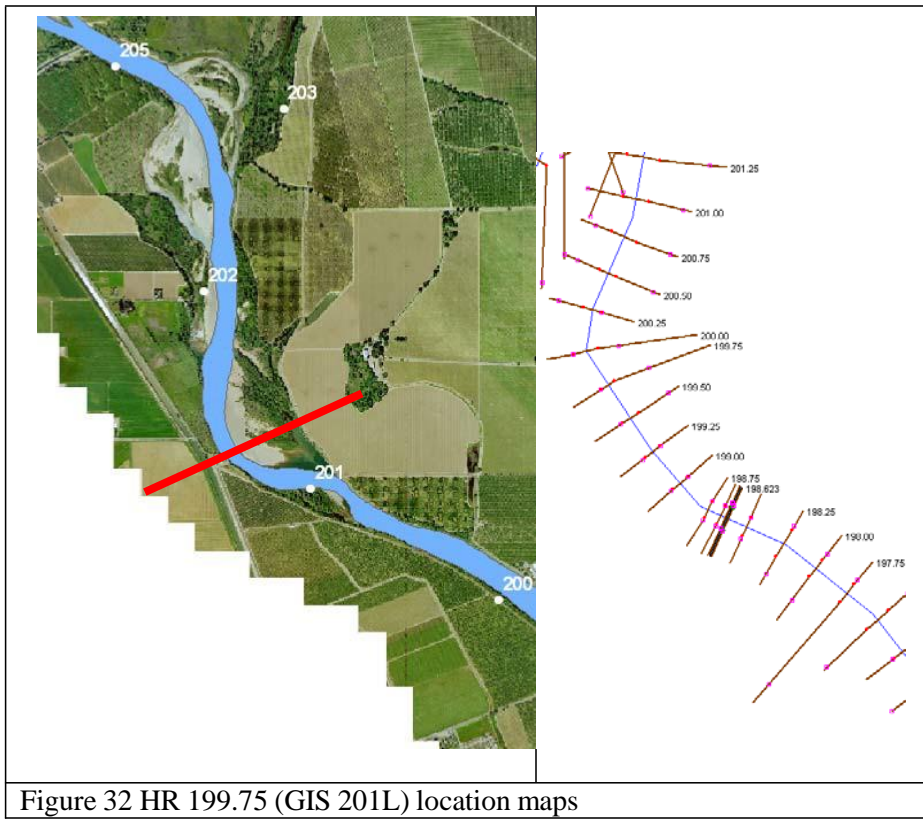


Figure 32 HR 199.75 (GIS 201L) location maps

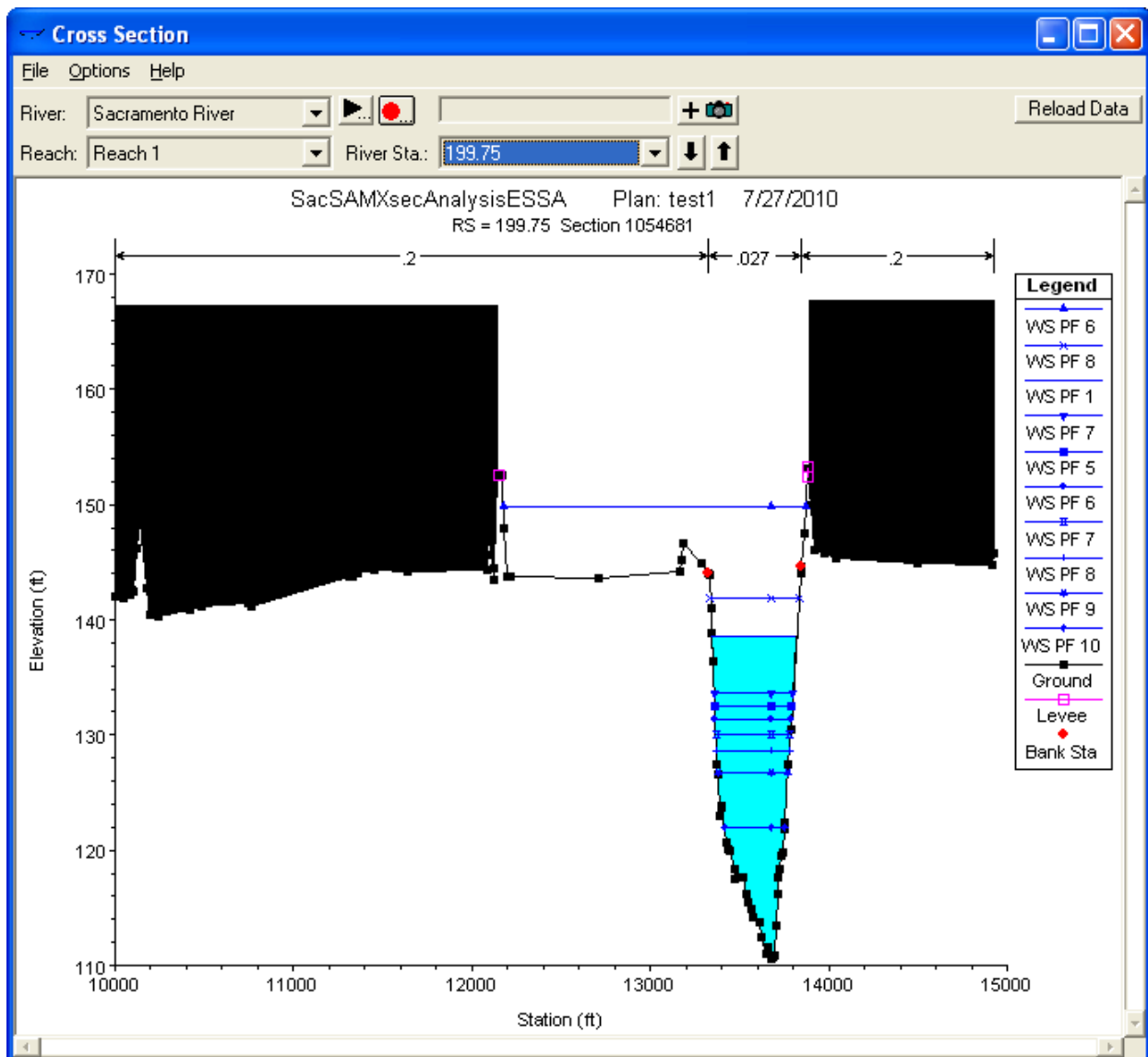


Figure 33 HR 199.75 HEC-RAS cross section plot

There is a “levee” on the edge of the floodplain.

HR 195.75 (GIS 197.0)

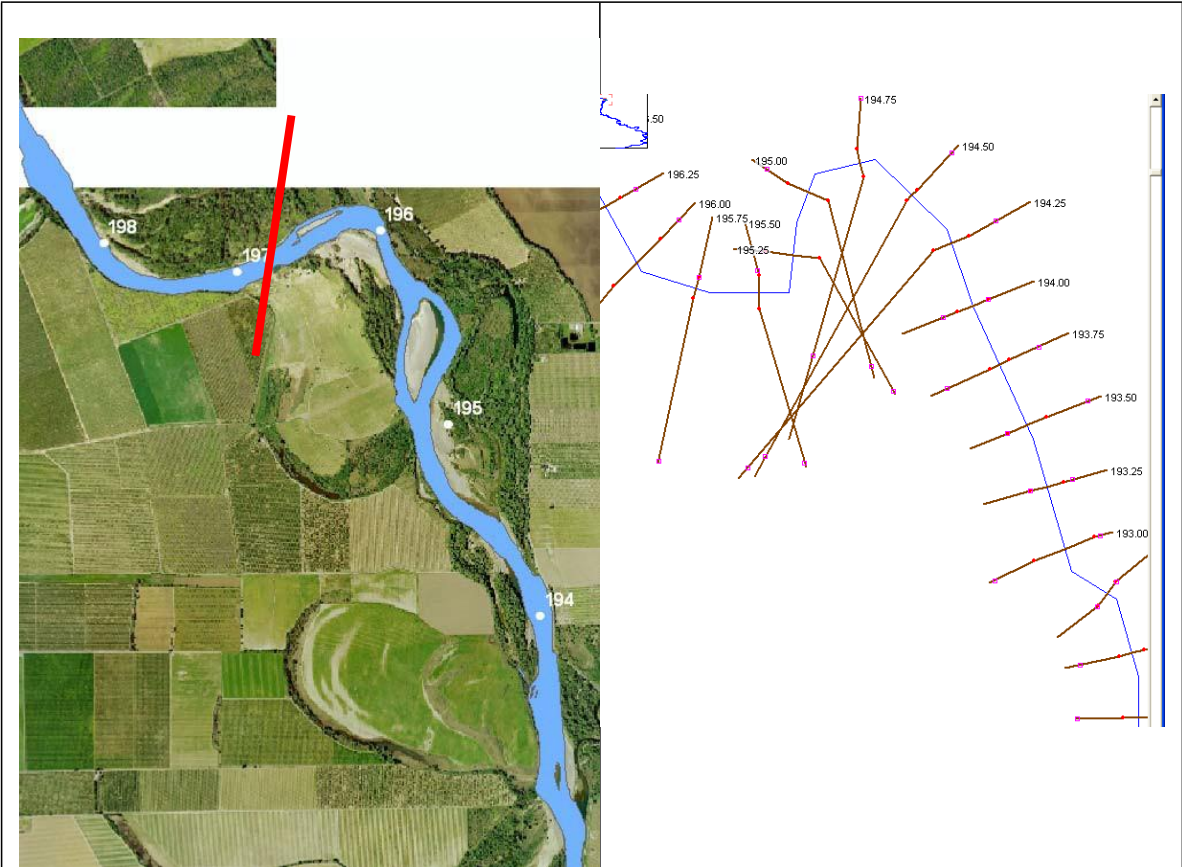


Figure 34 HR 195.75 (GIS 197.0) location maps

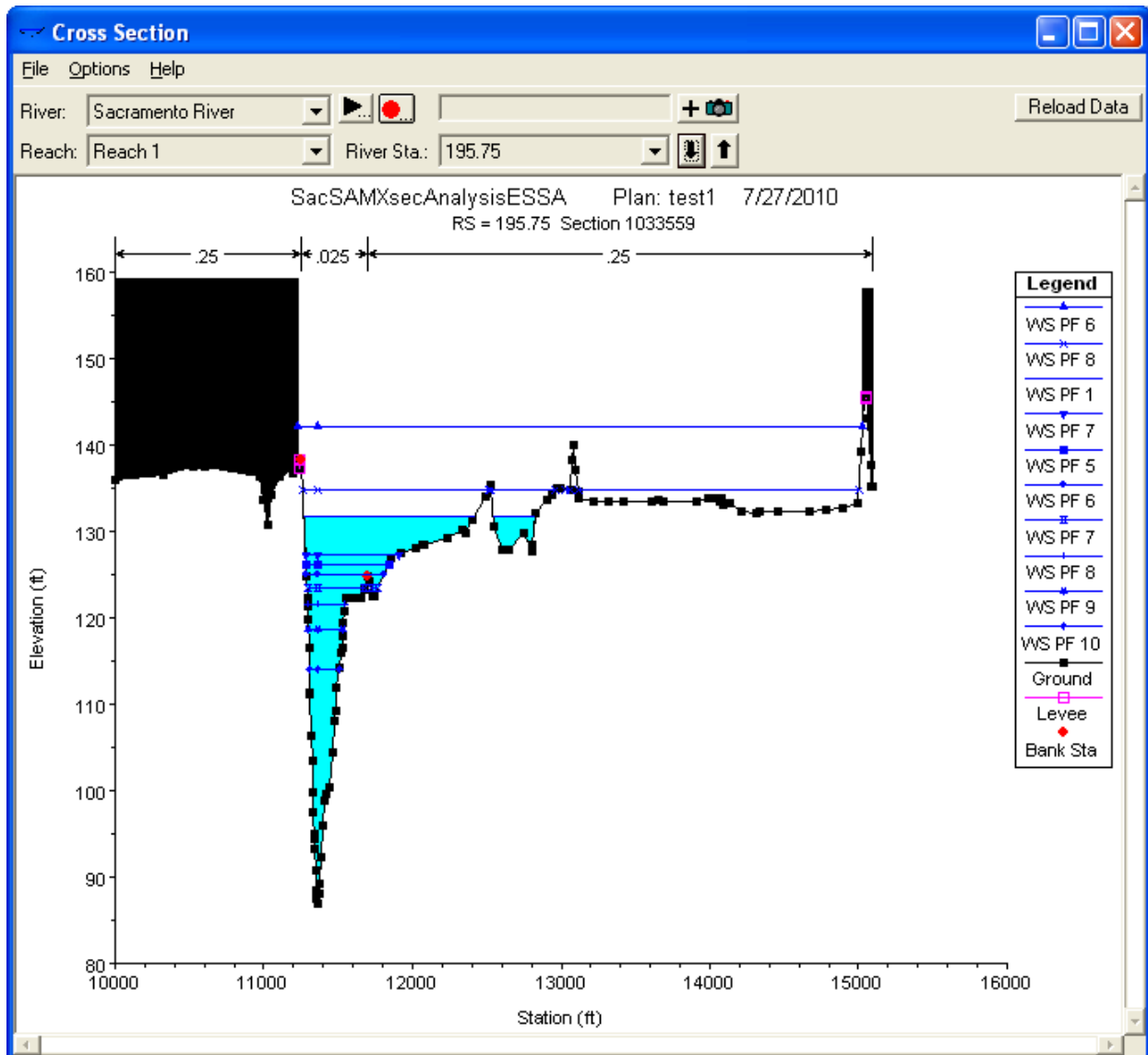


Figure 35 HR 195.75 HEC-RAS cross section plot

195.75 seems like a classic point bar.

HR 185.50 (GIS 187R)

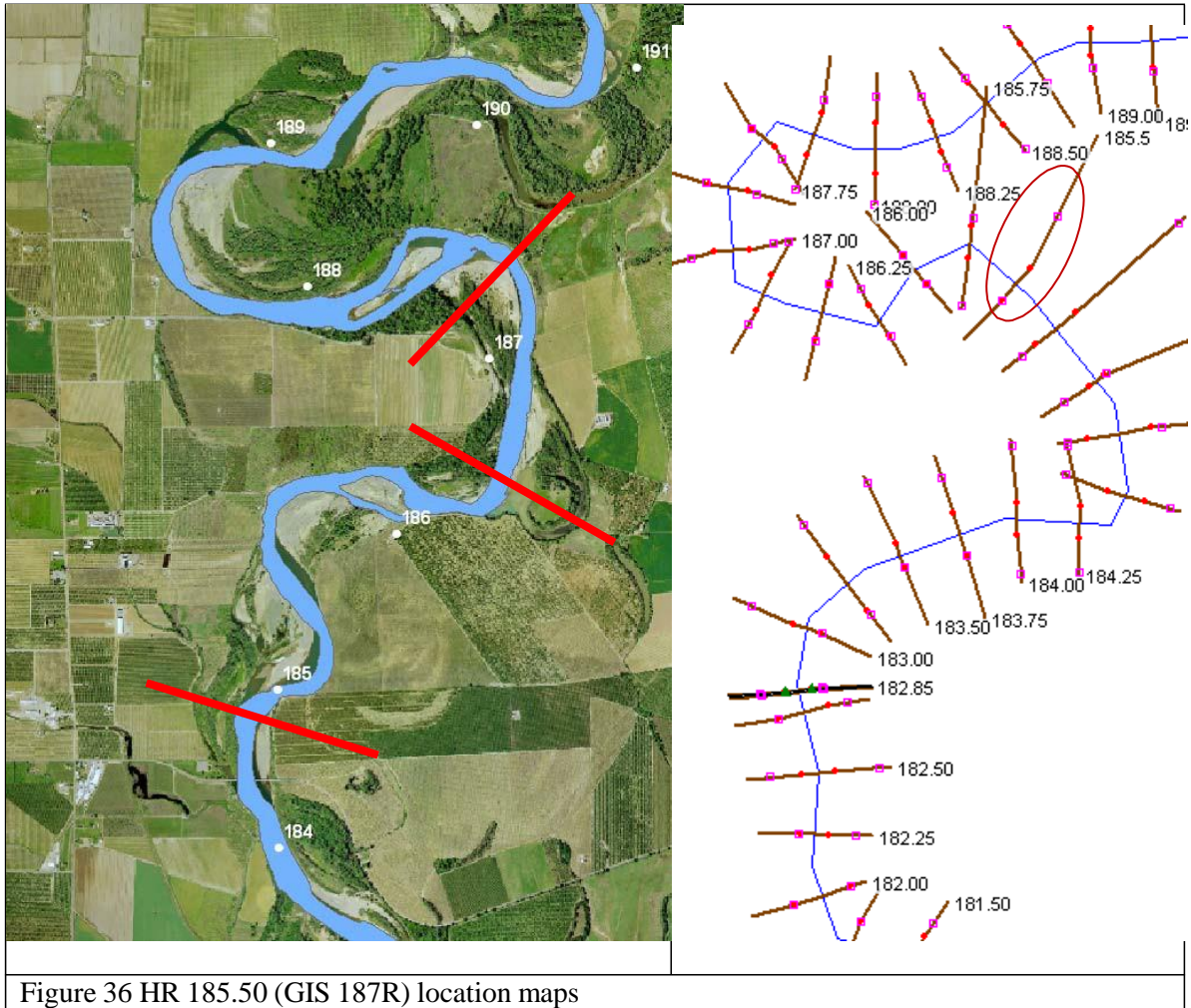


Figure 36 HR 185.50 (GIS 187R) location maps

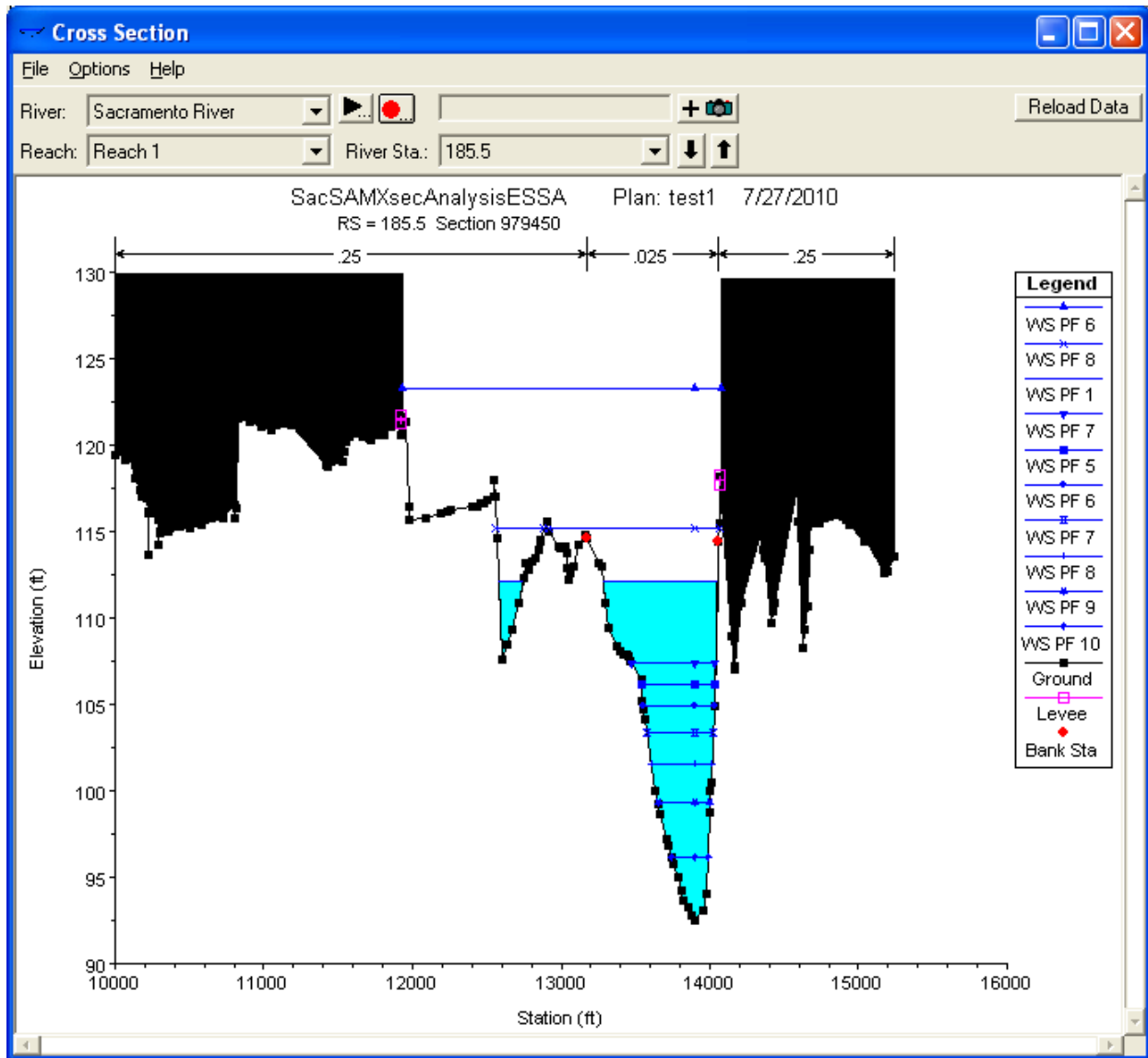


Figure 37 HR 185.50 HEC-RAS cross section plot

HR 172.00 (GIS 173.5)

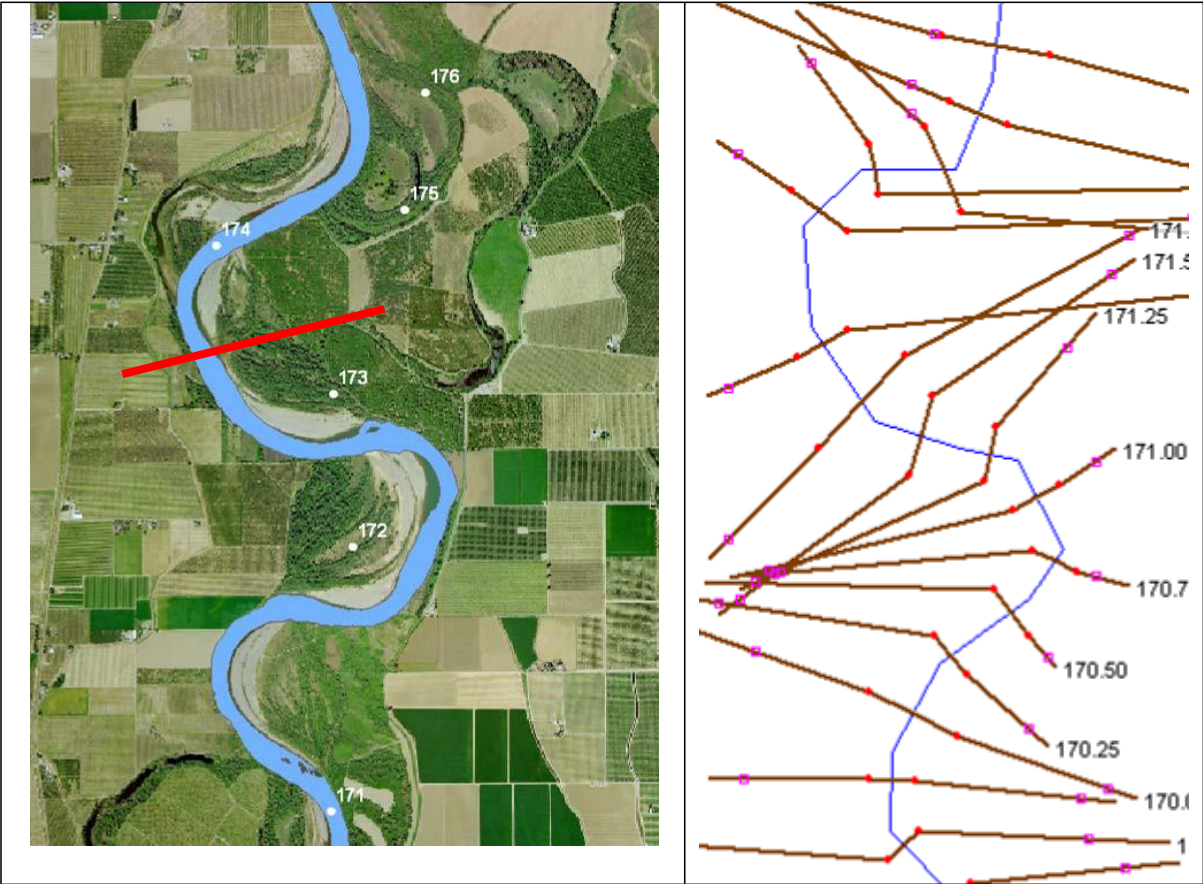


Figure 38 HR 172.00 (GIS 173.5) location maps

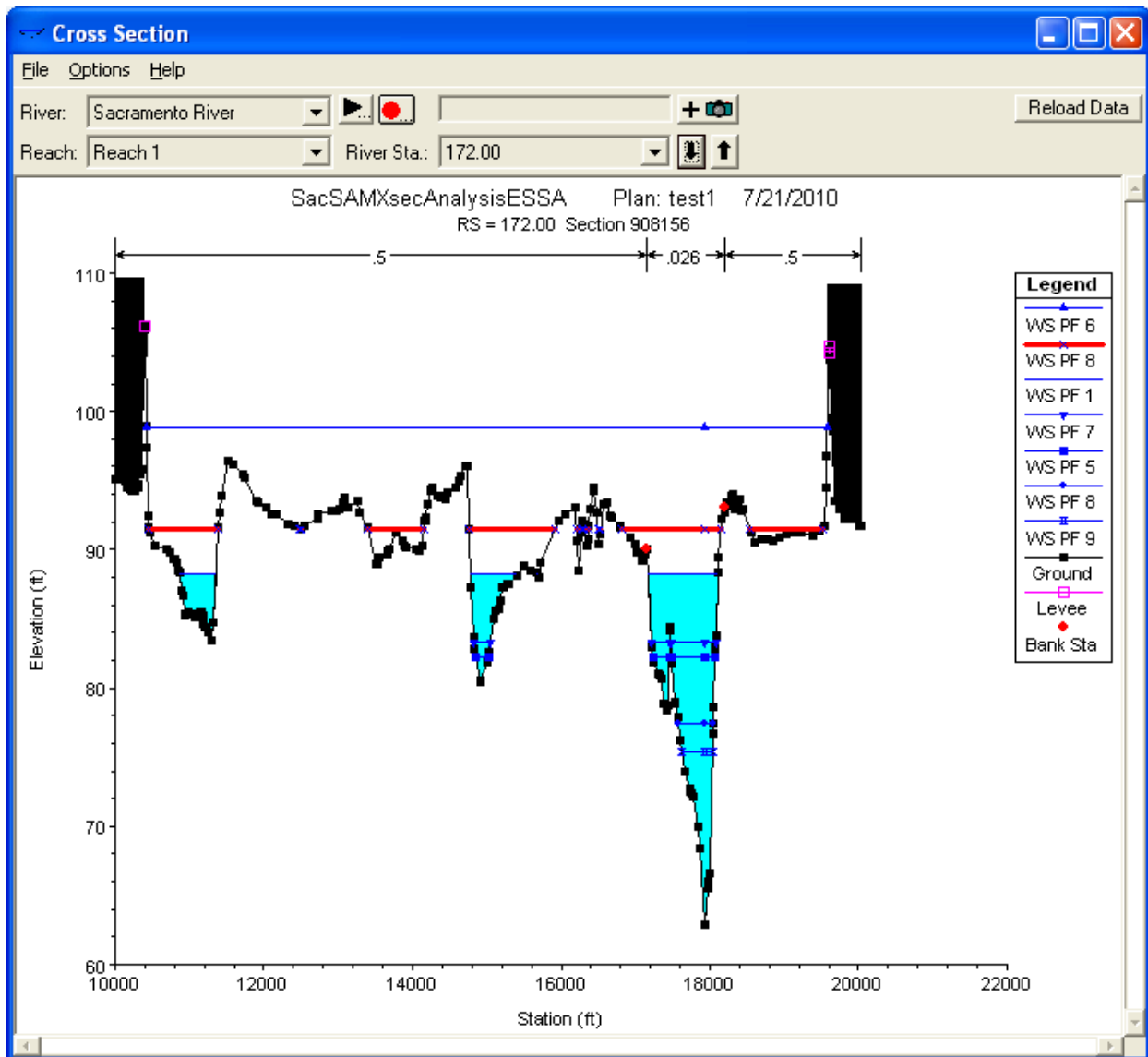


Figure 39 HR 172.00 HEC-RAS cross section plot

Lots of heterogeneity below bankfull.

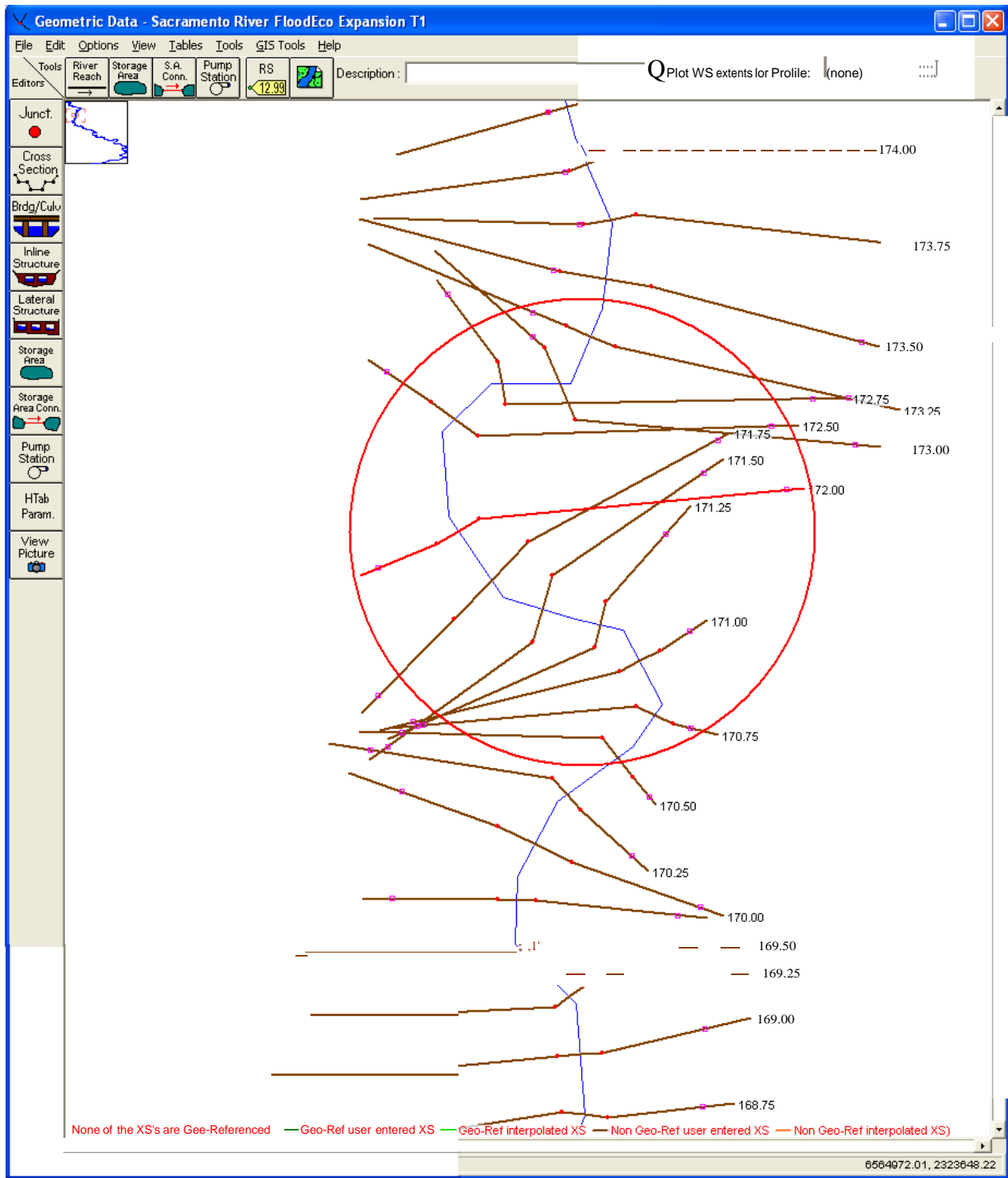


Figure 40 HR. 172.00 HEC-RAS cross section location map

HR 165.00 (GIS 166.5)

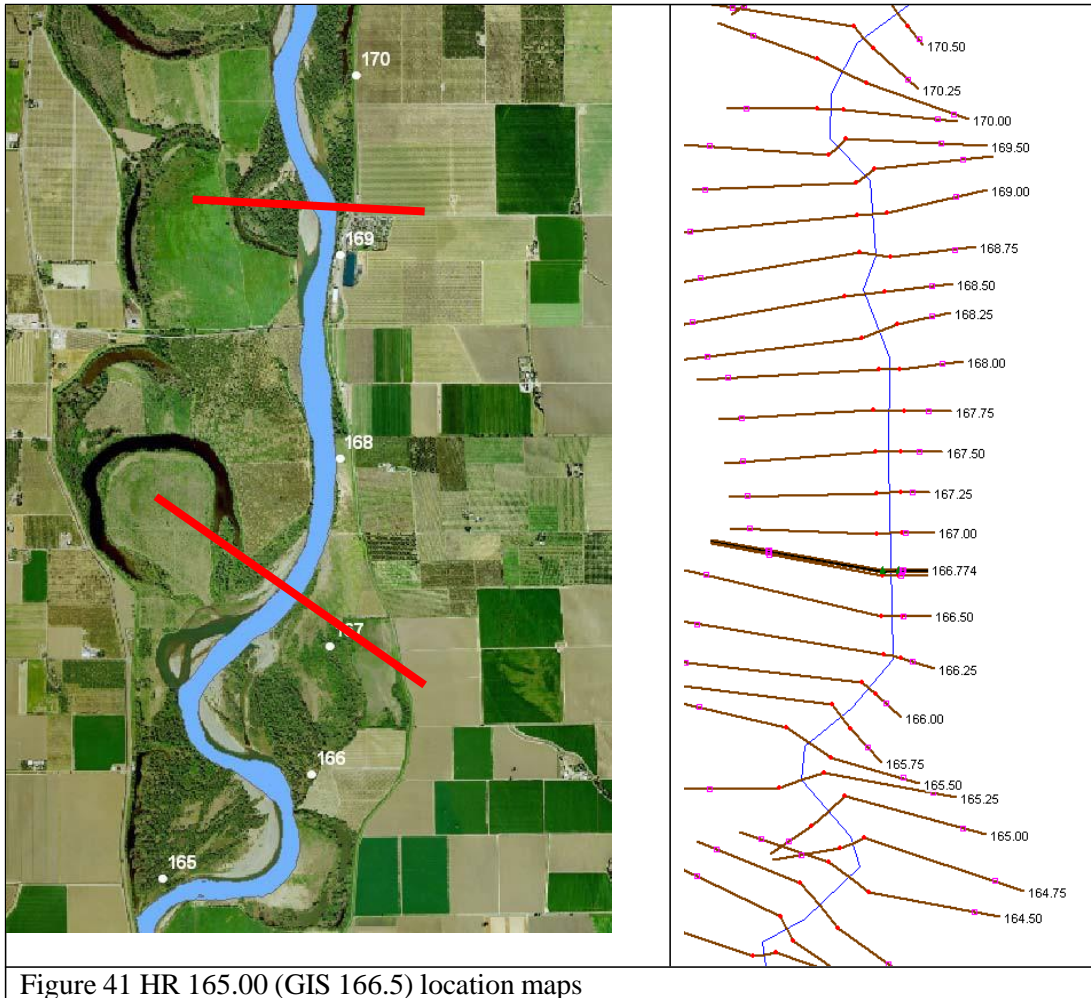


Figure 41 HR 165.00 (GIS 166.5) location maps

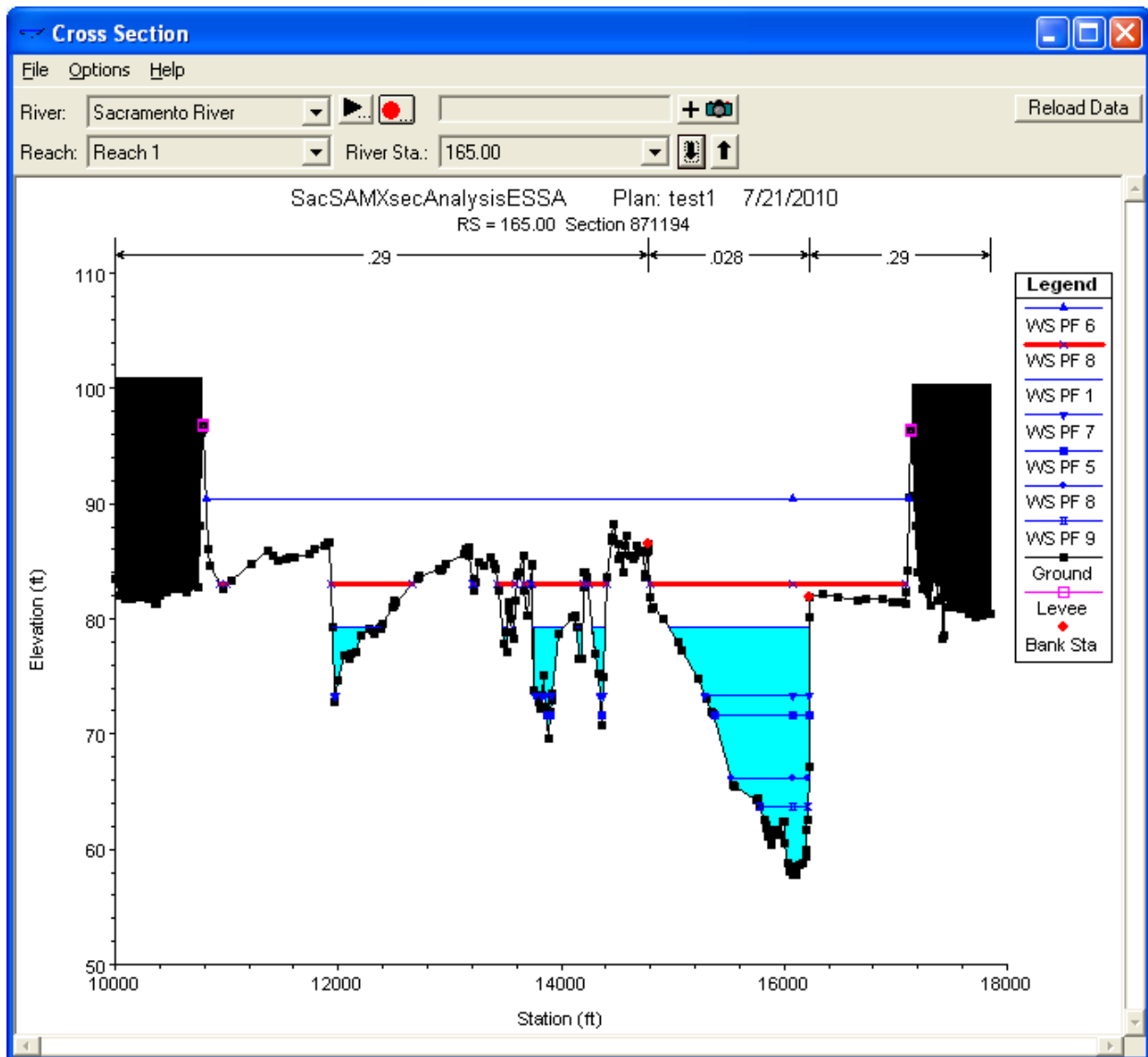


Figure 42 HR 165.00 HEC-RAS cross section plot

HR 164.00 (GIS 165.5)

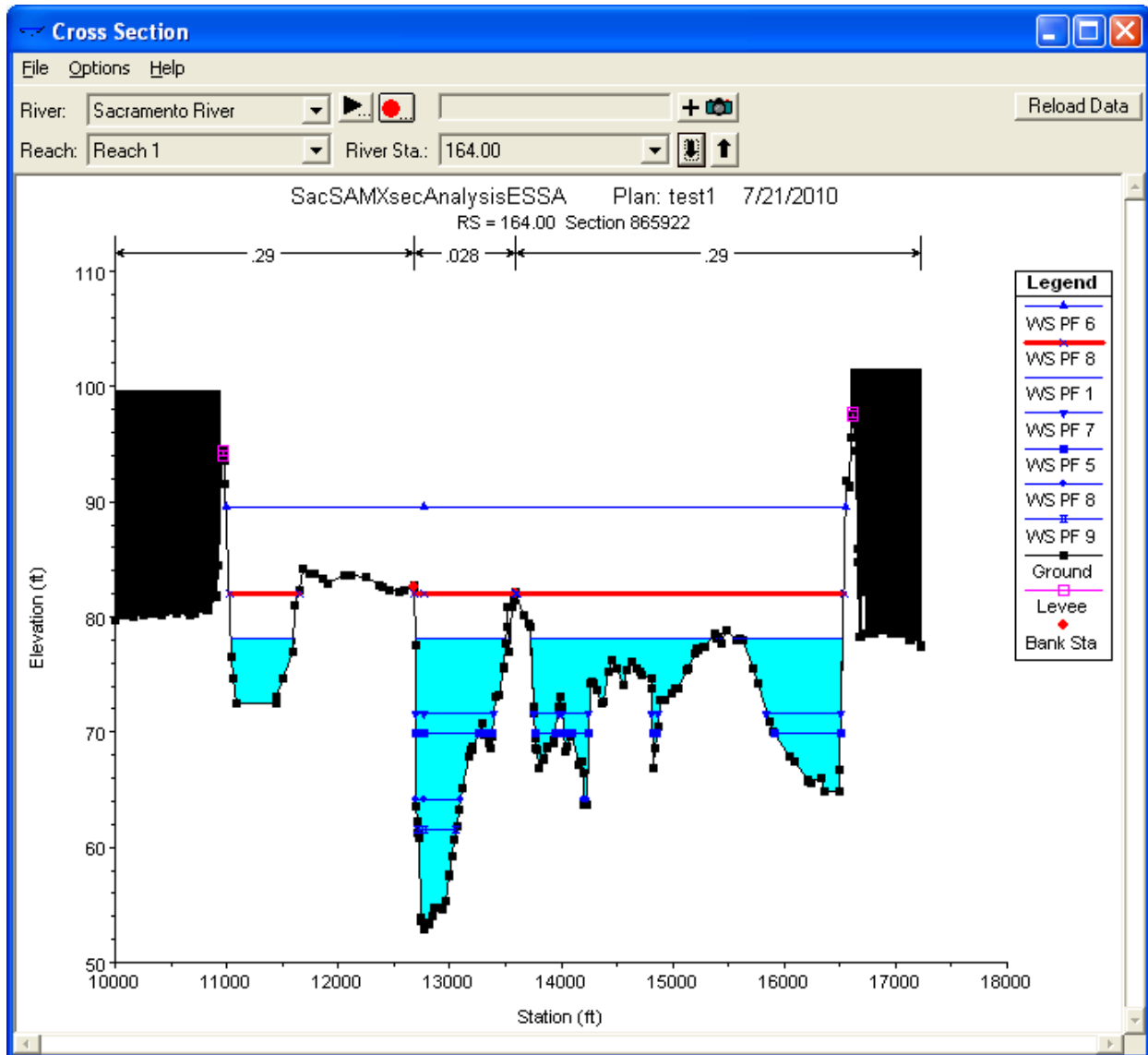


Figure 43 HR 164.00 HEC-RAS cross section plot

HR 159.00 (GIS 160.0)

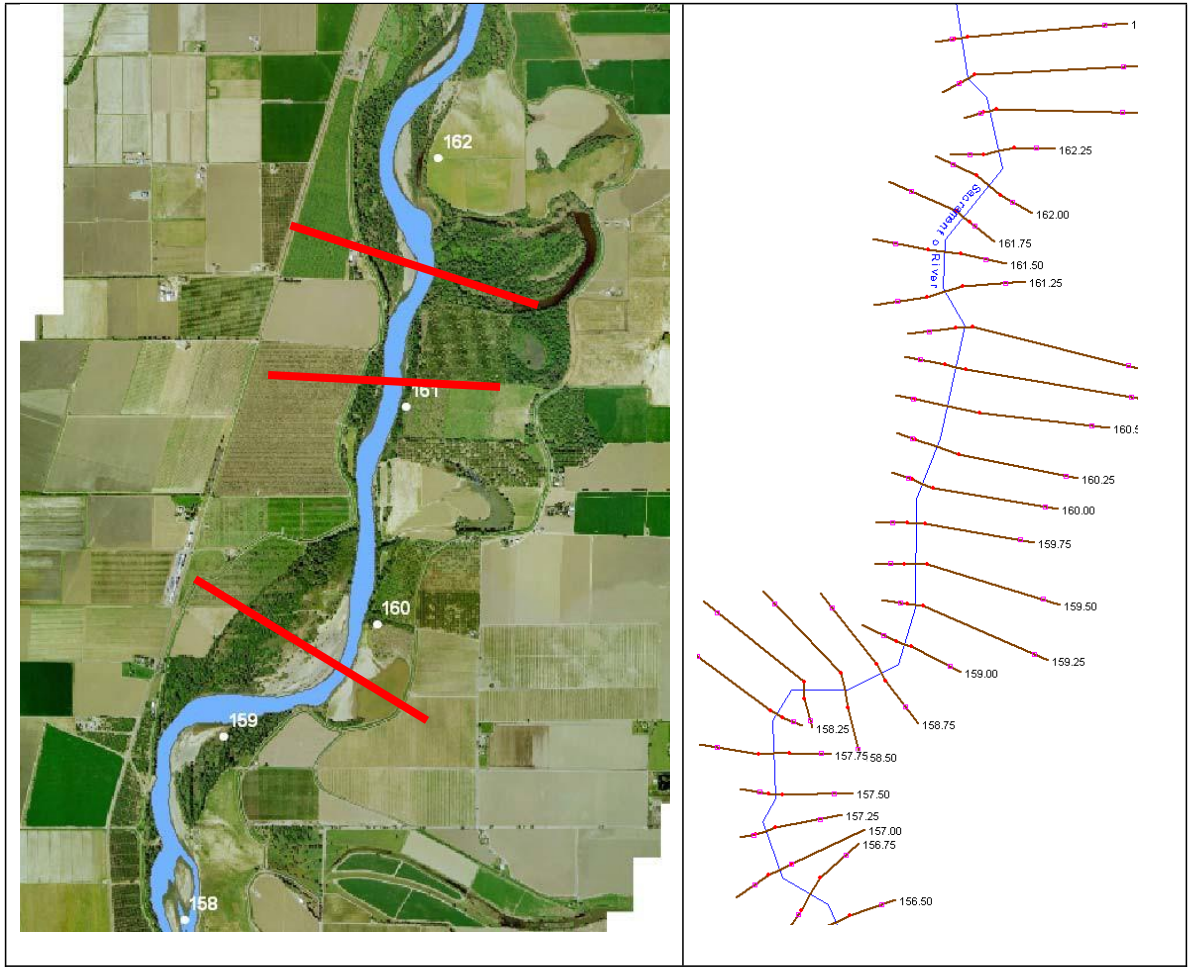


Figure 44 HR 159.00 (GIS 160.0) location maps

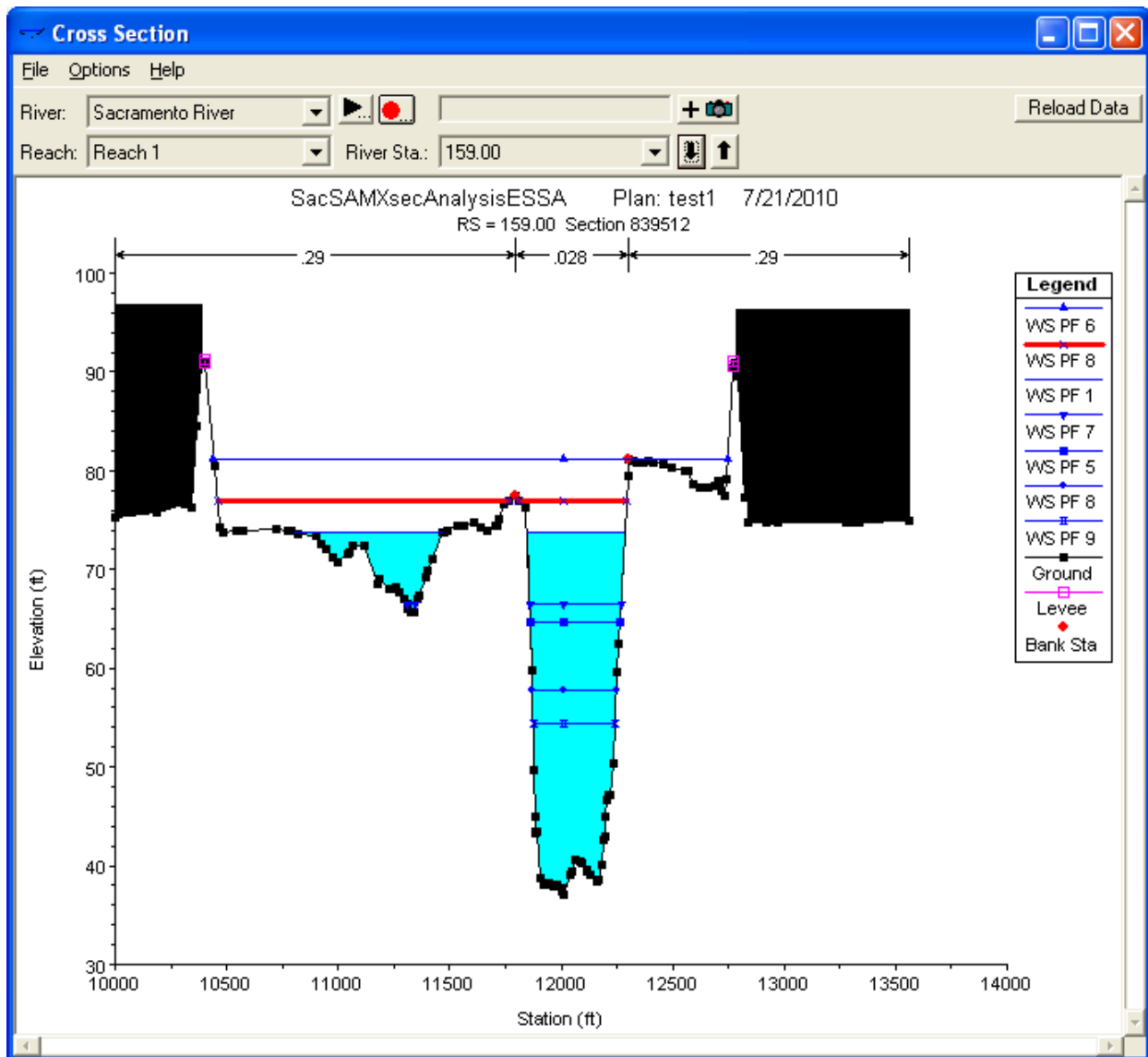


Figure 45 HR 159.00 HEC-RAS cross section plot