

January 17, 2024

Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)
The Massachusetts Archives Bldg.
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

Bettina Washington - Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO)
Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
via email: thpo@wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov

David Weeden - Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO)
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
via email: David.Weeden@mwtribe-nsn.gov &
106review@mwtribe-nsn.gov

John Brown - Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO)
Narragansett Indian Longhouse
via. email: tashtesook@aol.com

Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological
Resources (BUAR)
via email: david.s.robinson@mass.gov

Jeff Bendremer – Tribal Historic Preservation Manager
Stockbridge-Munsee Community
Tribal Historic Preservation Extension office
via email: thpo@mohican-nsn.gov

Subject: City of Pittsfield and Department of Conservation and Recreation Office of Dam Safety – Bel Air Dam Removal

Dear SHPO, THPO, and BUAR Project Reviewers:

On behalf of the City of Pittsfield and the Department of Conservation and Recreation Office of Dam Safety, AECOM respectfully requests information regarding areas of historical and archaeological resources within the vicinity of Bel Air Dam in the City of Pittsfield.

The proposed project consists of a full removal of the existing Bel Air Dam to eliminate the impoundment and restore the hydraulic connectivity of the original waterway. Specifically, this project proposes to remove a hazardous dam and rehabilitate the space for environmental benefit. The Bel Air Dam is classified as High (Class 1) Hazard Potential Dam in accordance with Massachusetts Dam Safety Regulations (302 CMR 10). From 2019 and 2022 sediment study, elevated levels of chromium, arsenic, lead, PAHs, and EPHs are present in the sediment. The proposed work also includes removal and out of state disposal of sediment with elevated chemical parameters as required by Massachusetts Contingency Plan Regulations (314 CMR 40.00).

To facilitate your review, we have enclosed a completed MHC Project Notification Form, locus map indicating the site's location, DCR archaeologists report including photographs of the site, and working draft project plans. The enclosed archaeology report was prepared by Jonathan Ruane, archaeologist with the DCR Office of Cultural Resources. Please send responses to this notification directly to the USACE via email: cenae-r-ma@usace.army.mil or address regular mail responses to: Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, Massachusetts 01742-2751 and copy jillian.flanagan@aecom.com or 250 Apollo Drive Chelmsford, MA 01824.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (978) 905-2100 or jillian.flanagan@aecom.com. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,
AECOM

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jillian Flanagan". The signature is cursive and fluid.

Jillian Flanagan
Environmental Scientist
Jillian.flanagan@aecom.com
(978) 905-2100

Enclosures:

- PNF Form
- USGS Map
- DCR Archaeologist Report
- Working Draft Dam Removal Plans

copies:

- W. Salomaa, Mass DCR Office of Dam Safety
- J. Doyle-Breen, AECOM
- J. McGrath, City of Pittsfield
- J. Ruane, DCR
- File

950 CMR: OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

APPENDIX A
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASS. 02125
617-727-8470, FAX: 617-727-5128

PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM

Project Name: DCR Six Abandoned Dams - Bel Air Dam Removal

Location / Address: East side of Wahconah Street, West side of Fairview Avenue

City / Town: Pittsfield

Project Proponent

Name: City of Pittsfield, c/o Jim McGrath, Park, Open Space and Natural Resource Manager

Address: 70 Allen Street

City/Town/Zip/Telephone: Pittsfield, MA 02201

Agency license or funding for the project (list all licenses, permits, approvals, grants or other entitlements being sought from state and federal agencies).

Agency Name	Type of License or funding (specify)
DCR	ARPA Funding; Dam Safety Permit
FEMA	Conditional Letter of Map Revision
MassDEP	401 Water Quality Certification, Chapter 91 Waterways License
MEPA	Ecological Restoration Project Expedited Review Approval
Pittsfield Conservation Commission	Wetland Protection Act Order of Conditions
USACE	Section 404/10 Approval
USFWS	Endangered Species Consultation

Project Description (narrative):

The proposed project consists of a full removal of the existing Bel Air Dam to eliminate the impoundment and restore the hydraulic connectivity of the original waterway. Specifically, this project proposes to remove a hazardous dam and rehabilitate the space for environmental benefit. The Bel Air Dam is classified as High (Class 1) Hazard Potential Dam in accordance with Massachusetts Dam Safety Regulations (302 CMR 10). From 2019 and 2022 sediment study, elevated levels of chromium, arsenic, lead, PAHs, and EPHs are present in the sediment. Once the dam is removed the contaminated sediment will be above the hydraulic grade line and fit the characteristics of potentially accessible soil. Due to this, there is the need to excavate an estimated 35,500 cubic yards of sediment six inches below the hydraulic grade line from the impoundment upstream of the dam. The remaining sediment will be resampled following the dredging and post-construction. After sediment removal a low-flow stream channel will be

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APPENDIX A (continued)

reconstructed, and an adjacent vegetated wetland and floodplain will be created.

Does the project include demolition? If so, specify nature of demolition and describe the building(s) which are proposed for demolition.

Yes, the project includes demolition. Demolition will not include any mapped historic structures or archeological sites. The full removal of the Bel Air Dam, its spillway, and appurtenant structures will occur. The dam was abandoned in the 1940's and is considered a High (Class 1) Hazard Potential Dam.

Does the project include rehabilitation of any existing buildings? If so, specify nature of rehabilitation and describe the building(s) which are proposed for rehabilitation.

No rehabilitation of any existing buildings will occur.

Does the project include new construction? If so, describe (attach plans and elevations if necessary).

The reconstruction of a low-flow channel will occur as well as the restoration (bank grading and stabilization) of the existing stream bed of the West Branch of the Housatonic River. See attached preliminary concept plans.

To the best of your knowledge, are any historic or archaeological properties known to exist within the project's area of potential impact? If so, specify.

DCR Archaeologists conducted a desktop assessment along with a site walkover and judgmental coring of the project for potential archaeological impacts (See Appendix). The dam was constructed in 1832 for powering a woolen mill downstream. One building associated with this business, the 1861 Pittsfield Woolen Company building (MHC# PIT.185) remains about .1 miles south of the dam, outside of the APE. There were two previous Phase I archaeological surveys covering this area, MHC reports 25-400 and 25-822. These reports are the result of large regional surveys conducted for the expansion of the Route 7 bypass, and the construction of a natural gas pipeline respectively. The dam has never been recorded within the State's historic resources and it is recommended that a MHC Form F-structure form be submitted for review.

The walkover and coring of the project impact areas by DCR Archaeologists has determined that the banks of the West Housatonic River, within the project area, have disturbed soils and are not archaeologically sensitive. If proposed dredging is limited to dam sediment and avoids disturbing areas above the natural streambed, then in the opinion of DCR Archaeologists this project, as proposed is unlikely to impact significant historic or prehistoric archaeological resources within Pittsfield.

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APPENDIX A (continued)

What is the total acreage of the project area?

Woodland	<u>0.07</u>	acres	Productive Resources:		
Wetland *	<u>4.30</u>	acres	Agriculture	<u>0</u>	acres
Floodplain	<u>0.52</u>	acres	Forestry	<u>0</u>	acres
Open Space	<u>0</u>	acres	Mining/Extraction	<u>0</u>	acres
Developed**	<u>1.54</u>	acres			
Other***	<u>0.01</u>	acres	Total Project Acreage	<u>6.44</u>	acres

* Wetland is water, LUW, and BVW added together

** This is developed open space and impervious

*** Grasslands

What is the acreage of the proposed new construction? 0 acres

What is the present land use of the project area?

Land use within the project area include earthen embankments on both sides of the dam with overgrowth of dense trees and shrubs. Erosion occurs on both sides near the abutment area with exposed tree roots and depressed areas. There are also impervious surfaces, riparian corridors, and several vegetated peninsulas in the project area.

Please attach a copy of the section of the USGS quadrangle map which clearly marks the project location.

An aerial locus map is included in this submittal package.

This Project Notification Form has been submitted to the MHC in compliance with 950 CMR 71.00.

Signature of Person submitting this form:



Date: January 17, 2024

Name: Jillian Flanagan

Address: 250 Apollo Drive

City/Town/Zip: Chelmsford, MA 01824

Telephone: 978-905-2100

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

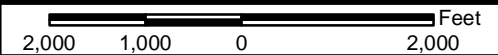
950 CMR 71.00: M.G.L. c. 9, §§ 26-27C as amended by St. 1988, c. 254.

7/1/93

950 CMR - 276

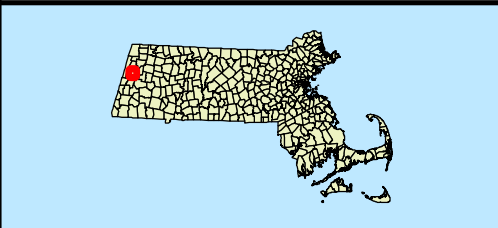


BEL AIR DAM
 42.47107 °N 73.24823 °W



LOCUS MAP

Project No:
01.0018802.42



Bel Air Dam
NID# MA01061
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Drawn by:
PJS

Checked by:
TEJ

Date:
JUNE 2015

BASE MAP: USGS Topographic Map
 PITTSFIELD EAST 1988 AND PITTSFIELD WEST 1988

Figure No:

1

SITE VISIT SUMMARY

Location: Bel Air Dam, Pittsfield; Demolition of Bel Air Dam

Date: 12/19/23

Purpose: Impact assessment to archaeological resources from the demolition of the Bel Air Dam, Pittsfield. The dam is planned for emergency demolition for public safety as it is in poor condition.

A site visit, including walkover of impact area and judgmental coring, was conducted by DCR archaeological staff for the project referenced above. The dam was constructed in 1832 for powering a woolen mill downstream. One building associated with this business, the 1861 Pittsfield Woolen Company building (MHC# PIT.185) remains about .1 miles south of the dam, outside of the APE. There were two previous Phase I archaeological surveys covering this area, they were both the result of large regional surveys (Thomas et al. 1977; Williams et al. 1976).

Evaluation/Finding: The project area is spread along the eastern and western banks of the West Housatonic River from the intersection of Waconah and Lenox Streets in the north, to the dam in the south (Figure 1). The staging area for the project is proposed at the site of demolished mill buildings approximately 170m south of the dam, along the eastern bank of the river (Figures 2 and 3).

During the walkover of the project area, it was ascertained that the eastern bank of the river, above the dam, had low archaeological sensitivity. The entire stretch of project area was steeply sloped from the residential yards down to the river (Figure 4). Furthermore, the landscape here appears to have been modified during the construction of the residences with leveling and terracing.

A total of eleven judgmental cores were placed along the western bank of the West Housatonic River to determine if there were intact soils that may be disturbed by this project (Figure 5). Five additional cores were attempted along this bank but were unable to penetrate the ground due to rocky impasses. The vegetation along the western bank was a combination of overgrown scrub brush with small trees and wetland vegetation closer to the river (Figures 6 and 7). All cores shared a similar structure with a developing A soil over a sandy fill (Figure 8). The results of the walkover and coring suggest that the soils within the APE are disturbed from past construction activities and are not archaeologically sensitive. The site visit to the dam took place shortly after a heavy rainstorm and it was clear that the dam was under stress with water leaking through the structure and a very large volume of water flowing through the spillway (Figure 9).

Core location coordinates and profiles:

1. 42.47370, 73.24657
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-15 Developing A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
15-30 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
2. 42.47358, 73.24673
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand

- 5-15 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
3. 42.47345, 73.24684
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-15 Developing A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
15-30 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 4. 42.47337, 73.24689
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-10 Developing A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
10-20 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
20-25 Fill 2/Buried A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
 5. 42.47329, 73.24699
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-15 Developing A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
15-30 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 6. 42.47321, 73.24713
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-15 Developing A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
15-30 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 7. 42.47288, 73.24731
0-3cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
3-20 Fill 1 10YR 5/2 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 8. 42.47249, 73.24820
0-3cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
3-10 Fill 1 10YR 5/2 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 9. 42.47209, 73.24817
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-15 Developing A 10YR 3/3 dark brown, wet very fine silt with sand
15-30 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 10. 42.47198, 73.24823
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-20 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel
 11. 42.47168, 73.24837
0-5cm Duff 10YR 3/1 very dark grey, wet very fine silt with sand
5-20 Fill 1 10YR 5/1 grey, wet very fine silt with sand and small gravel

Recommendation:

The dam has never been recorded within the State's historic resources and it is recommended that a MHC Form F-structure form be submitted for review. The walkover and coring of the project impact areas by DCR Archaeologists has determined that the banks of the West

Housatonic River, within the project area, have disturbed soils and are not archaeologically sensitive. If proposed dredging is limited to dam sediment and avoids disturbing areas above the natural streambed, then in the opinion of DCR Archaeologists this project, as proposed is unlikely to impact significant historic or prehistoric archaeological resources within Pittsfield.

References Cited:

Thomas, Peter, et al. 1977. Phase I Reconnaissance Archaeological Survey Report of Pittsfield Area Route 7 Bypass.

Williams, Stephen, et al. 1976. 1976 Preliminary Report, Cultural Resources in the Corridor for a National Gas Pipeline to be Constructed through a Portion of Massachusetts. Tennessee Gas Pipeline.

Figures:

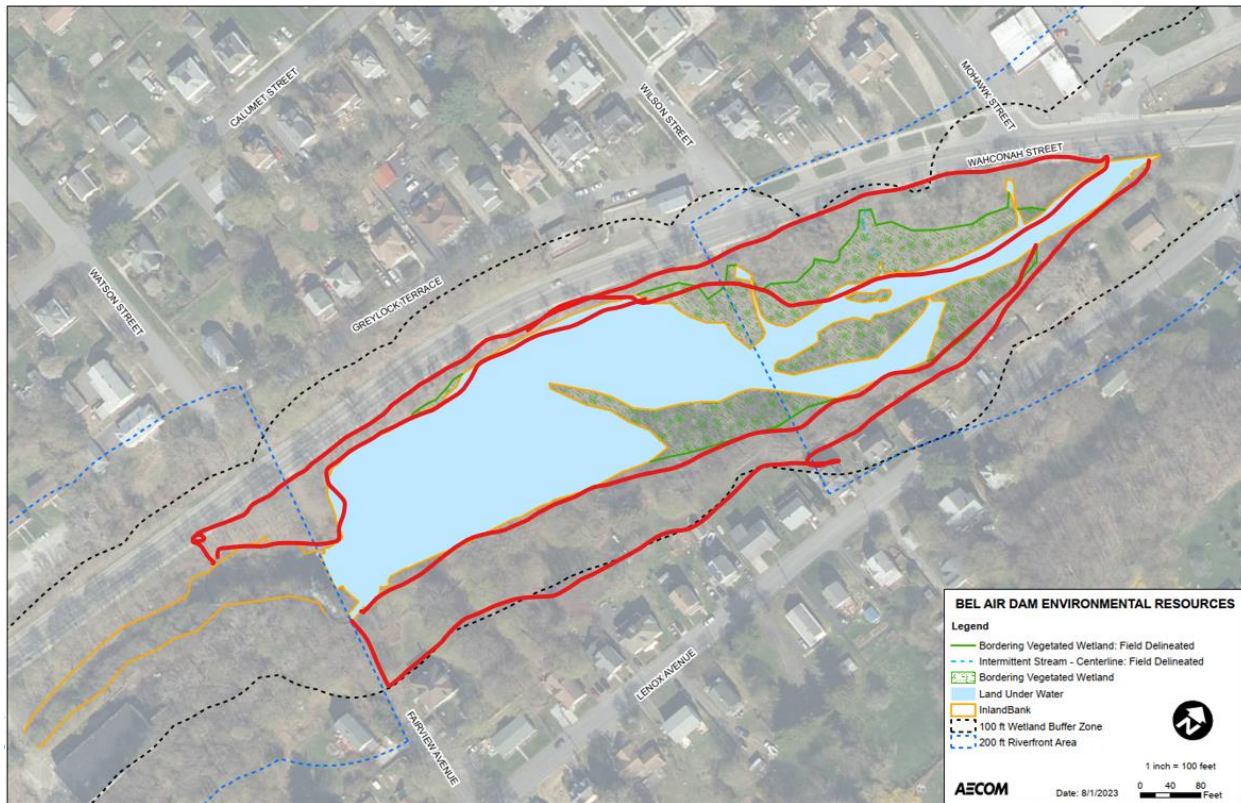


Figure 1: Approximate project impact area, outlined in red (map provided by AECOM)

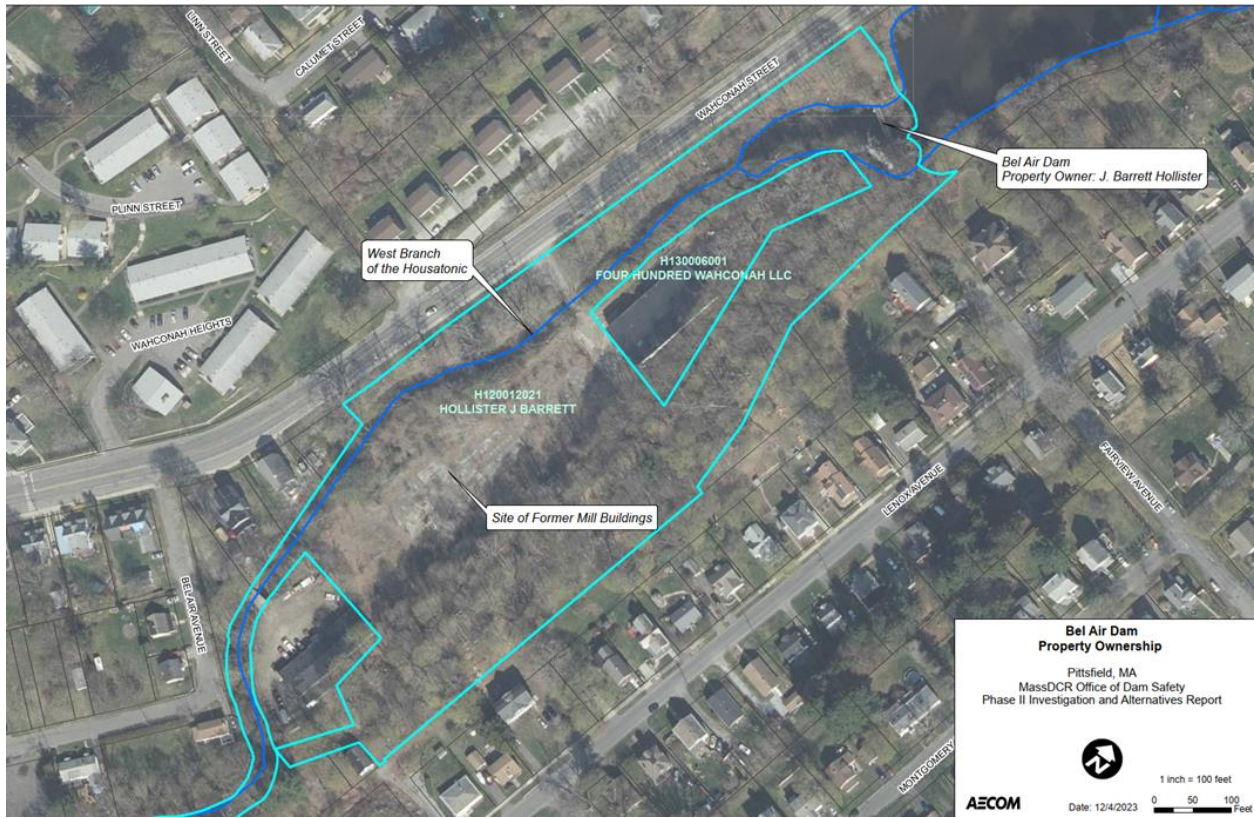


Figure 2: Staging area, site of former mill buildings (map provided by AECOM)

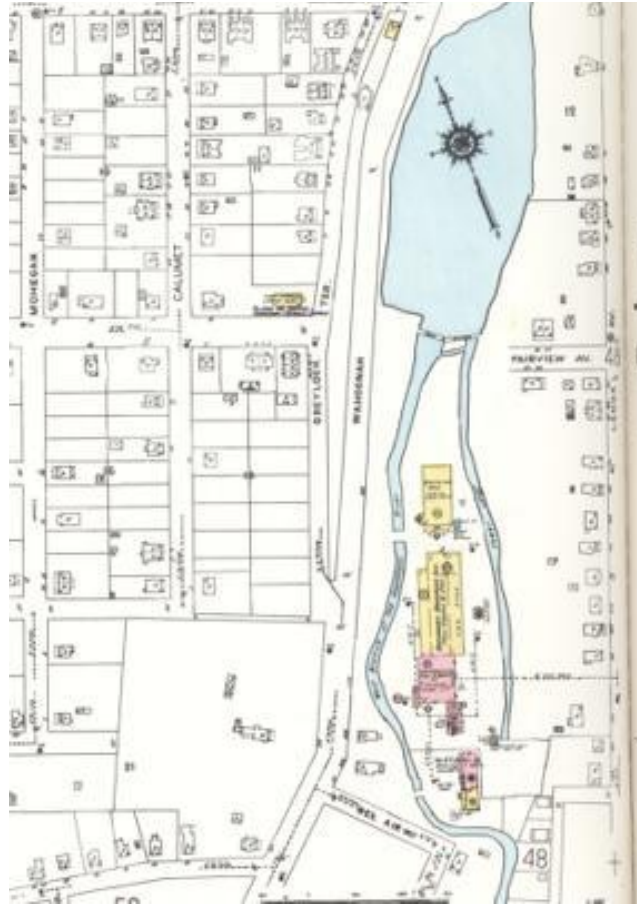


Figure 3: 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of former industrial complex within staging area (Library of Congress)

Eastern shore of West Housatonic River exhibits a steep slope from residences to river with apparent land modification and terracing for house plots.

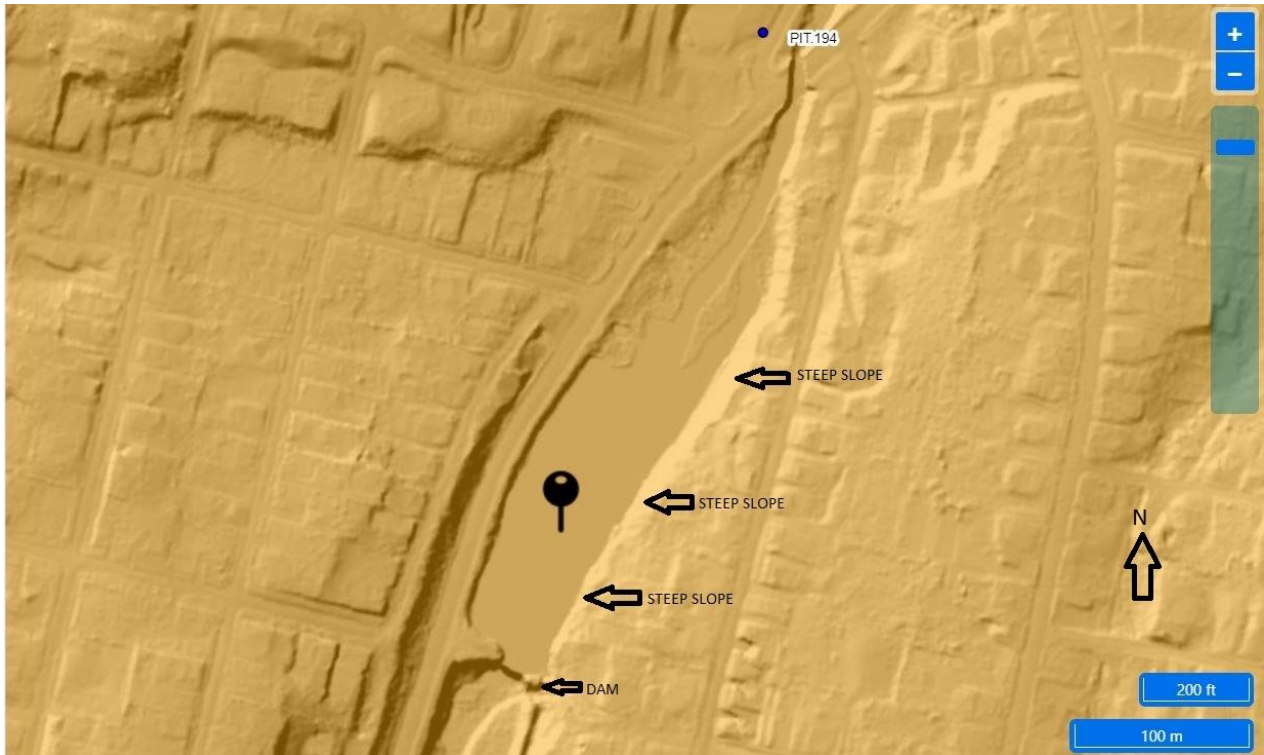


Figure 4: Shaded relief map of project area highlighting steep slope on eastern bank (MACRIS).
Western shore of West Housatonic River, in many areas coring was unsuccessful due to rocky impasses just below the surface.

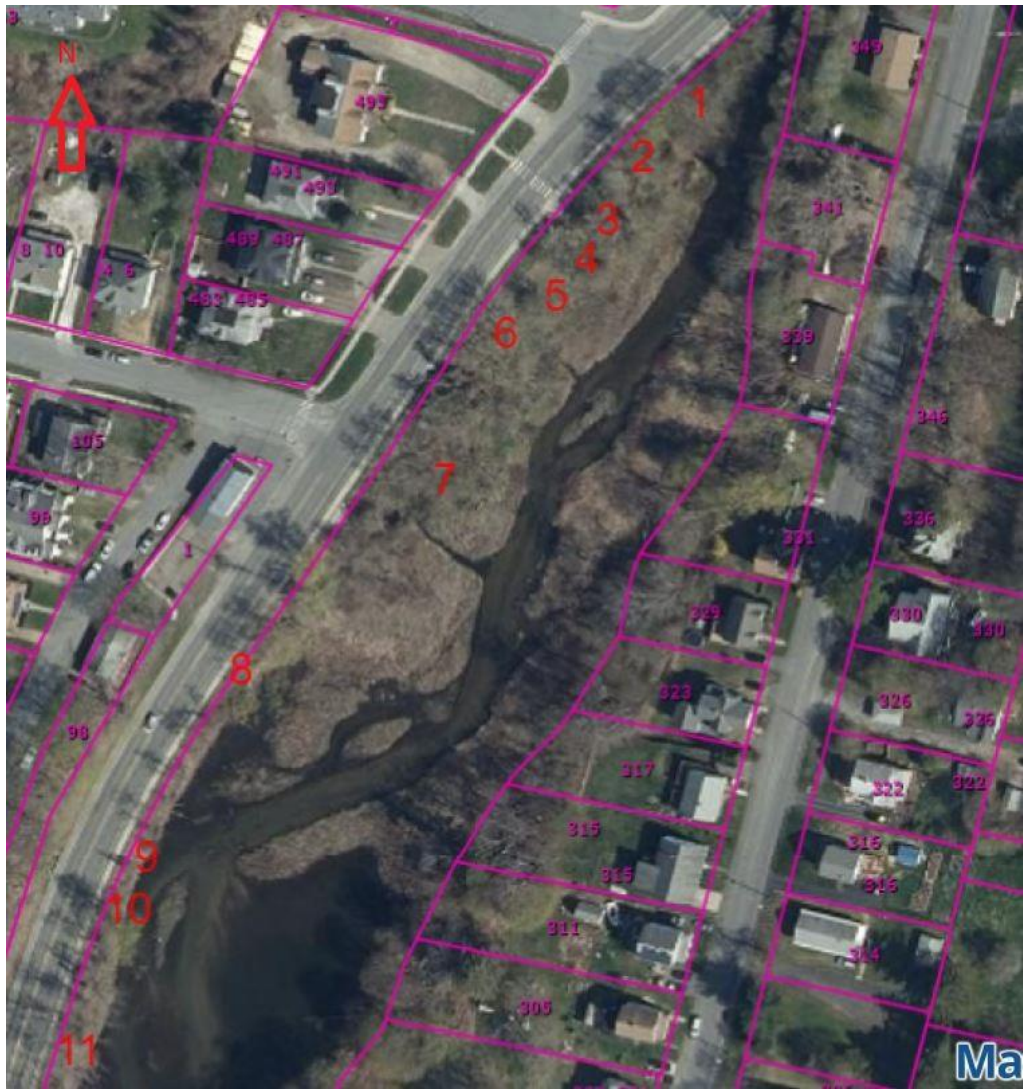


Figure 5: Bel Air Dam archaeological coring locations (Massmapper).



Figure 6: Field condition and vegetation at Core 6 location, facing east.



Figure 7: Field condition and vegetation at Core 7 location, facing south.



Figure 8: Core number 4, 30cm from base to top of core.



Figure 9: Heavy water flow from spillway and leaks in dam visible at time of visit, facing north east (12/19/23).

PROJECT

MASS DCR
 ABANDONED DAMS
 BEL AIR DAM REMOVAL
 CONTRACT NO.
 P19-3264-D4A

CLIENT

Massachusetts Department
 of Conservation and
 Recreation
 251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
 Boston, MA 02114-2119
 617.626.1250 tel 617.626.1351 fax
 www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation

CONSULTANT

AECOM TECHNICAL SERVICES, INC.
 250 APOLLO DRIVE
 CHELMSFORD, MA 01824
 PHONE: (978) 905-2100
 www.aecom.com

DRAFT
 8-4-2023

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ISSUE/REVISION

I/R	DATE	DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER

60604936

Designed By: **JPM**

Drawn By: **SN**

Dept Check: **CB**

Proj Check: **D. GOVE**

Date: **JULY 2023**

Scale: **AS NOTED**

DISCIPLINE

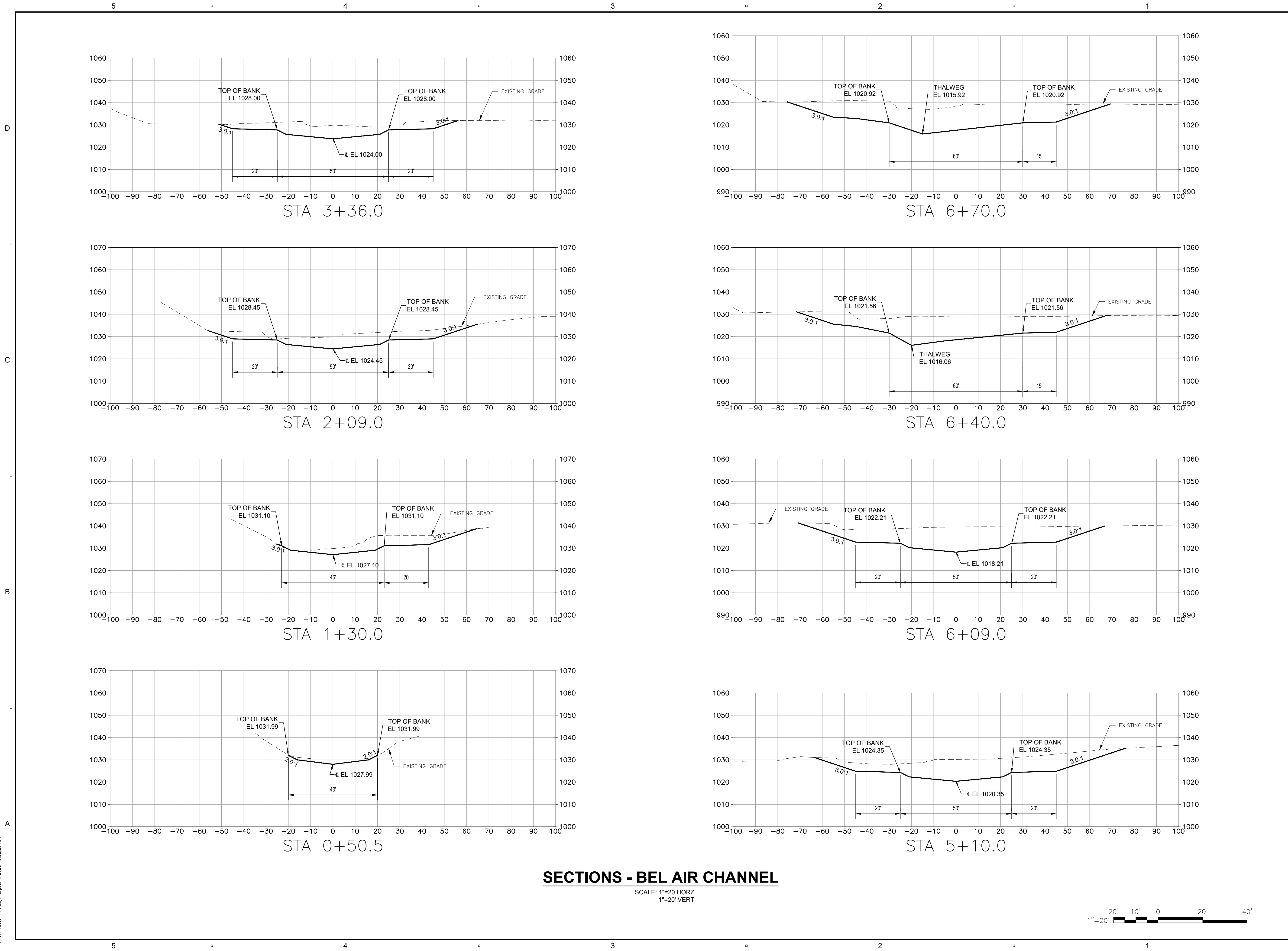
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SHEET TITLE

BEL AIR DAM REMOVAL
SECTIONS 1 OF 3

SHEET NUMBER

00 C-301



SECTIONS - BEL AIR CHANNEL

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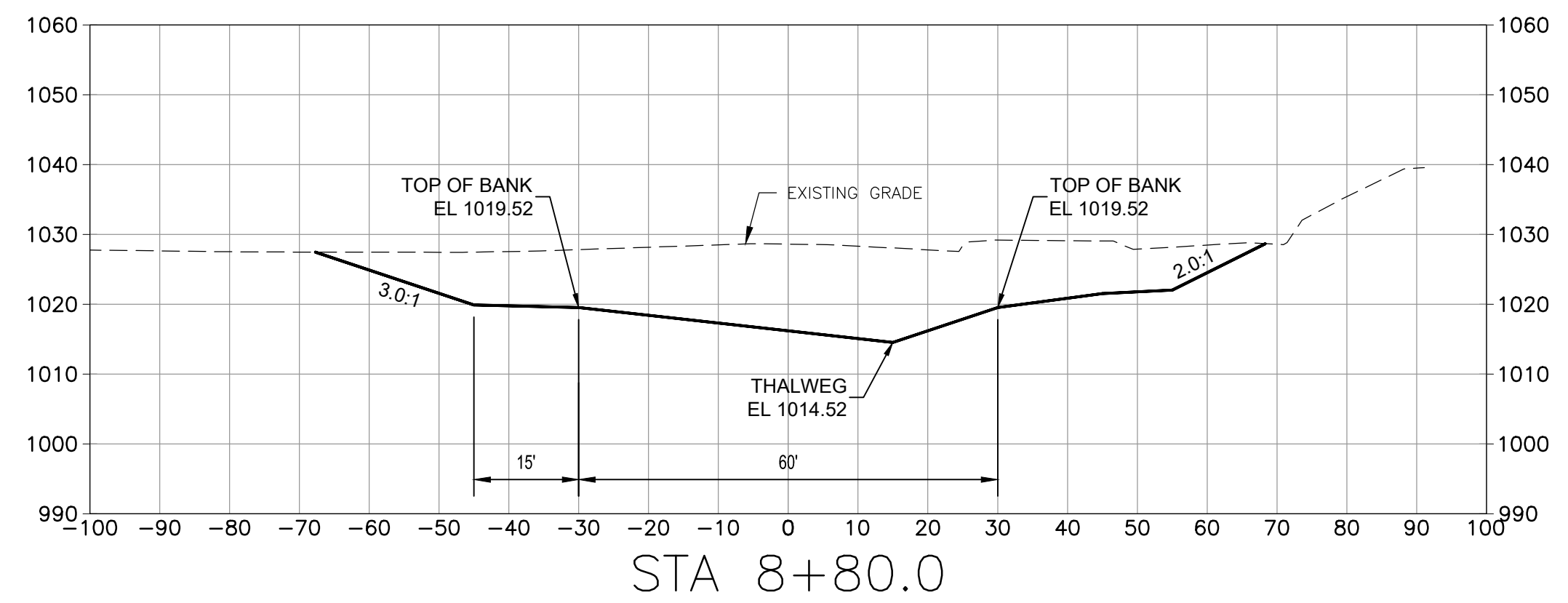
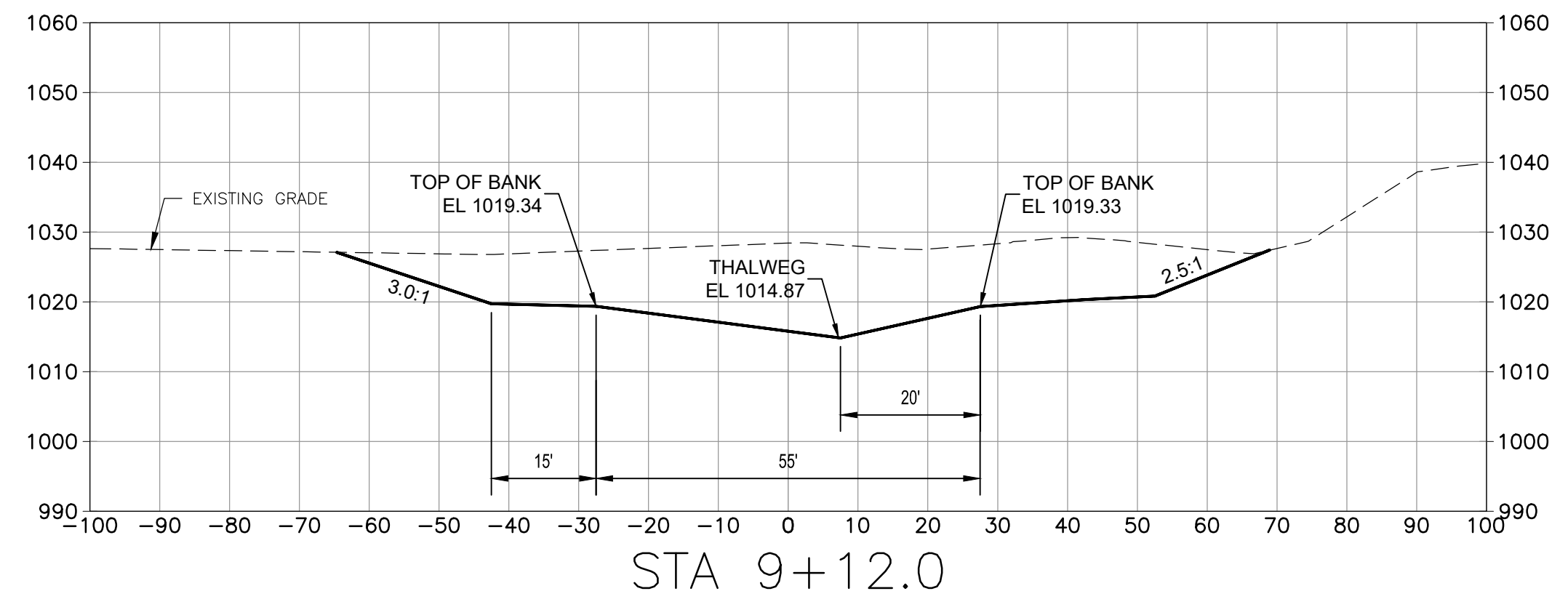
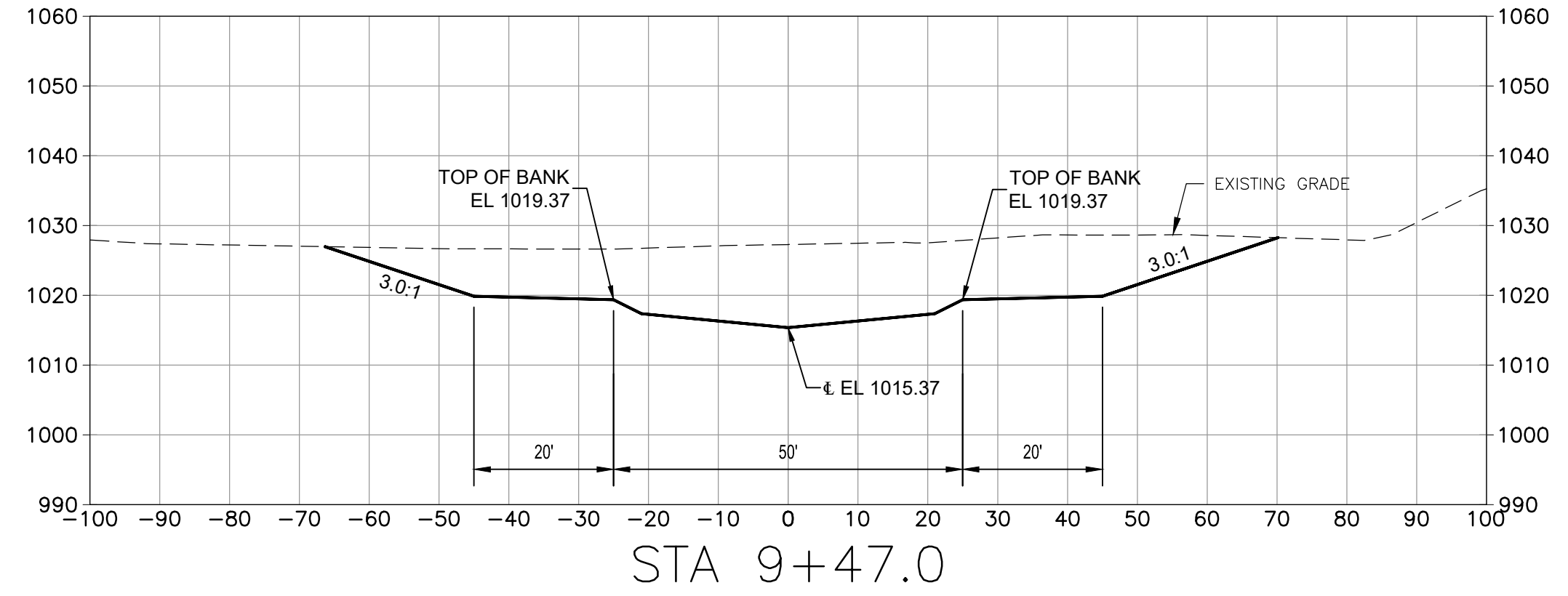
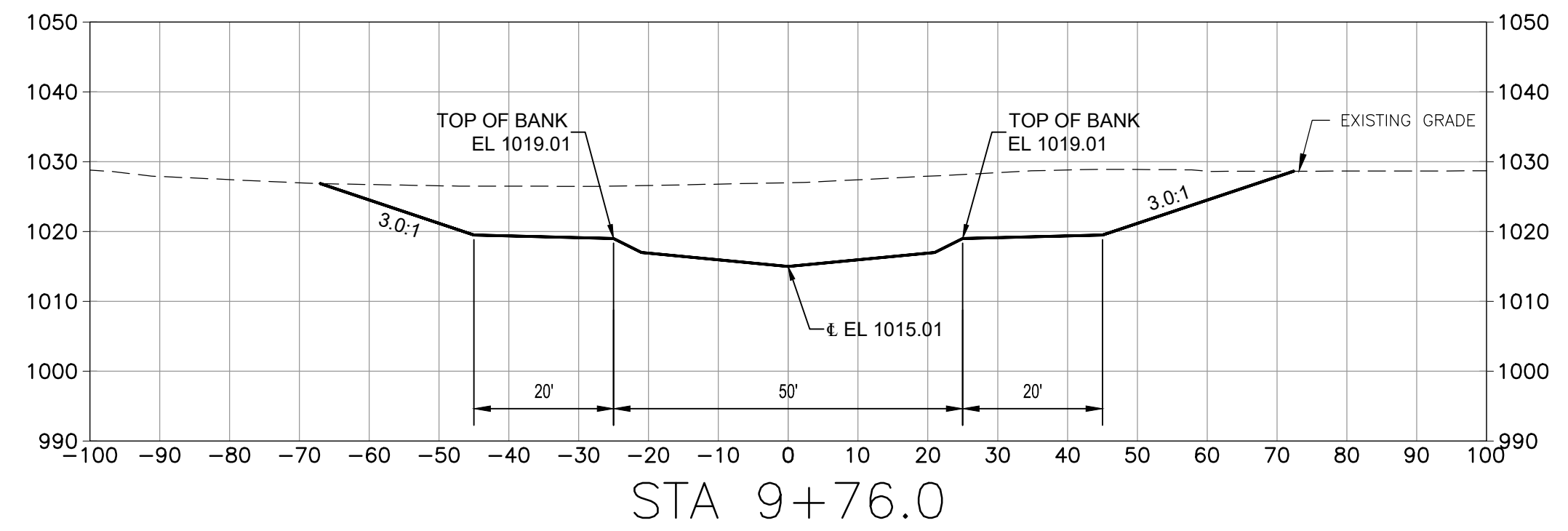
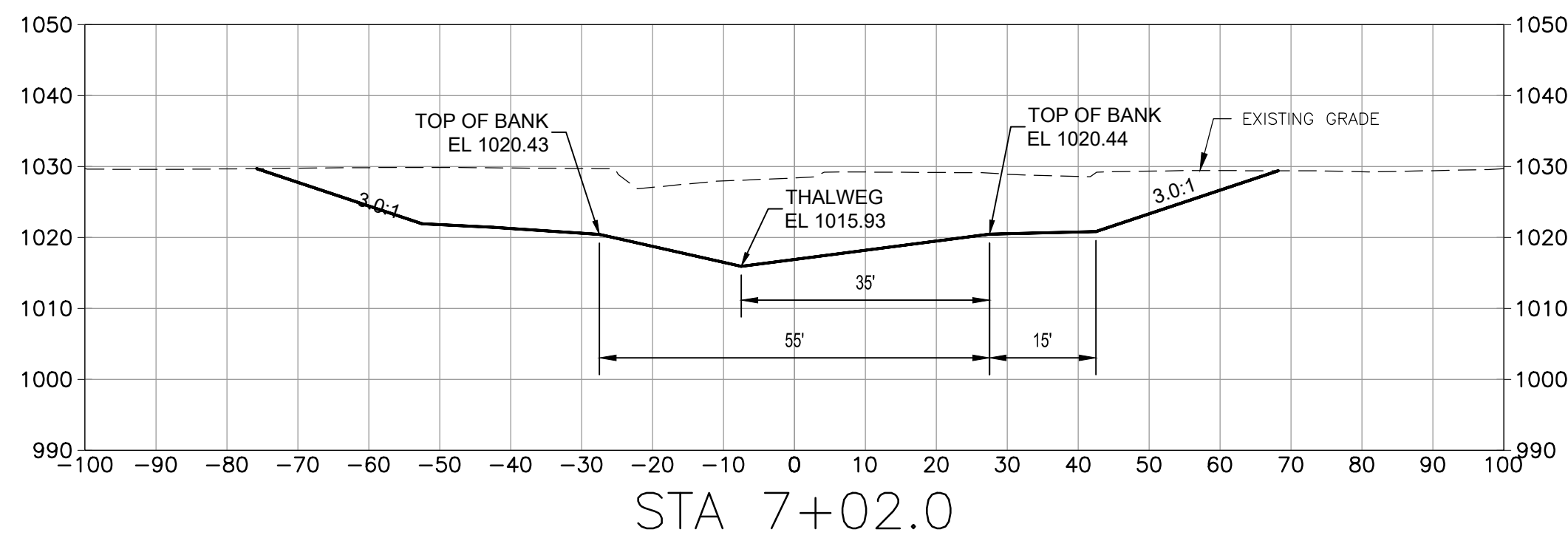
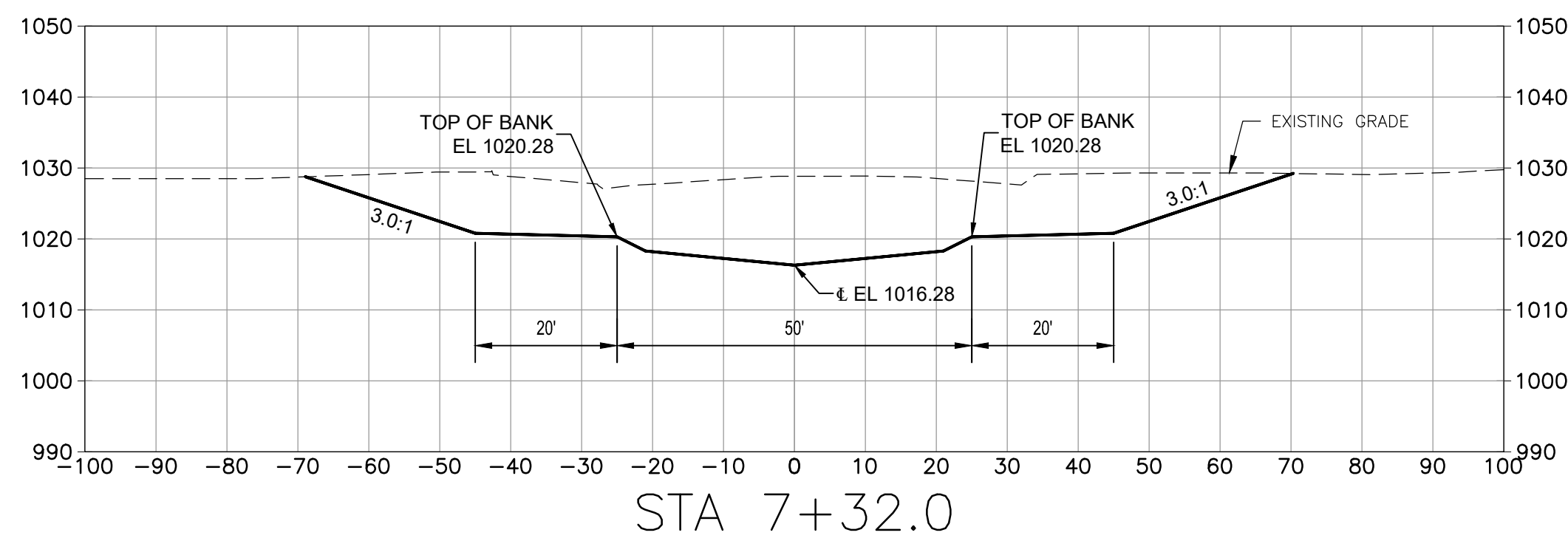
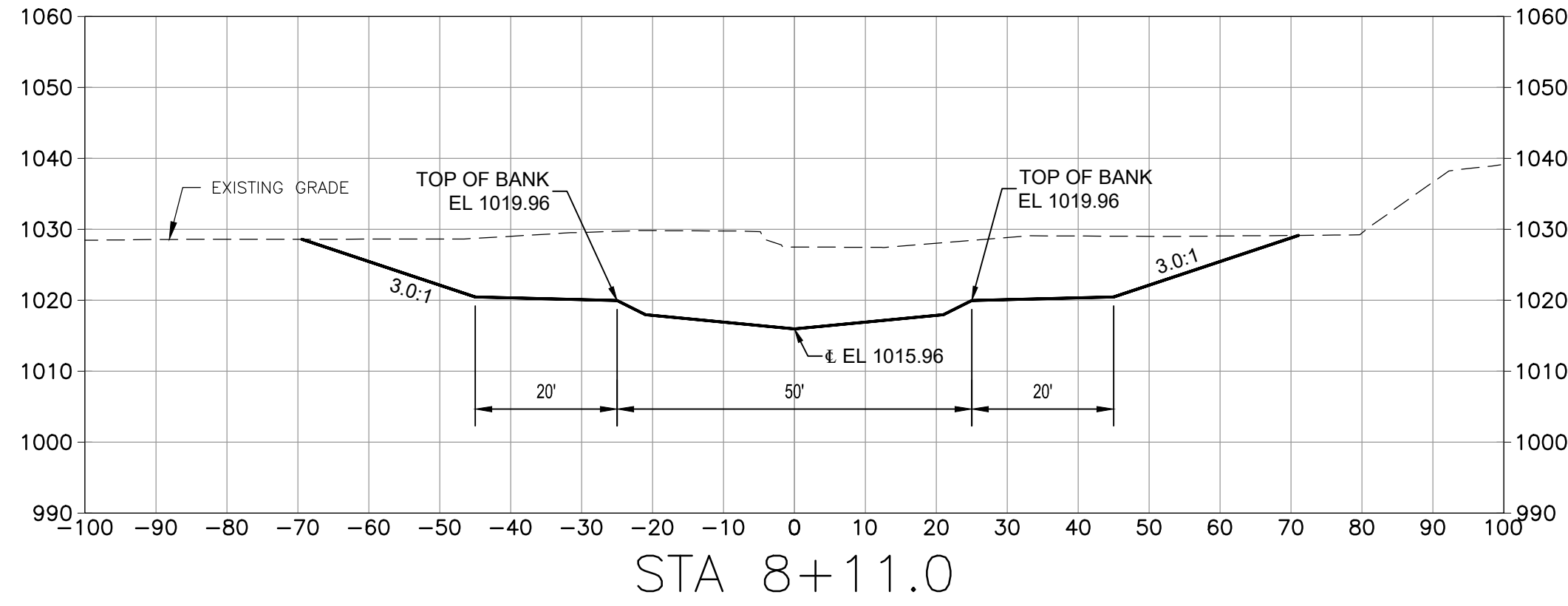
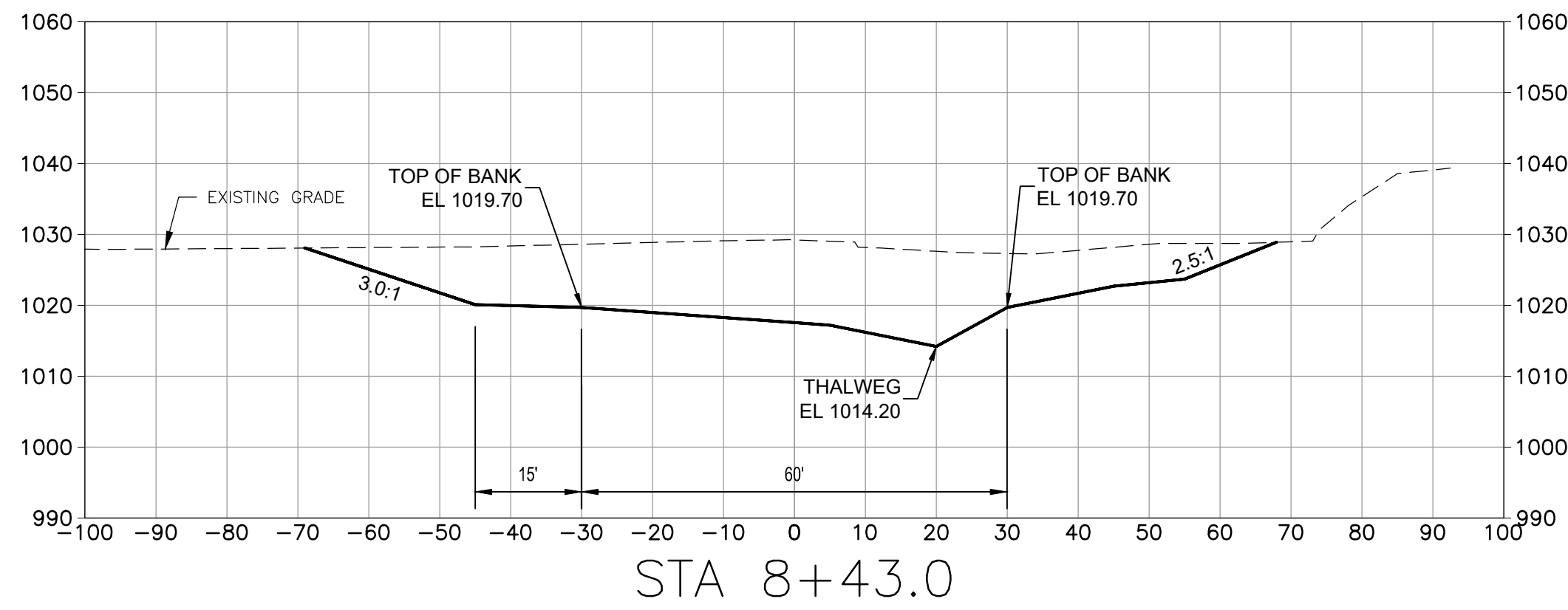
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BEL AIR DAM REMOVAL

SECTIONS 2 OF 3

SHEET NUMBER

00 C-302



SECTIONS - BEL AIR CHANNEL

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Date:	JULY 2023
Scale:	AS NOTED

DISCIPLINE

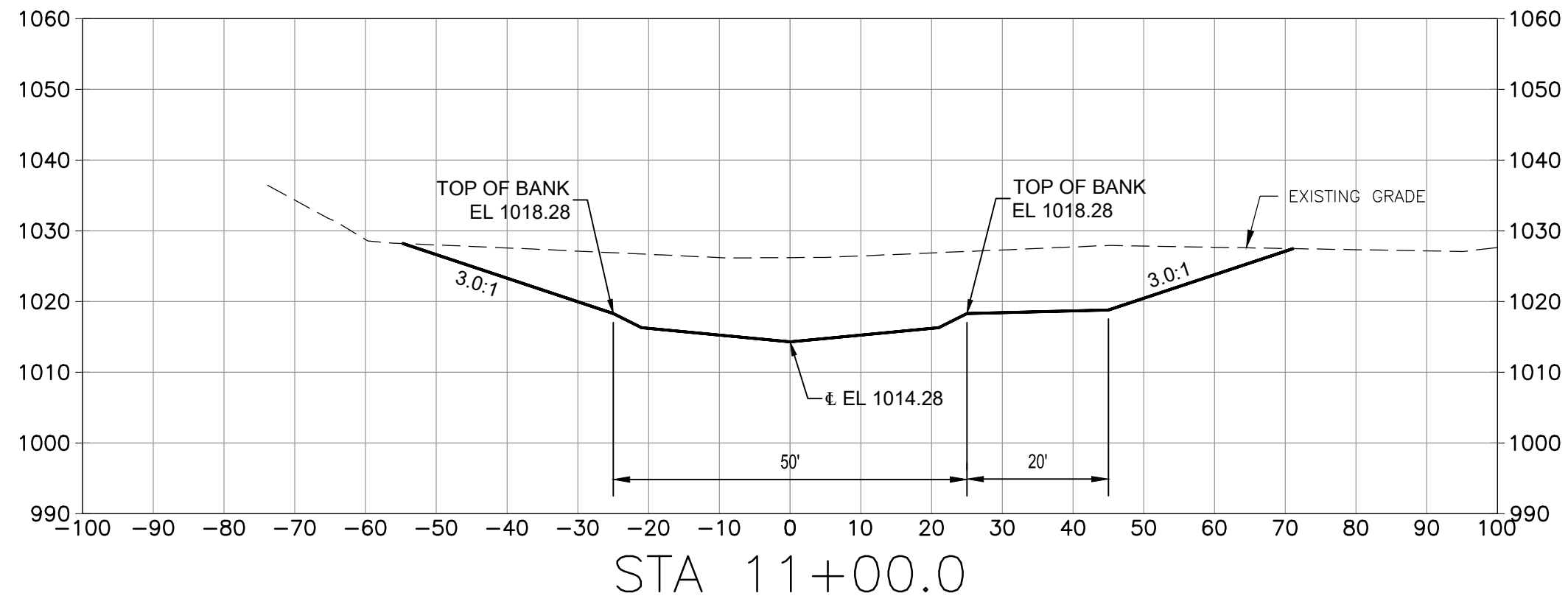
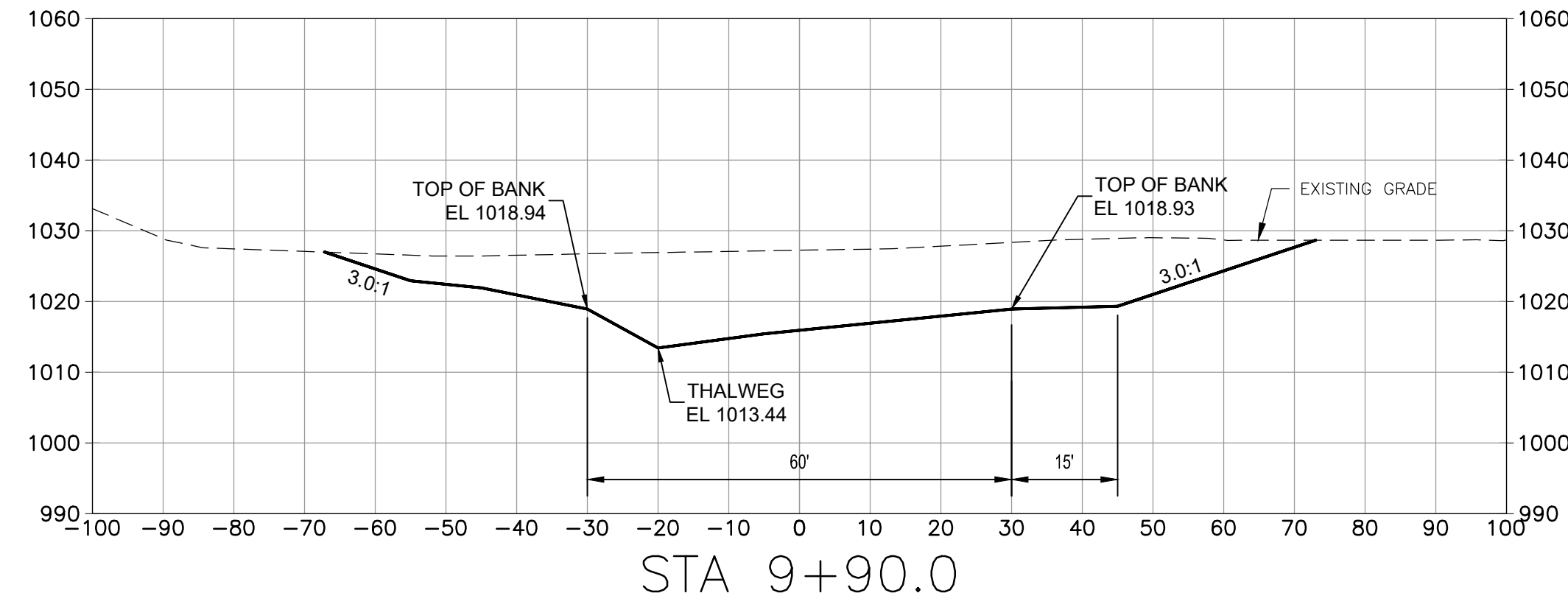
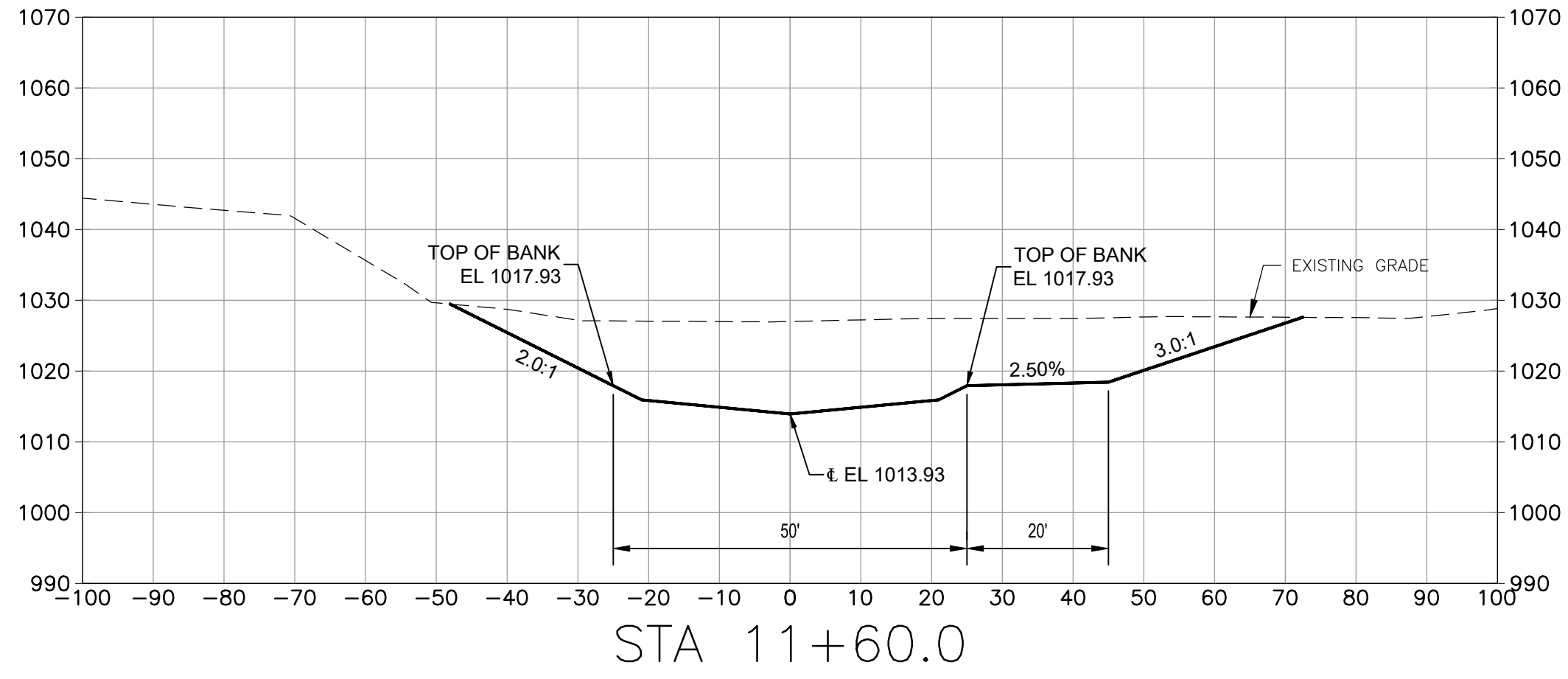
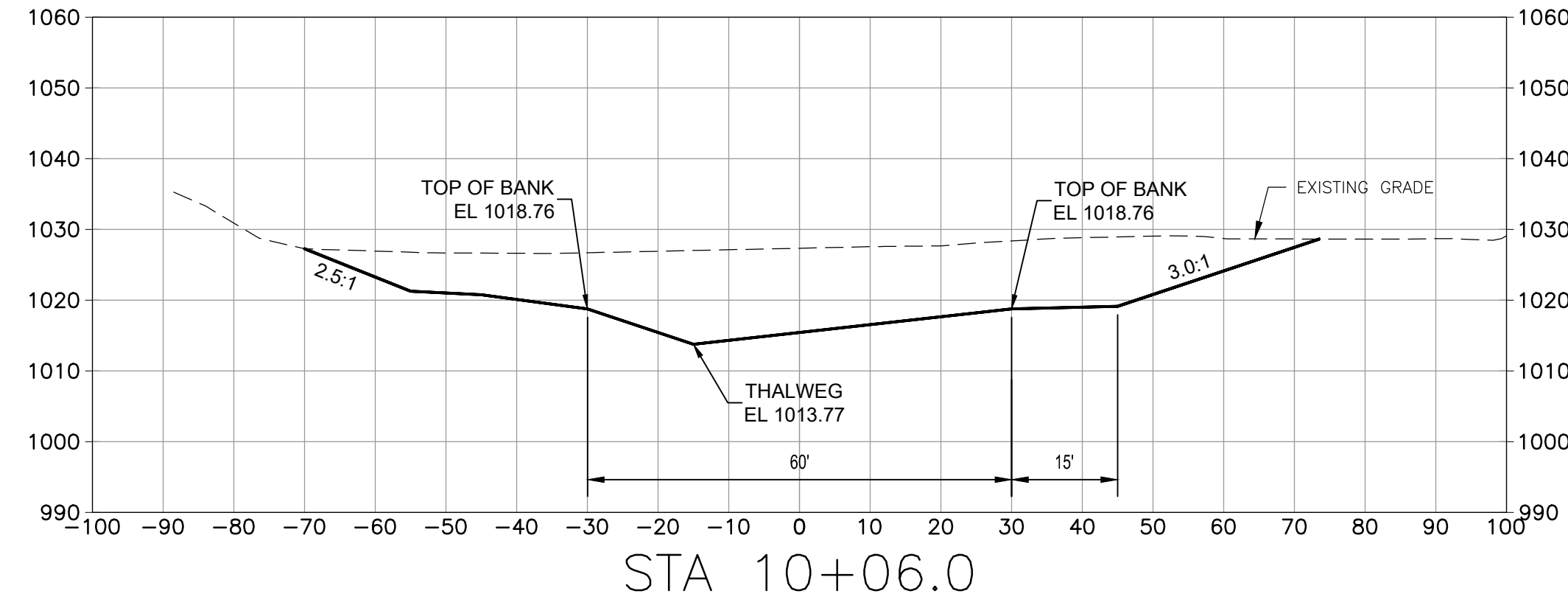
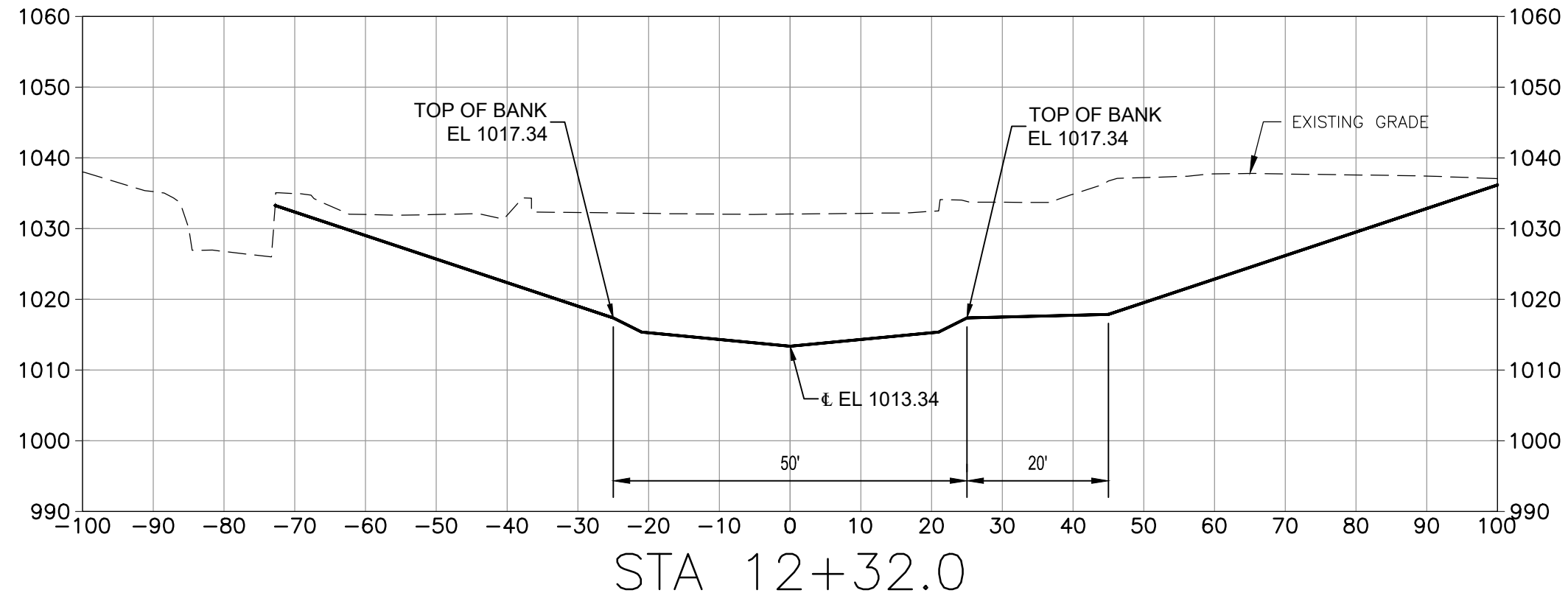
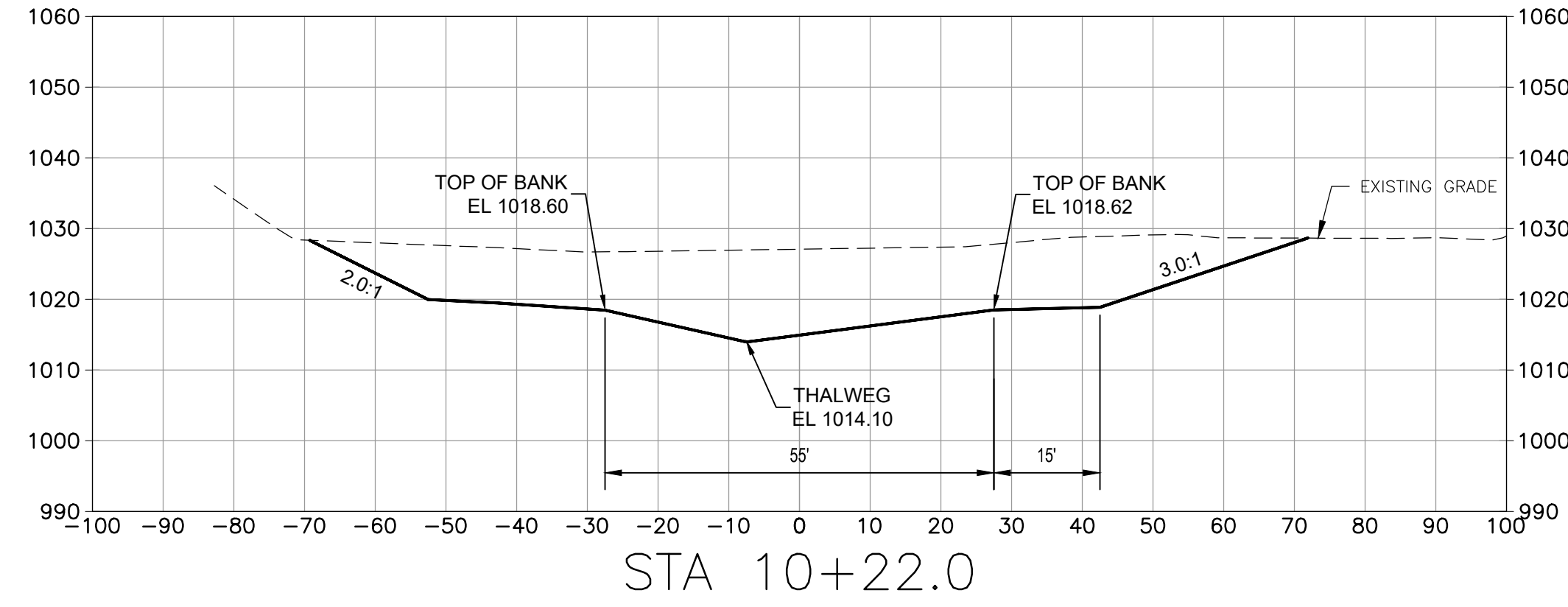
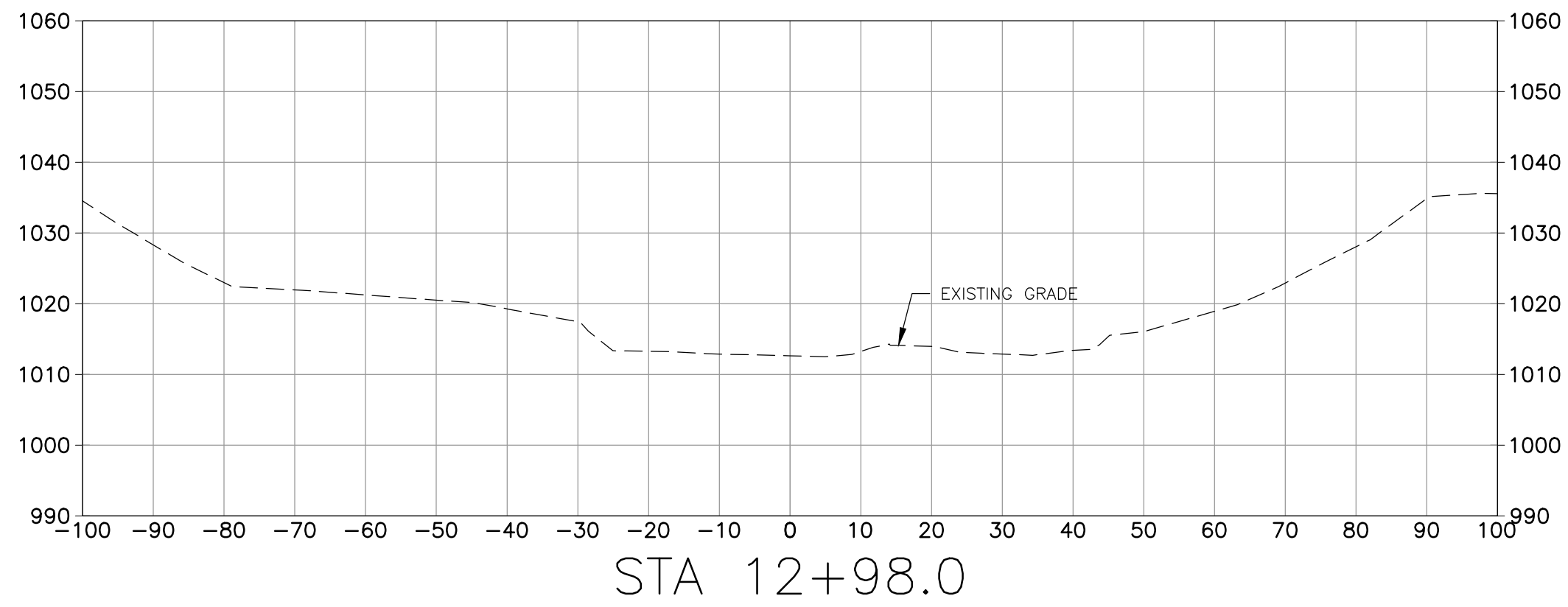
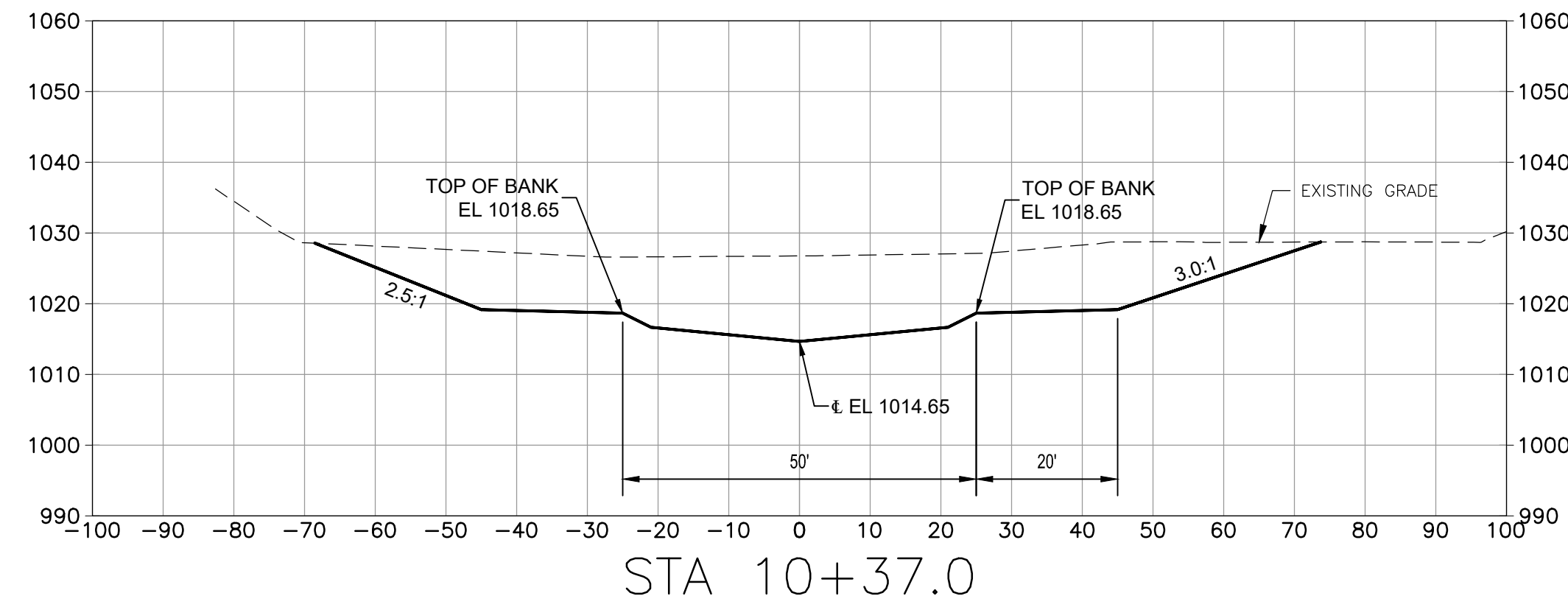
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SHEET TITLE

BEL AIR DAM REMOVAL
SECTIONS 3 OF 3

SHEET NUMBER

00 C-303



SECTIONS - BEL AIR CHANNEL

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 1"=20' VERT



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