

**Land Stewardship Proposal for Lake Britton Planning Unit  
Proposed Recipient: Alturas Field Office, BLM**

## PART 1 – ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

### Contact Information

**Primary Contact:**

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### Executive Summary

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is interested in obtaining the lands outlined in the attached map (Attachment 1) because they are near public lands which the BLM already manages. Acquiring fee simple title to these lands would provide the BLM an opportunity to manage contiguous open space for current and future generations; providing increased access for public recreation, fish and wildlife habitat monitoring and improvement projects, and preservation of cultural and historic points of interest.

The BLM has a full time staff of specialists such as; recreation planner, botanist, wildlife biologist, forester, and archeologist who are well versed in managing a variety of lands for the public. The BLM, Alturas Field Office (AFO) currently manages land within the Pit-McCloud River Watershed and is familiar with the sensitive species, cultural resources, and noxious weeds found within the watershed. The BLM has specific protocols in place for consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding endangered species and with the State Office of Historic Preservation regarding cultural resources. The Field Office also consults regularly with the Pit River Tribe regarding a wide range of resource management issues and coordinates with Shasta County to help reduce the spread of noxious weeds. Coordination efforts also involve Lassen National Forest, California State Parks, Fall River Community Services District, and local interest groups such as the Spring Rivers Foundation.

### Organizational Information

- A federal entity
- Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Alturas Field Office
- Alturas BLM
- As a federal entity the BLM is tax exempt
- See attached letter of support from the BLM California Acting State Director (Attachment 2)

## **Rationale for Applying**

- The BLM is interested in obtaining the lands outlined on the attached map because they are adjacent to public lands which the BLM already manages. Acquiring fee simple title to these lands would provide the BLM an opportunity to manage contiguous open space for current and future generations; provide increased access for public recreation; conduct fish and wildlife habitat monitoring and improvement projects; and preserve cultural and historic points of interest.

## **Organizational Mission**

- It is the mission of the BLM to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. As a public land management agency, the BLM is committed to managing lands for the long-term.

## **Geographic Focus**

- Lake Britton (approximately 1,520 acres fee title, 87 acres easement)

The AFO currently manages several hundred acres of public land adjacent to PG&E parcels throughout the Lake Britton Planning Unit.

The staff members of the AFO are intimately familiar with the resources of the area and have ongoing working relationships with local community members as well as the Pit River Tribe and Shasta County Board of Supervisors.

## **Organizational Experience and Capacity**

- In cooperation with the United States Forest Service and counties within a 6.5 million acre planning area, the AFO led development of and is currently implementing a sagebrush steppe restoration strategy. The goal of the strategy is to reduce western juniper encroachment in an environmentally responsible manner utilizing prescribed fire, mechanical and hand treatment techniques. For the first decade of the implementation the agencies have a collective objective of treating 14,000 to 21,000 acres annually.

In cooperation and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shasta County, the Spring River Foundation, and the general public the AFO developed and has ongoing management of the BLM's Pit River Campground. The campground is located in the center of the Fall River Mills Planning Unit and provides the public with an outstanding recreational opportunity.

The AFO has also developed interdisciplinary management plans focusing on riparian restoration in areas such as Cedar Creek and Fitzhugh Creek.

- The AFO currently manages approximately 503,000 acres of public land throughout Modoc, Shasta, Lassen, and Siskiyou Counties.

### **Organizational Finances**

- The AFO has an annual resource and fire management budget of \$2 million. The BLM has never received anything other than a clean budget audit review.
- The United States of America, and its assigns would take title to the land. Any money given to BLM from the Stewardship Council would be used on those specifically identified projects within each parcel that the funds were requested for. By law timber or lease revenue funds are deposited in the Treasury. However, funds to be expended by the AFO will far exceed potential revenue.

### **Key Personnel/Staff**

- Tim Burke, Field Office Manager
- Claude Singleton, Recreation Planner
- Arlene Kusic, Wildlife Biologist
- Jack Scott, Archeologist
- Peter Hall, Forester
- Kiley Whited, Rangeland Management Specialist
- Jerry Wheeler, Fire Management Officer
- Dave McKirahan, Engineer Technician
- Emily Jennings, Realty Specialist/NEPA Coordinator
- Mike Dolan, Botanist
- Alan Uchida, Rangeland Management Specialist/Noxious Weeds Coordinator

### **Community Engagement and Collaboration**

- The AFO staff has extensive community engagement and collaboration experience in communities throughout the resource area and is currently initiating planning for the Cinder Cone Off Highway Vehicle area involving public meetings and field tours. The BLM also has an obligation under the National Environmental Policy Act to include and collaborate with the public during the development of any land management plan.

### **Legal Compliance and Best Practice**

- The AFO signed a Record of Decision for the Alturas Resource Management Plan in April 2008, which is in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The BLM also operates under Best Management Practices described throughout the Code of Federal Regulations and Departmental Policies and Memorandums.

### **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

- Karla Norris, Assistant Deputy State Director in the BLM California State Office, is a non-voting member of the Stewardship Council's board.

## PART 2 – LAND STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION

### Land Interests Sought

- *Please identify the specific parcel(s) or portions of parcels that your organization is interested in receiving in fee title. Please refer to the background information packet for parcel identification numbers and approximate acreage.*

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alturas Field Office (AFO) is interested in 1,520 acres fee title and 87 acres easement in the following PG&E parcels: ID #'s 211-219, 231, most of 232, most of 236, 237-238, 240

- *Please indicate if the transfer of the watershed lands identified above would require a lot line adjustment, boundary survey, or legal parcel split. Please describe any proposed lot line adjustment, boundary survey, or parcel split and indicate why the proposed measure is necessary and how the proposed lot line adjustment or parcel split would contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the BPVs. Please include these costs in your organization's budget and funding plan and indicate if your organization would contribute funds for these costs.*

There may be a need for a legal parcel split within all of the above listed parcels, except parcels 211-219, where the FERC boundary divides the parcel. The BLM is concerned this division of the parcel would hinder the ability of the agency to meet the Beneficial Public Values (public access and interpretive signage throughout the planning unit at public access points) outlined in the Stewardship Council Land Conservation Plan, Volume II because the agency would not be able to manage the land within the FERC boundary. If it is not possible for BLM to acquire fee title to the area within the FERC boundary then the agency would request to hold the easement over these acres.

There is a potential for BLM cadastral surveyors to assist in the surveys in a cost share agreement with the Stewardship Council should the Council deem the parcel splits necessary.

- *Please provide an overview of your organization's internal process for approving the acquisition of, and completing the transaction associated with, real property.*

The acquisition of the fee estate on parcels of land provides BLM the opportunity to protect threatened natural and cultural resource values, critical habitat and ecosystems, historic and cultural sites, and fulfill the public's need for outdoor recreation and open space. Land acquisitions support the BLM strategic goals by providing opportunities for

environmentally responsible recreation and preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.

The 2008 Alturas Resource Management Plan identifies acquisition of up to 8,458 acres of PG&E land in the area as a priority management objective. As such, the initial planning and NEPA work has already been completed.

PROCESSING STEPS
<b>PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING</b>
• Conduct initial inspection of property. Complete Certificate of Inspection and Possession.
• Conduct Pre-Acquisition Environmental Site Assessment.
• Prepare NEPA document for proposed acquisition and alternatives.
• Prepare decision document.
<b>DOCUMENT PREPARATION</b>
• Obtain title evidence and evaluate title encumbrances.
• Examine adequacy of the legal description for lands to be acquired.
• Obtain appraisal of rights to be acquired.
• Prepare acquisition documents -- 1. Deed 2. Land Acquisition Voucher Certificate, Form 1370-32 3. Vicinity Map 4. Grantor's Hazardous Materials Certification for Fee Acquisitions (if not included in Environmental Site Assessment as Interview with Landowner)
<b>TITLE TRANSFER / CLOSING</b>
• For closing in escrow, prepare escrow and closing instructions.
• Obtain preliminary title opinion.
• Execute documents.
• Request payment of consideration.
• Deposit documents in escrow.
• Complete Certificate of Inspection and Possession just prior to closing or recording deed.
• Record deed if not closed in escrow.
• Obtain final title evidence on U.S. ALTA policy form.
• Obtain final title opinion.
<b>POST ACQUISITION ACTIONS</b>
• Request notation of the action to the official land status records.
• Prepare news release announcing completion of the acquisition, if

applicable.
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update real property records, as required.</li></ul> |
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### **Baseline and Enhanced Land Management**

- *Please describe baseline and enhanced management activities or practices identified in your organization's proposed project budget and funding plan.*

Baseline management of the parcel would include regular patrolling of the property by law enforcement and other BLM personnel. The AFO recognizes the desire for public access for recreational purposes and would to maintain current public access points.

Enhanced management would be developed through a public planning process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The AFO would propose to install a directional sign on Highway 299 near the turn off for the Pit River Bridge parking and boat take-out area. In addition, a directional sign would be proposed at the junction for the boat take out area and the scenic peninsula overlook road. Parking lots and interpretive paneling would be proposed at both the scenic overlook and the boat take-out area.

Aside from the public access described above the AFO would propose that the remainder of the parcel remain as open space to serve as a scenic view shed for Highway 299.

The parcel would be inventoried for the following resources; cultural and historic sites, noxious weeds, and biological and botanical species. Appropriate habitat improvement projects would be proposed based on the results of botanical and biological surveys. Should any endangered or sensitive species be found within the parcels the AFO would initiate consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The AFO would propose to hire a Pit River Tribal member to serve as a cultural monitor for the parcels and hire a contractor to conduct an ethnographic study of the area.

Yellow star thistle is known to be present within the planning unit. The AFO currently has a treatment plan in place for lands adjacent to the parcels of interest, which was developed in coordination with Shasta County and the Pit River Tribe. It is anticipated that an intensive and extensive treatment plan for yellow star thistle would be developed for the area.

The AFO would also support youth education opportunities within the planning unit.

Should the BLM acquire the approximately 8,000 acres of PG&E land that it is interested in the AFO would seek funding to hire a full time staff member to oversee the

management and coordinate community activities of the newly acquired land. This staff member would most likely be co-located in the Hat Creek Ranger District Office. The AFO also would potentially proposed a shared fire engine, to be located at the Hat Creek Ranger District Office, in cooperation with the Forest Service.

Within two years of acquiring the parcel the AFO would have the necessary environmental documentation and site development designs in place and would provide the Stewardship Council with a cost share proposal for enhancements within three years of the acquisition.

### **Physical Enhancements/Capital Improvements**

- *Please describe and explain any proposed physical enhancements or capital improvements identified by your organization.*

Physical enhancements the BLM would propose are directly in line with the objectives outlined in Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP) for the Lake Britton Planning Unit. The LCP calls for the development scenic overlook above the peninsula as well as interpretive and directional signs near the Pit River Bridge. In addition, the LCP calls for biological, botanical, and cultural surveys which the BLM also proposes to complete. The AFO would also conduct a noxious weed inventory and develop an appropriate treatment plan in coordination with Shasta County if necessary. Historical and Cultural sites would also be inventoried and protected as needed and where appropriate interpretive signs would also be installed. Timber within the parcel would be managed to reduce fuel loads and meet the goals of a sustainable healthy forest.

Should the BLM acquire the parcel a public planning process would take place which could take up to two years to complete. During this time the AFO would also work on securing funding to complete the proposed projects as well as finalize development plans.

There would be onetime development costs for the parking lots, directional and interpretive signs, and yellow star thistle treatment. Once these facilities and treatments are in place the costs for the ongoing maintenance and patrolling of the area would be absorbed into the AFO's annual operating budget.

### **Land Conservation Partners and Youth Opportunities**

- *Has your organization identified any potential land conservation partners to be involved in any of the proposed management or enhancement activities, including youth-related activities? If so, please name and describe their proposed role(s) and responsibilities.*



Potential partners include:

Pit River Tribe – identification, protection and interpretation of sensitive resources  
Spring Rivers Ecological Sciences – assessment of aquatic resources  
Fall River Community Services District – youth activities  
Fall River Resource Conservation District – site development  
California Department of Fish and Game – wild trout program  
Trout Unlimited – wild trout program  
Cal Trout – wild trout program  
Clearwater Lodge – recreation  
Shasta County – public access, recreation

### **Public Input**

- *Please describe how your organization has considered public input provided to the Stewardship Council to date in the development of this proposal.*

This Land Stewardship Plan closely mirrors the preservation and enhancement measures outlined in the Planning Unit Report, the Recommended Concept Table and Map and the Supporting Analysis. We have also reviewed the Public Comments and Responses and have considered them in the development of the Plan.

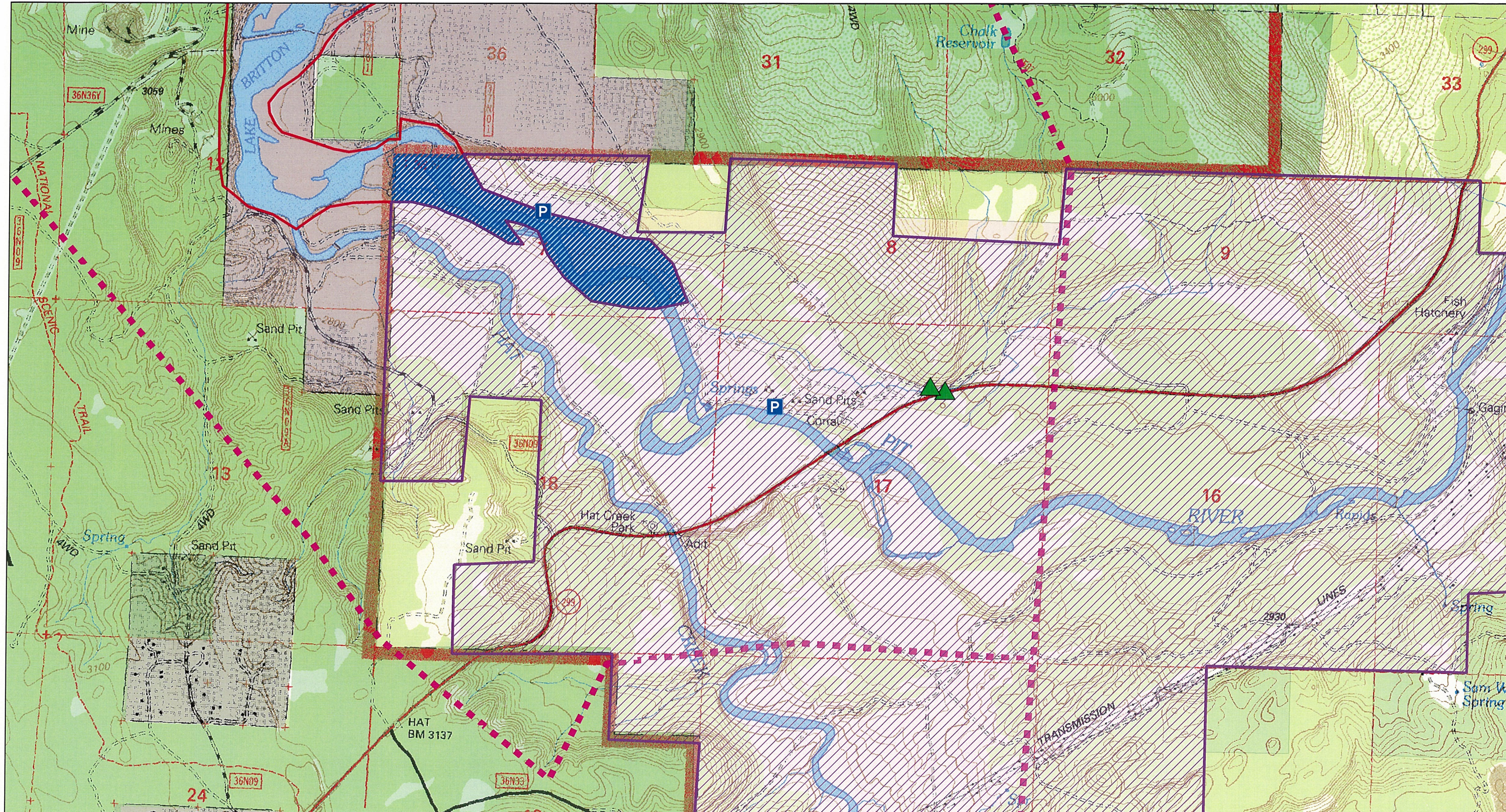
If this parcel were to be acquired by the BLM, the AFO would re-initiate a public planning process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and finalize management proposals.

### **Budget and Funding Plan**

- The BLM would absorb the costs for baseline management of the parcel but would propose a cost share agreement to the Stewardship Council for physical enhancements to the parcel.
- See Budget and Funding Plan (Submittal 2)

### **Attachments:**

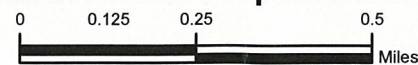
Attachment 1 – Map showing areas of interest and proposed enhancements  
Attachment 2 – Letter of support from BLM California Acting State Director



**Legend**

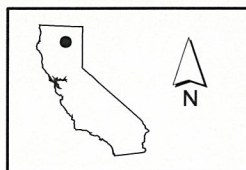
-  Lake Britton\_Proposed Directional Sign.shp
-  Lake Britton\_Proposed Parking Lot.shp
-  BLM Easement Interest
-  FERC Boundary
-  PGE Watershed Lands
-  PGE Planning Unit Boundary
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  US Forest Service
-  Private/Unclassified

**Lake Britton Planning Unit  
Bureau of Land Management  
Areas of Interest and Proposed Development**



Scale: 1:17,000

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregated use with other data. Original data was compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notice.



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 Date Prepared: 6/8/2010  
 Project: Fall River Valley Proposed Development



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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2100 (CA-910) P

July 29, 2010

Stewardship Council  
Attn: Ric Notini  
Director, Land Conservation Program  
15 N. Ellsworth Avenue, St. 100  
San Mateo, CA 94401

Dear Mr. Notini:

It is with pleasure that we submit this letter of support for the Alturas Field Office's participation in the Stewardship Council's land conservation process. We are fully aware of the ongoing discussions and coordination between the Field Office and the Stewardship Council staff.

PG&E property associated with the Pit 1 and 3 and the Hat 1 and 2 power projects have long been of interest to the BLM. These properties were identified as a priority for acquisition in the 2008 Alturas Resource Management Plan. Therefore, The California State Office approves the Alturas Field Office's submittal of Land Stewardship Proposals for the following Planning Units:

Fall River Valley  
Fall River Mills  
Lake Britton  
Hat Creek

Thanks for the opportunity to partner with you in this important conservation effort.

Sincerely,

James Wesley Abbott  
Acting State Director