

FEE TITLE DONEE RECOMMENDATION TUNNEL RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stewardship Council was created to oversee Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) Land Conservation Commitment, as set forth in the Settlement and Stipulation, to protect over 140,000 acres of land and to preserve and enhance, on an overall basis, the following six beneficial public values (BPVs): protection of the natural habitat of fish, wildlife, and plants; preservation of open space; outdoor recreation by the general public; sustainable forestry²; agricultural uses; and historic values. The Stewardship Council is responsible for developing a land conservation plan and recommending qualified organizations to become involved in the future stewardship of these lands.

The Tunnel Reservoir planning unit, located in Shasta County, consists of 30 legal parcels encompassing approximately 2,551 acres of land. Approximately 2,028 acres have been identified by PG&E as lands outside of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) project boundaries and not necessary for current and future utility operations. Therefore, these 2,028 acres of land have been made available for fee title donation. Stewardship Council staff received and evaluated three land stewardship proposals (LSPs) from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and the University of California Center for Forestry (UC) seeking fee title to a portion of the land available for donation in this planning unit. Based on an evaluation of each of the three proposals received, follow-up discussions with the potential donees, and consultation with members of the Watershed Planning Committee (Planning Committee), Stewardship Council staff developed the following recommendation, which was endorsed by the Planning Committee:

CAL FIRE to become the prospective recipient of fee title to approximately 1,796 acres available for donation within 20 parcels (Parcels 13-18, 22-25, 28-35, 38, and 41).

PG&E to retain fee title to approximately 232 acres available for donation within 17 parcels. This acreage is in addition to the 523 acres originally designated by PG&E for retention in this planning unit.

If this recommendation is adopted by the Stewardship Council Board (Board), Stewardship Council staff would work with the prospective donee on the development of a management and funding agreement. This agreement would be developed in coordination with the development of a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (LCCP). The proposed management and funding agreement and proposed LCCP would then be presented to the Board for consideration and approval.

¹ California Public Utilities Commission Decision 03-12-035, December 18, 2003 (the "Settlement") and the Stipulation Resolving Issues Regarding the Land Conservation Commitment dated September 25, 2003 (the "Stipulation").

² The Stewardship Council has adopted the following definition of "Sustainable Forestry": The practice of managing dynamic forest ecosystems to provide ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits for present and future generations.



I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

a. Planning Unit Description

The Tunnel Reservoir planning unit is located in Shasta County adjacent to the community of Big Bend. The unit contains the Pit River Canyon corridor and the Pit 4 and Pit 5 Reservoirs in addition to the Tunnel Reservoir. The lands within this planning unit are generally heavily forested and isolated, with access via several unimproved dirt roads.

Within the planning unit there is currently one license with Shasta County Fire for the Big Bend Fire Station, which is located on lands available for donation. The licensor's interest in this agreement would be assigned to the new fee owner at closing.

Day use activities in the planning unit include swimming, picnicking, berrypicking, sightseeing, hiking, and birdwatching. There are currently no formal day use sites, although the new FERC License requires (under the recreation management plan) adding day use facilities at the Pit 3 powerhouse and Pit 4 boat ramp areas, as well as enhancing the existing boat ramp. There is an informal day use area called the Powerline area, and two informal parking areas for day use at the Big Bend Bridge and Nelson Creek, a popular swimming location.

The three reservoirs and the Pit River corridor provide important riparian and aquatic habitat for many species, including special status species such as northwestern pond turtle, rough sculpin, hardhead, bigeye marbled sculpin, and several mollusks. Bald eagles, ospreys, and peregrine falcons nest within the planning unit. Bald eagles also winter in the area. The planning unit also supports critical deer winter range and a substantial native rainbow trout fishery.

The entire planning unit is contained within six PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs), totaling 2,123 acres. Most of the planning unit is currently managed by PG&E for sustainable timber production. A large portion of the planning unit was harvested in 2005 and 2006. The majority of the forests are second-growth mixed conifer stands. There are no plantations or late seral stage stands. Management of timber in the Pit 4 Reservoir area is restricted to mitigating for watershed and forest health issues, including emergency salvage harvesting following insect attack or a catastrophic event.

Grazing was eliminated in the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project area in the late 1980s to protect sensitive resources and water quality, and therefore grazing does not take place on lands within the FERC boundary in this planning unit. Lands outside the FERC project boundary are steep and heavily wooded and likely not suitable for grazing.

The Tunnel Reservoir planning unit is located within the ancestral territory of the Pit River Tribe. Relicensing studies conducted within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project cultural resource study area documented 19 cultural sites in the Pit 4 reach and 47 sites in the Pit 5 reach. Ethnographic studies documented 102 ethnographic locations within the cultural resource study area. Ethnobotanical resources have also been identified, such as hazel and redbud, which are of special importance to Native Americans for art, medicine, basketry, and cultural use.



b. Donee Evaluation Process

The Stewardship Council received statements of qualifications (SOQs) from five organizations interested in acquiring fee title to lands available for donation within this planning unit. A list of organizations that submitted SOQs is attached. Based on a review of the SOQs, all five organizations were invited to submit an LSP. Of these organizations, the following three organizations submitted LSPs for the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
- The University of California, Center for Forestry (UC)

In evaluating each of the LSPs, the following factors were considered:

- The potential donees' programmatic, financial, and legal capacity to maintain the property interest so as to preserve and/or enhance the beneficial public values of the planning unit;
- Anticipated funding needs of the potential donees;
- The management objectives for the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit as set forth in Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP);
- Public comments received regarding the desired qualifications of potential donees and the future stewardship of the planning unit;
- The requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation; and,
- Other relevant policies, procedures, and goals adopted by the Stewardship Council.

After completing an evaluation of the LSPs for the subject lands, Stewardship Council staff is recommending a donation of 1,796 acres to CAL FIRE.

II. EVALUATION

CAL FIRE is being recommended to receive a donation of fee title to lands within the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit as follows, subject to compliance with all of the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment:

CAL FIRE as the prospective recipient of fee title to approximately 1,796 acres available for donation within 20 parcels (Parcels 13-18, 22-25, 28-35, 38, and 41).

Additionally PG&E will retain approximately 755 acres of which 232 acres were designated as available for donation but constrained. A transfer of these 232 acres is not advised due to a lack of donee interest and the creation of parcels that would be difficult for a new landowner to manage in the future.

This recommendation is based on a determination that CAL FIRE possesses the financial and organizational capacity to hold and maintain fee title interests on these lands, and that the addition of these lands to the Demonstration State Forest system would result in the preservation



and/or enhancement of the BPVs. Evaluation of CAL FIRE and its LSP is further described below.

a. Donee Organizational Capacity

CAL FIRE is a major resource management, protection, and emergency response department within the California Natural Resources Agency. CAL FIRE's mission is to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California through its offices of Fire Protection, Resources Management, and State Fire Marshal. CAL FIRE has a wide breadth and depth of expertise in land management, archaeology, forestry, and other natural resource sciences, fire protection, law enforcement and recreation. With 4,700 permanent and 3,100 seasonal employees, including over 100 Registered Professional Foresters, CAL FIRE is responsible for protecting over 31 million acres of California's privately-owned wildlands, providing emergency services within 35 of California's 58 counties, and managing the Demonstration State Forest system.

CAL FIRE manages a network of eight Demonstration State Forests across California that encompasses a total of 71,000 acres. This network includes the high elevation 9,033 acre LaTour Demonstration State Forest in eastern Shasta County. The eight Demonstration State Forests are managed for sustainable forestry, applied research and demonstration projects on forest management, public recreation, education, fish and wildlife habitat, and watershed protection. The lands in this planning unit of interest to CAL FIRE would expand and complement the network of existing Demonstration State Forests across the State of California.

At each of the Demonstration State Forests, CAL FIRE works in cooperation with a variety of entities to implement research, fuels management, and fire protection activities. In Shasta County, CAL FIRE maintains an active role in research and professional forestry. CAL FIRE is a member of the Sierra-Cascade Intensive Forest Management Research Cooperative, maintains a close working relationship with the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station in Redding, and hosts several of their study installations at LaTour Demonstration State Forests. CAL FIRE maintains a close working relationship with the Department of Fish and Game and cooperates on joint wildlife studies at LaTour Demonstration State Forest. CAL FIRE maintains an active presence in local government, community, professional, conservation and recreation organizations in this area. CAL FIRE currently works with a large number of groups in Shasta County, including the Western Shasta Resource Conservation District and the Cow Creek Watershed Management Group, where CAL FIRE holds a seat on the Board.

CAL FIRE has a wide range of existing research partners to collaborate with on the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit. These organizations include: the University of California, Humboldt State University, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, California Department of Fish and Game, California Energy Commission, USDA Forest Service, US Department of Energy, NOAA/Scripps, The Nature Conservancy, and others.

CAL FIRE supported and participated in the development of the Cow Creek Watershed Fuel Reduction Plan, the Lakehead Area Strategic Fuel Reduction Plan, and the Fire Safe Plan for the Shingletown Community. CAL FIRE's Shasta Trinity Unit (SHU) Vegetation Management Program implements cost-share projects for wildlife habitat improvement, noxious weed control, range improvement and wildfire hazard reduction, primarily through prescribed burning and Conservation Camp inmate labor. In Shasta County, Vegetation Management Program (VMP)



projects include an 850-acre wildlife habitat enhancement project in McArthur Swamp to improve waterfowl habitat. SHU has also participated in Defensible Space Residential Chipping Programs in the Community of Shingletown, which provided free chipping services to help clear vegetation around residential homes in compliance with fire safe clearance codes and fuel break projects.

CAL FIRE collaborates with archaeology departments and programs at state universities to assist in protecting historic and prehistoric archaeological resources. The universities conduct surveys and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis to protect archaeological resources on CAL FIRE properties and facilities (e.g., Demonstration State Forests, fire stations, conservation camps, and Unit headquarters) and on private or state lands where CAL FIRE implements its Vegetation Management Program and California Forest Improvement Program projects. This mutually beneficial collaboration has existed for 23 years, providing training opportunities for the universities and their students, while offering low-cost archaeological and environmental review services to CAL FIRE.

b. Donee Financial Capacity

CAL FIRE's financial capacity was evaluated based on a review of its operating budget for the current year, as well as financial statements for the three most recent fiscal years. Based on a review of financial statements submitted, CAL FIRE appears to possess the financial capacity to own and manage the lands being recommended for donation in the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit.

c. Management Objectives

Volume II of the LCP established certain management objectives for the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit (see Volume II Planning Unit Report with attachments). As described below, CAL FIRE is seeking fee title to lands within the planning unit to achieve a number of proposed management activities, which are consistent with the established management objectives.

CAL FIRE is seeking a fee title donation in the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit to establish a new Demonstration State Forest. This Demonstration State Forest would be incorporated into the existing Demonstration State Forest system which supports monitoring, adaptive management, and research on best forest management practices. The management of the lands donated to CAL FIRE and incorporated into the Demonstration State Forest system would be subject to oversight by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. This oversight would include review and approval of a management plan to guide the management of the lands.

Development of a Demonstration State Forest at the planning unit would achieve several of the recommended potential measures identified under the sustainable forestry objective for the planning unit and would align with the overall management objectives identified under the sustainable forestry BPV. The Tunnel Reservoir planning unit provides a representative site for monitoring, adaptive management, research, and demonstration on best management practices to support privately owned forestry enterprises that are both ecologically and financially sustainable.

Additionally, Demonstration State Forests are managed for a variety of recreation and habitat management objectives consistent with the BPVs. CAL FIRE proposes to undertake the following objectives and activities on lands conveyed to it in the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit:



- Establish a Demonstration State Forest that would encompass all the donated lands within the planning unit with a part time forest manager and other staff as needed.
- Implement a sustainable forestry research program focused on demonstrating best
 management practices for watershed protection. An important part of sustainable forestry
 for the planning unit would be the implementation and demonstration of forest
 management practices to maintain forest cover, protect soils, and reduce fuels and
 wildfire hazard.
- Develop a comprehensive, multi-resource management and sustained yield plan. The management plan would address biological resources, recreation, and cultural values.
- Promote opportunities to study, mitigate, and adapt to climate change through management, research, and demonstration.
- Seek public input on the development of the management plan through requests to the public for comments, public meetings, as well as via the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection plan review and approval process and California Environmental Quality Act.
- Implement an ecosystem monitoring and adaptive management program that includes a forest-wide, multi-resource inventory and monitoring system.
- Implement habitat protection and restoration in the context of an actively managed forest. Activities would be aimed at developing a robust forest ecosystem with a wide range of wildlife habitat features, providing for habitat resilience to wildfire, and implementing habitat restoration projects.
- Implement educational and recreational activities such as a rustic campground, public tours and hikes, displays, self-guided tours and/or science camps similar to activities implemented on other Demonstration State Forests. Activities would demonstrate best practices for forest management.
- Implement a program to protect cultural and historic resources. CAL FIRE has a department-wide cultural resources management plan that details measures for protection of cultural resources, which applies to all the Demonstration State Forests. The Tunnel Reservoir planning unit, if donated to CAL FIRE, would also be covered by this management plan. The Demonstration State Forests and the department's archeology staff have extensive experience with protecting cultural resources, accommodating tribal land use, and providing educational opportunities where appropriate.

CAL FIRE has indicated that it would maintain and manage the existing license with Shasta County Fire for the Big Bend Fire Station at the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit.

d. Funding

Consistent with the Stewardship Council's Land Conservation Funding Policy, the Stewardship Council may elect to fund certain costs related to the transfer of fee title, satisfaction of property tax neutrality requirements and/or costs of enhancements to the beneficial public values on watershed lands. Any costs to be funded by the Stewardship Council would be identified in a management and funding agreement to be developed by the Stewardship Council in coordination



with CAL FIRE, the prospective donee.

e. Requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation

The Stewardship Council's recommendation that CAL FIRE receive fee title to certain lands available for donation within this planning unit is subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment. Several of these requirements are highlighted below.

The Stewardship Council would work with PG&E and Shasta County to ensure the land conveyance of these parcels achieves property tax neutrality.

A conservation easement will be established on the lands within the planning unit. The conservation easement for lands that are donated will include an express reservation of rights for continued operation and maintenance of hydroelectric facilities and associated water delivery facilities, including project replacements and improvements required to meet existing and future water delivery requirements for power generation and consumptive water use by existing users, and compliance with any FERC license, FERC license renewal, or other regulatory requirements on lands to be retained by PG&E. On lands to be conveyed to CAL FIRE, the grant deed would reserve to PG&E similar rights for operation and maintenance of hydroelectric facilities and associated water delivery facilities.

Consistent with the Settlement Agreement, any existing agreements for economic uses must also be honored.

f. Conservation Partners

The permanent protection of the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit and the future preservation and enhancement of the BPVs may benefit from the participation of land conservation partners. For the purposes of this recommendation, land conservation partners are defined as an organization, other than the prospective fee title donee or conservation easement holder, involved in future activities on the donated lands that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the BPVs. Land conservation partners may be identified in the LSPs submitted by organizations interested in a fee title donation, or during or after the development of the LCCP. Such organizations and activities may be eligible for Stewardship Council funding, depending on the type of organization, proposed activities, availability of funds, and other factors. Staff would work with the prospective organizations recommended for donation of fee title and conservation easements in this planning unit and evaluate opportunities for land conservation partners. The results of this effort would be reflected in the management and funding agreements and LCCP.

CAL FIRE identified potential partnerships for management and enhancement activities with the University of California, Western Shasta Resource Conservation District, USDA Forest Service Pacific Forest Southwest Research Station, and the California Department of Fish and Game. Letters of support from many of these organizations are included in CAL FIRE's LSP.

The LaTour Demonstration State Forest has a memorandum of understanding with the California Department of Fish and Game that formalizes a cooperative research and monitoring program to study the effects of different silvicultural practices on wildlife habitat. This agreement would extend to the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit, if donated. Moreover, CAL FIRE is a leading



member of the California Growth and Yield Model Cooperative, an organization dedicated to improving existing models to project forest growth and development under different management treatments. CAL FIRE also contributes to the Sierra-Cascade Intensive Forest Management Research Cooperative, a group of research organizations, landowners, and agencies dedicated to advancing applied silvicultural research. CAL FIRE would work with these same entities to conduct and promote research on the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit.

CAL FIRE collaborates with many community organizations on fire prevention and fire hazard reduction activities. CAL FIRE partnered with Shasta County Fire Safe Council to develop shaded fuel breaks at Rock Creek, Walker Mine, and Lower Springs using conservation camp inmate labor. Similar projects have also been implemented in partnership with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, Shasta-Trinity and Lassen National Forests, and private timberland owners. CAL FIRE also partnered with the Western Shasta Resource Conservation District on fuel break installation and maintenance in the communities of Old Shasta, Shasta Lake, Ingot, Centerville, Whitmore, and Shingletown. CAL FIRE expects to cooperate with most of these entities on fuels management projects and potentially recreation and habitat management activities for the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Stewardship Council has implemented a public outreach program to engage stakeholders and solicit public input on the development and implementation of the land conservation plan. A summary of key public outreach activities and public comments associated with the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit is attached. Additional public comments received concerning this recommendation will be provided to the Board for consideration.

IV. RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending that fee title to the 1,796 acres of lands available be donated to CAL FIRE for the following reasons:

- Donation of these lands would further one of the key goals of the Land Conservation Commitment of donating lands to a qualified organization with the financial and organizational capacity to preserve and enhance the BPVs.
- CAL FIRE has significant capacity and interest in preserving and/or enhancing the BPVs associated with these lands based on their years of experience managing the Demonstration State Forest lands for similar resource values.
- Lands donated to CAL FIRE would become part of the Demonstration State Forest system and subject to oversight by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, including policies and procedures requiring public review and input of CAL FIRE's management activities.
- Donation of these lands to CAL FIRE would increase the likelihood that the BPVs would be enhanced in the future. CAL FIRE has proposed the following actions and activities that would contribute to the preservation and/or enhancement of BPVs:



- Enhance management to create a diversity of forest stand structural conditions across the landscape.
- Enhance fuels management beyond current practices.
- Create a research and demonstration program where one has not existed before.
- Support recreation and education including activities such as science camps, tours and hikes, displays, and self-guided trails.
- Enhance public education by adding signs, and hosting public and private tours to demonstrate research and best management practices.
- Enhance protection of biological resources through comprehensive surveys, inventory, management, and monitoring and sharing this information with government agencies, landowners, and the general public through CAL FIRE's forest resources information system.
- Enhance opportunities for education and preservation of historical and cultural values through surveys and inventory of historical resources and cultural sites, as required by law and Governor's Executive Order, and incorporating this information into the Management Plan for Historic Buildings and Archaeological Sites.
- Donation of these lands to CAL FIRE would advance the burgeoning field of sustainable forestry and climate change research by providing CAL FIRE with additional lands for research and demonstration, with benefits that would extend well beyond the watershed lands.

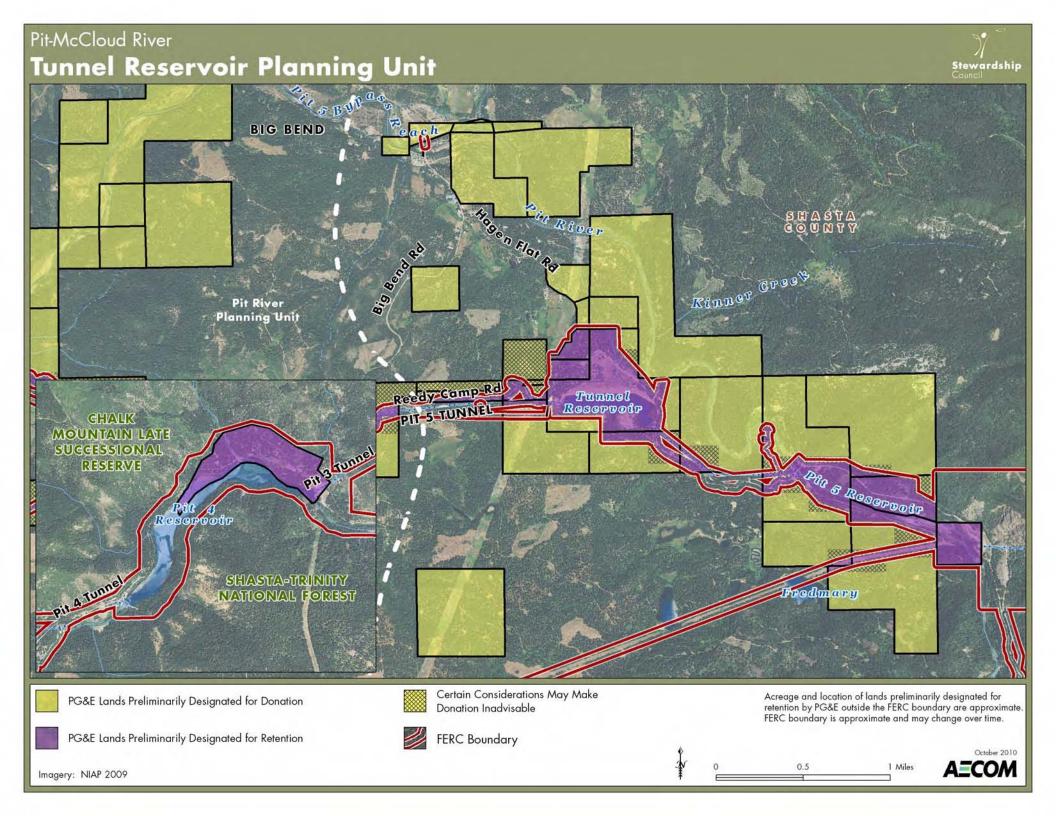
V. NEXT STEPS

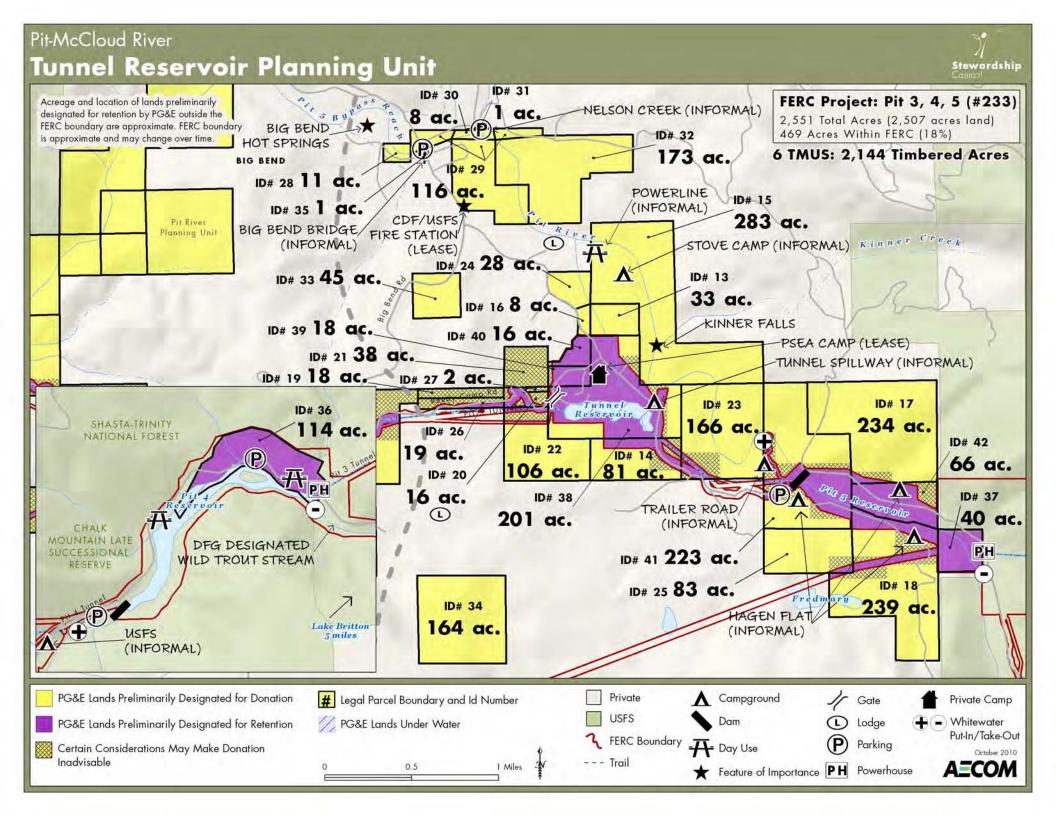
If this recommendation is adopted by the Board, staff would invite CAL FIRE to negotiate specific terms of the transactions with PG&E and would work with CAL FIRE to develop a management and funding agreement. The development of a management and funding agreement would be coordinated with the development of an LCCP.

Adoption of the LCCP by the Board would be the final step in the Stewardship Council's process for selecting donees. The proposed LCCP would be made available for public review and comment before it is approved by the Board.

ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit Map
- LCP Volume II Planning Unit Report for the Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit
- List of Registered Organizations That Submitted SOQs for Lands Available in the Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit
- Summary of Key Public Outreach Activities and Public Comments Associated with the Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit





Pit-McCloud River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

Overview

- Scenic river corridor and small reservoirs;
 2,555 acres in Shasta County
- 2,086 acres outside the FERC boundary; 469 acres inside the FERC boundary
- Part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project (FERC #233), New License issued July 2007

The Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit is located in Shasta County adjacent to the community of Big Bend (see Figure PM-11). The unit contains the Pit River Canyon corridor and the Pit 4 and Pit 5 Reservoirs in addition to the Tunnel Reservoir. The planning unit contains lands that are part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 FERC Project (#233) as well as hydropower infrastructure consisting of the Pit 3 Powerhouse, Pit 4 Powerhouse, Pit 5 Dam, Pit 5 Tunnel, and Tunnel Reservoir, which functions as an open portion of the Pit 5 Tunnel. PG&E was issued a New License for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project on July 2, 2007. The Pit 4 Reservoir area is completely surrounded by Lassen National Forest. Lands near the Pit 4 Powerhouse are bordered to the east by Lassen National Forest; private land surrounds the rest of the planning unit. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and USFS jointly operate a



Tunnel Reservoir



Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit Shasta County

fire station on leased planning unit land near Big Bend.

The stretch of the Pit River in the planning unit, referred to as the Pit 5 bypass reach (so called because most of the flow is diverted to the downstream Pit 5 Powerhouse), is within the Pit River Canyon, a 26-mile stretch of the river from the Pit 3 Dam to the Pit 5 Powerhouse. The largest of the three reservoirs in the planning unit, Pit 4 Reservoir, has 105 surface acres, while the long and narrow Pit 5 Reservoir has 32 surface acres, and the Tunnel Reservoir has 48 surface acres. The water level in each reservoir can fluctuate several feet each day due to power peaking operations. However, the Pit 3, 4, 5 New License requires a reduction in the magnitude of surface elevation fluctuation at Pit 4 Reservoir.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

The three reservoirs and the Pit River corridor provide important riparian and aquatic habitat for many species, including special status species such as northwestern pond turtle, rough sculpin, hardhead, bigeye marbled sculpin, and several mollusks. Bald eagles, ospreys, and peregrine falcons nest within the planning unit, and bald



Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit Existing Conditions

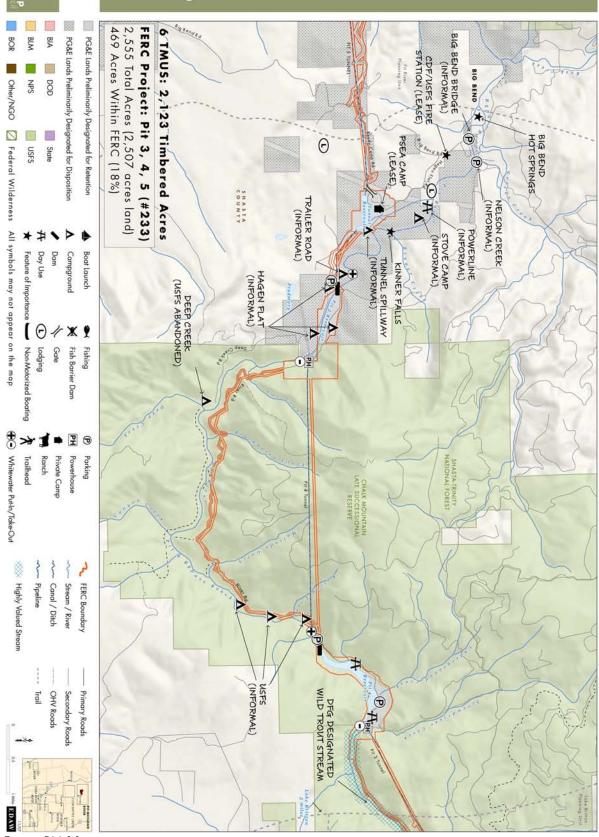


Figure PM-11

Pit-McCloud River Watershed

eagles also winter in the area. The planning unit also supports critical deer winter range and a substantial native rainbow trout fishery.

During recent botanical surveys, one sensitive plant was mapped in the planning unit, and a new species of plant, the Ishi jewelflower, was discovered. The Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit is located adjacent to the USFS-designated Chalk Mountain Late Successional Reserve (LSR), which contains late successional forest habitat and five spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs). Several habitat and species-related measures and plans are required in the New License.¹

Open Space

The planning unit contains open space around the three reservoirs and along the Pit 5 bypass reach. Due to a lack of development, steepness of the Pit River Canyon, and limited recreation facilities, open space values are found throughout the planning unit. The Shasta County General Plan recognizes that rivers, creeks and associated riparian corridors, and floodplains within the county are major open space resources. Lands adjacent to the town of Big Bend provide open space and viewsheds for this community. Lands along Hagen Flat/River Road provide views for the main thoroughfare in the Pit River Canyon.

Outdoor Recreation

The majority of recreational use within this remote planning unit consists of fishing and primitive camping. Relicensing studies indicated that the main activity for nearly all Pit River Canyon visitors is fly fishing. Anglers access the river from many sites and roads as well as user-created trails. Four dispersed camping areas exist along the Pit 5 bypass reach within the planning unit; however, there are currently no facilities at any of these areas. There is also one leased camp in the planning unit, called Camp Pit, which provides 17 cabins and a swimming pool for Pacific Service Employees Association (PSEA) member use only.

Day use activities in the planning unit include swimming, picnicking, berrypicking, sightseeing, hiking, and birdwatching. There are currently no formal day use sites, although the New License requires (under the recreation management plan) adding day use facilities at the Pit 3 Powerhouse and Pit 4 boat ramp areas, as well as enhancing the boat ramp.² There is an informal day use area called the Powerline area, and two informal parking areas for day use at the Big Bend Bridge and Nelson Creek, a popular swimming location. There are several hot springs around Big Bend, one of which is a formal site on private property. Various hiking trails, many of which provide river access on a steep grade, are found in the planning unit. Other recreation activities in the Pit River Canyon include hunting, tubing, and whitewater boating. Hunting in the area is mainly by local residents for deer and bear. Tubing is popular between the PSEA camp and Kinner Falls. Whitewater boating occurs in the Pit 5 bypass reach, which provides a Class IV to V whitewater run. There is currently no boating allowed on the Pit 4, 5 or Tunnel Reservoirs under Shasta County ordinances. However, under the FERC license required recreation management plan, changes to the ordinance for the Pit 4 Reservoir will be recommended to Shasta County to allow public non-motorized boating on the reservoir between August 1 and December 31. Many other recreation-related enhancements and plans are required in the New License.3



Pit 4 Reservoir

Pit-McCloud River Watershed



Timber harvesting in the planning unit

Forest Resources

The entire planning unit is contained within six PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs), totaling 2,123 acres. Most of the planning unit is currently managed by PG&E for sustainable timber production, and most (except for the Pit 4 Reservoir) was harvested in 2005 or 2006. The majority of the forests are second-growth mixed conifer stands. There are no plantations or late seral stage stands, although the Pit 4 Reservoir lands contain scattered old-growth trees. Management of timber in the Pit 4 Reservoir area is restricted to mitigating for watershed and forest health issues, including emergency salvage harvesting following insect attack or a catastrophic event. Between 1911 and 2001, there have been two fires that have affected more than 300 acres in the vicinity of the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project; one located north of the Pit 4 Reservoir and the other in the Pit 5 Tunnel area. Smaller fires have been more frequent, particularly around the Big Bend area and along highways, and less so in recreation areas and project facilities within the canyon. A fire management and response plan is required in the New License.

Agricultural Uses

Grazing was eliminated in the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project area in the late 1980s to protect sensitive resources and water quality, and therefore grazing does not take place on lands within the FERC boundary in this planning unit. In the Final EIS

for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project, FERC commented that grazing should not be reinstated on those lands; furthermore lands outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project boundary are steep and heavily wooded and therefore likely not suitable for grazing.

Historic Resources

The Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit is located within the ancestral territory of the Pit River Tribe. Relicensing studies within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project cultural resource study area documented 19 cultural sites in the Pit 4 reach (which includes the Pit 4 Reservoir), and 47 sites in the Pit 5 reach.⁴ Ethnographic studies documented 102 ethnographic locations within the cultural resource study area. Ethnobotanical resources have been identified in the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project area, such as hazel and redbud, which are of special importance to Native Americans for art, medicine, basketry, and cultural use. The Pit 3, 4, 5 Hydroelectric System was determined to be eligible for listing in the NRHP as an historic district. Some system components within the planning unit are also individually eligible for inclusion on the NRHP including the Pit 3 Powerhouse, Pit 5 Diversion Dam, and Pit 5 Open Conduit Dam. A final historic properties management plan (HPMP), including monitoring and protection measures for sites, is required in the New License.



Pit River Canyon

TUNNEL RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT Pit-McCloud River Watershed

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at the Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit be preserved and enhanced by focusing on the valuable habitat, unique primitive camping and angling recreation opportunities, substantial forest resources, and the cultural resources prevalent throughout the planning unit. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to preserve and enhance habitat, cultural, and forest resources while also enhancing the primitive recreation setting and encouraging appropriate recreation behavior. We recommend this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E. the USFS, and license compliance efforts for the area.

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological and cultural resources, and enhance recreation opportunities and sustainable forestry management.

As shown on Table PM-6, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit. Additional detail and background regarding these potential measures can be found in the Supporting Analysis for Recommendations, provided under separate cover. These measures are intended to be illustrative in nature, not prescriptive, and will be amended, deleted, or augmented over time in coordination with future land owners and managers to best meet the objective for this planning unit.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Objective: Preserve and enhance habitat in order to protect and restore special biological resources.



View from Pit 5 Dam

The Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit contains aquatic and terrestrial habitat supporting a wide variety of wildlife, including several special status species. In order to preserve and enhance the habitat and resources found here, and the recreational experience that is interconnected with this natural environment, the Stewardship Council recommends that baseline studies and plans be developed to gain a clear understanding of the resources (particularly outside the FERC boundary where little information is currently available). These studies will likely be followed by management plans to ensure implementation of preservation and enhancement measures for specific resources. Management of the property to preserve and enhance habitat will also include addressing noxious weeds.

Additional measures are recommended to restore OHV-damaged areas, support river clean-ups, assess resource impacts of trails, and assess the potential for enhancing special status turtle habitat. The Stewardship Council also recommends assessing the potential for a native plant nursery, assessing the planning unit for road restoration, closure or conversion to non-motorized trails, and abiding by the USFWS Pit 3, 4, 5 Biological Opinion where appropriate. All of the recommended evaluations, restoration, and plans should be consistent with relevant FERC license required plans and should evaluate any potential impacts to other resources prior to implementation. We encourage close coordination with the USFS, USFWS, Native

Pit-McCloud River Watershed

American entities, and other resource-focused organizations working in the area, and all planning should be considered in conjunction with the fuels and forest management plans.

Open Space

Objective: Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources and the recreation setting.

This concept would preserve open space through permanent conservation easements. This concept includes restoration with little recreation development and is therefore not expected to decrease the scenic quality of the viewsheds. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed and the requirement to maintain scenic qualities.

Outdoor Recreation

Objective: Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional public access, educational opportunities and recreation management, and to enhance the recreation experience.

The Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit provides many opportunities for visitors to enjoy primitive



Harvested timber within the planning unit

camping, angling, hiking, and other activities in a remote and rugged setting. However, the area has sustained extensive degradation from inappropriate recreation use. As shown in Figure PM-12, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance these opportunities by recommending increased management and restoration in dispersed use areas. We recommend enhancements focused on monitoring recreation use at informal sites, developing a dispersed camping management and restoration plan, and installing signage regarding methods of low impact recreation at dispersed camping areas. The Stewardship Council also recommends enhancing public recreation access at the PSEA camp, improving a trail to the Pit River, and increasing opportunities for youth education and recreation. We encourage close coordination of these measures with relevant FERC license required plans.

Sustainable Forestry

Objective: Develop and implement forestry practices in order to contribute to a sustainable forest, preserve and enhance habitat, as well as to ensure appropriate fuel load and fire management.

The entire Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit is forested and primarily managed for sustainable timber production, but also contains late successional habitat in the Pit 4 Reservoir area. The Stewardship Council recommends that future care and management of the land include developing a long-term vision for forest management in the area, addressing silvicultural practices, holistic watershed management, fuels management, and fire management and response. Identifying and protecting late successional habitat in the Pit 4 Reservoir area for management and recovery of the northern spotted owl is also recommended. The fire management and response, fuels, and forest management plans should be developed in conjunction with the noxious weed and wildlife and habitat management plans as well as relevant FERC license required plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination

TUNNEL RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT Pit-McCloud River Watershed

with adjacent landowners, CDF, and USFS management and practices as appropriate.

Preservation of Historic Values

Objective: Identify and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection.

Though studies have identified many prehistoric, historic, and ethnographic sties within the FERC cultural resource study area, much of the planning unit has not been studied and has a high likelihood of also containing cultural resources. The Stewardship Council aims to support an increased understanding of these resources and ensure they are appropriately protected. To meet this objective, we recommend that cultural resource studies be conducted to understand the resources found in the Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit (particularly outside the FERC cultural resource study area where less information is available), and that appropriate management plans be developed and implemented. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with Native American entities. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with the FERC license required Pit 3, 4, 5 Project final HPMP.

an information, education, and interpretation plan; a recreation monitoring and reporting plan; provision of whitewater flow information to the public; measures to provide new and upgraded project-related recreational facilities and trails within the project area; providing a new day use area at Pit 5 or Tunnel Reservoirs; and addressing several recreation-related issues along the bypass reach. The New License also requires development of a visual management plan, sign plan, and an OHV and vehicle management plan as a component of the road and facilities management plan. ⁴ Cultural sites are varied and include shell middens, house pits, lithic scatters, cairns, an historic railroad, road refuse scatters, and historic residential camps, construction camps, roads, and fences.

Endnotes

- ¹ Some of the habitat-related FERC license required measures include: a gravel management plan, a large woody debris management plan, a Biological Resources Program Technical Review Group, fish population trend and conditions monitoring in project reservoirs and river reaches, a western pond turtle monitoring plan, updating the Interagency Bald Eagle Management Plan, a terrestrial wildlife mitigation and monitoring plan, a vegetation and invasive weed management plan, a northern spotted owl protection plan, and a spoil pile management plan.
- ² The Pit 5 bypass reach receives about 50% of the camping use within the Pit River Canyon, but only about 7% of the day use.
- ³ Relevant recreation-related measures required in the New License under the recreation management plan include: enhancing whitewater boating access points;



Harvested timber area

TUNNEL RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT Pit-McCloud River Watershed

This page intentionally left blank.

PM-54 LCP Volume II FINAL NOVEMBER 2007



Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit

Organizations That Submitted a Statement of Qualifications for Fee-Title Interests

Bureau of Land Management
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Shasta County
University of California
Western Shasta Resource Conservation District

SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TUNNEL RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

PUBLIC REVIEW OF VOLUMES I AND II OF THE LCP

The Draft Land Conservation Plan (LCP) Volumes I and II were released in June 2007 for a 60-day public comment period. During this time, the Stewardship Council held ten public meetings to publicize the availability of the Draft LCP and to encourage public comment. During public review of Volumes I and II of the LCP, there was one comment concerning the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit. Comments were received via email, the Stewardship Council website, and hardcopy letters. The comments were reviewed and responded to individually, and the text in the Draft LCP was revised as appropriate.

Public comments emphasized the following regarding the future management of the property:

• Support for enhancing public access by developing campground facilities and fishing access.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING FOR THE TUNNEL RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

A public information meeting was hosted by the Stewardship Council on March 24, 2011 at the Millville Grange Hall in Palo Cedro, California. The meeting concerned the following eight planning units: Battle Creek, Burney Gardens, Cow Creek, Iron Canyon Reservoir, Kilarc, Lake McCloud, Pit River, and Tunnel Reservoir. A total of 49 people attended and participated in the meeting, representing a wide variety of interests, including local and federal governments, community organizations, and community members. The meeting was advertised via an e-mail sent to contacts in our database, an announcement posted on the Stewardship Council's web site, a press release in the local newspaper, and a postcard sent to all landowners on record that reside within one mile of any PG&E parcel associated with the eight planning units that were the focus of the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was to: (1) provide a review and update on the Stewardship Council's Land Conservation Program; and, (2) solicit additional public input on future stewardship of the eight planning units. During the meeting, participants were invited to ask questions and provide comments on the eight planning units. Stations were set up with maps, other pertinent information, and easels with blank paper. Below is a summary of comments for the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit and Pit-McCloud watershed area that were recorded on the easels and provided on comment cards.

Tunnel Reservoir Planning Unit

Future landowner should manage trespassing to protect adjacent private property

General Comments Concerning the Pit-McCloud Watershed Area

- Concern expressed about an organization's financial capacity to own and manage the lands available for donation
- Timely updates should be posted on the Stewardship Council's website

- Support for lands available for donation to be transferred to CAL FIRE and/or Shasta County
- Concern expressed about transferring forested lands to the US Forest Service or Pit River Tribe
- Forested lands should be managed for long-term productivity

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SUBMITTED

The Stewardship Council also received other public comments and letters from individuals and organizations regarding the future management of the Tunnel Reservoir planning unit, as summarized below:

- Assess and develop educational opportunities for the public and youth to learn about the Pit River Indian culture, such as signage, cultural resource center, and model villages
- Protect cultural resources including, traditional and medicinal plants, sacred sites, and human remains.
- Support for the lands available for donation to be transferred to the Pit River Tribe.
- Prohibit OHV use due to potential impacts on wildlife habitat and soils.
- Concern that land conveyances will negatively impact adjacent landowners.