

FEE TITLE DONEE RECOMMENDATION LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stewardship Council was created to oversee PG&E's Land Conservation Commitment, as set forth in the Settlement and Stipulation,¹ 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 forestry; 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 Lower Bear Area Planning Unit, located in Amador County, consists of approximately 1,806 acres of land, of which four parcels encompassing 907 acres have been identified as available for donation in fee. The Stewardship Council received and evaluated land stewardship proposals (LSPs) from two organizations interested in receiving a donation of fee title in this planning unit, the USFS and Amador County. Based on an evaluation of the proposals, follow-up discussions with the organizations, and consultation with the Watershed Planning Committee (Planning Committee), the Stewardship Council developed the following recommendation which was endorsed by the Planning Committee:

US Forest Service (Eldorado National Forest) to receive fee title to four parcels encompassing 907 acres available for donation (Parcels #950, 948, 949, 951) subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment, **with the expectation that the USFS and Amador County would make a good faith effort to negotiate and enter into a memorandum of understanding that establishes a mechanism under which the parties agree to work together to preserve and/or enhance the beneficial public values on the subject parcels.**

If this recommendation is adopted by the Stewardship Council Board (Board), Stewardship Council staff will work with the prospective donee on the development of a management and funding agreement, as applicable, and 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 at a future date.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

a. Description of Planning Unit

The Lower Bear Area Planning Unit, located in Amador County, encompasses approximately 1,806 acres of land currently owned by PG&E (see map included with attachments). Approximately 889 acres around Lower and Upper Bear River Reservoirs will be retained by

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").

PG&E for current and future operational needs. The remaining acreage, approximately 907 acres, is available for donation to a qualified donee.

The Lower Bear Area Planning Unit, located approximately 35 miles northeast of Jackson, includes portions of Lower and Upper Bear River Reservoirs and land bordering a portion of Cole Creek. This planning unit is almost completely surrounded by the Eldorado National Forest, managed by the US Forest Service (USFS). Lands surrounding the Lower and Upper Bear River Reservoirs are part of the Mokelumne River Project (FERC #137), and have been identified to be retained by PG&E. Lands available for donation consist of four parcels east of the reservoirs. Three of these parcels are entirely surrounded by the USFS Eldorado National Forest. They are mostly inaccessible by vehicle; however, the western portion is accessible by four-wheel drive vehicle. The eastern Cole Creek parcel is bounded on three sides by the USFS-managed Mokelumne Wilderness and is located within the Wilderness Boundary.

The planning unit provides important habitat to several special interest species as well as a variety of outdoor recreational activities, including fishing, boating, swimming, camping, hiking, and OHV use. The Bear River Resort, operated under a PG&E lease, is located on the western side of Lower Bear River Reservoir on land to be retained by PG&E. Additionally, PG&E leases Camp Ritchie to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for a summer camp for girls also on land to be retained by PG&E. The USFS has issued a Special Use Permit for the Camp Winton Boy Scouts Camp located on land currently owned by the USFS adjacent to the planning unit. Additionally, the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit includes three PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs), including one located on the Cole Creek parcels, which includes 554 timbered acres managed under a Sustainable Timber Management prescription. The planning unit is within the traditional territory of the Northern Sierra Miwok and several archeological sites within the planning unit have been identified. Grazing occurs on adjacent USFS and private lands and may also occur on planning unit lands, although PG&E has not granted permission or licenses for grazing on their lands.

The section of Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP) describing the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit, including the beneficial public values (BPVs) associated with the planning unit, and the management objectives that were previously approved by the Stewardship Council board is attached.

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 entities that submitted SOQs is provided with attachments. Of these, the following two organizations were invited to submit land stewardship proposals (LSPs):

- Amador County
- USFS (Eldorado National Forest)

In evaluating the LSPs, the following factors were considered:

- An evaluation of the potential donees' programmatic, financial, and legal capacity to maintain the property interest so as to preserve and/or enhance the beneficial public values (BPVs) of the planning unit;
- Anticipated funding needs of the potential donees;
- The management objectives for the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit as set forth in Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan;
- 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.

II. EVALUATION

The USFS is being recommended to receive the donation of fee title to four parcels of land encompassing 907 acres of lands available for donation. This recommendation is based on a determination that the USFS has sufficient financial and organizational capacity to hold and maintain the fee title interests, as identified, on these lands. This recommendation of the USFS is contingent upon approval of a conservation covenant that provides satisfactory assurance that the lands conveyed would be managed consistent with the purpose of the Land Conservation Commitment. Sierra Nevada Conservancy is anticipated to serve as the conservation covenant holder.

a. Donee Organizational Capacity

The USFS possesses the organizational capacity and experience to own and manage fee title to the properties recommended for donation.

- The USFS is a federal agency within the US Department of Agriculture that manages 193 million acres of public lands. The mission of the USFS is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”
- The USFS Eldorado National Forest manages the land surrounding the parcels recommended for donation to them as part of the 600,000 acre Eldorado National Forest. Law, policy, and various regulations govern the management of public lands by the US Forest Service. The Eldorado Forest Land and Resource Management Plan provides direction for the management of cultural, historic, and biological resources within the National Forest.

b. Donee Financial Capacity

The Stewardship Council's review of potential fee title donees' financial capacity consisted of an evaluation of each organization's annual operating budget and financial statements, and consideration of the current and projected management and enhancement costs and funding in relation to the organization's financial capacity. Based on this review, staff concluded that the USFS would have the financial ability to manage the lands being recommended for donation and to preserve and/or enhance the BPVs associated with these lands.

c. Management Objectives

Volume II of the land conservation plan established certain management objectives for the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit (see Volume II Planning Unit Report included with attachments). The USFS Eldorado National Forest is seeking fee title to lands available for donation within the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit to achieve consolidated, consistent management of the ecological, recreational, cultural, and historical resources contained on the Cole Creek parcels. Proposed management of lands to be received via a donation of fee title appears to be consistent with these management objectives as further described below.

These lands are proposed by the USFS to be managed for uses consistent with existing access and uses on the surrounding National Forest lands, including the Mokelumne Wilderness. Moreover, it has been proposed by the USFS that the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) be amended to incorporate the conveyed parcels and that specific management directions, standards and guidelines be developed consistent with the Stewardship Council's BPVs. Specific management objectives identified by the USFS include:

- Complete a management plan for the area within two years. The management plan would be included as an amendment to the Forest Plan and would include an analysis of the existing natural resource conditions and desired conditions, as well as identify management actions and opportunities to achieve desired conditions.
- Complete a cultural resource inventory within the first year. A Cultural Resources Management Plan would be developed based upon the results of the inventory and in conjunction with affected tribes to ensure the protection and conservation of cultural resources.
- Continue to support the maintenance of the groomed Silver Bear Snowmobile Trail in cooperation with the California OHV Division and PG&E.
- Improve USFS road 08N08 that provides vehicular access to the Cole Creek parcels.
- Analyze the feasibility of constructing a trailhead at the end of USFS road 08N08 that would include a parking area, vault toilet, and an information station.

- Incorporate the non-motorized trail leading to the Mokelumne Wilderness into the USFS formal system of trails to provide hiking access to Cole Creek and the wilderness area.
- Incorporate lands within the wilderness boundary (parcel # 951) into the Mokelumne Wilderness.
- Manage the eastern most three parcels (parcels #950, #948, #949) consistent with surrounding vegetation management.

Additionally, the USFS has indicated that any unauthorized grazing on the parcels would be incorporated into the existing adjacent grazing allotment and subject to a rangeland management plan. Unauthorized OHV use would be prohibited under existing USFS regulations. However, motorized access to existing dispersed camping areas on the donated parcels would be analyzed and potentially designated pending the results of the Travel Analysis Plan for the Eldorado National Forest.

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 the prospective donee.

e. Requirements of the Settlement Agreement and Stipulation

The Stewardship Council's recommendation that the USFS receive fee title to 907 acres 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 USFS appears to have sufficient organizational and financial capacity to own and manage the property interest proposed for donation for the preservation and/or enhancement of the beneficial public values, a finding required by Section 12(a)(3) of the Stipulation.

The USFS is precluded by existing policy from accepting a conservation easement on lands it acquires. Therefore, a conservation covenant has been proposed by the USFS in lieu of a conservation easement, to provide satisfactory assurance that lands conveyed would be managed consistent with the purpose of the Land Conservation Commitment as required by Section 12(d)(2) of the Stipulation. It has been proposed by the Stewardship Council that the covenant be held by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

The recommendation to donate fee title to the USFS is also contingent upon a determination that conveyance of these parcels would not result in an expansion of FERC license conditioning authority under the Federal Power Act, in compliance with Stipulation Section 12(b)(4).

Furthermore, the Stewardship Council would work with PG&E and Amador County to ensure the conveyance of these parcels is “tax neutral” for the county as required by Stipulation Section 12(a)(5).

PG&E manages two leases at Lower Bear River Reservoir on land to be retained by PG&E. These existing leases for economic uses (Bear River Resort and Camp Ritchie) would be permitted to be continued by PG&E through lease renewals or other arrangements consistent with the protection of the BPVs and other applicable laws and would not be prohibited under the conservation easement. The conservation easement will also 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, any 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 the USFS, the grant deed would reserve to PG&E similar rights for operation and maintenance of hydroelectric facilities and associated water delivery facilities.

f. Conservation Partners

The permanent protection of the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit, and the future preservation and enhancement of the BPVs, may involve, and benefit from, the participation of land conservation partners. For purposes of this recommendation, land conservation partners are defined as organizations other than the prospective fee title donee or conservation easement holder that become 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 land stewardship proposals submitted by organizations interested in a fee title donation, or during or after the development of the Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (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.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

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 received on the Lower Bear



Area Planning Unit during the development of Volumes I and II of the Land Conservation Plan and at a public workshop held on October 7, 2009 is attached. Additional public comments received concerning this recommendation will be provided to the Board for consideration.

IV. NEXT STEPS

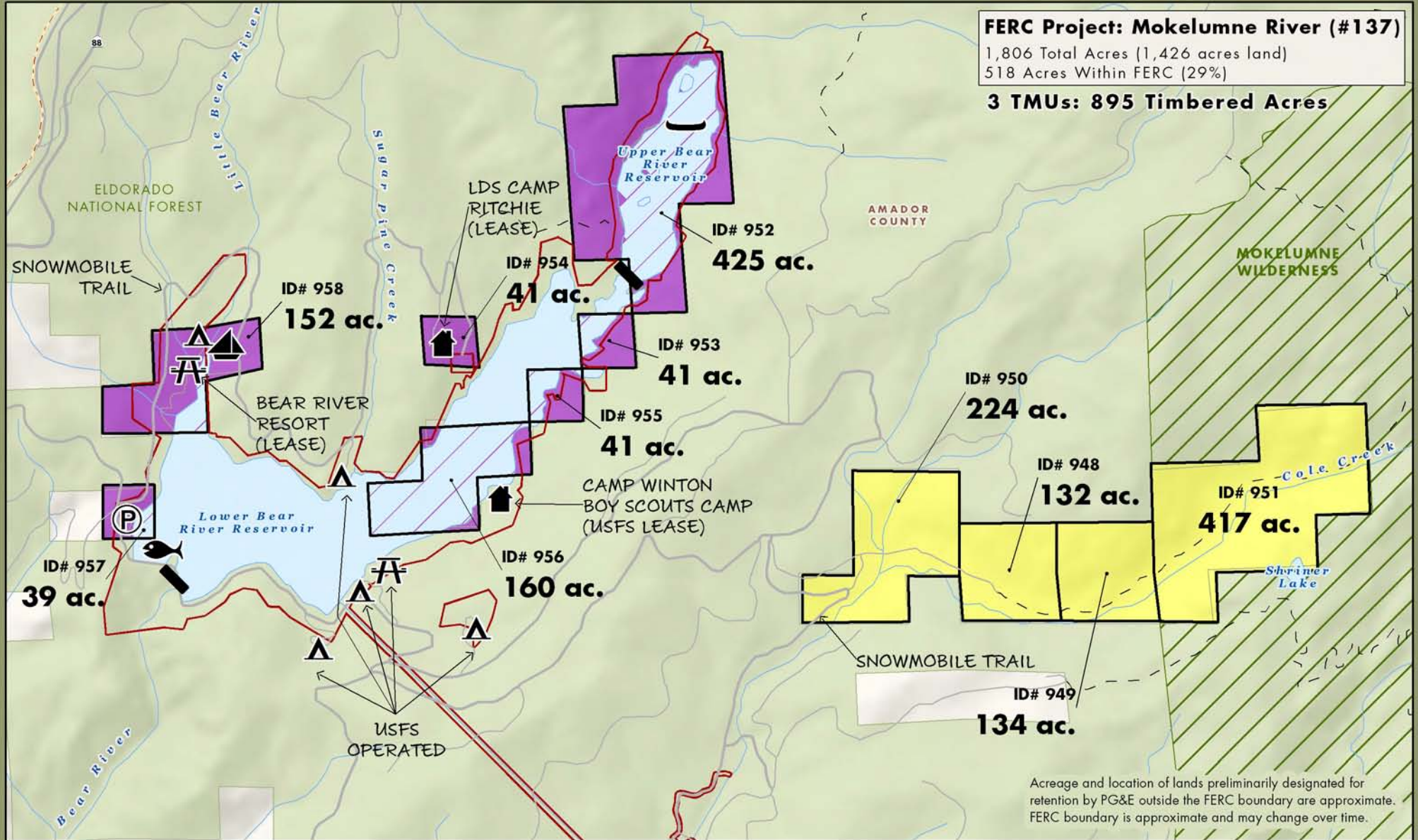
If this recommendation is adopted by the Stewardship Council board of directors, staff will invite the prospective donee to negotiate specific terms of the transaction with PG&E and will work with the prospective donee to develop a management and funding agreement, if applicable. The development of a management and funding agreement would be coordinated with the development of a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan.

Adoption of the LCCP by the Stewardship Council board of directors 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 Stewardship Council board.

ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

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

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Lower Bear Area Planning Unit



FERC Project: Mokelumne River (#137)
 1,806 Total Acres (1,426 acres land)
 518 Acres Within FERC (29%)
3 TMUs: 895 Timbered Acres

PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation	PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention	PG&E Lands Under Water	Private	USFS	Federal Wilderness	Boat Launch	Fishing	FERC Boundary
Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number						Campground	Dam	Non-Motorized Boating
						Parking	Private Camp	Canal / Ditch
						Day Use		Trail

Acreage and location of lands preliminarily designated for retention by PG&E outside the FERC boundary are approximate. FERC boundary is approximate and may change over time.



LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

Overview

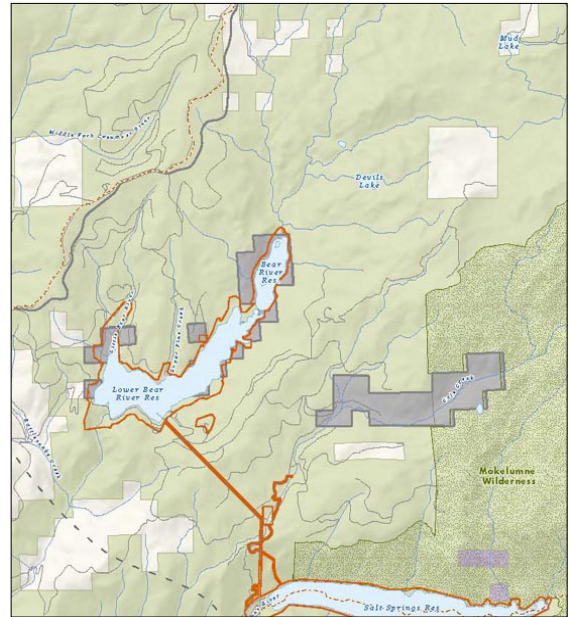
- Scenic reservoir shoreline with a popular boating resort and valuable habitat
- 1,795 acres in Amador County; 1,277 acres outside the FERC boundary and 518 acres inside the FERC boundary
- Part of the Mokelumne River Project (FERC #137); New License issued October 2001

Located at an approximate elevation range of 5,900 to 7,000 feet, the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit includes portions of Lower and Upper Bear River Reservoirs and land bordering a portion of Cole Creek (see Figure UM-3). This planning unit is almost completely surrounded by Eldorado National Forest, managed by the USFS. The eastern Cole Creek parcel is bounded on three sides by the USFS-managed Mokelumne Wilderness and is located within the Wilderness Boundary. Private timber companies own lands southwest of Lower Bear River Reservoir. The planning unit is located 35 miles northeast of Jackson.

Lower Bear River Reservoir is accessible by a paved road, Bear River Road, off of Highway 88.



Lower Bear River Reservoir from Hwy 88 overlook



Lower Bear Area Planning Unit
Amador County

Upper Bear River Reservoir is accessible by boat portaging from Lower Bear River Reservoir and by a hiking trail on the western side. The Cole Creek parcels are mostly inaccessible by vehicle; however, the western portion is accessible by four-wheel drive vehicle.

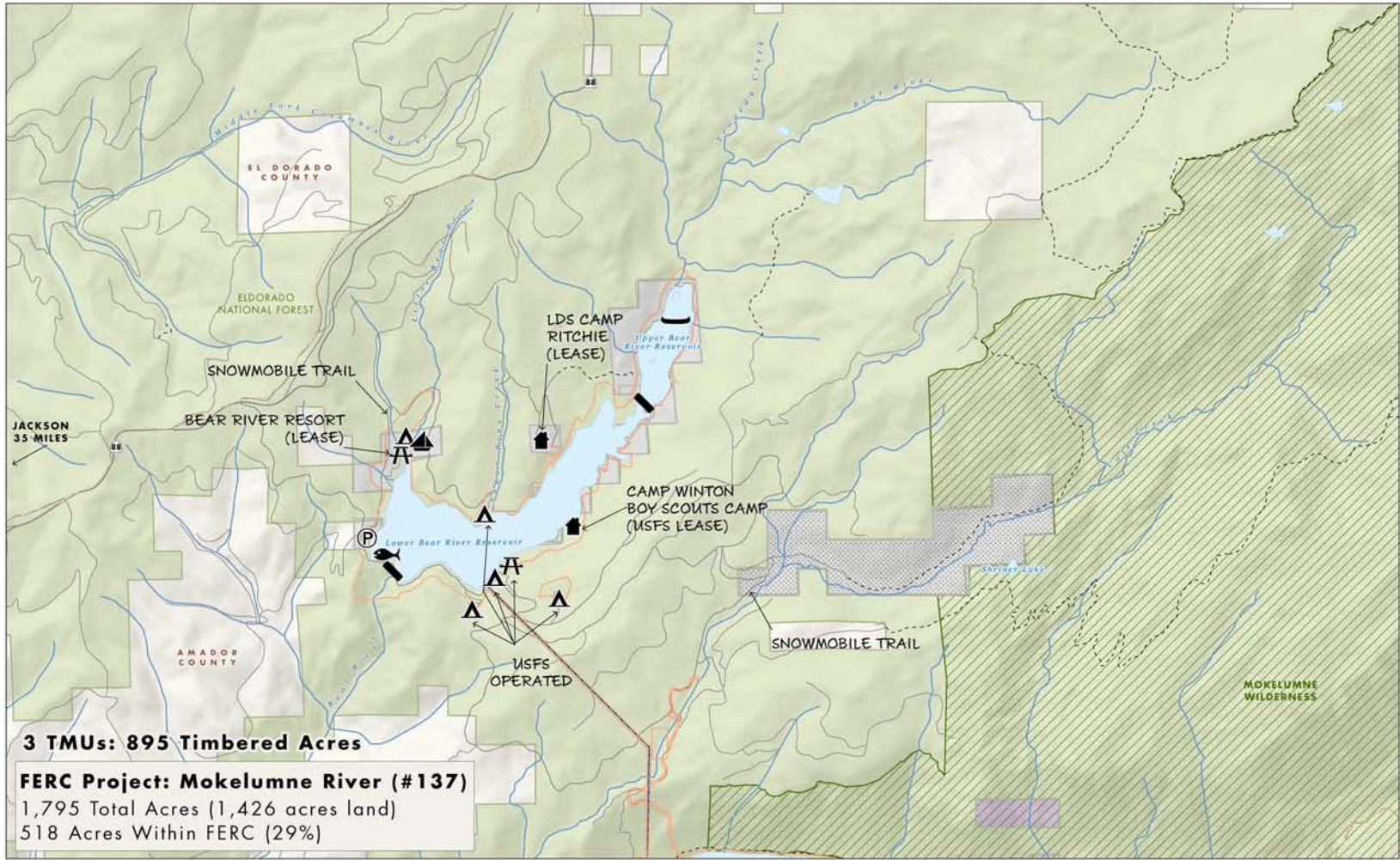
There is interest by the Amador Water Agency in gravity feeding water from Lower Bear River Reservoir for water supply in the future, potentially requiring expanding the reservoir storage capacity. The Bear River Reservoirs provide water supply for five counties as well as many agencies and other users.¹ Lower Bear River Reservoir has been identified as a future water supply for Amador County, Calaveras County and East Bay Municipal Utilities District areas. A feasibility study of raising Lower Bear Reservoir Dam to increase storage for future water supply will be completed by early 2008.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Habitat for several special status species is located by Upper and Lower Bear River Reservoirs, including the Federal candidate mountain yellow-legged frog, and various bird species including willow flycatcher, bald eagle,

Lower Bear Area Planning Unit

Existing Conditions



- PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention
- PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Disposition
- BIA
- BLM
- BOR
- DOD
- NPS
- Other/NGO
- State
- USFS
- Federal Wilderness

- Boat Launch
- Campground
- Day Use
- Fishing
- Fish Barrier Dam
- Non-Motorized Boating
- Parking
- Private Camp

- FERC Boundary
- Stream / River
- Canal / Ditch
- Pipeline
- Highly Valued Stream

- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- OHV Roads
- Trail

All symbols may not appear on the map



Figure UM-3

LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

and California spotted owl. USFS spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs) are located north of the Bear River Resort as well as south and east of Lower Bear River Reservoir. Summer range for the Salt Springs deer herd is located throughout the planning unit. The Sierra Nevada snowshoe hare, American marten, and sharp-shinned hawk are likely to be present in this planning unit. Upper and Lower Bear River Reservoirs provide habitat for a variety of coldwater fish species, including rainbow trout, brown trout, and tui chub.

The Cole Creek parcels may contain habitat for species including California spotted owl, mountain yellow-legged frog, forest carnivores (e.g., Pacific fisher), and northern goshawk. Areas next to Cole Creek contain some wetland/meadow habitat and about three miles of floodplain. The Cole Creek parcels are managed for native trout and mountain yellow-legged frog populations by Eldorado National Forest.

Open Space

The planning unit provides open space, including an inholding and other lands adjacent to the Mokelumne Wilderness, as well as viewshed values for several camps, campgrounds, and a resort situated by Lower Bear River Reservoir. The planning unit also provides scenic views from a Highway 88 pull-out. Highway 88 is a designated Scenic Highway in the National Highway System.

Outdoor Recreation

The planning unit provides many outdoor recreational opportunities, including fishing, boating, swimming, camping, hiking, and OHV use. All of the campgrounds and day use areas at Lower Bear River Reservoir are operated by the USFS; however, PG&E made many improvements to these facilities as part of the recent FERC relicensing as they are located within the Mokelumne River Project FERC boundary.² Lower Bear River Reservoir is annually stocked with rainbow and brown trout

and is known to be an exceptional northern California trout fishery. Rainbow trout are also stocked in Upper Bear River Reservoir. The Silver Bear Snowmobile Trail is located adjacent to Lower Bear River Reservoir and provides 20 to 55 miles of popular trails during the winter recreation season. The western parcel at Lower Bear River Reservoir was used as a parking and staging area for the snowmobile trail; however, the resort is currently closed during the winter months.

The Bear River Resort is located on the western side of Lower Bear River Reservoir and is operated under a PG&E lease. Many of the area's recreational opportunities are provided by this lessee, including summer boat rentals. The resort also provides a store, restaurant, 126 campsites (including 30 trailers), and a marina. Camp Ritchie, which PG&E leases to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), is operated as a 120-person per session summer camp for girls. The USFS has issued a Special Use Permit for the Camp Winton Boy Scouts Camp adjacent to the planning unit on the eastern side of Lower Bear River Reservoir.

Forest Resources

The Lower Bear Area Planning Unit contains three PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs) for a total of 895 timbered acres. The TMU located by Upper Bear River Reservoir contains 68 timbered acres and is managed under a



Bear River Resort boat dock

LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed



Lower Bear River Reservoir

Recreation and Sustainable Timber Management prescription, meaning that recreation in this area is compatible with timber management. Forest management in designated recreation areas is limited to fuels reduction, hazard tree removal, and improvement of aesthetics. Outside of designated recreation areas, sustainable timber management is emphasized.

The TMU located by Lower Bear River Reservoir contains 273 timbered acres and is managed under a Multiple-Use prescription, meaning that protection and uses of other resources and facilities may preclude sustained timber management as the highest and best use of portions of the TMU. The Cole Creek parcels contain 554 timbered acres and are managed under a Sustainable Timber Management prescription, meaning that sustained timber production is regarded as the highest and best use of the land while also placing an emphasis on protecting water quality, wildlife and fisheries habitat, soils, carbon sequestration, and cultural resources. The western one-third of the Cole Creek parcels have valuable timber resources, and future timber harvests are planned in this area.

Fire danger is a major concern in the Bear River Reservoir area and by the Cole Creek parcels. The “Power Fire” occurred just south of this planning unit in 2004, burning 16,800 acres and causing evacuation of the Bear River Reservoir area.

Agricultural Uses

Although PG&E does not currently have any grazing leases in this planning unit, the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit is located within the USFS Bear River and Pardoe grazing allotments. Grazing occurs on adjacent USFS and private lands, and may also occur on planning unit lands. PG&E has not granted permission for grazing on their lands, but due to the lack of fencing in the area, it is possible for cattle to graze on planning unit lands.

Historic Resources

PG&E is in the process of completing a Heritage Resources Management Plan (HRMP) for this area as part of the recent FERC relicensing process. Much of the area surrounding Upper and Lower Bear River Reservoirs was surveyed as part of the relicensing process. At least six prehistoric sites near Lower Bear River Reservoir and six archeological sites within the Cole Creek parcels have been identified. This planning unit is within traditional territory of the Northern Sierra Miwok, which extends from the Sierra foothills and mountains as far north as the Consumnes River, and includes the drainages of the Mokelumne and Calaveras Rivers.



Scenic rock by Lower Bear River Reservoir

LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit be preserved and enhanced by focusing on enhanced recreation facilities, while protecting the unique cultural resources, habitat values, and sensitive species present. We recommend this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E and the Amador Water Agency. Recommendations would need to be re-evaluated if the Amador Water Agency develops concrete plans to expand Lower Bear River Reservoir Dam and thereby raise the reservoir level (the 2006 Mokelumne Amador Calaveras Integrated Regional Water Management Plan identifies the reservoir as a future water supply).

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological and cultural resources, enhance public access, recreation opportunities, and sustainable forestry management, and evaluate the potential for grazing opportunities.

As shown on Table UM-2, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Lower Bear Area 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.



Lower Bear River Reservoir & dam

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

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

The Lower Bear Area provides terrestrial and aquatic habitat for many species, including a variety of special status species, and is a popular recreational fishery. The Stewardship Council recognizes the importance of this resource for public recreation and access, but intends to see that the wilderness beauty of the area and the habitat resources found here are protected. In order to preserve and enhance the habitat and resources found here, the Stewardship Council recommends that baseline studies and plans be developed to gain a clear understanding of



Bear River Resort boat dock & picnic table

LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

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.

Of specific note, unauthorized OHV trails may need to be altered to further protect habitat resources from inappropriate recreation use. We encourage close coordination with the USFS, Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority and other resource-focused organizations working in the area. Habitat preservation and enhancement measures should be consistent with FERC license requirements 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, viewsheds, and the recreation setting.

This concept would preserve open space by limiting construction to minor additions of recreation facilities, as well as through permanent conservation easements. The Stewardship Council specifically recommends that Cole Creek parcels be managed to complement surrounding wilderness values, as a portion of this land is located within the Wilderness Boundary. Conservation easements would describe all



Bear River Resort sign

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, and education and recreation opportunities.

The planning unit provides recreation facilities that support fishing, boating, swimming, camping, hiking, and OHV use. Additionally, one large resort and private camp provide recreational opportunities and facilities. As shown in Figure UM-4, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance these opportunities by recommending facilities at Lower Bear River Reservoir while maintaining the primitive recreation experience at Upper Bear River Reservoir. We recommend enhancements focus on a new day use/fishing site, additional public recreation access, increased opportunities for youth education and recreation, and review of resort uses for potential enhancement possibilities. Any improvements would need to be planned and sited to minimize disturbance to sensitive natural and cultural resources. We further recommend that future recreation planning be closely coordinated with Amador Water Agency's efforts to study the potential enlargement of the Lower Bear Reservoir.

Sustainable Forestry

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

The Lower Bear Area Planning Unit provides valuable forest resources in a fire-prone 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

LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

watershed management, fuels management, fire management and response, and surrounding wilderness values. The fuels, fire management and response, and forest management plans should be developed in conjunction with the noxious weed and wildlife and habitat management plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination with adjacent landowners, USFS, and lessee management and practices as appropriate.

Agricultural Uses

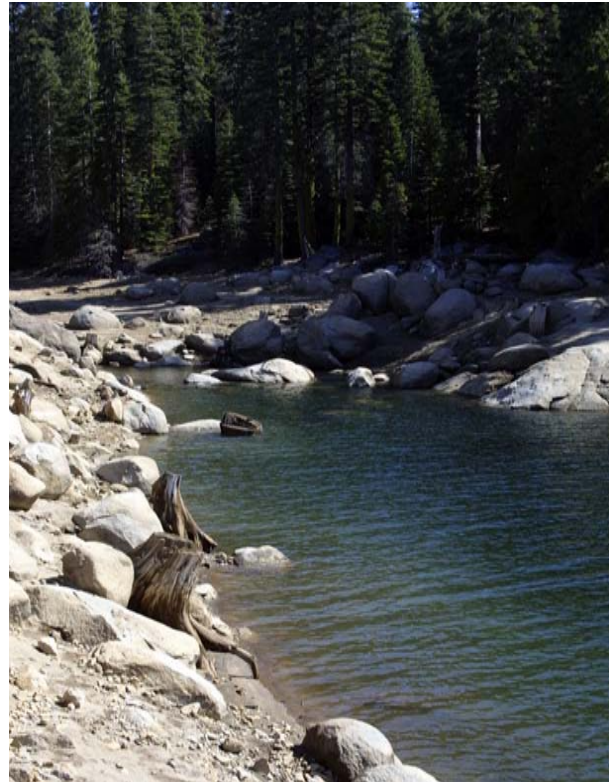
Objective: Identify potential grazing opportunities in order to enhance agricultural resources and related economic benefits.

Though the lands in the planning unit are steep and somewhat disconnected, there is some potential for grazing use. The Stewardship Council looks to enhance agricultural opportunities and associated important economic uses as part of the long-term management of the Lower Bear Area Planning Unit. To support this effort, we recommend evaluating grazing potential in coordination with adjacent USFS allotments. If grazing is determined to be feasible in the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a rangeland management plan to guide this activity.

Preservation of Historic Values

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

At least 12 cultural sites have already been identified in the planning unit and there is a high likelihood additional sites are present. 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 Lower Bear Area Planning Unit (particularly outside the FERC cultural resource study area where less information is available),



Inlet to Bear River Reservoir from Little Bear River

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 HRMP.

Endnotes

¹ The Bear River Reservoirs are a water supply source for Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Amador, and Calaveras Counties, Jackson Irrigation District, Amador Water Agency, North San Joaquin Water Conservation District, Woodbridge Irrigation District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and senior appropriators.

² Improved facilities include: South Shore Campground, Pardoes Point Campground and picnic area, Bear River Group Campground, and Sugar Pine Point Campground.

LOWER BEAR AREA PLANNING UNIT
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

This page intentionally left blank.



Lower Bear Area Planning Unit

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

Amador County
Amador County RCD
California State Parks OHV Recreation Division
US Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest

SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LOWER BEAR 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, over 33 public comments were submitted concerning the Lower Bear Area 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.

The majority of comments were submitted by Amador County, East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD), Sierra Club, and the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority,

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

- That lands outside the wilderness boundary remain without wilderness designation and management and/or uses to ensure that existing and/or historic management and uses may continue.
- That management of the eastern most Cole Creek parcel be directed by the Wilderness Act and USFS wilderness management regulations to ensure management of this parcel to “complement adjacent Mokelumne Wilderness values” as identified in LCP Volume II.
- That existing economic uses be permitted to continue. In Lower Bear Area Planning Unit this pertains to Bear River Resort in particular, which serves as an important attraction and source of revenue for the County of Amador.
- That OHV access and recreational opportunities continue on segments of trails that are crucial portions of existing historical trails and/or roads.
- That Recommended Concept Objectives and/or Proposed Measures reflect management recommendations to ensure protection of water supplies and water quality. In particular, that Proposed Measures reflect that Lower Bear River Reservoir was identified as a future water supply for Amador County, Calaveras County and EBMUD areas by the Mokelumne/Amador/Calaveras Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (MACIRWMP). Such a designation may require an expansion of the reservoir.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING FOR THE UPPER MOKELUMNE

A public information meeting for the North Fork Mokelumne River and Lower Bear Area Planning Units was hosted by the Stewardship Council on October 7, 2009 in Jackson, California. A total of 36 people attended and participated in the meeting, representing a wide variety of interests, including local, state, and federal governments; community organizations; and local businesses. The primary purpose of this meeting was to provide an overview of the land conservation process, provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions, and solicit

public input on the development of the Land Conservation and Conveyance Plans (LCCP) to preserve and enhance the North Fork Mokelumne River and Lower Bear Area Planning Units.

Meeting participants were provided an opportunity to discuss and comment on Proposed Measures for the Lower Bear Area and North Fork Mokelumne River Planning Units identified by staff as potential priorities for Stewardship Council funding, as well as to identify desired qualifications of future fee title and conservation easement donees. Comments provided emphasized the following:

Potential Priority Proposed Measures

- The importance of measures to address forest health, fire management, and fuels treatment.
- Coordinated management activities with surrounding land holders and/or existing regional natural resource management.
- The importance of historical and/or current recreational uses.
- Enhanced educational/youth & family programming opportunities.
- The wilderness values of eastern most Cole Creek parcel.
- Opportunities for important, authorized OHV uses to continue.
- The establishment of a trailhead for the Mokelumne Wilderness

Qualifications of Donees

- Demonstrated experience with and record of successful land management for the BPVs
- Success in achieving partnerships, collaborations and conducting management activities in coordination with regional initiatives/adjacent landowners.
- Ability to ensure/prioritize public access.
- A mission that includes protection, preservation, and sustainability of BPVs
- Financially sound/fiscally responsible.
- An ability to balance economic opportunities with BPVs.
- Local knowledge and experience (presence in community)