

FEE TITLE DONEE RECOMMENDATION BLUE LAKES 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 Blue Lakes Planning Unit, located in Alpine County, consists of 10 parcels encompassing approximately 1,857 acres of land, of which 1,032 acres have been identified as available for donation in fee. The Stewardship Council received and evaluated a land stewardship proposal (LSP) from the USFS Eldorado National Forest (USFS) with interest in receiving a donation of fee title to land in this planning unit. Based on an evaluation of the proposal, follow-up discussions, 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 1,032 acres available for donation within 10 parcels (Parcel #937, # 938, #939, #941, #942, #943, #944, #945, #946, #947) subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment. Any of the subject parcels or acres that can not be transferred to the USFS due to the requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation would be retained by PG&E.

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 Blue Lakes Planning Unit, located in Alpine County, consists of 10 parcels encompassing approximately 1,857 acres of land currently owned by PG&E (see attached map). Approximately

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").



1,003 acres within the planning unit will be retained by PG&E for current and future operational needs. The remaining acreage, 1,032 acres, is available for donation to a qualified donee.

Located at an elevation of 8,000 feet, the planning unit consists of four glacial step lakes: Upper Blue Lake, Lower Blue Lake, Twin Lake, and Meadow Lake. The planning unit is mostly surrounded by the USFS land and is bordered on the western side by the Mokelumne Wilderness. Seasonal access to the Blue Lakes Planning Unit is gained via State Highway 88 on Blue Lakes Road.

The lakes, creeks, and associated riparian areas found in this planning unit provide a range of high-elevation habitats for species, including several trout species, and special status species including Yosemite toad, pine marten, snowshoe hare, pacific fisher, and mountain yellow-legged frog.

The planning unit is a significant recreation area with opportunities for camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, swimming, OHV use, and boating. Developed campgrounds, day use areas, and boat ramps are located throughout this area. There are two trailheads to the adjacent Mokelumne Wilderness and a half-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail runs across the eastern Upper Blue Lake parcel.

Forest resources within the planning unit are comprised of subalpine conifers, lodgepole pine, and red fir stands. Lands are managed under a salvage management prescription, meaning that the lands are mainly managed for uses other than sustained timber production. However, fuels management is conducted in the area.

There are no grazing leases on the lands, as these lands serve as a water quality buffer. A USFS grazing allotment on adjacent USFS lands surrounds parts of Meadow Lake, the southern edge of Twin Lake and the northwestern edge of Lower Blue Lake.

The planning unit is in traditional Washoe territory and numerous prehistoric and historic sites have been found around the lakes.

The section of Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP) describing the Blue Lakes 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 seven organizations interested in acquiring fee title to lands available for donation within this planning unit. A list of organizations that submitted SOQs is attached. Of these organizations, the following three organizations were invited to submit land stewardship proposals (LSPs):

- Alpine County
- USFS (Eldorado National Forest)
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Neither Alpine County nor the Washoe Tribe submitted LSPs.

In evaluating the LSP submitted by the USFS, 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 Blue Lakes 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 1,032 acres available for donation within 10 parcels.

a. Donee Organizational Capacity

The USFS possesses the organizational capacity and experience to own and manage fee title to the properties identified 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 USFS. 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

US Forest Service 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 Blue Lakes Planning Unit (see Volume II Planning Unit Report with attachments). The USFS Eldorado National Forest is seeking fee title to lands available for donation within the Blue Lakes Planning Unit to achieve consolidated, consistent management of the ecological, recreational, cultural, and historical resources contained within the planning unit. Proposed management of the lands it would receive 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 Eldorado 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 Blue Lakes 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.
- Prepare a recreation management plan for acquired lands to be incorporated into the Blue Lakes Management Plan. The plan would emphasize traditional recreation experiences and values consistent with historic uses of the area and identify opportunities to improve signage, trail access and conditions, interpretive literature and signage, youth programming, and general day use.
- Analyze the feasibility of a non-motorized trail that would provide access between the four lakes and tie into the Pacific Crest Trail north of Upper Blue Lake and the Grouse Lake Trail between Upper and Lower Blue Lake.
- 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.

Unauthorized OHV use would be prohibited under the existing USFS regulations. However, motorized access to 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 and Stipulation

The Stewardship Council's recommendation that the USFS receive fee title to 1,032 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 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 Alpine County to ensure the conveyance of these parcels is "tax neutral" for the county as required by Stipulation Section 12(a)(5).

The conservation easement 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, 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 will 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 Blue Lakes 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.

The USFS and Washoe Tribe have identified a common interest in ensuring protection of cultural resources present within the parcels available for donation. The Stewardship Council acknowledges the opportunity for Washoe Tribe to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of cultural resources within the Blue Lakes planning unit and is supportive of further discussions between the USFS and Washoe Tribe pertaining to potential conservation partner opportunities.

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 received on the Blue Lakes Planning Unit during the development of Volumes I and II of the Land Conservation Plan and at a public workshop held on October 8, 2009 is attached. Additional public comments received concerning this recommendation will be provided to the Board for consideration.

IV. NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

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 will 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

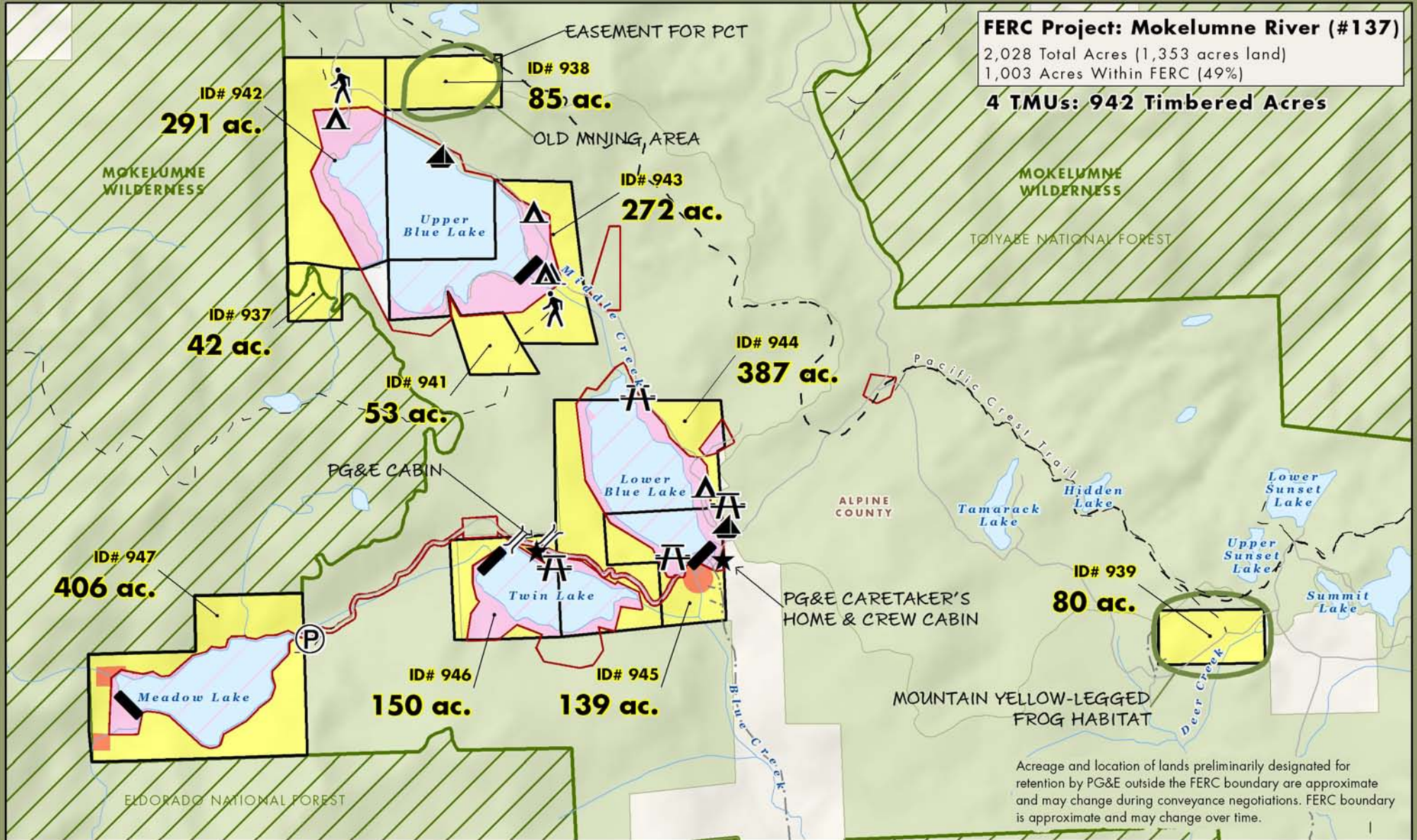


available for public review and comment before it is approved by the Stewardship Council board.

ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

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

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Blue Lakes Planning Unit



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

PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation	PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention Within FERC Boundary	PG&E Lands Under Water	Boat Launch	Feature of Importance	FERC Boundary
PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation with Continued PG&E Operations	Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number	Private	Campground	Gate	Canal / Ditch
PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention Outside FERC boundary	North	USFS	Dam	Parking	Trail
	Federal Wilderness	Day Use	Trailhead		

July, 2009

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Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

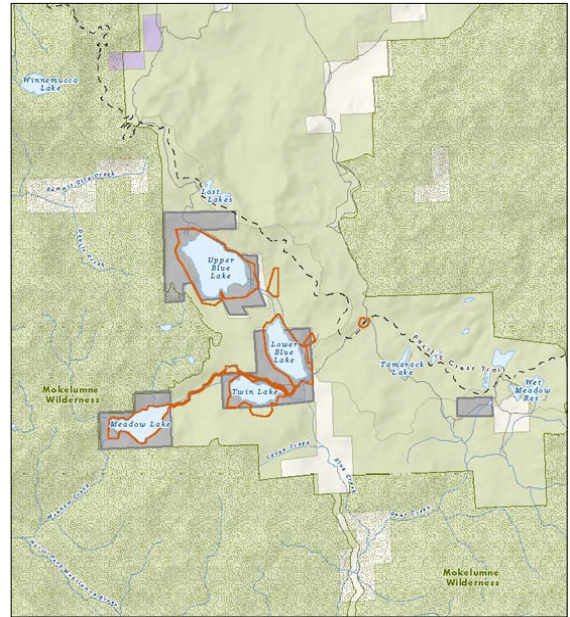
Existing Conditions & Uses

Overview

- Popular high elevation lakes adjacent to the Mokelumne Wilderness; 2,028 acres in Alpine County
- 1,025 acres outside the FERC boundary; 1,003 acres inside
- Part of the Mokelumne River Project (FERC #137); New License Order issued October 2001

The Blue Lakes Planning Unit is located at a high elevation (over 8,000 feet) and contains four glacial step lakes: Upper Blue Lake, Lower Blue Lake, Twin Lake, and Meadow Lake. Segments of Middle Creek, Blue Creek, Meadow Creek, and Deer Creek flow through this planning unit. The planning unit is almost entirely surrounded by USFS land and is bordered on the western side by the Mokelumne Wilderness (see Figure UM-1). Private lands border this planning unit to the southeast of Lower Blue Lake. The planning unit is located 30 miles south of South Lake Tahoe and 11 miles northwest of Kirkwood.

The Blue Lakes Planning Unit does not have any hydropower facilities or infrastructure, with the exception of dams. The Upper Mokelumne River



Blue Lakes Planning Unit
Alpine County

Watershed provides water supply for five counties as well as many agencies and other users.¹ Two PG&E residences are located just south of Lower Blue Lake; one is used by a seasonal contractor and the other is used as a crew cabin. A PG&E cabin used for operations is also located on the northern side of Twin Lake.

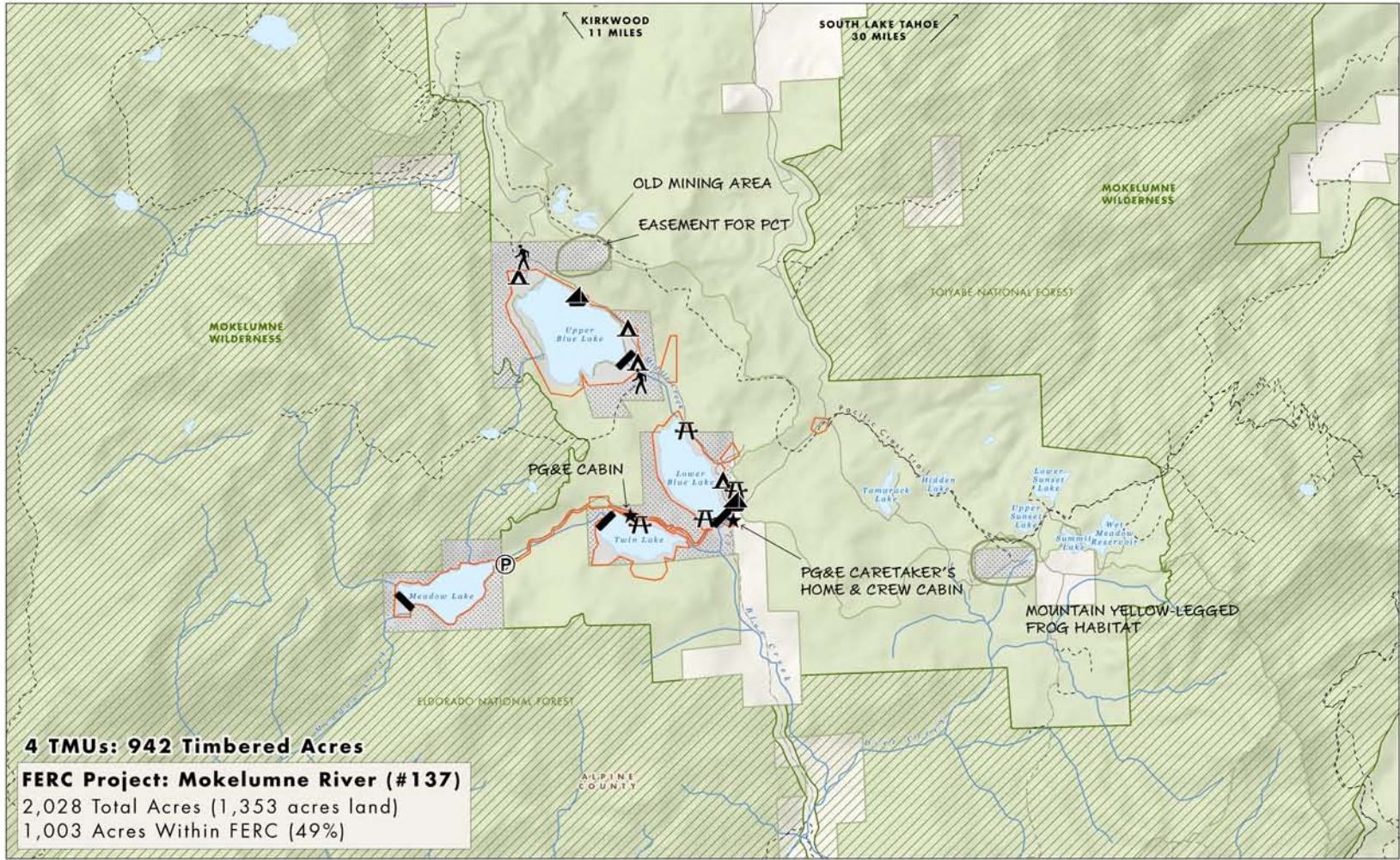
Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

The lakes, creeks, and associated riparian areas found in this planning unit provide a diverse range of high elevation habitats. No anadromous fish currently utilize the waters in this area; however, several trout species occur in both the creeks and lakes. The area may also provide habitat for special status species such as Yosemite toad, pine marten, snowshoe hare, and two Federal candidate species (Pacific fisher and mountain yellow-legged frog), as well as deer summer range. Bald eagles may also use the lakes for summer habitat, and Meadow Lake contains potential peregrine falcon habitat. Several USFS willow flycatcher Protected Activity Centers (PACs) are located within one mile of this planning unit. No special status plant species have been recorded in the planning unit, though the potential exists for the subalpine



Willows along the edge of Upper Blue Lake & dam

Blue Lakes 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
 - Dam
 - Day Use
 - Feature of Importance
 - Fishing
 - Fish Barrier Dam
 - Gate
 - Lodging
 - Non-Motorized Boating
 - Parking
 - Powerhouse
 - Private Camp
 - Ranch
 - Trailhead
 - Whitewater PutIn/Take-Out
- All symbols may not appear on the map

- FERC Boundary
- Stream / River
- Canal / Ditch
- Pipeline
- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- OHV Roads
- Trail



Figure UM-1

BLUE LAKES PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

cryptantha, two species of sedge, and two species of claytonia to occur in the area.

Open Space

The planning unit provides open space adjacent to the Mokelumne Wilderness as well as viewshed values for several campgrounds and day use areas around these lakes. The Alpine County General Plan has designated the planning unit's lands as Open Space with the intention of protecting and promoting wise use of the County's natural resources, including growing or harvesting of forest products, agricultural production, protection or development of mineral resources, protection of important wildlife and aquatic habitats, and preservation of significant view corridors and dispersed recreation.

Outdoor Recreation

Recreation use of the area is significant, primarily consisting of camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, swimming, OHV use, and boating. Developed campgrounds, day use areas, and boat ramps are located throughout this area; however, Meadow Lake does not contain any developed recreation facilities, with the exception of a gravel parking lot.² The planning unit contains two trailheads to the adjacent Mokelumne Wilderness, and a half-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail runs across the eastern Upper Blue Lake parcel.

As part of recent relicensing, several recreation enhancements have been implemented. These include the addition of a visitor information kiosk; graveling of several parking areas; upgrades to the Twin Lake day use area; upgrades to the Lower Blue Lake fishing access area, picnic area, and boat launch; expansion of the Middle Creek Campground; and the addition of signage at Highway 88 to indicate when all developed campsites are full. The County Road from Highway 88 to this planning unit, Blue Lakes Road, was recently paved, providing easy access for recreationists and thus potentially increasing use.

Forest Resources

Subalpine conifers, lodgepole pine, and red fir stands with interspersed granite outcroppings dominate this planning unit. Late seral stage stands comprise 385 acres of the almost 950 acres of timbered land surrounding the lakes. No timber harvests are planned by PG&E; however, fuels management is conducted in this area. The planning unit is currently under a Salvage management prescription, meaning that the lands are primarily managed for uses other than sustained timber production, but may require management to mitigate for urgent forest and watershed health issues such as insect attacks.

Agricultural Uses

The Indian Valley USFS grazing allotment surrounds parts of Meadow Lake, the southern edge of Twin Lake, and the northwestern edge of Lower Blue Lake. The eastern edges of Upper and Lower Blue Lakes and the eastern parcel by Deer Creek are classified by the USFS as "non-allotments." There are no grazing leases on PG&E land at the present time, as planning unit lands serve as a water quality buffer from sediment going into the adjacent lakes and creeks.

Historic Resources

An old livery stable used to board horses during construction of the dam is located south of Lower



Granite boulder along the banks of Meadow Lake

BLUE LAKES PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed



Drawdown zone along Lower Blue Lake

Blue Lake. This and other cultural resources in the planning unit may be eligible for NRHP listing. Numerous prehistoric and historic sites have been found around the lakes. The planning unit is in traditional Washoe territory, which was centered around Lake Tahoe but extended across the headwaters of the Mokelumne River.

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at Blue Lakes be preserved and enhanced by focusing on the unique high elevation habitat values, cultural resources, and popular recreation opportunities available within the planning unit. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to enhance opportunities for recreation, preserve cultural resources, and preserve and enhance the high elevation habitat.

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

As shown on Table UM-1, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for Blue Lakes. 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 special biological resources.

In general, Blue Lakes provides diverse high elevation aquatic and riparian habitats. 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 resources found at Blue Lakes, 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



Lower Blue Lake looking northeast

BLUE LAKES PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

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.

Additionally, some recreation facilities and areas 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 fuels and forest management plans.

Open Space

Objective: Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources, viewsheds, the recreation setting, and the adjacent wilderness character.

This concept would preserve open space by limiting new construction to minor additions of recreation facilities, as well as through permanent conservation easements. The Stewardship Council specifically recommends that areas bordering the Mokelumne Wilderness be managed to complement adjacent wilderness values. 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 education and recreation opportunities consistent with the carrying capacity of the area.

Blue Lakes is a popular recreation destination. The planning unit offers many developed



Glacier erratic on granite above Meadow Lake

recreation facilities to support heavy camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, swimming, boating, and OHV use. Due to its location, the planning unit also provides multiple entry points to the Mokelumne Wilderness. As shown in Figure UM-2, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance recreation opportunities by recommending a few additional facilities to enhance the recreation experience, but not greatly increase the number of visitors to the area. We recommended enhancements focus on evaluating adding a new day use area, evaluating trail access between the lakes, additional interpretive signage, and increased opportunities for youth education and recreation.

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 management.

Though the Blue Lakes Planning Unit primarily consists of water features, there are some forest resources present. 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

BLUE LAKES PLANNING UNIT

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed

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

Preservation of Historic Values

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

Numerous prehistoric and historic cultural resources are known to be present at Blue Lakes, and there is a high likelihood that additional cultural resources 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 at Blue Lakes (particularly outside the FERC cultural resources study area where less information is available), that appropriate management plans be developed and implemented, and that opportunities to support public education regarding cultural resources be considered. Additionally, some recreation facilities and areas may need to be altered to further protect cultural resources from inappropriate recreation use. Throughout this effort, the Council recommends close

coordination with Native American entities. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with the existing FERC license mandated Heritage Resources Management Plan (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 The road from the gravel parking lot to Meadow Lake has been closed off and is used infrequently for operational needs.



Historic livery stable in a lodgepole pine forest



Blue Lakes Planning Unit
Organizations That Submitted a
Statement of Qualifications
for Fee Title Interests

Amador County
Amador County RCD
California State Parks OHV Recreation Division
County of Alpine
Environmental Education Council of Marin
US Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest
Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BLUE LAKES 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, 52 comments were submitted concerning the Blue Lakes 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 available lands to transfer to USFS, since this planning unit is entirely surrounded by National Forest Lands.
- Support for the recommended measures outlined in Vol. II of the LCP, including closure of unauthorized OHV trails and providing non-motorized trail access between lakes.
- Support for close coordination with Native American entities to identify and preserve cultural resources.
- Support for the development of a fuels management plan that identifies fire-cutting areas and opportunities for large scale timber projects.
- Support for year round recreational enhancements, including a trail system; signage; interpretive center; and winter ski huts and kiosks.
- Support for wildlife baseline surveys and management plans.
- Emergency services should be sufficiently funded to meet increasing public needs in the basin.
- To complement wilderness values, salvage logging should be limited to felling hazardous trees only.
- Document the history of lands available for donation and evaluate the potential for these lands to be included in the Wilderness Area.
- Concern that change in ownership may affect adjacent landowners.
- Concern that a Timber Management Plan is not justified due to limited timber growth and timber sales in the area.
- Concern that existing uses should be preserved and enhanced, not restricted or eliminated.
- Concern about the possible curtailment of OHV access, especially on existing trails and roads.
- Concern that recreational enhancements, such as day use areas and trails, would impact existing recreational uses in the basin.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING FOR THE UPPER MOKELUMNE

A public information meeting for the Blue Lakes Planning Unit was hosted by the Stewardship Council on October 8, 2009 at the Turtle Rock Park Community Center outside of Markleeville, California. A total of 18 people attended and participated in the meeting, representing a wide variety of interests, including local and federal governments; community organizations; and local businesses. The primary purpose of this meeting was to solicit public input on the development of the Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (LCCP) to preserve and enhance the Blue Lakes Planning Unit.

Meeting participants were provided an opportunity to discuss and comment on proposed measures that were 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

- Identify and catalog natural heritage sites (in addition to pre-historic and historical resources)
- Survey natural resources and evaluate for potential educational opportunities (natural resource attractions such as scenic or geologic values)
- Enhance parking areas and boat ramps (on PG&E retained lands)
- Assess opportunity for additional day use parking (below Lower and Upper Blue Lakes and at the Twin Lakes trail head)
- Enhance recreation management planning (in coordination with PG&E)
- Develop a non-industrial timber management plan
- Develop a management plan for open space and outdoor recreation (in addition to management plans developed for the other BPVs)
- Ensure adequate facilities prior to providing additional youth opportunities
- Provide equestrian access (for overnights)

Qualifications of Donees

- Track record to manage lands and multiple uses
- Ability and interest in collaboration
- Financial capability to carry out management
- Local office/accessible representative
- Truly multi-use organization