

## **Fall River Mills Planning Unit**

### **Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat**

#### **Potential Measure:**

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the FERC boundary to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*

It is likely that relicensing studies for the Pit 1 Project only focused on areas within the FERC boundary. Some surveying and monitoring is occurring in river reaches not included within the FERC boundary; however, the planning unit contains additional habitat apart from river reaches outside the FERC boundary. Therefore, to enhance knowledge of biological resources throughout the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of lands outside the FERC boundary to identify biological resources and enable their protection.

#### **Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary consistent with the Pit 1 Project Vegetation Management Plan.*

The License-required Pit 1 Project Vegetation Management Plan describes briefly the treatment of noxious weeds. As this plan only applies to lands within the FERC boundary, there is currently no management of noxious weeds outside the FERC boundary. To protect native species, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary consistent with the Pit 1 Project Vegetation Management Plan. Development of the noxious weed management plan should be coordinated with existing PG&E noxious weed efforts, and the wildlife and habitat management plan, fuels management plan, and forest management plan.

#### **Potential Measures:**

- *Close vehicular access; provide walk-in only access to east side of the Pit 1 Forebay.*
- *Restore unauthorized OHV roads, closed roads, and other damaged areas around the Pit 1 Forebay.*

On a field visit, it was noted that there were several off-highway vehicle (OHV) roads, and some other larger bare ground areas, that appeared to be damaged from recreation use on the east side of Pit 1 Forebay. The east side of the forebay is the viewshed for the extensive recreation facilities on the west side of the forebay. Additionally, there are several cultural sites on the east side of the forebay that are potentially being impacted from unauthorized OHV use. The Stewardship Council recommends closing vehicular access to the east side of the forebay through installation of a gate and providing walk-in access only. This approach could reduce unauthorized OHV use and associated impacts to habitat and cultural resources. In conjunction, the Stewardship Council also recommends restoring unauthorized OHV roads, closed roads, and other damaged areas around the Pit 1 Forebay, in a manner that minimizes impacts to cultural resources. Roads on the west side of the forebay beyond the group picnic area have been closed, but may still provide facilities for unauthorized OHV use. Restoring these closed roads, along with unauthorized OHV roads and damaged areas on the east side of the forebay, would help restore habitat, reduce attractive nuisance for unauthorized OHV use, reduce possible damage to

cultural sites, and enhance the viewshed from the backside of town and the west side of the forebay.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Monitor shoreline vegetation by the group picnic area at the Pit 1 Forebay.*

A group picnic area was recently created at the Pit 1 Forebay. It appears that users of the picnic area are entering the forebay, as evidenced by patches of missing shoreline vegetation near the picnic area. A swimming area is provided just south of the picnic area. The Stewardship Council recommends monitoring shoreline vegetation at the group picnic area to determine if management of shoreline access is needed.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Coordinate with Sucker Springs Creek Shasta crayfish habitat restoration efforts and provide interpretive programs on Shasta crayfish at the restoration site.*

A major restoration project is occurring within the planning unit to restore Shasta crayfish habitat in Sucker Springs Creek. According to the Recovery Plan for the Shasta Crayfish, the Sucker Springs Creek population of Shasta crayfish has been isolated from the Fall River and Hat Creek populations for over 80 years and likely represents a unique gene pool. PG&E is currently funding the habitat restoration project, which focuses on eliminating signal crayfish in the creek and removing dams associated with the old hatchery. To continue endangered species protection efforts within the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends coordinating with Sucker Springs Creek Shasta crayfish habitat restoration efforts. The Stewardship Council also recommends providing interpretive programs regarding the Shasta crayfish at the restoration site to encourage further public support for restoration and protection of this species. Interpretive programs should be coordinated with restoration efforts and only commence when appropriate based on restoration work.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Require regular clean-up of debris at the Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Club.*

The Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Club is located on leased land north of Highway 299, just east of the Pit River bridge on Highway 299. The club is very popular and thus produces considerable shooting debris. Currently, brass prices have made clean-up worthwhile; however, clean-up is not believed to be conducted on a consistent basis. To improve habitat and prevent contamination, the Stewardship Council recommends requiring regular clean-up of debris at the Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Club.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit.*

The Fall River Mills Planning Unit provides habitat for a variety of species, including many special status species such as northwestern pond turtles, bald eagles, and Shasta crayfish. Additionally, the planning unit may provide several opportunities for restoration. To provide a comprehensive vision for habitat protection and enhancement within the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends creating a wildlife and habitat management plan. Once recommended biological resource surveys are completed, potential habitat enhancements can be identified and developed into a comprehensive plan describing goals and objectives for habitat and species, as well as measures needed to enhance and protect habitat for plant and wildlife

species. Monitoring of species and/or habitats would also be developed as a component of the plan. The wildlife and habitat management plan should be developed in conjunction with the noxious weed, forest, and fuels management plans as well as habitat enhancement and protection measures already described herein. The wildlife and habitat management plan should also be consistent with relevant Pit 1 Project plans.

## Open Space

### Potential Measure:

- *Apply permanent conservation easements to ensure a higher level of open space protection.*

The Stewardship Council recommends preserving open space values through permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed. Recommendations include only minor recreation development and are not expected to decrease the scenic quality of the viewsheds.

### Potential Measure:

- *Work in partnership with PG&E to explore ways to eliminate graffiti on the Pit 1 Forebay Dam.*

Currently, there is graffiti along the north side of the Pit 1 Forebay Dam. The Stewardship Council recommends working in partnership with PG&E to explore ways to eliminate graffiti on the Pit 1 Forebay Dam face. Whether it is murals, other artwork, or a plain dam face, reducing graffiti on the dam would benefit the recreational users of the area as well as enhance the open space viewshed.

## Outdoor Recreation

### Potential Measure:

- *Assess the potential for youth program opportunities.*

There are great opportunities within the planning unit for youth to learn about species such as bald eagles, northwestern pond turtles, and bank swallows, and their habitats; geomorphology; water quality and water management; and grazing. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends assessing the potential for youth program opportunities within the planning unit. Additionally, facilities located within the planning unit could provide staging areas for youth programs, including the old Fall River Mills library building, an old PG&E warehouse.

### Potential Measure:

- *Evaluate opportunities to support community park development by the Fall River Weir.*

There is local interest in creating a community park near the old feed mill site in Fall River Mills (not within the planning unit), which is surrounded by planning unit lands. Planning unit lands near the old feed mill may not be an ideal site for a community park due to topography and sensitive habitat; however, a park could be located at the site of the old mill where there is adequate space for park facilities. A park on this site would offer views of both the Pit 1 bypass reach and the Fall River, and benefit the community and recreation use within the area. While development of a community park may require planning unit lands and the access that they

provide to the old mill site, the Stewardship Council recommends evaluating opportunities to support community park development at this site.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Enhance usability of the ADA fishing platform at the Pit 1 Forebay.*

Recently, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) fishing access site was created at the Pit 1 Forebay just north of the forebay dam. The site includes parking, restroom, picnic table, and ADA fishing platform. The platform was installed several feet away from the water's edge and thus it will be difficult to fish from the platform. Therefore, to enhance the fishing experience, the Stewardship Council recommends enhancing the usability of the ADA fishing platform. Potential options to enhance usability may include extending the platform or moving the platform, but need to be further evaluated.

**Potential Measures:**

- *Provide trash facilities and parking at the Pit 1 Powerhouse.*
- *Formalize a trail from the Pit 1 Powerhouse to the footbridge with signage and benches.*

Though the Pit 1 Project has been recently relicensed and many recreation sites are being improved, there are still opportunities to enhance the recreation experience around the Pit 1 Powerhouse. Anglers and Pit River Lodge visitors are the primary users of the Pit 1 Powerhouse area. Currently, there are user-created trails from the Pit 1 Powerhouse to a footbridge over the Pit River, as well as trails along an old road that continues from the footbridge upstream through the Pit 1 bypass reach. Though use at the Pit 1 Powerhouse is not high, it would be beneficial to offer some formal facilities to ensure safety, protect habitat, and enhance the recreation experience for those that do use the powerhouse area. The Stewardship Council recommends providing trash and parking facilities at the powerhouse and formalizing a trail from the powerhouse to the footbridge, which would include signage and benches overlooking the river for visitors to enjoy the natural setting of the Pit 1 bypass reach. These measures would concentrate use to protect habitat as well as provide a safe way for visitors to access and enjoy the Pit 1 bypass reach. Disturbance to bald eagles should be considered when developing and siting recommended facilities. In addition, new facilities should be consistent with the Final Pit 1 Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP).

**Potential Measure:**

- *Assess the potential for a trail along the Pit River from the footbridge to Pit River Falls and from the Pit 1 Powerhouse to the BLM campground.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends assessing the potential for a non-motorized trail along the Pit River from the footbridge upstream to Pit River Falls and from the Pit 1 Powerhouse downstream to the BLM campground. Currently, there is an old road along the river to the falls that could be used as a trail alignment. However, safety from rockfall could be an issue; therefore, providing a trail to the falls needs further investigation. Additionally, a trail through this area may affect other sensitive resources and impacts to other resources would need to be identified. A trail from the powerhouse to the campground would provide a non-motorized connection between recreation sites; however, the trail alignment would need to be further investigated as private property may need to be crossed, and cooperation and an easement with the Pit River Lodge would therefore be necessary. In addition, bald eagles are known to use the Pit River in the area where trails are recommended. Potential trail impacts to bald eagles would

need to be evaluated, especially since both nearby nesting bald eagle pairs have recently moved their nests away from the shore.

If a trail to the Pit River Falls is found to be safe and feasible, opportunities to provide interpretive information along the trail should be evaluated. Development of either trail should be consistent with the Final Pit 1 HPMP. Additionally, if such trails are created, the trails should be included in an appendix (non-jurisdictional) to the existing Pit 1 Project Recreation Plan to ensure long-term management, maintenance, and monitoring of use of the recommended trails, as well as consistent interpretation and education facilities both within and outside the FERC boundary.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Work with the Fort Crook Historical Society to evaluate safety of the bridge by Pit River Falls.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends evaluating the safety of a bridge along the old road in the bypass reach. The safety of the bridge near Pit River Falls has been raised as an issue. Boaters in the bypass reach may portage around the Pit River Falls, and it is unknown if they walk across the bridge. The Stewardship Council recommends working with the Fort Crook Historical Society (owner of the bridge) to evaluate the safety of the bridge by Pit River Falls to determine what to do with the bridge, especially if the recommended trail to the falls is feasible and safe.

**Sustainable Forestry****Potential Measures:**

- *Evaluate existing timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate.*
- *Develop a forest management plan for the planning unit to promote natural forest development and structural and physical diversity in forests for long-term ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits.*

The planning unit currently contains two PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs) that are managed for multiple uses and emergency salvage operations; however, there is no overall documented vision for these TMUs. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a forest management plan for the planning unit through the evaluation of existing forest inventory data and supplemental information, when appropriate. In addition to supporting natural forest development, the forest management plan would promote holistic watershed management, supporting the enhancement of other BPVs over the long term. As this is an area mostly managed under the salvage prescription, snags and downed woody debris would be maintained in the planning unit when not deemed a safety, fire, or disease hazard as they are important components for wildlife habitat and forest regeneration. Development of the forest management plan should be coordinated with development of the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, and fuels management plans as well as relevant Pit 1 Project plans.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a fuels management plan for the planning unit to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard.*

Due to the location of the planning unit adjacent to and within the town of Fall River Mills and the presence of rural residential and commercial development nearby, reduction of fuels within the planning unit is important. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fuels management plan for the planning unit to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard. This plan would address fuels reduction, special status species' requirements, and watershed protection.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a fire management and response plan for the planning unit to ensure fire preparedness.*

As previously mentioned, the planning unit includes lands surrounding and within the town of Fall River Mills, as well as lands adjacent to or near other rural residential and commercial developments. The planning unit also contains recreation facilities that receive use during certain times of the year. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends a fire management and response plan to outline appropriate actions to take when a fire occurs and reporting procedures which would be useful for the community and site hosts within the planning unit and on adjacent lands (BLM campground host). Such a plan would increase fire preparedness and enhance fire prevention.

## **Agricultural Uses**

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement.*

There are currently two grazing leases within the planning unit: one for 300 acres of cattle grazing on the west side of the Pit 1 Forebay and one for 26 acres of horse grazing near the Pit River Weir. It is unknown if range assessments have been done for the planning unit and whether or not appropriate grazing practices are being used by both lessees. Thus, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement. This report would help determine appropriate grazing practices, regime, and management.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a rangeland management plan for grazing use that includes goals and objectives and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing practices that address soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management, and habitat protection.*

Once the recommended baseline conditions report is completed, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a rangeland management plan for grazing use that includes goals and objectives and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing prescriptions that may address topics including soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management, habitat protection, and cultural resources management. This plan would ensure that grazing use within the planning unit meets Stewardship Council policy for agricultural uses on Watershed Lands. To ensure consistency and

complementary measures, the rangeland management plan should be developed to be consistent with the recommended noxious weed management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary as well as the Pit 1 Project Vegetation Management Plan.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Evaluate the potential for additional grazing opportunities within the planning unit.*

There were formerly two other grazing leases within the planning unit, one along the Pit River west of the Pit 1 Powerhouse and one for the north and east sides of the Pit 1 Forebay. The Stewardship Council recommends evaluating the potential for additional grazing opportunities within the planning unit. Former grazing areas could be reviewed for potential reintroduction of grazing including whether or not grazing is an appropriate use in these areas, impacts to other resources, and whether or not a qualified lessee could be identified. If grazing is found to be an appropriate use of these areas, then a baseline conditions report would be prepared and a rangeland management plan developed.

**Preservation of Historic Values****Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys outside the FERC Project APE to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

PG&E conducted several cultural resource studies within the Pit 1 Project Area of Potential Effects (APE). Additionally, as part of the Programmatic Agreement for the Pit 1 Project, PG&E was required to conduct an archaeological survey of the Pit 1 bypass reach. There is a high likelihood of cultural sites within the planning unit outside the APE and Pit 1 bypass reach; thus, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys outside the Pit 1 Project APE (excluding already surveyed portions) to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. Documentation of cultural sites should be coordinated with Native American entities.

**Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct an ethnographic study of lands outside the FERC Project APE to identify traditional use areas.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

There are many cultural resources within this planning unit, as well as the potential for the presence of traditional plants or for the cultivation of plants traditionally used by Native Americans. To increase traditional use of this area, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting an ethnographic study of lands outside the Pit 1 Project APE to identify traditional use areas, including areas traditionally used for plant gathering. The ethnographic study should be coordinated with Native American entities.

**Potential Measures:**

- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for lands outside the FERC Project APE consistent with the Pit 1 Project Programmatic Agreement.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Assuming that the recommended surveys and ethnographic study identify cultural sites and traditional use areas within the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a cultural resources management plan for lands outside the Pit 1 Project APE to ensure that cultural resources are provided adequate protection in the future. The plan would include appropriate measures for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of cultural resources (archaeological and historical), as well as traditional use areas. Treatment measures could include avoidance, specific protective measures (e.g., fencing), site monitoring, and methods to preserve, restore, or enhance cultural resource values through conservation easements, management agreements, or through public interpretation and education programs. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with the Final Pit 1 HPMP and should be coordinated with Native American entities.

**Potential Measures:**

- *Determine potential noise impacts from the Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Club on Stewardship Council BPVs.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

The Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Club has leased land north of Highway 299 near the western edge of the planning unit since 1980. Many events are held at the club and membership is over 200 people. It is possible that activities at the club could interrupt Native American ceremonies, recreation uses and wildlife on surrounding lands. As a result, the Stewardship Council recommends determining how noise may be impacting Stewardship Council BPVs such as habitat protection, historic preservation and outdoor recreation. Should an impact area be identified, the activities at the club could be coordinated with Native American entities so that shooting use does not interfere with ceremonies that take place within the impact area or noise dampening measures could be used to decrease impacts to adjacent recreation use or wildlife. Determination of noise impacts should be coordinated with the club and any other potentially affected parties.