

Pit River Planning Unit

All recommended measures must be coordinated with relicensing efforts to avoid inconsistent or duplicative efforts.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Potential Measure:

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

Many habitat and species studies were conducted for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project relicensing within the FERC boundary, and studies will be conducted for the McCloud-Pit Project relicensing as well. Outside the FERC boundaries, some surveys for habitat and/or species may have been performed before recent timber harvesting occurred; however, comprehensive biological resource surveying was likely not completed. To develop a greater understanding of all biological resources outside the FERC boundaries, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of lands outside the FERC boundaries to identify biological resources and enable their protection.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for lands not included in relevant FERC-required plans.*

The Pit 3, 4, 5 Project License Application documented noxious weeds in the Pit 5 bypass reach area, but surveys did not fully cover lands within the planning unit. In addition, surveys for the McCloud-Pit Project relicensing will likely only cover lands within the FERC boundary. Noxious weeds within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project FERC boundary will be addressed in the vegetation and invasive weed management plan required in the New License for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and possibly under a similar plan for lands within the McCloud-Pit Project FERC boundary. FERC also suggested in their Final EIS for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project that PG&E implement weed control measures on its adjacent non-project lands to reduce the risk of the spread of weed infestations. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for lands not included in the FERC license required plan for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and any future FERC license required plan for the McCloud-Pit Project. Development of the noxious weed management plan should be coordinated with existing PG&E noxious weed efforts, and the wildlife and habitat, fuels, and forest management plans, and should be consistent with relevant FERC license required plans.

Potential Measure:

- *Abide by the USFWS Biological Opinion for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project outside the FERC boundary where applicable.*

The USFWS Biological Opinion contains a condition that specifically requires any easement holders or owners of land previously owned by PG&E to abide by the Biological Opinion for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project. FERC addressed this in the Final EIS for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and indicated that this condition appeared to apply to PG&E lands outside the FERC boundary, which are beyond FERC jurisdiction. To ensure species protection, the Stewardship Council recommends that easement holders or fee title owners of lands in the planning unit outside the FERC boundary abide by the USFWS Biological Opinion for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project where applicable.

Potential Measure:

- *Evaluate trails in the Pit 5 bypass reach for erosion impacts and potential restoration consistent with the FERC-required Pit 3, 4, 5 Project recreation management plan.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends evaluating trails in the Pit 5 bypass reach area of the planning unit for erosion impacts and potential restoration. The Recreation Opportunities and Management Issues report for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project identified erosion problems on trails in the Bush Bar area and erosion from off-road vehicle use in the Pit 5 bypass reach and at Bush Bar trails. The Stewardship Council recommends evaluating trails to determine which ones have erosion problems, as well as establishing priority, cost, and feasibility of restoring trails with erosion problems. Additionally, the trail evaluation should be consistent with the FERC license required Pit 3, 4, 5 Project recreation management plan, which will identify measures to maintain and upgrade trails within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project area.

Potential Measure:

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

The Pit River Planning Unit provides habitat for a variety of species, including potentially many special status species. Additionally, the planning unit may provide some opportunities for restoration of trails to reduce erosion and sedimentation. To provide a comprehensive vision for habitat protection and enhancement within the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends developing 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 habitat and species goals and objectives, as well as measures needed to enhance and protect habitat for plant and wildlife species. Monitoring of species and/or habitats would also be 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 FERC license required plans developed as part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project relicensing efforts.

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 uses allowed. Recommendations do not include new development and are therefore not expected to decrease the scenic quality of the viewsheds.

Outdoor Recreation

Potential Measure:

- *Install directional signage to Bush Bar if not developed in the FERC-required information, education, and interpretation plan.*

Currently, there is no directional signage to the Bush Bar informal day use site. The Pit 3, 4, 5 Project New License requires, under the recreation management plan, that the Bush Bar site be improved and serve as the formal take-out for the Pit 5 bypass reach whitewater run. Directional signage would help users better locate the site, saving them time and energy and therefore enhancing their recreation experience. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends installing directional signage to Bush Bar on the Pit 5 Powerhouse Road if such signage is not developed as part of the FERC license required information, education, and interpretation plan. If recommended signage at Bush Bar is not included in the FERC license required plan, then signage at this site should be included in an appendix (non-jurisdictional) to the FERC license required information, education, and interpretation plan to ensure consistent message, format, and maintenance of signage within and outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project FERC boundary.

Potential Measure:

- *Monitor recreation use at Bush Bar if this site is not included in the FERC-required Pit 3, 4, 5 Project recreation monitoring and reporting plan.*

In addition to installing directional signage to Bush Bar, the Stewardship Council recommends monitoring recreation use at Bush Bar if this site is not included in the FERC license required Pit 3, 4, 5 Project recreation monitoring and reporting plan. With potential whitewater recreation flows in the Pit 5 bypass reach, use at Bush Bar may increase. Monitoring of recreation use could demonstrate when or if the site reaches capacity or if additional improvements are needed. If monitoring of Bush Bar is not included in the FERC license required recreation monitoring and reporting plan, then monitoring of this site should be included in an appendix (non-jurisdictional) to the FERC license required plan to ensure consistent monitoring of use at recreation sites within and outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project FERC boundary.

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.*

Due to historical forest management, including even and uneven age management, the Flatwoods area has very different forest conditions than lands along the Pit River and in the northern portion of the planning unit. In addition, there is no overall documented vision for the Timber Management Units (TMUs) within the planning unit. 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. The forest management plan would also address the potential for research on planning unit lands related to sustainable forestry topics. The forest management plan should be developed in conjunction with the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, and fuels management plans, as well as relevant FERC license required plans developed as part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project relicensing efforts.

In areas where timber extraction is consistent with the forest management plan, timber harvesting techniques would be promoted that maintain mosaics of forest stands of different age, size, and rotation period. In addition to utilizing PG&E's uneven-age selection harvest system, harvesting practices and a monitoring program would be developed to protect watercourses and lakes and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests. Post-harvest, a monitoring plan would be developed to ensure that forest management and the proposed harvesting schedule would be consistent with the forest management plan, promoting natural forest development in perpetuity.

Potential Measure:

- *Manage plantations to best mimic forests in the natural landscape.*

Currently, the planning unit contains several plantations, primarily in the Flatwoods area. The Stewardship Council recommends managing plantations to best mimic forests in the natural landscape. The scale and layout of plantation blocks would be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found in the natural landscape. Trees would be selected that are suitable for the natural conditions of the site. Unless unsuitable based on regeneration, native species would be selected and exotic species used only minimally and only when determined to present no adverse ecological impacts. Plantation management would be included as a component of the forest management plan.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a fuels management plan for lands not included in relevant FERC-required plans to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard.*

An important component in minimizing fire risk is the reduction of fuel loads. The New License for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project requires a fire management and response plan that will contain fire hazard reduction measures; however, this plan would only apply to lands within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project FERC boundary. Similar actions may be proposed in McCloud-Pit Project relicensing efforts. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fuels management plan for lands not included in relevant FERC license required plans. The fuels management plan would ensure long-term forest health and reduction of fuel loading and fire hazard and may include a controlled fire component that could reduce wildfire danger and enhance deer winter range. FERC suggested that PG&E consider such actions for adjacent non-project lands, but these actions would need to be weighed against potential negative effects on other resources. The fuels management plan would identify when and where controlled fire would be an appropriate fuel reduction technique. Development of the fuels management plan should be coordinated with the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, and forest management plans and should be consistent with relevant FERC license required plans.

Agricultural Uses

None recommended.

Preservation of Historic Values

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project APEs to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Many cultural resource investigations have been conducted within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project area, and the Pit 5 bypass reach was surveyed again in 1999 and 2000 for relicensing. Though the area within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project Area of Potential Effects (APE, generally the area within the FERC boundary, 25 feet on either side of project roads, and most flat terraces within the Pit River reaches) has been thoroughly documented, it is unclear the extent to which the area outside the APE has been studied, possibly for timber harvests and other activities. Additionally, it is likely that only areas within the McCloud-Pit Project APE will be surveyed during relicensing of that FERC Project. With a high likelihood of cultural sites outside the APE, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys on lands outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project APEs to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. Documentation efforts should be coordinated with Native American entities.

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct an ethnographic study of lands outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project APEs to identify traditional use areas.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Ethnographic studies were conducted in 1984 and identified 102 ethnographic locations within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project APE. The Pit River Tribe requested that PG&E conduct additional ethnographic studies, covering dance areas, fasting areas, and other traditional practices and land use. The new ethnographic study identified additional traditional cultural properties, including traditional plant gathering locations, within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project APE. However, traditional use areas outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project APE (and likely outside the McCloud-Pit Project APE) are not being studied, and the planning unit contains significant acreage outside the APE. Thus, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting an ethnographic study of lands outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project APEs to identify traditional use areas, including areas traditionally used for plant gathering. This information would provide important baseline data for future management activities; for instance, if restoration activities were proposed for traditional plant gathering areas, traditional plants could be used in trail restoration and thus ethnobotanical use of the planning unit could be enhanced. The ethnographic study should be coordinated with Native American entities.

Potential Measures:

- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for lands outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project APEs and include impacted sites not treated under FERC-required plans.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

There are identified cultural sites within the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project APE Pit 5 bypass reach area that are being impacted by a variety of uses; however, impacts are not related to the FERC Project and therefore PG&E did not propose treatment for these sites in the Cultural Resources Management

Plan (part of the project License Application). Uses such as logging, trails, vandalism, and erosion are impacting these cultural sites. Additionally, there are likely cultural resources on lands within the planning unit outside the FERC boundary.

To preserve cultural resources, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a cultural resources management plan for lands outside the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project and McCloud-Pit Project APEs, as well as any impacted sites that are not proposed for treatment under the FERC license required Pit 3, 4, 5 Project final Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). Similarly, sites not protected in any McCloud-Pit Project cultural resource plans should be included as well. 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 relevant FERC license required plans and should be coordinated with Native American entities.