

LAKE MCCLOUD PLANNING UNIT

Pit-McCloud River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

Overview

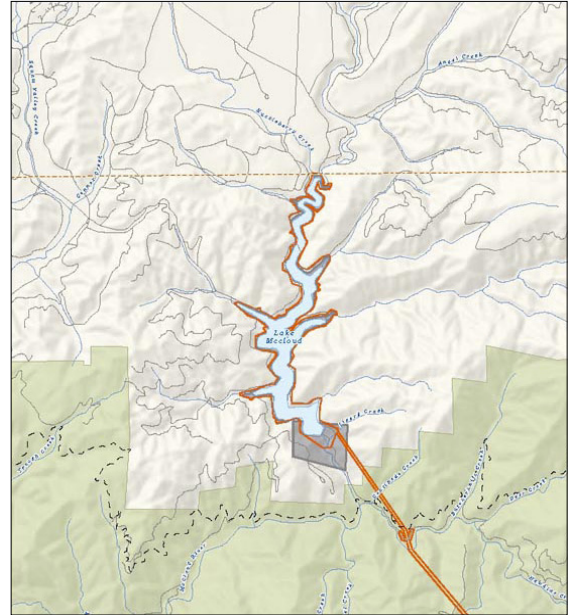
- Scenic reservoir surrounded by steep, forested terrain
- 833 acres in Shasta County; 184 acres outside the FERC boundary and 649 acres inside the FERC boundary
- Part of the McCloud-Pit Project (FERC #2106), currently undergoing relicensing (License expires in 2011)

The Lake McCloud Planning Unit is located in northern Shasta County, approximately 10 miles from the town of McCloud, 37 miles from the City of Redding, and 6 miles northwest of Iron Canyon Reservoir. The site includes Lake McCloud, a 520-acre reservoir with 14 miles of shoreline at normal pool elevation. Hydropower infrastructure in the planning unit includes the dam at the south end of the lake and a portion of the McCloud Tunnel (see Figure PM-17).

The Lake McCloud area is immediately surrounded by USFS lands and Hearst Corporation property. From Tarantula Gulch and Star City Creek south, the USFS (Shasta-Trinity National Forest) administers a narrow



Lake McCloud



Lake McCloud Planning Unit
Shasta County

band of land between the high water line and the road around the lake. The Hearst Corporation owns the shoreline and surrounding lands from Tarantula Gulch and Star City Creek north to the top of the lake and beyond along the McCloud River. The Hearst family summer retreat at Wyntoon, built by William Randolph Hearst in the 1930s, is just north of the lake.

The majority of the planning unit located above the high water mark is found near the dam along the southern shore of the lake. The McCloud River from the dam south to Lake Shasta is generally referred to as the lower McCloud River and is managed under the McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan. The Lake McCloud Planning Unit contains about 80 acres of land south of the dam that are part of the lower McCloud River and are therefore managed under this plan.

The McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan was adopted in July 1991 to maintain the remarkable values of the potentially wild and scenic McCloud River. The management plan establishes guidelines to coordinate management activities with the principal landowners in the McCloud River drainage area and public agencies that administer



Lake McCloud Planning Unit

Existing Conditions

- PG&E Lands Preliminary Designated for Retention
 - PG&E Lands Preliminary 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 Put-In/Take-Out
 - 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

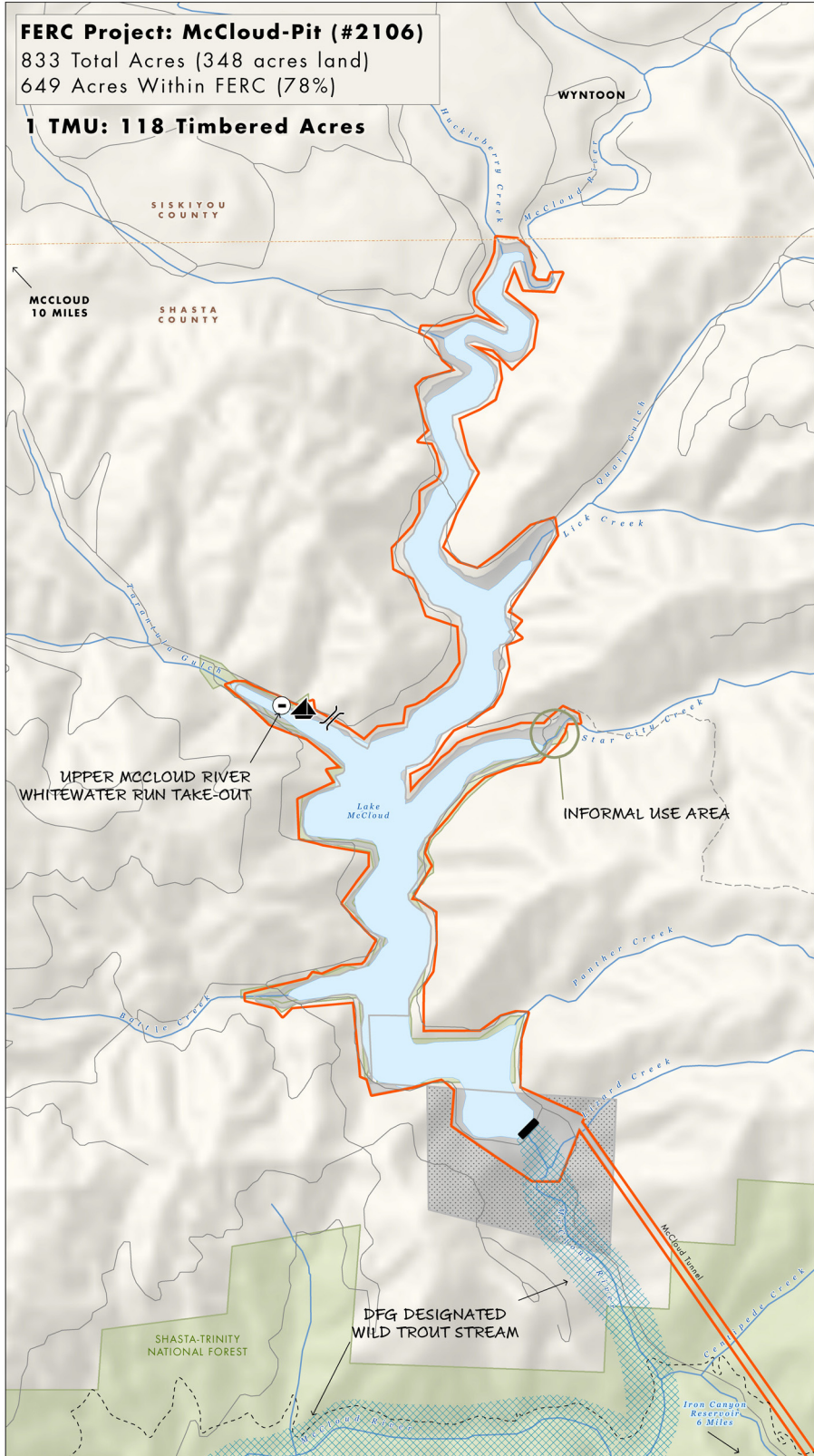


Figure PM-17

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programs in the area. The main objective of the plan is to improve management of the area's resources to allow for multiple uses while protecting the natural environment and private property rights. Signatories of the McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan include Bollibokka Land Company, Crane Mills, USFS, McCloud River Co-Tenants, PG&E, CalTrout, Sierra Pacific Industries, DFG, Hearst Corporation, and The Nature Conservancy.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

The planning unit provides aquatic, riparian, and forest habitats, including part of Lizard Creek, the McCloud River, and the canyon area around the river (Figure PM-17). There are two bald eagle nests at the lake, and there have been sightings of wintering bald eagles. Most of the USFS land south of Lake McCloud is designated as a Late Successional Reserve (LSR), protecting high quality habitat for late successional habitat dependent species such as the spotted owl. Many species potentially occur within the planning unit including several types of salamanders, frogs, bats, mollusks, and birds such as hawks and spotted owls. Mammals that may occur in the planning unit include beaver, black bear, fox, otter, skunk, and weasel. Nine species of noxious weeds are known to occur within the McCloud-Pit FERC Project area including a population of yellow starthistle at the boat ramp at Lake McCloud. There are also more than 10 special status plants that are known or likely to occur within the McCloud-Pit FERC Project area.

As for aquatic species, Lake McCloud contains rainbow and brown trout (stocked by DFG), as well as Sacramento sucker, Sacramento pikeminnow, hardhead and riffle sculpin. The McCloud River and Lake McCloud were refugia for the last population of bull trout in the State; however, it is now believed that this species has been extirpated. As shown on Figure PM-17, the lower McCloud River is a DFG-designated Wild Trout stream, from the dam south, for approximately 10 miles. The McCloud-Pit FERC Project is currently undergoing relicensing,

which will provide more specific habitat and species information through proposed studies that will include surveys for special status species, classify and map vegetation community types, map and assess noxious weeds, and characterize fish populations within the project reservoirs (including Lake McCloud) and project-affected stream reaches.

Open Space

Due to lack of development, steepness of the area, and minimal recreation facilities, open space values are found throughout the planning unit. The primarily undeveloped shoreline provides excellent views for lake visitors. The Shasta County General Plan recognizes that rivers, creeks and associated riparian corridors, and floodplains within the county are major open space resources.

Outdoor Recreation

Recreational activities at Lake McCloud include boating, fishing, and informal camping. There are no developed recreation facilities on planning unit lands. The USFS operates a boat ramp on the west side of the lake (Figure PM-17). There is some waterskiing and personal watercraft use on the lake, in addition to boat fishing. The boat ramp site is also the take-out for the upper McCloud River whitewater run, a ten-mile Class III run. The run passes through private property where a boater take-out is disallowed, therefore



Road across dam

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Lake McCloud

the boat ramp is the first publicly accessible take-out location. Fishing is the primary recreational use of Lake McCloud, and is conducted from boats and the shoreline via several access trails. Shoreline access is limited due to steepness and private property. The McCloud River is a well-known and popular fishing destination, with special fishing regulations for the McCloud River Wild Trout Area.

Currently, there are no overnight facilities at Lake McCloud. There was a USFS day use area at Star City Creek, but it has been removed due to unauthorized camping that was occurring at the site. Visitors still informally camp in this area, however, as it is one of the few flat spots around the lake. Several studies regarding recreation use are proposed in relicensing, including studies assessing existing and future recreation demand, assessing recreation supply and recreation use impacts, as well as determining if recreation management, access, or development improvements are needed.

Forest Resources

The Lake McCloud Planning Unit contains one PG&E Timber Management Unit (TMU) consisting of 118 timbered acres. Forest resources include mature Sierra mixed conifer stands, consisting of species such as ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and incense-cedar, with some old-growth trees. The TMU is currently managed by PG&E under a Multiple-Use

prescription, meaning that although sustained timber production is an important management component, protection and uses of other resources and facilities may preclude sustained timber management as the highest and best use of portions of the TMU.

Agricultural Uses

No agricultural uses occur in this area. Planning unit lands have low potential for grazing due to steep topography. According to the McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan, livestock use is inconsistent with lower McCloud River area planning objectives and will not be permitted.

Historic Resources

Little is known about the cultural constituents and early settlement of the McCloud-Pit FERC Project area, with less than 40% of the total McCloud-Pit Project FERC cultural resource study area (currently all lands within the FERC boundary) having undergone some cultural resource identification effort in the past. Previous identification efforts have yielded 74 sites within or adjacent to the study area. Many of the previous surveys are more than 10 years old and do not meet current standards. Numerous prehistoric sites have been recorded within the lower McCloud River area, mostly associated with the McCloud River Wintun Tribe. Two relicensing studies are proposed that would survey and assess archaeological and historic-era properties as well as identify and document traditional cultural properties.¹

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at the Lake McCloud Planning Unit be preserved and enhanced by focusing on habitat values, recreation, and sustainable forestry. In presenting the Recommended

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Concept provided here, our objective is to preserve and enhance habitat, manage recreation, while also enhancing important forest resources. We recommend this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E and FERC relicensing efforts for the area.

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological resources, as well as enhance sustainable forestry and recreation management.

As shown on Table PM-9, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Lake McCloud Planning Unit. Additional detail and background regarding these potential measures can be found in the Supporting Analysis for Recommendations, provided under separate cover. These measures are intended to be illustrative in nature, not prescriptive, and will be amended, deleted, or augmented over time in coordination with future land owners and managers to best meet the objective for this planning unit.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

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

The Lake McCloud Planning Unit offers high value aquatic habitat for recreational and wild trout fisheries, as well as some late successional forest habitat. 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 the resources (particularly outside the FERC boundary where little information is currently available or will be provided by relicensing studies). Management of the property to preserve and enhance habitat will also include addressing noxious weeds. In addition, the Stewardship Council recommends working with the USFS to investigate stability

measures for the area around the access road below the dam to reduce erosion. We encourage close coordination with the USFS and other resource-focused organizations working in the region. All planning be considered in conjunction with the forest management plan and any FERC license required measures developed as part of relicensing.

Open Space

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

This concept would preserve open space through permanent conservation easements. 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 recreation management in order to provide appropriate recreation use.

Currently, there is no information on fishing use below the dam and Lake McCloud is not included within the Recreation Plan for the McCloud-



Lake McCloud & mixed conifer forest

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Pit Project. As shown in Figure PM-18, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance recreation opportunities by monitoring recreation use below the dam along the McCloud River and managing this use consistent with the McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

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.

Forest stands are located along the McCloud River and include some old-growth trees, which could provide habitat for a variety of late successional habitat dependent species. The Stewardship Council recommends that future care and management of the land include developing a long-term vision for forest management in the area, addressing silvicultural practices, holistic watershed management, and fuels management. The forest management plan should be consistent with the McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan. We expect that these plans would be developed in coordination with relicensing efforts, as well as with adjacent landowners and USFS management and practices as appropriate.

Preservation of Historic Values

Objective: Document and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection if discovered in the future.

Non-inundated planning unit lands are very steep and therefore there is a low likelihood of cultural resources being present. However, in order to ensure any cultural resources found within the planning unit in the future are protected and appropriately managed, we recommend that cultural resource protection measures be incorporated into conservation easements.

These measures would describe the process for addressing any cultural materials found during ground-disturbing activities. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with Native American entities.

Endnote

¹Unless required by the Forest Service on National Forest Lands, PG&E does not propose to conduct eligibility evaluations for previously unevaluated sites. Instead, PG&E proposes to treat all unevaluated sites as if they are eligible for NRHP listing unless avoidance or elimination of potential adverse effects to a particular site is not feasible.