

Burney Gardens Planning Unit

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Potential Measure:

- *Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*

The planning unit is not associated with a FERC Project and likely has not been surveyed or studied, except possibly for previous timber harvests (the last of which was over 15 years ago). Wetlands and vernal pools within the planning unit, as well as the moderate elevation meadow, suggest there could be special status species present. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of the planning unit to identify biological resources and enable their protection.

Potential Measure:

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

The Stewardship Council also recommends using biological resource survey data to develop a wildlife and habitat management plan. This planning unit contains excellent habitat, and many species likely use this area. Once 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 both 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, rangeland, and fuels management plans, as well as coordinated with patrols of the planning unit for unauthorized hunting (see below).

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit.*

It is unknown if there are noxious weeds within the planning unit. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit. Development of the noxious weed management plan should be coordinated with existing PG&E noxious weed efforts, and the wildlife and habitat, rangeland, fuels, and forest management plans.

Potential Measure:

- *Encourage the local Game Warden to patrol the planning unit during the first part of hunting season to stop unauthorized hunting.*

Unauthorized hunting use does occur in Burney Gardens, primarily at the beginning of the season before cattle have been removed from the planning unit. To reduce unauthorized hunting use, the Stewardship Council recommends encouraging the local Game Warden to patrol the planning unit during the first part of the hunting season to stop unauthorized hunting. Such patrol might also deter unauthorized artifact collecting and OHV use.

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 do not include development of any new sites and therefore are not expected to decrease the scenic quality of the viewsheds.

Outdoor Recreation

None recommended.

Sustainable Forestry

Potential Measure:

- *Protect remaining late successional habitat from vandalism and harvesting.*

There are a few very large ponderosa pines left around the edge of the planning unit along Tamarack Road. Some of these trees are within the fenced area and some are not. One in particular is extremely large and not within the fenced area. This tree has been vandalized by people carving into the tree. There is potential for this to occur on other large trees nearby that are not fenced. Though these large ponderosa pine trees are commercially valuable, such large, old trees provide excellent habitat for many species, especially as surrounding areas are being intensively harvested. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends protecting late successional habitat from further vandalism and potential harvesting, both legal and illegal, to ensure that such important habitat is preserved and protected. Measures to protect late successional habitat would be included as a component of the forest management plan.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop measures to reduce and control lodgepole pine encroachment on meadow areas.*

Lodgepole pine is currently encroaching into the meadow areas of the planning unit, reducing meadow habitat and available forage. Potential causes of lodgepole pine encroachment could include previous disturbances such as logging or water manipulation, previous fire suppression efforts, changing microclimates due to downed trees, and removal of other tree species such as ponderosa pine. To maintain meadow habitat, provide forage, and return to more historical forest conditions, the Stewardship Council recommends developing measures to reduce and control lodgepole pine encroachment on meadow areas. Such measures could include tree removal and controlled burning. Efforts to reduce lodgepole pine encroachment should also be coordinated with the grazing lessee and would be included as a component of the forest management plan.

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.*

Current forest management at Burney Gardens is for sustained timber production. Most large trees, except for a few scattered late successional ponderosa pines along the edge of the planning unit, have likely been removed. Such late successional habitat can provide habitat for many species. Surrounding lands are being intensively harvested and occasionally clearcut. Therefore, habitat quality and quantity in the greater area are being diminished. To enhance sustainable forestry management, promote late successional growth, and protect existing habitat, 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 watershed management, supporting the enhancement of other BPVs over the long term. The plan would address the potential for research on planning unit lands and would include previously mentioned measures to protect remaining late successional habitat and reduce lodgepole pine encroachment. Development of the forest management plan should be coordinated with development of the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, rangeland, and fuels management plans.

In the 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 included 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:

- *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 near the towns of Burney and Whitmore, presence of late successional habitat, and propensity for fires in the Whitmore area, 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. Development of the fuels management plan should be coordinated with the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, rangeland, and forest management plans.

Agricultural Uses

Potential Measure:

- *Improve fencing to better manage livestock movement and distribution.*

Fencing infrastructure at Burney Gardens is somewhat dated and has been vandalized, as well as damaged from snow and fallen trees. To better manage livestock movement and distribution, the Stewardship Council recommends improving fencing. Improved fences would not only benefit agricultural use, but could also reduce unauthorized artifact collecting, hunting, and OHV use.

Potential Measure:

- *Allow use of only established corridors to access cattle areas.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends using only established corridors to access cattle areas. Currently, the grazing lessee does use existing corridors such as old logging roads that have become four-wheel-drive roads and trails; however, the lessee also sometimes drives an all-terrain vehicle across the meadows to access cattle areas. This can damage meadow habitat and reduce forage. By limiting access to existing corridors, meadow habitat would be protected and forage resources maintained. If established corridors do not offer direct access and are cumbersome to the lessee, a compromise would need to be developed to both offer direct access to cattle areas and protect meadow habitat. This measure would also be included within the rangeland management plan.

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.*

It is unknown if range assessments have been conducted for the planning unit. 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 practices 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 the Stewardship Council policy for agricultural uses on Watershed Lands. This plan would also identify any additional fencing needed within the planning unit, in conjunction with protection and enhancement of habitat as identified in the wildlife and habitat management plan. Development of the rangeland management plan should be coordinated with the noxious weed, fuels, and forest management plans. Additionally, development of the rangeland management plan should be coordinated with measures to reduce lodgepole pine encroachment as such efforts would maintain and/or increase forage availability.

Preservation of Historic Values

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*

- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Burney Gardens is not associated with a FERC Project and was last surveyed in 1991 for a timber harvest. It is unknown if this survey meets current standards. The area is rich in historic resources as there were at least seven homesteads in the area, and remnants of some can still be found. Projectile points and other lithics have been found by the lessee around the meadow and because of the unique meadow setting, the planning unit is likely rich in cultural resources. To develop a better understanding of cultural resources within Burney Gardens, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of the planning unit 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 the planning unit to identify traditional use areas.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

In addition to surveys, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting an ethnographic (and ethnohistoric) study of the planning unit to identify traditional use areas. Such a study would document both historical and Native American use of the planning unit. As generations pass on, such information is difficult to obtain and valuable historical information may be lost. There appear to be individuals in the area that know the history of the area, providing an opportunity to document historical and traditional use of the planning unit; thus, advantage should be taken of this opportunity. Such information may also help identify additional cultural sites that surveys cannot or do not identify. The ethnographic study should be coordinated with Native American entities.

Potential Measures:

- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Once the recommended surveying and ethnographic study identify cultural sites and traditional use areas, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit 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) and 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 coordinated with Native American entities.