

## **Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit**

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

#### **Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Maintain and protect meadow habitats and sensitive species by monitoring, adding protective measures, and providing restorative enhancements.*
- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Protect meadow and fish habitats by assessing water quality and by working with adjacent landowners for the overall betterment of habitats in Mountain Meadows Reservoir.*
- *Restore and improve fencing to protect certain wetlands from adjacent grazing operations.*
- *Prevent OHV and other vehicle access to informal use sites and other sensitive areas; facilitate organized clean-ups and restore sites, where needed.*

Habitat values would be enhanced through assessment of stream, meadow, and sensitive habitats and species around Mountain Meadows Reservoir and along the Hamilton Branch, and protective measures in specific areas would enable their protection. These would include determining areas of high habitat importance and fencing where impacts have been observed. Additionally, existing restoration efforts would be extended, for example, by continuing to provide habitat and nesting structures for waterbirds and waterfowl as appropriate. All enhancement measures would be part of a wildlife and habitat management plan. A noxious weed management plan would also be developed for the entire planning unit to protect native habitat and plants.

### **Preservation of Historic Values**

#### **Potential Measures:**

- *Supplement existing cultural resource survey.*
- *Conduct an ethnographic study to identify traditional use areas and assess the potential to restore these areas and uses.*
- *Allow access for ethnobotanical uses, gatherings, and ceremonies.*
- *Develop a cultural resources management plan.*
- *Protect cultural sites by formalizing recreation where necessary.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Habitat protection measures would also generally protect cultural resources; however, additional efforts may be necessary where specific uses threaten to impact cultural resources. In coordination with Native American entities, additional surveys and an ethnographic (and

ethnohistoric) study would be conducted to supplement existing cultural resource data, identify sites for protection, and determine locations for traditional uses. Access to traditional use sites, appropriate cultural resource management, and protective measures would be summarized in a cultural resources management plan. This plan would be developed in coordination with Native American entities.

## Outdoor Recreation

### Potential Measures:

- *Develop a recreation management plan to formalize increasing uses and protect valuable recreation, habitat, and cultural resources.*
- *Evaluate the potential to add additional public access and a day use area on the north shore of Mountain Meadows Reservoir in coordination with adjacent landowners.*
- *Evaluate the potential to add wildlife viewing facilities (e.g., a platform or boardwalk) linked to a new day use area near Westwood and a potential east shore site and facilitate education programs.*
- *Evaluate the potential to enhance the existing boat launch by replacing the boat ramp and adding a boarding dock, ADA fishing platform, and day use facilities.*
- *Include public access at historically used informal access points and potential new access points in coordination with adjacent landowners, when adding/restoring fencing to protect wetlands at Mountain Meadows Reservoir.*

Measures would also include providing additional facilities at the existing boat launch at the Indian Ole Dam, and assessing the potential for new access and a day use area on the north shore that would be easily accessible from Westwood. Improvements at the existing boat ramp could include replacement of the ramp with concrete, installation of a boarding dock and an ADA fishing platform, short shoreline access trails, and basic day use area facilities (e.g., a primitive restroom facility, trash receptacles, and picnic tables).

The development of the adjacent Dyer Mountain Project may affect these recommendations as project plans show the project area surrounding the Indian Ole Dam and including the access road to the current public boat launch. The plans suggest that the lands north of Hamilton Branch would remain publicly accessible; however, the project could affect the recreation character and capacity of the reservoir as a recreation resource. Dyer Mountain Associates (DMA), who currently own the property that provides access to the existing boat ramp, commented on October 16, 2006, that they would like PG&E/the Stewardship Council to allow the existing boat ramp at Indian Ole Dam to remain and/or be improved, but with limited parking that would be controlled by DMA on their lands. Given these requirements, preference may be given to development measures for facilities near Westwood, if this opportunity becomes available. However, since the reservoir is so shallow to the south of Westwood, building another boat launch in that location would most likely be infeasible. In addition, representatives of private landowners on the north, east, and southern shores of the reservoir have commented that they oppose increasing public access via their private lands. Further investigation needs to be done on land ownership around the shoreline of the reservoir to determine public access possibilities.

Accordingly, the potential to add day use facilities (such as parking, picnic sites, vault toilets, and garbage receptacles) at the recommended access point near the north shore of Mountain Meadows

Reservoir (close to Westwood and accessed by existing roads) would need to be considered in coordination with private landowners. Local youth may also benefit from these facilities and could be involved in planning and maintenance. Additional recreation and access opportunities would be assessed along the Hamilton Branch, as the area is popular with anglers and hikers, who primarily use dispersed informal sites.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop an interpretation and education program with signage at public access points in coordination with local Native American entities, adjacent landowners, and interested stakeholders as part of the recreation management plan.*

To enhance the recreation experience, as well as preserve habitat and historic values, the Stewardship Council recommends developing an interpretation and education program to raise awareness of these valuable resources through interpretive signage at public access points. Measures to guide and direct recreation to reduce potential impacts would include designing any additional access facilities (e.g., a new access and a wildlife viewing platform or boardwalk) in such a manner that the resulting recreation use is directed away from sensitive habitat and cultural resources. Fencing that may be installed to protect resources from cattle would allow for historical access points and any potential new public access points, as coordinated with adjacent landowners.

**Open Space****Potential Measure:**

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

The Stewardship Council recommends protecting the Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit from development pressure and thus further preserve open space values through permanent conservation easements. Any recommended new facilities would be small, unobtrusive, and are not expected to cause impacts or further large development; the remaining area would remain primarily undeveloped. However, plans by DMA to develop adjacent property may affect the overall appearance of open space at Mountain Meadows.

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

- *Evaluate timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate.*
- *Develop a forest management plan for the planning unit to promote wildlife habitat and structural and physical diversity in the surrounding forests of Mountain Meadows Reservoir and along Hamilton Branch for long-term ecological, social, economic, and cultural benefits.*

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 emphasize the protection of streams with a

focus on preventing soil erosion and sedimentation, and managing fuel loading. The forest management plan should be developed in conjunction with the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, and cultural resources management plans.

## **Agricultural Uses**

### **Potential Measures:**

- *Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement.*
- *Evaluate the potential to reinstate appropriate levels of grazing intensity as a tool for meadow management within the planning unit.*
- *Improve fencing to better manage livestock movement and distribution near the reservoir.*

The meadow area may retain potential for cattle grazing, but any renewed grazing (e.g., for meadow maintenance) would need to be carefully managed and monitored to protect the unique and sensitive resource values present. The current exclusion of cattle following long-term grazing use that resulted in meadow habitat and cultural resource degradation do not warrant increased agricultural uses at this time. However, carefully managed and controlled grazing may have value as a tool for future meadow management. Thus, a baseline conditions report to describe current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions as well as cultural resources in the area, including current use and state of improvement, is suggested. Following development of this report, the Stewardship Council recommends assessing the potential to reinstate appropriate levels of grazing intensity for meadow management. Any new grazing use would require reconfiguration of fencing to exclude cattle from the most sensitive riparian areas, wetlands, and cultural resource areas, and development of cattle fords where creek crossing is necessary. In addition, the Stewardship Council recommends working with adjacent landowners to identify public access opportunities and to preserve habitat values and water quality in the inflow area (around Goodrich Creek).