

Bucks Lake Planning Unit

Outdoor Recreation

Potential Measure:

- *Provide public day use area amenities and improved pedestrian shoreline access at the existing site at Lakeshore Resort.*

On the east side of the former Lakeshore Resort restaurant is an open area surrounding a concrete patio and sand volleyball court. The area surrounding the patio had been planted with sod, which appeared dead during a fall 2006 site visit. The Stewardship Council recommends providing a small day use picnic site in the lawn and patio portion of the site and improving shoreline access to serve visitors passing through the area on Bucks Lake Road. The aesthetics of the site would also be improved with landscaping. The addition of a few tables and grills, basic informational and perhaps interpretive signage, and stairs for improved pedestrian access to the shore would be sufficient to serve the intended purpose and could be integrated with the resort's uses of the site, if the resort returns to full operation. Parking is available along Bucks Lake Road. This enhancement is intended to complement the more extensive day use improvements planned for the west shore, which appear less likely to be used by travelers who may enjoy a brief stop on the lakeshore, than by nearby cabin owners and boaters. Travelers also may not be aware of the west shore site or may not detour from the Oroville-Quincy Highway up Bucklin Road to the site.

Potential Measures:

- *Consider installation of a portable chemical toilet and bear-proof refuse container at an appropriate site near the south shore of Haskins Bay.*
- *Consider installation of a portable chemical toilet and bear-proof refuse container at an appropriate site near the south shore of Bucks Creek inlet.*

Anglers and others access the lake — and Bucks and Haskins Creeks when the lake is drawn down — at informal use areas on the south side of Haskins Bay and the south side of the Bucks Creek inlet. Local residents have reported problems with sanitation and accumulation of litter at these sites during high-use periods. Based on a previous evaluation, PG&E has eliminated from consideration any formal recreation improvements on the south side of the Haskins Bay area due to inundation and marshy ground when the lake is high, as well as poor conditions for recreation use when the lake is drawn down. However, the Stewardship Council recommends that consideration be given to installing a portable chemical toilet and perhaps a bear-proof refuse container at a suitable location in the area to reduce sanitation and refuse problems. Similarly, the Stewardship Council recommends that consideration be given to installing a portable chemical toilet and perhaps a bear-proof refuse container at an appropriate site on the south side of the Bucks Creek inlet. Possible future improvements at the Bucks Creek inlet trailhead, particularly if the improvements include a toilet, may draw current users of this informal access point away, and may remove the need for this enhancement.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Potential Measure:

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

Several biological surveys have been conducted recently by PG&E, some of which extended beyond the FERC boundaries. However, because not all areas of the planning unit may have been surveyed, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting a biological survey to cover any areas excluded from the previous studies.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit, in coordination with commercial and recreation homesite lessees.*

Once recommended biological resource surveys are completed, potential habitat enhancements can be identified and developed into a comprehensive wildlife and habitat management plan describing goals and objectives for habitat and species, as well as measures to enhance and protect habitat for both plant and wildlife species. Monitoring of species and/or habitats would also be a component of the plan. The intent of this plan would be to address potential habitat protection and enhancement on both undeveloped lands within the planning unit and lands occupied by public recreation facilities, commercial lease facilities, and private cabins on leased sites. The wildlife and habitat management plan should be developed in conjunction with the forest management and fuels management plans, as well as habitat enhancement and protection measures described in recently completed FERC license required plans developed for the Bucks Creek Project. Specifically, the wildlife and habitat management plan should be consistent with the Noxious Weed Control and Prevention Plan, the Bald Eagle Management Plan, and the Habitat Protection and Mitigation Plan for Willow Flycatcher and Haskins Valley. Potential measures to protect and enhance habitat on commercial and recreation home lease sites would be developed in coordination with lease holders.

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.*

Forest management would focus on habitat preservation and enhancement, as well as fuel load management. Most of the planning unit is forested and primarily managed for Multiple Uses including timber production; however, there is no overall documented vision for the Timber Management Unit (TMU) 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. Opportunities to protect and enhance aspen groves and other uncommon habitats found in small

pockets on the shore of the Bucks Creek inlet and south of Haskins Bay would be pursued in the context of the forest management program. The forest management plan would be compatible with adjacent USFS management where appropriate to maintain habitat connectivity. Development of the forest management plan should be coordinated with relevant county plans and development of the wildlife and habitat management and fuels management plans.

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 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 recommended 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 within a "wildland urban intermix defense zone" as identified in the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, reduction of fuels within the planning unit is important. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fuels management plan for the planning unit that would promote long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard within the planning unit. Development of the fuels management plan should be coordinated with the USFS, relevant county plans, and development of the forest management plan and wildlife and habitat management plan.

Potential Measure:

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

The presence within the planning unit of numerous cabins, several commercial facilities, and recreation facilities that receive heavy use during certain times of the year makes fire management and response a priority. Of equal concern for fire protection are the commercial recreation facilities and rural residential developments on adjacent lands. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fire management and response plan to ensure fire preparedness and enhance fire prevention. The plan would include appropriate actions to take when a fire occurs, as well as reporting procedures that would be useful for the Bucks Lake community. This plan would be developed in coordination with the USFS, who is responsible for fire management in most of the Bucks Lake area, and the Bucks Lake community fire department, which maintains a fire house on a leased site within the planning unit.

Preservation of Historic Values**Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys outside the FERC Project APE to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Conduct an ethnographic study of the planning unit to identify traditional use areas.*

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

Over the past few decades, several cultural resource investigations have been conducted within the Bucks Creek Project Area of Potential Effects (APE), with detailed study and excavation of sites on the Bucks Lake shore and in the inundation zone. Recent archeological surveys conducted for a THP identified numerous additional cultural sites. However, because a thorough survey of cultural resources has not occurred outside the APE, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys outside the Bucks Creek Project APE to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. The Stewardship Council also recommends conducting an ethnographic study of the planning unit (particularly outside the FERC boundary) to identify traditional use areas, such as ethnobotanical sites. The cultural resource surveys and 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.*

Recent efforts to protect cultural resources at Bucks Lake have focused on areas that receive high recreation use or that are recommended for recreation development, and no comprehensive cultural resources management plan has been produced. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit to ensure that cultural resources are adequately protected 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 cultural resource policies and practices associated with the Bucks Creek Project and should be coordinated with PG&E cultural resource specialists and Native American entities.

Open Space

Potential Measure:

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

The Stewardship Council recommends providing long-term protection of open space values through permanent conservation easements. Management of undeveloped lands focused on habitat enhancement, viewshed protection (from both the Bucks Lake Road corridor and the reservoir), and fuel load management would also preserve open space while protecting the habitat of eagle, osprey, and other wildlife. The easements would also provide protection for willow flycatcher habitat and other riparian habitat values in the Haskins Bay area, which may be threatened by development on adjacent private lands.

Potential Measure:

- *Manage north shore lands as a buffer for the Bucks Lake Wilderness Area.*

The Stewardship Council recommends that the lands on the north shore of Bucks Creek inlet be managed as a wilderness buffer area, with development limited to trails, as exist now, and associated improvements such as trailhead parking and trail signage. This measure would protect both habitat and open space values on those lands and minimize disturbance of wilderness uses and values on adjacent lands. This measure is consistent with the existing buffer on the remainder of the north and east sides of the lake between the shoreline and the Federally designated boundary of the Wilderness Area, where the wilderness boundary is about 200 feet above the high water mark. As is currently permitted, boats would continue to be allowed to land on the shoreline adjacent to the Wilderness Area.

Agricultural Uses

None recommended.