

Lower Drum Planning Unit

The Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with the upcoming relicensing effort to ensure consistency with proposed studies and subsequent actions to avoid any duplication of efforts. Given the range of biological, recreation, and cultural studies to be conducted and the study area boundaries, it is expected that most information needs on lands inside the FERC boundary will be met. Recommended additional study efforts or assessments are intended to provide only information that may not be obtained by relicensing studies and is considered necessary to fully support the LCP.

Outdoor Recreation

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a recreation management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary.*

Recreation uses on lands within the FERC boundary are managed under the existing Recreation Plan for the Drum-Spaulling Project, which may be updated as part of relicensing. However, there is no management guidance for recreation occurring on lands outside of the FERC boundary, which includes approximately 70% of the planning unit. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a recreation management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary. Suggested elements of the recreation management plan include developing a recreation monitoring program, evaluating recreation needs, developing a dispersed recreation use management component, and developing an operations and maintenance program for any facilities developed outside of the FERC boundary. Development of the recreation management plan should be coordinated with relicensing efforts and any future FERC license required measures and plans.

Potential Measures:

- *Explore potential public access points for Rock Creek Reservoir.*
- *Install a day use area at Rock Creek Reservoir including a parking area, picnic benches, loop trail, restrooms, fishing platform, and shade structure.*
- *Secure flumes and canals surrounding Rock Creek Reservoir and Wise Forebay for public safety.*

Rock Creek Reservoir, located within the Auburn metropolitan area, currently supports occasional informal day use, including hiking and fishing. Surrounding development pressures make this area ideal for a community-oriented park and recreation facility, including a parking area, picnic benches, restrooms, fishing platform, and shade structure. The feasibility of developing a loop trail, which would require gaining an easement across private property, would be evaluated. All recreation and access enhancements would be coordinated with Nevada Irrigation District as they own a water treatment plant near the reservoir. Additional public access points, or upgrades to existing entrance points, would be considered along New Airport Road, Bell Road, or Grass Valley Highway. In addition, fencing would be installed at key locations to eliminate access to the flumes and canals. All new or renovated recreation facilities within the planning unit would meet ADA compliance standards.

Potential Measure:

- *Install a day use area along New Airport Road including a parking area, picnic benches, loop trail, restrooms, and shade structure.*

A 25-acre parcel, surrounded by new residential development and located just south of Rock Creek Reservoir and along New Airport Road, contains oak woodlands and a rolling hill landscape. The location and surrounding development make it a prime location for a community-oriented park and recreation facility. Recommended facilities at the New Airport Road parcel include a parking area, picnic benches, loop trail, restrooms, and shade structure.

Potential Measure:

- *Explore the feasibility of installing a day use area at Wise Forebay including a picnic bench and formalized trail.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends exploring the potential for a small day use facility at Wise Forebay. While the current walk-in only access would be maintained, the installation of additional day use facilities would be explored. Facilities may include a picnic bench and formalized trail. For enhanced public safety, fencing may also be required to eliminate access to the canal in this area.

Potential Measure:

- *Explore the potential for a trail connecting Halsey Forebay and Afterbay.*

In addition to the new day use areas, the Stewardship Council recommends exploring the potential for a trail connecting Halsey Forebay and Afterbay. Although hiking takes place on informal trails, there are no designated trails that fully connect the lakes. Due to the potential for cultural resources within the planning unit, the lands should be surveyed for cultural resources prior to implementation. Formalizing or limiting recreation in the vicinity of cultural sites may limit disturbance to sensitive resources.

Potential Measure:

- *Install interpretive signage regarding local history and natural resources.*

The Stewardship Council recommends the addition of interpretive signage or displays depicting the history of mining activities, hydropower, prehistoric uses, and species found in the Lower Drum area. This measure would educate the public about some of the values that make the Lower Drum area special and enhance visitor enjoyment, appreciation, and concern for stewardship of the area.

Agricultural Uses

Potential Measures:

- *Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current use and state of improvements.*
- *Evaluate potential demand and feasibility for enhancing agricultural uses.*

Currently, there are two beekeeping leases within the planning unit and horse grazing takes place on 5 acres near immediately adjacent to the City of Auburn. The Stewardship Council

recommends evaluating the potential enhance these agricultural uses. To determine whether enhancement is feasible, local demand, the presence of noxious weeds (specifically star thistle, which is known to exist in the area and is toxic to horses), water quality issues, and appropriate locations and infrastructure limitations would have to be evaluated. A baseline conditions report would be developed that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current use and state of improvements. The Stewardship Council recommends protecting these existing agricultural uses from encroachment to ensure the continued use of these lands for grazing, beekeeping, and open space.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Potential Measure:

- *Conduct surveys outside the relicensing study area to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*

Currently, there is little biological information available for the planning unit. While the upcoming FERC relicensing process will incorporate habitat and species studies, it is likely that lands outside the FERC boundary would not be studied. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends surveying outside the relicensing study area for biological resources, such as sensitive plant and wildlife species, to gain a better understanding of existing habitats and species. Such information would be valuable in making future management decisions.

Potential Measure:

- *Use biological resource survey data to determine if preparation of a wildlife and habitat management plan is appropriate.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends using biological resource survey data to determine if preparation a wildlife and habitat management plan is appropriate. The planning unit contains potential habitat for several special status species including the coast horned lizard, big-scale balsamroot, and Brandegees' clarkia, and recommended surveys may reveal additional special status plants and wildlife. Once recommended surveys are completed, and if a wildlife and habitat management plan is determined necessary, potential habitat enhancements and restoration opportunities can be identified and developed into a comprehensive plan describing goals and objectives for habitat and species, as well as measures to enhance and protect habitat for both wildlife and plant species. Monitoring of species and/or habitats would also be developed as a component of the plan. If developed, the wildlife and habitat management plan should be consistent with the noxious weed, forest, cultural resources, and fuels management plans as well as relevant FERC license required plans.

Potential Measures:

- *Evaluate potential impacts of formalizing additional recreation uses on habitat values, particularly in the Rock Creek Reservoir area.*
- *Consider establishing a nature preserve at Rock Creek Reservoir.*

Valuable habitat and natural resources are present in the planning unit. Recommendations focus on protecting the lands and associated habitat from potential impacts due to increasing development pressure and recreation use. Rock Creek Reservoir is an important natural area in a developed landscape. The Stewardship Council recommends protection of sensitive resources by using the area as a nature preserve and installing protective fencing at key locations for habitat

protection and preservation. Preservation of Rock Creek Reservoir would offer open space protection and high value habitat conservation.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit in coordination with Placer and Nevada Counties.*

Noxious weeds are known to occur within the planning unit, specifically around Halsey Forebay, Wise Forebay, and Rock Creek Reservoir, and likely occur in other areas as well. Currently, there is no noxious weed management plan for the Lower Drum area. To protect native habitat and plants, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit. This plan should be developed in coordination with Placer and Nevada Counties and local stakeholders and should be consistent with future FERC license required plans.

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.*

This planning unit has 255 timbered acres currently managed under a Salvage prescription. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a forest management plan through the evaluation of existing forest inventory data and supplemented with additional information, when appropriate. This baseline information would be used to determine appropriate forest management practices as well as forest monitoring and timber extraction goals. In addition to supporting natural forest development, the forest management plan would promote holistic watershed management. As this is an area managed under the Salvage prescription, snags and downed woody debris would be maintained in the planning unit when not deemed a safety, fire, or disease hazard as these are important components for wildlife habitat and forest regeneration. The forest management plan would be compatible with current and recommended recreation uses; noxious, wildlife and habitat, and fuels management plans; as well as relevant FERC license required plans as part of the relicensing process.

Potential Measures:

- *Develop a fire management and response plan in coordination with Placer and Nevada Counties.*
- *Develop a fuels management plan to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard.*

As previously mentioned, the planning unit includes lands surrounding the City of Auburn as well as lands adjacent to or near other residential and light industrial development. The planning unit also contains recreation facilities and the drinking water reservoir for the City of Auburn. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends both a fire management and response plan to ensure fire preparedness and enhance fire prevention as well as a fuels management plan. The fire management and response plan would outline appropriate actions to take when a fire occurs

and reporting procedures that would be useful for the community. The fuels management plan would reduce fuel loading and fire hazard, in addition to ensuring long-term forest health. The forest, fire management and response, and fuels management plans would be developed in coordination with Placer and Nevada Counties, the FERC relicensing process, and adjacent landowners.

Preservation of Historic Value

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys outside the relicensing study areas to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*
- *Protect cultural sites with landscape measures, signage, and restrict or formalize recreation use.*

The historic component of the recommendations would promote the protection and identification of cultural resources in the Lower Drum Planning Unit. The Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys outside the relicensing study area to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. To protect these resources, the Stewardship Council recommends development of a cultural resources management plan. Any cultural resources identified during surveys could be protected through the installation of signage and landscape measures such as boulders and rail fences. All cultural resource surveys and protection measures would be conducted in coordination with Native American entities.

Open Space

Potential Measure:

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

Finally, 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. No new significant developments are recommended, thus the scenic quality of the planning unit would be protected.