

## **Manzanita Lake Planning Unit**

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

#### **Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the FERC boundary to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary consistent with the forthcoming FERC Project vegetation management plan.*
- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary consistent with the forthcoming FERC Project vegetation management plan.*

Though many studies were and are being conducted for the Crane Valley Project relicensing effort, these studies generally focus on resources within the FERC boundary. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of lands outside the FERC boundary to identify biological resources and thus gain a broader knowledge of the wildlife, plants, and habitats within the Manzanita Lake Planning Unit to enable their protection. For example, as part of PG&E's License condition, a biological evaluation must be prepared in accordance with the USFWS for the assessment of potential impacts to the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. This requirement would be extended to all lands in the planning unit, as the Crane Valley vegetation management plan will also address protection of the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Based on these surveys and the forthcoming Crane Valley FERC Project vegetation management plan, a wildlife and habitat management plan and a noxious weed management plan would be developed for the lands outside the FERC boundary.

The noxious weed management plan would detail how and where to eradicate existing populations of noxious weeds and implement preventative measures to minimize the spread of weeds in the future. Similar to the development of the Crane Valley FERC Project vegetation management plan, the plans would incorporate practices that are considerate of local Native American traditional use sites and incorporate ethnobotanical resource protection.

#### **Potential Measure:**

- *Install habitat protection and erosion prevention measures (OHV barriers, signage) at the informal use area near the Willow Creek bridge and increase site upkeep.*

Several of the dispersed use sites also require additional habitat protection and erosion control measures, such as vehicle barriers and signage to limit unauthorized uses. An area which needs such measures is the informal use area by the bridge crossing North Fork Willow Creek north of Manzanita Lake. Dumping, OHV-caused erosion, and traces of target shooting and digging were observed at this site. The Stewardship Council recommends habitat protection and erosion prevention measures at this area and potentially other easily accessible but remote sites would receive additional periodic maintenance to discourage dumping.

## Outdoor Recreation

### Potential Measure:

- *Assess the potential of the nature park and interpretive trails proposal submitted by North Fork Mono Tribe for the No. 3 ditch parcel and adjacent parcel.*

People in the area enjoy the lands, as well as the informal access to them for authorized activities such as walking and gathering of ethnobotanical plants. This informal access, particularly to traditional use areas, would remain and would be enhanced. An example of such an enhancement is the assessment of developing a day use area with interpretive trails on the Conduit No. 3 parcel and adjacent parcel. The Stewardship Council recommends assessing a proposal from the North Fork Mono Tribe for a nature park on these parcels, including a day use area with picnic tables and parking, to enhance access to this historic ethnographic site. The tribe's vision is to keep it a gathering area. The site has many of the plant species used for traditional purposes; including soaproot, oak, pine, clover, manzanita, and willow. It is easily accessible from the County Road and would provide connectivity to other important areas and gathering grounds for nearby tribal residents. Adding parking, an interpretive trail, and panels would make this site accessible and interesting to the general public and could serve as an active educational tool. It would be an important addition to the local historic and interpretive resources of the larger area and could be of interest to visitors traveling through the area on their way to and from Bass Lake. Such a measure would be consistent and would be coordinated with the interpretation and education program that is also recommended (see below). Buffers to existing flumes and other operational facilities would be delineated as necessary to ensure safety and protect ongoing operations.

### Potential Measure:

- *Assess the potential for trails along Willow Creek, South Fork Willow Creek, Peckinpah Creek, and the western shore of Manzanita Lake.*

Potential trail opportunities exist in several areas of the planning unit, especially in areas where planning unit lands follow a creek and/or connect to other trails, public lands, or points of interest. The North Fork portion of Willow Creek and the western shore of Manzanita Lake appear to provide opportunities to connect points of interest, potentially even linking Manzanita Lake with the town of North Fork. (Madera County is currently looking to collaborate with the Forest Service and the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District to enhance recreational access to Manzanita Lake, including a walking/biking trail along the old Forest Service road from the town of North Fork to the lake.) Opportunities for trails may also exist along South Fork Willow Creek and Peckinpah Creek. Planning unit lands along these creeks are near the North Fork Recreation Center and could provide a publicly accessible corridor from the recreation center to the Sierra National Forest. However, further investigation is necessary to identify the extent of these lands outside the creek channel to determine if there is enough shoreline planning unit land to provide for a trail.

### Potential Measure:

- *Develop a recreation management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary based on the forthcoming FERC Project recreation plan.*

The Stewardship Council recommends developing a recreation management plan for areas outside the FERC boundary based on the forthcoming Crane Valley FERC Project recreation plan (due in 2007), and including measures to limit unauthorized uses. The recreation management

plan would also include other recommended measures to enhance recreation, such as assessing the potential for trails along Willow Creek and the western shore of Manzanita Lake and the potential for a nature park with interpretive trails as proposed by the North Fork Mono Tribe for the No. 3 ditch parcels.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop an interpretation and education program and provide interpretive panels at the Manzanita Lake Day Use Area.*

Due to its wealth of natural and cultural resources and uses, the planning unit offers opportunities to educate visitors on these subjects. To provide a consistent format and information for interpretation and education, the program would be developed in coordination with DFG and other interested stakeholders. Suggested elements of an interpretation and education program include: developing consistent information and directional signage; developing educational programs with Native Americans and local schools and groups; and developing interpretation programs and materials focusing on traditional use of the area, plant identification, and appropriate recreation use. As part of the interpretation and education Program, interpretive panels would be added to the heavily used day use site at Manzanita Lake.

**Preservation of Historic Values****Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the FERC boundary to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Conduct an ethnographic study of the planning unit to identify traditional use areas and allow access for traditional practices.*
- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary, consistent with the FERC Project Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP).*
- *Restore and enhance ethnobotanical species throughout the planning unit.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Along with other recommended enhancements that also benefit cultural resources, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys and an ethnographic study to identify and document additional cultural resources and traditional use areas on lands outside the FERC boundary. The Stewardship Council also recommends developing a cultural resources management plan to enable the protection of these resources. The cultural resources management plan would be consistent with the Crane Valley FERC Project Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). Specific enhancement measures would include the restoration of sedge stands for basketmakers farther south at Manzanita Lake, and allowing enhancements and limited management of other ethnobotanical resources in the planning unit by local tribes. There may be more specific access and preservation measures necessary for traditional use and archeological sites, but these can only be identified with more information about the location and status about these sites and in coordination with the tribes. Cultural resource surveys, the ethnographic study, development of the cultural resources management plan, and ethnobotanical enhancements would be coordinated with Native American entities.

## 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, consistent with the forthcoming FERC Project vegetation management plan.*

Even though there is a Timber Management Unit (TMU) for the planning unit, the amount of timber that is commercially harvestable is limited to a few areas that are outside the designated recreation area and viewsheds. Since erosion control and sedimentation management are very important in this area, a more active harvesting schedule is not recommended. However, there are opportunities to manage the forest resources outside the FERC boundary according to the forthcoming Crane Valley Project vegetation management plan, thus enhancing habitat, recreation, and cultural values. The Stewardship Council recommends developing a forest management plan for the planning unit consistent with the aforementioned vegetation management plan. The forest management plan would be developed 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 resources in the whole planning unit would be managed for habitat enhancement, fuel load reduction, viewshed protection, and timber production in compliance with the vegetation management plan and New License conditions. In addition, the forest management plan should be coordinated with local resource conservation districts and fire safe councils, such as the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District and the Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council, as well as the USFS.

## Open Space

### Potential Measure:

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

The Stewardship Council recommends preserving open space through permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed. Except for a potential interpretive day use area and trail in the Conduit No. 3 area, recommendations do not include development of any new sites; therefore, the scenic quality of the viewsheds is not expected to decrease through these measures.

## Agricultural Uses

None recommended.