

Wishon Reservoir Planning Unit

Preservation of Historic Values

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the FERC boundaries to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the area not included in the Haas-Kings River Project CRMP.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

There are few known cultural sites immediately around Wishon Reservoir; however, only the shoreline that lies within the FERC boundary was surveyed for cultural resources. Prehistoric sites were also recorded within the Helms-Pumped Storage FERC boundary (Hall Meadow); however, they do not appear to be subject to a cultural resources management plan or other formal protection. These lands are within the territory of the Western Mono, who are concerned about treatment of archeological resources and prefer minimal disturbance to prehistoric sites. In addition to surveying the land for cultural resources, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a cultural resources management plan for the area not included in the Haas-Kings River Project Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP). Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with the Haas-Kings River Project CRMP and should be coordinated with Native American entities. No measure is recommended for the potentially historic mining claim on the eastern slope of Wishon Reservoir, unless surveys show a need for protection.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

There is some specific knowledge of biological resources in the area, especially regarding special status species such as the willow flycatcher, which is found in the area southwest of the Wishon Dam and Hall Meadow parcels. Eighty acres of the Hall Meadow area are designated as a wildlife habitat management area. Prescriptions for the management of this area until 2027 are detailed in the 1991 Wildlife Habitat Management Plan that is part of the Helms Pumped Storage FERC Project License Amendment. The plan includes new plantings of oaks and shrubs which have been fenced for protection from grazing or other disturbances. Further measures in the plan include increasing the cover and species diversity at the edges of forest, meadows, and streams by planting willow, alder, aspen, and dogwood; and increasing the density of conifer snags. Maintenance consists of supplemental watering, periodic pruning or thinning, and additional planting to achieve planting goals. Other measures in the plan pertain to the transmission lines that traverse the parcel; these needed to be redesigned and constructed to protect raptors from electrocution, and the transmission line right-of-way was closed to any vehicular use, except for maintenance. The plan also requires an Environmental Awareness Program for PG&E employees, which has been well received by the employees. Other related plans that may provide a basis for additional measures are the Wildlife Mitigation, Visual Resources, and Fisheries Monitoring Plans of the Haas-Kings River FERC Project.

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the FERC boundaries to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit, consistent with the Helms-Pumped Storage and Haas-Kings River management plans.*
- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit.*

The Stewardship Council recommends surveying lands outside the FERC boundaries to identify biological resources and enable their protection. Areas within the FERC boundaries that have not been previously surveyed could also be included in the recommended surveys. Furthermore, appropriate prescriptions to enhance biological resources would be developed and captured in a wildlife and habitat management plan consistent with the existing FERC license required management and monitoring plans. The Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for planning unit lands that are not already included in existing FERC prescriptions to control existing infestations of noxious weeds where possible and implement preventative actions to minimize the spread of weeds in the future. This plan would provide for consistency in management of noxious weeds with adjacent management and should be coordinated with the USFS. These measures would ensure that habitat-enhancing prescriptions would be similarly extended to include all lands within and outside the FERC boundaries.

Outdoor Recreation

Potential Measure:

- *Assess developing a scenic vista loop trail on the upland area of the western shore of Wishon Reservoir that would connect the picnic area with the fishing access.*

The potential to enhance recreation opportunities is limited, as the lands outside the FERC boundary are mostly inaccessible and according to the 2003 Recreation Monitoring Report, recreation facilities at the project are adequate. Also, the recreation facilities within the planning unit are in the process of being updated, and the need for further enhancement in the area is low. However, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a scenic vista trail to allow enhanced public access to lands outside the FERC boundaries above the reservoir. The trail is suggested as a 2.4-mile loop trail between the parking lots of the Helms/Wishon Quarry Picnic Area and the Short Hair Creek Fishing Access along the western side of the reservoir. The rugged granite hillside may be too steep for a trail, but if feasible, it would provide scenic views and enhance the opportunity to actively experience the high country. Adequate parking would be available at both locations and allow for an alternate pedestrian connection between the two recreation facilities. A portion of the potential trail near the Short Hair Creek Fishing Access would cross USFS land, thus planning and implementation would have to be coordinated with the USFS.

Sustainable Forestry

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a fuels management plan to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard throughout the planning unit.*

Forest resources in the planning unit's Timber Management Unit (TMU) make up only about 10% of the planning unit. Most other lands around the reservoir are sparsely vegetated,

inaccessible, and/or are part of the reservoir's viewshed; thus, there is low potential to enhance or increase management. The most densely timbered lands in the planning unit are in the Hall Meadow/Helms housing area; however, those parcels are not part of a TMU because they are managed for other uses (residential and wildlife habitat mitigation). To ensure appropriate long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fuels management plan consistent with USFS fuels reduction projects to ensure consistent management and maintenance of habitat connectivity.

Open Space

Potential Measure:

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

Open space protection would be addressed through conservation easements, although there is little threat of development at present. There are no plans to increase recreation development within the planning unit and surrounding lands are managed by Sierra National Forest for their viewshed and habitat value. Nevertheless, conservation easements would limit future development and preserve open space in the planning unit.

Agricultural Uses

None recommended.