

# MOUNTAIN MEADOWS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

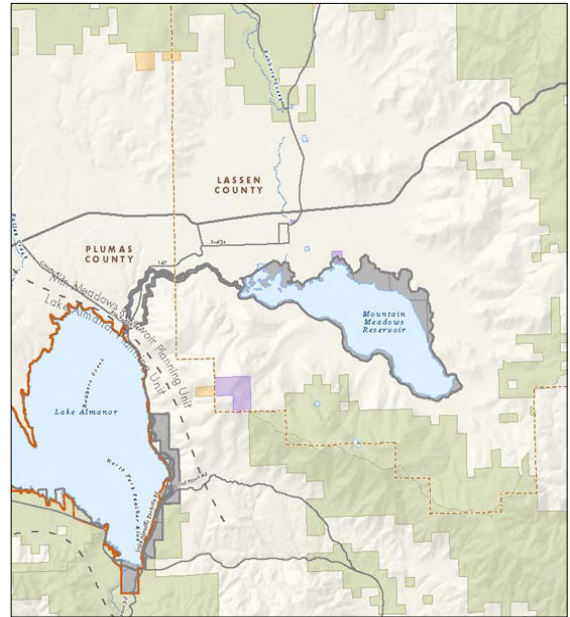
## Feather River Watershed

### Existing Conditions & Uses

#### Overview

- Scenic reservoir fringed with marsh and montane meadows containing a diverse assemblage of biological and cultural resources
- Important area for birds, including breeding and migrating waterfowl
- Five-mile reach of Hamilton Branch of the North Fork Feather River with associated riparian habitat and a popular trout fishery
- 7,064 acres in Lassen and Plumas Counties
- Lands and waters are part of a hydropower project that is exempt from FERC licensing

The Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit consists primarily of the shallow Mountain Meadows Reservoir, also known as Walker Lake, and surrounding shoreline lands. At 5,000 feet elevation, it is the uppermost reservoir among PG&E's North Fork Feather River hydropower developments. As shown in Figure FR-3, at full pool the reservoir covers over 80% of the planning unit. The planning unit is located just south of Highway 36 and Westwood, a former



Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit  
Lassen & Plumas Counties

lumber mill town with approximately 2,000 residents.

The planning unit also encompasses the Hamilton Branch of the North Fork Feather River, which carries water about five miles from Mountain Meadows Reservoir to Lake Almanor, and a parallel canal into which water is diverted to a powerhouse located at the outlet of the stream into Lake Almanor. Together, these areas comprise PG&E's Hamilton Branch Development, which is exempt from FERC licensing requirements.

### Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Mountain Meadows Reservoir and surrounding shoreline lands have numerous high value biological resources, particularly for migrating and breeding waterfowl. Fed by Goodrich Creek from the northeast and other small tributary streams, the reservoir inundates part of a high elevation meadow system. The planning unit includes the reservoir (5,746 acres at maximum pool elevation) and 100 feet of shoreline above the high water mark in most areas. Unusual for a reservoir, most of the shoreline is fringed with emergent marsh and wet montane meadow



Mountain Meadows Res. from Indian Ole Dam

# Mtn Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit Existing Conditions

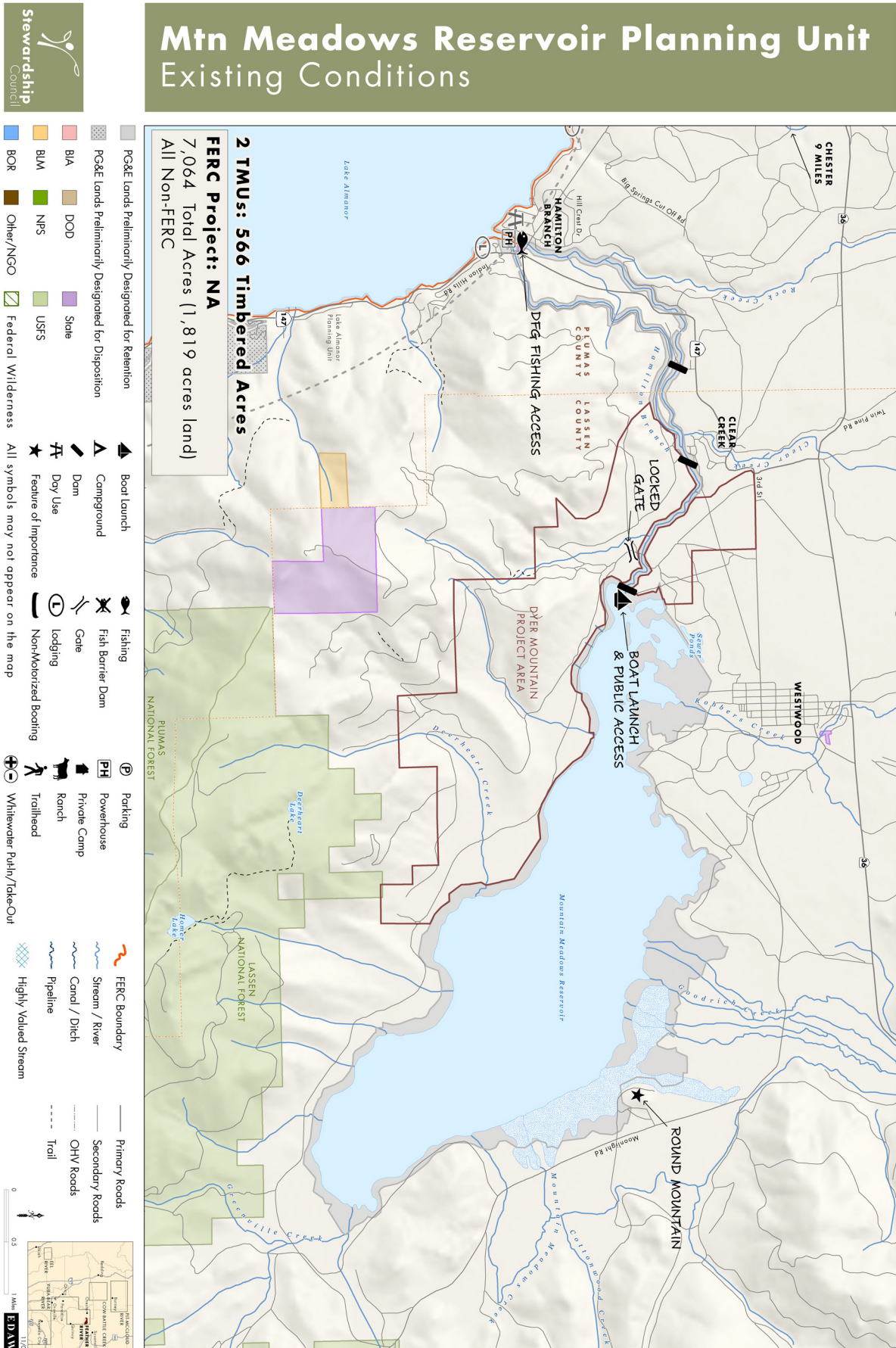


Figure FR-3



# MOUNTAIN MEADOWS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

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habitats. Conifer forest grows close to the shoreline along parts of the north and west shore where there is higher ground. In the area where the braided channels of Goodrich Creek enter the reservoir and in the area south of Westwood, more extensive areas of wet montane meadow and emergent marsh are present. The reservoir supports primarily warmwater fish species, including largemouth bass, panfish, and suckers.

Hamilton Branch flows through a rocky channel surrounded by riparian and conifer forest, with several tributary streams and springs contributing to the flow along the way. The stream drops several hundred feet in elevation between the reservoir and Lake Almanor and supports naturally reproducing and stocked trout.

The reservoir, meadow, streams, and associated riparian habitat provide for a diverse range of wildlife and plant species. Though no targeted surveys have been conducted in the planning unit, six rare plants have been recorded in the area, and the reservoir basin is used by numerous special status bird species, such as the willow flycatcher, yellow warbler, northern goshawk, bald eagle, greater sandhill crane, black tern, spotted owl, Swainson's hawk, osprey, and great blue heron. The area is within the Pacific Flyway and supports thousands of migrating and breeding waterfowl every year, including several species of geese, grebes, ducks and other waterfowl and shorebirds. Two bald eagle nests have been documented near the south shore of the reservoir, and numerous osprey nests are found primarily on the west shore. The California Audubon Society has designated the area as part of its Lake Almanor Area Important Bird Area.

Because Mountain Meadows Reservoir is shallow and warm, it has a higher potential for being nutrient-rich. However, high *e. coli* bacteria counts have been reported as well, which may derive from upstream cattle grazing, migratory waterfowl, or the adjacent sewer ponds for the town of Westwood. Reported *e. coli* counts were above the level required for health and safety and may have impacts on fish and other organisms, thus anglers are instructed to wash their hands.

### Open Space

The greater Mountain Meadows area has abundant open space, with large areas of undeveloped timber and grazing lands. However, the nearby communities of Westwood and Hamilton Branch are growing, as are communities in the Lake Almanor area. The surrounding area lands are generally owned or managed by the USFS (Lassen National Forest), Roseburg Resources Company, Sierra Pacific Industries, Red River Forests Partnerships, and other private landowners and are being used for timber production, hydropower, grazing, and rock mining. The lands immediately surrounding the planning unit are entirely in private ownership. Land use is governed by the policies of the 2000 Lassen County General Plan.

A private developer is in the process of planning the 7,000-acre Dyer Mountain Resort Project on former timber company land adjacent to Mountain Meadows. The development area would abut the southwest and west side of Mountain Meadows Reservoir and would surround the upper portion of Hamilton Branch. These developments would have a visible impact on the current predominantly natural landscape.<sup>1</sup>

### Outdoor Recreation

The beautiful natural setting of Mountain Meadows Reservoir, with few facilities or other developments, provides a semi-primitive



Hamilton Branch inlet

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Mountain Meadows Westwood access point

recreation experience. Recreation use at Mountain Meadows Reservoir — primarily boat and shoreline angling, canoeing/kayaking, and hunting — is light and dispersed, as much of the reservoir is shallow and not boatable at lower pool elevations. The only public access point is a boat ramp at the Indian Ole Dam, accessible via a County-maintained gravel road that crosses private property (located within the Dyer Mountain Resort Project area). A Westwood Community Survey (August 2000) indicated support for managing Mountain Meadows Reservoir for more fishing and for wildlife habitat but opposed managing for more tourism and recreation.

Hamilton Branch Creek is popular for trout fishing, particularly the lower reach, which has colder water and is stocked with rainbow trout. A DFG fishing access area is located near the mouth of the stream. There are several informal trails and old roads in both the reservoir and Hamilton Branch areas that locals use for hiking and shoreline access, as well as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter. These roads and trails provide access to nearly 50 generally lightly used informal use sites along Hamilton Branch and widely dispersed sites around the shore of the reservoir. Other dispersed recreation activities include wildlife viewing, snowmobiling, off-road vehicle use, and primitive camping.

### Forest Resources

The planning unit includes 566 timbered acres in two Timber Management Units (TMUs). The 280-acre Mountain Meadows Reservoir TMU consists of small stands mostly at the western end of the reservoir and along part of the northern shore. This TMU is managed by PG&E under a Multiple-Use prescription, which may preclude sustained timber management as the highest and best use of portions of the property. In the 286-acre Hamilton Branch TMU, forest resources are managed under a Salvage prescription, wherein timber management activities are restricted to mitigating for emergency forest and watershed health issues. According to PG&E's Timber Harvesting Management Plan, there are no late successional stands in either TMU.

### Agricultural Uses

PG&E has previously leased grazing rights for the upland parts of the meadow on the northern shore, but the leases have not been renewed in recent years. PG&E has been working with the California Waterfowl Association to exclude cattle from the meadow system to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.<sup>2</sup>

### Historic Resources

The Mountain Meadows Basin is a location of continuing importance for the Maidu people of northeastern California. Lands inundated by and surrounding the reservoir contain Maidu historic, ceremonial, village, and burial sites. In 2003, a study to identify areas of traditional cultural importance to the Maidu for resource gathering, ceremonies, or other special uses was initiated in support of the Draft Hamilton Branch Project 2105 License Application Amendment, but was not completed. However, cultural resource surveys recorded 30 archeological sites, 15 of which were new discoveries and 19 of which contained prehistoric (Native American) resources, such as stone flakes and tools, milling stones, and mortars. Several of these, as well as other sites, contained historic resources. Most

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recorded cultural resources are near the reservoir and several additional sites are believed to be inundated.

### Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at the Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit be preserved and enhanced by focusing on the unique and diverse habitat values in the planning unit, including stream, meadow, forest, and associated sensitive species habitats, as well as the beautiful natural setting and recreational resources. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to protect this ecosystem as a whole while assessing the potential to improve existing facilities and enhance the currently limited recreational access to the reservoir and surrounding lands. The Stewardship Council also recommends that the potential for some grazing activities, in balance with habitat protection activities, should be evaluated.

The Dyer Mountain development proposed on adjacent lands, may cause impacts to existing conditions and resources if approved and built, in which case further revision and adaptation of these recommendations may be required.

**Objective: Preserve and enhance biological and cultural resources, enhance recreation opportunities and sustainable forestry management, and evaluate the potential for grazing opportunities.**



View of wet meadow & Round Mountain

As shown in Table FR-2, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit. Additional detail and background regarding these potential measures can be found in the Supporting Analysis for Recommendations, provided under separate cover. These measures are intended to be illustrative in nature, not prescriptive, and will be amended, deleted, or augmented over time in coordination with future land owners and managers to best meet the objective for this planning unit.

### Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

**Objective: Preserve and enhance habitat in order to protect special biological resources.**

The Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit contains valuable marsh and meadow habitat that supports many species of waterfowl and other birds, as well as riparian, forest, and aquatic habitat. The Stewardship Council recommends enhancing habitat values through assessment of stream, meadow, and sensitive habitats and species around Mountain Meadows Reservoir and along the Hamilton Branch, and enabling their protection with protective measures in specific areas, including addressing noxious weeds. These would include



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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 potential enhancement measures would be addressed through the development of a wildlife and habitat management plan.

### Open Space

**Objective: Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources and the undeveloped recreation setting.**

The open meadows and undeveloped forests of the planning unit are integral parts of the habitat, cultural, and recreational values of the Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit. This concept would protect the area from development pressure and further preserve open space values through permanent conservation easements. Any recommended new facilities would be small and unobtrusive with minimal site impacts; the remaining area would remain primarily undeveloped under this concept.<sup>3</sup> Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed and the requirement to maintain scenic qualities.



Informal vehicle access at west end of reservoir

### Outdoor Recreation

**Objective: Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional public access, educational and recreation opportunities, and additional recreation management.**

Mountain Meadows Reservoir is enjoyed by local residents and visitors to the area interested in angling, bird watching, non-powered boating, and similar activities in a quiet and undeveloped setting. Hamilton Branch provides well known opportunities for trout fishing. As shown in Figure FR-4, the Stewardship Council looks to maintain these existing opportunities and enhance access by recommending improvements to the existing boat launch and assessing the potential for new access and day use areas on the north and west shores of the reservoir. The Stewardship Council also aims to restore areas damaged by past unauthorized use, to prevent potential future impacts, and develop an interpretation and education program to raise awareness of the valuable resources there. It is expected that several studies and development of a recreation plan would be required to support these recommendations. Since PG&E lands are limited to near shore and streamside parcels, and the ability to access adjacent private lands would be necessary to reach the potential enhancement sites, the proposals would need to be considered in coordination with the private landowners.

### Sustainable Forestry

**Objective: Develop and implement forestry practices in order to contribute to a sustainable forest and preserve and enhance habitat.**

The Mountain Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit contains nearly 600 acres of conifer and riparian forest. The Stewardship Council recommends that future care and management of the land include developing a long-term vision for forest management in the area, addressing silvicultural practices and holistic watershed management.

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The forest management plan should be developed in conjunction with the wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, and cultural resources management plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination with adjacent landowners as appropriate.

### Agricultural Uses

**Objective: Assess the potential use of cattle grazing in order to maintain meadow habitat.**

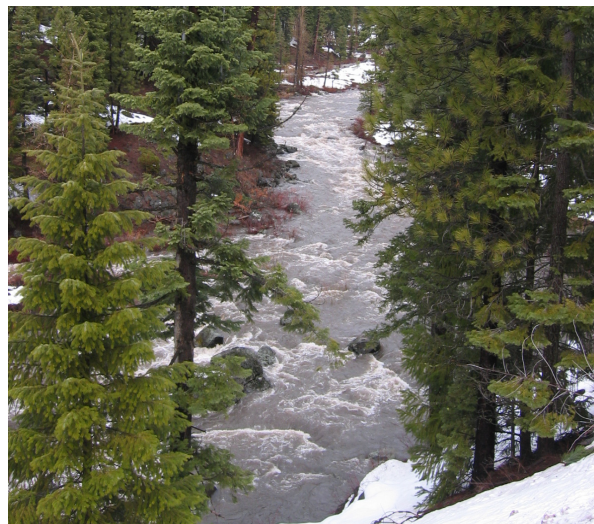
Although the planning unit is no longer used for grazing, and efforts have been made to exclude cattle from sensitive habitat and cultural areas, the meadow areas may retain potential for cattle grazing directed at maintaining meadow habitat. The Stewardship Council recommends development of a baseline 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. This would support an assessment of the potential to reinstate appropriate levels of grazing intensity for meadow management. It is anticipated that 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.

### Preservation of Historic Values

**Objective: Identify and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection.**

The Mountain Meadows Reservoir area is of great importance to local Maidu Native Americans and several Native American and pioneer cultural sites are known to exist near the reservoir.

Habitat protection measures would also generally protect these cultural resources; however, additional efforts may be necessary



Hamilton Branch in March

where specific uses threaten to impact cultural resources. The Stewardship Council recommends that cultural resource studies be conducted to understand the resources at Mountain Meadows Reservoir. A cultural resources management plan would address access to traditional use sites, appropriate cultural resource management, and protective measures. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with Native American entities.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rezoning for the project was approved by Lassen County voters in 2000; a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was circulated in 2005, and certain sections of the Draft EIR were re-circulated in July 2006. The comment period ended on August 28, 2006. A Final EIR is anticipated in 2007.

<sup>2</sup> California Waterfowl Association (CWA) has also been working to enhance habitat for ducks, geese, and other birds and wildlife. A 1,500-acre habitat enhancement project (including fencing, grazing management, and nesting structures), funded by the USFWS and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), was completed in 1998. A similar 10-year project on 370 acres, funded by PG&E and the WCB, is ongoing.

<sup>3</sup> However, plans by Dyer Mountain Associates (DMA) to develop adjacent property may affect the overall viewshed at Mountain Meadows Reservoir.

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Table FR-2 Objectives to Preserve and/or Enhance – Recommended Concept

Planning Unit Objective: Preserve and enhance biological and cultural resources, enhance recreation opportunities and sustainable forestry management, and evaluate the potential for grazing opportunities.		
Beneficial Public Value	Objective	Potential Measures to Preserve and/or Enhance BPVs – Not Requirements*
Protection of the Natural Habitat of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants	<b>Preserve and enhance habitat in order to protect special biological resources.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify biological resources and enable their protection.</li><li>• Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit.</li><li>• Maintain and protect meadow habitats and sensitive species by monitoring, adding protective measures, and providing restorative enhancements.</li><li>• Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Restore and improve fencing to protect certain wetlands from adjacent grazing operations.**</li><li>• Prevent OHV and other vehicle access to informal use sites and other sensitive areas; facilitate organized clean-ups and restore sites, where needed.</li></ul>
Preservation of Open Space	<b>Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources and the undeveloped recreation setting.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply permanent conservation easements to ensure a higher level of open space protection.</li></ul>
Outdoor Recreation by the General Public	<b>Enhance recreation facilities in order to provide additional public access, educational and recreation opportunities, and additional recreation management.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a recreation management plan to formalize increasing uses and protect valuable recreation, habitat, and cultural resources.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.**</li><li>• 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.**</li><li>• 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.**</li><li>• 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.**</li></ul>
Sustainable Forestry	<b>Develop and implement forestry practices in order to contribute to a sustainable forest and preserve and enhance habitat.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
Agricultural Uses	<b>Assess the potential use of cattle grazing in order to maintain meadow habitat.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement.</li><li>• Evaluate the potential to reinstate appropriate levels of grazing intensity as a tool for meadow management within the planning unit.</li><li>• Improve fencing to better manage livestock movement and distribution near the reservoir.</li></ul>
Preservation of Historic Values	<b>Identify and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supplement existing cultural resource survey.</li><li>• Conduct an ethnographic study to identify traditional use areas and assess the potential to restore these areas and uses.</li><li>• Allow access for ethnobotanical uses, gatherings, and ceremonies.</li><li>• Develop a cultural resources management plan.</li><li>• Protect cultural sites by formalizing recreation where necessary.</li><li>• Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.</li></ul>

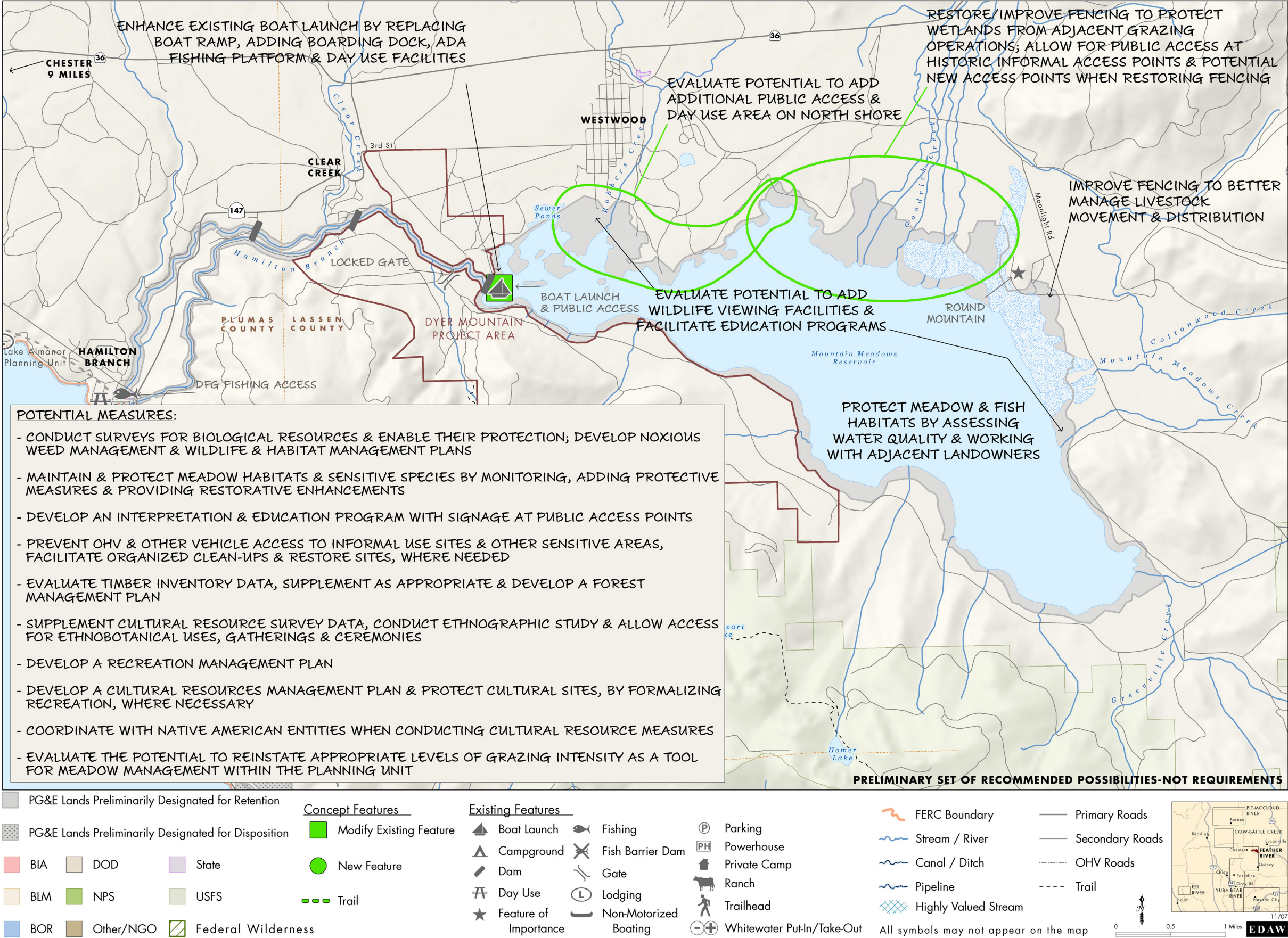
\* This is a set of recommended possibilities for the preservation and enhancement of BPV's, and is not intended to be a set of requirements for future land management.

\*\* Denotes site specific measure.



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Mtn Meadows Reservoir Planning Unit  
Recommended Concept



## **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).