

FEE TITLE DONEE RECOMMENDATION LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stewardship Council was created to oversee Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) Land Conservation Commitment, as set forth in the Settlement and Stipulation,¹ to protect over 140,000 acres of land and to preserve and enhance, on an overall basis, the following six beneficial public values (BPVs): protection of the natural habitat of fish, wildlife, and plants; preservation of open space; outdoor recreation by the general public; sustainable forestry; agricultural uses; and, historic values. The Stewardship Council is responsible for developing a land conservation plan and recommending qualified organizations to become involved in the future stewardship of these lands.

The Lyons Reservoir planning unit, located in Tuolumne County, consists of 12 legal parcels encompassing approximately 1,088 acres of land. Approximately 786 acres have been identified by PG&E as lands outside of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) project boundaries and not necessary for their current and future utility operations. Therefore, these 786 acres of land have been made available for fee title donation. Stewardship Council staff received and evaluated three land stewardship proposals (LSPs) from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the US Forest Service Stanislaus National Forest (USFS), and Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD). Based on an evaluation of the SOQs received, related information, and subsequent discussion with these organizations, the Stewardship Council staff is making the following recommendation which was endorsed by the Watershed Planning Committee:

USFS (Stanislaus National Forest) to become the prospective recipient of fee title to approximately 628 acres available for donation within four parcels (Parcels #1024 - 1027) subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment.

Of the three organizations that submitted LSPs, the USFS and CAL FIRE were the only organizations that expressed fee title interest in Parcels 1024 -1027. The proposal submitted by TUD expressed fee title interest in approximately 20 acres of land available for donation within Parcel 1019. Stewardship Council staff will continue to work with TUD to assess its proposal and potential additional land transfers within the Lyons Reservoir planning unit.

If this recommendation is adopted by the Stewardship Council Board (Board), Stewardship Council staff will work with the prospective donee on the development of a management and funding agreement. This agreement will be developed in coordination with the development of a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (LCCP). The proposed management and funding agreement and proposed LCCP will then be presented to the Planning Committee and Board for consideration and approval, after an opportunity for public comment.

¹ California Public Utilities Commission Decision 03-12-035, December 18, 2003 (the "Settlement") and the Stipulation Resolving Issues Regarding the Land Conservation Commitment dated September 25, 2003 (the "Stipulation").

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

a. Planning Unit Description

The Lyons Reservoir planning unit is located in Tuolumne County, 10 miles northeast of the City of Sonora. The planning unit is surrounded by the Stanislaus National Forest and private lands, including lands belonging to Sierra Pacific Industries. The elevation within the planning unit ranges between 2,600 and 4,700 feet.

The water features within this planning unit include Lyons Reservoir and portions of the Main Tuolumne Canal and South Fork Stanislaus River. Lyons Reservoir, fed by the waters of the South Fork Stanislaus River, serves as the primary drinking water supply for Tuolumne County's population.

The majority of acreage available for donation within this planning unit is located northeast of the Reservoir within four contiguous parcels. These parcels are surrounded by the Stanislaus National Forest, with the exception of the southernmost end which is bordered by private land, and are bisected by the South Fork Stanislaus River. There is currently a cattle grazing license for acreage within these parcels. Consistent with the PG&E Land Conservation Commitment, agreements for economic uses must be honored; therefore, licensor's interest in this agreement would be assigned to the new fee owner at closing.

The water features and associated riparian areas within these parcels and the remaining planning unit properties provide a variety of wildlife and plant habitat values. Special status wildlife species found within the planning unit could include bald eagle, northern goshawk, great gray owl, foothill yellow-legged frog and willow flycatcher. Both migratory and resident populations of the Stanislaus deer herd are located in the area. Regular observations of osprey have occurred in the area and a nest exists near the parking area northeast of Lyons Dam. In addition, the planning unit has been identified as good habitat for black bear, black-tailed deer, mountain lion, and gray fox.

Recreational activities at Lyons Reservoir are generally limited to the season of May 1st to October 31st when road access is available. Activities include bank angling, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, and bicycling. Boating and swimming in Lyons Reservoir are not allowed in order to protect water quality. There is one formal day use area adjacent to Lyons Reservoir, on lands to be retained by PG&E. Hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding on the historic Sugar Pine Railroad grade, as well as hiking along the Tuolumne Ditch trail, are popular activities. In addition, there is a popular trail that crosses Lyons Dam and provides access downstream to the base of the dam. Interpretive signs about the Sugar Pine Railroad have been posted at the Lyons Reservoir parking area.

The Main Tuolumne Canal is stocked with catchable trout by PG&E and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). DFG also stocks rainbow trout in Lyons Reservoir. Lyons Reservoir is inhabited by at least seven species of fish. Hardhead and San Joaquin roach are two special status fish species that may occur within the planning unit.

Forest resources within the planning unit contain a mix of pine, fir, and cedar species. Timber within the planning unit is contained within three PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs) and totals 756 timbered acres. The Rushing Meadows Timber Harvest Plan (THP), which includes acreage available for donation northeast of the reservoir, was completed in 2007.

b. Donee Evaluation Process

The Stewardship Council received statements of qualifications (SOQs) from seven organizations interested in acquiring fee title to lands available for donation within this planning unit. A list of organizations that submitted SOQs is attached. Based on a review of the SOQs, CAL FIRE, USFS, Tuolumne County, and TUD, were invited to submit LSPs. Three LSPs were received from the USFS, CAL FIRE, and TUD.

In evaluating the LSPs, the following factors were considered:

- The potential donees' programmatic, financial, and legal capacity to maintain the property interest so as to preserve and/or enhance the beneficial public values of the planning unit;
- Anticipated funding needs of the potential donees;
- The management objectives for the Lyons Reservoir planning unit as set forth in Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP);
- Public comments received regarding the desired qualifications of potential donees and the future stewardship of the planning unit;
- The requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation; and,
- Other relevant policies, procedures, and goals adopted by the Stewardship Council.

II. EVALUATION

Staff evaluated the LSPs received and conducted follow-up discussions with USFS, CALFIRE, and TUD. Based on this evaluation and follow-up discussions, USFS is being recommended to receive a donation of fee title to 628 acres available for donation within four parcels in the Lyons Reservoir planning unit (Parcels #1024 -1027), subject to compliance with all of the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment.

This recommendation is based on a determination that the USFS appears to have sufficient financial and organizational capacity to hold and maintain fee title interests on these lands, and that the addition of these lands to the USFS national forest system would result in the preservation and/or enhancement of the BPVs. The recommendation of the USFS as the best suited donee for fee title to the 628 acres identified in this recommendation is based on the following considerations:

- As the surrounding land owner, USFS is best suited to achieve consolidated and consistent management of the resources on the PG&E lands recommended for donation. USFS management of the lands would promote biological and physical connectivity, as well as public access and recreational opportunities consistent with adjacent lands.

- The Stanislaus National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), which identifies management goals for adjacent lands, reflects the full range of Stewardship Council BPVs reflected on the acreage identified for donation to the USFS.

Staff's evaluation of the USFS and their LSP is further described below.

USFS (Stanislaus National Forest)

a. Donee Organizational Capacity

The USFS possesses the organizational capacity and experience to own and manage fee title to the properties identified for donation as follows:

- The USFS is a federal agency within the US Department of Agriculture that manages 193 million acres of public lands. The mission of the USFS is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”
- The USFS manages the land surrounding the parcels recommended for donation to them as part of the 898,000 acre Stanislaus National Forest. Law, policy, and various regulations govern the management of public lands by the USFS. The Stanislaus Forest Land and Resource Management Plan provides direction for the management of cultural, historic, and biological resources within the National Forest.
- The Stanislaus National Forest employs over 250 permanent employees and 75-100 additional temporary employees. This base of professional, technical and administrative expertise reflects specialties and management functions including, but not limited to, wildlife biology, botany, fuels management, forestry, archeology, hydrology, soils, ecology, range management, recreation, interpretation, and education.

b. Donee Financial Capacity

USFS's financial capacity was evaluated based on a review of the organization's operating budget for the current year as well as financial statements for the three most recent fiscal years. Based on a review of financial statements submitted, the agency demonstrates the financial capacity to own and manage the fee title interests identified for donation within the Lyons Reservoir planning unit.

c. Management Objectives

Volume II of the LCP established certain management objectives for the Lyons Reservoir planning unit (see Volume II Planning Unit Report with attachments). As described below, the USFS is seeking fee title to lands within the Lyons Reservoir planning unit to achieve a number of proposed management activities consistent with the management objectives established in Volume II.

The USFS seeks fee title to lands available for donation within the Lyons Reservoir planning unit to achieve consolidated, consistent management of the ecological, recreational, cultural, and

historical resources. As described below, the USFS is seeking fee title to lands within the planning unit to achieve a number of proposed management activities consistent with the management objectives established by the USFS.

- Manage lands consistent with existing access and uses established on surrounding USFS lands.
- Conduct biological resource surveys to inform future project planning.
- Conduct noxious weed surveys and develop a noxious weed risk assessment to inform management for the area.
- Enhance habitat values, including potential habitat for great gray owl as well as restore riparian habitat along the South Fork of the Stanislaus River to reduce downstream sedimentation and promote water quality.
- Close and rehabilitate to a natural condition any unauthorized OHV trails in the area while continuing to support existing non-motorized recreational use of the Sugar Pine Railroad grade.
- Pursue potential opportunities to formalize the Sugar Pine Railroad Trail as a non-motorized route in coordination with existing Rails-to-Trails recreational development efforts.
- Manage vegetation to reduce fuel loads and foster mature forest structure.
- Incorporate the existing grazing use on the PG&E properties into the surrounding grazing allotment. Permitted grazing uses within USFS lands are managed under Stanislaus National Forest Plan standards and guidelines and subject to periodic environmental review under NEPA.

d. Funding and Financial Costs

Consistent with the Stewardship Council's Land Conservation Funding Policy, the Stewardship Council may elect to fund certain costs related to the transfer of fee title, satisfaction of property tax neutrality requirements and/or costs of enhancements to the beneficial public values on watershed lands. Any costs to be funded by the Stewardship Council would be identified in a management and funding agreement to be developed by the Stewardship Council in coordination with USFS, the prospective donee.

e. Requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation

The recommendation to donate lands to the USFS is contingent upon a determination that conveyance of these parcels would not result in an expansion of FERC license conditioning authority under the Federal Power Act, in compliance with Stipulation Section 12(b)(4).

The Stewardship Council would work with PG&E and Tuolumne County to ensure the land conveyance of these parcels achieves property tax neutrality.

In addition, PG&E currently manages one grazing license on lands available for fee title donation within the Lyons Reservoir planning unit. Consistent with the Settlement Agreement, agreements for economic uses must be honored.

The USFS is precluded by existing policy from accepting a conservation easement on lands it acquires. Therefore, a conservation covenant has been proposed by the USFS in lieu of a conservation easement, to provide satisfactory assurance that lands conveyed would be managed consistent with the purpose of the Land Conservation Commitment as required by Section 12(d)(2) of the Stipulation. It has been proposed by the Stewardship Council that the covenant be held by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

A conservation easement will be established on lands retained by PG&E within the Lyons Reservoir planning unit. All conservation easements implemented on any donated lands will include an express reservation of rights for continued operation and maintenance of hydroelectric facilities and associated water delivery facilities, including project replacements and improvements required to meet existing and future water delivery requirements for power generation and consumptive water use by existing users, and compliance with any FERC license, FERC license renewal, or other regulatory requirements on lands to be retained by PG&E. On lands to be conveyed to the USFS, the grant deed would reserve to PG&E similar rights for operation and maintenance of hydroelectric facilities and associated water delivery facilities.

f. Conservation Partners

The permanent protection of the Lyons Reservoir planning unit and the future preservation and enhancement of the BPVs may benefit from the participation of land conservation partners. For the purposes of this recommendation, land conservation partners are defined as an organization, other than the prospective fee title donee or conservation easement holder, involved in future activities on the donated lands that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the BPVs. Land conservation partners may be identified in the LSPs submitted by organizations interested in a fee title donation, or during or after the development of the LCCP. Such organizations and activities may be eligible for Stewardship Council funding, depending on the type of organization, proposed activities, availability of funds, and other factors. Staff would work with the prospective organizations recommended for donation of fee title and conservation easements in this planning unit and evaluate opportunities for land conservation partners. The results of this effort would be reflected in the management and funding agreements and LCCP.

The USFS collaborates with many agencies and community organizations on land management activities including habitat restoration, trail maintenance, environmental education, and resource interpretation. These groups include the Backcountry Horsemen of California, DFG, CAL FIRE, the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Motherlode Job Training, the Student Conservation Association (SCA), Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, UC Cooperative Extension, and a wide variety of user clubs and associations.

The USFS's LSP included letters of support from Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Motherlode Jobs Training, Summerville Union High School as well as Willie Ritts,

current grazing licensee. Several of these organizations as well as others have expressed interest in potential partnerships with the USFS.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Stewardship Council has implemented a public outreach program to engage stakeholders and solicit public input on the development and implementation of the land conservation plan. A summary of key public outreach activities and public comments associated with the Lyons Reservoir planning unit is attached.

IV. RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Stewardship Council staff is recommending that fee title to 628 acres be donated to the USFS for the following reasons:

1. Donation of these lands would further one of the key goals of the Land Conservation Commitment of donating lands to a qualified organization with the financial and organizational capacity to preserve and enhance the BPVs.
2. USFS has significant capacity and interest in preserving and/or enhancing the BPVs associated with these lands based on their experience managing surrounding National Forest lands for similar resource values.
3. Lands donated to the USFS would become part of National Forest lands and subject to management requirements and guidelines identified in the Stanislaus Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, which is subject to public review and comment.
4. Donation of these lands to the USFS would increase the likelihood that the BPVs would be enhanced in the future. The USFS has proposed the following actions and activities that would contribute to the preservation and/or enhancement of BPVs:
 - Resource surveys and inventories for a variety of biological, cultural, and historical resources to inform management and project planning.
 - Closure and rehabilitation of unauthorized OHV trails.
 - Enhancement of traditional recreational experiences on the property and support for future steps to formalize the Sugar Pine Railroad Trail.
 - Forest management to achieve reduced fuel loads and mature forest structure consistent with surrounding lands.
5. Donation of these lands to the USFS would achieve consistent and consolidated management of the property.

V. NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING THE BOARD RECOMMENDATION

If this recommendation is adopted by the Board on January 19, 2012, staff will invite the USFS to negotiate specific terms of the transactions with PG&E and will work with the USFS to

develop a management and funding agreement. The development of a management and funding agreement will be coordinated with the development of an LCCP.

Adoption of the LCCP by the Board would be the final step in the Stewardship Council's process for selecting donees. The proposed LCCP would be made available for public review and comment before it is approved by the Watershed Planning Committee and the Board.

ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit Map
- LCP Volume II Planning Unit Report for the Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit
- List of Registered Organizations That Submitted SOQs for Lands Available in the Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit
- Summary of Key Public Outreach Activities and Public Comments Associated with the Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit

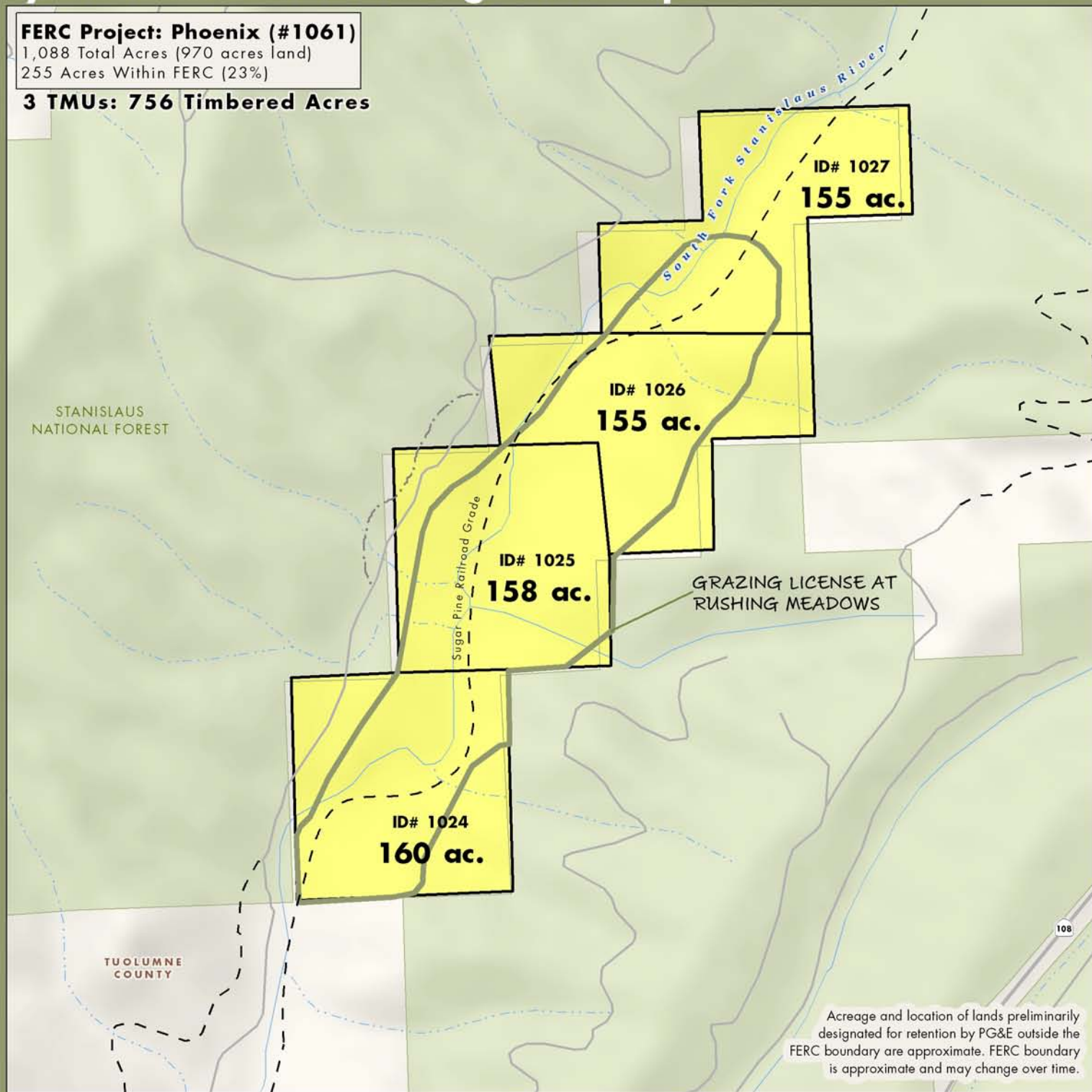
Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit: Map 1

FERC Project: Phoenix (#1061)

1,088 Total Acres (970 acres land)

255 Acres Within FERC (23%)

3 TMUs: 756 Timbered Acres



PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation

PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention

PG&E Lands Under Water

Certain Considerations May Make Donation Inadvisable

Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number

FERC Boundary

BLM

Private

USFS

Trail

OHV Road



Dam



Day Use Area



Fishing



Gate



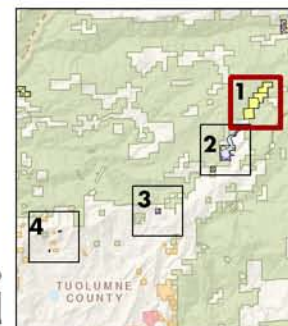
Powerhouse



Trailhead

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

October 2010
AECOM



LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

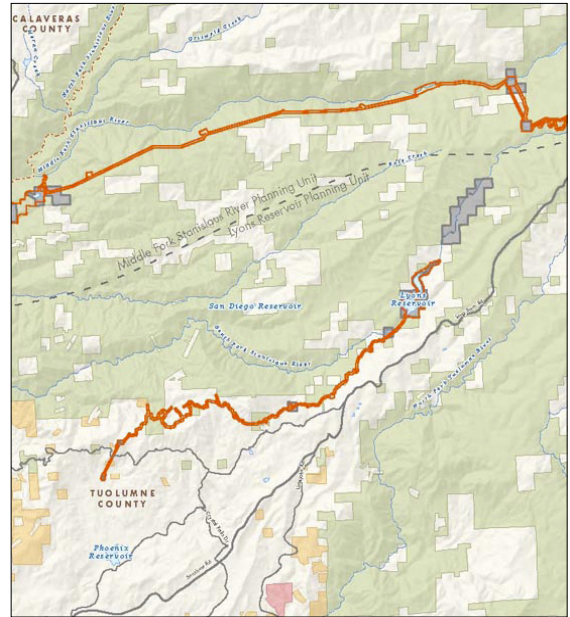
Overview

- Provides popular fishing and hiking access and valuable cultural and biological resources
- 1,087 acres in Tuolumne County; 832 acres outside the FERC boundary and 255 acres inside the FERC boundary
- Part of the Phoenix Project (FERC #1061); New License Order issued September 1992

The Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit is located between 2,600 and 4,700 feet in elevation, approximately 10 miles northeast of the City of Sonora in Tuolumne County. Parcels at the northern end of the planning unit are surrounded by Stanislaus National Forest as well as private lands, including those of Sierra Pacific Industries (see Figure SR-5). Parcels at the southern end of the planning unit are surrounded by private lands. Mi-Wuk, Twain Harte, and Long Barn are the closest urban areas to this planning unit. This planning unit contains Lyons Reservoir, portions of the Main Tuolumne Canal, South Fork Stanislaus River, and the Phoenix Powerhouse. Lyons Reservoir is formed by waters of the South Fork Stanislaus River impounded by Lyons Dam.



Lyons Dam & Reservoir



Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit
Tuolumne County

Lyons Reservoir serves as the primary drinking water supply for the Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD); serving the majority of the population of Tuolumne County. TUD has plans to expand Lyons Reservoir in the future to provide for additional water storage. Raising the dam would inundate the meadow area north of Lyons Reservoir.

State Highway 108 provides the main access to the planning unit, with Lyons Reservoir and the Tuolumne Canal accessible by secondary and unimproved roads from this highway. Lyons Dam Road, the primary access to Lyons Reservoir, is closed by a gate, and access is limited to the recreation season. Phoenix Powerhouse is accessible via Lyons Bald Mountain Road off of Highway 49 on the southern end of the planning unit.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Lyons Reservoir, South Fork Stanislaus River, Main Tuolumne Canal, numerous intermittent streams, and associated riparian areas provide wildlife and plant habitat values. Several special status wildlife species may be present in this planning unit, including bald eagle, northern

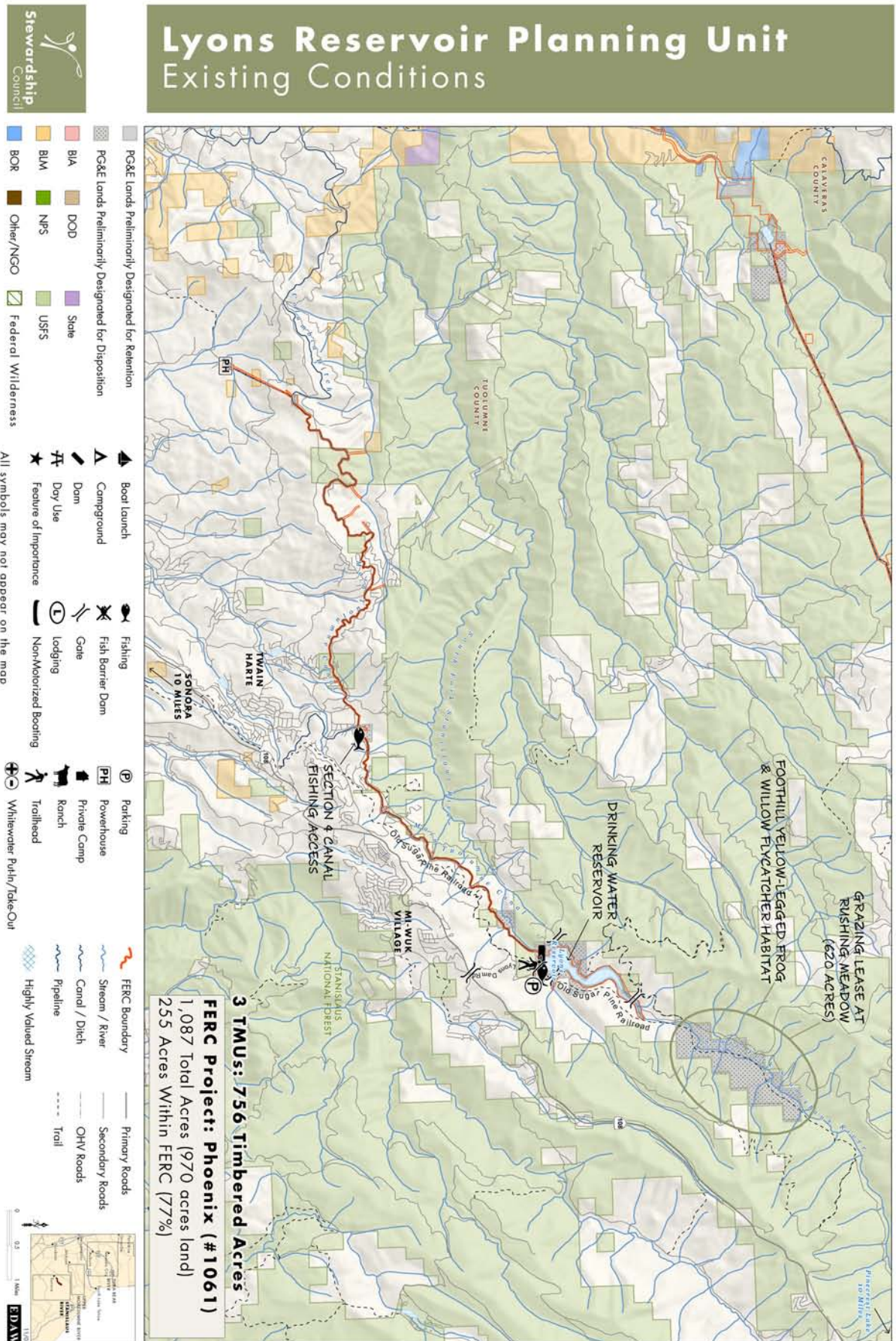


Figure SR-5

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

goshawk, and great gray owl. Wetland and meadow areas located along the South Fork Stanislaus River, north of Lyons Reservoir, provide habitat for special status species including foothill yellow-legged frog and willow flycatcher. The USFS has designated spotted owl and willow flycatcher Protected Activity Centers (PACs) adjacent to Lyons Reservoir and north along the South Fork Stanislaus River. Both migratory and resident populations of the Stanislaus deer herd are located in the area. In addition, regular detections of osprey have been reported at Lyons Reservoir, and a nest exists near the parking area.

Habitat types within this planning unit include mixed conifer forest, ponderosa pine forest, riparian woodland, and montane meadow. Special status plant species are known to be located within one mile of the planning unit, and one special status plant may grow in this planning unit. A variety of noxious weeds may also be located within the planning unit, according to the USFS Central Stanislaus Watershed Analysis.

Two special status fish species, hardhead and San Joaquin roach, could occur in this planning unit. Both PG&E and DFG stock catchable trout in the Main Tuolumne Canal, and DFG also stocks rainbow trout in Lyons Reservoir. Lyons Reservoir is inhabited by at least seven species of fish.

A biological assessment was conducted on a portion of this planning unit as part of PG&E's recent Rushing Meadow Timber Harvesting Plan (THP). In this assessment, bald eagles were observed along with osprey nests, and good habitat was identified for black bear, black-tailed deer, mountain lion, and gray fox. The assessment also cited survey results from 2001 that identified moderately to highly suitable habitat for special status amphibians and reptiles in the project area, though there were no detections of special status species.

Open Space

The planning unit provides open space adjacent to the small town of Twain Harte, as well as viewshed values for anglers and recreationists who enjoy the Sugar Pine Railroad Trail.

Outdoor Recreation

Recreation activities at Lyons Reservoir are limited to the recreation season (May 1st to October 31st) and include bank angling, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, and bicycling. Boating and body contact recreation on Lyons Reservoir are prohibited to protect the water supply in the reservoir. The Class IV-V Strawberry whitewater run take-out is located just north of Lyons Reservoir on the South Fork Stanislaus River; however, this run is said to receive little to no use. Dispersed camping also occurs in the northern portion of the planning unit, as well as on adjacent USFS lands.

Hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding on the historic Sugar Pine Railroad grade, as well as hiking along the Tuolumne Ditch trail, are popular activities. PG&E has produced a brochure about the Sugar Pine Railway history and posted an interpretive sign at the Lyons Reservoir parking area. In addition, there is a popular trail that crosses Lyons Dam and provides access downstream to the base of the dam.



Stairway path to the base of Lyons Dam

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed



PG&E signs by the Lyons Reservoir parking area

The only formal recreation facility at Lyons Reservoir is a parking area that includes a toilet, trash containers, one picnic table, and drinking water. A caretaker maintains the recreation facilities in this planning unit and patrols the Lyons Reservoir area during the recreation season. PG&E's fishing access facility at the Section 4 Canal by Twain Harte is flat, easily accessible from the road, provides parking, and is stocked with fish through a partnership between DFG and PG&E. The area surrounding the Phoenix Powerhouse has no developed recreational facilities.

Peat soil erosion problems have occurred in the vicinity of Lyons Reservoir. This is of particular concern because of water quality considerations, given that Lyons Reservoir is a source of domestic drinking water. Unauthorized public use and OHV use have caused serious erosion problems and degraded natural and cultural resources in the past; however, PG&E has installed barriers on access roads to minimize such impacts. Remaining unauthorized trails have been mapped by the USFS south of Lyons Reservoir, on the northwest side of the reservoir, as well as north of Lyons Reservoir.

Forest Resources

Timber within the planning unit is contained within three PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs). The planning unit contains 756 timbered acres of Sierra mixed conifer with

ponderosa pine, sugar pine, white fir, Douglas-fir, and incense-cedar present. The TMUs located by Lyons Reservoir and north along the South Fork Stanislaus River are managed under a Recreation and Sustainable Timber Management prescription, meaning that recreation in this area is compatible with timber management. Forest management in designated recreation areas is limited to fuels reduction, hazard tree removal, and improvement of aesthetics. Outside of designated recreation areas, sustainable timber management is emphasized.

The parcel by the Section 4 Canal is currently under a Salvage timber management prescription, meaning that the lands are primarily managed for uses other than sustained timber production, but may require management to mitigate for emergency forest and watershed health issues, such as insect attacks. The parcels by Columbia Ditch and Phoenix Powerhouse are not contained within TMUs. Timber within the planning unit was harvested in the late 1980s or early 1990s and was scheduled to be harvested again in 2006.¹ Private lands surrounding Lyons Reservoir are primarily commercial timberlands.

Agricultural Uses

There are several small cattle ranches near the project; however, the area around Lyons Reservoir is heavily forested and grazing occurs only at the upper end of the reservoir. There is



Northern arm of Lyons Reservoir

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

one lease for grazing on 620 acres to the north of Lyons Reservoir. This lessee also grazes cattle on neighboring USFS lands. The adjacent Stanislaus National Forest has a number of grazing allotments including the Rushing Allotment that encompasses the northern portion of the planning unit.

Historic Resources

The Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit was once inhabited by the Miwok Tribe. Several prehistoric and historic sites have been identified in this planning unit, particularly around Lyons Reservoir and at the Phoenix Powerhouse. One historical site is a two-mile section of the pre-1912 Sugar Pine Railroad, which is now used as a trail. Unauthorized collecting of railroad ties and looting of sites have occurred in the past and are currently being monitored by PG&E. Several archeological and historical sites may be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. A Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) was developed by PG&E in 1990 to avoid and mitigate impacts to particular NRHP eligible archeological and historic sites. The portion of this planning unit included in the recent Rushing Meadow THP was surveyed for archaeological resources.

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at Lyons Reservoir be preserved and enhanced by focusing on habitat, forestry, and cultural resources, agricultural values, and recreation opportunities. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to preserve and enhance cultural and habitat resources, as well as agricultural values, while also enhancing recreation and forest management. We recommend this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E and the TUD. The following recommendations would need to be re-evaluated if the TUD has imminent plans



Walkway at the base of Lyons Dam

to expand Lyons Dam and thereby raise the reservoir level.

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological, cultural and agricultural resources, and enhance the recreation experience and sustainable forestry management.

As shown on Table SR-3, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for Lyons Reservoir. 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 Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit provides forest, meadow, riparian, and aquatic habitat for a wide range of special status wildlife and fish

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

species. In order to preserve and enhance the habitat and resources found here, the Stewardship Council recommends that baseline studies and plans be developed to gain a clear understanding of the resources (particularly outside the FERC boundary where little information is currently available). These studies will likely be followed by management plans to ensure implementation of preservation and enhancement measures for specific resources. Management of the property to preserve and enhance habitat will also include addressing noxious weeds. Additionally, restoration of unauthorized OHV trails and additional management of dispersed recreation use at Lyons Reservoir are recommended to protect habitat values and control erosion. We encourage close coordination with the USFS and other resource-focused organizations working in the area, and all planning should be considered in conjunction with rangeland, forest, and fuels management plans.



Lyons Dam

Open Space

Objective: Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources, agricultural land uses, recreation experiences, and viewsheds.

This concept would preserve open space by limiting new construction to signage and minor recreation facility additions, as well as through permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to



Section 4 Canal fishing access & parking lot

maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed and the requirement to maintain scenic qualities.

Outdoor Recreation

Objective: Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional education opportunities, recreation management, and enhance the recreation experience.

Recreation at Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit mainly consists of fishing, hiking, and day use opportunities with some dispersed camping. There is also unauthorized OHV use. As shown in Figure SR-6, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance these authorized opportunities by recommending facility and signage enhancements. We recommend enhancements focused on providing day use amenities at two fishing access sites, installing signage on a variety of topics, and increased opportunities for youth education and recreation. The Stewardship Council also recommends supporting any future steps to formalize the Sugar Pine Railroad Trail.

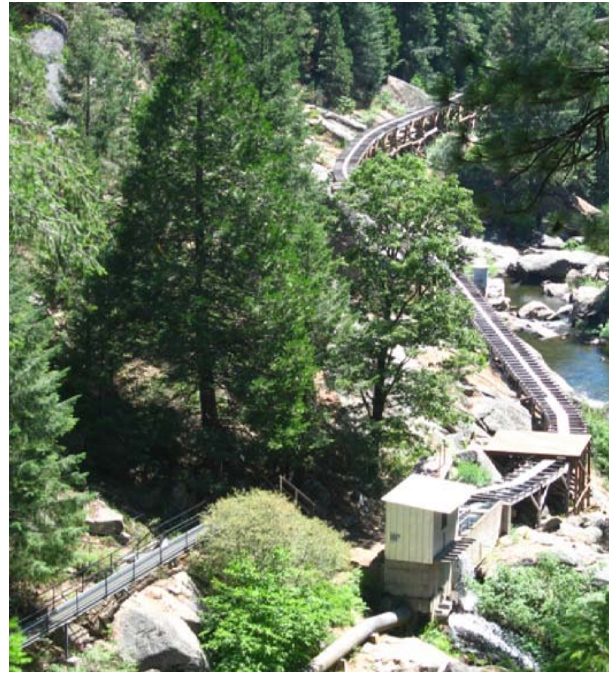
LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

Sustainable Forestry

Objective: Develop and implement forestry practices in order to contribute to and promote a sustainable forest, preserve and enhance habitat, as well as to ensure appropriate fuel load management.

The Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit contains over 750 acres of valuable forest stands and plantations. 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, holistic watershed management, plantation management, and fuels management. The fuels and forest management plans should be developed in conjunction with the rangeland, noxious weed, and wildlife and habitat management plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination with adjacent landowners and USFS management and practices as appropriate. The Stewardship Council also recommends assessing the potential to develop a demonstration forest to promote sustainable forestry research and management.



Main Tuolumne Canal south of Lyons Reservoir

Preservation of Historic Values

Objective: Identify and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection, as well as to support opportunities for public education.

Several prehistoric and historic cultural sites have been identified within the Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit, along with identification of damage and looting at some sites. The Stewardship Council aims to support an increased understanding of these resources and ensure they are appropriately protected. To meet this objective, we recommend that cultural resource studies be conducted to understand the resources found at Lyons Reservoir (particularly outside the FERC cultural resource study area where less information is available), that appropriate management plans be developed and implemented, and that opportunities to support public education regarding cultural resources be considered. Additionally, restoration of unauthorized OHV trails and additional management of dispersed recreation use at Lyons Reservoir are recommended to protect historic values. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship

Agricultural Uses

Objective: Preserve and enhance grazing in order to support associated economic benefits, as well as to protect open space and habitat resources.

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LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

Council recommends close coordination with Native American entities. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with the existing FERC license required CRMP.

Endnote

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Lyons Reservoir



Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit

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SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

PUBLIC REVIEW OF VOLUMES I AND II OF THE LCP

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- The importance of preserving historical resources and features, in particular pioneer history.
- Support for grazing to continue.
- Support for lands available for donation to be transferred to the US Forest Service to support the consolidation of in-holding within the Stanislaus National Forest
- Removal and restoration of unauthorized OHV trails
- The importance of preserving Sugar Pine Railroad as a historical and recreational feature

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Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit

- Concern expressed about OHV impacts to the land around Lyons Reservoir, particularly on the northern end

- Concern expressed about the lack of law enforcement around Lyons Reservoir which results in illegal campfires and littering, especially on the western side
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- Transfer lands to an entity that values meadow habitat
- Support for the lands available for donation to transfer to the US Forest Service (maybe with the Department of Fish and Game as a partner) because they are already patrolling the area
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- Restore riparian areas along the South Fork Stanislaus River

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- Support for lands available for donation to be transferred to California Department of Forestry and Fire and Tuolumne Utilities District, as requested.
- Enhance trail access and provide detailed trail maps

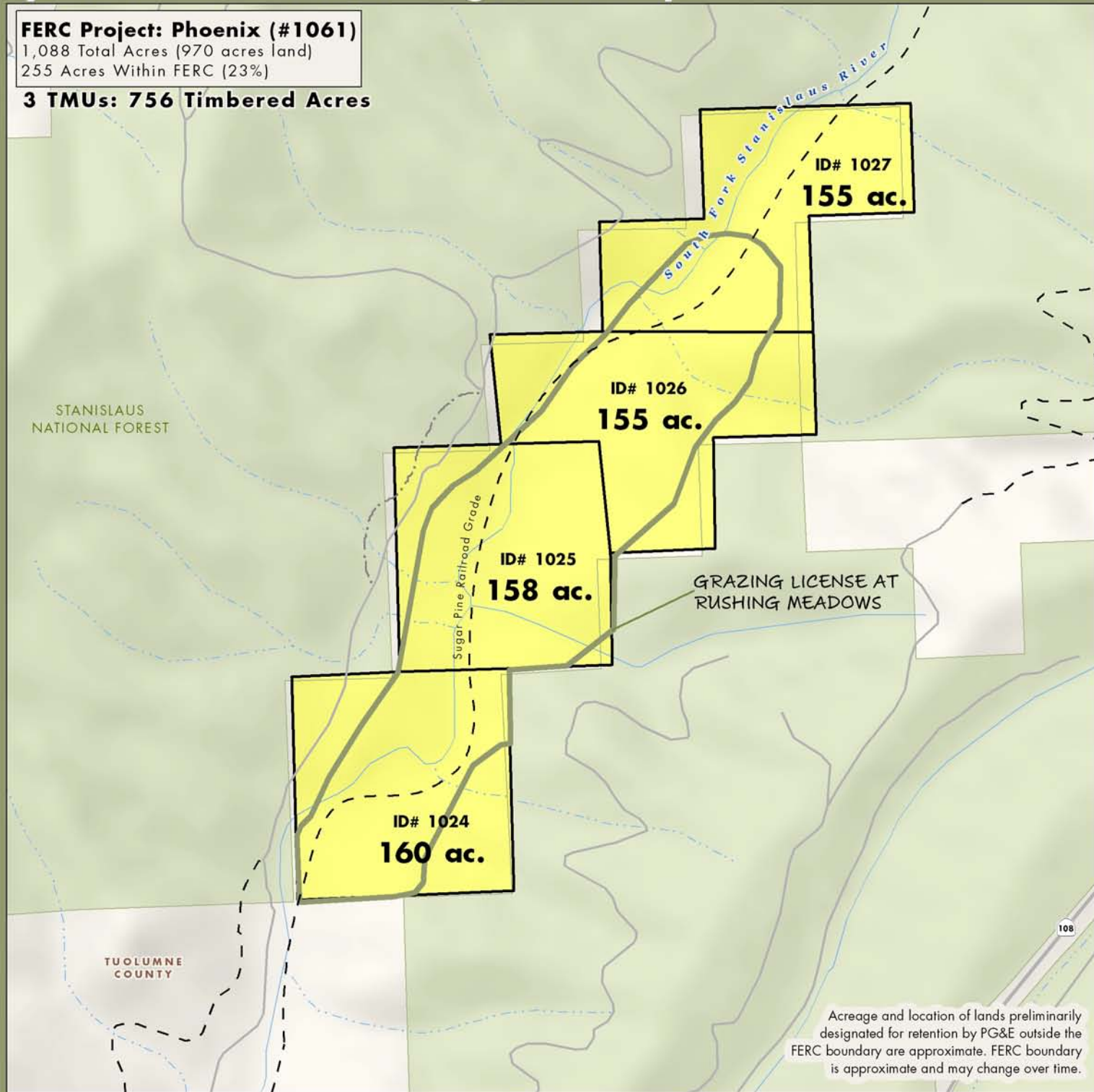
Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit: Map 1

FERC Project: Phoenix (#1061)

1,088 Total Acres (970 acres land)

255 Acres Within FERC (23%)

3 TMUs: 756 Timbered Acres



PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation

PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention

PG&E Lands Under Water

Certain Considerations May Make Donation Inadvisable

Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number

FERC Boundary

BLM

Private

USFS

Trail

OHV Road



Dam



Day Use Area



Fishing



Gate



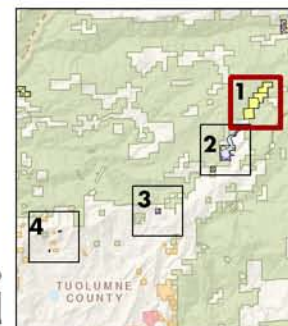
Powerhouse



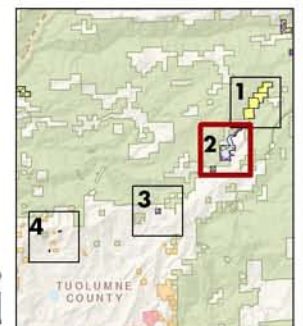
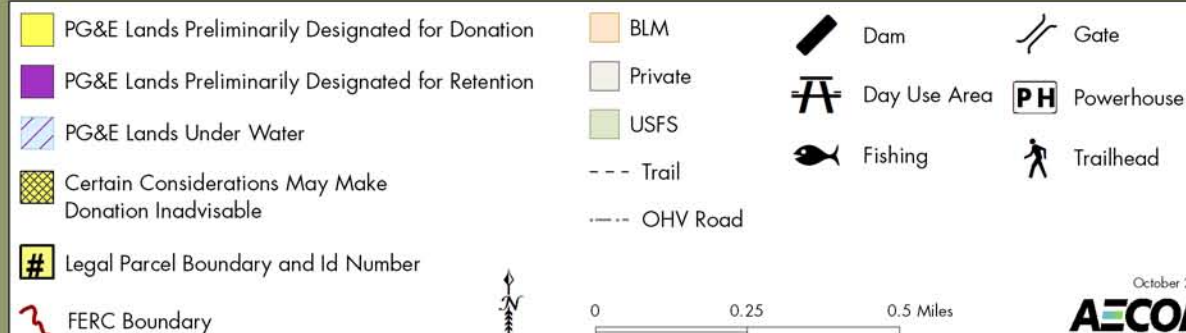
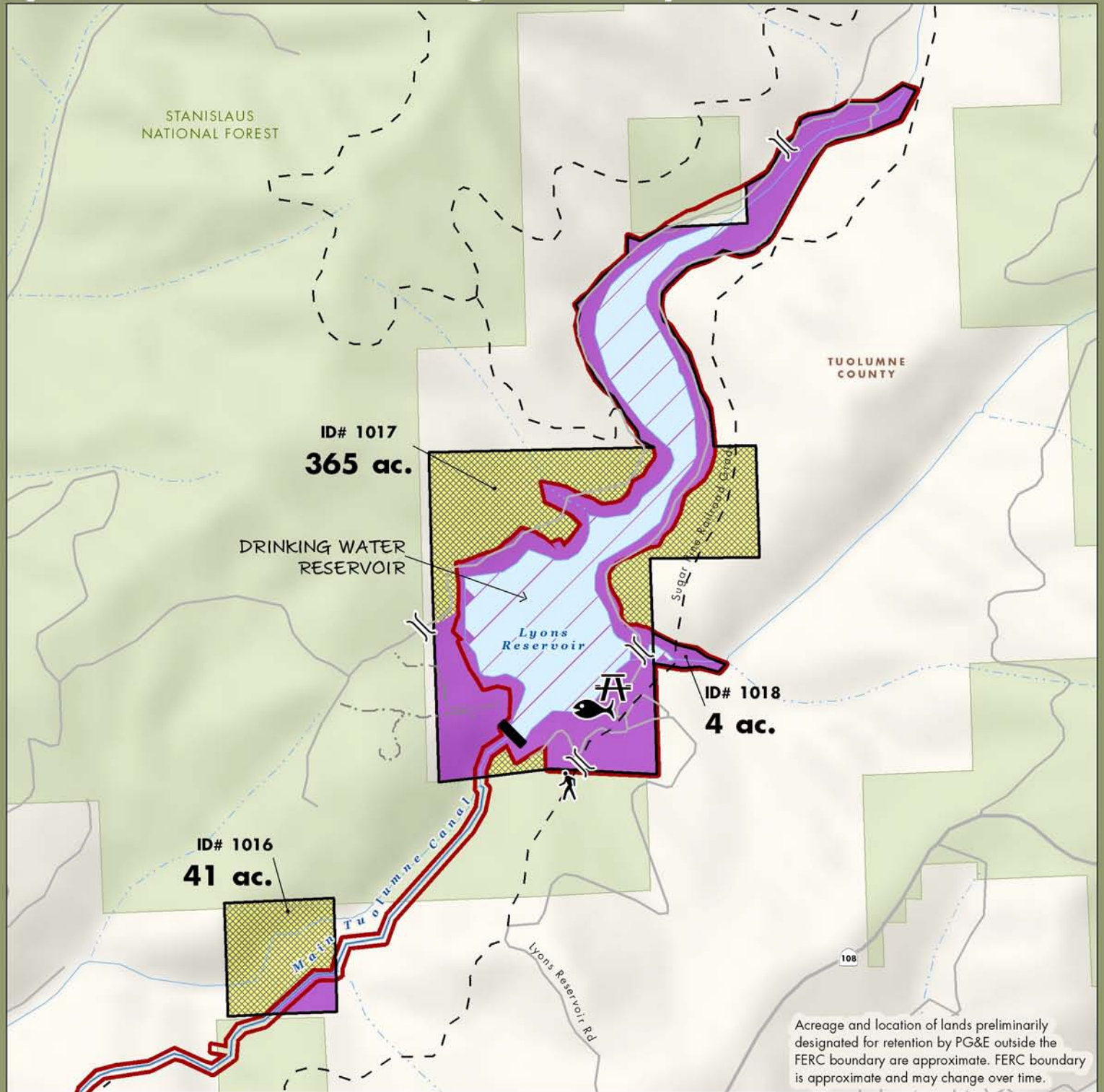
Trailhead

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

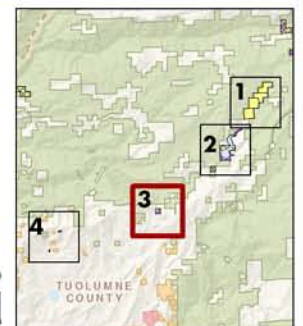
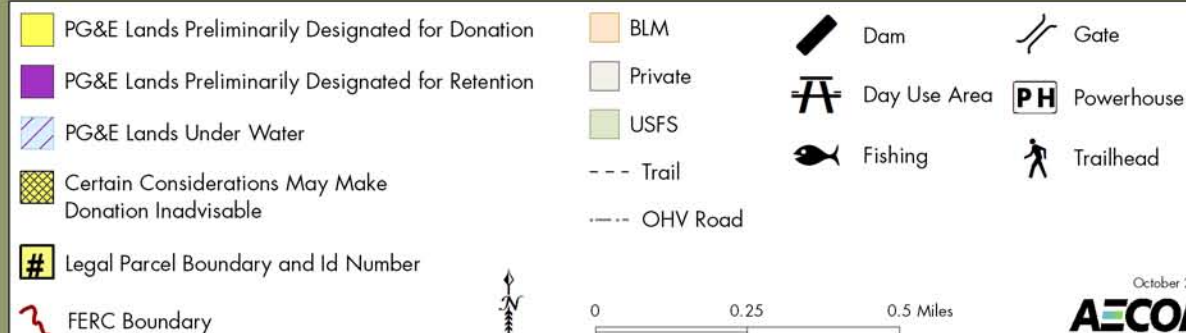
October 2010
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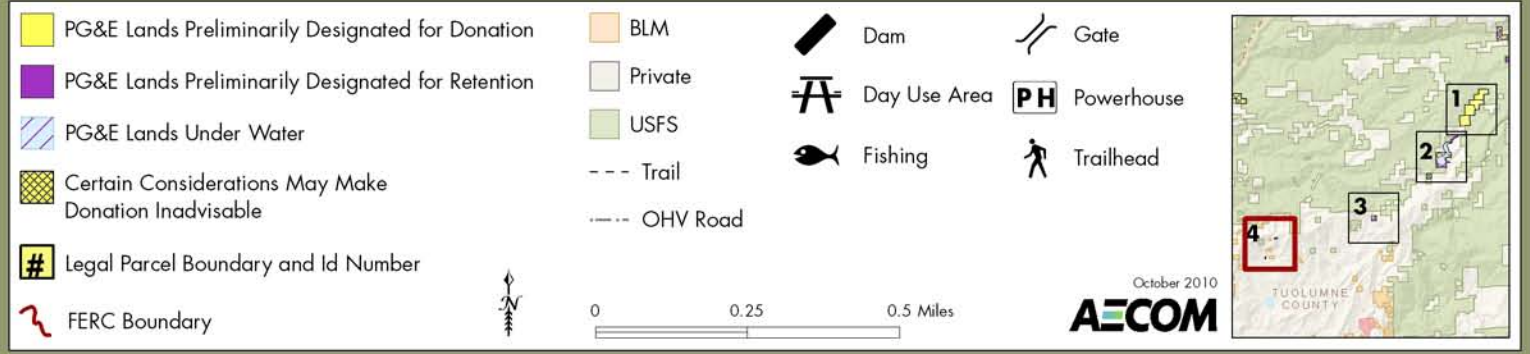
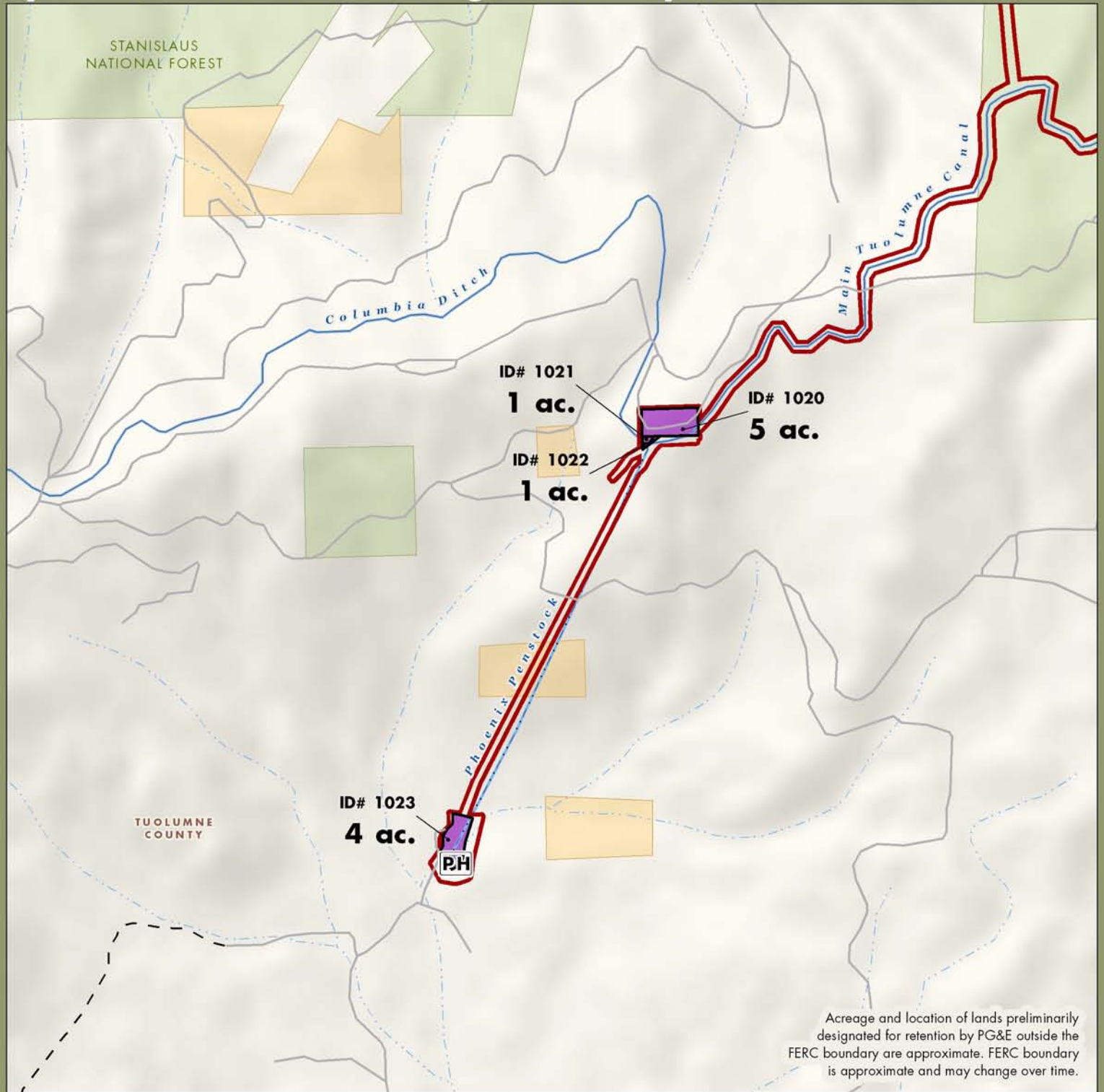
Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit: Map 2



Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit: Map 3



Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit: Map 4



LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

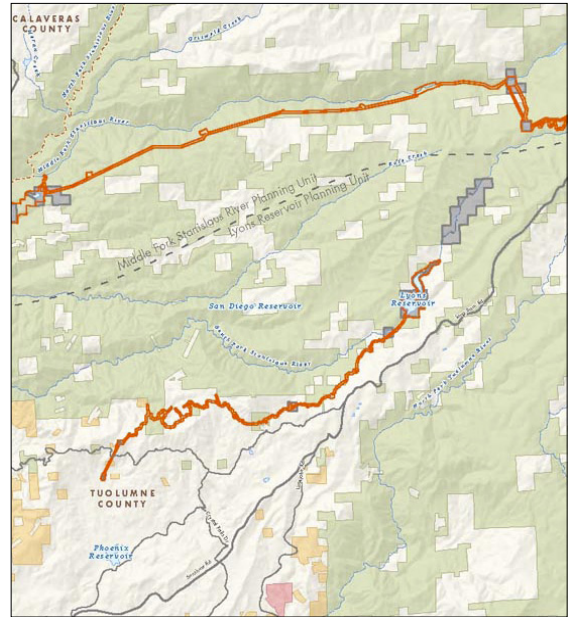
Overview

- Provides popular fishing and hiking access and valuable cultural and biological resources
- 1,087 acres in Tuolumne County; 832 acres outside the FERC boundary and 255 acres inside the FERC boundary
- Part of the Phoenix Project (FERC #1061); New License Order issued September 1992

The Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit is located between 2,600 and 4,700 feet in elevation, approximately 10 miles northeast of the City of Sonora in Tuolumne County. Parcels at the northern end of the planning unit are surrounded by Stanislaus National Forest as well as private lands, including those of Sierra Pacific Industries (see Figure SR-5). Parcels at the southern end of the planning unit are surrounded by private lands. Mi-Wuk, Twain Harte, and Long Barn are the closest urban areas to this planning unit. This planning unit contains Lyons Reservoir, portions of the Main Tuolumne Canal, South Fork Stanislaus River, and the Phoenix Powerhouse. Lyons Reservoir is formed by waters of the South Fork Stanislaus River impounded by Lyons Dam.



Lyons Dam & Reservoir



Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit
Tuolumne County

Lyons Reservoir serves as the primary drinking water supply for the Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD); serving the majority of the population of Tuolumne County. TUD has plans to expand Lyons Reservoir in the future to provide for additional water storage. Raising the dam would inundate the meadow area north of Lyons Reservoir.

State Highway 108 provides the main access to the planning unit, with Lyons Reservoir and the Tuolumne Canal accessible by secondary and unimproved roads from this highway. Lyons Dam Road, the primary access to Lyons Reservoir, is closed by a gate, and access is limited to the recreation season. Phoenix Powerhouse is accessible via Lyons Bald Mountain Road off of Highway 49 on the southern end of the planning unit.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Lyons Reservoir, South Fork Stanislaus River, Main Tuolumne Canal, numerous intermittent streams, and associated riparian areas provide wildlife and plant habitat values. Several special status wildlife species may be present in this planning unit, including bald eagle, northern

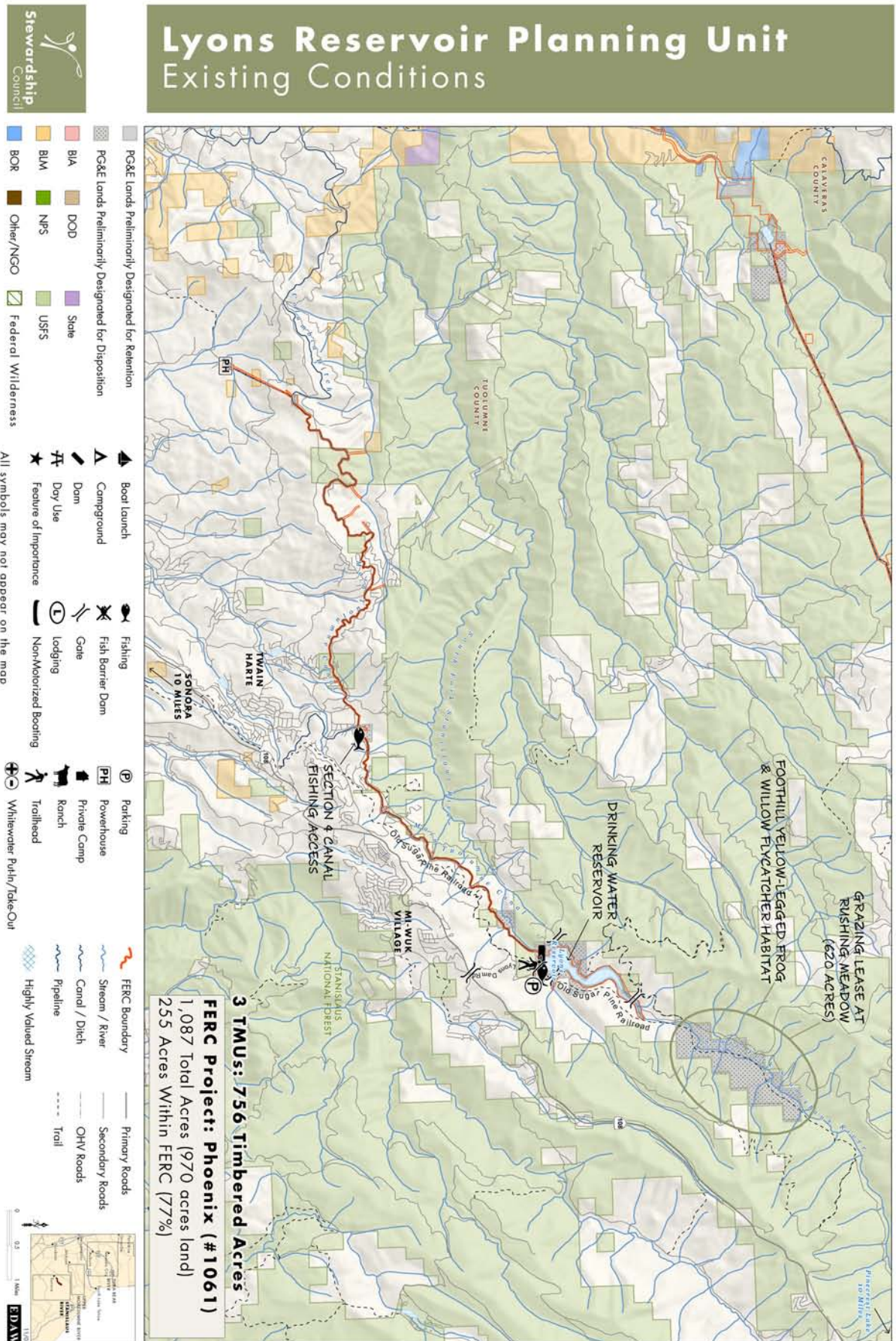


Figure SR-5

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

goshawk, and great gray owl. Wetland and meadow areas located along the South Fork Stanislaus River, north of Lyons Reservoir, provide habitat for special status species including foothill yellow-legged frog and willow flycatcher. The USFS has designated spotted owl and willow flycatcher Protected Activity Centers (PACs) adjacent to Lyons Reservoir and north along the South Fork Stanislaus River. Both migratory and resident populations of the Stanislaus deer herd are located in the area. In addition, regular detections of osprey have been reported at Lyons Reservoir, and a nest exists near the parking area.

Habitat types within this planning unit include mixed conifer forest, ponderosa pine forest, riparian woodland, and montane meadow. Special status plant species are known to be located within one mile of the planning unit, and one special status plant may grow in this planning unit. A variety of noxious weeds may also be located within the planning unit, according to the USFS Central Stanislaus Watershed Analysis.

Two special status fish species, hardhead and San Joaquin roach, could occur in this planning unit. Both PG&E and DFG stock catchable trout in the Main Tuolumne Canal, and DFG also stocks rainbow trout in Lyons Reservoir. Lyons Reservoir is inhabited by at least seven species of fish.

A biological assessment was conducted on a portion of this planning unit as part of PG&E's recent Rushing Meadow Timber Harvesting Plan (THP). In this assessment, bald eagles were observed along with osprey nests, and good habitat was identified for black bear, black-tailed deer, mountain lion, and gray fox. The assessment also cited survey results from 2001 that identified moderately to highly suitable habitat for special status amphibians and reptiles in the project area, though there were no detections of special status species.

Open Space

The planning unit provides open space adjacent to the small town of Twain Harte, as well as viewshed values for anglers and recreationists who enjoy the Sugar Pine Railroad Trail.

Outdoor Recreation

Recreation activities at Lyons Reservoir are limited to the recreation season (May 1st to October 31st) and include bank angling, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, and bicycling. Boating and body contact recreation on Lyons Reservoir are prohibited to protect the water supply in the reservoir. The Class IV-V Strawberry whitewater run take-out is located just north of Lyons Reservoir on the South Fork Stanislaus River; however, this run is said to receive little to no use. Dispersed camping also occurs in the northern portion of the planning unit, as well as on adjacent USFS lands.

Hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding on the historic Sugar Pine Railroad grade, as well as hiking along the Tuolumne Ditch trail, are popular activities. PG&E has produced a brochure about the Sugar Pine Railway history and posted an interpretive sign at the Lyons Reservoir parking area. In addition, there is a popular trail that crosses Lyons Dam and provides access downstream to the base of the dam.



Stairway path to the base of Lyons Dam

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed



PG&E signs by the Lyons Reservoir parking area

The only formal recreation facility at Lyons Reservoir is a parking area that includes a toilet, trash containers, one picnic table, and drinking water. A caretaker maintains the recreation facilities in this planning unit and patrols the Lyons Reservoir area during the recreation season. PG&E's fishing access facility at the Section 4 Canal by Twain Harte is flat, easily accessible from the road, provides parking, and is stocked with fish through a partnership between DFG and PG&E. The area surrounding the Phoenix Powerhouse has no developed recreational facilities.

Peat soil erosion problems have occurred in the vicinity of Lyons Reservoir. This is of particular concern because of water quality considerations, given that Lyons Reservoir is a source of domestic drinking water. Unauthorized public use and OHV use have caused serious erosion problems and degraded natural and cultural resources in the past; however, PG&E has installed barriers on access roads to minimize such impacts. Remaining unauthorized trails have been mapped by the USFS south of Lyons Reservoir, on the northwest side of the reservoir, as well as north of Lyons Reservoir.

Forest Resources

Timber within the planning unit is contained within three PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs). The planning unit contains 756 timbered acres of Sierra mixed conifer with

ponderosa pine, sugar pine, white fir, Douglas-fir, and incense-cedar present. The TMUs located by Lyons Reservoir and north along the South Fork Stanislaus River are managed under a Recreation and Sustainable Timber Management prescription, meaning that recreation in this area is compatible with timber management. Forest management in designated recreation areas is limited to fuels reduction, hazard tree removal, and improvement of aesthetics. Outside of designated recreation areas, sustainable timber management is emphasized.

The parcel by the Section 4 Canal is currently under a Salvage timber management prescription, meaning that the lands are primarily managed for uses other than sustained timber production, but may require management to mitigate for emergency forest and watershed health issues, such as insect attacks. The parcels by Columbia Ditch and Phoenix Powerhouse are not contained within TMUs. Timber within the planning unit was harvested in the late 1980s or early 1990s and was scheduled to be harvested again in 2006.¹ Private lands surrounding Lyons Reservoir are primarily commercial timberlands.

Agricultural Uses

There are several small cattle ranches near the project; however, the area around Lyons Reservoir is heavily forested and grazing occurs only at the upper end of the reservoir. There is



Northern arm of Lyons Reservoir

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

one lease for grazing on 620 acres to the north of Lyons Reservoir. This lessee also grazes cattle on neighboring USFS lands. The adjacent Stanislaus National Forest has a number of grazing allotments including the Rushing Allotment that encompasses the northern portion of the planning unit.

Historic Resources

The Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit was once inhabited by the Miwok Tribe. Several prehistoric and historic sites have been identified in this planning unit, particularly around Lyons Reservoir and at the Phoenix Powerhouse. One historical site is a two-mile section of the pre-1912 Sugar Pine Railroad, which is now used as a trail. Unauthorized collecting of railroad ties and looting of sites have occurred in the past and are currently being monitored by PG&E. Several archeological and historical sites may be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. A Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) was developed by PG&E in 1990 to avoid and mitigate impacts to particular NRHP eligible archeological and historic sites. The portion of this planning unit included in the recent Rushing Meadow THP was surveyed for archaeological resources.

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at Lyons Reservoir be preserved and enhanced by focusing on habitat, forestry, and cultural resources, agricultural values, and recreation opportunities. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to preserve and enhance cultural and habitat resources, as well as agricultural values, while also enhancing recreation and forest management. We recommend this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E and the TUD. The following recommendations would need to be re-evaluated if the TUD has imminent plans



Walkway at the base of Lyons Dam

to expand Lyons Dam and thereby raise the reservoir level.

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological, cultural and agricultural resources, and enhance the recreation experience and sustainable forestry management.

As shown on Table SR-3, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for Lyons Reservoir. 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 Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit provides forest, meadow, riparian, and aquatic habitat for a wide range of special status wildlife and fish

LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

species. In order to preserve and enhance the habitat and resources found here, the Stewardship Council recommends that baseline studies and plans be developed to gain a clear understanding of the resources (particularly outside the FERC boundary where little information is currently available). These studies will likely be followed by management plans to ensure implementation of preservation and enhancement measures for specific resources. Management of the property to preserve and enhance habitat will also include addressing noxious weeds. Additionally, restoration of unauthorized OHV trails and additional management of dispersed recreation use at Lyons Reservoir are recommended to protect habitat values and control erosion. We encourage close coordination with the USFS and other resource-focused organizations working in the area, and all planning should be considered in conjunction with rangeland, forest, and fuels management plans.



Lyons Dam

Open Space

Objective: Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources, agricultural land uses, recreation experiences, and viewsheds.

This concept would preserve open space by limiting new construction to signage and minor recreation facility additions, as well as through permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to



Section 4 Canal fishing access & parking lot

maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed and the requirement to maintain scenic qualities.

Outdoor Recreation

Objective: Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional education opportunities, recreation management, and enhance the recreation experience.

Recreation at Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit mainly consists of fishing, hiking, and day use opportunities with some dispersed camping. There is also unauthorized OHV use. As shown in Figure SR-6, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance these authorized opportunities by recommending facility and signage enhancements. We recommend enhancements focused on providing day use amenities at two fishing access sites, installing signage on a variety of topics, and increased opportunities for youth education and recreation. The Stewardship Council also recommends supporting any future steps to formalize the Sugar Pine Railroad Trail.

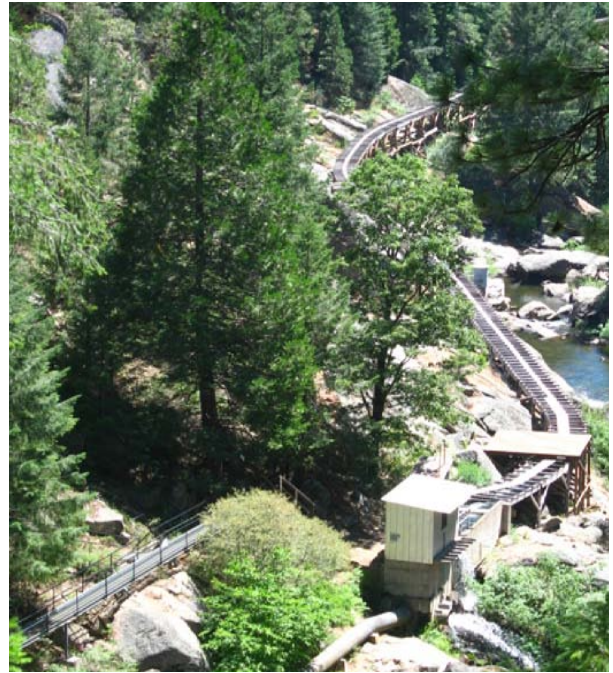
LYONS RESERVOIR PLANNING UNIT

Stanislaus River Watershed

Sustainable Forestry

Objective: Develop and implement forestry practices in order to contribute to and promote a sustainable forest, preserve and enhance habitat, as well as to ensure appropriate fuel load management.

The Lyons Reservoir Planning Unit contains over 750 acres of valuable forest stands and plantations. 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, holistic watershed management, plantation management, and fuels management. The fuels and forest management plans should be developed in conjunction with the rangeland, noxious weed, and wildlife and habitat management plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination with adjacent landowners and USFS management and practices as appropriate. The Stewardship Council also recommends assessing the potential to develop a demonstration forest to promote sustainable forestry research and management.



Main Tuolumne Canal south of Lyons Reservoir

Preservation of Historic Values

Objective: Identify and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection, as well as to support opportunities for public education.

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- Enhance trail access and provide detailed trail maps