

INITIAL FEE TITLE DONEE RECOMMENDATION LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stewardship Council was created to oversee PG&E's Land Conservation Commitment, as set forth in the Settlement Agreement 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 Lake Britton Planning Unit, located in Shasta County, consists of 61 parcels encompassing approximately 6,144 acres of land, of which 3,640 acres have been identified as available for fee title donation. The Stewardship Council staff received and evaluated land stewardship proposals (LSPs) from five organizations interested in receiving a donation of fee title in this planning unit. Based on an evaluation of the proposals, follow-up discussions with the organizations, and consultation with the Watershed Planning Committee (Planning Committee), Stewardship Council staff developed the following recommendation, which was endorsed by the Planning Committee:

California State Parks recommended to receive fee title to approximately 119 acres available for donation within four parcels (Parcels 244, 245, 249, and 269) subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment.

Shasta County recommended to receive fee title to approximately five acres available for donation within one parcel (Parcel 211) subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment.

Pursuant to this recommendation, a total of 124 acres of the 3,640 acres available for donation are being recommended for donation. Additionally, staff will continue to work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), and Pit River Tribe to further assess the possibility of additional land transfers within the Lake Britton Planning Unit.

If this recommendation is adopted by the Stewardship Council Board (Board), Stewardship Council staff would work with the prospective donees on the development of management and funding agreements, if applicable. These agreements would be developed in coordination with the development of a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (LCCP). The proposed management and funding agreements and proposed LCCP would then be presented to the Planning Committee and Board for consideration and approval at a future date.

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 Lake Britton Planning Unit consists of approximately 6,144 acres of land currently owned by PG&E and located in Shasta County (see attached map). The planning unit, located at an elevation of 2,700 feet, is comprised of 61 legal parcels along Lake Britton and portions of Pit River and Hat Creek.

Lake Britton is primarily surrounded by USFS land, California State Park land, and private property. Lake Britton is generally discussed as two areas, lower and upper Lake Britton, due to the distinct difference in character and level of development between the two areas. The lower lake is more reservoir-like and heavily developed for recreation, while the upper lake is more narrow and river-like with little recreation development.

Lake Britton provides valuable habitat resources and has been identified as a Significant Natural Area by the California Department of Fish and Game. Lower Lake Britton supports a warm water fishery for introduced game species, while the shallower upper Lake Britton contains higher concentrations of native fish species. The area adjacent to Lake Britton and the Pit River has one of the largest populations of bald eagles within the contiguous United States, and the Pit River System is one of the most important bald eagle nesting areas in California.

Lands within the planning unit provide open space and scenic viewsheds for McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park, Highway 299, and Highway 89, which has been designated as part of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.

Lake Britton is a popular recreation area for angling, swimming, hiking, picnicking, boating, camping, wildlife viewing, and hunting. The lakeshore day use area contains a beach, marina, picnic area, designated swim area, and boat rental. In addition, lower Lake Britton contains a campground, boat launch, day use area, two private camps, and a moderately used informal recreation area. There are also 20 recreation trails found in the lower portion of Lake Britton.

The planning unit contains one PG&E Timber Management Unit (TMU) that consists of 2,499 acres of second-growth mixed conifer and eastside pine stands, and may contain some remnant apple orchard trees, along with oaks and incense-cedar. The Lake Britton TMU is currently managed by PG&E for multiple-uses, in which protection and uses of other resources and facilities may preclude sustained timber management as the highest and best use of portions of the TMU.

Grazing was discontinued on lands within the FERC boundary in the late 1980s to protect sensitive resources and water quality. Lands outside the FERC boundary appear to have low potential to support grazing activities due to the presence of sensitive species.

Human use of the Lake Britton area dates back to the Paleoindian period over 7,500 years ago. The planning unit is within the Pit River Tribe's ancestral territory. The entire shoreline of Lake Britton was federally designated an archaeological district in 1975. In accordance with its FERC license, in 2008 PG&E prepared a new National Register Nomination to expand the district to cover a larger area. The expanded district is now referred to as the Pit River Aboriginal Cultural District.

The section of Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP) describing the Lake Britton Planning Unit, including the beneficial public values (BPVs) and the management objectives that were previously approved by the Stewardship Council board is attached.

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. Of these organizations, the following five organizations were invited to submit land stewardship proposals (LSPs):

- BLM (Alturas Field Office)
- California State Parks
- Shasta County
- Pit River Tribe
- USFS (Lassen National Forest)

In evaluating the LSPs submitted by these five organizations, the following factors were considered:

- An evaluation of 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 Lake Britton Planning Unit as set forth in Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan;
- 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.

At this time, the Stewardship Council has completed its evaluation of the LSPs and is recommending donations of fee title to Shasta County and California State Parks. Additionally, Stewardship Council staff will continue to work with the BLM, USFS, and Pit River Tribe to further assess interests and qualifications.

II. EVALUATION

California State Parks is being recommended to receive fee title donation to 119 acres and Shasta County is being recommended to receive fee title donation to five acres. This initial recommendation is based on a determination that California State Parks and Shasta County have sufficient financial and organizational capacity to hold and maintain the fee title interests, as identified, on these lands.

a. Donee Organizational Capacity

California State Parks and Shasta County possess the organizational capacity and experience to own and manage fee title to the properties recommended for donation, as summarized below.

California State Parks

- The California Department of Parks and Recreation manages more than 270 park units encompassing 1.4 million acres of land across the state of California, with over 280 miles of coastline, 625 miles of lake and river frontage, nearly 15,000 campsites, and 3,000 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.
- California State Parks manages the McArthur Burney Falls Memorial State Park (MBFMSP), which is adjacent to each of the parcels being recommended for donation to California State Parks. This park consists of 611 acres of land under direct ownership, 74 acres under a use agreement with the USFS, and 225 acres leased from PG&E. These lands are managed under the MBFMSP General Plan, which reflects long-range development plans to provide for optimum use and enjoyment of the Park as well as protection of its quality and resources.

Shasta County

- The County has established standards and practices to own and manage property, in the form of a General Land Use Plan that guides growth and development as well as codes, ordinances, and policies established to protect public health and safety.
- The County has financial and organizational resources to own and operate the approximately five acre area being recommended for transfer to them. Under a PG&E lease, Shasta County currently manages this property as the Hat Creek Park, a public day use facility that provides a roadside rest area, picnic area, wildlife viewing area, and access to catch and release fly-fishing.
- Shasta County's ownership and management includes parks, roads, water resources as well as a number of larger municipal facilities, including buildings and landfills. Shasta County is working on several collaborative processes including the establishment of multi jurisdictional parks and trails.

b. Donee Financial Capacity

The Stewardship Council's review of potential fee title donees' financial capacity consisted of an evaluation of each organization's annual operating budget and financial statements, and consideration of the current and projected management and enhancement costs and funding in relation to the organization's financial capacity. Based on this review, staff concluded that California State Parks and Shasta County would have the financial ability to manage the lands being recommended for donation and to preserve and/or enhance the BPVs associated with these lands.

c. Management Objectives

Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan established certain management objectives for the Lake Britton Planning Unit (see Volume II Planning Unit Report with attachments). California State Parks and Shasta County are seeking fee title to lands within the Lake Britton Planning Unit to achieve a number of proposed management activities, which appear to be consistent with the established management objectives, as described below.

California State Parks

California State Parks has expressed interest in acquiring fee title to four parcels that encompass 119 acres that are adjacent to the MBFMSP. California State Parks proposes to manage donated lands consistent with existing management plans that guide uses and management of the MBFMSP. Specific management activities identified in the California State Parks' proposal include:

- Conduct biological and cultural resource surveys to inform management.
- Inventory existing roads and trails and assess opportunities to connect and enhance the MBFMSP trail system, including installation of interpretive and directional signage.
- If feasible, relocate Headwaters Trail Camp onto donated lands and enhance facilities.
- Offer interpretive programs, consistent with programming already offered at MBFMSP.

Shasta County

Shasta County has expressed an interest in acquiring approximately five acres of land that they currently lease from PG&E and operate as the Hat Creek Park. Specific management activities identified in the County's proposal include:

- Continue to manage the park as a roadside rest area, picnic area, wildlife viewing area, and access to catch and release fly-fishing. Under its current lease, the County has recently renovated the fishing access and rest area facilities.
- Work with adjacent land owners to develop contiguous trail access through the property.

d. Funding

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 the prospective donees.

e. Requirements of the Settlement Agreement and Stipulation

The Stewardship Council's recommendation that California State Parks and Shasta County receive fee title to certain lands available for donation within this planning unit is subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment. Several of these requirements are highlighted below.

PG&E currently manages one lease and one license on parcels identified for donation within the proposed recommendation. One is a lease that permits Shasta County to maintain and operate Hat Creek Park, a public day use facility located on approximately five acres adjacent to Highway 299 and Hat Creek. Pursuant to this recommendation, this area is being proposed for transfer to the lessee, Shasta County. PG&E's license is with California State Parks for lands incorporated into the MBFMSP. All improvements constructed on the licensed area are owned and managed by California State Parks. The license area is located both on lands available for donation and lands to be retained by PG&E. Pursuant to this recommendation, the lands available for donation under this license would be transferred to California State Parks, which would honor the existing uses under the current license.

PG&E manages three additional leases or licenses within the planning unit, all of which are on lands being recommended to be retained by PG&E. None of those leases or licenses is located on lands being recommended for donation pursuant to this recommendation.

The conservation easement will also 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, any compliance with any FERC license, FERC license renewal, or other regulatory requirements. On lands to be conveyed, the grant deed will reserve to PG&E similar rights for operation and maintenance of hydroelectric facilities and associated water delivery facilities.

Furthermore, the Stewardship Council would work with PG&E and Shasta County to ensure the conveyance of these parcels is “tax neutral” for the county as required by Stipulation Section 12(a)(5).

f. Conservation Partners

The permanent protection of the Lake Britton Planning Unit, and the future preservation and enhancement of the BPVs, may involve, and benefit from, the participation of land conservation partners. For purposes of this recommendation, land conservation partners are defined as organizations other than the prospective fee title donee or conservation easement holder that become 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 land stewardship proposals submitted by organizations interested in a fee title donation, or during or after the development of the Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (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.

Stewardship Council 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.

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 received on the Lake Britton Planning Unit during the development of Volumes I and II of the Land Conservation Plan and at a public workshop held on October 29, 2009 is attached. Additional public comments received concerning this recommendation will be provided to the Board for consideration.

IV. NEXT STEPS

If this recommendation is adopted by the Stewardship Council board of directors, staff would invite the prospective donee to negotiate specific terms of the transaction with PG&E and would work with the prospective donee to develop a management and funding agreement, if applicable. The development of management and funding agreement would be coordinated with the development of a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan.

Adoption of the LCCP by the Stewardship Council board of directors 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 Stewardship Council board.

ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

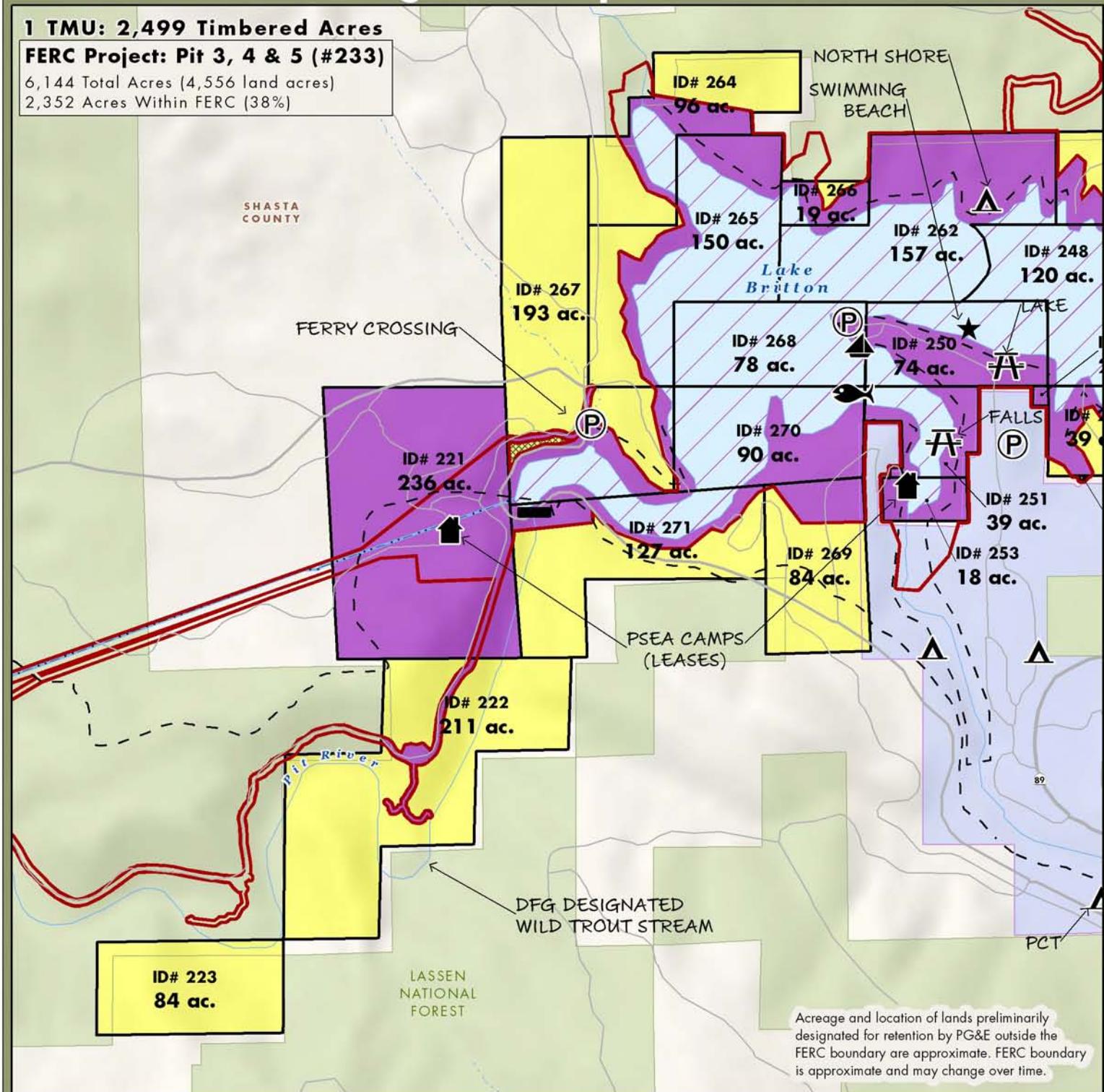
- Lake Britton Planning Unit Maps
- LCP Volume II Planning Unit Report for Lake Britton Planning Unit
- List of Registered Organizations That Submitted SOQs for Lands Available in the Lake Britton Planning Unit
- Summary of Key Public Outreach Activities and Public Comments Associated with the Lake Britton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

Lake Britton Planning Unit: Map 1

1 TMU: 2,499 Timbered Acres

FERC Project: Pit 3, 4 & 5 (#233)

6,144 Total Acres (4,556 land acres)
2,352 Acres Within FERC (38%)



 PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation

 PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention

 Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number

 Certain Conditions May Make Donation Inadvisable

 PG&E Lands Under Water

 FERC Boundary

 BLM

 Private

 State

 USFS

 Boat Launch

 Campground

 Dam

 Day Use Area

 Feature of Importance

 Fishing

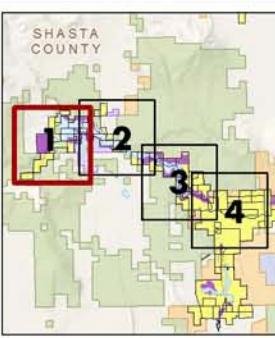
 Fish Barrier Dam

 Gate

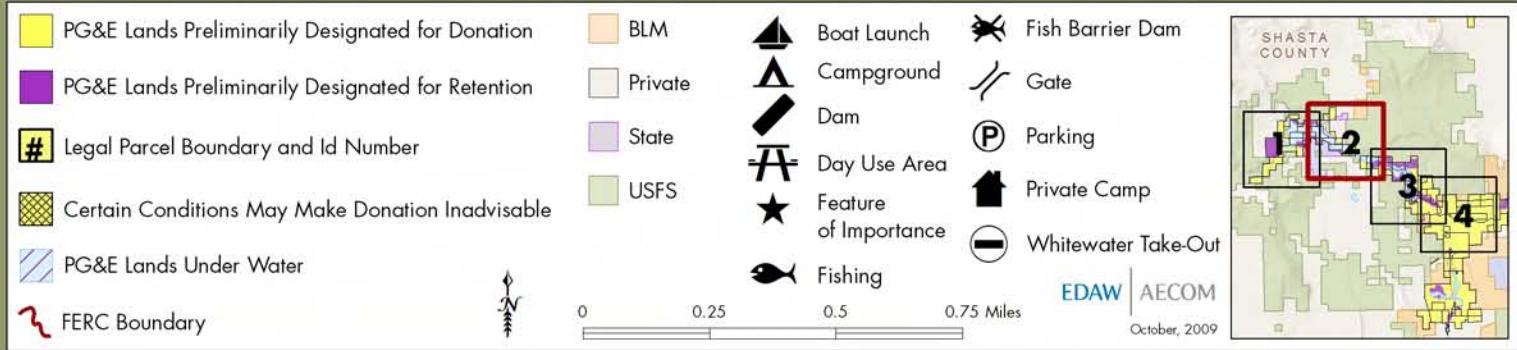
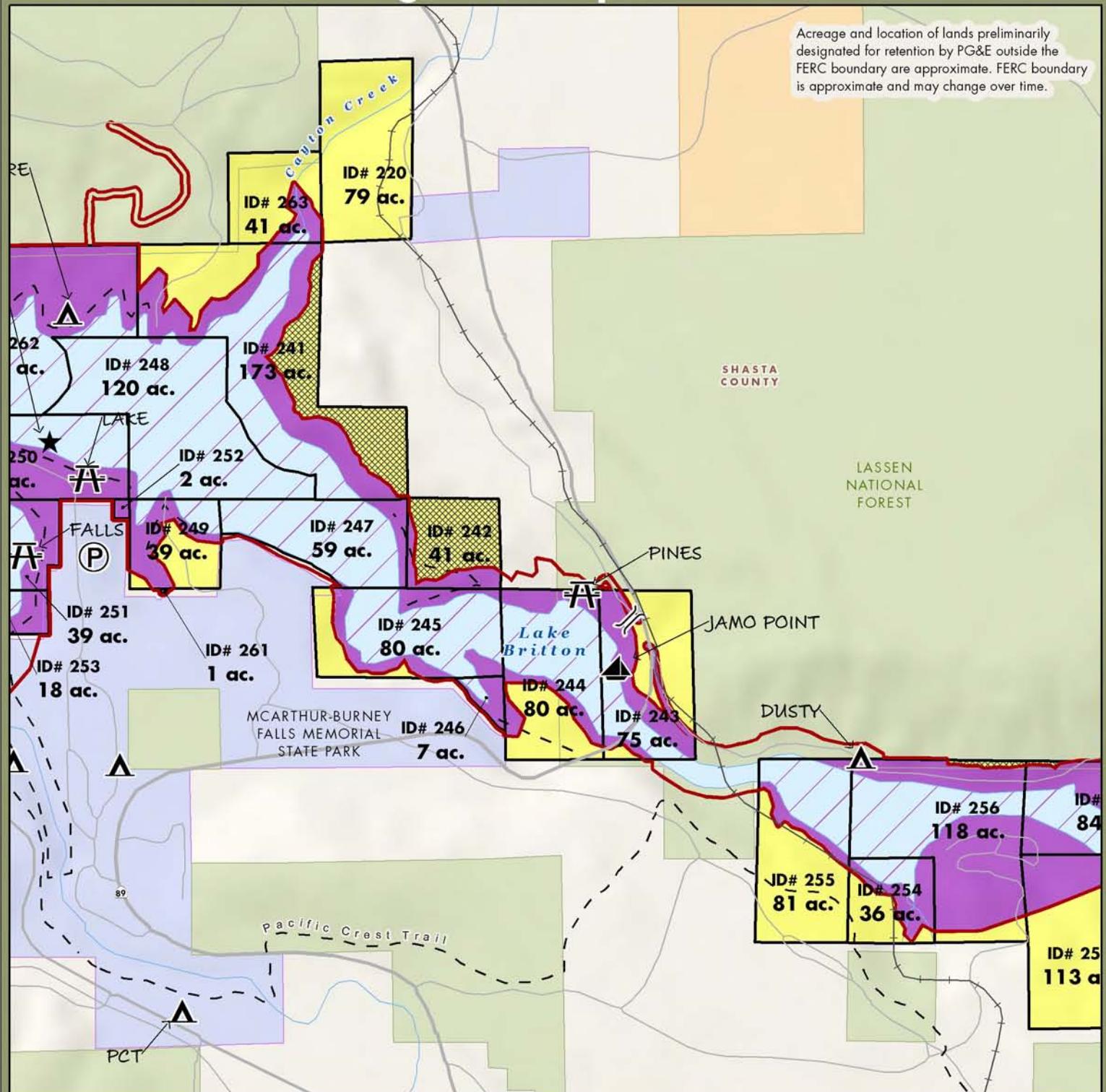
 Parking

 Private Camp

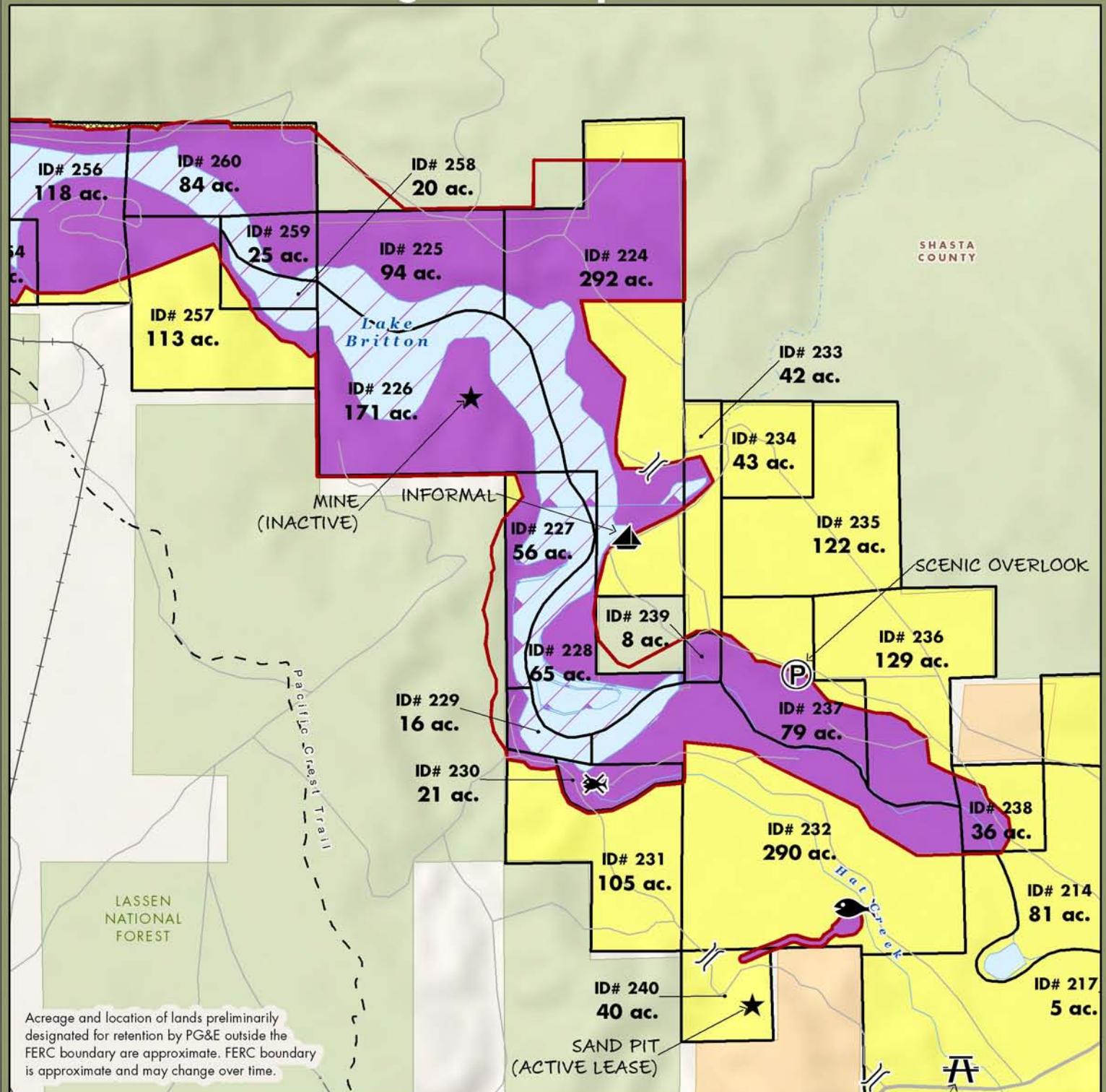
 Whitewater Take-Out



Lake Britton Planning Unit: Map 2



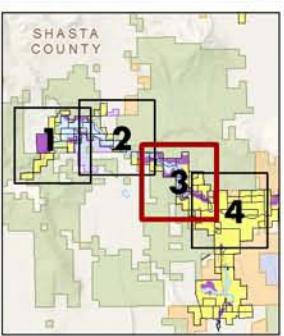
Lake Britton Planning Unit: Map 3



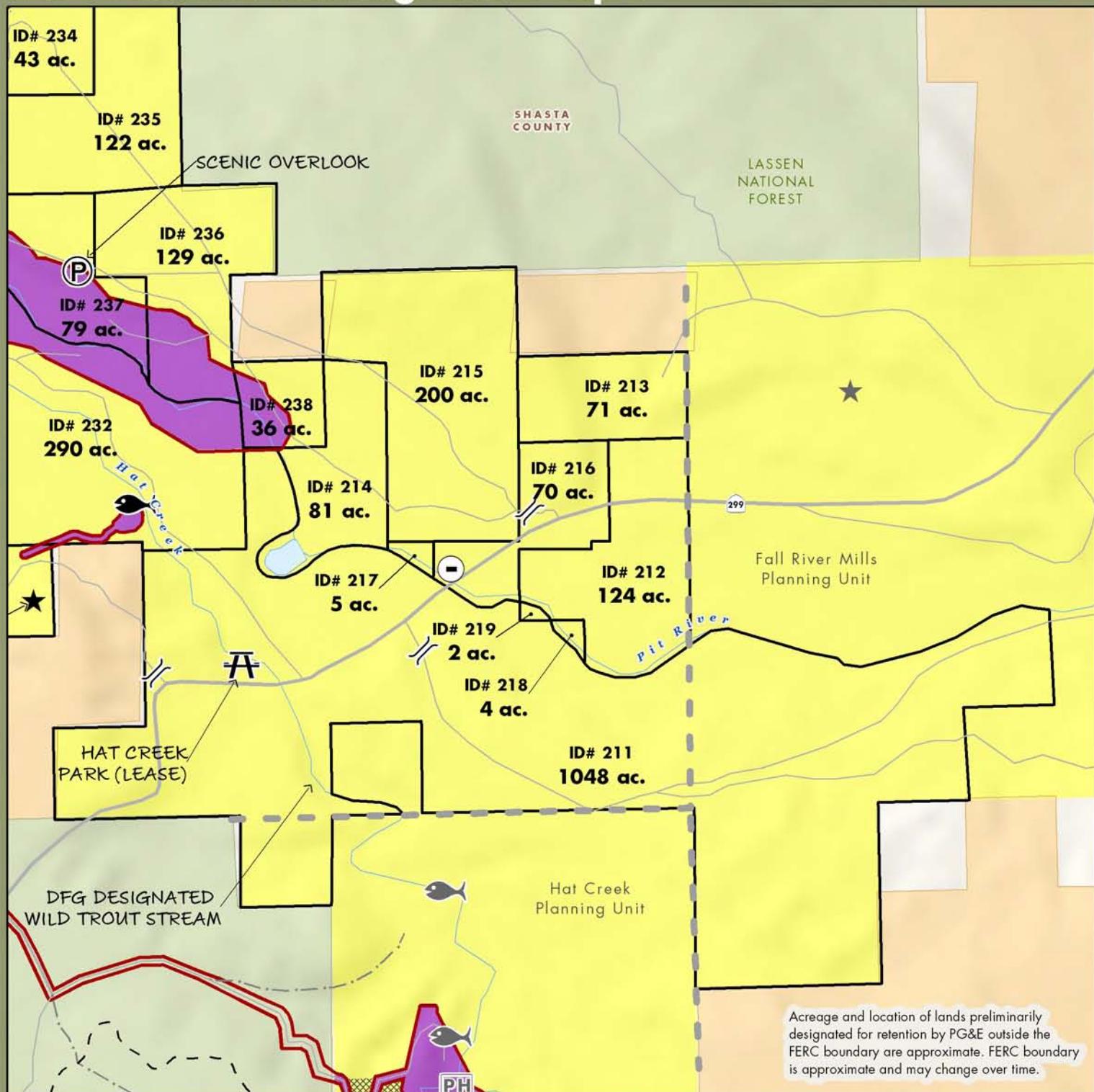
- PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation
- PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention
- # Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number
- Certain Conditions May Make Donation Inadvisable
- PG&E Lands Under Water
- FERC Boundary

- BLM
- Private
- State
- USFS

- Boat Launch
- Campground
- Dam
- Day Use Area
- Feature of Importance
- Fishing
- Fish Barrier Dam
- Gate
- Parking
- Private Camp
- Whitewater Take-Out



Lake Britton Planning Unit: Map 4



■ PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Donation

■ BLM

■ PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention

■ Private

■ Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number

■ State

■ Certain Conditions May Make Donation Inadvisable

■ USFS

■ PG&E Lands Under Water

■ FERC Boundary

0 0.25

0.5

0.75 Miles

▲ Boat Launch

▲ Campground

■ Dam

■ Day Use Area

■ Feature of Importance

■ Fishing

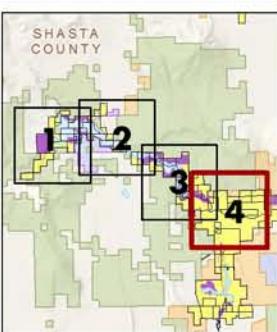
■ Fish Barrier Dam

■ Gate

■ Parking

■ Private Camp

■ Whitewater Take-Out



LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

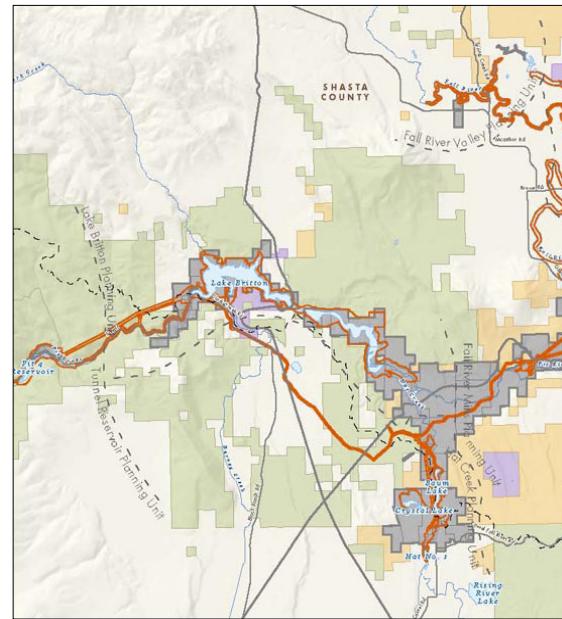
Pit-McCloud River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

Overview

- Adjacent to and part of McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park; 5,663 acres in Shasta County
- Extensive habitat resources, important recreation area, and part of an Archeological District
- 3,311 acres outside the FERC boundary; 2,352 acres inside
- Part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project (FERC #233), New License issued July 2007

The Lake Britton Planning Unit is located in Shasta County, 46 miles northeast of Redding and less than 10 miles north of Burney. The planning unit contains the 1,293-acre Lake Britton and portions of the Pit River and Hat Creek (see Figure PM-9). The planning unit contains lands that are part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 FERC Project (#233) as well as associated hydropower infrastructure. PG&E was issued a New License for the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project on July 2, 2007. Lake Britton is primarily surrounded by USFS land, State Park land, and private property. The Hat Creek and Pit River



Lake Britton Planning Unit
Shasta County

lands are primarily surrounded by USFS land and a few BLM parcels.

Lake Britton is generally discussed as two areas, lower and upper Lake Britton,¹ due to the distinct difference in character and level of development between the two areas. The lower lake is more reservoir-like and developed heavily for recreation, while the upper lake is more narrow and river-like with little recreation development.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Lake Britton provides valuable habitat resources and has been identified as a Significant Natural Area by DFG. The 8-mile long Lake Britton provides habitat for both recreational and native fisheries. Lower Lake Britton supports a warmwater fishery for introduced game species such as bass, black crappie, green sunfish, and bluegill. The shallower upper Lake Britton contains higher concentrations of native fish species such as hardhead, Sacramento pikeminnow, and Sacramento sucker. Lake Britton also contains rough sculpin, bigeye marbled sculpin, and Pit roach. Northwestern pond turtles, as well as several mollusks and bi-valve aquatic



Pit River

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Pit-McCloud River Watershed

species, were also frequently documented around Lake Britton during FERC relicensing studies.

Previous fisheries enhancement efforts in Lake Britton included the construction of the Hat Creek fish barrier dam, located at the confluence of Hat Creek and Lake Britton. This dam was constructed in 1969 to prevent introduced fish species within Lake Britton from entering and impacting the designated Hat Creek Wild Trout area. The Hat Creek Wild Trout area extends from the fish barrier dam upstream to Hat Creek #2 Powerhouse (located within the Hat Creek Planning Unit).

Terrestrial habitat within the planning unit provides for a wide range of species. The area adjacent to Lake Britton and the Pit River has one of the largest populations of bald eagles within the contiguous United States, and the Pit River System is one of the most important bald eagle nesting areas in California. Seven pairs of bald eagles nest within the planning unit, and wintering bald eagles can also be seen in the planning unit. Eight bank swallow colony complexes have been documented along Lake Britton with 30 to over 2,000 nesting burrows at each colony. Additionally, three osprey nests, a probable new peregrine falcon breeding site, potential breeding habitat for willow flycatcher, and habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle were also identified during FERC relicensing studies. The Lake Britton area is also within the range of the northern spotted owl, and the adjacent USFS Chalk Mountain Late Successional Reserve (LSR) contains five spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs). The Lake Britton area also provides habitat for several special status plants and six species of noxious weeds. Many habitat-related enhancements and plans are required in the New License.²

Open Space

The Shasta County General Plan recognizes that rivers, creeks and associated riparian corridors, and floodplains within the county are major open space resources. Lands within the planning unit provide open space and scenic viewsheds for McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park,

Highway 299, and Highway 89, which has been designated as part of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway.

Outdoor Recreation

Lake Britton is a popular recreation area for angling, swimming, hiking, picnicking, boating, camping, wildlife viewing, and hunting. Most of the recreation facilities are found in the lower Lake Britton area at McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park. The park leases 182 acres of shoreline lands from PG&E. McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park is one of the oldest and most popular State Parks in California; it contains Burney Falls, a National Landmark, along with several campgrounds, trails, and two day use areas. These popular day use areas are located at Burney Falls and along the lakeshore.

The lakeshore day use area contains a beach, marina, picnic area, designated swim area, and boat rental. In addition, lower Lake Britton contains a campground (North Shore), boat launch, day use area, two private camps, and a moderately used informal recreation area. There are also 20 recreation trails found in the lower portion of Lake Britton. A number of recreation enhancements are required in the New License under the recreation management plan, and focus on enhancing both facilities and the user experience in the lower lake area.³ Additionally, a bridge replacement and relocation of Highway 89 planned in the lower



Marina at Lake Britton

LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

Pit-McCloud River Watershed



Fishing platform on Lake Britton

Lake Britton area will improve highway access from the boat launch and picnic area on the east side of the lake.

The upper Lake Britton area provides a more primitive recreation setting. There are only two developed recreation sites - a campground and day use area. Most recreation use is dispersed, and fishing is the primary recreation activity. The day use area, Hat Creek Park, is located on Hat Creek and Highway 299 and is leased and managed by Shasta County. Hat Creek is a catch-and-release wild trout fishery that is very popular with anglers. The upper lake area also contains an informal scenic overlook on the Pit River off Highway 299, an informal boat launch near the scenic overlook, and a whitewater take-out at the Highway 299 Bridge for the Pit River run. A short road and parking area are provided for boaters at the take-out. There are 39 trails in the upper lake area, primarily used for fishing access. Additional recreation enhancements for upper Lake Britton are required in the New License under the recreation management plan.⁴

Unauthorized OHV use is known to occur in the area. PG&E has closed, gated, and bouldered many roads in the upper lake area to limit vehicle access and reduce unauthorized OHV use. These measures have been very successful and have helped reduce impacts to habitat and cultural resources. Also included within the Lake Britton Planning Unit are two former project construction camps, Camp Britton and Camp Shasta, now leased by Pacific Service Employees Association

(PSEA). There are a total of four recreational leases within the planning unit, including McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park, Camp Britton, Camp Shasta, and Hat Creek Park.⁵

Forest Resources

The planning unit contains one Timber Management Unit (TMU) that includes 2,499 acres of timber, consisting of second-growth mixed conifer and eastside pine stands. There are no plantations within the TMU, but there is a possibility of late seral stage stands. The area near the Pit River confluence with Lake Britton may contain some remnant apple orchard trees, along with oaks and incense-cedar. The Lake Britton TMU is currently managed by PG&E for Multiple-Uses, meaning that protection and uses of other resources and facilities may preclude sustained timber management as the highest and best use of portions of the TMU. Forestland in the southwest portion of the planning unit, adjacent to the USFS Chalk Mountain LSR, was harvested in the early 1990s.

Much of the forestland within the planning unit is surrounded by USFS lands managed under a late successional prescription. This prescription strives to provide diversity through maintenance and protection of old-growth ecosystems that serve as habitat for late successional and old-growth forest-related species, such as the northern spotted owl. Fire management is a concern in the planning unit; small fires are fairly common at Lake Britton. In



Habitat in peninsula area along Pit River

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Pit-McCloud River Watershed

fact, seven of the nine large fires in the project vicinity between 1911 and 2001 were located around Lake Britton.⁶

Agricultural Uses

Grazing was discontinued on lands within the FERC boundary in the late 1980s to protect sensitive resources and water quality.⁷ Lands outside the FERC boundary appear to have low potential to support grazing activities due to the presence of sensitive species.

Historic Resources

Lake Britton is located on land formerly occupied by an extensive ancient lake. Human use of the Lake Britton area dates back to the Paleoindian period over 7,500 years ago. The planning unit is within the Pit River Tribe's ancestral territory. The entire shoreline of Lake Britton was Federally designated an archaeological district in 1975 with over 90 archaeological sites including 20 prehistoric villages contained within the district. Cultural resource surveys as part of the Pit 3, 4, 5 FERC Project identified 102 ethnographic locations and recorded 66 sites in the vicinity of Lake Britton, which include shell middens, lithic scatters, housepits, cairns, and historic cairns, a railroad, homesteads, roads, and ditches. Ethnobotanical resources have also been identified in the Pit 3, 4, 5 Project area such as hazel and redbud, which are of special importance to Native Americans for art, medicine, basketry, and cultural use.

In relicensing, the Pit 3, 4, 5 Hydroelectric System was determined to be eligible for listing in the NRHP as an historic district. Some system components within the planning unit are also individually eligible for inclusion on the NRHP including the Pit 3 Dam and Lake Britton, Camp Shasta, and Camp Britton. Vandalism and shoreline erosion were affecting many cultural sites; however, limits on boat speed in upper Lake Britton, bouldering and closure of roads, and seasonal gate closures have reduced vandalism and impacts to cultural sites. Many sites impacted by



Pit River Overlook

fluctuating water levels in Lake Britton have been stabilized and/or documented. PG&E currently has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pit River Tribe for tribal use of two spiritual sites within the planning unit. The New License requires developing a final historic properties management plan (HPMP) including monitoring and protection of sites.

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at the Lake Britton Planning Unit be preserved and enhanced by focusing on biological and cultural resources protection, public access and recreation, and sustainable forestry. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to preserve and enhance open space and recreation, while also protecting biological and cultural resources and important forest resources. We recommend this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E and license compliance efforts for the area.

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological and cultural resources, as well as enhance public access, educational opportunities, the recreation experience and sustainable forestry management.

LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

Pit-McCloud River Watershed

As shown on Table PM-5, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Lake Britton 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 Lake Britton Planning Unit offers diverse and high value terrestrial habitat as well as important aquatic resources such as Lake Britton, Hat Creek and the Pit River. 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, and compliance with the USFWS Biological Opinion, outside the FERC boundary as applicable. Bald eagle nesting habitat improvements on the north side of the lake are also recommended. The Stewardship Council encourages close coordination with the USFS and other resource-focused organizations working in the region. All planning should be considered in conjunction with fuels and forest management plans as well as relevant FERC license required plans.

Open Space

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

The Lake Britton Planning Unit provides important open space and viewsheds for major recreation areas and highways. This concept would preserve open space by limiting the construction of human-made features to recreation improvements within existing developed areas, as well as through permanent conservation easements. 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.

Outdoor Recreation

Objective: Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional public access and educational opportunities, as well as to enhance the recreation experience.

The Lake Britton Planning Unit is a popular recreation destination, primarily for water-based recreation such as boating, swimming, and fishing. The planning unit offers a variety of experiences ranging from very developed to dispersed and primitive. As shown in Figure PM-10, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance recreation



Meadow habitat along Pit River

LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

Pit-McCloud River Watershed

opportunities by recommending improvements to existing recreational facilities as well as the creation of new trail features and interpretive programs. We recommend enhancements focused on assessment of the potential for additional trail connections, installation and improvement of directional and interpretive signage, enhancement of public access at the PSEA camps, designation of OHV routes, evaluation of the potential to relocate the Pacific Crest Trail campground, and development of additional interpretive programs. We recommend coordinating with the development of FERC license required plans and working closely with Shasta County, the Department of Parks and Recreation, USFS, USFWS, and the Pit River Tribe regarding recreation enhancements.

Sustainable Forestry

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

The Lake Britton Planning Unit contains almost 2,500 acres of forestland adjacent to late successional habitat in a fire-prone area. 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, fire management and response, and fuels management. The forest, fire management and response, and fuels management plans should be developed in conjunction with noxious weed and wildlife and habitat management plans as well as with relevant FERC license required plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination with adjacent landowners, lessees, and USFS management and practices as appropriate.



Hat Creek Park

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 and traditional uses.

With the entire shoreline of Lake Britton designated an archaeological district and numerous documented archaeological and historic sites, the Lake Britton Planning Unit is an important cultural resource area. 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 Lake Britton (particularly outside the FERC cultural resource study area where less information is available). The Stewardship Council recommends that appropriate management plans be developed and implemented, and that opportunities to support public education regarding cultural resources be considered. Additionally, removal of signs of unauthorized recreation use at cultural sites is recommended to further discourage unauthorized use and protect cultural resources. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with Native American entities. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with relevant FERC license required plans and recommended habitat enhancement measures.

LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

Pit-McCloud River Watershed

Endnotes

¹The lower Lake Britton area includes lands from the Pit 3 Dam (in the west) to Highway 89 (in the east). Upper Lake Britton includes lands from Highway 89 (in the west) to Highway 299 (in the east).

²Measures required in the New License regarding habitat include: a western pond turtle monitoring plan, updating of the Interagency Bald Eagle Management Plan, a vegetation and invasive weed management plan, a valley elderberry longhorn beetle protection plan, a northern spotted owl protection plan, fish population trend and condition monitoring in Project reservoirs and river reaches, a Biological Resource Program Technical Review Group, and a terrestrial wildlife mitigation and monitoring plan.

³The New License requires several recreation enhancements for the lower lake area under the recreation management plan. These enhancements include: improvements at North Shore Campground, measures to address management of the informal use area called the North Ferry Crossing; boating, parking, and day use enhancements at the Jamo Point Boat Ramp; increased camping and day use capacity; maintaining and upgrading existing trails around Lake Britton; pedestrian signage at the Pit 3 Dam; and development of a reservoir water surface zoning plan, an information, education, and interpretation plan, and a recreation monitoring and reporting plan (all three of which would cover the lower and upper Lake Britton areas). The New License also requires development of a visual management plan and a sign plan.

⁴The New License also requires several recreation enhancements for the upper lake area under the recreation management plan. These enhancements include: a plan for public access to lower Hat Creek; camping, swimming, and ADA access improvements at the campground; improvements to the car-top boat ramp; parking closures; and an OHV and vehicle management plan as a component of the road and facilities management plan (which would cover the upper and lower Lake Britton areas).

⁵There is also a lease for a sand quarry located north of Hat Creek Park.

⁶The New License requires developing a fire management and response plan for the project area.

⁷Grazing was discontinued in accordance with the previous Pit 3, 4, 5 FERC Project Cultural Resources Management Plan.



Riparian habitat along Hat Creek



Lake Britton Planning Unit

Registered Organizations that Submitted Statements of Qualifications for Lands Available for Donation

California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks)

County of Shasta

Environmental Education Council of Marin

Pit River Tribe

Save Burney Falls

US Forest Service - Lassen National Forest

US Bureau of Land Management

SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

PUBLIC REVIEW OF VOLUMES I AND II OF THE LCP

The Draft Land Conservation Plan (LCP) Volumes I and II were released in June 2007 for a 60-day public comment period. During this time, the Stewardship Council held ten public meetings to publicize the availability of the Draft LCP and to encourage public comment. During public review of Volumes I and II of the LCP, five comments were submitted concerning the Lake Britton Planning Unit. Comments were received via email, the Stewardship Council website, and hardcopy letters. The comments were reviewed and responded to individually, and the text in the Draft LCP was revised as appropriate.

Public comments emphasized the following regarding the future management of the property:

- Prohibit grazing in the Lake Britton Planning Unit to protect the streambank.
- Limit timber harvesting to protect the viewshed and water quality.
- The conservation easement should protect the viewshed, limit development, and prohibit mining.
- The conservation easement should provide public access, as appropriate.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING FOR THE LAKE BRITTON PLANNING UNIT

A public information meeting for the Fall River Mills, Fall River Valley, Hat Creek, and Lake Britton planning units was hosted by the Stewardship Council on October 29, 2009 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall in Burney, California. A total of 33 people attended and participated in the meeting, representing a wide variety of interests, including local and federal governments, community organizations, and community members. The primary purpose of this meeting was to solicit public input on the development of the Land Conservation and Conveyance Plans (LCCP) to preserve and enhance the Fall River Mills, Fall River Valley, Hat Creek, and Lake Britton planning units.

During the meeting, participants were invited to provide comments at the four planning unit stations, focusing on two topics: the potential priority measures proposed for the above listed planning units, and important qualifications of future land owners and conservation easement holders. A summary of the public comments concerning the Lake Britton Planning Unit is provided below.

General Comments/Potential Priority Measures to Preserve and Enhance the BPVs

- How will the conservation easement address resource rights not owned by PG&E?

Important Qualifications of Future Landowners and Conservation Easement Holders

- Experience managing easements

- Expertise in resource management (timber, minerals, grazing) and grazing as a management tool
- Financial resources, staying power to do job
- Ability to cooperate with multiple stakeholders

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SUBMITTED

The Stewardship Council also received other public comments and letters from individuals and organizations regarding the future management of the Lake Britton Planning Unit, as summarized below:

- Prohibit OHV use due to potential impacts on wildlife habitat and soils.
- Assess and develop educational opportunities for the public and youth to learn about the Pit River Indian culture, such as signage, cultural resource center, and model villages.
- Protect cultural resources including, traditional and medicinal plants, sacred sites, and human remains.
- Concern that enhanced public access would impact sensitive riparian habitat.
- Support for reestablishing the Pit River Rendezvous, a yearly black powder shooting event hosted by the Pit River Pioneers.
- Support for the lands available for donation to be transferred to the Pit River Tribe.