

KERCKHOFF LAKE PLANNING UNIT

Willow Creek Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

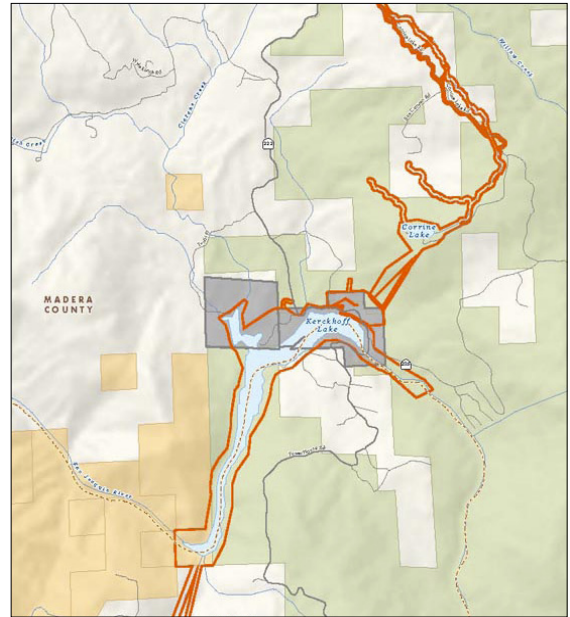
Overview

- Small reservoir with light recreation use, grazing, and Native American cultural and ethnobotanical gathering sites
- 325 acres in Madera and Fresno Counties; 135 acres outside and 190 acres inside FERC boundaries (including part of reservoir)
- Lands are primarily associated with the Kerckhoff Project, FERC #96 (License expires in 2022), but also includes a portion of the Crane Valley Project, FERC #1354 (New License issued October 2003)

The planning unit includes the northern, upstream end of 172-acre Kerckhoff Lake and surrounding lands. The lake is at an elevation of about 1,000 feet and is situated mid-way between the small communities of North Fork and Auberry, each less than 10 miles away. As shown in Figure WC-7, County Road 222 (Auberry Road)¹ passes close to the north and east shores of the lake and provides access to the Smalley Cove recreation area, as well as to an informal use area on the north shore.



Kerckhoff Lake from the south shoreline



Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit
Madera & Fresno Counties

Wishon Powerhouse, the terminus of the Crane Valley Project (FERC #1354) that includes the three upstream Willow Creek Watershed planning units, is located on the east shore of the lake and releases water to the reservoir. About 58% of the planning unit is within the boundaries of the Kerckhoff Project (FERC #69), including the sole developed recreation area and a narrow band of shoreline lands.

The north and east sides of the planning unit, and part of the south side, are adjacent to Sierra National Forest (SNF) lands managed under a frontcountry prescription that emphasizes wildlife and range management. Private lands are adjacent to the south and west. The BLM administers the San Joaquin River Gorge Management Area, located immediately downstream of the planning unit. These Federal and private lands in the vicinity of the planning unit are sparsely populated and largely undeveloped, with only scattered rural residences. The local communities are in transition from traditional economies based on logging and timber mills to depending more heavily on recreation, tourism, and related small businesses.

Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit Existing Conditions

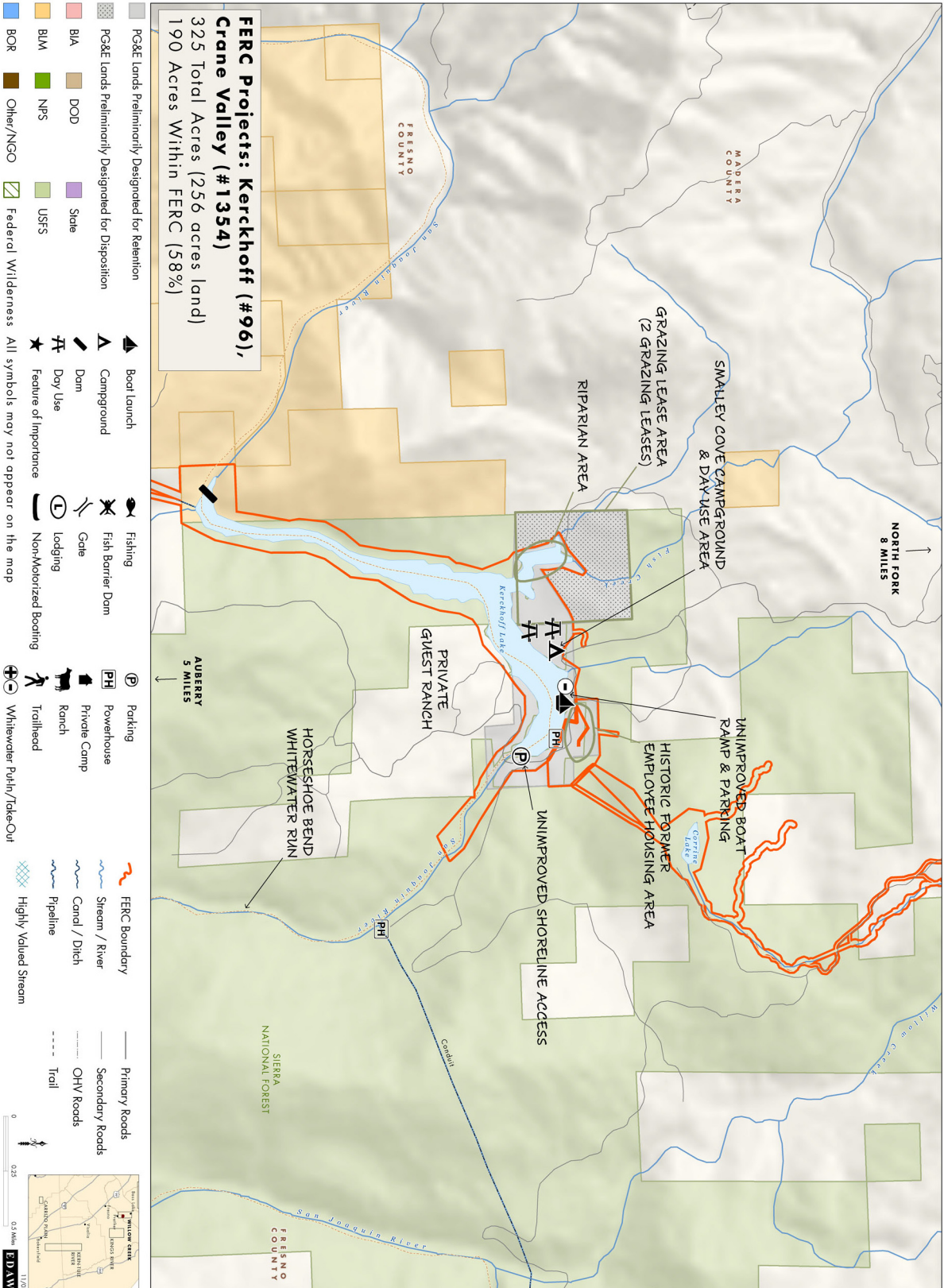


Figure WC-7

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Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Vegetation on the north side of the reservoir is primarily open oak woodlands with a grass understory. Specific data on plants and wildlife, and special status species in particular, are lacking, but recent general biological assessments conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for a water storage investigation in the area highlight the importance of the area's uncommon riparian habitat. Riparian vegetation is found in the narrow drainages leading to the lake and in a narrow band along its shore. Also, the back portion of Smalley Cove has filled in with sediment, forming a marsh that provides an uncommon habitat for the area and enhanced opportunities for bird watching. Great blue herons and other waterfowl were observed on the cove and in the marsh during a site visit. Osprey forage on the lake and Smalley Cove is an attractive area for waterfowl and wading birds due to its shallow, calm water and marsh.

The abutments of a former bridge at the southern edge of the planning unit are reportedly used by bats for roosting and a 2001 survey found several hundred Yuma myotis bats (a special status species) roosting at Wishon Powerhouse. Special status aquatic species such as the western pond turtle may occur in the reservoir. The reservoir and its tributaries may also support hardhead, a special status fish specie. The tree anemone, a rare and showy flowering shrub found only in this area of the Sierra foothills, may also occur in the planning unit. The valley elderberry longhorn beetle, a Federally threatened specie, is likely to occur where elderberry shrubs are present.

Open Space

The lands within the planning unit have value as open space, similar to the surrounding rural lands, providing scenic viewsheds to residents, lake visitors, and travelers on the County Road that passes through the area.

Outdoor Recreation

The Smalley Cove recreation area contains a campground with five campsites, water, and vault toilets; individual picnic sites close to the water; and a group picnic site on the hill above. A large bare dirt area near the group picnic site was formerly a ball field used by local PG&E-sponsored youth leagues. The recreation area has a resident campground host, a recent addition implemented by PG&E to reduce vandalism and provide site upkeep.

An informal use area on the north shore provides gravel parking and an unpaved boat ramp. In addition to boat launching, the site is used for shoreline angling and informal camping, and as a take-out point for whitewater rafters and kayakers completing the six-mile Horseshoe Bend run on the upstream reach of the San Joaquin River. A few whitewater boaters may also put-in there, paddle two miles downstream to Kerckhoff Dam, and portage around and launch below the dam to begin the 11-mile Patterson Bend run. A limited amount of fishing also occurs on the lake, primarily from the shore. Use of the facilities is generally low to moderate.

A short walk west from the Smalley Cove developed recreation area on an existing dirt track brings visitors to the shore of Smalley Cove, which provides an area of calm water and marsh with pleasant oak-shaded grasslands available for picnicking and similar uses. Apart from a picnic



Informal picnic site on Smalley Cove

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Annual grassland & oak woodland grazing area table near the shore of the cove, there are no developed facilities.

The lands on the lake's south side are steeper and more densely vegetated with oak woodlands, preventing access to the shore. On the adjacent private lands, what appears to be an informal boat launch and shoreline use area are visible from the north shore. Current use of the adjacent land is not known, but signage suggests some type of commercial guest ranch or similar operation, and the land includes a primitive air strip. A gravel parking area exists at the east end of the new county bridge crossing the river where it enters the lake, but shoreline access is poor due to a steep and rocky shoreline. The parking area may be used by vehicles shuttling whitewater boaters.

The main body of the reservoir receives little boating use due to cold, shallow water; fluctuating water levels; and constant strong currents. Flow into the reservoir is largely controlled by upstream hydropower projects operated by Southern California Edison. Most use is by personal watercraft. There are no formal trails in the area, but the Mono Tribe refers to an historical trail used by Native Americans that passed through the northern parcels. Plans are being developed for a segment of the San Joaquin River Trail to pass close to the south shoreline; it is not known if this trail would cross PG&E lands.

Forest Resources

The planning unit contains one PG&E Timber Management Unit (TMU) which includes no timbered acres. The lack of timber resources, prevalence of recreation and agricultural development, and existing uses of the land provide little potential for enhancement of sustainable forestry.

Agricultural Uses

The entrance road to the Smalley Cove recreation area also provides access to the 160-acre parcel of land to the west, which is used for cattle grazing under two PG&E leases (see Figure WC-7). One lease is for use of approximately 127 acres of land, comprising most of the western parcel and the area on both sides of the entrance road to the Smalley Cove recreation area. A corral is located close to the entrance road. A group of cattle grazing operators has a lease for use of another 20 acres of the west parcel as a cattle staging area. This land is the area immediately to the west of the Smalley Cove recreation area and between the recreation area and Smalley Cove itself. Vehicle access to the parcel is limited to dirt tracks, which are used only by the grazing operators.

The two grazing lease areas are separated from each other and from the Smalley Cove recreation area by barbed-wire fences. The area is grazed year round, with the PG&E property used primarily to gain access to the adjoining



Ithuriel's Spear flowering among annual grasses

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USFS grazing allotment. One of the lessees has described the PG&E parcel as essential to the viability of his overall grazing operation. During the May 2006 site visit, tall grasses and numerous wildflowers were observed in the grazing lease area near Smalley Cove. Some erosion was observed on the shoreline of Smalley Cove due to cattle use.

Historic Resources

Native American cultural sites are located in the Smalley Cove recreation area and elsewhere in the planning unit. A known Yokuts village site is in the vicinity of the Wishon Powerhouse. For many years, local tribes have used the Kerckhoff Lake area for community gatherings and related cultural activities, as well as for recreation. The Mono Tribe uses the Smalley Cove area on an informal basis for gathering plant materials and has proposed formal development of facilities to host cultural resource demonstrations, teaching, and tribal ceremonies and gatherings, in conjunction with continued public recreation and possibly grazing. Many Native Americans reside in the area and maintain an active interest in protecting and using cultural resources and pursuing traditional cultural practices in the vicinity of Kerckhoff Lake.

The slope to the north of the Wishon Powerhouse is the site of a former community where power company employees and their families lived in the early days of hydropower development in the region, beginning in the early 1900s. A gated road crosses the site, and historical remnants such as rock walls and stairways are still visible.

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at Kerckhoff Lake be preserved and enhanced by focusing on protecting cultural resources and enhancing the recreation experience, habitat resources, and agricultural



Open water & marsh at Smalley Cove

uses. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to protect and enhance cultural and habitat resources and agricultural uses, as well as enhance recreation opportunities. Given the importance of the area to Native Americans and grazing lessees, we envision this concept would be planned and implemented in close coordination with Native American entities and the lessees.

Objective: Preserve and enhance biological, cultural, and agricultural resources, as well as enhance recreation opportunities.



Rocks walls & stairs at former PG&E housing area

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As shown on Table WC-4, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Kerckhoff Lake 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.

Although specific data on plants and wildlife in the planning unit is lacking, the planning unit provides important riparian, marsh, and oak woodland habitat along Kerckhoff Lake and several creeks and the surrounding hillsides. In order to preserve and enhance the habitat and resources found here, the Stewardship Council



Cattle paddock used by grazing lessee

recommends that baseline studies and plans be developed to gain a clear understanding of the resources. 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. We recommend close coordination with the USFS and other resource-focused organizations working in the region, and that all planning be considered in conjunction with the rangeland management plan and relevant Crane Valley Project management and monitoring plans.

Open Space

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

This concept would preserve open space by limiting construction to only minor additions of recreation facilities, 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 education and recreation opportunities.

Day use, camping, fishing, boating, and whitewater boating opportunities and facilities are present in the Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit. As shown in Figure WC-8, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance these opportunities by recommending minimal improvements that would enhance the recreation experience without detracting from the remote natural setting and would protect natural and cultural resources. We recommend enhancements focused on development of modest day use access and facilities at Smalley Cove, development of

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interpretive facilities overlooking Wishon Powerhouse, as well as updating information on recreation needs, including requirements for recreation-related law enforcement. Further development of a proposed Mono Indian Village Camp, addressed below, may also enhance recreation opportunities.

Agricultural Uses

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

Two existing grazing leases are located on the lands surrounding Smalley Cove, which are primarily used as staging areas and to gain access to the adjoining USFS grazing allotment. The Stewardship Council looks to preserve this resource and important economic use as part of the long-term management of the Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit. To support this effort, we anticipate a baseline conditions report will be required to describe current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area. From this, specific determinations can be made to identify and manage grazing practices in balance with other uses of the property. This effort should be developed in conjunction with the wildlife and habitat and noxious weed management plans, and evaluation of proposed cultural and recreation enhancements to ensure consistency and complementary actions.

Preservation of Historic Values

Objective: Identify and manage cultural resources and further develop and assess proposed cultural facilities in order to ensure their protection as well as to support continued uses and opportunities for public education.

The Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit area is an important community gathering site for



Fishing at dirt boat ramp

local tribes and also contains historic 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 Kerckhoff Lake (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. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship Council supports close coordination with Native American entities. In addition, we recommend coordination with the North Fork Mono Tribe to further develop their proposal for a Mono Indian Village Camp at



Alligator lizard

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Smalley Cove. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be consistent with the Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) for the Crane Valley Project (this plan is only relevant to the area of the planning unit surrounding the Wishon Powerhouse).

Endnote

¹ Madera County may reroute Road 222 and replace a small bridge, which could impact the lands on the north shore.

Table WC-4 Objectives to Preserve and/or Enhance – Recommended Concept

Planning Unit Objective: Preserve and enhance biological, cultural, and agricultural resources, as well as enhance recreation opportunities.		
Beneficial Public Value	Objective	Potential Measures to Preserve and/or Enhance BPVs – Not Requirements*
Protection of the Natural Habitat of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants	Preserve and enhance habitat in order to protect special biological resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify biological resources and enable their protection. • Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit. • Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit.
Preservation of Open Space	Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources, viewsheds, and agricultural land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply permanent conservation easements to ensure a higher level of open space protection.
Outdoor Recreation by the General Public	Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional education and recreation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update information on recreation needs at Kerckhoff Lake. • Develop minimal day use access and facilities on the east side of Smalley Cove.** • Develop day use and interpretive facilities on hillside lands overlooking Wishon Powerhouse.**
Sustainable Forestry		None proposed.
Agricultural Uses	Preserve and enhance grazing in order to support associated economic benefits, as well as to protect open space and habitat resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement. • Develop a rangeland management plan for grazing use that includes goals and objectives and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing practices that address soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management, habitat protection, and cultural resources management.
Preservation of Historic Values	Identify and manage cultural resources and further develop and assess proposed cultural facilities in order to ensure their protection as well as to support continued uses and opportunities for public education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the North Fork Mono Tribe to further develop proposal for Mono Indian Village Camp at Smalley Cove; following development of a more detailed proposal, assess feasibility and constraints, and potential conflicts with existing uses, of proposed Mono Indian Village Camp.** • Conduct surveys outside the FERC Project APE to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. • Conduct an ethnographic study of the planning unit to identify traditional use areas. • Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit. • Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.

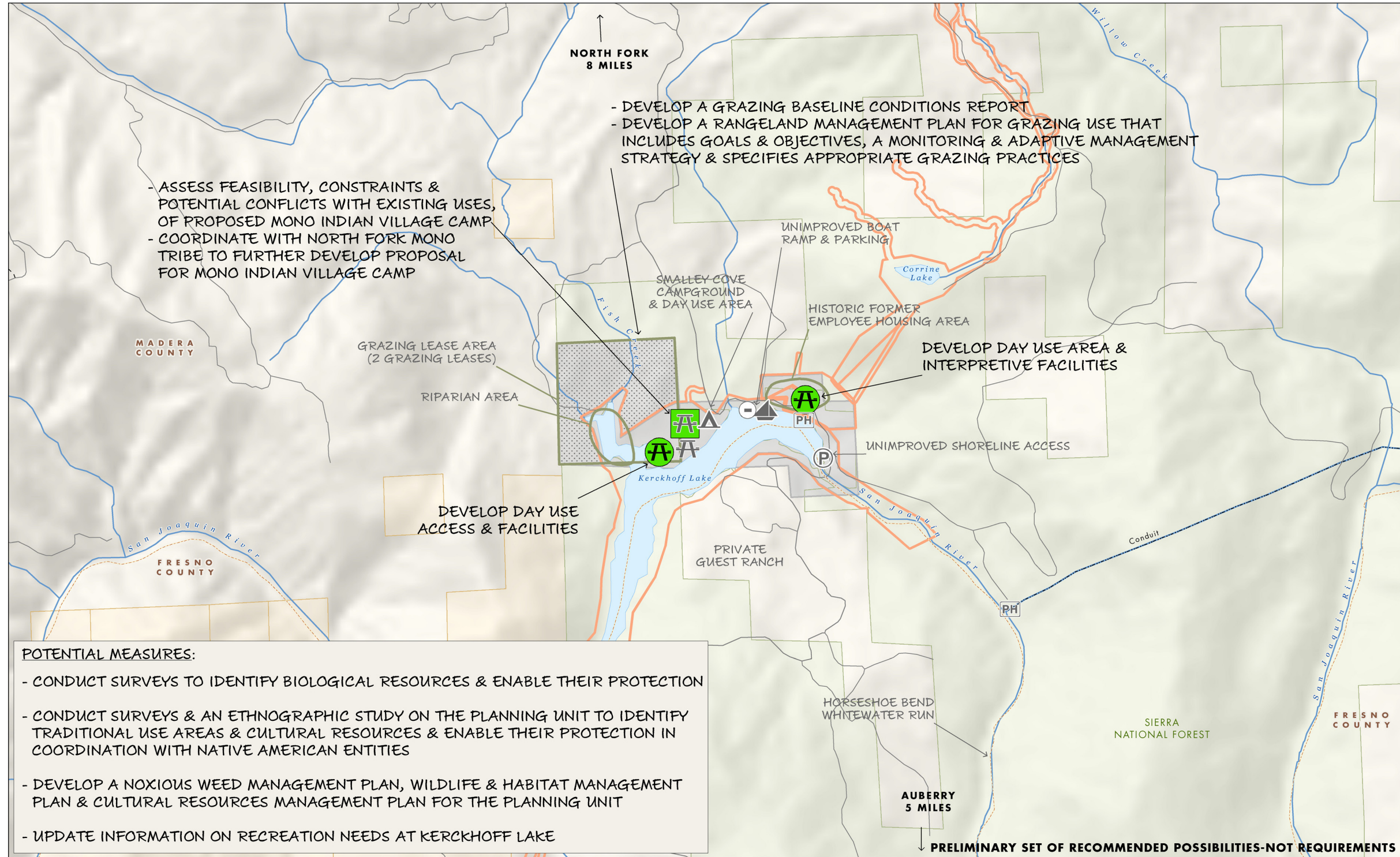
* This is a set of recommended possibilities for the preservation and enhancement of BPV's, and is not intended to be a set of requirements for future land management.

** Denotes site specific measure.

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Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit Recommended Concept



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Disposition BIA BLM BOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOD NPS Other/NGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State USFS Federal Wilderness 	Concept Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify Existing Feature New Feature Trail 	Existing Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boat Launch Campground Dam Day Use Feature of Importance Fishing Fish Barrier Dam Gate Lodging Non-Motorized Boating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Powerhouse Private Camp Ranch Trailhead Whitewater Put-In/Take-Out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FERC Boundary Stream / River Canal / Ditch Pipeline Highly Valued Stream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Roads Secondary Roads OHV Roads Trail
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All symbols may not appear on the map

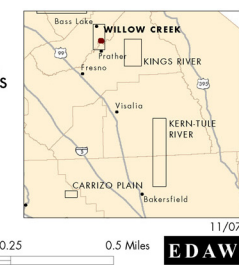


Figure WC-8

Kerckhoff Lake Planning Unit

Preservation of Historic Values

Potential Measure:

- *Coordinate with the North Fork Mono Tribe to further develop proposal for Mono Indian Village Camp at Smalley Cove; following development of a more detailed proposal, assess feasibility and constraints, and potential conflicts with existing uses, of proposed Mono Indian Village Camp.*

The North Fork Mono Tribe has developed a preliminary proposal that outlines several specific cultural and recreational enhancements for the Smalley Cove area, presented under the overall theme of a Mono Indian Village Camp. The Stewardship Council recommends evaluation of the several components of this facility, and more detailed development of the preliminary proposal and examination of opportunities, constraints, and potential conflicts with existing uses.

The proposed facility would provide for both day use and camping, with a covered patio for eating and gathering, food preparation and storage areas, barbeques, toilets and showers, and group campsites with canvas tents. The village would have re-creations of traditional structures built from native materials and with interpretive signs, as well as cooking pits and a campfire area. The structures would include a round house for ceremonies. Recreation-oriented elements include a traditional Native American game area, a multi-purpose ball field and pow-wow ground at the site of the former ball field, an amphitheater for traditional dances and performances, an archery range, and trails. No details of these elements are provided in the proposal.

Given the potential complexity and magnitude of the proposed development, more detailed development of the proposal and assessment would be required. Information to be further developed includes approximate space and infrastructure requirements and preferences; sizes and potential locations of structures and associated improvements; expected amounts, types, and timing of use; and site management and upkeep requirements. Other topics that should be explored include potential phasing of the project, coordination with existing recreation and grazing uses, and other potential Stewardship Council recommended. With availability of a more detailed proposal, assessment would focus on feasibility of the proposal, likely constraints, and potential conflicts with other area uses and values.

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys outside the FERC Project APE to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Although some information on cultural resources in the vicinity of Kerckhoff Lake exists and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been consulted on protection of cultural resources, in accordance with FERC License conditions, it is uncertain if investigations of cultural resources within the planning unit have been completed outside the Area of Potential Effects (APE). No cultural resource management plan has been prepared. (The exception to this is the area surrounding the Wishon Powerhouse, which is addressed in the Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) for the recently relicensed Crane Valley Project.) Given this lack of information and the need to prevent disturbance of cultural resources as a result of new recreation

development, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting a survey to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. Documentation of cultural sites should be coordinated with Native American entities.

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct an ethnographic study of lands the planning unit to identify traditional use areas.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends conducting an ethnographic study of the planning unit to identify traditional use areas, including traditional plant gathering locations. Ethnographic uses of the area by the Mono Tribe are known to occur, but specific information has not been compiled, to the best of our knowledge, particularly outside the APE. Also, the North Fork Mono Tribe's Mono Indian Village Camp proposal contains ideas for restoration focused on ethnobotanical resources. These include plants used for basket-making and other traditional skills and plants, fish, and shellfish used for food. The ethnographic study should be coordinated with Native American entities.

Potential Measures:

- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

The results of the recommended cultural resource surveys and ethnographic study would be used to develop a cultural resources management plan to ensure that cultural resources are adequately protected. The plan would include appropriate measures for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of cultural resources (archeological and historical), and traditional use areas. Treatment measures could include avoidance, specific protective measures (e.g., fencing), site monitoring, and methods to preserve, restore, or enhance cultural resource values through conservation easements, management agreements, or through public interpretation and education programs. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be coordinated with Native American entities.

Outdoor Recreation

Currently, reservoir conditions and the presence of Native American cultural resources act as constraints on the potential for additional recreational use of the planning unit. However, the area may be underutilized. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends small-scale recreation enhancements that make greater use of two distinctive and relatively unused sites whose use would not be dependant on reservoir conditions and would avoid sensitive cultural resources.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop minimal day use access and facilities on the east side of Smalley Cove.*

Opportunities exist for wildlife watching, fishing, picnicking, and canoeing and kayaking on Smalley Cove within the western parcel of the planning unit. The riparian and marsh habitat and relative quiet and seclusion of the cove area contribute to its attractiveness for these activities, and the calm water is more conducive to non-motorized boating than the main body of the lake. Visitors to the Smalley Cove recreation area may be unaware that the cove is just a short walk

(less than a quarter mile) from the existing developed area, as it is not visible from or depicted on signs or maps at the recreation area. This distance would not preclude hand carrying or dolly transport of car-top boats. Boaters could also launch from the upstream unpaved ramp, although strong currents might prevent boaters from returning to the same location to take-out, requiring a carry-out to the Smalley Cove recreation area.

Recognizing these opportunities, a new day use facility at Smalley Cove is recommended to better enable use of the cove and surrounding shoreline area for activities that would be enhanced by the quiet and attractive setting and the calm waters of the cove. Components of this development would include a formalized trail route using existing vehicle tracks (used by grazing lessees), addition of a few picnic tables and grills and limited site hardening, installation of a portable toilet nearby where it can be easily serviced, and a small dock to facilitate canoeing and kayaking and prevent shoreline impacts, if needed. Signage at the existing parking areas at the Smalley Cove recreation area would provide a map to the new site.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop day use and interpretive facilities on hillside lands overlooking Wishon Powerhouse.*

Development of the site on the hillside above the Wishon Powerhouse would focus on interpretive elements with modest day use recreation development that takes advantage of several historic resources at the site and within view. The interpretive potential is embodied in several area features: the surviving remnants of an employee community on the hillside (e.g., rock walls and stairs), built by a predecessor to PG&E in the early 1900s; a view of the original San Joaquin #1 Powerhouse (built in 1896, and burned in the 1980s) and the existing Wishon Powerhouse (built in 1910); and a view of the steep-sided river canyon where it enters the lake and where a series of bridges were built during the hydropower development period, including a wooden suspension bridge lost to a flood. All of these features are part of the pioneering hydropower development of the region at a time when the area was quite remote, accessible only by a long wagon trip on dirt roads from Fresno. The interpretive information that would be the focus of the site would make use of historical information and photographs, available from organizations such as the Central Sierra Historical Society and the Eastern Fresno County Historical Society. Historical photographs are available depicting the area's features as they existed 80-100 years ago, which add to the interpretive potential.

The day use facility at this location would provide basic amenities such as shaded picnic sites, parking, and vault toilets, combined with a substantial interpretive kiosk or signage. Access to the site could potentially use the existing gated road, pending evaluation for safe ingress and egress where the road meets County Road 222. Additional evaluation of potential constraints would be required, including possible safety hazards associated with remnants of the employee village on the site and noise from the Wishon Powerhouse.

Both of the proposed day use recreation enhancements might address the relative scarcity of developed outdoor recreation opportunities in the local communities. The planning unit is situated just a few minutes drive from the communities of Auberry and North Fork, and current recreation use is primarily by local residents. Interpretive components focused on the more than a century-old development of hydropower in the area would provide information currently lacking related to this important aspect of local history.

Potential Measure:

- *Update information on recreation needs at Kerckhoff Lake.*

PG&E filed the original Recreation Plan (Exhibit R) for Kerckhoff Reservoir with FERC in 1977. Some updates to the plan occurred in the 1980s, and FERC has been informed of more recent improvements related to the addition of an on-site caretaker. Some changes have occurred in recreation use at Kerckhoff Lake, such as the closure of the baseball diamond and the advent of personal watercraft as the primary type of boating activity on the lake. Recreation needs and demands may also have changed. Due to these factors and a local tribe's proposal for new facilities, the Stewardship Council recommends updating the existing recreation information prior to development of specific plans for the two new recommended day use areas and, if the proposal moves forward to development, the Mono Indian Village Camp. The update should focus on an evaluation of recreation needs, including ADA facilities and law enforcement, which entails coordination with both Madera and Fresno Counties.

It is not yet known if the proposed Mono Indian Village Camp and the day use area above Wishon Powerhouse would be entirely within the FERC boundaries. Facilities or portions of facilities outside the FERC boundaries would not be under FERC jurisdiction; therefore, a companion to the FERC-jurisdictional recreation plan addressing areas outside the FERC boundary might be required. Alternatively, the FERC boundary could be adjusted in consultation with FERC to include all newly developed recreation sites.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Potential Measure:

- *Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*

As is the case for cultural resources, little information is available regarding terrestrial and aquatic resources within the planning unit. The wetland, riparian, oak woodland, and grassland habitats within the planning unit likely provide for a variety of species. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends that habitat enhancement within the planning unit begin with filling this data gap by conducting surveys to identify biological resources and provide needed information for future management. The potential for restoration of ethnobotanical resources and habitat suggested by the North Fork Mono Tribe as part of the Mono Indian Village Camp proposal would be a focus of biological surveys.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit.*

No information is available on noxious weeds that may occur in the planning unit. However, both the recreation use and grazing activity on the planning unit have the potential to spread noxious weeds throughout the area. Grazing may also, however, help control noxious weeds. Currently, there is no noxious weed management plan for the area, although the plan that will be developed as a result of FERC relicensing of the Crane Valley Project would be expected to address the portion of that project area surrounding the Wishon Powerhouse. To protect native habitat and plants, ethnographic plants, and forage in the grazing lease areas, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit, borrowing from the Crane Valley Project plan where appropriate. The noxious weed

management plan should be developed in conjunction with the wildlife and habitat and rangeland management plans.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit.*

The Stewardship Council recommends using the biological resource survey data to create a wildlife and habitat management plan. The planning unit may contain habitat for special status species, and the wetland habitat of Smalley Cove has been highlighted as particularly valuable. Once surveys are completed, potential habitat enhancements and restoration opportunities can be identified and developed into a comprehensive plan describing goals and objectives for habitat and species, as well as measures to enhance and protect habitat for both plant and wildlife species. Monitoring of species and habitats would also be developed as a component of the plan. The wildlife and habitat management plan should be developed in conjunction with the noxious weed and rangeland management plans.

Agricultural Uses

The Stewardship Council recommends continuing the current grazing operations on the lands surrounding Smalley Cove. This is in recognition of the importance of the leases in maintaining the viability of the grazing operations, which also use Federal and private lands in the area. The supposition in this continuance is that the proposed recreation and cultural enhancements in the Smalley Cove recreation area, and at Smalley Cove, would not conflict with grazing use of the lease areas. Coordination with the lessees, particularly regarding the 20-acre lease area on the east side of Smalley Cove and the area surrounding the Smalley Cove recreation area entrance road, which is associated with the 127-acre lease area, would be necessary to further explore any new uses or development of the planning unit.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement.*

It is unknown if a range assessment has been done on the planning unit, or if grazing practices have been evaluated. An assessment of grazing practices is needed to ensure that key habitats, such as riparian areas, are not degraded. Some evidence of use by cattle of shoreline areas at Smalley Cove was observed during a site visit, although impacts, such as shoreline erosion, appeared to be minor. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement. This report would help determine appropriate grazing practices, regime, and management.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a rangeland management plan for grazing use that includes goals and objectives and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing practices that address soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management, and habitat protection.*

Once the recommended baseline conditions report is completed, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a rangeland management plan for grazing use that includes goals and objectives, and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing practices that may address topics including soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management, habitat protection, and cultural resources management. This plan would ensure that grazing use within the planning unit meets Stewardship Council policy for agricultural use on Watershed Lands. To coordinate potential habitat and recreation enhancements with grazing uses, the rangeland management plan should be developed in conjunction with the wildlife and habitat enhancement plan, noxious weed management plan, and evaluation of recommended recreation enhancements to ensure consistency and complementary actions.

Open Space

Potential Measure:

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

The Stewardship Council recommends preserving open space through the application of conservation easements. There appears to be little threat of development at present. However, open space values, which enhance the recreation setting and coincide with habitat values within the planning unit, would be protected with conservation easements. This would ensure the long-term preservation of aesthetic values enjoyed by visitors and travelers in the area.

Sustainable Forestry

None recommended.