

FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

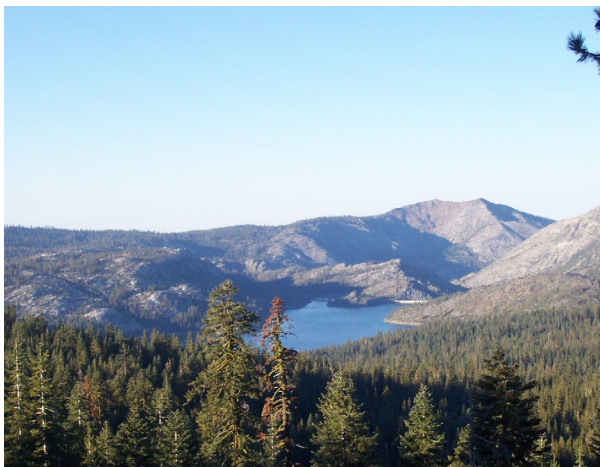
Yuba-Bear River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

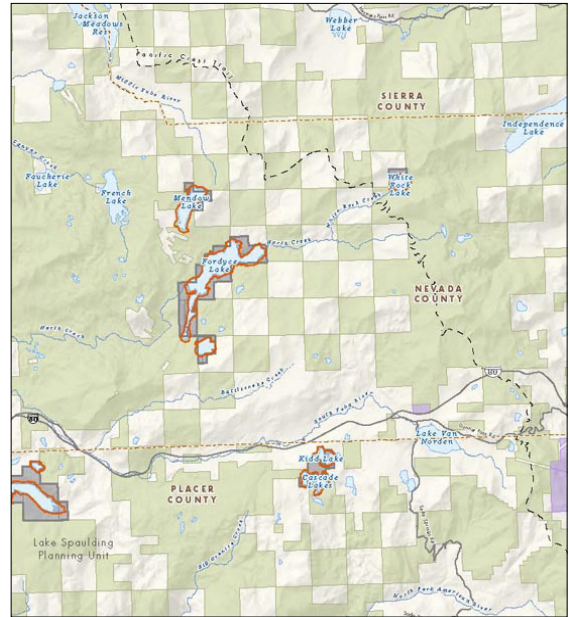
Overview

- Scenic, high elevation reservoirs adjacent to the Tahoe National Forest with important biological and recreation resources
- 2,279 acres in Nevada and Placer Counties; 1,157 acres outside FERC boundary and 1,122 acres inside FERC boundary
- Drum-Spaulding Project (FERC #2310); License expires in 2013, relicensing expected to begin in 2007

As shown in Figure YB-1, the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit provides outdoor recreation and important wildlife habitat in the remote, upper elevations of the northern Sierra Nevada. With an elevation range of 6,200 to 7,800 feet, the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit is located in Nevada and Placer Counties 15 miles west of Truckee. The planning unit consists of six PG&E reservoirs and surrounding lands, which form the headwaters region of the FERC Drum-Spaulding Project and are utilized by Nevada and Placer Counties for both domestic and agricultural uses. The planning unit contains 21 parcels and is



Fordyce Reservoir



Fordyce Lake Planning Unit
Nevada & Placer Counties



surrounded by a checkerboard mixture of private lands and USFS lands of the Tahoe National Forest. One PG&E maintenance cabin is located just west of Fordyce Lake.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

The Fordyce Lake Planning Unit provides a diverse range of high elevation wildlife and plant habitats. Minimal biological information is available for this planning unit; however, American marten, Pacific fisher, mountain yellow-legged frog, and California wolverine, all special status species, have been found. In addition, willow flycatchers are known to breed in the region, particularly at Independence Lake, Van Norden (formerly Lake Van Norden), and Webber Lake, and California spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs) are mapped within four miles of the planning unit. There is potential for late successional forests within and adjacent to the parcels, and special status plant species found in the area include fell-fields claytonia, starved daisy, and Donner Pass buckwheat.

Fordyce Lake Planning Unit

Existing Conditions

- PG&E Lands Preliminary Designated for Retention
 - PG&E Lands Preliminary Designated for Disposition
 - BIA
 - BLM
 - BOR
 - DOD
 - NPS
 - Other/NGO
 - State
 - USFS
 - Federal Wilderness
 -  Boat Launch
 -  Campground
 -  Dam
 -  Day Use
 -  Feature of Importance
 -  Fishing
 -  Fish Barrier Dam
 -  Gate
 -  Lodging
 -  Non-Motorized Boating
 -  Parking
 -  Powerhouse
 -  Private Camp
 -  Ranch
 -  Trailhead
 -  Whitewater Put-In/Take-Out
 -  FERC Boundary
 -  Stream / River
 -  Canal / Ditch
 -  Pipeline
 -  Highly Valued Stream
 -  Primary Roads
 -  Secondary Roads
 -  OHV Roads
 -  Trail
- All symbols may not appear on the map

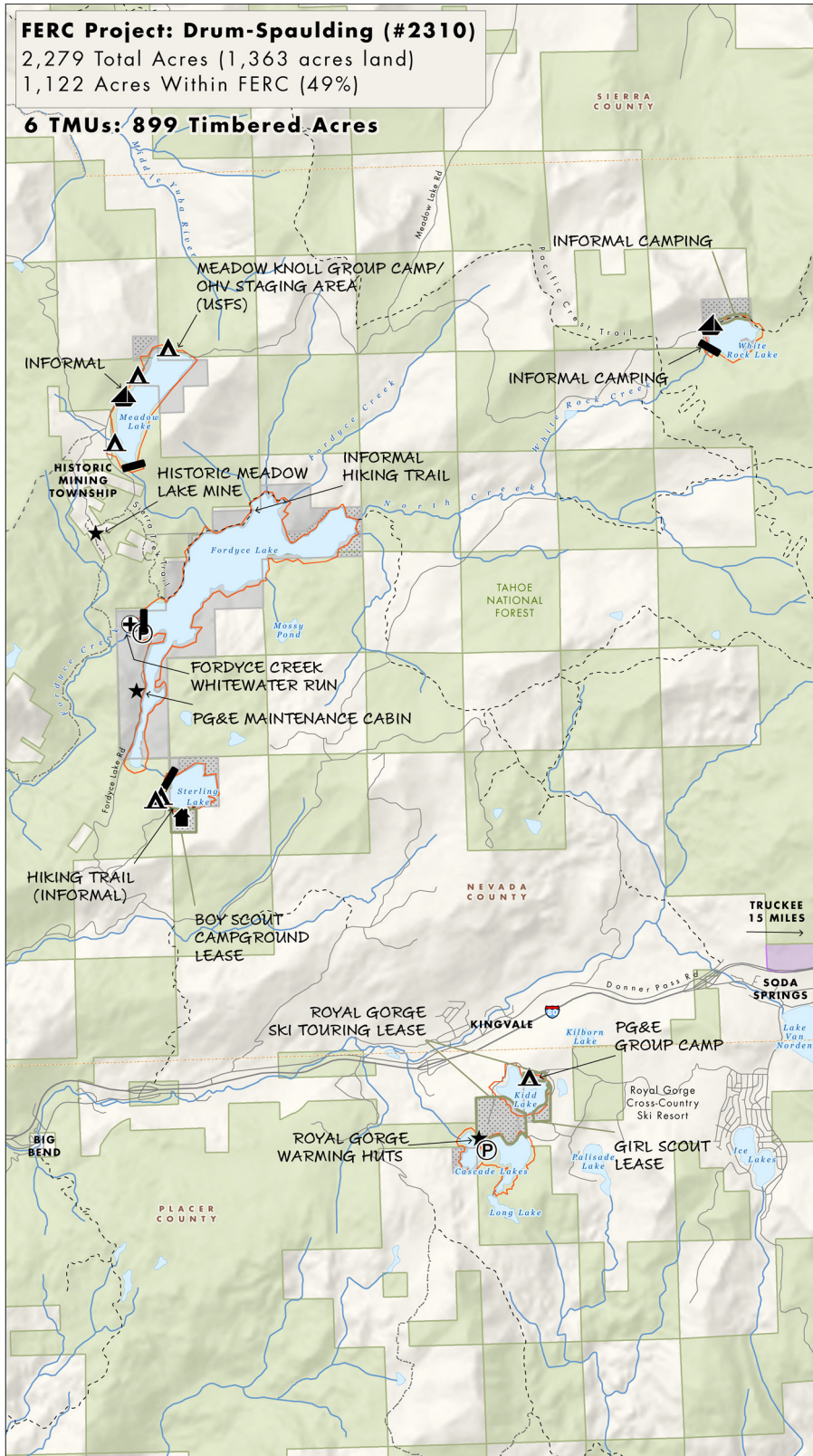


Figure YB-1

FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

Yuba-Bear River Watershed

Open Space

The open space values of the planning unit are represented in forests and barren rock covered mountain slopes, which characterize the Sierra Nevada. The lands are primarily managed for watershed value and offer public access and year-round recreation opportunities in a minimally developed setting.

Outdoor Recreation

Recreation opportunities at the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit include camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing, OHV use, and boating. A few formal recreation facilities are located on PG&E lands, and a number of developed campgrounds, day use areas, and boat ramps are located on surrounding USFS land, operated by PG&E.

During the summer months, recreation is concentrated at Sterling Lake and Kidd Lake. Sterling Lake is accessible from Interstate 80 and is a popular camping and fishing destination. South of Interstate 80, Kidd and Cascade Lakes provide camping, non-motorized boating, and hiking, as well as cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

Fordyce Lake, the largest of the six reservoirs, is accessed by a rough four-wheel drive road and is a popular fishing destination; however, there are no formal recreation facilities. An informal whitewater boat put-in for the 12-mile Fordyce Creek Run (Class IV/V) is located about 1/8 of a mile below the Fordyce Dam. An OHV road parallels Fordyce Creek for much of its length and provides fishing and hiking opportunities. In addition, there is an informal trail along the northern shoreline of Fordyce Lake.

In the northern part of the planning unit, Meadow Lake is a popular fishing destination, which also offers camping at three USFS campgrounds, including the Meadow Knoll Group Camp. Jeep activity is common in this area. This group camp was originally built as the staging area for the annual Sierra Trek, a four-wheel-drive event

that attracts over 1,000 participants. During this event, vehicles travel from the Meadow Knoll Group Camp along designated OHV trails and USFS roads to Fordyce Lake, crossing Fordyce Creek multiple times.

About five miles to the east, White Rock Lake is a remote reservoir with difficult road access located near the Pacific Crest Trail and the Mt. Lola Trail. At an elevation of 7,800 feet, this scenic reservoir has two dispersed shoreline camping areas and one informal boat launch.

PG&E manages three recreation leases within the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit, including two summer camps along Sterling and Kidd Lakes, which include shoreline and boating access, trails, and various recreation and sleeping facilities, as well as a cross-country ski resort.

Forest Resources

The Fordyce Lake Planning Unit is adjacent to the Tahoe National Forest and private timber lands, and contains six PG&E Timber Management Units (TMUs) totaling 899 timbered acres. Forest resources are primarily mixed conifer stands at lower elevations, transitioning into lodgepole pine/fir forest, and sub-alpine forest stands at higher elevations. Two of the TMUs, Meadow Lake and Sterling Lake, are currently managed for Multiple-Uses, which allows for sustained timber production as an important management component, while at the same time recognizing that protection and uses of other resources and facilities may exclude sustained timber harvesting as the best use of



Mariposa lilies

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Cross-county skiing these forests. The remaining TMUs are managed for Salvage only, which allows harvesting following insect attack or a catastrophic event.

Agricultural Uses

Grazing does not occur in the planning unit; however, it does occur on adjacent USFS grazing allotments (i.e., two active allotments and one vacant allotment). Lands around Meadow Lake and Fordyce Lake abut the unfenced active allotments of English and Canyon Creek. Sterling Lake, Kidd Lake, and Cascade Lakes abut the vacant Devils Peak allotment. This 28,000-acre historic sheep grazing allotment has not had a permittee in almost 20 years due to a decline in sheep grazing, remote location, steep terrain, and lack of forage.

Historic Resources

The Washoe are historic inhabitants of the area, and evidence of Native American settlement is present in the Fordyce Lake area. Five archeological sites (four historic and one prehistoric) have been found within the FERC boundary. In addition, several petroglyphs are found in the area, and the non-profit group, Friends of Sierra Rock Art, has worked in coordination with the USFS to protect these prehistoric sites from vandalism.

The Meadow Lake area in particular is known for its valuable historic and prehistoric resources. The historic mining town of Meadow Lake

Township is located near the planning unit; while no structures from the township have survived, some remnant mining equipment and features may remain in the area.

Stewardship Council Recommendations

The Stewardship Council recommends that the land and land uses at the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit be preserved and enhanced by focusing on biological and cultural resource values in this scenic location in the Sierra Nevada. In presenting the Recommended Concept provided here, our objective is to preserve and enhance the legacy of Native Americans and early pioneers in the area as well as important plant and wildlife resources. In addition, low-intensity recreation opportunities will be enhanced in this primitive, remote location. We recommend that this effort be conducted in close coordination with PG&E and the upcoming FERC relicensing efforts for the area.

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

As shown on Table YB-1, the Stewardship Council has identified a number of preservation and/or enhancement measures that may contribute to the conservation management program for the Fordyce 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.

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Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

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

The Fordyce Lake Planning Unit offers a variety of habitat for both plants and wildlife, including many special status 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 relicensing study area where little information is currently available or will be provided by relicensing studies). 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. The Stewardship Council encourages close coordination with the USFS and other resource-focused organizations working in the region, and that all planning be considered in conjunction with fuels, forest, and recreation management plans and future FERC license required plans.

Open Space

Objective: Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources, the wilderness character of the region, and continued low-intensity recreation experiences.

The Fordyce Lake Planning Unit is remote in nature and located adjacent to the Tahoe National Forest. This concept would preserve open space by limiting the construction of human-made features to low impact recreation improvements, 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 required to maintain scenic qualities in this important, high elevation setting.



Paintbrush and sulfur buckwheat

Outdoor Recreation

Objective: Enhance recreational facilities in order to provide additional public access and enhance the recreation experience.

Recreation opportunities in this remote, primitive setting are varied and include camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing, OHV use, and boating. Recreation is available year-round and includes sites with paved roads and those which require OHV vehicles for access. As shown in Figure YB-2, the Stewardship Council looks to enhance these opportunities by recommending additional facilities and monitoring to enhance the recreation setting. We recommend enhancements focused on improving OHV, directional, and safety signage; exploring the potential to expand and integrate the non-motorized trail network; monitoring and assessing OHV needs; and collecting trash and debris. We recommend these enhancements be considered in close cooperation with PG&E as well as upcoming FERC relicensing efforts and related recreation planning.

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Yuba-Bear River Watershed

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 majority of the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit is managed for Salvage harvest, and the remainder is managed for Multiple-Uses. The Stewardship Council recommends that future care and management of the property include developing a long-term vision for forest management in the area which addresses silvicultural practices, holistic watershed management, fuels management, and fire management and response. The fuels, fire management and response, and forest management plans should be developed in conjunction the noxious weed and wildlife and habitat management plans, as well as future FERC license required plans. We expect that all of these plans would be developed in coordination with management and practices of the USFS and Placer and Nevada Counties, as appropriate.

Agricultural Uses

Objective: Identify potential grazing opportunities in order to enhance agricultural resources and related economic benefits.



Azure penstemon

Two active grazing allotments are found on lands adjacent to the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit. The Stewardship Council looks to enhance agricultural opportunities and associated important economic uses as part of the long-term management of the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit. To support this effort, we recommend evaluating grazing potential in coordination with adjacent USFS allotments. If grazing is determined to be feasible in the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a rangeland management plan.

Preservation of Historic Values

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

Native Americans and early California pioneers were once inhabitants of the area, and various cultural resources have been found within the planning unit. 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 Fordyce Lake (particularly outside the relicensing study area where less information is available or will be provided by relicensing studies), and that appropriate management plans be developed and implemented. Throughout this effort, the Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with Native American entities, as well as PG&E and upcoming FERC relicensing efforts.

Table YB-1 Objectives to Preserve and/or Enhance – Recommended Concept

Planning Unit Objective: Preserve and enhance biological and cultural resources, enhance the recreation experience and sustainable forestry management, and evaluate the potential for grazing opportunities.		
Beneficial Public Value	Objective	Potential Measures to Preserve and/or Enhance BPVs – Not Requirements*
Protection of the Natural Habitat of Fish, Wildlife, and Plants	Preserve and enhance habitat in order to protect special biological resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct surveys outside the relicensing study area to identify biological resources and enable their protection. • Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan in coordination with adjacent landowners. • Develop a noxious weed management plan in coordination with noxious weed abatement efforts. • Identify and disclose unauthorized uses and develop strategies to address future management and/or eradication.
Preservation of Open Space	Preserve open space in order to protect natural and cultural resources, the wilderness character of the region, and continued low-intensity recreation experiences.	<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 recreation facilities in order to provide additional public access and enhance the recreation experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Tahoe National Forest to monitor OHV use and assess need for additional OHV trails in the vicinity. • Improve OHV trail signage to promote navigation and proper trail use. • Explore the potential to expand and integrate the non-motorized trail network with surrounding USFS lands. • Install additional directional and safety signage for Sterling and Fordyce Lakes.** • Collect trash and debris from Fordyce Lake and any other locations determined necessary.**
Sustainable Forestry	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate existing timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate. • Develop a forest management plan for the planning unit to promote natural forest development and structural and physical diversity in forests for long-term ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits. • Develop a fuels management plan to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard. • Develop a fire management and response plan in coordination with Nevada and Placer Counties and the USFS.
Agricultural Uses	Identify potential grazing opportunities in order to enhance agricultural resources and related economic benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the potential for grazing opportunities within the planning unit, in coordination with adjacent USFS grazing operations.
Preservation of Historic Values	Identify and manage cultural resources in order to ensure their protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect cultural sites with landscape measures, and signage, and restrict or formalize recreation use. • Conduct surveys outside the relicensing study area to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. • Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit. • Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.

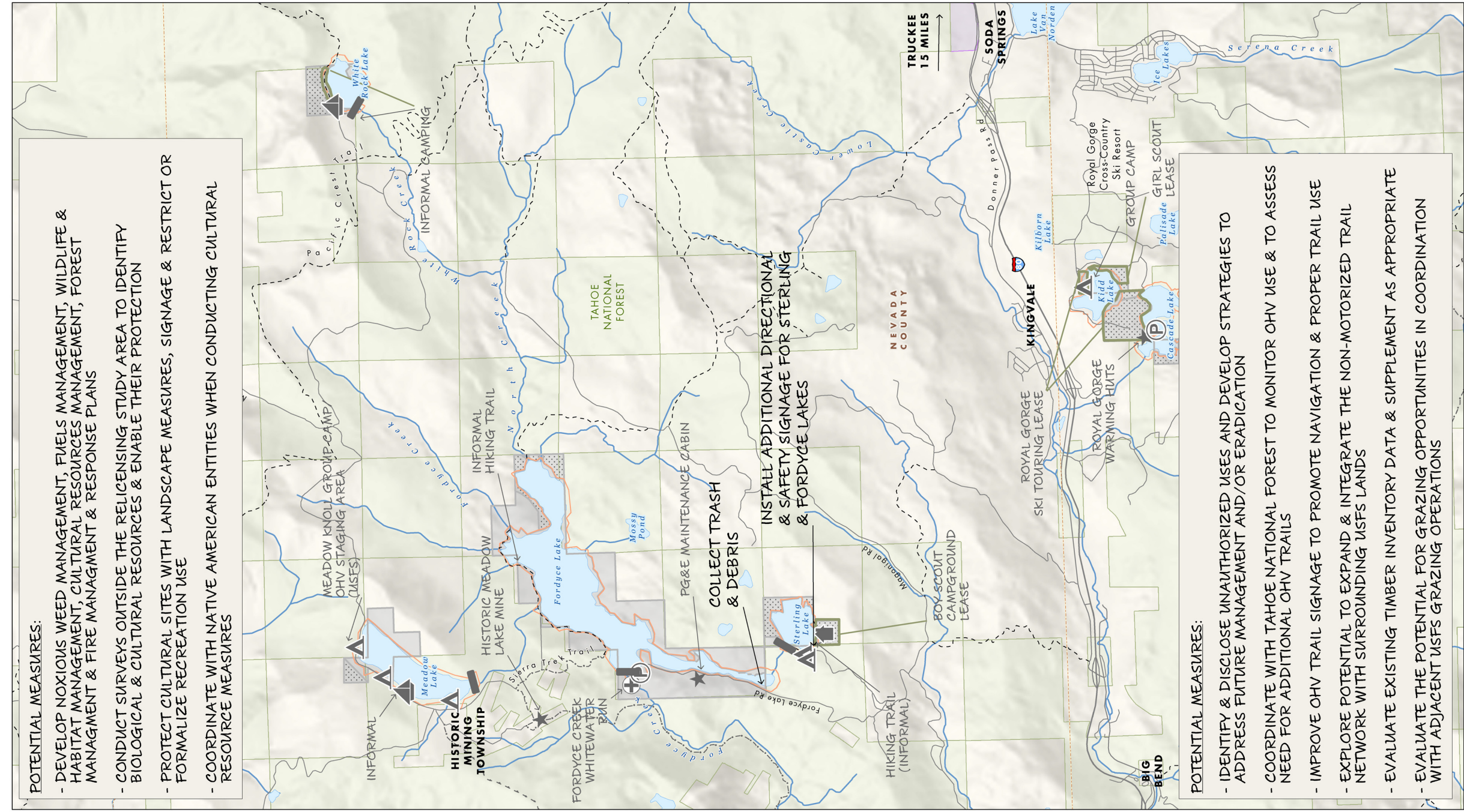
* This is a set of recommended possibilities for the preservation and enhancement of BPV's, and is not intended to be a set of requirements for future land management.

** Denotes site specific measure.

Fordyce Lake Planning Unit Recommended Concept



Figure YB-2



Fordyce Lake Planning Unit

The Stewardship Council stresses close cooperation with Nevada Irrigation District (NID) and the upcoming relicensing effort to ensure consistency with proposed studies and subsequent actions to avoid any duplication of efforts. Given the range of biological, recreation, and cultural studies to be conducted and the study area boundaries, it is expected that most information needs on lands inside the FERC boundary will be met. Recommended additional study efforts or assessments are intended to provide only the necessary information that may not be obtained by the relicensing studies.

Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

Potential Measures:

- *Conduct surveys outside the relicensing study area to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan in coordination with adjacent landowners.*
- *Identify and disclose unauthorized uses and develop strategies to address future management and/or eradication.*

The Stewardship Council recommends promoting the protection and enhancement of habitat values by conducting surveys outside the FERC relicensing study area to identify biological resources and enable their protection. The planning unit offers a diverse range of wildlife and plant habitat values. Development pressures are present in the region due to the checkerboard of public and private lands surrounding the Watershed Lands. The planning unit's high elevation, rocky landscape provides habitat with a high potential for special status species. Three forest carnivores have been documented in the region and may possibly still occur within the region. These species are sensitive to habitat loss and fragmentation (primarily late successional habitat with open meadow/riparian areas), and disturbance from recreation and/or human presence. Therefore, a wildlife and habitat management plan would be developed. This plan would be coordinated with adjacent landowners such as the USFS to ensure consistent management. Wildlife corridors would be identified and enhanced through the development of buffers to enhance species recovery and reduce the potential impact of habitat fragmentation. Consistent with the forest management plan, harvesting would not occur in areas determined critical and important for special status species or sensitive habitats, such as late successional forest.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan in coordination with noxious weed abatement efforts.*

An inventory of noxious weeds throughout the planning unit would be performed to determine the threat of invasive species. As noxious weeds have been identified in the planning unit, a noxious weed management plan would be developed to eradicate and control them. This plan would be coordinated with the proposed noxious weed abatement effort in Placer and Nevada Counties.

Open Space

Potential Measure:

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

The Stewardship Council recommends preserving open space values through permanent conservation easements. Minimal development is recommended, and the aesthetic quality of the scenic lakes and forests throughout the planning unit would be protected.

Outdoor Recreation

Potential Measures:

- *Explore the potential to expand and integrate the non-motorized trail network with surrounding USFS lands.*
- *Install additional directional and safety signage for Sterling and Fordyce Lakes.*

The recreation component of the recommendations focuses on assessing recreation opportunities in the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit.¹ Potential recreation improvements would include the expansion and connection of trails throughout the planning unit in coordination with the USFS. Many trails already exist in the area, and right-of-way easements through PG&E lands may be necessary to expand the trail network. Difficult road access limits recreation use in portions of the planning unit. In fact, White Rock and Fordyce Lakes are only accessible by long and rugged roads. Improved directional signage would be placed on Fordyce Lake Road to inform motorists of the recreation opportunities at Sterling and Fordyce Lakes. Past Sterling Lake, signs to Fordyce Lake would warn that passenger vehicles are not recommended. This signage would promote safe public use within these areas. All recreation measures should be coordinated with relicensing efforts and any future FERC license required measures and plans.

Potential Measures:

- *Coordinate with the Tahoe National Forest to monitor OHV use and assess the need for additional OHV trails in the vicinity.*
- *Collect trash and debris from Fordyce Lake and any other locations determined necessary.*
- *Improve OHV trail signage to promote navigation and proper trail use.*

The Fordyce Lake area is a popular OHV destination with a combination of formalized and unauthorized OHV trails. The Stewardship Council recommends close coordination with the Tahoe National Forest to monitor OHV use and assess the need for additional OHV trails in the vicinity. OHV use can in some cases degrade resources through increased erosion, cultural site disturbance, habitat and wildlife disturbance, and debris. The Stewardship Council recommends assessing historic and biological resource impacts from OHV use. Trash and debris would be collected around Fordyce Lake and any other locations determined necessary. Through coordination efforts, proper signage and interpretive features would be installed to promote proper trail use and mark authorized OHV routes and staging areas, including Meadow Knoll and Indian Springs. Erosion prevention and habitat protection measures, such as OHV barriers and signage, would be installed in areas that have experienced impacts. Any impact or change to the

OHV trail networks would be coordinated with adjacent landowners. The Stewardship Council also recommends identifying and disclosing unauthorized uses and develop strategies to address future management and/or eradication.

Sustainable Forestry

Potential Measures:

- *Evaluate existing timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate.*
- *Develop a forest management plan for the planning unit to promote natural forest development and structural and physical diversity in forests for long-term ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits.*

The Fordyce Lake Planning Unit has fairly low value timber resources, consisting primarily of lodgepole pine/fir forest, shrub, and sub-alpine forest. The Stewardship Council recommends developing a forest management plan through the evaluation of existing forest inventory data and supplemental information, when appropriate. This baseline information would be used to determine appropriate forest management practices as well as forest monitoring and timber extraction goals. In addition to supporting natural forest development, the forest management plan would promote holistic watershed management, compatible with enhancements in the Stewardship Council recommendations such as the wildlife and habitat management plan and the noxious weeds management plan to ensure consistent and complementary actions. Additionally, snags and downed woody debris would be maintained in forest stands of Timber Management Units (TMUs) under the Salvage management prescription for wildlife habitat and forest regeneration when not a safety, fire, or disease hazard.

Potential Measure:

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

Furthermore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fuels management plan to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard throughout the planning unit. Lands have been historically fire-suppressed, and a fuels management plan would aid in the prevention of high intensity fires, promote forest structure and composition, as well as foster natural regeneration in these forests. It should be noted that the 2001 Gap Fire was a catastrophic, stand-replacing fire that destroyed the majority of mature forests on PG&E lands located southwest of the planning unit and along the Interstate 80 corridor. Currently, the USFS is managing adjacent lands for fire management to reduce fire hazard and promote wildlife habitat, recreation, and visual quality. Coordination with USFS management and adjacent landowners would foster a holistic approach to the forest, habitat, and recreation resources in this area.

Potential Measure:

- *Develop a fire management and response plan in coordination with Nevada and Placer Counties and the USFS.*

Additionally, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fire management and response plan for the planning unit to ensure fire preparedness. The fire management and response plan would be developed in coordination with Nevada and Placer Counties and the USFS. This plan

would include fire prevention measures designed to promote public awareness about fire danger as well as provide the provisions and staff for an appropriate response to fire.

Agricultural Uses

Potential Measure:

- *Evaluate the potential for grazing opportunities within the planning unit, in coordination with adjacent USFS grazing operations.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends investigating the potential for grazing opportunities within the planning unit, in coordination with the adjacent USFS allotments. Currently, adjacent USFS allotments are unfenced, and it is unknown how often, or even if, grazing occurs on PG&E property. If grazing is reintroduced, cultural resource protection measures will be included. The Stewardship Council recommends evaluating the potential for grazing opportunities within the planning unit, in coordination with adjacent grazing operations and USFS allotments.

Preservation of Historic Values

Potential Measures:

- *Protect cultural sites with landscape measures and signage, and restrict or formalize recreation use.*
- *Conduct surveys outside the relicensing study area to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Recommendations promote the protection and discovery of cultural resources in the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit. Due to the prominent Native American and pioneer history in the area, cultural surveys would be performed in areas not previously surveyed, such as areas outside the FERC relicensing study area. These surveys would complement any relicensing studies, which may not include all areas of the planning unit. These surveys would identify cultural resources in the area, and the Stewardship Council recommends avoiding any conflicting use in areas deemed culturally important. Rock art and cultural artifacts have already been identified in the area, and it is likely that additional prehistoric and ethnographic resources have yet to be discovered. Based on the results of cultural resource surveys, a cultural resources management plan would be developed to determine protection measures for cultural and historic sites. Such protection measures could include landscape measures, signage, education, and restricting or formalizing recreation use through the relocation of trails or public access to non-sensitive areas. All cultural resource surveys and protection measures would be conducted in coordination with Native American entities.

Endnote

¹ Relicensing efforts for the Drum-Spaulding Project are expected to begin in 2007 and would likely result in additional recreation studies and an updated Recreation Plan.