

FEE TITLE DONEE RECOMMENDATION FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

The Fordyce Lake planning unit, located in Nevada and Placer Counties, consists of 20 legal parcels encompassing approximately 2,278 acres of land. Approximately 393 acres have been identified by PG&E as lands outside of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) project boundaries and not necessary for current and future utility operations. Therefore, these 393 acres of land have been made available for fee title donation. Stewardship Council staff received and evaluated one land stewardship proposal from the US Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest (USFS).

Based upon evaluation of the proposal as well as the constraints identified for transfer of certain acreage to the USFS, Stewardship Council staff has developed the following recommendation, which has been endorsed by the Watershed Planning Committee (Planning Committee):

USFS (Tahoe National Forest) to become the prospective recipient of fee title to approximately 75 acres available for donation within one parcel (Parcel #775) subject to compliance with all the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment.

The Planning Committee also recommended that the Stewardship Council Board (Board) accept the USFS's proposed Conservation Covenant as providing satisfactory assurance that the parcels recommended for donation to the USFS in the Fordyce Lake planning unit will be managed consistent with the purpose of the Land Conservation Commitment.

A donation to the USFS of fee title to the remaining acres available for donation within this planning unit (318 acres) is not possible due to the provisions of Section 12(b)(4) of the Stipulation relating to the exercise of mandatory conditioning authority by federal agencies under Section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act.

If this recommendation is approved by the Board, PG&E would negotiate the transaction agreements with the USFS, and the Stewardship Council would develop a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (LCCP) for the property. If approved by the Board, a conservation

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").

covenant between the USFS and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, under which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy would monitor the uses on the subject lands, would be established in lieu of a conservation easement in order to protect the beneficial public values of the lands donated to the USFS.

The proposed LCCP would be made available for public review and comment before it is forwarded by the Planning Committee to the Board for its review and approval. Adoption of the LCCP by the Board would be the final step in the Stewardship Council's process.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

a. *Planning Unit Description*

The Fordyce Lake planning unit is located in Nevada and Placer counties, approximately 15 miles west of Truckee. The surrounding properties are a mixture of private land and USFS Tahoe National Forest. The elevation within the planning unit ranges between 6,200 and 7,800 feet.

There are six reservoirs that form the headwaters region of the Drum-Spaulding FERC Project within this planning unit. A variety of public uses are supported by these lands, including camping, fishing, and cross-country skiing. A few formal recreation areas are located within the planning unit as well as several informal recreation areas, such as a trail along the northern shoreline of Fordyce Lake. South of Interstate 80, Kidd and Cascade lakes both provide opportunities for non-motorized boating as well as cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Fordyce Lake is the largest of the reservoirs and is accessed by a rough, four wheel drive road.

PG&E manages recreational licenses including summer camps and a cross-country ski resort. PG&E also manages five Timber Management Units (TMUs), totaling 899 timbered acres, managed under multiple-use and salvage prescriptions.

b. *Description of Parcel 775*

Parcel 775 is located entirely in Nevada County. Parcel 775 is bounded by Sierra Pacific Industries land to the north and west and by USFS land and White Rock Lake to the east and south. The lake itself is managed by the USFS. The parcel has a mix of wooded areas, treeless areas, and montane meadow. The parcel is accessed via State Highway 89, then Henness Pass Road to White Rock Road. At White Rock Road, the road becomes a USFS road, which is a 4WD-only road to the lake. The road that runs along the north side of the lake to the primitive campsites is very steep and rough. The smaller portion of the parcel to the southeast of the lake was previously accessed by a USFS road, but since 2004, USFS has blocked vehicular access to protect environmental resources. This parcel contains limited recreational improvements.

c. *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. The USFS was the only organization to submit an LSP for this planning unit.

In evaluating the LSP, the following factors were considered:

- The potential donee's 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 donee;
- The management objectives for the Fordyce Lake planning unit as set forth in Volume II of the Land Conservation Plan (LCP);
- Public comments received regarding the desired qualifications of potential donees and the future stewardship of the planning unit;
- The requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation; and,
- Other relevant policies, procedures, and goals adopted by the Stewardship Council.

II. EVALUATION

Based on staff's evaluation of the USFS's LSP and follow-up discussions, and in consultation with the Planning Committee the USFS is being recommended to receive a donation of fee title to lands within the Fordyce Lake planning unit as follows, subject to compliance with all of the requirements of the Land Conservation Commitment:

USFS (Tahoe National Forest) as the prospective recipient of fee title to approximately 75 acres available for donation within one parcel (Parcel #775).

A donation to the USFS of fee title to the remaining acres available for donation within this planning unit is not possible due to the provisions of Section 12(b)(4) of the Stipulation relating to the exercise of mandatory conditioning authority by federal agencies under Section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act.

This recommendation is based on a determination that the USFS appears to have sufficient financial and organizational capacity to hold and maintain fee title interests on these lands, and that the addition of these lands to the USFS system would result in the preservation and/or enhancement of the BPVs. Staff's recommendation of the USFS as the best suited donee for fee title to the 75 acres identified in this recommendation is based on the following considerations:

- As the adjacent land owner, the USFS is best suited to achieve consolidated and consistent management of the resources on the PG&E lands recommended for donation. USFS management of the lands would promote biological and physical connectivity, as well as public access and recreational opportunities consistent with adjacent lands.
- The Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan has proposed management goals for the subject lands which reflect the full range of Stewardship Council BPVs for the acreage identified for donation to the USFS.

Staff's evaluation of the agency's LSP is further described below.

a. Donee Organizational Capacity

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

- The USFS is a federal agency within the US Department of Agriculture that manages 193 million acres of public lands. The mission of the USFS is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”
- The USFS manages land adjacent to the parcel recommended for donation to them as part of the Tahoe National Forest. Law, policy, and various regulations govern the management of public lands by the USFS. The Tahoe Forest Land and Resource Management Plan provides direction for the management of cultural, historic, and biological resources within the National Forest.
- The Tahoe National Forest employs approximately 250 permanent employees and 150 additional temporary employees during the peak season. This base of professional, technical and administrative expertise reflects specialties and management functions including, but not limited to, wildlife biology, botany, fuels management, forestry, archeology, hydrology, soils, ecology, range management, recreation, interpretation, and education.

b. Donee Financial Capacity

USFS’s financial capacity was evaluated based on a review of Tahoe National Forest’s operating budget and expenditures for 2011 and 2012. Based on a review of financial statements submitted, the agency continues to spend below budget for both years and demonstrates sufficient funding to own and manage the fee title interests identified for donation within the Fordyce Lake planning unit.

c. Management Objectives

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

The USFS seeks fee title to lands available for donation within the Fordyce Lake planning unit to achieve consolidated, consistent management of the ecological, recreational, cultural, and historical resources. Parcel #775 will be managed primarily for dispersed recreation values. A proposed travel analysis plan would identify opportunities to decommission excess routes and reduce sedimentation. Additionally, the White Rock Lake area contains potentially suitable habitat for willow flycatcher as well as mountain yellow-legged frogs. The Tahoe National Forest proposes to work to improve water quality and riparian habitat to benefit these and other species.

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, and/or costs of enhancements to the beneficial public values on watershed lands. Any enhancement project costs to be funded by the Stewardship Council would be identified in a management and funding agreement to be developed by the Stewardship Council in coordination with USFS, the prospective donee.

e. Requirements of the Settlement and Stipulation

Section 12(b)(4) of the Stipulation provides that the “Parties agree that the Land Conservation Commitment does not expand or limit PG&E’s obligation or the rights of others in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing proceedings or otherwise under Part I of the Federal Power Act (“FPA”). For example, a land disposition that would result in the creation of FPA Section 4(e) authority in PG&E relicensing proceedings would be inconsistent with this provision.” Therefore, the donation of lands to the USFS is conditioned on this Stipulation requirement being satisfied.

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

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

f. Conservation Partners

The permanent protection of the Fordyce Lake planning unit and the future preservation and enhancement of the BPVs may benefit from the participation of land conservation partners. For the purposes of this recommendation, land conservation partners are defined as an organization, other than the prospective fee title donee or conservation easement holder, involved in future activities on the donated lands that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the BPVs. Land conservation partners may be identified in the LSPs submitted by organizations interested in a fee title donation, or during or after the development of the LCCP. Such organizations and activities may be eligible for Stewardship Council funding, depending on the type of organization, proposed activities, availability of funds, and other factors. The USFS collaborates with many agencies and community organizations on land management activities including cultural resource monitoring, technical expertise, habitat restoration, noxious weed eradication, and trail maintenance and construction.

Staff would work with USFS as the prospective organization recommended for donation of fee title to evaluate opportunities for land conservation partners. The results of this effort may be reflected in the LCCP or via enhancement projects funded after fee title is transferred to the USFS.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

IV. NEXT STEPS

If the Board adopts this recommendation on November 14, 2013, staff would invite the USFS to negotiate specific terms of the transactions with PG&E. Adoption of the LCCP by the Board would be the final step in the Stewardship Council's process for selecting donees. The proposed LCCP would be made available for public review and comment before it is approved by the Board.

ATTACHMENTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

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

Fordyce Lake Planning Unit

The Fordyce Lake Planning Unit report located in LCP Volume II can be found at this link:

http://lcp.stewardshipcouncil.org/Vol_2/pdf/25_1_FordyceLakeText.pdf

The aerial map to the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit can be found at this link:

http://www.stewardshipcouncil.org/maps/Fordyce_Lake_aerial_mapbook_reduced.pdf

The existing conditions maps to the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit can be found at this link:

http://www.stewardshipcouncil.org/maps/Fordyce_Lake_ex_mapbook_reduced.pdf



Fordyce Lake Planning Unit

Organizations That Submitted a Statement of Qualifications for Fee-Title Interests

Bureau of Land Management
Bear Yuba Land Trust (Formerly Nevada County Land Trust)
Placer County Water Agency
Placer Land Trust
San Joaquin County Office of Education
United States Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest
University of California

SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORDYCE LAKE 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. 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. During public review of Volumes I and II of the LCP, one entity submitted comments concerning the Fordyce Lake planning unit.

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

- Recommendation that reference to hiking trails, be modified to say simply “trails” or “non-motorized trails.”

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING FOR THE FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

A public information meeting was hosted by the Stewardship Council on April 14, 2011 at the Auburn Parks and Recreation District Community Center in Auburn, California. The meeting concerned the following six planning units: Bear River, Chili Bar, Fordyce Lake, Lake Spaulding, Lower Drum, and Narrows. A total of 58 people attended and participated in the meeting, representing a wide variety of interests, including local and federal governments, community organizations, and community members. The meeting was advertised via an e-mail sent to contacts in our database, an announcement posted on the Stewardship Council’s web site, a press release in the local newspaper, and a postcard sent to all landowners on record that reside within one mile of any PG&E parcel associated with the six planning units that were the focus of the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was to: (1) provide a review and update on the Stewardship Council’s Land Conservation Program; and, (2) solicit additional public input on future stewardship of the six planning units. During the meeting, participants were invited to ask questions and provide comments on the six planning units. Stations were set up with maps, other pertinent information, and easels with blank paper. Below is a summary of comments related to the Fordyce Lake planning unit that were recorded on the easels and provided on comment cards.

Fordyce Lake

- Incorporate any donated lands into adjacent Wilderness Areas as applicable
- Support for the lands available for donation to be transferred to the US Forest Service
- Coordinate enhancements with the Overland Emigrant Trail Project on Parcels 792 and 793

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED

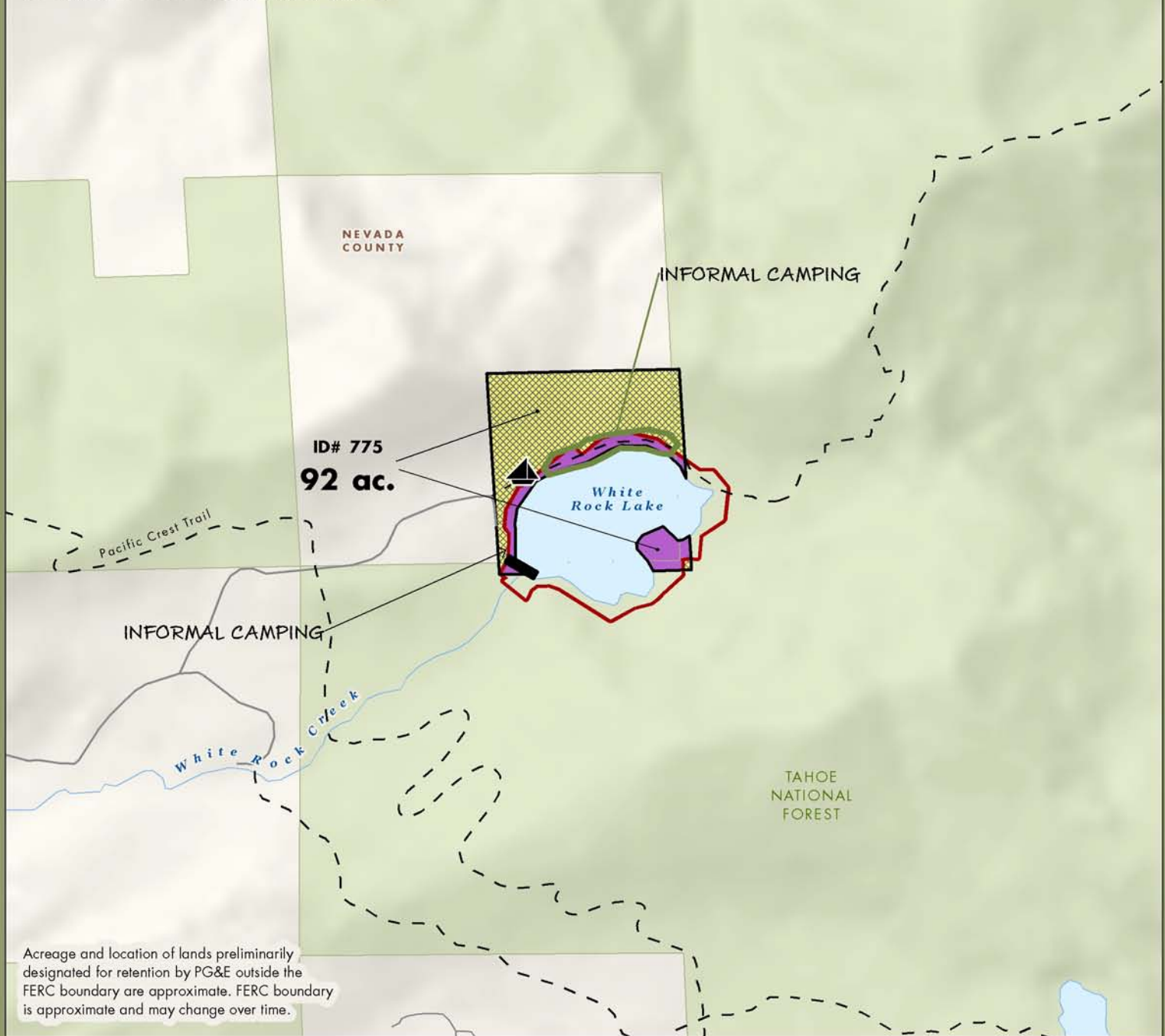
The Stewardship Council also received other public comments and letters from individuals and organizations regarding the future management of the Fordyce Lake Planning Unit, as summarized below:

- Support for donation of lands to public agencies managing adjacent lands to consolidate land management, and achieve consistent enforcement of regulations.
- Request that negotiated conservation easements on lands adjacent to public lands (USFS) reflect management practices consistent with adjacent public lands management.

Fordyce Lake Planning Unit: Map 1

FERC Project: Drum-Spauling (#2310)
 2,278 Total Acres (1,363 acres land)
 1,122 Acres Within FERC (49%)

5 TMUs: 899 Timbered Acres

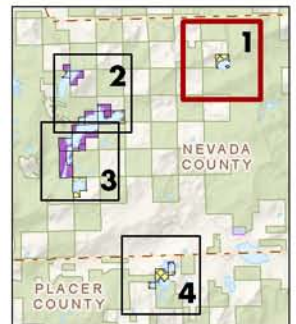


Acreage and location of lands preliminarily designated for retention by PG&E outside the FERC boundary are approximate. FERC boundary is approximate and may change over time.

- | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention | Private | Boat Launch | Parking |
| PG&E Lands Under Water | USFS | Campground | Private Camp |
| Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number | OHV Road | Dam | Whitewater Put-In |
| Certain Considerations May Make Donation Inadvisable | Trail | Feature of Importance | |
| FERC Boundary | | | |

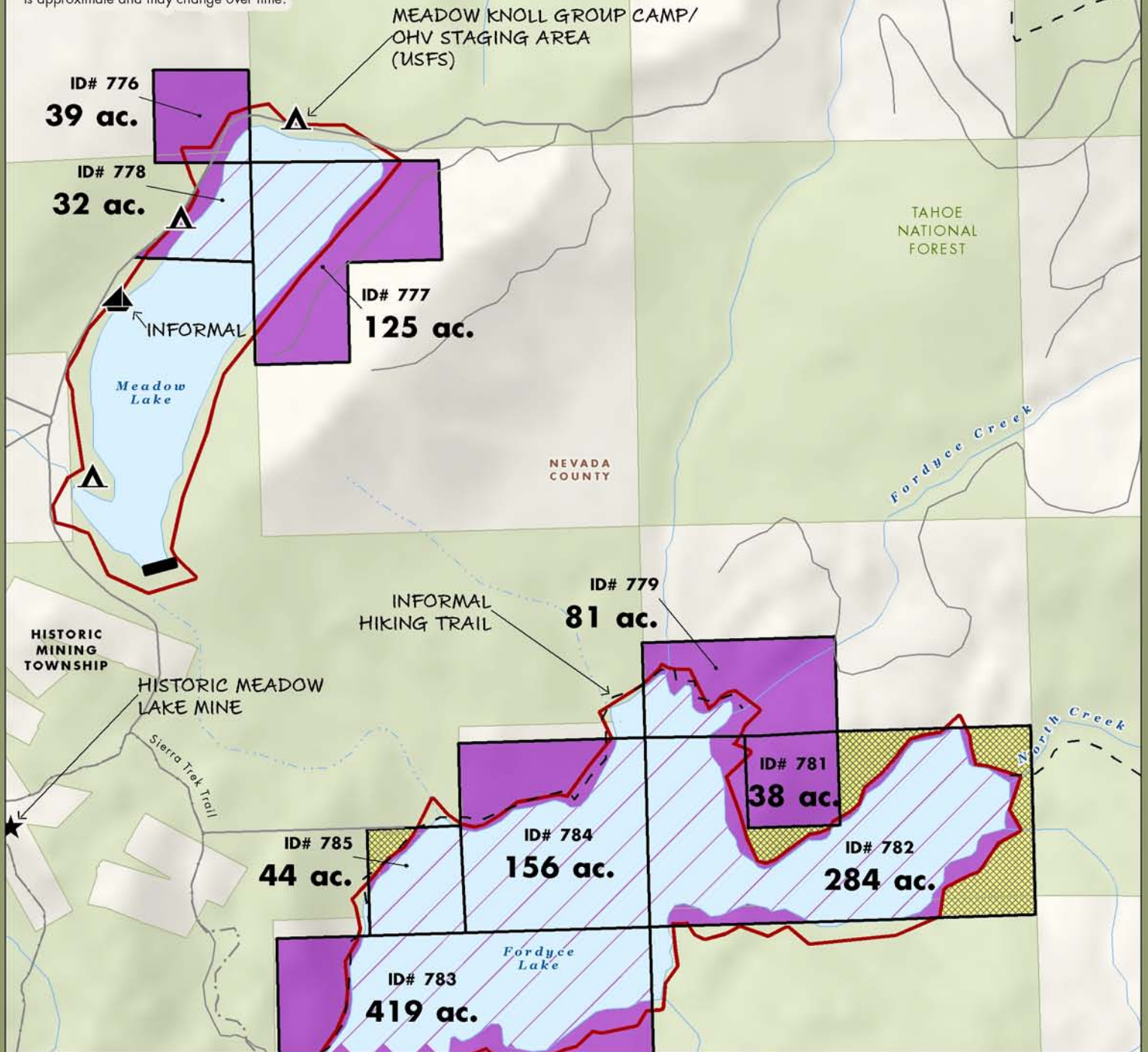


October 2010
AECOM



Fordyce Lake Planning Unit: Map 2

Acreage and location of lands preliminarily designated for retention by PG&E outside the FERC boundary are approximate. FERC boundary is approximate and may change over time.

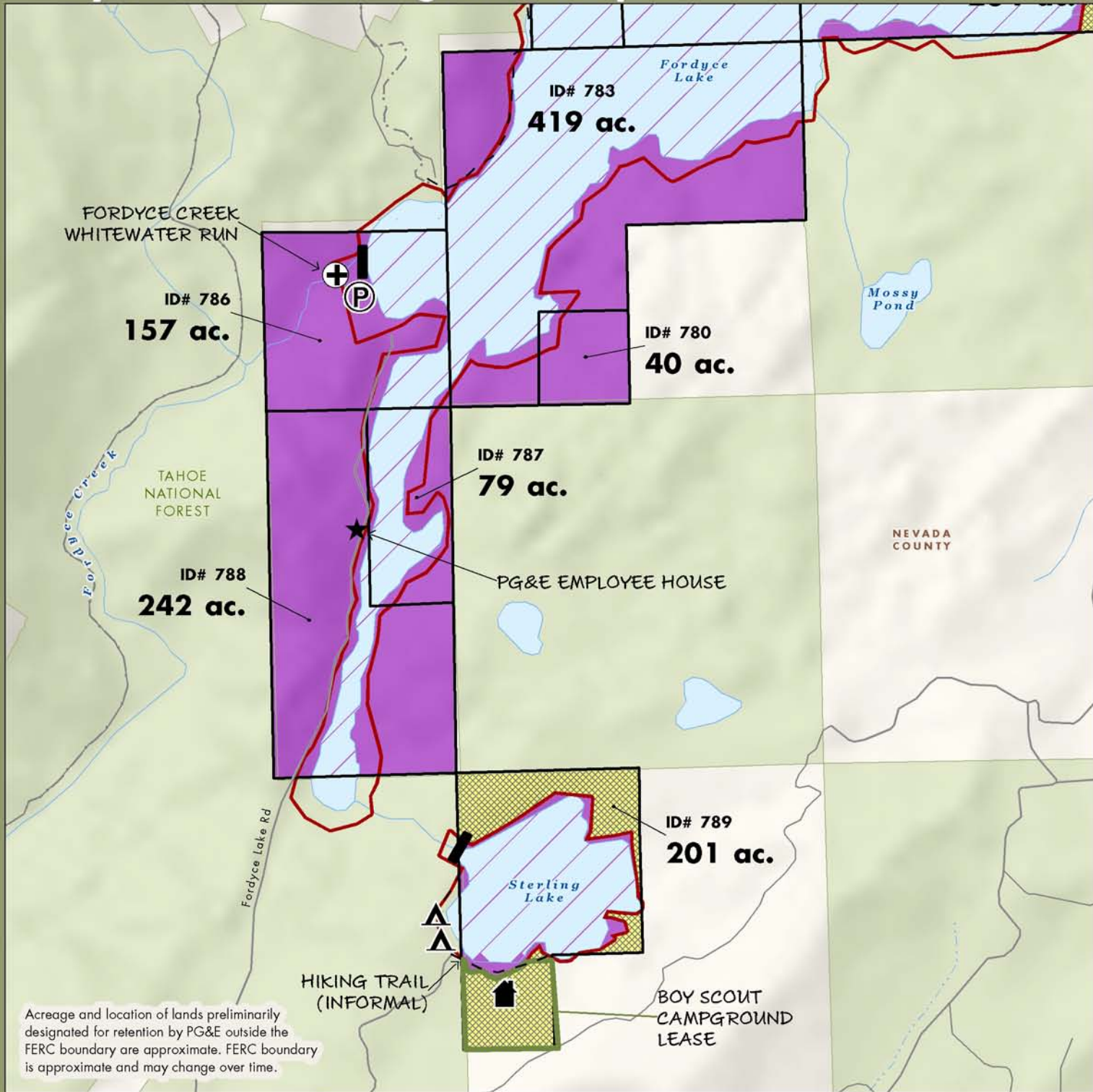


PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention	Private	Boat Launch	Parking
PG&E Lands Under Water	USFS	Campground	Private Camp
Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number	OHV Road	Dam	Whitewater Put-In
Certain Considerations May Make Donation Inadvisable	Trail	Feature of Importance	
FERC Boundary			

0
0.25
0.5
0.75 Miles

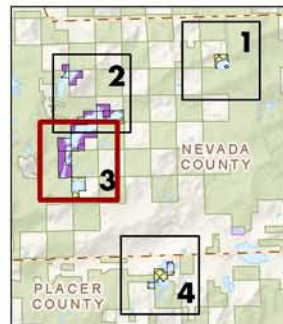
October 2010

Fordyce Lake Planning Unit: Map 3

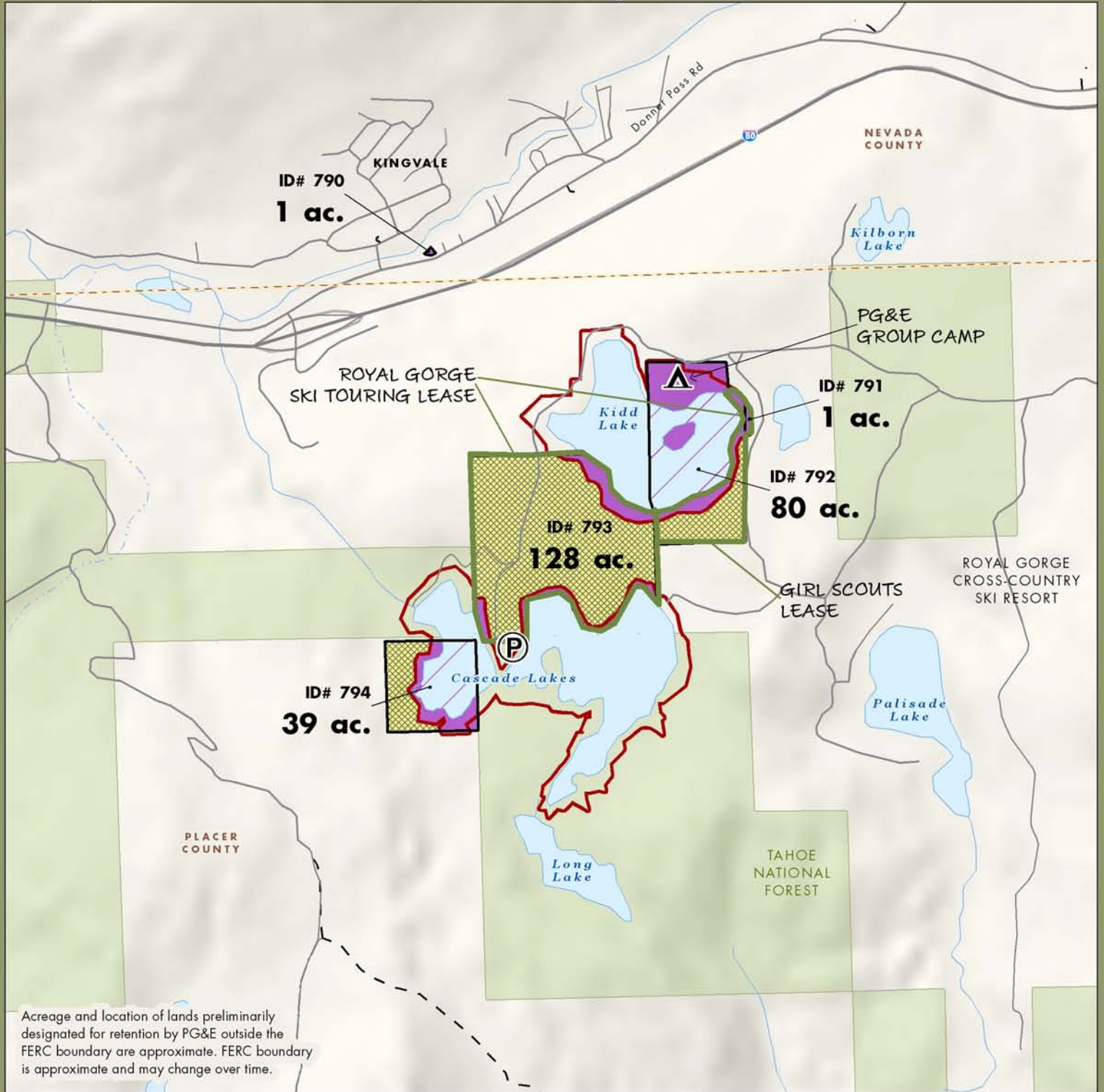


Acreage and location of lands preliminarily designated for retention by PG&E outside the FERC boundary are approximate. FERC boundary is approximate and may change over time.

- | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention | Private | Boat Launch | Parking |
| PG&E Lands Under Water | USFS | Campground | Private Camp |
| Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number | OHV Road | Dam | Whitewater Put-In |
| Certain Considerations May Make Donation Inadvisable | Trail | Feature of Importance | |
| FERC Boundary | | | |



Fordyce Lake Planning Unit: Map 4



Acreage and location of lands preliminarily designated for retention by PG&E outside the FERC boundary are approximate. FERC boundary is approximate and may change over time.

PG&E Lands Preliminarily Designated for Retention	Private	Boat Launch	Parking
PG&E Lands Under Water	USFS	Campground	Private Camp
Legal Parcel Boundary and Id Number	OHV Road	Dam	Whitewater Put-In
Certain Considerations May Make Donation Inadvisable	Trail	Feature of Importance	
FERC Boundary			

October 2010

FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

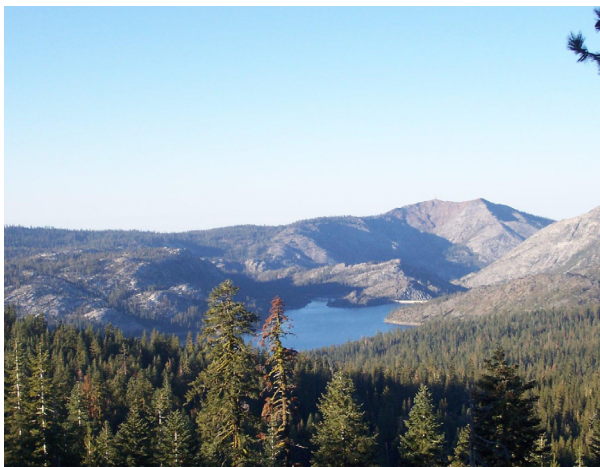
Yuba-Bear River Watershed

Existing Conditions & Uses

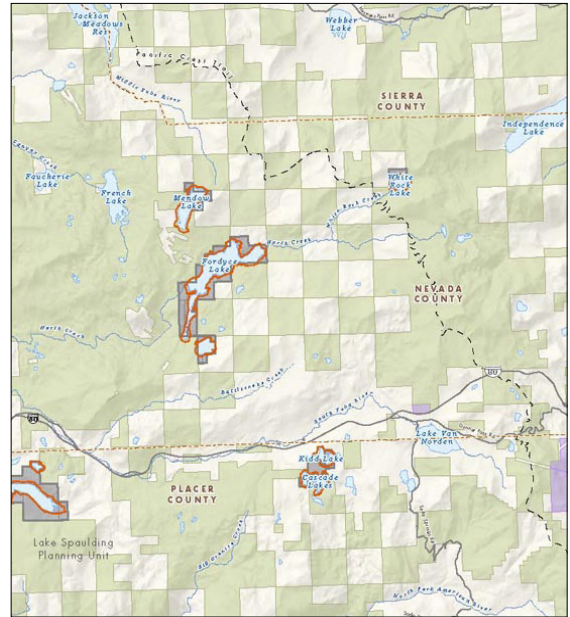
Overview

- 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 Preliminarily Designated for Retention
 -  PG&E Lands Preliminarily 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

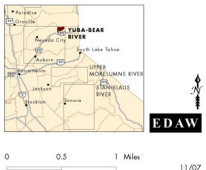
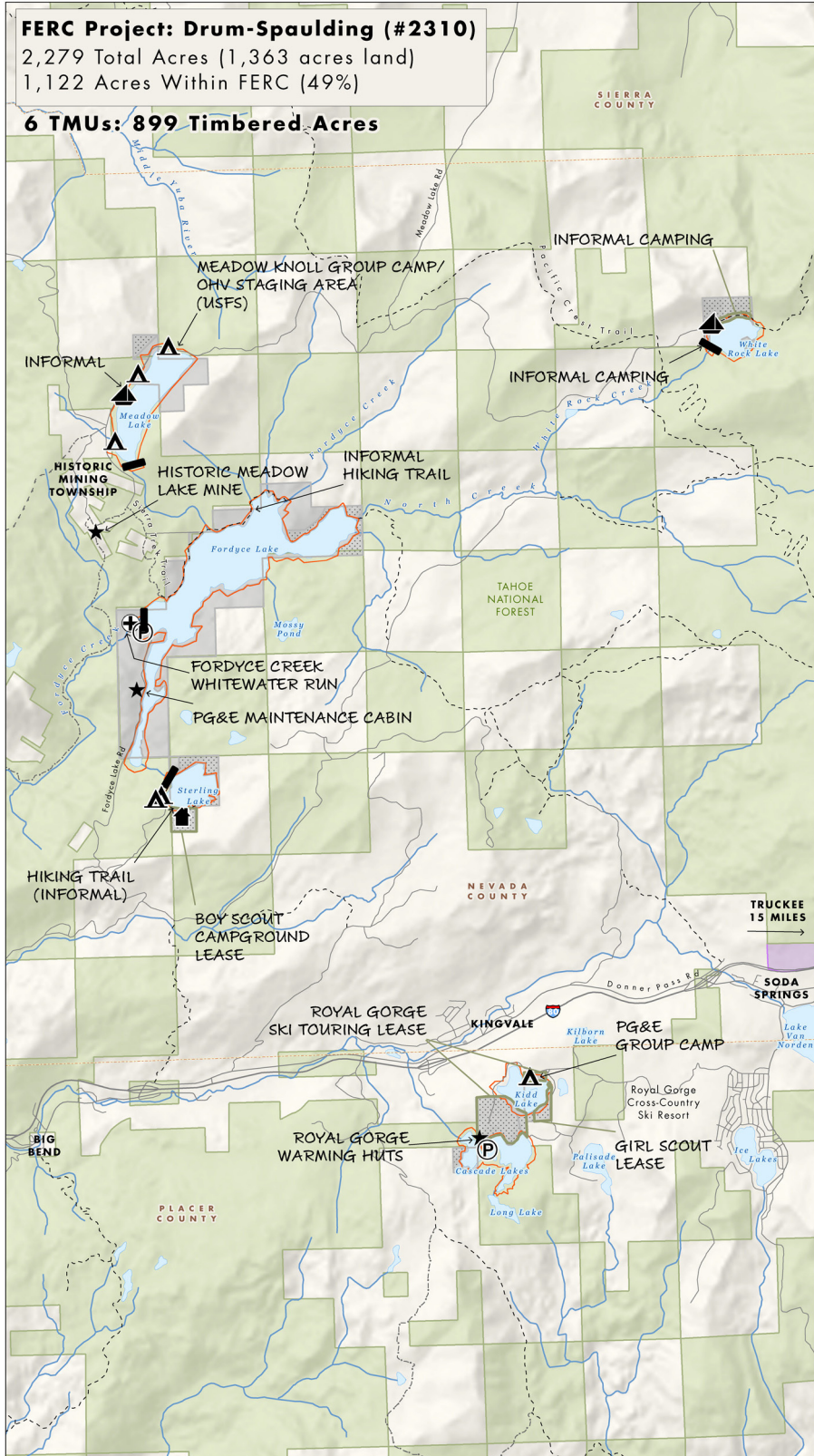


Figure YB-1

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

FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

Yuba-Bear River Watershed



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.

FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

Yuba-Bear River Watershed

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.

FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

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.



Fordyce Lake Planning Unit

Organizations That Submitted a Statement of Qualifications for Fee-Title Interests

Bureau of Land Management
Bear Yuba Land Trust (Formerly Nevada County Land Trust)
Placer County Water Agency
Placer Land Trust
San Joaquin County Office of Education
United States Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest
University of California

SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORDYCE LAKE 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. 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. During public review of Volumes I and II of the LCP, one entity submitted comments concerning the Fordyce Lake planning unit.

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

- Recommendation that reference to hiking trails, be modified to say simply “trails” or “non-motorized trails.”

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING FOR THE FORDYCE LAKE PLANNING UNIT

A public information meeting was hosted by the Stewardship Council on April 14, 2011 at the Auburn Parks and Recreation District Community Center in Auburn, California. The meeting concerned the following six planning units: Bear River, Chili Bar, Fordyce Lake, Lake Spaulding, Lower Drum, and Narrows. A total of 58 people attended and participated in the meeting, representing a wide variety of interests, including local and federal governments, community organizations, and community members. The meeting was advertised via an e-mail sent to contacts in our database, an announcement posted on the Stewardship Council’s web site, a press release in the local newspaper, and a postcard sent to all landowners on record that reside within one mile of any PG&E parcel associated with the six planning units that were the focus of the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was to: (1) provide a review and update on the Stewardship Council’s Land Conservation Program; and, (2) solicit additional public input on future stewardship of the six planning units. During the meeting, participants were invited to ask questions and provide comments on the six planning units. Stations were set up with maps, other pertinent information, and easels with blank paper. Below is a summary of comments related to the Fordyce Lake planning unit that were recorded on the easels and provided on comment cards.

Fordyce Lake

- Incorporate any donated lands into adjacent Wilderness Areas as applicable
- Support for the lands available for donation to be transferred to the US Forest Service
- Coordinate enhancements with the Overland Emigrant Trail Project on Parcels 792 and 793

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED

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

- Support for donation of lands to public agencies managing adjacent lands to consolidate land management, and achieve consistent enforcement of regulations.
- Request that negotiated conservation easements on lands adjacent to public lands (USFS) reflect management practices consistent with adjacent public lands management.