SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON®
Energy for What's Ahead®

Lee Vining, FERC Project No. 1388

TERRESTRIAL AND BOTANICAL TWG 1 MEETING NOTES
January 27, 2021; 10 AM - 12 PM PDT

**These meeting notes are documentation of general discussions from the meeting held on the above-noted date. These notes are not a verbatim account of proceedings, are not meeting minutes, and do not represent any final decisions or official documentation for the project or participating agencies.*

1. Attendees

Relicensing Team Members	Agencies and Interested Stakeholders
Allison Rudalevige, Psomas	Alyssa Marquez, CDFW
Brad Blood, Psomas	Bartshe Miller, Mono Lake Committee (MLC)
Carissa Shoemaker, ERM	Blake Englehardt, USFS
David Moore, SCE	Chad Mellison, USFWS
Edith Read, ERA	Christina McDonald, North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt	Monique Sanchez, USFS
Kelly Larimer, Kleinschmidt	Nathan Sill, USFS
Matthew Woodhall, SCE	Thomas Torres, USFS
Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt	
Steve Norton, Psomas	

2. Compiled Action Items

- Blake Englehardt will send USFS records and whitebark pine layer to Allison Rudalevige directly.
- The Relicensing Team will distribute a link to the Bishop Creek Study Plan and an updated study plan template for TWG members to fill out by Feb 19, 2021.

3. Welcome and Introductions

- Matthew Woodhall provided a Safety moment
- Introductions of team and all participants
- Review of notes/comments from November – good to be finalized
- Chat box was disabled for at least 1 participant, tested it

4. Relicensing Process

- Finlay Anderson provided a FERC relicensing overview

5. Discussion of Resource Management Objectives / Potential Study Requests

- What issues would you like us to focus on?
- Comment: MLC

  - Resource issue – *Didymo* infestation and how flows may impact it. This is a new issue since the last license was issued.
  - Response: Relicensing Team – It was discussed in the Aquatics TWG, but please provide anything you know about it, or make a case for including it in Terrestrial TWG.
- Comment: USFS
  - Tag on to MLC's comment, has Eurasian milfoil been mentioned? June Lake has it. Is it in LV canyon? Or other aquatic invasives in general? Can we broaden the scope to all invasive aquatics rather than only *Didymo*? The botanical framework from Bishop Creek would be good model to start with for Lee Vining Creek (initial thought). But there wasn't an aquatic invasive species survey for Bishop Creek.
  - Response: Relicensing Team - No other aquatic plant species were mentioned besides *Didymo* in Aquatics. We have decided to circulate the Bishop Creek study plans and determine which ones apply to Lee Vining Creek also, or how to adjust them for Lee Vining.
- Comment: USFWS
  - I'm focused on listed species. When we see issues with analysis it usually has to do with how a particular area has been managed in the past. Has management led to impacts to the listed species? Are we proposing to change management of the system? Grazing example. I am hoping there is good data showing how T&E species were managed the past 30 years (e.g., Yosemite toad). How will management in the next 30-40 years impact the species? Lack of monitoring of the toad, because they are hard to monitor. I suggest revisiting the previous study locations (from the 80s) and see what is going on now.
  - Response: Relicensing Team – We do want to study or look at historic data. What would help us is some language from USFS and USFWS around management objectives for the species so as we construct the study, we have guidance from management plans on how to protect the species. Then we will give you a consultation document so you can say 'yes, no effect', or the opposite. But we need you to help us with the process.
  - Comment: USFWS – We need to know where they are first, then we can determine the impacts, if any.
- Comment: CDFW
  - I don't have any study suggestions, but I'm thinking about how the proposal of a study would work. I'm new to the process. We need to understand what invasives could be in system but how they could be related to the operations of the project, if no changes are proposed. Since no changes, is it enough to say 'we don't know what species/invasives are there, and we have concerns'?
  - Comment/Response: USFS – The study plans are to learn about existing conditions and how they are affected by project operations, if operations are causing a resource concern or not meeting desired conditions then we can develop license conditions/management plans part of operations moving forward that improve/address the condition. Also to support NEPA. So we know what conditions to apply to the new license.

  - Response: Relicensing Team – Operations may not be changing, but the Project does need to comply with changing regulations and agency/organization objectives. The Team reviewed the Study Plan Request Template.
- Comment: MLC
  - How about the Yosemite toad, would a study goal be 'how current ops impact toads'? I know a population exists at the south end of Saddlebag Lake. People and dogs run through their habitat with the increased recreation there, during their tadpole life stages. There is also habitat along Lee Vining Creek below Saddlebag Lake. Are flows impacting toads there?
  - Response: Relicensing Team – I think what I am hearing is you're asking if there is an indirect effect from project operation that impacts recreational use which then impacts toads. It is a worthwhile objective to write down and then we will synthesize it.
- Comment: USFS
  - To tag onto USFS/CDFW, in regard to *Didymo*, could frame a study that we have O&P components to reduce size of invasive populations, we can use that to show how a change in operations might expand the populations.
- Comment: SCE - This project has been in operations for a long time, we have quite a bit of information about the region to use as starting point. We can't go in and look for everything, this is why we have these meetings to discuss with leads that know the system so they can bring forth things of concern. Examples of *Didymo* and Yosemite toad.
- Relicensing Team discussed the two primary studies SCE is already considering; wildlife and botanical:
  - Wildlife would be similar to Bishop Creek's but include Yosemite toad specifically. It would be kept to the FERC project boundary to keep it related to the project. We would bring in data from previous years. Wildlife cameras could be installed as well.
  - Botanical on-the-ground fieldwork would be for RTE, Special Status Species, invasive weeds, and updated vegetation mapping, all at the same time.
  - The main questions are scope and scale, and we would need to agree on methods. Make it as efficient as possible for implementation.
- Comment: USFS – Is there already a synthesis of current info on the project? What is already being studied? Can we get a list of what is already happening?
  - Response: Relicensing Team – Already up on the project website (www.sce.com/leevining) are a list of Comprehensive Management Plans and a list of references we already have for the PAD. The references list includes studies that have been done in past. Draft PAD tables and figures are also on the website for your reference.
- Comment: USFS – Can you show us your botanical map for whitebark pine so folks know that it is present in the project vicinity. It is currently proposed to be listed as threatened. Your suggested approach of coinciding botanical survey tasks makes total sense.
  - Response: Relicensing Team - Very old whitebark pine data, from herbarium records. Few from 2016 and 2017. We would complete a floristic compendium of all the species observed.

- USFS knows of some occurrences by Saddlebag dam, the USFS GIS data layer has it shown. We should consider adding this data to our PAD. Blake can send USFS records and whitebark pine layer to Allison directly.

6. Schedule & Next Steps

- The Relicensing Team provided the Bishop Creek study plan applicability preview, folks wanted to see what was done for Bishop Creek and suggest modifications for Lee Vining Creek. However, we need to be disciplined about not only doing Lee Vining studies because they were done at Bishop. We (consultants) are not as good at knowing your resource management objectives as you (agencies). We are asking for your help in guiding us with these. Revised homework will include a link to Bishop Creek study plans, ask you if you think the study is applicable to Lee Vining Creek, and if applicable we need project specific details. The template is to give a framework. We would give you a little time to populate this and for next meeting we'd ask you to bring it back.
  - Bartshe Miller and Nathan Sill said the applicability template looks helpful
  - MLC - Will the Bishop example have stated goals and objectives?
    - There is a link to original Bishop study plans are on website, and a link in the template word doc.
- The Relicensing Team reviewed the upcoming TWGs timeline. Does this time work for the upcoming meetings? The March meeting week might be during kid's spring break. Email Carissa Shoemaker with conflicts (carissa.shoemaker@erm.com).
- Chad Mellison is unavailable for next two proposed dates.
- SCE reminds us that everyone can ask questions throughout, not only during the meetings. And we can do our best to give out notes to those that can't make meetings. We can also work on individual meetings with you, as needed.
- Chad Mellison – Yosemite toad questions can be sent to Chad at any time.
- Draft meeting notes to be circulated for review as well as the memo of Bishop Study Plans.
- Meeting invitations for February and March to be sent out
- Additional action items are underlined above

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7. Upcoming TWG Meetings

Aquatics 2	February 22, 2021 10am
Terrestrial 2	**February 24, 2021 10am**
Cultural and Tribal 2	February 24, 2021 1:30pm
Recreation and Land Use 2	February 25, 2021 10am
Aquatics 3	March 29, 2021 10am
Terrestrial 3	**March 31, 2021 10am**
Cultural and Tribal 3	March 31, 2021 1:30pm
Recreation and Land Use 3	April 1, 2021 10am