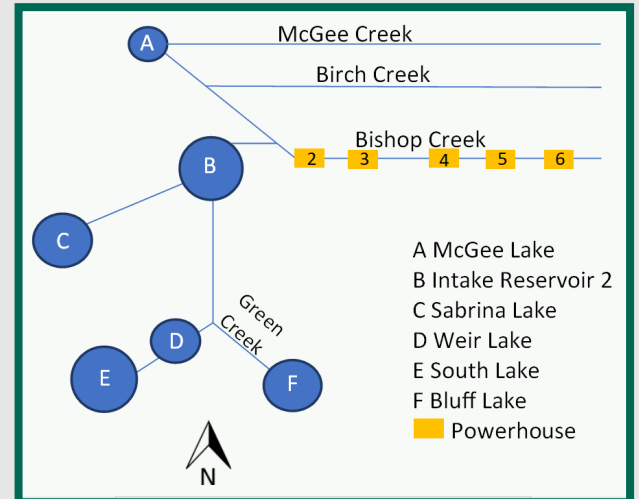


What is the Bishop Creek Project?

The Bishop Creek Project is a Southern California Edison (SCE) facility generating hydroelectric power on Bishop Creek. It lies about five miles southwest of the city of Bishop on the steep eastern slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada Range. The Project diverts water from McGee Creek, Birch Creek, and the Middle and South Forks of Bishop Creek through five powerhouses and includes the storage reservoirs of Lake Sabrina, Longley Reservoir, and South Lake.

The Project has a long history in the area: after silver and gold were discovered in the Bishop region in the 1900s, mining camps required more power than nearby wood or coal supplies could easily provide, so in 1904 two local entrepreneurs built a hydroelectric project.



What is a FERC license and why does it matter?

Every state and privately-owned dam is regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) via a FERC license. The license is like a long-term rental agreement with the government for the right to use the river to generate hydropower. This agreement states how the Project will be operated for the 30 to 50 year license period. It also establishes the frequency and type of natural resource monitoring during that period as well as agreed upon protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures. The current Bishop Creek license will expire in 2024, and SCE must file a new license application by 2022.



RELICENSING is a five year process during which the Project's existing natural, cultural, and recreational resources are assessed, along with the impacts of any potential changes to Project operations, and new license terms are negotiated.

Who decides how much water is released down the Creek?

SCE uses the Creek's water to generate power on its way downstream to other water rights holders. When SCE makes decisions about how to operate the Project and release water through the system, it balances a number of priorities: generating electricity, storing water for downstream water users, operating its reservoirs to ensure dam integrity and downstream flood protection, providing water for environmental needs, and fostering recreational opportunities in the reservoirs and creek.

Who is involved in the relicensing process?

FERC

Role: To regulate all non-federal dams that generate electricity in the U.S. The Federal Power Act requires FERC to give "equal consideration" to power and non-power uses of the river.



Dam Owner

Role: To provide FERC, natural resource agencies, and other stakeholders information necessary to assess current resource conditions and any proposed changes to operations and to file the appropriate documentation with FERC.

State & Federal Agencies

Role: To provide comments to FERC about how the Project may impact fish, wildlife, or public lands within its boundary. Depending on the State or Federal agency's authority, their final comments are either recommendations to FERC or mandatory requirements.

Native American Tribes

Role: To provide recommendations on Project operations, particularly as related to potential Project impacts to culturally-important resources that exist within the Project area.

THE PUBLIC

Role: To provide comments on project impacts and the community's vision for the future management of the Project area. You can participate by attending public meetings, sharing your thoughts with SCE via our project email, and/or using the FERC website to submit comments on filed documents.

Year 0

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

2018. SCE values strong collaboration: they have invited technical experts to participate in a Technical Working Group process to discuss necessary studies and draft a broadly supported study plan.

2019. SCE plans to file its Pre-application Document (PAD) and study plan with FERC April 1, 2019. FERC will hold a public site visit and meeting to begin its scoping process.

2020. SCE will conduct studies to gather missing information about the project's impact on natural, cultural, and recreational resources and host a public meeting to discuss study results and potential study modifications.

2021. SCE will conduct a second year of studies, and file its Draft License Application.

2022. SCE will file its Final License Application.

2023/24. FERC will issue or deny the new license.

Learn more.

Sign up for email updates.

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