



DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY NOTES*

LEE VINING, FERC PROJECT NO. 1388

PME-1 MINIMUM FLOWS TWG MEETING

APRIL 1, 2026 10:00 – 11:00 AM

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

AGENDA

- Continue discussion of PME-1 flows and operational conditions

ATTENDEES

Relicensing Team Members

Matthew Woodhall, SCE
Seth Carr, SCE
Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt
Carissa Shoemaker, Kleinschmidt
Bret Hoffman, Kleinschmidt

Technical Working Group Members & Interested Parties

Tristan Leong, US Forest Service (USFS)
Sheila Irons, USFS
Michael Wiese, USFS
Stephanie Heller, USFS
Bryan Muro, State Water Board
Adam Cohen, State Water Board
Graham Meese, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
Beth Lawson, CDFW
Dana Scott, CDFW
Greg Reis, Mono Lake Committee (MLC)
Teri Tracy, MLC
Robbie Di Paolo, MLC

CONTINUED PME-1 DISCUSSION: FLOWS BELOW ELLERY LAKE/POOLE POWERHOUSE

1. Proposed Updates to PME-1 Flow Framework
 - a. SCE presented updated PME-1 flow tables intended to better reflect actual operating conditions rather than theoretical or planned flows (Attachment 1).
 - b. A key shift of the framework is toward using measured releases instead of planned releases to set flow targets, particularly during winter operations.
 - c. The proposal differentiates between:
 - i. Wet and normal years
 - ii. Dry years
2. “Measured” vs. “Planned” Flows
 - a. Stakeholders discussed implications of replacing planned flow requirements with measured (actual) releases.
 - b. Concern: this change could effectively reduce minimum instream flows, particularly when using “whichever is less” logic.
 - c. SCE indicated:
 - i. Measured flows better reflect real constraints (e.g., valve limitations, inflow variability) and therefore are a more accurate representation of what is actually happening.
 - ii. Planned flows may not always be achievable—especially in dry water years.
3. Minimum Flow Thresholds and Operational Constraints
 - a. SCE proposed maintaining a minimum instantaneous flow of ~8 cfs below Poole Powerhouse.
 - b. Historically higher targets (e.g., 27 cfs and 89 cfs) were difficult to meet:
 - i. Modeling showed targets were missed up to 97% of the time in dry scenarios.
 - c. Constraints influencing flows:
 - i. Limited inflows to reservoirs
 - ii. Fixed valve settings that cannot be adjusted in winter
 - iii. Physical system limitations
4. Hydrologic Variability and “Whichever is Less” Condition
 - a. The “whichever is less” provision (comparing minimum flow vs. actual releases) sparked concern:
 - i. In wet years, this logic might default to lower minimum flows (e.g., 8 cfs) even when higher flows are available.
 - ii. Could reduce daily average instream flows, not just instantaneous flows.
 - b. Stakeholders suggested:
 - i. Potentially separating requirements by water year type
 - ii. Revising how daily averages vs instantaneous flows are applied
5. Ecological and Public Safety Considerations
 - a. Agencies raised concerns about:
 - i. Rapid flow fluctuations (delta changes) during low-flow conditions
 - ii. Impacts to ecological resources and fish spawning
 - iii. Potential public safety risks during sudden changes in discharge
 - b. Questions remain about:

- i. Maximum rate of change in flows
 - ii. How often extreme fluctuations could occur
- 6. Operational and Modeling Clarifications
 - a. Several clarifications were provided:
 - i. CAISO scheduling is based on SCE-provided available capacity, not vice versa.
 - ii. In dry winter periods, operations are typically kept at minimum stable flow levels with little or no ramping.
 - iii. If the powerhouse is offline:
 - 1. Flow releases come from Ellery Lake valves
 - 2. Monitoring relies on gaging below Rhinedollar Dam and Ellery measurements
- 7. Regulatory and Licensing Context
 - a. Discussion on whether existing license Article 405 should carry forward:
 - i. Determined it is a FERC condition and was modified to only apply to Saddlebag Lake, likely not part of PME-1 table updates.
 - b. Stakeholders noted ongoing concerns about flow fluctuations below Poole, similar to earlier regulatory issues.
- 8. Need for Further Refinement
 - a. The updated PME-1 table needs additional review and refinement
 - b. Stakeholders want to assess whether proposed flows reflect realistic modeled outcomes vs theoretical assumptions

Overall Takeaway:

The meeting focused on reconciling real-world operational constraints with regulatory and ecological flow requirements. While progress was made toward a more practical PME-1 framework, key concerns from stakeholders remain around minimum flow levels, modeling accuracy, and ecological impacts, requiring further refinement and stakeholder review.

SCHEDULE AND ACTION ITEMS

- 1. SCE / Kleinschmidt Team
 - a. Revise the PME-1 table to reflect meeting feedback
 - b. Clarify:
 - i. Measured vs planned releases
 - ii. Wet/normal vs dry year distinctions
 - iii. “Whichever is less” language
 - c. Update footnotes in the table
 - d. Distribute:
 - i. Updated PME-1 table
 - ii. Presentation materials to stakeholders
 - e. Send out a poll to schedule next meeting

- f. Hold a placeholder follow-up meeting (if needed), alternatively, resolve outstanding issues via email coordination
- 2. All Stakeholders / TWG Members
 - a. Review revised PME-1 table once distributed
 - b. Evaluate:
 - i. Flow assumptions vs modeled outputs
 - ii. Potential ecological and operational impacts
 - c. Provide follow-up feedback (likely via email or next meeting)

Attachment 1: PME-1 Table, April 2026 Revisions

Table 1. Minimum Flow Requirements by Location

Location	Water Year Type	Minimum Flow (cfs)	Timing/Duration
Below Saddlebag Dam ^a	Wet	30	Week 1, for 1 week ^c
		22	Week 2, for 1 week
		16	Week 3, for 1 week
		9 ^b	Remainder of the year (late summer and over-winter flows)
	Normal	20	Week 1, for 1 week ^c
		14	Week 2, for 1 week
		10	Week 3, for 1 week
		6 ^b	Remainder of the year (late summer and over-winter flows)
	Dry	4 ^b	Year-round
Below Tioga Dam ^a	Wet	10	2 weeks ^c
		2	Until October 29
		5	October 30 ^d through early spring
	Normal	5	2 weeks ^d
		2	Until October 29
		5	October 30 ^d through early spring
	Dry	2	June 1 ^c until October 29
		5	October 30 ^d through early spring
Below Poole Powerhouse	Wet and Normal	8 cfs or the sum of the measured average daily releases from Saddlebag and Tioga, whichever is less ^{a, e}	Instantaneous Release
		The sum of the planned releases from Saddlebag and Tioga dams ^a	Daily Average, June 1 ^c - Oct 29
		The sum of the measured average daily release from Saddlebag and Tioga dams ^{a, e}	Daily Average, October 30 - May 31 ^c
	Dry	8 cfs or the sum of the measured releases from Saddlebag and Tioga Reservoirs, whichever is less. ^{a, e}	Instantaneous and Daily Average, Year-round

cfs = cubic feet per second; USFS = U.S. Forest Service

^a Minimum flow requirements below Saddlebag and Tioga Dams are determined annually in consultation with USFS, no later than May 1 of each calendar year. If no agreement is reached, minimum flows in this table apply.

- ^b While valves are inaccessible, overwinter flows at Saddlebag and Tioga may be less than planned MIF due to natural inflow conditions and reduced head.
- ^c Beginning June 1, or as soon as access allows.
- ^d October 30 flows will remain at 5 cfs through drawdown, at which time outflow may equal inflow.
- ^e Flows are measured by a continuously recording gaging device (acoustic velocity meter).

Reservoir levels are to be maintained for recreation and generation requirements, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Reservoir Level Requirements

Location	Water Year Type	Lake Elevation and Duration
Tioga Lake	Wet or Normal	As of July 4, and through September 30, the water level of Tioga Lake will be maintained within 2 feet of the crest of the spillway.
	Dry	In dry years, every effort will be made to maintain lake elevation within 2 feet of the crest of the spillway between July 4 and September 30. At a minimum, lake elevation will be maintained at its peak through September 30.
Ellery Lake	All	• Ellery Lake will be managed to be full (within 2 feet of its spillway elevation) during the annual recreation season (defined as the Friday preceding Memorial Day through the end of September). • Ellery Lake may be drawn down to a level that is more than within 2 feet of the spillway elevation if required by operating emergencies beyond the control of the licensee, or for short periods of time upon mutual agreement between SCE and USFS.

cfs = cubic feet per second; USFS = U.S. Forest Service.