



DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY NOTES*

LEE VINING, FERC PROJECT NO. 1388

PME-1 MINIMUM FLOWS TWG MEETING

APRIL 27, 2026 3:00-4:00 PM

**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

- Review updated PME-1 table provided mid-April

ATTENDEES

Relicensing Team Members

Matthew Woodhall, SCE
Seth Carr, SCE
Vince White, SCE
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt
Carissa Shoemaker, Kleinschmidt
Bret Hoffman, Kleinschmidt

Technical Working Group Members & Interested Parties

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

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

The TWG met to review and refine the updated PME-1 minimum flows table, with a focus on improving flow management and coordination across the Lee Vining system.

- Alignment of Reservoir Releases (Saddlebag & Tioga)
 - A discussion topic was whether flow release timing from Saddlebag and Tioga reservoirs should be more closely synchronized, particularly in wet years.
 - Current issue:
 - Saddlebag releases last ~3 weeks
 - Tioga releases last ~2 weeks
 - Stakeholders suggested extending Tioga releases to 3 weeks to better align peak flows and improve downstream consistency. The idea would be to improve coordination to create more natural, system-wide flow patterns.
 - SCE noted operational constraints (reservoir size, control differences, risk of early over-release).
- Flow Triggers, Footnotes, and PME-1 Table Accuracy
 - Several inconsistencies and potential typos in the PME-1 table were identified (e.g., incorrect footnote references).
 - Discussion emphasized:
 - Standardizing structure across reservoirs
 - Clarifying language for low-flow (5 cfs) conditions
- Mimicking Natural Hydrology
 - The group discussed aligning operations with historical hydrographs and natural flow conditions instead of rigid, date-based rules.
 - Objective: Better replicate combined flows from Saddlebag + Tioga downstream (especially below Poole Powerhouse)
 - Consideration of whether to:
 - Use fixed date ranges (old license approach)
 - Or adaptive flows based on real conditions (preferred approach)
- Minimum Instream Flow (MIF) and Flow Accounting
 - Clarification of how flows are calculated and regulated below Poole Powerhouse:
 - Use of planned vs. measured flows depending on season
 - Reliance on daily averages (24-hour) for compliance and implications of the “instantaneous flows” metric (see below).
 - Potential for including measurements of generation flows + spill flows
 - Discussion of minimum instantaneous flow (8 cfs):
 - Ensures water is always present even when the plant is offline
 - Consistent with past operations (no observed adverse effects), though ecological justification is still a concern of CDFW
- Operational Constraints & Seasonal Access
 - Differences between:
 - Summer (accessible) → flows can be actively managed
 - Winter (inaccessible) → flows decline naturally after valve settings

- October 30 identified as a practical cutoff due to access limitations.
 - Flow rules must reflect real-world operational constraints.
- Variances, Annual Meetings, and Regulatory Process
 - Discussion on whether to maintain:
 - Annual Consultation meetings for setting flows, or
 - Move to a fixed, table-based approach without yearly negotiation
 - USFS retains a key decision role under 4(e) conditions.
 - Concerns:
 - Variance processes through FERC are slow and complex
 - State agencies (CDFW, Water Board) want input and are concerned about current structure not having a mechanism for influencing decisions
- Measurement and Compliance Methods
 - Discussion of how flows are measured: Combination of gage data, powerhouse releases, and spill
 - Need to clarify in the table what counts toward compliance and where measurements are taken
- Water Year Classification & Timing
 - Agreement that water year type should be determined before the annual meeting (target ~April 1 vs May 1).
 - Snow survey data (e.g., April 1) used for classification.
- Future Refinement of PME-1 Table
 - USFS will further refine flow values, language, and approach for wet vs normal years
 - Group acknowledged desire to refine operational measures, especially for Poole powerhouse flows.

5.0 SCHEDULE AND ACTION ITEMS

- Revise PME-1 table to:
 - a. Correct footnote errors and inconsistencies
 - b. Standardize structure across reservoirs
 - c. Clarify language for planned vs measured flows
 - d. Update footnotes (e.g., combine or reassign “b” and “d” where appropriate).
- Flow Alignment Analysis
 - a. Evaluate feasibility of:
 - i. Extending Tioga release duration to 3 weeks
 - ii. Better aligning peak flows across reservoirs
 - b. Assess risks of early-season releases (storage impacts).
- Flow Calculation & Compliance Clarification
 - a. How daily average flows are calculated
 - b. Whether spill + generation flows are included
 - c. Which gages are used for compliance
- USFS Follow-Up
 - a. Draft updated PME-1 table
 - b. Provide revised language and flow values

- c. Share proposed approach with group
- SCE Follow-Up
 - a. Revise and circulate updated table version
 - b. Answer modeling questions, as needed (Matt/Finlay/Bret)