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# LAND 1 SCE LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN ASSESSMENT

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Portions of the Southern California Edison (SCE) Big Creek Project facilities are located on SCE private lands within Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project boundaries. This study assesses the management of these private lands owned by SCE and located within FERC Project boundaries for their consistency with adopted land management policies by county, state, and federal agencies. These lands are located around Shaver Lake, Balsam Meadows Forebay, Huntington Lake, and near SCE facilities at Big Creek Powerhouse Nos. 2 and 3.

As part of this study SCE land management practices, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and Special Use Authorizations (SUAs) between SCE and public resource agencies were reviewed for consistency with SCE land management policies.

SCE's Corporate Real Estate Department manages all SCE private lands in the Big Creek basin. Within this department, the SCE Forestry Group is tasked to manage SCE lands in the Shaver Lake and Balsam Meadows Forebay areas. SCE follows FERC regulations and license conditions in the use of the lands within FERC Project boundaries including MOUs between SCE and public resource agencies which includes the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and SUAs from the U.S. Forest Service (USDA-FS). Day-to-day management of these lands are guided by SCE's land management plan and practices developed in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and requirements. Current land use on SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries are consistent with existing land management policies.

## 2.0 STUDY OBJECTIVES

Determine consistency of existing and proposed SCE land management within FERC Project boundaries associated with operations and maintenance activities or existing or proposed license conditions with existing MOUs, Fresno and Madera County land use plans and USDA-FS land management plans. Assess existing and proposed SCE land management practices and determine if there is a need to modify them to be consistent with current management plans.

Facilitate and improve open communication and coordination through the ALP with government planning agencies and private landowners potentially affected by Project-related activities.

### **3.0 STUDY IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.1 STUDY ELEMENTS COMPLETED**

- Reviewed Fresno County Land Use Plan, USDA-FS management plans, existing MOUs and special use permits to identify potential areas of inconsistency with existing SCE land management practices on SCE's lands within FERC Project boundaries.
- Reviewed SCE's existing land management practices for project-related facilities to identify areas of inconsistency with existing land management plans.
- If inconsistencies existed, assessed potential changes to SCE's land management practices for operation and maintenance activities for project-related facilities to make them consistent with land management plans.

#### **3.2 OUTSTANDING STUDY ELEMENTS**

- Identify proposed changes to SCE's existing land management practices associated with their operations and maintenance on SCE's lands within FERC Project boundaries and determine consistency with existing land management plans.
- As project-related changes are proposed, meet with affected public (county officials, USDA-FS representatives) and private stakeholders to discuss proposed changes.

### **4.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY**

As part of this study, reviews were conducted of agency land management plans including the Fresno County General Plan (2000), the Sierra National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1999), and SCE land management practices on SCE privately owned lands. All SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries in the Big Creek basin are located within Fresno County. Existing MOUs between SCE and public resource agencies and current SUAs with USDA-FS for lands considered in this study were obtained and reviewed. Boundaries of SCE privately owned lands were provided by SCE and added to the GIS database. An inventory of existing land uses and practices on SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries and those immediately adjacent to these lands were collected.

### **5.0 STUDY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

In the Big Creek basin and for the Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process, SCE lands within the FERC Project boundaries are located at Shaver Lake and Balsam Meadows Forebay, Huntington Lake, near Big Creek Powerhouse No. 2, and near Big Creek Powerhouse No. 3. All of these lands are located within Fresno County. Figure LAND 1-1a through LAND 1-1d presents Big Creek lands within FERC Project boundaries and owned by SCE. A total of 3,076 acres of SCE private lands are located within the FERC Project boundaries. Generally, these lands are used for Project related facilities and operations or to meet Project related licensing agreement(s). Use of these lands

are regulated by the FERC license and day-to-day management of these lands are guided by the SCE Corporate Real Estate Department's management practices. SCE's private lands around Shaver Lake and Balsam Meadows Forebay, are under the management of the SCE Forestry Group, which is a part of the SCE Corporate Real Estate Department.

Fresno County's Land Use Plan designates these lands in the Big Creek basin as public lands and open space. The County defines this designation as land or water areas which are essentially unimproved and planned to remain open in character. These areas are devoted to activities such as the preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, and parks and recreation, or are subject to flood, fire, or geologic hazards (Fresno County 2000). Around Shaver Lake and Balsam Meadows Forebay, some lands are zoned for timber production in addition to open space. Lands occupied by Camp Edison and Camp Chawanakee (operated by the Boy Scouts of America) are zoned as resources conservation for limited recreation. (Fresno County 2000)

At Shaver Lake and Balsam Meadows Forebay, there are 2,853 acres of SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries and are presented in Figure LAND 1-1a. These lands have been divided into nine areas to facilitate their description (Figure LAND 1-1a). The descriptions start at the south side of Shaver Lake and proceeds clockwise around the lake.

Area 1 is used as Camp Chawanakee and leased to the Boy Scouts of America. It is managed for camping and recreational activities. Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 2 is the location of Camp Edison (Figure LAND 1-1a). SCE developed and operates Camp Edison as a license condition for the Balsam Meadow Project (FERC Project No. 67). SCE operates the campground. Associated recreation facilities including marinas, boat rentals, a store, and stables, are operated by concessionaires under agreements with SCE. Surrounding lands are other SCE private lands managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 3 is north of Camp Edison and generally bounded by Shaver Dam and Hwy 168. This area was included in the FERC Project boundary for a formerly proposed recreation use area that was not developed. Surrounding lands are SCE private lands managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 4 includes a portion of Tunnel No. 5, which is a Balsam Meadow Project (FERC Project No. 67) facility. Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 5 is near the northern tip of Shaver Lake (Figure LAND 1-1a). The area includes a parking area for the County Boat Launch, access to the Sierra Marina, day use areas, and the North Shore Day Use area. Sierra Marina is operated by a concessionaire under agreement with SCE. The North Shore Day Use area was established as

mitigation for the Balsam Meadow Project (FERC Project No. 67). Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 6 is the Eagle Point Day Use area. This day use area was established as a mitigation measure for the Balsam Meadow Project (FERC Project No. 67). Public access to this day use area is by boat only. The Perimeter Road (USDA-FS Road 9S58) is closed to public vehicles just east of the North Shore Day Use area. Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 7 is the location of the Eastwood Powerstation tailrace (Figure LAND 1-1a). This area is closed to public vehicular access. Facilities for the Eastwood Powerstation (FERC Project No. 67) include access road, communication cable right-of-way, and access tunnels. Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 8 is near the North Fork Stevenson Creek channel. SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries include a portion of the North Fork Stevenson Creek channel, land over the Eastwood tailrace tunnel, and land over the Eastwood access tunnel. Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE Forestry Group for timber resources and wildlife habitat.

Area 9 is the Balsam Meadows Forebay (Figure LAND 1-1a). At Balsam Meadows Forebay, lands within FERC Project boundaries owned by SCE are used for hydroelectric development along with recreation improvements as a mitigation measure for the Balsam Meadows Project (FERC Project No. 67). Surrounding SCE private lands are managed by the SCE forestry group for timber resources.

At Huntington Lake, 213 acres of SCE private lands are within FERC Project boundaries (Figure LAND 1-1b). The majority of these lands are located below the highwater mark at Huntington Lake. Two SCE private parcels within FERC Project boundaries with land above the highwater mark are located on the south shore between Dams 1 and 2 and west of Dam 2 (Figure LAND 1-1b). These lands between Dams 1 and 2 include the footprint of the dam, the spillway, Tunnel No. 1, a portion of Dam 1, and a segment of USDA-FS Road 8S66B, which is used to access Dam 1. At the SCE private parcel west of Dam 2, the FERC Project boundaries include Tunnel No. 1 and a communication cable route. All hydro facilities at Huntington Lake are part of Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 (FERC Project No. 2175). Lands adjacent to these SCE private parcels above the highwater mark are owned and managed by the USDA-FS under Class III management prescription with limited timber harvests and limited range of multiple use objectives.

Near Big Creek Powerhouse No. 2, 5 acres of SCE private lands are within FERC Project boundaries (Figure LAND 1-1c). These lands include portions of the Canyon Road (USDA-FS Road 8S05) and Dawn Meadow Road (USDA-FS Road 8S13) and are part of Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 (FERC Project No. 2175). Adjacent public lands are

managed by the USDA-FS under Class II management prescription with moderate range of multiple use objectives and outputs and recreation opportunities are primarily for dispersed activities in a roaded natural setting.

Near Big Creek Powerhouse No. 3, 5 acres of SCE private lands are within FERC Project boundaries (Figure LAND 1-1d). These lands include a portion of the Canyon Road (USDA-FS Road 8S05) and a telephone line route, which are part of Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 (FERC Project No. 2175). Adjacent public lands are managed by the USDA-FS under Class II management prescription with moderate range of multiple use objectives and outputs and recreation opportunities are primarily for dispersed activities in a roaded natural setting. Adjacent private SCE lands are managed by the SCE Corporate Real Estate Department for hydroelectric generation use.

### SCE Land Management Practices

SCE's Corporate Real Estate Department oversees the management of all SCE private lands. This department manages SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries at Huntington Lake, near Big Creek No. 2, and near Big Creek No. 3. Within the Corporate Real Estate Department, the Forestry Group manages SCE's private lands surrounding Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek areas. This group manages the wildlife, water, fire, recreation, and vegetation resources on these SCE private lands. The SCE Forest Manager oversees all aspects of SCE's forest management and campground facilities. A team of specialists focus on assessment and management of specific resources and programs.

The SCE Forestry Group inventories the amount and location of timber and other resources on SCE private lands (including those within FERC Project boundaries) and oversees reforestation projects and also maintains the health of new and existing plantations on these lands. Revenues generated from timber harvest supports SCE's recreation, tree nursery and planting, and biometrics (vegetation measurement and categorization) programs (SCE 1999). SCE private lands around Shaver Lake are divided into four 'working circles' for timber harvest. SCE foresters prepare and update timber harvest plans for each working circle. Each working circle has a ten-year cutting cycle and are selected based on geography, stream locations, and access.

SCE wildlife biologists assess the overall condition of wildlife habitat, including sensitive areas. SCE's wildlife biologists integrate wildlife management with all other activities that occur on SCE forest lands. Meadows, wildlife, riparian habitats, and other resources on Project-related lands are administered and managed according to the provisions of the FERC licenses and agreements with other resource agencies. SCE's wildlife management program also engages in several monitoring programs. All rare, threatened, and endangered species are monitored annually. Critical habitat and nests sites are protected and yearly progress on reproductive success is documented. Detailed avian counts are completed annually in various locations and habitat types to measure the effects of SCE management practices on wildlife (SCE 1999).

SCE's resource protection specialist coordinates all managed burns on SCE lands, as well as the development and maintenance of community relations. SCE manages a prescribed burning program to create natural seedbeds, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the possibility or severity of wildfire (SCE 1999).

SCE's land management practices are consistent with the FERC licenses and existing land management plans.

#### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Special Use Authorizations (SUAs)

SCE currently holds 10 MOUs with public agencies including the USDA-FS for Project-related facilities and activities on SCE private lands within FERC Project boundaries. Table LAND 1-1 lists the agreement, its name/description, agency, FERC Project number, facility(ies), and dates. A total of five MOUs were established as part of the Balsam Meadows Powerhouse Development Project. Another three agreements were established in reference to the Balsam Meadow Project (FERC Project No. 67) facility operations and recreation developments. The remaining two agreements apply to all SCE Northern Hydro facilities: regarding undergrounding of appropriate powerlines and communication lines and the annual fire plan required as a license condition.

The Balsam Meadows Power Plant Project and related facilities are located on SCE private lands and SNF public lands. SCE maintains MOU's for the Balsam Meadows Power Plant Project. In addition, SCE has a SUA (PIN 4245-01) for facilities and activities on Sierra National Forest lands within FERC Project boundaries. SCE's SUAs including PIN 4245-01 are discussed in detail in LAND 7, Special Use Authorization Assessment 2003 Draft Technical Study Report.

Use of SCE private lands within FERC project boundaries are consistent with its MOUs and existing land management plans.

## **6.0 LITERATURE CITED**

Fresno County. 2000. Fresno County General Plan.

USDA-FS. 1999. Sierra National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Southern California Edison. 1999. Land Management Plan.

### **Consultation**

Terry Schumacher. Resource Specialist, U.S. Forest Service, Prather office. November, 2002. Personal communication with Rick McCartney, ENTRIX, Inc.

## TABLE

**Table LAND 1-1. Memorandum of Understanding on SCE Private Lands in FERC boundaries**

<b>Name/Description</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Project Number(s)</b>	<b>Facility(ies)</b>	<b>Date of Execution</b>	<b>Expiration Date</b>
1 Agreement between the CDFG and SCE relating to Federal Power Commission Project No.67 - mutual agreement of terms and conditions of FERC license.	CDFG	FERC No. 67	All Project No. 67 facilities	3/22/1971	9/28/2003
2 Memo of Understanding between the USDA-FS and SCE on FERC project No.67 - mutual agreement on responsibilities with respect to: full utilization of the project waters and adjacent project lands for recreational purposes; measures to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife resources affected by the project; land use management such as protection of soil, timber and water resources, public safety, fire protection, aesthetics of the development, water and water resources; and other matters of mutual interest and concern to both parties.	USDA-FS	FERC No. 67	Florence Lake, Mono Creek Diversion, Shaver Lake, and Stevenson Creek	4/16/1971	9/28/2003
3 Memo of Understanding between the USDA-FS and SCE to underground appropriate new and replacement powerlines and communication lines in National Forests in the California Region.	USDA-FS	N/A	All Facilities in California Region National Forests	10/1/1976	None
4 Second Amendment between the USDA-FS and SCE to Memo of Understanding for Project No.67 - mutual agreement to amend MOU executed on April 16, 1971 by deleting Part I, Recreation, and replace it with a new Part I .	USDA-FS	FERC No. 67	Florence Lake, Mono Creek Diversion, and Shaver Lake	2/5/1981	None
5 Fish and Wildlife Agreement between the CDFG and SCE for the Balsam Meadows Powerhouse Facilities FERC Project No. 67 - mutual agreement to share the responsibility for planning and evaluating measures intended to minimize the Facilities impacts on fish and wildlife. Edison will insure that the Facilities impacts do not exceed impact acreage as stated in Exhibit "S" filed with the FERC on Feb. 29, 1980, and in this agreement.	CDFG	FERC No. 67	Balsam Meadow Powerhouse Development	8/9/1982	None

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6 Memorandum of Agreement between the USDA-FS and SCE for the Balsam Meadow Powerhouse development Project No. 67 - mutual agreement to define responsibility to better enable: conservation and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources affected by the development; land use management such as protection of soil, timber and water resources, public safety, fire protection, aesthetics of the development, water and water resources; and other matters of mutual interest and concern to both parties.	USDA-FS	FERC No. 67	Balsam Meadow Powerhouse Development	4/20/1983	None
7 Recreation Amendment to (4/20/83) Memorandum of Agreement between the USDA-FS and SCE for the Balsam Meadow Powerhouse development Project No. 67.	USDA-FS	FERC No. 67	Balsam Meadow Powerhouse Development	10/24/1985	None
8 USDA-FS authorization for construction of facilities to enhance communications.	USDA-FS	FERC No. 67 FERC No.2174 FERC No. 2175	Balsam Meadow Forebay	3/3/1986	None
9 Memorandum of Understanding between the CDFG and SCE on meadow habitat mitigation for accidental release from Balsam Meadow Forebay in June 1999.	CDFG	FERC No. 67	Balsam Meadow Powerhouse Development	7/18/2001	None
10 SNF High Sierra and Bass Lake Ranger Districts Project (annual) Fire Plan for SCE's Northern Hydro Region.	USDA-FS	FERC No. 67 FERC No.120 FERC No. 2017 FERC No. 2085 FERC No. 2086 FERC No. 2174 FERC No. 2175	All Northern Region Facilities	2/1/2003	None

## **FIGURES**

## **Placeholder for Figures**

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