



DRAFT MEETING NOTES*
LEE VINING, FERC PROJECT NO. 1388
RECREATION AND LAND USE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING
MARCH 1, 2023, 9:00 AM–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.*

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- Present 2023 implementation plans for REC-1, REC-2, and LAND-2

2.0 ATTENDEES

Relicensing Team Members

Martin Ostendorf, Southern California Edison (SCE)
Matt Woodhall, SCE
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt
Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt
Kelly Larimer, Kleinschmidt
Angela Whelpley, Kleinschmidt
Karen Klosowski, Kleinschmidt
Lauren Rosenkranz, Kleinschmidt
Carissa Shoemaker, ERM

Technical Working Group Members & Interested Parties

Adam Barnett, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Stephanie Heller, USFS
Sheila Irons, USFS
Jameisha Washington, USFS
Alyssa Hockaday, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] coordinator in southern region)
Adam Cohen, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
Bryan Muro, SWRCB

3.0 COMPILED ACTION ITEMS

- **Relicensing Team** will send datasheets / survey forms out after this meeting for stakeholder review. Complete.
- **Relicensing Team** will send meeting invite for 3/15 at 9 am to 10 am Pacific Time. Complete.
- **Relicensing Team** will look for the USFS Over Snow Vehicle Use Management Plan coming out in May 2023.
- **Relicensing Team and USFS** will discuss logistics and necessity/nexus for over snow /winter surveys.

- **CDFW, Alyssa Hockaday** will confirm with Nick Buckmaster when the reservoirs will be stocked (before Fishmas?) and which target species will be stocked. Completed – usually yes, reservoirs would be stocked before Fishmas, but it depends on snowpack; rainbow trout is the only species that CDFW stocks.
- **Relicensing Team** will further assess the request to add Lower Lee Vining and Moraine campgrounds to the REC-2 survey.
- **Relicensing Team** will add the “industrial” area on the north side of Ellery Lake as a Key Observation Point (KOP) to the Aesthetics survey. Completed.

4.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt, welcomed Technical Working Group (TWG) members to the meeting, everyone introduced themselves, and Shannon provided an overview of the agenda. Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt, provided a safety moment.

Shannon reminded the group of the Project baseline: based on the 1992 FERC Environmental Assessment, there are no recreation facilities within the FERC Project Boundary.

5.0 REC-1 COMMENT 1: INCLUDE LOWER LEE VINING AND MORAINES CAMPGROUNDS IN REC-1 SURVEY

Question (Q) (Adam Barnett): Nearly a third of respondents from the area reported that they come to recreate in the upper canyon. Substantial can be debated, the amount responded was more than negligible. If we’re trying to evaluate the need for facilities it would make sense to ask people from those two new locations [Moraine and Lee Vining campgrounds].

Response (R) (Matthew Woodhall): We found that folks staying in the lower canyon did want to be there, so we conclude that they are camping where they want to be. Your concern was folks were being displaced from the upper area, which we did not find evidence of.

(R) (Adam Barnett): We will take a closer look at your results so we can understand.

6.0 REC-1 COMMENT 2: ASSESS THE OVER SNOW RECREATION IN PROJECT AREA

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): We want to clarify if USFS wants SCE to conduct additional surveys during the winter or just add additional over snow recreation questions to our surveys? We can include snowmobiling and skiing on the survey, but don’t see a clear nexus so don’t intend to do additional surveys.

(R) (Stephanie Heller): The over snow use is not huge in the area, but asking questions in the summer wouldn’t capture accurate results, because the user groups are not the same.

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): We do intend to be out there in April and May, are you asking us to come out specifically in winter to survey these groups?

(Q) (Finlay Anderson): Has the USFS measured winter recreation in the area?

(R) (Stephanie Heller): Unsure, but anecdotal evidence and winter-use guides for the area are available. I'm unsure if actual surveys have been done.

(Q) (Finlay Anderson): We would like to figure out how much of the project itself is driving use. We are trying to figure out how the recreation is connected to the project.

(R) (Stephanie Heller): The USFS is in the middle of over snow use management planning; the Saddlebag Lake area has been discussed a lot among user groups. Also, the backside of Tioga Lake where people want to have access to snowmobile. They access by going on the highway / Tioga Pass Road over snow on snowmobiles. They couldn't get up there last year, this year they can because there is enough snow.

(R) (Jameisha Washington): The use is not only snowmobiles, but also folks accessing Tuolumne Park on skis. Saddlebag is adjacent to that park, people are just looking to get out and do fun things, so they'll take the long road.

(Q) (Jameisha Washington): Regarding the ice climbing comment, how are we deciding what is in the project area? Doesn't the ice exist because of the project? The ice that is near the Poole Powerhouse.

(R) (Martin Ostendorf): The ice climbing group seems to be very specific. We think that ice climbing information can be obtained with consultation with those user groups and shouldn't warrant further questionnaires. How much of the use is induced by our project? We may want to survey use just to figure out how it is used and then determine if there is nexus.

(C) (Sheila Irons): I would add the ice climbing is more accessible since Poole Power Plant Road is plowed to the powerhouse.

(R) (Finlay Anderson): It sounds like the USFS is already starting to determine what use occurs. Ice climbing may be an additional discussion. The USFS is making an over snow management plan. We would like to collaborate and make sure the information is carried forward in our Draft License Application (DLA).

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): We have had some discussions with individuals at the Access Fund about ice climbing. Does the USFS have other contacts within the ice climbing community that we can engage with?

(R) (Adam Barnett): This year is going to be a late start even for summer recreation surveys, so the shoulder/spring season could be more focused on over snow use than other recreation in the canyon, so you may not need additional survey work, but converting earlier surveys to different questions to focus on over snow activities. I'm unsure what snowmobile use will be like this spring, but Saddlebag Lake Road will be used by snowmobilers.

(R) (Shannon Luoma): There are additional logistical challenges getting up there to survey in the snow. We can discuss this further.

(R) (Matthew Woodhall): We're having an almost record-setting snow year this year, so we'll gather that information as we get into the season. For example, the campground surveys will be delayed because of the snow. We'd be capturing the conditions during the high-snow season.

(Q) (Finlay Anderson): Would the USFS be able to provide the Relicensing Team with information about your management plan updates as it relates to winter recreation? This would be really useful for the license application.

(R) (Stephanie Heller): We are only at the very beginning of Over Snow Vehicle Use Management planning. We've had conversations with user groups, but we haven't done formal scoping yet. Our proposed action won't be out until May.

7.0 REC-1 STUDY PLAN FOR 2023

Angela Whelpley shared study plans for 2023.

(Q) (Angela Whelpley): Will CDFW be stocking the reservoirs prior to Fishmas?

(R) (Alyssa Hockaday): I'm unsure, but I will check with Nick Buckmaster and he will let us know.

(Q) (Angela Whelpley): We also want to know which target species will be stocked? Are there others to add to our list?

(R) (Alyssa Hockaday): I will ask Nick to confirm.

8.0 REC-2 COMMENT 1: INCLUDE SAWMILL WALK-IN AND JUNCTION CAMPGROUNDS IN REC-2

No stakeholder comments.

9.0 REC-2 COMMENT 2: INCLUDE LOWER LEE VINING AND MORAINES CAMPGROUNDS IN REC-2

(Q) (Adam Barnett): This is a similar issue to one we faced with Bishop Creek relicensing, there may become a need for additional overnight facilities in upper canyon, but we may not be able to expand them because of topographical constraints. We might not need to do a facilities assessment, but it would be worthwhile to determine if expansion is needed at those lower sites.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): We recognize that there is a ton of use in the vicinity, but we don't feel that including those additional sites is necessary at this time.

(R) (Adam Barnett): The USFS position is that there is a need for additional recreational capacity in the canyon. Sites in the lower canyon may be the only area that we can provide that in this project vicinity.

(R) (Finlay Anderson): We'll take this comment and work it into our process.

(R) (Matthew Woodhall): SCE's position is that in the condition assessment, assessing the condition now based on an unknown outcome is not worthwhile, if there is a known capacity issue in the upper canyon and we had to do offsets at other locations, then we could do some assessments to determine how to make that work. We don't believe these recreation sites are project-induced. We can look at these later if we ever get there.

10.0 REC-2 STUDY PLAN FOR 2023

Angela Whelpley shared study plans for 2023.

No stakeholder comments.

11.0 LAND-2 STUDY PLAN FOR 2023

Shannon Luoma shared study plans for 2023.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): There is an SCE area north of Ellery Lake that is “industrial looking” not USFS property and is in the project area. It is a denuded area north of the lake with some old structures and pull offs. We would like you to include that in the Aesthetics survey.

(R) (Shannon Luoma): Confirmed which area Adam was referring to in ArcGIS Online (AGOL) (IMG-0354 location).

(Q) (Carissa Shoemaker): Would the USFS want to help select the exact location [GPS coordinate] of each KOP?

(R) (Adam Barnett): Yes, we’d like to review the areas you choose.

Karen Klosowski summarized the KOP selection process, datasheet information that will be collected, and how the data will be used in the report.

12.0 SCHEDULE AND NEXT STEPS

Shannon asked the group if a March 15 meeting from 9 am to 10 am would work to discuss comments on the survey methods. No objections were heard, Adam Barnett and SCE can attend. Relicensing Team will send out an invitation and the survey methods documents.

13.0 FINAL Q&A

No stakeholder comments.

The Relicensing Team adjourned the meeting.