



DRAFT MEETING NOTES*
LEE VINING, FERC PROJECT NO. 1388
PROTECTION, MITIGATION, AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES STAKEHOLDER MEETING
AUGUST 15, 2024, 1:00 PM–3:00 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.*

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- Review proposed protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PME) measures for:
 - Minimum instream flows, reducing flow alteration requests, streamlining annual consultation needs
- Hear stakeholder suggestions for PMEs
- Address stakeholder questions
- Review proposed PME meeting schedule, bi-weekly meetings through December

2.0 ATTENDEES

Relicensing Team Members

Matthew Woodhall, SCE
Martin Ostendorf, SCE
Audry Williams, SCE
Seth Carr, SCE
Kelly Larimer, Kleinschmidt
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt
Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt
Bret Hoffman, Kleinschmidt
Isha Deo, Kleinschmidt
Carissa Shoemaker, Kleinschmidt
Heather Neff, Stillwater Sciences

Technical Working Group Members & Interested Parties

Adam Cohen, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
Beth Lawson, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
James Erdman, CDFW
Bryan Muro, SWRCB
Chris Shutes, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
Graham Meese, CDFW
Robert Di Paolo, Mono Lake Committee (MLC)
Jonathan Knight, US Forest Service (USFS)
Gabriel Gaspar, LADWP
Dustin Fischer, LADWP
Tristan Leong, USFS

3.0 COMPILED ACTION ITEMS

- Add a definition for water year types and how they are determined to the AQ-5 Report/FLA.
- Confirm if water years or run-off years are used and add to AQ-5 Report/FLA.
- Bret Hoffman to continue with Operations Model updates and provide to TWG.
- Stakeholders will bring flow suggestions to play with in the Operations Model to the next meeting (August 22).

4.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt, welcomed attendees and introduced the meeting.

5.0 PME TOPIC: MINIMUM INSTREAM FLOWS, REDUCING FLOW ALTERATION REQUESTS, STREAMLINING ANNUAL CONSULTATION NEEDS

Shannon described the PME topic to discuss as minimum instream flows, reducing flow alteration requests, streamlining annual consultation needs, and specifically flows coming from Saddlebag Lake. Matt Woodhall, SCE, explains that we are talking about instream flows, which aren't actually variance requests. The flows are defaults in the license and are used if SCE and USFS can't agree with flow numbers (cfs) during the annual spring consultation meeting. The idea is we will discuss if there are flows we can stick to without having to discuss annually. Noting that 'variance' has a heavier connotation.

- Tristan explained that there would likely still be an annual consultation requirement, but hopefully not bi-annually. The existing requirement in the license is hard to work with and can be made more efficient. Tristan proposed a single meeting that is not tied to setting flows for the Project.
- There was discussion on how the project defines the water year (WY) type. SCE's hydrographers use the averages of 100s of years of data and base the WY type on a percentile of 30% above and below for wet/normal. Graham and others suggested changing the average to a moving average of the most recent 30 years to keep the average more in-tune with climate changes.
- Beth suggested the methodology for proposing the years' worth of instream flows (below Saddlebag) would be to take WY type established then use in the model to release instream flows, stepped monthly, or implementing four different steps. Then the annual meeting would be a confirmation of the WY type.
- CDFW's objective is to restore something that looks more like a natural hydrograph and have some semblance of water neutrality. Matt explained that there are likely competing interests at play that could restrict this objective. Beth explained that a natural hydrograph is often the USFS objective; she proposes we look at the studies and see what type of flow we can go down to, see how we could step the flows down too, look at how that compares to historic water level elevations, and how it changes the water levels in the reservoirs.
- Robert explained that MLC is mostly wanting to see flows below Poole Powerhouse as the potential for biggest riparian habitat impacts would be there, the greatest implications for MLC.
- Graham, Robert, and Adam discussed how the Sales Agreement affects reservoir regulation.

- Chris asked about the impacts to SCE generation if a more natural hydrograph was used. SCE wants to spread flows out so we can keep generating year-round. The Operations Model can be used to determine impacts.
- Graham described how in normal and wet WYs, CDFW has interest in mimicking a pulse flow out of Saddlebag during the peak runoff. And then push the water all the way through to Lower Lee Vining Creek. We'd also want to include a scenario with a peak in early June.
- Robert explained that in wetter years, we have the opportunity to get some peak flow events, which would have riparian benefits like recruitment, geomorphic benefits, restoration efforts in lower Lee Vining Creek, and work well with SCE's generation goals. In drier years, we have different ecological opportunities and longer durations of flows could be beneficial like for water temperatures for fish, etc. We should try and tie ecological outcomes to certain operational proposals.
- Several attendees asked about access possibilities at the dams to adjust flows early in the year. Site access is snowpack and road access dependent and varies every year.
- Shannon summarized that the group wants to spend time with the Operations Model to possibly lower flows early in the year (Saddlebag), potential monthly increases/steps, and get a smaller TWG together to look at flows together with the model.

6.0 SCHEDULE AND NEXT STEPS

Shannon Luoma discussed the schedule of upcoming meetings, the next one (fifth) is planned for September 12. We should have another before then to walk through the Operations Model together. Stakeholders would bring scenarios to the discussion so we can run through the model. Key attendees would be Beth Lawson, Bret Hoffman, Tristan Leong, Graham Meese, Adam Cohen, Chris Shutes, Robert Di Paolo, Greg Reis, Bryan Muro, and remainder of the relicensing team. The group conferred that August 22 from 8-10am would work for the majority.

- (C) Beth Lawson – We will come prepared with some scenarios.
- (C) Chris Shutes – What is the meeting topic for September 12?
 - (R) Shannon Luoma – A continuation of this, instream flows again.

The relicensing team adjourned the meeting.