

Lee Vining, FERC Project No. 1388

TERRESTRIAL AND BOTANICAL TWG 4 MEETING NOTES MAY 26, 2021; 10 AM – 10:45 PM PDT

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

1. Attendees

Relicensing Team Members

Allison Rudalevige, Psomas
Brad Blood, Psomas
Carissa Shoemaker, ERM
Edith Read, ERA
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt
Matthew Woodhall, SCE
Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt
Steve Norton, Psomas

Agencies and Interested Stakeholders

Alyssa Marquez, CDFW
Blake Englehardt, USFS
James “Jim” Erdman, CDFW
Thomas Torres, USFS

2. Welcome, Introductions, Review of Notes and Other TWGs’ Proposed Studies, Proposed Studies

- Matthew Woodhall provided a safety moment
- Introductions of team and all participants via the chat window
- Review of notes/comments and action items from April TWG
 - Recent agencies discussions regarding consultation on Yosemite toad included:
 - Questions to address in Yosemite toad study:
 - Do higher lake levels result in increased foot traffic through the occupied meadow
 - Is the water level of the meadow directly affected by the lower lake levels of Saddlebag
 - Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) data is not likely applicable, so SCE is not planning to pursue it, no USFS update at this time
- The Relicensing Team discussed the proposed studies that are being discussed in the other resource TWGs. SCE intends to make sure that on an ongoing basis, the subject matter experts for each TWG are communicating with each other so that TWGs can ensure that interdisciplinary objectives are covered.
 - In Aquatics TWG, the Hydro Operations Model study has a new objective to understand the intra-day variation in flows and how these may affect specific resources.
 - In Recreation, the Visual Quality Assessment is a newly proposed study.
- Proposed Wildlife Study

- Proposing to extend the survey area for wildlife to assess willow flycatcher nesting habitat between Poole Powerhouse and LADWP diversion.
- Pedestrian survey
- Comment: Alyssa Marquez CDFW
 - For the ground-truthing of vegetation, how will you classify vegetation, by height or by species type?
 - Response: Relicensing Team – Agreed that the internal structure is what matters, we do want to get eyes on the vegetation to assess the sub-structure height and density which can't be observed remotely.
- Comment: James Erdman CDFW
 - What about including Tioga Lake for the Yosemite toad study area, is that included or only Saddlebag Lake?
 - Response: Relicensing Team – Yes, we are still internally discussing which portions of Tioga Lake will be included in the proposed study plan.
- Focused Yosemite toad survey
- Yosemite toad habitat-recreation interaction survey would assess pedestrian access of the meadow near Saddlebag Lake to see if there are impacts occurring from foot traffic.
- Proposed Botanical Study
 - Assess rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) species, e.g., whitebark pine and other special-status species
 - Ground-truthing the existing USFS vegetation layers
 - Riparian monitoring study results would be incorporated
 - Invasive species survey
 - Comment: Blake Englehardt USFS
 - I agree that these botanical methods sound good.

3. Schedule & Next Steps

- Study plan outlines will be distributed with the PAD.
- Joint agency meeting (JAM) and receipt of comments on final study plans by end of September and beginning of October.
- Comment: James Erdman CDFW
 - I visited Saddlebag Lake in mid-May and it was still totally covered in snow. Saddlebag and Tioga Lake levels were very low. Ellery Lake was totally full and ice free. The Bishop area has much less snow.
- No additional TWG meetings scheduled at this time, TBD as needed.