FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20426
July 28, 2020

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 77-298 – California
Project No. 77-285
Potter Valley Project
Sonoma County Water Agency
Mendocino County Inland Water Agency and Power Commission
California Trout, Inc.
County of Humboldt, California
Round Valley Indian Tribes

VIA FERC Service

Subject: Scoping Document 3 for the Potter Valley Project

To the Parties Addressed:

On April 6, 2017, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) a Notice of Intent (NOI) and a Pre-Application Document (PAD) and initiated the pre-filing steps of the Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) to relicense the 9.959-megawatt (MW) Potter Valley Project (FERC No. 77). The existing project is located on the Eel and East Fork Russian Rivers, in Lake and Mendocino Counties, California. The project occupies lands owned by PG&E and National Forest System Lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, Mendocino National Forest.

On June 1, 2017, we issued Scoping Document 1, in which we disclosed our preliminary view of the scope of environmental issues associated with the proposed action identified in the PAD. The Commission hosted two public scoping meetings on June 28, 2017, in Ukiah, California,[1] and based on oral and written comments received during the scoping process, we prepared and issued Scoping Document 2 on September 18, 2017.

[1] Public notice of the meetings was published in the Federal Register and in the *Lake County Record Bee*, the *Lake County News*, and the *Mendocino Beacon*. A court reporter recorded and transcribed both scoping meetings.

On January 25, 2019, PG&E filed a notice of withdrawal of its NOI and PAD, indicating it was discontinuing its efforts to relicense the project. The withdrawal became effective on February 11, 2019. On March 1, 2019, the Commission issued a Notice Soliciting Applications for interested applicants, other than PG&E, to file NOIs, PADs, and requests to complete the pre-filing stages of the licensing process.

On June 28, 2019, the NOI Parties[2] filed a NOI to file an application for a new license for the Potter Valley Project. On August 1, 2019, the Commission issued a public notice of the NOI Parties' intent to continue the ILP initiated by PG&E and file a final license application by April 14, 2022.

On May 13, 2020, the NOI Parties filed a Feasibility Study Report that includes information on the proposed Regional Entity to operate and maintain the project and proposed changes to project facilities and operations that differ significantly from what PG&E originally proposed in its PAD. The NOI Parties' proposed changes include, but are not limited to, removal of Scott Dam, increasing diversion capacity at the Van Arsdale Diversion, and modifications to the Commission's previously approved study plan.[3] As a result, we are re-initiating our scoping process for the Potter Valley Project.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, Commission staff intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will be used by the Commission to determine whether, and under what conditions, to issue a new license for the project. The public scoping process will support and assist our environmental review, to ensure that all pertinent issues are identified and analyzed, and that the EIS is thorough and balanced.

We invite all interested agencies, Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to participate in the scoping process and are circulating the attached Scoping Document 3 (SD3) to provide you with information on the Potter Valley Project. We are also soliciting your comments and suggestions on our preliminary list of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EA. Further information on our scoping process is available in the enclosed SD3.

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[2] The NOI Parties are proxies for a new Regional Entity that ultimately would be the license applicant for the project. The Regional Entity has not yet been formed under California law, but once formed, the Regional Entity would supplant the NOI Parties in this ILP proceeding. The NOI Parties are Mendocino County Inland Water Agency and Power Commission; Sonoma County Water Agency; California Trout, Inc.; County of Humboldt, California; and the Round Valley Indian Tribes.

[3] On February 15, 2018, the OEP Director issued its Study Plan Determination, which can be accessed at: http://elibrary.FERC.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20180215-3070.

SD3 is being distributed to both the NOI Parties' distribution list and the Commission's official mailing list for the Potter Valley Project (see Section 10, *Mailing List* of the attached SD3). If you wish to be added to or removed from the Commission's official mailing list, please send your request by email to efiling@ferc.gov or by mail. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852. All written or emailed requests must specify your wish to be added to or removed from the mailing list and must clearly identify the following on the first page: **Potter Valley Project No. 77-298.**

Please review SD3 and, if you wish to provide comments, follow the instructions in Section 5.0, *Request for Information and Studies*. The Commission strongly encourages electronic filings. If you have any questions about SD3, the scoping process, or how Commission staff will develop the EIS for this project, please contact Quinn Emmering at (202) 502-6382 or quinn.emmering@ferc.gov. Additional information about the Commission's licensing process and the Potter Valley Project may be obtained from our website, www.ferc.gov. The deadline for filing comments is **August 27, 2020.**

Enclosure: Scoping Document 3

SCOPING DOCUMENT 3

POTTER VALLEY PROJECT

CALIFORNIA

PROJECT NO. 77

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Office of Energy Projects
Division of Hydropower Licensing
Washington, DC

July 2020

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Potter Valley Project, No. 77

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or FERC), under the authority of the Federal Power Act (FPA),[4] may issue licenses for terms ranging from 30 to 50 years for the continued operation, and maintenance of non-federal hydroelectric projects (relicensing). On June 28, 2019, the NOI Parties[5] filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) to seek a new license for the existing Potter Valley Project No. 77 (project).[6] In the notice, the NOI Parties state that it incorporates by reference PG&E's Pre-Application Document (PAD) as part the project proceeding and that all of the general information on the project described in the PAD remains the same.[7] On May 13, 2020, the NOI Parties filed a Feasibility Study Report, which includes its proposed changes to the project from what PG&E originally proposed.[8] Therefore, in addition to the NOI Parties' Feasibility Study Report and NOI, stakeholders should also refer to PG&E's PAD for general information about existing project facilities, project operations, and environmental resources in the project area.

The Potter Valley Project is located on the Eel River and East Fork Russian River, in Lake and Mendocino Counties, California. The project has a total installed capacity of 9.959 megawatts (MW) and, under current operation (since 2007), an average annual generation of 19,900 megawatt-hours (MWh).

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[4] 16 U.S.C. § 791(a)-825(r) (2012).

[5] The NOI Parties are proxies for a new Regional Entity that ultimately would be the license applicant for the project. The Regional Entity has not yet been formed under California law, but once formed the Regional Entity would supplant the NOI Parties in this ILP proceeding. The NOI Parties are Mendocino County Inland Water Agency and Power Commission; Sonoma County Water Agency; California Trout, Inc.; County of Humboldt, California; and the Round Valley Indian Tribes.

[6] The current license for the Potter Valley Project was issued with an effective date of October 1, 1983 and expires on April 14, 2022.

[7] On April 6, 2017, PG&E filed its PAD, which can be viewed at: http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20170406-5314.

[8] The NOI Parties' Feasibility Study Report can be viewed at: http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/file_list.asp?accession_num=20200513-5025.

Section 3.0, *Proposed Action and Alternatives*, provides a detailed description of the project, and figure 1 shows the project location within the Eel and Russian River Basins. The existing FERC project boundary encompasses about 3,515 acres in total and occupies lands owned by PG&E (2,328 acres), National Forest System Lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, Mendocino National Forest (1,146 acres), and privately-owned lands (41 acres).

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969,[9] the Commission's regulations, and other applicable laws require that we independently evaluate the environmental effects of relicensing the Potter Valley Project as proposed by the NOI Parties, and also consider reasonable alternatives to the NOI Parties' proposed action. We intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that describes and evaluates the probable effects, including an assessment of the site-specific and cumulative effects, if any, of the proposed action and alternatives. The EIS preparation will be supported by this paper scoping process to ensure identification and analysis of all pertinent issues.

[9] National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4370(f) (2012).

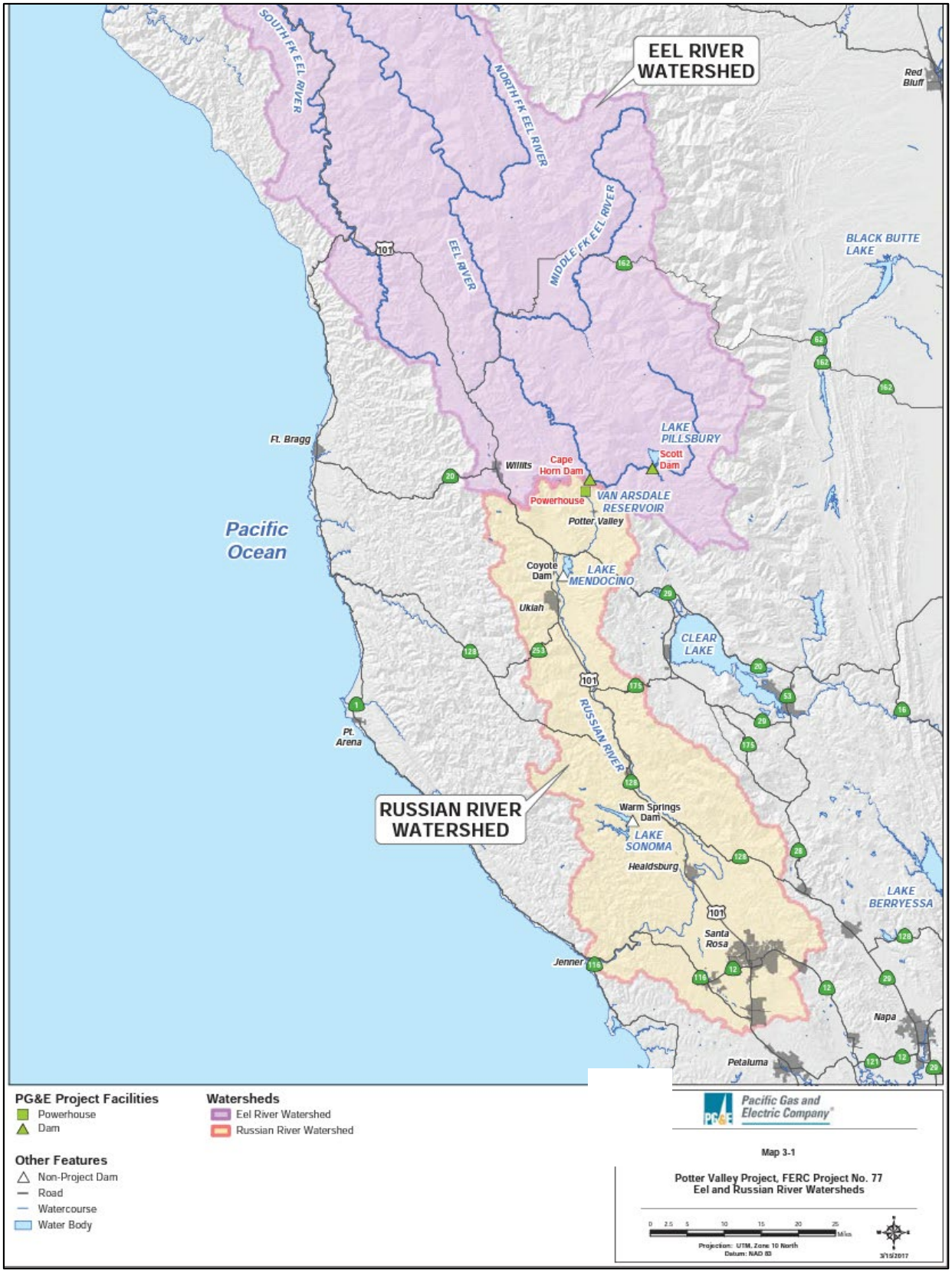

Figure 1. Location of the Potter Valley Project and vicinity (Source: NOI Parties).

2.0 SCOPING

This Scoping Document 3 (SD3) is intended to advise all participants as to the proposed scope of the EIS and to seek additional information pertinent to this analysis. This document contains: (1) a description of the scoping process and schedule for the development of the EIS; (2) a description of the proposed action and alternatives; (3) a preliminary identification of environmental issues and proposed studies; (4) a request for comments and information; (5) a proposed EIS outline; and (6) a preliminary list of comprehensive plans that are applicable to the project.

2.1 PURPOSES OF SCOPING

Scoping is the process used to identify issues, concerns, and opportunities for enhancement or mitigation associated with a proposed action. In general, scoping should be conducted during the early planning stages of a project. The purposes of the scoping process are as follows:

- invite participation of federal, state, and local resource agencies; Indian tribes; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and the public to identify significant environmental and socioeconomic issues related to the proposed project;
- determine the resource issues, depth of analysis, and significance of issues to be addressed in the EIS;
- identify how the project would or would not contribute to cumulative effects in the project area;
- identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action that should be evaluated in the EIS;
- solicit from participants available information on the resources at issue, including existing information and study needs; and
- determine the resource areas and potential issues that do not require detailed analysis during review of the project.

Commission staff does not anticipate holding a formal public or agency scoping meeting at this time. Consequently, interested entities are requested to file with the Commission any data and information concerning environmental, land-use, and socioeconomic issues in the project area and the project's potential impacts to the aforementioned.

Following the scoping comment period, Commission staff will evaluate the information provided to determine the level of analysis needed in the EIS for each potential environmental, land-use, and socioeconomic issue. If comments provided indicate that one or several potential issues raised in this scoping document have little potential for causing significant effects, the issue or issues will be identified and the reasons for not providing a more detailed analysis will be given in the EIS. Commission staff will revise this SD3, if necessary, to reflect comments received during the comment period.

2.2 SCOPING COMMENTS

There are several opportunities for agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and the public to provide comments to the Commission regarding this project. The opportunities occur:

- during the public scoping process and study reports when we solicit written comments regarding the scope of the issues and analysis for the EIS;
- in response to the Commission's notice that the project is ready for environmental analysis;
- and after issuance of the EIS when we solicit written comments on the EIS.

We invite all interested agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and individuals to file written comments to assist staff in identifying the scope of environmental issues that should be analyzed in the EIS as well as additional information pertinent to this analysis. See Section 5.0, *Request for Information*, for instructions on filing written comments and information with the Commission.

Following the scoping comment period, all issues raised will be reviewed and decisions made as to the level of analysis needed. If we receive no substantive comments on SD3, we will not prepare a Scoping Document 4 (SD4). Otherwise, a SD4 addressing substantive comments received will be issued for informational use only by all participants or interested persons; no responses will be required. The EIS will address recommendations and input received during the scoping process.

3.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

In accordance with NEPA, the environmental analysis will consider the following alternatives, at a minimum: (1) the no-action alternative, (2) the NOI Parties' proposed action, and (3) alternatives to the proposed action.

3.1 NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the no-action alternative, the Potter Valley Project would continue to operate as required by the current project license (i.e., there would be no change to the existing environment). No new environmental protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures would be implemented. We use this alternative to establish baseline environmental conditions for comparison with other alternatives.

3.1.1 Existing Project Facilities

Dams

Scott Dam

Scott Dam is located on the Eel River (river mile 168.5). The dam is a concrete, gravity-type, ogee-shaped structure having a maximum height of 130 feet and a total length of 805 feet. The ogee crest, which is at an elevation of 1,818.3 feet msl[10] is surrounded by five radial gates, each 32 feet wide by 10 feet high, and 26 steel slide gates, each 10 feet high and varying in width from 7.5 to 10.08 feet. The gates are manually operated with the exception of Gate 13, which is automated. Storage releases are made through a 72-inch-diameter, riveted-steel outlet pipe passing through the dam at invert elevation 1,730.3 feet, which is controlled by a 42-inch Lauren-Johnson needle valve. The needle valve is remotely operated.

Cape Horn Dam

Cape Horn Dam is located on the Eel River downstream of Scott Dam (river mile 156.8). The dam is 520 feet long and consists of an earthfill section and a concrete, gravity overflow spillway section. The earthfill section on the right side of the dam is approximately 237 feet long and has a 10-foot-wide crest at elevation 1,519 feet. The maximum height of the embankment is roughly 60 feet at the concrete retaining wall on the left side of the embankment. The embankment is comprised of earthfill with a concrete corewall. The concrete, gravity overflow spillway section forms the left side of

[10] All elevations included in this document are presented in feet above mean sea level (msl).

the dam and has a maximum height of 63 feet. The spillway crest is at elevation 1,490.3 feet and is 283 feet long.

There is a 5-foot-diameter outlet through the spillway structure, which was abandoned in place in 1987 due to an accumulation of sediment preventing its operation, and the construction of a weir associated with fish ladder improvements that flooded the downstream side of the outlet. Currently, water passing downstream of the dam flows through the east and west release gates at the center of the dam, through the fish ladder on river left (west bank), or over the length of the spillway crest.

A pool-and-weir-type fish ladder provides fish passage over Cape Horn Dam allowing fish access to the Eel River and its tributaries between Cape Horn Dam and Scott Dam. The fish ladder is 434 feet long and rises a vertical distance of 40 feet. It is comprised of 49 pools, each measuring 8 feet long, 4 to 10 feet wide, and 3 to 4 feet deep. The path of the ladder is roughly u-shaped, with the entrance located about 80 feet downstream from the toe of the dam and the exit at the west end of the dam crest. The ladder passes through the non-project Van Arsdale Fisheries Station, operated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The station is currently used to enumerate migrating salmon and steelhead and collect fish tissue for genetic analysis. Downstream migrant fish screened at the Van Arsdale Intake, located approximately 400 feet upstream of Cape Horn Dam, are introduced into the fish ladder just upstream of the counting station. A corrugated pipe along the ladder provides alternative upstream passage for adult lamprey.

Reservoirs

Lake Pillsbury

Lake Pillsbury, formed by the construction of Scott Dam on the Eel River, has a surface area of approximately 2,275 acres at the normal maximum water surface elevation of 1,828.3 feet and a current storage capacity of 76,876 acre-feet. Due to concerns of bank instability in the reservoir and the potential for sloughing material to block the outlet needle valve or be released downstream creating high turbidity and streambed sedimentation, the reservoir is operated to maintain a minimum reservoir storage of at least 10,000 acre-feet, resulting in a normal usable storage of 66,876 acre-feet.

Van Arsdale Reservoir

Van Arsdale Reservoir was formed by the construction of Cape Horn Dam on the Eel River. The reservoir has a surface area of approximately 106 acres at the normal maximum water surface elevation of 1,494.3 feet. The gross storage capacity of Van Arsdale Reservoir was originally 1,457 acre-feet with a usable capacity of 1,140 acre-

feet. Accumulation of sediment over time has resulted in significant loss of reservoir capacity. Based on the most recent bathymetric and topographic surveys conducted in 2002 and 2006, the current reservoir capacity is less than 390 acre-feet.

Diversion System

Van Arsdale Diversion Intake Structure

The Van Arsdale diversion intake diverts water upstream of Cape Horn Dam and conveys it to the Potter Valley Powerhouse, approximately 9,257 feet to the south. The intake structure, located on the southwest bank of Van Arsdale Reservoir, is approximately 400 feet upstream from Cape Horn Dam. At the entrance to the diversion tunnel, the intake consists of two fish screen bays, an inclined plane screen in each bay, an Archimedes screw pump, and a fish return channel.

The fish return channel leads to a secondary fish screen that reduces the fish return flow from 4 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 2 cfs. This reduced flow carries screened fish and debris through a series of fish return pipes to a half-round ogee spillway and a baffled flume, where it discharges into the fish ladder just upstream of CDFW's Van Arsdale Fisheries Station (non-project).

Each of the inclined plane fish screens is approximately 82 feet long and 8 feet wide and is comprised of wedge wire screening material with 1/8-inch slotted openings. The screens are cleaned by an automated compressed air sparging system that blows debris off the screens from below. The debris is then carried by water flowing over the top of the screens to the fish bypass system. A series of flow and fish passage acceptance tests of the screens were conducted to determine if the screens satisfied specific and general guidelines that had been developed by PG&E, CDFW, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The results of the tests indicated that the screens met the majority of the acceptance criteria. Issues that were identified as needing attention to fully meet the acceptance criteria were later addressed.

The fish screens and fish return system remain in continuous operation from October through July, except during periods of storm runoff when flows are 7,000 cfs or greater, at which time diversion is ceased to avoid damage to the screens. During August and September, the fish screens and the return system may be taken out of service for maintenance as long as entrainment below the powerhouse is monitored 1 day (24-hour duration) per week when the diversion is unscreened to document the absence of fish. Typically, one screen is taken off-line to be cleaned at a time, allowing diversion to occur through the other screen, and thus avoiding fish entrainment. Each screen is designed to pass 240 cfs with an approach velocity of 0.4 foot per second (i.e., 600 square feet of screen). However, the screens have been derated to 50 percent capacity due to current mechanical limitations, and so only 240 cfs total can be diverted through the screens.

Tunnels/Conduits

A trans-basin diversion system comprised of tunnels, steel pipes, and wood stave conduits passes through two ridges transporting water from the Van Arsdale Reservoir to the Potter Valley Powerhouse. The first ridge is crossed by a 5,826-foot-long underground tunnel (Tunnel No. 1). The second ridge is crossed by an 807-foot-long underground tunnel (Tunnel No. 2). Tunnel No. 1 and Tunnel No. 2 are connected by a 457-foot-long aboveground conduit which crosses the valley between the two ridges (Conduit No. 1). A second aboveground conduit section (Conduit No. 2), approximately 367 feet in length, connects the downstream end of Tunnel No. 2 to Penstock No. 1 (1,793 feet long) and Penstock No. 2 (1,812 feet long).

Penstocks and Penstock Bypass

Penstock No. 1

Penstock No. 1 is a 1,793-foot-long, riveted-steel pipe varying in diameter from 62 inches at the gate valve to 48 inches at the Potter Valley Powerhouse. Penstock No. 1 supplies water to Unit No. 1.

Penstock No. 2

Penstock No. 2 is a 1,812-foot-long, riveted-steel pipe varying in diameter from 62 inches at the gate valve to 48 inches at the Potter Valley Powerhouse. A 30-inch-diameter wye branch from Penstock No. 2 supplies water to Unit No. 3 and Unit No. 4.

Penstock Bypass Channel and Powerhouse Bypass System

A butterfly valve house is located at the junction of Tunnel No. 1 and Conduit No. 1. Beginning near the butterfly valve house and terminating in the discharge canal downstream of the powerhouse, a seasonal creek is used as a penstock bypass channel to maintain flows in the East Fork Russian River during powerhouse outages that include dewatering of the entire penstock system. The capacity of the penstock bypass channel is approximately 25 cfs.

PG&E constructed a powerhouse bypass system in November 2009 with a capacity of 140 cfs. This is a fully automated system that is used to maintain required flow releases through the powerhouse as measured at gage E-16. The powerhouse bypass system can only be used when the penstock is in service (the limited-capacity penstock bypass channel is still used when the penstock is taken out of service).

Powerhouse, Switchyard, and Tailrace

Potter Valley Powerhouse

The 9.959-MW Potter Valley Powerhouse has three generating units. Water surface at Van Arsdale Reservoir at spill crest elevation (1,490.3 feet), yields a static powerhouse head equal to 475.5 feet. The powerhouse is a steel-frame structure approximately 101 feet long by 53 feet wide.

The three generating units are Francis turbines and are further described below.

- Unit No. 1[11] is a 6,500-horsepower, single horizontal reaction turbine operating at 720 revolutions per minute (RPM) that is directly connected to a 4,400-kilowatt (kW) generator rated at 5,500 kilovolt-amperes (kVA).

- Unit 3 is a 4,000-horsepower, single horizontal reaction turbine operating at 450 RPM that is directly connected to a 2,559-kW generator rated at 3,187 kVA.

- Unit 4 is a 4,000-horsepower, single horizontal reaction turbine operating at 450 RPM that is directly connected to a 3,060-kW generator rated at 3,400 kVA.

Potter Valley Switchyard

The Potter Valley Switchyard, located adjacent to the powerhouse, contains a main transformer bank with a total capacity of 12,000 kVA and steps up the powerhouse output from 2.4 kilovolts (kV) to 60 kV. The bank consists of four 4,000-kVA, single-phase, 60-cycle, air-cooled, outdoor-type transformers with one used as a spare. One station service transformer bank provides station light and power to the powerhouse. Three transformer banks (one is a backup) and related facilities associated with PG&E's 12-kV distribution system, are non-project.[12]

Potter Valley Tailrace

The three generating units discharge water into the Potter Valley Powerhouse tailrace. The tailrace is comprised of three individual concrete channels that join together into a common channel approximately 60 feet downstream from the powerhouse. This

[11] Original Units Nos. 1 and 2 were replaced in 1939 as Unit No. 1.

[12] Transmission lines are not part of the project. Power is fed directly to PG&E's interconnected transmission system, which passes through the powerhouse switchyard.

common channel continues another 25 feet to the 12-foot by 6-foot tailrace radial gate, and forms the head works for the non-project Potter Valley Irrigation District (PVID) East and West Canals. Water not diverted to the PVID canals flows into a 60-foot-long Venturi flume that discharges into the 6,325-foot-long Powerhouse Discharge Canal. Water from the Powerhouse Discharge Canal flows into the East Fork Russian River.

Project Recreation Facilities

A variety of developed project recreation facilities are located in the immediate vicinity of the project. The developed project recreation facilities include family campgrounds, group campgrounds, and day-use facilities that are open to the public.

Five family campgrounds and one group campground are located along the shoreline of Lake Pillsbury. In addition, one campground with both family and group capacity is located along the Eel River upstream of Van Arsdale Reservoir. Developed day use facilities in the vicinity of Lake Pillsbury include a visitor information kiosk, three day-use areas, three boat launches, and associated parking and picnic areas.

A variety of non-project private recreation facilities, including the Lake Pillsbury Resort, private camps, and private residence tracts are also located around Lake Pillsbury. Except for Westshore Camp, all private recreation facilities in the vicinity of Lake Pillsbury are located on Forest Service lands, and therefore, operated under long-term lease agreements with the Forest Service. The majority of the Westshore Camp is located on PG&E land with a small portion located on Forest Service lands. The grounds are operated by the Westshore Campers Association under a long-term lease agreement with PG&E. The owners of the private recreation facilities around Lake Pillsbury maintain boat docks and/or launches along the shoreline. These boat docks and launches are located within the FERC project boundary, on land owned by PG&E, and are therefore operated under long-term agreements with PG&E.

3.1.2 Existing Project Operation

The project is operated in compliance with existing regulatory requirements, agreements, and water rights to generate power and deliver consumptive water to local water users. The following sections summarize water management, regulatory requirements, water rights, and water supply agreements associated with the project.

Water Management

The project began operating in 1908. As environmental values have evolved, so too has PG&E's operation of the project. Historically (i.e., prior to 1979), PG&E was required by the Federal Power Commission, FERC's predecessor, to maintain a minimum

year-round streamflow of 2 cfs in the Eel River below Cape Horn Dam. However, beginning in the fall of 1979, minimum streamflow requirements were increased substantially to mimic the pattern and timing of the natural hydrograph of the Upper Eel River. Over the years since then, the flow regime has been modified periodically based on the results of extensive fisheries studies and water modeling efforts but has continued to mimic the natural hydrograph.

Beginning in 2004, a flow regime prescribed by NMFS (the federal agency under the Endangered Species Act [ESA] with jurisdiction over listed anadromous fish species) was incorporated into PG&E's FERC license via a license amendment. The flow regime was included in the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) of the Biological Opinion prepared by NMFS in 2002 for project operations and is designed to protect salmon and steelhead populations in the Upper Eel River Watershed. The flow regime was developed based on data from years of study conducted by PG&E and others, including: an initial 3-year relicensing study (1979–1982); a 10-year license compliance study (1985–1996); input from many stakeholders, including federal and state resource agencies, Native American tribes, water supply and agricultural interests, and non-governmental organizations. It remains the currently required flow regime.

Today, NMFS continues to closely evaluate flows in the Eel and Russian Rivers, seeking to balance the benefits to salmon and steelhead in both rivers while considering other beneficial uses. PG&E continues to conduct annual fisheries monitoring studies in the Eel River and closely communicates with NMFS, CDFW, and Native American tribes regarding the protection of salmon and steelhead populations.

The current Eel River flow schedule below Cape Horn Dam is very complex and is designed to mimic the natural hydrograph. For example, minimum summer flow requirements in the Eel River below Cape Horn Dam range from 3 to 5 cfs in very dry years, 9 to 20 cfs in dry years, 15 to 25 cfs in wet years, and 30 to 35 cfs in very wet years. During the fall through spring period, the flow schedule incorporates natural flow variability, by adjusting flows on a daily basis, based on natural inflows to the project. During years of moderate to high inflows, minimum flow requirements increase during the fall to 140 cfs, increase in early spring to 200 cfs, and then decrease back to the summer flow minimums during late spring and early summer. During years of low inflow, minimum flow requirements increase during the early fall to 25 cfs, increase in late fall to 100 cfs, and then decrease back to summer minimums during spring. This highly complex flow schedule evolved from a prior study flow schedule initiated in late 1979 and later modified based on the results of extensive fisheries studies. Salmon and steelhead habitat were substantially enhanced through implementation of the current flow schedule.

Minimum flow requirements in the East Fork Russian River below the powerhouse are also specified in the RPA. These minimum flows range from 5 to 75 cfs

between May 15 and September 15 and range from 5 to 35 cfs between September 16 and May 14 depending on water year classification. Releases for PVID are subject to a flow cap. During the growing season, defined as April 15 to October 15, the maximum release to PVID is 50 cfs. During the rest of the year, the maximum release to PVID is 5 cfs. Brief exceptions to this flow cap are allowed for frost protection purposes. As specified in the RPA, diversions from the Eel River to the East Fork Russian River are limited to the amounts set out in the RPA when the actual amount of water stored in Lake Pillsbury ("storage") is below a particular threshold, which changes daily. The storage thresholds for limiting diversions are referred to as the Target Storage Curve. When the amount of water stored in Lake Pillsbury exceeds the Target Storage Curve value on a given day, PG&E can divert water above and beyond the minimum releases to East Fork Russian River plus PVID's allotment. However, when the amount of water stored in Lake Pillsbury is below the Target Storage Curve, PG&E's diversion is capped at making the minimum releases to East Fork Russian River and delivering PVID's required allotment. To ensure that every possible effort was made to maximize the amount of water stored during the important pre-dry-season period, Target Storage Curve values were set at levels higher than can be attained during the spring.

Regulatory Requirements

Project operations are regulated by requirements contained in: (1) the existing 1983 FERC license; (2) the 2004 license amendment, which incorporated the terms of NMFS' RPA; and (3) a 2007 operational "reinterpretation" of the terms of the 2002 RPA. The project is further limited by PG&E's existing water rights and water supply agreement with PVID.

Water Rights

PG&E holds water rights for both power and consumptive uses. Water is diverted from the Eel River for generation at Potter Valley Powerhouse in the East Fork Russian River Watershed. After passing through the Potter Valley Powerhouse, a portion of the powerhouse outflow is diverted via canals to PVID for consumptive use. The remaining outflow is abandoned to the East Fork Russian River. This abandoned water from powerhouse operations adds significant inflow to Lake Mendocino and benefits downstream users.

PG&E has three licensed water rights for project diversions and two pre-1914 water rights. License 1424, with a priority date of March 12, 1920, allows PG&E to divert and store up to 102,366 acre-feet per annum (afa) at Lake Pillsbury for the beneficial uses of hydropower generation and incidental Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement. License 1199, with a priority date of August 15, 1927, allows PG&E to divert and store up to 4,500 afa at Lake Pillsbury for irrigation purposes within the PVID service area. License 5545, with a priority date of March 11, 1930, allows PG&E to

divert to storage up to 4,908 afa of water at Lake Pillsbury and to directly divert up to 40 cfs from the Eel River for irrigation purposes within the PVID service area in the Russian River Watershed.

PG&E claims a pre-1914 water right to directly divert up to 340 cfs from the Eel River, as specified in Statement of Water Diversion and Use (SWDU) 1010, for power generation and irrigation use. PG&E also claims a pre-1914 water right to store up to 1,457 afa in Van Arsdale Reservoir, as specified in SWDU 4704, for power, irrigation and domestic use.

Water Supply Agreement

PG&E has a contract to sell and deliver water to PVID at the tailrace of the Potter Valley Powerhouse. PG&E's obligation under the current contract is to deliver up to 19,000 ac-ft of water to PVID at a rate not to exceed 50 cfs, provided the water is available and permitted per PG&E's applicable water rights.

3.2 NOI PARTIES' PROPOSAL

3.2.1 Proposed Project Facilities and Operations

As part of its Feasibility Study Report, the NOI Parties' propose the following:

Removal of Scott Dam

To restore anadromous fish passage, the NOI Parties propose to remove Scott Dam. The dam would be removed in a phased process by incrementally lowering the crest of the dam. Dam removal would be integrated with a proposed sediment management plan for Lake Pillsbury and in coordination with infrastructure modifications to ensure continued power generation and water supply reliability for the Potter Valley Irrigation District. In addition, the dam removal would be coordinated with implementation of Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations on Lake Mendocino in the Russian River Basin, and approval by the California State Water Resources Control Board on alternative minimum instream flows on the Russian River.

The NOI Parties propose to refine the specific details and schedule of the dam removal and the water diversion schedule based on the results of additional water supply analyses and engineering studies conducted as part of the proposed Scott Dam Removal Assessment Study (AQ 12).

Modifications to the Van Arsdale Diversion Intake Structure

The project's Van Arsdale Diversion is currently limited to a maximum diversion of approximately 240 cfs due to a derated fish screen. The NOI Parties propose to implement modifications at the diversion (which may include infrastructure replacement) to increase the diversion capacity to approximately 300 cfs to improve water supply reliability to the Russian River, power generation capacity of the project, and reliability of fish passage. These modifications may include redesigning the fish screen to achieve the proposed increased diversion capacity and redesigning the fish bypass pipe to comply with NMFS criteria.

Modifications to Cape Horn Dam Fish Passage Facilities

The existing Cape Horn Dam fish ladder currently provides fish passage for anadromous salmonids, and recent modifications now allow passage for Pacific lamprey. Downstream fish passage is provided via the existing fishway for flows up to 124 cfs; higher flows spill over the face of the dam, with a varying proportion of downstream migrating fish also spilling across the dam.

The NOI Parties propose to modify the upstream fish ladder, which may include infrastructure replacement. The NOI Parties also propose to study potential modifications to further improve downstream fish passage.

Revised Project Operations Plan

With the removal of Scott Dam and loss of Lake Pillsbury storage, the NOI Parties propose a Revised Project Operations Plan to reflect a seasonal diversion from the Eel River to the Russian River Basin. In addition to the increased diversion capacity noted above, the proposed plan would focus diversions to winter and spring months when Eel River unimpaired flows are higher and potential ecological impacts from the diversions would be lowest.

3.2.2 Proposed Environmental Measures

The NOI Parties propose the following environmental measures:

Geologic and Soils Resources

- Develop a sediment management plan to be implemented in coordination with the proposed removal of Scott Dam and dewatering of Lake Pillsbury to reduce the risk of sedimentation in the Eel River and in Van Arsdale Reservoir and service interruption to the Van Arsdale diversion.

Aquatic and Fishery Resources

- Develop a fisheries restoration plan to improve and protect fishery resources in the Eel River Basin while preserving existing fishery resources in the Russian River basin. The proposed plan would include: (1) restoration of anadromous fish access to habitat upstream of Scott Dam via removal of Scott Dam; (2) management of sediment and vegetation in the Lake Pillsbury footprint to restore historic riverine and riparian habitat along the Eel River, and minimizing impacts to aquatic resources downstream of Scott Dam; (3) restoration of natural physical and biological processes within the dewatered reservoir footprint and reaches downstream of Scott Dam via removal of Scott Dam and additional restoration actions; (4) modifications to Cape Horn Dam and existing fish passage facilities to improve upstream and downstream fish passage; and (5) modifications to Van Arsdale diversion infrastructure and existing fish screens to reduce risk of fish entrainment.

Terrestrial Resources

- Develop a Lake Pillsbury vegetation management plan for implementation after the proposed removal of Scott Dam and proposed dewatering of Lake Pillsbury to revegetate, stabilize sediment, and reclaim any sediment spoils areas in the former lake inundation area.

3.3 DAM SAFETY

It is important to note that certain proposed or recommended modifications to the dam structure, such as the addition of flashboards or fish passage facilities, could impact the integrity of the dam structure and may be constrained by dam safety concerns. Such constraints should be taken into consideration in the development of proposals and alternatives considered in the pending proceeding. As the proposal and alternatives are developed, the applicant must evaluate the effects and ensure that the project would meet the Commission's dam safety criteria found in Part 12 of the Commission's regulations and the engineering guidelines (https://www.ferc.gov/industries-data/hydropower/dam-safety-and-inspections/engineering-guidelines-evaluation-hydropower).

3.4 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

Commission staff will consider and assess all alternative recommendations for operational or facility modifications, as well as protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures identified by the Commission, the agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and the public.

3.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

At present, we propose to eliminate the following alternatives from detailed study in the EIS.

3.5.1 Federal Government Takeover

In accordance with § 16.14 of the Commission's regulations, a federal department or agency may file a recommendation that the United States exercise its right to take over a hydroelectric power project with a license that is subject to sections 14 and 15 of the FPA.[13] We do not consider federal takeover to be a reasonable alternative. Federal takeover of the project would require congressional approval. While that fact alone would not preclude further consideration of this alternative, there is currently no evidence showing that federal takeover should be recommended to Congress. No party has suggested that federal takeover would be appropriate, and no federal agency has expressed interest in operating the project.

3.5.2 Non-power License

A non-power license is a temporary license the Commission would terminate whenever it determines that another governmental agency is authorized and willing to assume regulatory authority and supervision over the lands and facilities covered by the non-power license. At this time, no governmental agency has suggested a willingness or ability to take over the project. No party has sought a non-power license, and we have no basis for concluding that the Potter Valley Project should no longer be used to produce power. Thus, we do not consider a non-power license a reasonable alternative to relicensing the project.

[13] 16 U.S.C. §§ 791(a)-825(r).

4.0 SCOPE OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS AND SITE-SPECIFIC RESOURCE ISSUES

4.1 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

According to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing NEPA (40 C.F.R. 1508.7), a cumulative effect is the effect on the environment that results from the incremental effect of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time, including hydropower and other land and water development activities.

4.1.1 Resources that could be Cumulatively Affected

Based on information in the NOI and Feasibility Study Report filed by the NOI Parties, PG&E's PAD, the Commission's public record for the Potter Valley Project, and preliminary staff analysis, we have identified water quantity, water quality (dissolved oxygen and water temperature), fisheries, special-status aquatic reptile and amphibian species (foothill yellow-legged frog and western pond turtle), and recreational resources as resources that could be cumulatively affected by the proposed continued operation and maintenance of the Potter Valley Project in combination with other activities in the Eel River Basin and Russian River Basins.

4.1.2 Geographic Scope

Our geographic scope of analysis for cumulatively affected resources is defined by the physical limits or boundaries of: (1) the proposed action's effect on the resources, and (2) contributing effects from other hydropower and non-hydropower activities within the Eel River Basin and Russian River Basin. We have identified the geographic scope for water quality (water temperature and dissolved oxygen concentration) to include the Eel River from its headwaters to its confluence with the Middle Fork Eel River, and the East Fork Russian River from the Potter Valley Project's powerhouse to Lake Mendocino. We chose this geographic scope because the operation and maintenance of the Potter Valley Project, in combination with other water development activities in these drainages may cumulatively affect water quality throughout the geographic reaches identified. We have identified the geographic scope for water quantity, fishery resources, foothill yellow-legged frog and Western pond turtle, threatened and endangered Pacific salmon and steelhead, and recreation to include the Eel River from its headwaters to its mouth near the town of Fortuna, California, and in the Russian River Basin from the Potter Valley Project's powerhouse to the mouth of the Russian River, near the town of Jenner, California. We chose these geographic scopes because the operation and maintenance of the Potter Valley Project, including the inter-basin transfer of water, in combination with

other activities in these drainages may cumulatively affect these resources throughout the geographic reaches identified.

4.1.3 Temporal Scope

The temporal scope of our cumulative effects analysis in the EIS will include a discussion of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions and their effects on each resource that could be cumulatively affected. Based on the potential term of a new license, the temporal scope will look 30 to 50 years into the future, concentrating on the effect on the resources from reasonably foreseeable future actions. The historical discussion will, by necessity, be limited to the amount of available information for each resource. The quality and quantity of information, however, diminishes as we analyze resources further away in time from the present.

4.2 RESOURCE ISSUES

In this section, we present a preliminary list of potential environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS. We identified these potential issues, which are listed by resource area, by reviewing the NOI and Feasibility Study Report filed by the NOI Parties, PG&E's PAD, and the Commission's record for the Potter Valley Project, including information received during the scoping process. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or final, but contains the issues raised to date. After the scoping process is complete, we will review the list and determine the appropriate level of analysis needed to address each issue in the EIS. Those issues identified by an asterisk (*) will be analyzed for both cumulative and site-specific effects.

4.2.1 Geologic and Soils Resources

- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury and proposed modifications to Van Arsdale diversion on erosion and sedimentation including sediment transport in the Eel River.
- Effects of continued and proposed project operations on shoreline erosion and sedimentation in the Eel River.

4.2.2 Water Resources

- Effects of continued and proposed project operation and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on water quantity and water rights in the Eel River and East Fork Russian River Basins.*
- Effects of continued and proposed project operation and maintenance and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on dissolved oxygen and water temperature in the Eel River and East Fork Russian River.*

4.2.3 Fishery Resources

- Effects of continued and proposed project operation and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on the supply and transport of spawning gravels.
- Effects of continued and proposed project operation and maintenance and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on streamflow and aquatic habitat in the Eel River and East Fork Russian Rivers on salmon, Pacific lamprey, resident and special-status fishes, amphibians, and benthic macroinvertebrates.*
- Effects of project operation with the proposed modifications to Van Arsdale Diversion infrastructure and existing fish screens on fish entrainment.
- Effects of project operation with the proposed modifications to existing fish passage facilities on upstream and downstream passage of salmonids and Pacific lamprey at the Cape Horn Dam including predation on fish.
- Effects of project operation and project-related changes in water quality with the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on anadromous and resident fishes in the Eel and Russian Rivers.*
- Effects of continued and proposed project operation, maintenance, and project-related recreation on the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, including the Sacramento Pikeminnow.
- Potential effects of the Sacramento Pikeminnow on the success of mitigation and enhancement measures intended to aid restoration of anadromous salmonids in the Eel River.

4.2.4 Terrestrial Resources

- Effects of continued project operation and maintenance on wetland and riparian habitat.
- Effects of continued and proposed project maintenance activities and recreational use on the spread of non-native, invasive plant species including associated effects on special-status plant species and wildlife habitat.
- Effects of project operation, maintenance activities, and project-related recreation on special-status plant species.
- Effects of continued and proposed project operation, maintenance activities, and recreation on nesting birds and special-status wildlife species, including the foothill yellow-legged frog, western pond turtle,* northern goshawk and

bald eagle (and other birds of conservation concern), Pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and fringed myotis.

- Effects of the proposed changes to project facilities including removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, modifications to Van Arsdale diversion, sediment management, and construction of any associated facilities (e.g. access roads, staging areas, etc.) that may be necessary on:
    - the alteration of existing, and potential reestablishment of, wetland and riparian habitat;
    - revegetation of the dewatered footprint of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury;
    - special-status plant and wildlife species (noted above);
    - the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive plant species including their associated effects on wildlife habitat and special-status plant species;
    - the abundance and distribution of tule elk (*Cervus canadensis nannodes*)[14] and their suitable habitat; and
    - suitable habitat for riparian and special-status bird species including bald eagle, osprey, and willow flycatcher as well as birds nesting in any proposed construction areas.
- Effects of human presence, equipment activity, and noise associated with proposed construction and modifications to project facilities on wildlife.

4.2.5 Threatened and Endangered Species

- Effects of continued and proposed project operation, maintenance, and recreational use including the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, proposed modifications to Van Arsdale diversion and fish screens, and proposed modifications to existing upstream and downstream fish passage facilities at Cape Horn Dam on federally listed and proposed endangered, threatened, and candidate species, including the Southern Oregon/Northern California (SONC) coho salmon, the Central California Coast (CCC) coho salmon, the Northern California (NC) steelhead, the Central California Coast (CCC) steelhead, and the California Coastal (CC) chinook salmon in the Eel River and on the Russian River from Lake Mendocino to the Pacific Ocean.* Our analysis will include flow timing, duration, and magnitude; water quality and water temperature; habitat quality and availability; habitat access; and effects of predatory species.

[14] The tule elk is a subspecies of elk endemic California.

- Effects of continued project operations and maintenance, and project-related recreation activities, and proposed changes to project facilities including removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, modifications to Van Arsdale diversion, and construction of any associated facilities (e.g. access roads, staging areas, etc.) on the northern spotted owl and its critical habitat.

4.2.6 Recreation Resources

- Effects of continued and proposed project operations and maintenance on recreational access and use, including river-based recreation opportunities, in the project-affected area, including Lake Pillsbury and Lake Mendocino.*
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, including sediment management, on recreational access and use, and river-based recreation opportunities in the project-affected area.
- Effects of project operation and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, including sediment management, on recreational facilities in the project-affected area, including project recreational facilities, Mendocino National Forest facilities, and Lake Mendocino.
- Effects of the project on the adequacy of existing recreational access and types of facilities present in the project-affected area to meet current and future recreation demand.
- Effects of continued and proposed project operation and maintenance and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on recreational whitewater boating use within the project-affected area.
- Effects of proposed project operation and maintenance and the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on Wild & Scenic River segments of the Eel River downstream of Cape Horn Dam.
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on wildlife viewing opportunities at Lake Pillsbury.

4.2.7 Land Use and Aesthetic Resources

- Effects of continued and proposed project operations and maintenance on the aesthetic quality of the project-affected area.
- Effects of forest fires on project lands and facilities, and analysis of local forest fire history.
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on preparedness and effectiveness of forest fire fighting, including water

availability in the project area and response times related to water collecting techniques.

- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on existing and future public and private development around Lake Pillsbury.
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, including sediment management, lake drawdown, and vegetation loss, on the aesthetic quality of the project area.

4.2.8 Cultural Resources

- Effects of continued and proposed project operation and maintenance, and proposed changes to project facilities including removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury, modifications to Van Arsdale diversion, and construction of any associated facilities (e.g. access roads, staging areas, etc.) on historic or archeological resources, or traditional cultural properties that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

4.2.9 Socioeconomics

- Effects of continued and proposed project operation, specifically inter-basin flow diversions, on agriculture and other consumptive uses in the upper and middle Russian River watershed.
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on communities around Lake Pillsbury, Van Arsdale Reservoir, and the Lower Eel River.
- Effects of the project on the local and regional tourism economy including economic effects on Tribes.
- Effects of continued and proposed project operation on Lake Mendocino water levels and reliability for agricultural and municipal water supply in the Russian River Basin.
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on water supply, including agricultural and municipal water deliveries in the Russian River Basin.

4.2.10 Developmental Resources

- Effects of any proposed and recommended environmental measures on project economics, including power generation.

- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury and proposed modifications to Van Arsdale diversion on project economics.
- Effects of any proposed or recommended environmental measures on water supply, including agricultural and municipal water deliveries.
- Effects of the proposed removal of Scott Dam and Lake Pillsbury on water supply, including agricultural and municipal water deliveries in the Russian River Basin.

5.0 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

We are asking federal, state, and local resource agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and the public to forward to the Commission any information that will assist us in conducting an accurate and thorough analysis of the project-specific and cumulative effects associated with relicensing the Potter Valley Project. The types of information we request includes, but are not limited to:

- information, quantitative data, or professional opinions that may help define the geographic and temporal scope of the analysis (both site-specific and cumulative effects), and that helps identify significant environmental issues;

- identification of, and information from, any other EIS, Environmental Assessment, or similar environmental study (previous, on-going, or planned) relevant to the proposed relicensing of the Potter Valley Project;

- existing information and any data that would help to describe the past and present actions and effects of the project and other developmental activities on environmental and socioeconomic resources;

- information that would help characterize the existing environmental conditions and habitats;

- the identification of any federal, state, or local resource plans, and any future project proposals in the affected resource area (e.g., proposals to construct or operate water treatment facilities, recreation areas, water diversions, timber harvest activities, or fish management programs) along with any implementation schedules;

- documentation that the proposed project would or would not contribute to cumulative adverse or beneficial effects on any resources. Documentation can include, but need not be limited to, how the project would interact with other projects in the area and other developmental activities; study results; resource management policies; and reports from federal and state agencies, local agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and the public; and

- documentation showing why any resources should be excluded from further study or consideration; and

- study requests by federal and state agencies, local agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and the public that would help provide a framework for collecting

pertinent information on the resource areas under consideration necessary for the Commission to prepare the EIS for the project.

All requests for studies filed with the Commission must meet the criteria found in Appendix B, *Study Plan Criteria*.

The requested information and comments on SD3 may be filed electronically via the Internet **no later than August 27, 2020.** See 18 C.F.R. 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's website https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOnline.aspx. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at https://ferconline.ferc.gov/QuickComment.aspx. You must include your name and contact information at the end of your comments. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at 1-866-208-3676, or for TTY, (202) 502-8659. Although the Commission strongly encourages electronic filing, documents may also be paper-filed. To paper-file, mail an original and five copies. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Register online at https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOnline.aspx to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to these or other pending projects. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support mailto: ferconlinesupport@ferc.gov.

Intervenors – those on the Commission's service list for this proceeding – are reminded that if they file comments with the Commission, they must also serve a copy of their filing on each person whose name appears on the official service list. Note that the list is periodically updated. The official service list can be obtained on the Commission's web site (http://www.ferc.gov) – click on Documents and Filing and click on eService – or call the Office of the Secretary, Dockets Branch at (202) 502-8715. In addition, if any party files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, they must also serve a copy of the document on the resource agency.

Any questions concerning the paper scoping process or how to file written comments with the Commission should be directed to Quinn Emmering at (202) 502-6382 or quinn.emmering@ferc.gov. Additional information about the Commission's licensing process and the Potter Valley Project may be obtained from the Commission's website.

6.0 POTENTIAL STUDIES

On February 15, 2018, the OEP Director issued its Study Plan Determination for the Potter Valley Project based on the project proposal described in PG&E's PAD filed in April 2017. The approved plan includes 21 studies related to aquatic, fishery, botanical, wildlife, recreation, land use, aesthetics, and cultural resources.

On January 25, 2019, PG&E filed a notice of withdrawal of its NOI and PAD, indicating it was discontinuing its efforts to relicense the Potter Valley Project. As a result, PG&E suspended implementation of the approved study plan. The NOI Parties propose to complete 20 of the approved studies, with modifications to 12 studies, as well as delete the Lake Pillsbury Fish Habitat Study, and add two additional studies (Table 1).

At this time, we have not identified the need for additional studies. However, we may determine that further study is warranted based on a review of comments provided to the Commission from interested participants, including Indian tribes and resource agencies in response to our NEPA scoping process.

On September 14, 2020, the NOI Parties anticipate filing an Initial Study Report (ISR) and subsequently hold an ISR meeting 15 days later. The ISR will describe the NOI Parties' overall progress in implementing the study plan and schedule and the data collected, including an explanation of any variance from the approved study plan and schedule. The ISR will also include any modifications to ongoing studies or new studies proposed by the NOI Parties.

Following the ISR meeting, the NOI Parties will file a summary of the meeting with the Commission that will include any modifications to ongoing studies, or any new studies proposed. Stakeholders and Commission staff may file disagreements concerning the meeting summary, including recommendations for any modifications to ongoing studies or new studies, after which the OEP Director would resolve the disagreement and amend the approved study plan as appropriate. These project milestones and due dates for the project are outlined in Appendix A, *Revised Process Plan and Schedule*. All requests for studies filed with the Commission must meet the criteria found in Appendix B, *Study Plan Criteria*.

Table 1. Commission approved and NOI Parties' proposed study modifications for the Potter Valley Project. (Source: NOI Parties' Feasibility Study Report)

Studies	Commission Approved	Proposed Modifications	Proposed New Study	Proposed to Delete
Aquatic Resources				
AQ 1 – Hydrology and Project Operations Modeling	**X**	**X**		
AQ 2 – Water Temperature	**X**	**X**		
AQ 3 – Water Quality	**X**	**X**		
AQ 4 – Geomorphology	**X**			
AQ 5 – Instream Flow	**X**	**X**		
AQ 6 – Lake Pillsbury Fish Habitat	**X**			**X**
AQ 7 – Fish Passage	**X**	**X**		
AQ 8 – Fish Entrainment	**X**	**X**		
AQ 9 – Fish Populations	**X**	**X**		
AQ 10 – Special-status Amphibians and Aquatic Reptiles	**X**			
AQ 11 – Macroinvertebrates and Special-status Mollusks	**X**			
AQ 12 – Scott Dam Removal Assessment			**X**	
Terrestrial Resources				
TERR 1 – Botanical Resources	**X**			
TERR 2 – Wildlife Resources	**X**			
Recreation, Land Use, and Aesthetics				
REC 1 – Recreation Facility Assessment	**X**			
REC 2 – Reservoir Recreation Opportunities	**X**			

Studies	Commission Approved	Proposed Modifications	Proposed New Study	Proposed to Delete
REC 3 – Whitewater Boating Flow Assessment	**X**			
LAND 1 – Project Roads and Trails Assessment	**X**	**X**		
LAND 2 – Visual Resource Assessment	**X**	**X**		
LAND 3 – Hazardous Fuels Reduction Assessment	**X**	**X**		
Cultural Resources				
CUL 1 – Cultural Resources	**X**	**X**		
CUL 2 – Tribal Resources	**X**	**X**		
Socioeconomic Resources				
SE 1 – Socioeconomic Effects of Dam Removal			**X**	

7.0 EIS PREPARATION

At this time, we anticipate the need to prepare a draft and final EIS. The EIS will be sent to all persons and entities on the Commission's service and mailing lists for the Potter Valley Project. The EIS will include our recommendations for operating procedures, as well as environmental protection and enhancement measures that should be part of any license issued by the Commission. All recipients will then have 45 days to review the EIS and file written comments with the Commission.

The major milestones, with pre-filing target dates, are as follows:

Major Milestone	Target Date
File Comments on Scoping Document 3	**August 27, 2020**
Final License Application filed	April 14, 2022
Ready for Environmental Analysis Notice Issued	-
Deadline for Filing Comments, Recommendations, and-Agency Terms and Conditions/Prescriptions	-
Draft EIS Issued	-
Comments on draft EIS Due	-
Deadline for Filing Modified Agency Recommendations	-
Final EIS Issued	-
Order Issued	-

Post-filing milestones will be established following the applicant's filing of the final license application. A copy of the Commission's Revised Process Plan and Schedule, which has a complete list of pre-filing relicensing milestones for the Potter Valley Project, including those for developing the license application, is attached as Appendix A to this SD3.

8.0 PROPOSED EIS OUTLINE

The preliminary outline for the Potter Valley Project EIS is as follows:

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3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

9.0 COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Section 10(a)(2) of the FPA, 16 U.S.C. section 803(a)(2)(A), requires the Commission to consider the extent to which a project is consistent with federal and state comprehensive plans for improving, developing, or conserving a waterway or waterways affected by a project. The NOI Parties have preliminarily identified and reviewed the plans listed below that may be relevant to the Potter Valley Project and are also included on the list of approved plans on file with the Commission. Agencies are requested to review this list and inform the Commission staff of any changes. If there are other comprehensive plans that should be considered for this list that are not on file with the Commission, or if there are more recent versions of the plans already listed, they can be filed for consideration with the Commission according to 18 CFR 2.19 of the Commission's regulations. Please follow the instructions for filing a plan at https://www.ferc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/List%20of%20Comprehensive%20Plans_%20July%202020.pdf.

The following is a list of comprehensive plans currently on file with the Commission that may be relevant to the Potter Valley Project.

Bureau of Land Management. Forest Service. 1994. Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-successional and Old-growth Forest related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. Washington, D.C. April 13, 1994.

California Department of Fish and Game. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. Final Hatchery and Stocking Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement. Sacramento, California. January 2010.

California Department of Fish and Game. 2007. California Wildlife: Conservation Challenges, California's Wildlife Action Plan. Sacramento, California.

California Department of Fish and Game. 1996. Steelhead Restoration and Management Plan for California. February 1996.

California Department of Fish and Game. 2003. Strategic Plan for Trout Management: A Plan for 2004 and Beyond. Sacramento, California. November 2003.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2008. California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan. Sacramento, California. January 18, 2008.

California Department of Parks and Recreation. 1980. Recreation Outlook in Planning District 2. Sacramento, California. April 1980.

California Department of Parks and Recreation. 1980. Recreation Outlook in Planning District 3. Sacramento, California. June 1980.

California Department of Parks and Recreation. 1998. Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California. Sacramento, California. March 1998.

California Department of Parks and Recreation. 1994. California Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Sacramento, California. April 1994.

California State Water Resources Control Board. 1999. Water Quality Control Plans and Policies Adopted as Part of the State Comprehensive Plan. April 1999.

California State Water Resources Control Board. 2018. Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region. Sacramento, California. June 2018.

National Marine Fisheries Service. Pacific Fishery Management Council. 1988. Fishery Management Plan for Commercial and Recreational Salmon Fisheries off the Coasts of Washington, Oregon and California Commencing in 1978. January 1988.

National Marine Fisheries Service. 2014. Final Recovery Plan for the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit of Coho Salmon.

National Marine Fisheries Service. 2016. Final Coastal Multispecies Recovery Plan for California Coastal Chinook Salmon, Northern California Steelhead, and Central California Coast Steelhead.

National Park Service. 1993. The Nationwide Rivers Inventory. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Canadian Wildlife Service. 1986. North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Department of the Interior. Environment Canada. May 1986.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2001. Final Restoration Plan for the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program. Department of the Interior, Sacramento, California. January 9, 2001

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. n.d. Fisheries USA: The Recreational Fisheries Policy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Washington, D.C.

10.0 MAILING LIST

The list below is the Commission's official mailing list for the Potter Valley Project (FERC No. 77). If you want to receive future mailings for the Potter Valley and are not included in the list below, please send your request by email to efiling@ferc.gov or by mail to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. All written and emailed requests to be added to the mailing list must clearly identify the following on the first page: **Potter Valley Project No. 77-298**. You may use the same method if requesting removal from the mailing list below.

Register online at https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOnline.aspx to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at 1-866-208-3676, or for TTY, (202) 502-8659.

Official Mailing List for the Potter Valley Project

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APPENDIX A

POTTER VALLEY PROJECT NO. 77
PROCESS PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Responsible Party	Milestone	Due Date	FERC Regulation
FERC	*Issued Notice Soliciting Applications*	*3/1/2019*	*16.6(d); 16.25*
NOI Parties	*Filed Notice of Intent and Pre-Application Document to File an Application for a New License*	*6/28/2019*	*5.5*
FERC	*Issued Notice of Continuation of Relicensing Proceeding*	*8/1/2019*	*N/A*
NOI Parties	*Filed Feasibility Study*	*5/31/2020*	*N/A*
FERC	Issue Scoping Document 3	7/28/2020	5.8
All Stakeholders	File Comments on Scoping Document 3	8/27/2020	5.9
FERC	Issue Scoping Document 4	TBD	5.1
NOI Parties	File Initial Study Report on the Commission's Approved Study Plan[15]	9/14/2020	5.15(c)(1)
All Stakeholders	Initial Study Report Meeting	9/29/2020	5.15(c)(2)
NOI Parties	File Initial Study Report Meeting Summary	10/14/2020	5.15(c)(3)
All Stakeholders	File Disagreements and Requests to Amend Study Plan	11/13/2020	5.15(c)(4)
All Stakeholders	File Responses to Disagreements and Amendment Requests	12/14/2020	5.15(c)(5)
FERC	Issue Director's Determination on Disagreements and Amendments	1/13/2021	5.15(c)(6)
NOI Parties	Conduct Studies	Jan-Dec 2021	5.15(a)
NOI Parties	File Updated Study Report	9/14/2021	5.15(f)
All Stakeholders	Updated Study Report Meeting	9/29/2021	5.15(f)

[15] Issued February 15, 2018.

Responsible Party	Milestone	Due Date	FERC Regulation
NOI Parties	File Updated Study Report Meeting Summary	10/14/2021	5.15(f)
All Stakeholders	File Study Disputes/Request to Modify Study Plan due	11/15/2021	5.15(f)
All Stakeholders	File Responses to Disputes/Study Requests	12/15/2021	5.15(f)
FERC	Issue Director's Study Plan Determination	1/14/2021	5.15(f)
NOI Parties	File Preliminary Licensing Proposal (or Draft License Application)	11/15/2021	5.16(a)-(c)
All Stakeholders	File Comments on Preliminary Licensing Proposal (or Draft License Application)	2/13/2022	5.16(e)
Regional Entity	File Final License Application	4/14/2022	5.17
FERC	Issue Public Notice of Final License Application Filing	4/28/2022	5.17(d)(2)

APPENDIX B

STUDY PLAN CRITERIA
18 CFR Section 5.9(b)

Any information or study request must contain the following:

1. Describe the goals and objectives of each study proposal and the information to be obtained;

2. If applicable, explain the relevant resource management goals of the agencies or Indian tribes with jurisdiction over the resource to be studied;

3. If the requester is not a resource agency, explain any relevant public interest considerations in regard to the proposed study;

4. Describe existing information concerning the subject of the study proposal, and the need for additional information;

5. Explain any nexus between project operations and effects (direct, indirect, and/or cumulative) on the resource to be studied, and how the study results would inform the development of license requirements;

6. Explain how any proposed study methodology (including any preferred data collection and analysis techniques, or objectively quantified information, and a schedule including appropriate filed season(s) and the duration) is consistent with generally accepted practice in the scientific community or, as appropriate, considers relevant tribal values and knowledge; and

7. Describe considerations of level of effort and cost, as applicable, and why proposed alternative studies would not be sufficient to meet the stated information needs.

For more information, see the Guide to Understanding and Applying the Integrated Licensing Process Study Criteria on the Commission's web site (https://www.ferc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/AGuidetoUnderstandingandApplyingtheIntegratedLicensingProcessStudyCriteria.pdf).

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