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Map 1-1. Middle Fork American River Project and Vicinity.

## 1.0 APPLICATION

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) is applying to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) for a new license for the existing Middle Fork American River Project (MFP or Project). This Application for New License for Major Project – Existing Dam (License Application) is filed pursuant to the Commission’s regulations at Title 18 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 5.18. This Exhibit E – Environmental Exhibit (Exhibit E) was prepared by PCWA in support of this application.

The MFP was constructed and operates under a 50-year license (FERC Project No. 2079), which was issued on March 13, 1963, by the Federal Power Commission, predecessor of the current FERC. The current license expires February 28, 2013. PCWA is seeking renewal of its license to continue operation and maintenance of the MFP.

Through submittal of this License Application, PCWA is requesting renewal of its license to continue operation and maintenance of the MFP with a license term of 50 years (expiring on February 28, 2063). The new license term is based on the substantial costs associated with relicensing of the MFP; capital improvements; new environmental measures, programs, and facilities; and extensive monitoring and ongoing resource agency consultation to ensure continued resource protection over the term of the new license.

The MFP is located within the Middle Fork American River Watershed. The majority of the MFP is located in Placer County, California (Map 1-1). A small component (a portion of Ralston Afterbay Dam) is located in El Dorado County, California. The FERC Project boundary encompasses 4,554 acres of land including: 1,883 acres within Tahoe National Forest (TNF) and 1,385 acres within Eldorado National Forest (ENF) both of which are administered by the United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS). The remainder of the MFP is located on PCWA-owned land or private land.

The MFP serves as a multi-purpose water supply and hydro-generation project designed to conserve and control waters of the Middle Fork American River, the Rubicon River, Duncan Creek, and North and South Fork Long Canyon creeks. The MFP consists of two major storage reservoirs, five smaller regulating reservoirs and diversion pools, and five powerhouses that began operation in 1967. The MFP’s major storage reservoirs, French Meadows and Hell Hole, have a combined capacity of 342,583 acre-feet (ac-ft). The MFP has a total dependable generation capacity of 223.7 megawatts (MW) and an average annual energy production of 1,039,078 megawatt-hours (MWh)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Generation from French Meadows, Middle Fork, Ralston, and Oxbow powerhouses is averaged over a 40-year period of record (1967–2006). Hell Hole Powerhouse began operation in 1983; therefore, annual net generation is averaged over a 24-year period

In preparation for the relicensing of the MFP, PCWA conducted an assessment to identify potential modifications to existing Project facilities that would improve operations or maintenance of the MFP and result in an increase in annual or peaking generation. As a result of this assessment, PCWA identified one Project improvement—Hell Hole Reservoir Seasonal Storage Increase. The purpose of this improvement is to seasonally increase the storage capacity of Hell Hole Reservoir by approximately 7,600 ac-ft. The improvement will utilize a portion of the existing flood pool, above the present normal maximum operating water level, to store additional water during the spring and summer after the peak of the runoff period. This increase will be achieved by installing 6-foot-high crest gates on the existing dam spillway. Operation of the crest gates will seasonally increase the reservoir's inundation area, within the existing flood pool, by approximately 36 acres.

In years when either French Meadows or Hell Hole reservoirs would have spilled, this improvement allows the MFP to capture additional water in storage in Hell Hole Reservoir, which can later be used to increase net annual energy generation. In all but the driest years, the improvement also allows the MFP to shift the timing of some generation from the spring runoff period to the summer peak energy demand period. This improvement will require a new water right to allow for additional storage at Hell Hole Reservoir for power production purposes.

This improvement requires construction of three new Project facilities in addition to the 6-foot-high crest gates including:

- Hell Hole Dam Spillway Crest Gates Control Building—a small control building adjacent to the spillway to house equipment to power the new spillway crest gates;
- Hell Hole Dam Spillway Crest Gates Control Building Powerline—a short spur line (approximately 525 feet) from the control building to an existing Project powerline to provide power to the control building for operation of the spillway crest gates; and
- Hell Hole Dam Spillway Gates Road—a road providing access to the new spillway gates.

PCWA used FERC's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) to develop this License Application for the MFP.

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of record (1983–2006). The total average annual energy production represents the sum of the average net generation for the five Project powerhouses based on their respective period of record (refer to Table 3-16).

The exact name and business address of Placer County Water Agency is as follows:

Placer County Water Agency  
Attention: General Manager  
P.O. Box 6570  
Auburn, CA 95604  
144 Ferguson Road  
Auburn, CA 95603  
(530) 823-4860

The exact name and business address of the person authorized to act as agent for Placer County Water Agency in this License Application is:

Einar L. Maisch, Director of Strategic Affairs  
Placer County Water Agency  
P.O. Box 6570  
Auburn, CA 95604  
144 Ferguson Road  
Auburn, CA 95603  
(530) 823-4889

**MAPS**