

**Placer County Water Agency
Middle Fork American River Project
(FERC Project No. 2079)**

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT E
**Relevant Comprehensive Plans and
Resource Management Plans**



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CONTENT

Supporting Document E (SD E) contains a report summarizing the various comprehensive plans and resource management plans that are relevant to the relicensing of the Middle Fork American River Project (MFP or Project). This report was prepared in accordance with Title 18 of Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4 § 4.38 and Part 5 § 5.6 (b)(2)(d). This report summarizes the content of each relevant comprehensive plan and discusses their applicability to the MFP. The effects of MFP operations and maintenance activities will be evaluated with respect to each of these comprehensive plans as the relicensing process proceeds. The purpose of the evaluation will be to ensure that operation and maintenance of the MFP is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the comprehensive plans.

The plans discussed in this report were identified based on a review of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC's) Revised List of Comprehensive Plans dated August 2007. Eleven relevant plans were identified on the FERC's List of Comprehensive Plans. In addition, nine other planning documents that are not included on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans were identified and are discussed in this report. A previous version of this report, which summarized plans contained in the FERC's March 2006 List of Comprehensive Plans, was distributed to the stakeholders for review and comment in July 2006. The Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) did not receive any comments on the previous version of this report.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Section 10(a)(2)(A) of the Federal Power Act (FPA) requires the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or FERC) to consider the extent to which a project is consistent with Federal and state comprehensive plans for improving, developing, and conserving the waterways associated with a project. In addition, Title 18 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4 § 4.38 and Part 5 § 5.6 (b)(2) requires that the Pre-Application Document (PAD) contain information about comprehensive plans.

The following describes the comprehensive plans that are relevant to the relicensing of the Middle Fork American River Project (MFP or Project), based on a review of the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans and other documents. This report summarizes the content of each relevant comprehensive plan and discusses their applicability to the MFP. The effects of MFP operations and maintenance activities will be evaluated with respect to each of these comprehensive plans as the relicensing process proceeds. The purpose of the evaluation will be to ensure that operation and maintenance of the MFP is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the comprehensive plans.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENTS IDENTIFIED ON THE FERC'S LIST OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The FERC's Revised List of Comprehensive Plans, dated August 2007, includes 11 planning documents, which are relevant to the MFP. These plans, as cited in the August 2007 list are identified below. In some cases, updated versions of the planning documents identified in the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans are available and were used for this report. Planning documents that have been updated are identified with an asterisk (*). Details about the update are provided in the description of the plan, as appropriate.

- California Department of Fish and Game. 1979. Rubicon River wild trout management plan. Sacramento, California. July 1979. 46 pp.
- *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. 1980. Recreation outlook in Planning District 3. Sacramento, California. June 1980. 82 pp.
- Department of Parks and Recreation. 1983. Recreation needs in California. Sacramento, California. March 1983. 33 pp. and appendices.
- *California Department of Parks and Recreation. 1994. California outdoor recreation plan (SCORP) - 1993. Sacramento, California. April 1994. 154 pp. and appendices.

- *California Department of Water Resources. 1983. The California water plan: projected use and available water supplies to 2010. Bulletin 160-83. Sacramento, California. December 1983. 268 pp. and attachments.
- *California Department of Water Resources. 1994. California water plan update: Bulletin 160-93. Sacramento, California. October 1994. Two volumes and executive summary.
- *California State Water Resources Control Board. 1995. Water quality control plan report. Sacramento, California. Nine volumes.
- Forest Service. 1988. Eldorado National Forest land and resource management plan. Department of Agriculture, Placerville, California. December 1988. 752 pp.
- *Forest Service. 1990. Tahoe National Forest land and resource management plan. Department of Agriculture, Nevada City, California. March 1990. 687 pp. and appendices.
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service. undated. Fisheries USA: the recreational fisheries policy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Washington, D.C. 11 pp.

Each of these documents is described the following subsections.

2.1 RUBICON RIVER WILD TROUT MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document is identified on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. In 1971 the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) established the California Wild Trout Program (Program) to protect and enhance wild trout fisheries. The primary purpose of the Program is to preserve attractive stream trout fisheries which are naturally sustained by wild strains of trout. The general management objectives of the Program are summarized as follows:

- Maintain wild trout population levels necessary to provide satisfactory recreational angling opportunities for wild trout.
- Maintain and enhance where possible the habitat required for optimum wild trout production.
- Preserve the natural character and aesthetic beauty of the streamside environment.

Between 1971 and 1979, CDFG designated 18 streams as wild trout streams. The Rubicon River was included in the Program following the recommendations of the Eldorado National Forest (ENF). The designated wild trout section of the river extends from Hell Hole Dam to Ralston Afterbay.

In 1979, the CDFG Inland Fisheries Branch published the Rubicon River Wild Trout Management Plan (Plan) as required by the California Wild Trout Program. The Plan sets forth a detailed management program including goals, major assumptions, management direction, recommendations for nearby land management, a monitoring program, and a program implementation schedule. The Plan also includes a discussion of existing water development in the watershed including flow releases from Hell Hole

Reservoir, future water development, and sedimentation from water development operations.

The updated policies of the Program are described on CDFG's website (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fishing/html/WildAndHeritageTrout/WHTTrout_0.htm). According to this website, the Rubicon River remains a designated Wild Trout Stream (also referred to as wild trout water) from Hell Hole Reservoir to Ralston Afterbay. Designated wild trout waters are managed in accordance with the following stipulations:

- Domestic strains of catchable sized trout shall not be planted in designated wild trout waters.
- Hatchery-produced trout of suitable wild and semi-wild strains may be planted in designated waters, but only if necessary to supplement natural trout reproduction.
- Habitat protection is of utmost importance for maintenance of wild trout populations. All necessary actions, consistent with State law, shall be taken to prevent adverse impact by land or water development projects affecting designated wild trout waters.

The regulations cited on the CDFG website also note that the CDFG must prepare and periodically update a management plan for each designated wild trout water. However, the CDFG website did not identify that the Rubicon River Wild Trout Management Plan, first published in 1979, has been updated. Additional consultation with the CDFG did not identify an updated plan.

2.2 PUBLIC OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES ON OUTDOOR RECREATION IN CALIFORNIA

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans cites the 1998 Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California, which was published in March 1998 by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). This survey has since been updated with data obtained in 2002 and a revised report was published in 2003. The following description relies on the most recent survey results and report.

Initially in 1987, and again in 1992, 1997, and 2002, the DPR conducted telephone surveys of public opinions and attitudes towards outdoor recreation in California. For comparison purposes, the questions asked in each survey were kept as similar as possible. The data is used to track outdoor recreation trends, identify shifts in public attitudes and values and identify the demand for and participation in a variety of outdoor recreation activities. The 2002 survey addressed a broad range of topics, but in general it found that Californians believe outdoor recreation areas are important to their quality of life and most support protecting the natural environments within outdoor recreation areas. The 2002 telephone survey is included as an Element of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan.

2.3 RECREATION OUTLOOK IN PLANNING DISTRICT 3

This document is identified on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. In 1980, the DPR published the "Recreation Outlook in Planning District 3" (Recreation

Outlook). District 3 covers the northeastern portion of central California, which is made up of eight counties, including Placer County. The MFP is primarily located in Placer County so this document is considered a relevant comprehensive plan.

The Recreation Outlook is an element of the Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). Planning district studies are conducted as part of the CORP process, providing an in-depth look at recreation in California on a regional basis. The purpose of the CORP is to coordinate and guide activities of state, local, and Federal agencies, and the private sector in planning, developing, operating, and maintaining outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The plan is also used to form the basis for obtaining grant funds and as a guide in allocating funds to state and local government agencies.

The Recreation Outlook describes the land ownership, recreation lands and resources, and adequacy of recreation lands in District 3. The Recreation Outlook also presents 17 bulleted findings, 15 bulleted recommendations, and describes the management concerns in the region. Most of the findings are general to the entire District 3 planning area but some are specific to the foothill and Sierra Nevada regions. The study found that District 3, in general, is a prime tourist and recreation area with adequate total acreage of natural resource lands open to recreation to meet the foreseeable needs of residents and tourists. However, the study also found insufficient facilities for certain recreation activities throughout the region, including boating access, wetland and waterfowl observation, and hunting.

The study findings and recommendations specific to the foothill and Sierra Nevada regions are summarized below.

- The study found that the foothills have the potential to provide for expanded year-round recreation opportunities and there is a need to provide improved public transportation to the major foothill and Sierra Nevada recreation areas. An emphasis was placed on provision of services to heavily visited winter recreation areas.
- The study recommended that various organizations work cooperatively to develop a Recreation Plan for the foothill area. The Recreation Outlook recommended that this Plan examine the possibility of increasing the recreational appeal of Highway 49.
- The study found that the two most popular year-round sightseeing routes in District 3 follow Highway 50 and 80 from the Sacramento Valley to the Lake Tahoe area. Highway 49 is also noted as a popular route. The study notes that camping and picnicking are often associated with sightseeing, which creates a strong demand for these facilities along these routes.

2.4 RECREATION NEEDS IN CALIFORNIA

This document was published in 1983 by the DPR and is identified on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. The DPR report summarizes a statewide recreation needs analysis conducted between 1976 and 1982 and recommends that the California legislature consider the following:

- To meet increasing demand for outdoor recreation, opportunities for activities such as camping, fishing, hiking, and nature appreciation need to be provided in and near metropolitan areas.
- Accelerated development of State Park System facilities and programs near metropolitan areas is necessary to keep pace with projected increases in demand for outdoor activities.
- Legislative action is needed to modify the Roberti-Z'berg Open Space and Recreation program criteria to reflect current needs analysis findings.
- Private recreation suppliers will need to assume a much larger role in satisfying recreation desires of California's urban residents. Studies need to be conducted by the legislature to develop incentives for the private sector to provide additional recreation services.
- The DPR needs to implement pilot programs to alleviate constraints to full and equitable access to recreation opportunities.

2.5 CALIFORNIA OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans cites the 1993 California Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP), which was published in 1994 by the DPR. This plan has since been updated with the 2002 CORP, published in 2003. The following description is based on the 2002 CORP.

The 2002 edition of the CORP provides a tool for statewide outdoor recreation leadership and actions for the next five years. The CORP is updated approximately every five years to reflect current and expected changes in California's large and complex population and economy. Each revised edition takes into consideration the current demographic, economic, political, and environmental conditions in California, and then explores and analyzes the outdoor recreation issues that will be of major concern to public agencies in the next five years.

The 2002 CORP provides a policy foundation, information source, and action guide for state and local recreation development and implementation. The CORP is based primarily on information collected from 2000 through 2002. The trends, policies, and proposed actions described in the CORP are very broad in scope and direction. Topics such as funding, public access, and pressure on natural resources are included. In general, the plan promotes recreation projects that create partnerships and seek to mitigate trends that adversely affect resource conditions.

2.6 THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN AND THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN UPDATES

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans identifies two California water planning documents, the 1983 California Water Plan referred to as Bulletin 160-83 (DWR 1983) and the California Water Plan Update referred to as Bulletin 160-93 (DWR 1994). These documents are part of a series of documents that are periodically updated to accommodate California's changing water supply and demands. For

instance, the Bulletin 160-93 series has been updated by Bulletin 160-98 (DWR 1998) and the most recent update to the California Water Plan is entitled, "California Water Plan: Update 2005." The discussion below relies on the 2005 version.

The 2005 California Water Plan Update provides details pertaining to water use and supply. Using a 2030 planning horizon the plan presents a recent appraisal of statewide water uses for various beneficial uses, and identifies and analyzes options for improving water supply reliability. The 2005 Water Plan Update also provides a framework for water management in California and it includes a list of 14 recommendations to guide water managers for the next 25 years.

The majority of the 2005 California Water Plan Update focuses on California's consumptive water uses such as agriculture and urban use. Water management for instream uses is acknowledged in Chapter 9 entitled, "Ecosystem Restoration". This chapter briefly addresses the future need to protect and enhance instream water uses such as fisheries, wildlife, aesthetics, and recreation. The plan update acknowledges that the data and analytical tools used to measure the adequacy of instream flows is insufficient to address ecosystem restoration and it provides a list of five recommendations to improve water management for ecosystem restoration. These recommendations include:

- DWR, CDFG, and SWRCB should work together to publish comprehensive assessments of instream flow needs on California rivers, similar in scope to studies on the Feather and American rivers.
- The Resources Agency and Cal-EPA should work with their respective departments, boards, and commissions to ensure and promote use of independent science to inform their decision-making.
- The Resources Agency should continue to support development and use of statewide databases, analytical tools and evaluation criteria.
- The Resources Agency should support further scientific research on the relationship between flow dedication and water-independent actions to achieve desired restoration.
- The CDFG, with the Department of Conservation and DWR, should investigate and resolve key issues regarding long-term coarse sediment supplies for ecosystem needs.

2.7 WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN (BASIN PLAN) - CENTRAL VALLEY REGION, THE SACRAMENTO RIVER BASIN AND SAN JOAQUIN RIVER BASIN

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans identifies a water-planning document entitled, "Water quality control plan report" (SWRCB 1995). This report includes nine volumes, organized by region, that are periodically updated to reflect changes in policies and regulations. The most recent update is entitled, The Sacramento River Basin and San Joaquin River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the California Regional Water Quality Control Board - Control Valley

Region (Fourth Edition revised September 2004). The updated version is available on the RWQCB website (2006).

The Basin Plan identifies eight beneficial uses that apply to the surface waters in the Middle Fork American River Watershed (Watershed). These beneficial uses are defined as follows:

- Municipal and Domestic Supply - Uses of water for community, military, or individual water supply systems including, but not limited to, drinking water supply.
- Agricultural Supply - Uses of water for farming, horticulture, or ranching including, but not limited to, irrigation (including leaching of salts), stock watering, or support of vegetation for range grazing.
- Hydropower Generation - Uses of water for hydropower generation.
- Water Contact Recreation - Uses of water for recreational activities involving body contact with water, where ingestion of water is reasonably possible. These uses include, but are not limited to, swimming, wading, water-skiing, skin and scuba diving, surfing, white water activities, fishing, or use of natural hot springs.
- Non-contact Water Recreation - Uses of water for recreational activities involving proximity to water, but where there is generally no body contact with water, nor any likelihood of ingestion of water. These uses include, but are not limited to, picnicking, sunbathing, hiking, beachcombing, camping, boating, tide pool and marine life study, hunting, sightseeing, or aesthetic enjoyment in conjunction with the above activities.
- Coldwater Freshwater Habitat - Uses of water that support coldwater ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish, or wildlife, including invertebrates.
- Spawning, Reproductive, and/or Early Development - Uses of water that support high quality aquatic habitats suitable for reproduction and early development of fish.
- Wildlife Habitat - Uses of water that support terrestrial or wetland ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation and enhancement of terrestrial habitats or wetlands, vegetation, wildlife (e.g., mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates), or wildlife water and food sources.

2.8 ELDERADO NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans identifies the document entitled, "Eldorado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan" (ENF-LRMP), which was developed by the USDA-FS to direct the management of the ENF (FS 1988). The goal of this plan is to provide management direction that reflects a variety of activities, allows use and protection of Forest resources, and fulfills legislative requirements while addressing local, regional, and national issues. The ENF-LRMP describes the desired future state of the ENF, provides forestwide management direction and prescriptions for

individual management areas, and includes management standards and guidelines. The ENF-LRMP applies to all National Forest System lands administered by the ENF.

The ENF-LRMP recognizes water management and recreation as two important beneficial uses of the ENF. The management guidelines that apply to Project recreation facilities are described as part of Management Area 9 of the ENF-LRMP. The management emphasis for developed recreation facilities focuses on providing recreation opportunities for the public, maintaining recreation facilities, and preserving the natural forest setting surrounding these facilities. The protection of water quality is also emphasized through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

In the early 1980's, as part of the preparation to develop the ENF-LRMP, the ENF conducted eligibility and suitability studies to determine if the Rubicon River met the requirements for designation as a national Wild and Scenic River (WSR). The full length of the Rubicon River was evaluated for eligibility. The upper Rubicon, above Hell Hole Reservoir was found not eligible, and the lower Rubicon, below Hell Hole Dam was found eligible. Subsequently, a suitability study was conducted along three segments of the Rubicon River extending from Hell Hole Dam to Ralston Afterbay. The study concluded that all three segments of the Rubicon River possessed "outstandingly remarkable values" (ORVs) that met the required WSR standards for "Scenic," "Fish," and "Other" values. Only one ORV is required to qualify a river segment for WSR eligibility.

The ENF-LRMP recommended all three segments of the lower Rubicon River between Hell Hole Dam and Ralston Afterbay for scenic river designation. However, the classification for the river in the ENF-LRMP was appealed, and in a subsequent decision by the Chief of the Forest Service, the two lower segments of the Rubicon River, from Ellicott Bridge to Ralston Afterbay were recommended for "Wild" classification in addition to "Scenic" classification. The upper segment, from 100-yards below the Hell Hole Dam to Ellicott Bridge, continues to have a "Scenic" classification (S. Rodman pers. comm. 2006). The ENF formally recommended that Congress designate the Rubicon River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers system (S. Rodman pers. comm. 2006). However, the United States Congress has not yet acted to officially designate the river. Regardless, the ENF manages the Rubicon River, and a ¼ mile corridor, to protect the ORV's identified in their WSR eligibility study.

2.9 TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans cites the Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan published by the USDA-FS in March 1990. This plan was amended in 2005 to provide direction for managing the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) for the next 10-15 years. In general, the 2005 amended plan embraces the goals identified in the 1990 plan, particularly with respect to water resources.

As with the ENF-LRMP, the Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (TNF-LRMP) was developed by the USDA-FS to direct the management of the

TNF. In general, the goals of this plan are similar to those contained in the ENF-LRMP, with some specific references to water resources as noted below.

The TNF-LRMP discusses a “water program” designed to address management direction for water resources and development. The purpose of the water program is described as follows:

“To afford optimum protection to the water resources compatible with other program practices, including timber, wildlife, fisheries, range, recreation, engineering, and mining. Where opportunities arise, watershed improvement measures will be implemented and water quantities and timing of flow will be improved. The water program on the TNF has primarily served as a support function for other resource activities. The various types of support include planning, inventories, analyzing project proposals, monitoring, and administration.”

As with the ENF-LRMP, a strong emphasis is placed on implementing BMPs to protect water quality. The following summarizes the TNF’s primary objectives regarding Water quality and quantity as identified in the 2005 TNF-LRMP Record of Decision:

“The Forest Plan emphasizes the protection of water quality through implementation of Best Management Practices and streamside management zone standards presented in this Forest Plan. Remedial actions will be taken during the first two decades to eliminate the backlog of historically disturbed or damaged watersheds resulting from early day mining activities at a rate of approximately 100-acres per year. Restoration of degraded riparian and streamside management zones is a high priority.”

In an amendment to the 1990 TNF-LRMP, the TNF Forest Supervisor concluded that the segment of the upper Rubicon River on the TNF above Hell Hole Reservoir is not eligible to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This decision is described in the report entitled “Record of Decision: Twenty-two Westside Rivers Wild and Scenic Study Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement” (USDA-FS, TNF/Plumas National Forest, Undated). This recommendation concurs with the findings of the ENF for the same river segment as described in above. The Rubicon River downstream of Hell Hole Dam is not within the TNF and therefore is not addressed in the TNF-LRMP.

2.10 FISHERIES USA, THE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY OF THE USFWS

This policy is cited on the FERC’s August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. It provides general information about the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) policies regarding recreational fisheries and is therefore considered pertinent to the MFP.

The National Recreational Fisheries Policy (National Policy) was adopted in 1988. The USFWS issued Fisheries USA to identify its responsibilities and role under the auspices

of the National Policy (USFWS 1989). Policy elements relevant to recreational fisheries associated with the MFP include the following:

- Protect, restore, and enhance fish populations and their habitats.
- Serve as an active partner with other Federal governmental agencies, States, Tribes, conservation organizations, and the public in developing recreational fisheries programs.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Nine additional planning documents that are not included on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans were also considered as part of this review, as follows:

- National Park Service. 2006. The Nationwide Rivers Inventory. U.S. Department of Interior.
- Placer County. 1994. Placer County General Plan: Countywide General Plan Policy Document.
- Placer County Planning Department (PCPD). 2000. Placer Legacy: Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program - Implementation Report.
- PCPD. 2007. Foresthill Divide Community Plan: Placer County, California.
- United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). 1992. Auburn State Recreation Area Interim Resource Management Plan.
- USBR. 1993. American River Water Resources Investigation: Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study and Preliminary Classification.
- United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service (USDA-FS). 1993. Granite Chief Wilderness Management Plan, Wilderness Implementation Schedule and Decision Notice.
- USDA-FS. 1998. Desolation Wilderness Management Guidelines - Land Management Plan Amendment.
- USDA-FS. 2004. Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, including final environmental impact statement and record of decision. Department of Agriculture, Vallejo, California. January 2004.

Each of these documents and their relevance to the MFP is briefly summarized in the following.

3.1 THE NATIONWIDE RIVERS INVENTORY

The NRI is not cited on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans but is considered relevant because it identifies the Rubicon River as a candidate for Wild and Scenic River status.

The Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) is a listing of more than 3,400 free-flowing river segments in the United States that are believed to possess one or more "outstandingly

remarkable values” (ORVs) that are judged to be of more than local or regional significance. Under a 1979 Presidential directive and related Council on Environmental Quality procedures all federal agencies must seek to avoid or mitigate actions that would adversely affect one or more NRI segments (NPS 2006). The NRI is a source of information for statewide river assessments and federal agencies involved in stream-related projects.

In order to meet the criteria for “outstandingly remarkable”, a river value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale (NPS 2006). The eligibility criteria set minimum thresholds and are designed to foster greater consistency within federal river-administering agencies. There are nine eligibility criteria used to assess a river’s status, these include: Scenery(S), Recreation(R), Geology(G), Fish(F), Wildlife(W), Prehistory(P), History(H), Cultural(C), and Other Values(O).

The Middle Fork American River is not currently listed on the NRI, although portions of the Middle Fork American River were determined to be eligible for National Wild and Scenic River Status by the USBR. The Rubicon River from the base of Hell Hole Dam to Ralston Afterbay is included on the NRI.

3.2 PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN: COUNTYWIDE GENERAL PLAN POLICY DOCUMENT

The Placer County General Plan (Placer County 1994) is not included on the FERC’s August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. However, it is considered relevant because the MFP is primarily located in Placer County.

The Placer County General Plan includes information regarding land uses and transportation in the vicinity of the MFP. In addition, it provides management goals and policies relevant to the Middle Fork American River Watershed. In accordance with State law and case law, all zoning, subdivision approvals, and public works projects must be consistent with the General Plan.

The General Plan is designed to comply with various state regulations and policies for land use and development. As required, it addresses seven topics or “elements” including land use, circulation (transportation), housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The General Plan consists of two types of documents: the Countywide General Plan and a set of more detailed community plans covering specific areas of the unincorporated county. The Foresthill Divide Community Plan, described below, is an example of a community plan, which provides detailed focus on a specific geographic region.

The Countywide General Plan provides an overall framework for development and protection of the County’s natural and cultural resources. The goals and policies are applicable throughout the County, except to the extent that County authority is preempted by cities within their corporate limits.

3.3 PLACER LEGACY OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM - IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

The Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program is managed by Placer County. This document is not included on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans but pertains to Placer County and is therefore considered relevant to the MFP. The Program is designed to protect and conserve open space and agricultural lands in Placer County in perpetuity. The Program was developed to implement the goals, policies, and programs of the 1994 General Plan including the open space and conservation elements of the General Plan. Placer Legacy's 2000 Implementation Report takes a proactive approach to conserve open space and agricultural lands without eliminating opportunities for economic growth and expansion.

For planning and management purposes, the Implementation Report subdivides Placer County into 10 separate geographic regions or study areas. The MFP falls within two study areas: the "American River Canyon" and "West Slope Sierra". The Implementation Report describes each of these geographic regions. In addition, it analyzes the land management trends in each of these areas, including stressors and conflicts, and concludes with a detailed analysis of conservation opportunities for each study area.

A Placer Legacy Program Summary was published in December 2006. The following objectives, identified in the Placer Legacy Program Summary, are pertinent to the MFP:

- Maintain a viable agricultural segment of the economy;
- Conserve natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities;
- Retain important scenic and historic areas;
- Preserve the diversity of plant and animal communities;
- Protect endangered and other special status plant and animal species; and
- Separate urban areas into distinct communities, and ensure public safety.

3.4 FORESTHILL DIVIDE COMMUNITY PLAN - PLACER COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

This plan is not cited on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. However, this document is considered pertinent to the MFP because it contains management direction regarding the Middle Fork American River Watershed.

The Foresthill Divide Community Plan (Plan), in combination with the Placer County General Plan, is designed to satisfy the requirements of the California Planning and Zoning Law by setting forth the goals, policies, assumptions, guidelines, standards, and implementation measures for the planning area. The Plan was adopted in August 2003 and provides overall direction for future growth in the Foresthill Divide to approximately the year 2022. The planning area comprises approximately 109-square-miles including

the northern portion of the Middle Fork American River Watershed in the Foresthill Divide region.

The Community Development Elements that are most relevant to the MFP include Public Facilities (e.g., Water Supply and Drainage/Water Quality) and Parks and Recreation (e.g., ASRA and French Meadows/Hellhole Reservoir). The Goals and Policies described in these Elements address topics such as the availability of an adequate and safe water supply, the maintenance of high quality water in water bodies and aquifers used as sources of domestic supply, and providing recreation facilities/opportunities for the residents of the Plan area.

3.5 AUBURN STATE RECREATION AREA INTERIM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This plan is not identified on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. However, it is considered pertinent to the MFP because the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) is situated immediately downstream of the MFP, encompassing portions of the Middle Fork and North Forks of the American River.

The ASRA is located downstream of Ralston Afterbay and includes approximately 42,000-acres along 40-miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River. The ASRA offers a wide variety of recreation opportunities to over 900,000 visitors a year (DPR undated). Primary recreational activities include hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, camping, mountain biking, gold panning, and off-highway motorcycle riding. Whitewater recreation is also very popular along both forks of the river. Twenty-eight Class IV permits and 24 Class II permits were issued along the Middle Fork American River in 2005 in the ASRA (B. Deitchman pers. comm. 2006).

In September 1992, the USBR published the ASRA Interim Resource Management Plan (IRMP). The IRMP amends the 1978 General Plan for the Auburn Dam and Reservoir Project, which was designed to manage the area exclusively as a reservoir-based SRA. Although the 1992 IRMP assumes the Auburn Dam and Reservoir would be constructed, unlike the General Plan, it guides the use, development, and management of the ASRA primarily as a river-based recreation area.

Development of the IRMP required a broad analysis of the recreation area including its resources, uses, problems, and potentials. This analysis was accomplished through field studies, literature searches, and extensive public and agency consultation. Specific management guidelines address such items as allowable land use, facilities design and construction standards, special events, camping, resource management, recreational mineral collection, and whitewater recreation.

The DPR, Gold Fields District, recently initiated a process to prepare an updated General Plan for the ASRA (J. Michaels pers. comm. 2006). This General Plan will be developed over a two-year period starting in January 2006. The new General Plan will replace the existing 1978 General Plan and the 1992 IRMP.

3.6 AMERICAN RIVER WATER RESOURCES INVESTIGATION: WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ELIGIBILITY STUDY AND PRELIMINARY CLASSIFICATION

This document is not cited on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. However, it involves portions of the Middle and North Forks of the American River downstream of Oxbow Powerhouse, and is therefore considered pertinent to the MFP.

In January 1993 the USBR published the report entitled, "American River Water Resources Investigation, Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility and Preliminary Classification" (USBR 1993). This study was conducted as part of a larger land and water resource planning effort known as the American River Water Resources Investigation (also known as the Auburn Dam Project). In this study, three segments on the North and Middle Forks of the American River were found "Eligible" for Wild and Scenic designation under the WSRA. Two of these segments are located downstream of the MFP and are described in the USBR report as follows:

- Middle Fork American River: From Oxbow Dam to the confluence with the North Fork American River. Length is approximately 23-miles.
- North Fork American River: The North Fork, from North Fork Debris Dam to the intake of the Auburn Dam diversion tunnel. Length is approximately 5-miles.

The study concluded that these segments possess "outstandingly remarkable values" (ORVs) that meet the required WSRA standards for eight resource categories including "Recreation," "Scenic," "Geologic," "Wildlife," "Fish," "Ecological," "Cultural," and "Other Values." Only one ORV is required to qualify a river segment for WSR eligibility. In order for the river segment to be considered eligible in this study, the ORVs must occur on federally administered lands.

The summary statement in the 1993 study indicated that the next step in the process would be a suitability study to determine if the eligible river segments are suitable for designation to the National Wild and Scenic River System. According to the USBR, a suitability study has not been conducted and there are no plans to conduct a suitability study at this time (R. Schroeder, pers. comm. 2006). The USBR and other state and federal resource agencies are required to manage the river and the area within ¼ mile of the river to protect the ORVs until the suitability study is completed.

3.7 GRANITE CHIEF WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document is not cited on the FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans. However, it dictates management of the Granite Chief Wilderness, which is located within the Middle Fork American River Watershed immediately east of the MFP.

The Granite Chief Wilderness is located west of Lake Tahoe and south of Highway 80 along the crest of the Sierra Nevada. The Wilderness includes high elevation glaciated peaks, steep river canyons, and is bordered by the Rubicon River to the south. The natural environment is predominantly unmodified, providing outstanding opportunities for visitors to enjoy isolation and solitude. The MFP is situated immediately west of and

just outside the Wilderness boundary. At its closest points, the Wilderness boundary is approximately 0.25-miles east of the Hell Hole Reservoir and approximately 4.5-miles east of French Meadows Reservoir. The Granite Chief Wilderness is administered by the TNF, Truckee and American River Ranger Districts, in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In 1993, the USDA-FS adopted the Granite Chief Wilderness Management Plan (GCMP) and Wilderness Implementation Schedule (USDA-FS 1993). The GCMP amends the TNF-LRMP providing specific direction for management of the Granite Chief Wilderness. The GCMP strongly emphasizes sustaining and enhancing the natural ecosystem.

The GCMP does not specifically address land management activities outside of the Wilderness boundary. However, Forest Service Wilderness management objectives generally consider activities on lands contiguous to the Wilderness boundary.

3.8 THE DESOLATION WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES - LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

This document is not cited in the FERC's September 2006 List of Comprehensive Plans. However, it dictates management in the Desolation Wilderness, a portion of which is located within the Middle Fork American River Watershed.

The Desolation Wilderness Area is located southeast of the MFP and west of Lake Tahoe, along the crest of the Sierra Nevada. Desolation Wilderness includes the headwaters of the Rubicon River and the South Fork of the American River, and numerous shorter drainages that flow into Lake Tahoe. The designated Wilderness Area encompasses 63,960 acres of land.

Desolation Wilderness is jointly administered by the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), in accordance with the goals, objectives and direction contained in the Desolation Wilderness Management Guidelines - Land Management Plan Amendment (LMPA). The LMPA was developed by the USDA-FS to provide consistent direction for management of the Desolation Wilderness. According to the LMPA, the Desolation Wilderness is managed consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964 to "ensure an enduring resource of wilderness for present and future generations". The primary management goal is to provide long-term protection and preservation of the area's wilderness character under a principle of nondegradation. Maintaining the wilderness resource is dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between preservation of wilderness character and visitor use. Other resources in the wilderness are managed in a manner compatible with wilderness resource management objectives.

Desolation Wilderness is subdivided into forty-five zones, which can be accessed via 15 trailheads. The zone boundaries generally correspond to topographic features such as ridge lines and lake basins, and to different levels of use. Permits are required for both day and overnight use and fees are charged for overnight camping. Overnight use is

managed according to a zone quota system, which is based upon the number of people entering the wilderness each day and their first nights destination zone. The nearest trailhead to the MFP is the Buck Island Trailhead, which is located near Buck Island Lake, just outside the northwest wilderness boundary. This trail head provides access to the Rubicon Trail, which generally parallels the Rubicon River, through Rockbound Valley.

3.9 SIERRA NEVADA FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT , FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (FEIS) AND RECORD OF DECISION (ROD)

The FERC's August 2007 List of Comprehensive Plans does not identify the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) or associated Final Supplemental Environment Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). This set of documents was published in 2004 and augments the previously published 2001 SNFPA, FEIS, and ROD. This discussion relies on both amendments, which must be used in tandem.

The 2001 SNFPA augments the Pacific Southwest Regional Guide, the Intermountain Regional Guide, and the LRMPs for National Forests in the Sierra Nevada and Modoc Plateau, including the ENF and TNF (USDA-FS 2001). The Forest Plan Amendment addresses the need to: (1) sustain the desired condition of old forest ecosystems; (2) protect and restore riparian, aquatic, and meadow ecosystems; (3) combat noxious weeds; (4) improve fire and fuels management, and (5) sustain desired conditions of lower west side hardwood ecosystems in the affected National Forests. The ROD was submitted with the FEIS and includes rationale regarding the decision basis for the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative applies a cautious approach for vegetation and fuels management in habitats for sensitive wildlife species, particularly those associated with old forest ecosystems, while recognizing the need to reduce the threat of fire to human communities.

The 2004 SNFPA and associated documents address in more detail three problem areas that were not adequately analyzed in the 2001 Forest Plan Amendment. These problem areas include: (1) old forest ecosystems and associated species; (2) aquatic, riparian and meadow ecosystems, and associated species; and (3) fire and fuels management. The 2004 SNFPA adopts an integrated strategy for vegetation management designed to reduce the threat of wildfire to communities in the urban-wildland interface. It is also designed to modify fire behavior over the broader landscape. The 2004 SNFPA does not address all management activities on National Forest System land. For example, the 2004 SNFPA does not address recreation management or Wild and Scenic River management. These topics are addressed in the individual forest LRMPs.

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