

13.0 Chili Bar Socioeconomic Study Plan

The Chili Bar Socioeconomic Study will consist of reviewing existing data sources and conducting interviews to develop a broad description of the current socioeconomic setting in the 20-mile-long area along the South Fork American River from Chili Bar Dam to, but not including, Folsom Reservoir (referred to in the this study plan as the Reach Downstream of Chili Bar) and how this current socioeconomic setting might be affected by the combined operation of the Chili Bar Project by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and of the Upper American River Project (UARP) by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD).

13.1 Pertinent Issue Questions

2. What are the socioeconomic benefits (direct, indirect and induced) and costs of the UARP and Chili Bar projects to El Dorado County and the Region?

13.2 Background

Both Pacific Gas and Electric Company and SMUD are in the process of relicensing their projects, with license applications scheduled for filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by July 2005. The Licensees have agreed to jointly perform various “overlapping” studies (studies that are to the joint benefit of PG&E and SMUD in their respective relicensings). One such study is the recently completed Recreation Flow Study that focused entirely in the Reach Downstream of Chili Bar and had the specific objectives of:

- Describe existing fishing, swimming, recreational gold panning, dredging and whitewater boating opportunities and other types of flow-dependent day use activities below Chili Bar Dam.
- Identify the regional significance of existing and potential fishing, swimming, gold panning, dredging, whitewater boating opportunities and other types of flow-dependent day use activities below Chili Bar Dam.
- Determine how water year type, flow (including water temperature) and timing affect these opportunities.
- Identify the minimum, optimum and maximum flow regimes (including timing, duration and volume) for each of the identified flow-dependent recreation opportunities. Provide this information to the Aquatics TWG to determine if the Aquatics TWG can take advantage of the identified flows for study purposes.
- Answering the pertinent issue questions identified in 7.5.1

To complete that study, the Licensees interviewed local businesses and agencies.

This Chili Bar Socioeconomic Study is another overlapping study that should be able to take advantage of some information developed in the Recreation Flow Study.

13.3 Study Objectives

The objectives of the Chili Bar Socioeconomic Study are:

- Provide a broad description of the current socioeconomic setting in the Reach Downstream of Chili Bar.
- Identify how the combined operations of the Chili Bar and UARP projects might affect the current socioeconomic setting into the future.

13.4 Study Area

The study area will focus primarily on the lands adjoining the Reach Downstream of Chili Bar, with emphasis on the Lotus/Coloma area. Information will be gathered from other areas as well, but the level of effort will, in general, be inversely proportional to the distance from the reach. The presumption is that the more distant an area is from the reach, the less affect flows in the reach have on the socioeconomic setting of that area.

13.5 Study Methods

The study will be performed in two steps.

Step 1: Review Available Information – The Licensee will review existing sources of socioeconomic information for the reach. These data sources are likely to include: a PhD Thesis by Kelley Bricker for the Planning and Conservation League Study (Executive Director Fred Keeley); information from the Bureau of Land Management; information from El Dorado County documents; information from the El Dorado County Economic Development Office; and information from the Coloma-Lotus Chamber of Commerce. The Licensees have also asked the Bureau and others to identify potential data sources. The goal of this review is to: 1) describe the local and regional population and trends including seasonal changes where possible; and 2) describe in general current economic conditions in housing, construction, recreation and tourism, employment, earnings per capita and tax base. Information on these parameters is typically found by searching the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, state and local databases.

Step 2: Interviews – The Licensees will perform telephone and face-to-face interviews with individuals who may help add to the description of the current socioeconomic conditions in the study area and how the combined operations of the Projects might affect that condition. Some of the parties the Licensees might attempt to interview include:

- Those individuals interviewed for the Recreation Flow Study
- Kelley Bricker, who performed a socioeconomic study on the reach as part of a PhD thesis
- Bill Center (Camp Lotus)
- Nate Rangel (California Outdoors)
- The 20 or so Commercial Rafting Companies that have permits to run the reach
- Local businesses in the Lotus/Coloma area
- Some of the numerous private landowners whose property abuts the river
- Local clubs and organizations with an interest in recreation
- Coloma-Lotus Chamber of Commerce
- River Management Advisory Committee
- Bureau of Land Management
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- El Dorado County Sheriff's Office
- El Dorado County Tax Assessor's Office
- El Dorado County Planning Department
- El Dorado County Economic Development Office
- El Dorado County Visitor's Authority
- El Dorado County Film Commission
- Local real estate agents
- Local municipalities
- California State Parks – Folsom and Marshall Gold Discovery

Some of the questions that will be asked during the interviews will include:

To all interviewed:

- Please describe your relationship with activities associated with the SFAR.
- Where do you live/work in relation to the river?
- How long have you been in the area?
- On average, how often (days/year) do you partake in an activity that brings you to the river? For boating, picnicking, sightseeing, swimming, wildlife viewing, etc?
- Do you have a sense for the general magnitude, duration and frequency of various flow levels in the river? If so, what is your sense of how often the flow is about 200 to 300 cfs; 1,000 to 1,500 cfs; 1,500 cfs or more?

- What is your perspective on the relationship between the dependability and predictability of flows in the SFAR with the economic health of the region? How do you see this affecting the issues that you deal with as part of your business or professional responsibilities?

To homeowners:

- Can you see the river from your home?
- How often do you spend the day on or near the river at your house?
- To what extent is your use and enjoyment of the river dependent on/affected by specific flow levels? What are those flow levels?

To Business Owners:

- What type of a business do you operate?
- Which business sector is your business within? (retail, recreation, manufacturing, tourism, agriculture)
- How many people do you employ?
- How many FTEs are dependent on SFAR river related businesses?
- How many individual employees are primarily dependent on the SFAR river related business?
- What are the socioeconomic impacts associated with seasonal employment?
- How many adults who are not employees are primarily supported by this business?
- What is the annual payroll of your business? (a range will be provided to choose from)
- Is your business a seasonal business? If so please indicate the months that you operate. (*Jan., Feb., March, ...*)
- Is your business dependant on river flows? (*yes/no*)
- Which months of the year is your business most dependent on flows in the river?
- Which of those months affect your business the most?
- What would happen to your business if you expected a certain flow in the river and it did not occur?
- Can you describe the flow levels that cause a substantial change in your business?
- If you are a commercial outfitter, about what percent of your customers are repeat customers on the SFAR?
- To what extent is your business dependent on flows in the river as compared to other conditions such as roads, general economy, season, weather conditions, local government regulations, etc.?
- If you provide opportunities for river access and/or use please provide the number of people that use your services per year and a breakdown of how far people travel to use your business (*less than 1 hour/ 1 - 4 hours/ 4-8 hours*) and average expenditures per person per visit.
- What percentage of your business is dependent on boatable flows? How important is dependability and predictability of those flows?
- If there were not reliable summer boating flows on the South Fork for a period of time, how long would it be until you went out of business or shut down your business?

To Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Office/and appropriate County Officials:

- How many SFAR related businesses are there in the Georgetown/Placerville/Cameron Park area and the Coloma/Lotus area? Please list the types of river related businesses that are present.
- What does the local economy primarily consist of (*retail, recreation, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism*)?
- Please provide specifics of the sector(s) identified in the question above.
- What is the annual money (as applicable) generated from recreation, tourism, retail, and agricultural sectors.
- What are the fastest growing sectors in the past 5 years?
- How is this growth reflected in housing, retail, commercial, recreational and industrial construction?
- How have the changes in the economy and sectors (identified above) over time affected the make up of the community?
- What are most people looking for when they move to the Coloma/Lotus Community?
- What are most people looking for when they move to the West Slope El Dorado County?
- Why do businesses want to move to/from the community? (*taxes, availability of labor, location, quality of life, municipal services*)

- Why do most people want to move to/from the community? (*employment, retirement, taxes, housing, quality of life, municipal services*)
- Has there been an increase in services for families over the past 10 years i.e.: school construction, school enrollment, health care etc? (*yes/no*)
- If yes please describe.
- What is the most valuable resource to the community from an economic standpoint?
- How many hotel/motel/bed and breakfast rooms are there in the Georgetown/Placerville/Cameron Park area?
- How many hotel/motel/bed and breakfast rooms are there in the Coloma/Lotus area?
- Is there a demand for additional lodging in each of these two areas?
- How many restaurants are there in the Georgetown/Placerville/Cameron Park area?
- How many restaurants are there in the Coloma/Lotus area?
- Is there a demand for additional restaurants in each of these two areas?
- Is there a correlation between lodging and restaurant use and users of the river?
- Has there been a change in the numbers of hotel/motel/bed and breakfast rooms and restaurants in the two areas described above?
- What is the primary reason for the change in numbers of lodging rooms/restaurants in each of these two areas?
- How is the local economy dependant on river flows?
- How many FTEs are dependent on SFAR river related businesses?
- How many individual employees are primarily dependent on the SFAR river related business?
- What are the socioeconomic impacts associated with seasonal employment?
- How many adults who are not employees are primarily supported by this business?

To Real Estate Agents:

- Please provide information on general property values by sector (as applicable); riverfront property, off river property, residential, agricultural, commercial, manufacturing/industrial.
- What are the median values of houses, condos, raw land (riverfront/non-riverfront), agricultural land, and commercial real estate?
- What is the trend in property values on or very near to the river over the past 5 years, and how does that trend compare to other properties in the area not on or very near to the river?
- Please provide the number of houses and commercial properties sold over the past 5 years.
- How are taxes in the community viewed? (*high, low, as expected*)
- Does the reliability/predictability of river flows have any effect on property values? (*yes/no*) If yes, please explain.
- Do other factors such as, and not limited to, the actual and potential increase in government owned lands have any affect on property values and marketability?
- Why do most people want to move to/from the community? (*employment, retirement, taxes, housing, quality of life, municipal services*)

To Public Lands Managers (County Park @ Henningsen's, State Park @ Coloma and Folsom Reservoir, BLM) and Law Enforcement:

- What are the costs and incomes to your agency that you attribute to the South Fork of the American River?
- How do you see these costs and incomes affected by the predictability and reliability of flows in the river?

13.5 Study Analysis

The data will be analyzed and organized to describe the general socioeconomic condition in the principal study area and how the combined operations of the Projects affect this condition.

13.7 Study Output

A presentation of the study results will be made to the Socioeconomic TWG. The ultimate study output will be mostly a narrative report with tables and charts. The report will include the following: issue questions, objectives, study area, methods used to collect information, methods used to analyze the data, findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations. The report will be prepared in a format so that it can easily be incorporated into the Licensees' draft environmental assessment or exhibit E that will be submitted to FERC with the Licensees' applications for new license.

13.8 TWG and Plenary Group Endorsement

The Socioeconomic TWG approved the draft study plan on December 12, 2003. The participants at the meeting who said they could "live with" the plan were El Dorado County Water Agency, City of Sacramento, Placer County Water Agency, U.S. Forest Service, American River Recreation Association & Camp Lotus, Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County, Pacific Gas & Electric Company and SMUD. None of the participants at the meeting said they could not "live with" the draft study plan. Several participants, including EDCWA and Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County, stated their approval was conditional upon EDCWA and SMUD meeting to discuss issues identified on page 4 of EDCWA's October 10, 2003, letter to David Hanson, SMUD.

The Plenary Group approved this plan on January 7, 2004. The participants at the meeting who said they could "live with" this study plan were the U.S. Forest Service, American River Recreation Association & Camp Lotus, El Dorado County Water Agency, El Dorado County, El Dorado Irrigation District, El Dorado County Citizen's for Water, National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Placer County Water Agency, City of Sacramento, California Outdoors, California Department of Fish and Game, Friends of the River, State Water Resources Control Board, and SMUD. None of the participants at the meeting said they could not "live with" this study plan.

13.9 References

None