
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES REGARDING AN ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FOR WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

BISHOP CREEK HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 1394

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Persons

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) plans to prepare an environmental document for Southern California Edison Company's (SCE) Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Res. Code, § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.). The Project is located on Bishop Creek, Middle Fork Creek, South Fork Creek, Birch Creek, McGee Creek, and Green Creek in Inyo County, California. The Project is approximately 28 miles southwest of the city of Bishop. Project facilities are depicted in the attached map and a more detailed description is provided in the *Project Description* section below.

The Project is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which issues licenses for the operation of hydroelectric projects for 30 to 50 years. SCE applied for a new FERC license for the Project on June 29, 2022. SCE currently operates the Project under a 30-year license that expires on June 30, 2024. SCE is proposing to relicense the Project for a term of 40 years. FERC is required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act as part of its licensing decision for the Project.

In accordance with section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act, SCE must apply for a water quality certification (certification) for the Project.

NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15063, subdivision (g), notice is hereby given that the State Water Board is conducting informal consultation with responsible and trustee agencies (Agencies) to solicit input on the Project's CEQA process. Recipients of this notice are encouraged to inform other responsible and trustee agency representatives that may be interested in this Project about this notice. While it is not required by CEQA, the State Water Board will accept similar input and supporting information from other interested entities and persons.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek input from the Agencies responsible for resources affected by the Project. **The State Water Board would like to obtain recommendations, rationale, and supporting information regarding whether an Environmental Impact Report or a Negative Declaration should be prepared.**

Recommendations and supporting information should be provided by the deadline in the *Consultation Deadline and Contact* section of this notice.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project consists of: (1) eight existing dams; (2) five powerhouses with an installed capacity of 26.27 megawatts; (3) four reservoirs (South Lake, Lake Sabrina, Longley Lake, and Intake No. 2 Reservoir); (4) three water diversions (Birch Creek Diversion, McGee Creek Diversion, and Green Creek Diversion); (5) the Birch-McGee diversion pipe that conveys water from Birch and McGee Creeks to Flowline No. 2; and (6) appurtenant facilities. The Project has three primary storage reservoirs: South Lake (12,883 acre-feet), Lake Sabrina (8,376 acre-feet), and Longley Lake (178 acre-feet). The fourth reservoir, Intake No. 2, provides negligible storage. South Lake, Lake Sabrina, and Intake No. 2 Reservoir provide water-based recreation with nearby facilities owned by the United States Forest Service. The Green Creek diversion has been out of service since October 2008 and SCE plans to return it to service as part of the Project relicensing. SCE does not propose any changes to Project operations or any new construction or modification of any Project structures other than returning the Green Creek diversion to service.

The State Water Board will use the CEQA analysis to support its decision of whether to issue certification and if so, under what conditions. Certification issuance requires analysis of a project's overall effect on water quality and an analysis of whether the designated beneficial uses identified in the appropriate water quality control plan(s) are adequately protected.

CONSULTATION DEADLINE AND CONTACT

The State Water Board will accept written input on the type of environmental document that should be developed for the Project (e.g., negative declaration, environmental impact report) and supporting information **until 5:00 p.m. on January 13, 2023.**

Written input should specifically identify that it is provided as part of the "Bishop Creek CEQA Section 15063(g) Informal Consultation" and include recommendations as to the type of CEQA document that should be prepared as well as the rationale and supporting information for the recommendation. Written input may be submitted electronically or by mail to:

Email: Wr401program@waterboards.ca.gov

or

Mail to:

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights – Water Quality Certification Program
Attn: Garrett Long
P.O. Box 2000
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If you have questions regarding this notice please contact Garrett Long, Project Manager, by email to: garrett.long@waterboards.ca.gov.

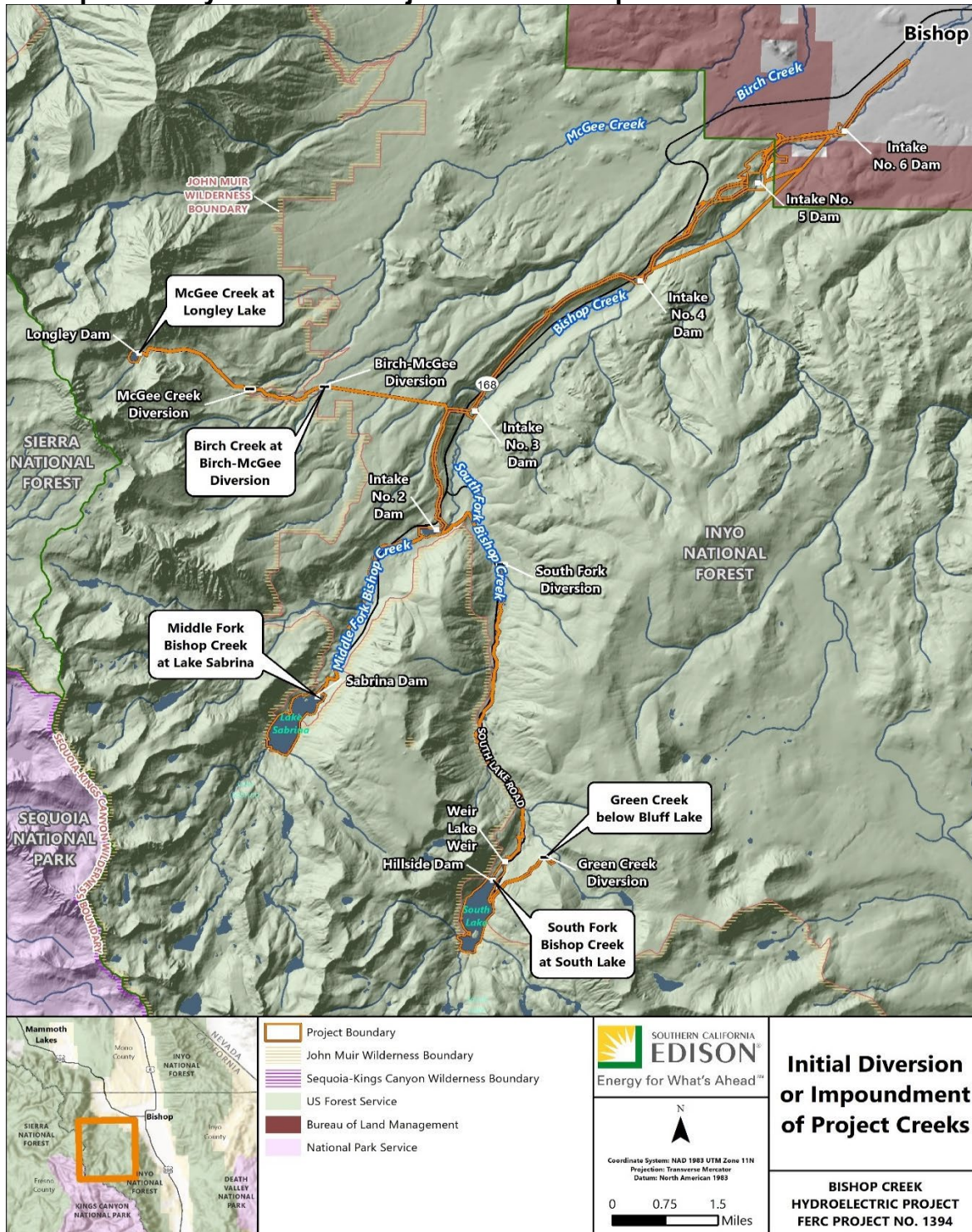
Parker Thaler
Water Quality Certification Program Manager
Division of Water Rights

12/9/2022

Date

Enclosures: Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project Location Map
Distribution List

Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project Location Map



Source: Southern California Edison Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project, Final License Application, June 2022

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