

## Battle Creek Planning Unit

### Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat

#### Potential Measure:

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the Battle Creek Restoration Project boundary to identify biological resources and enable their protection.*

Due to the Restoration Project, there are substantial biological data available for certain parts of the planning unit, particularly around FERC Project facilities. Otherwise, little data are available, particularly for areas such as Bluff Springs and the area north of North Battle Creek Reservoir as they are primarily outside the FERC boundary. To provide a better understanding of the existing resources and potential for enhancement, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of lands outside the Restoration Project boundary to identify biological resources and enable their protection.

#### Potential Measure:

- *Develop a noxious weed management plan for the planning unit.*

Field surveys for the Restoration Project identified five noxious weed species at several locations throughout the Restoration Project area, which includes many of the planning unit lands. Other locations north of the Restoration Project area receive significant recreation use; thus, there is a potential for recreationists and their vehicles to spread noxious weeds throughout the area, if they have not already become established. Currently, there is no noxious weed management plan for the Battle Creek area. To protect native habitat and plants, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a noxious weed management plan for the entire planning unit, which would include management of both terrestrial and aquatic weeds. Development of the noxious weed management plan should be coordinated with existing PG&E noxious weed efforts, and the wildlife and habitat, fuels, rangeland, and forest management plans.

#### Potential Measure:

- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for the planning unit.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends using biological resource survey data to develop a wildlife and habitat management plan. As mentioned previously, the Restoration Project proposed for the Battle Creek area will greatly enhance aquatic habitat, primarily for special status chinook salmon and steelhead. Conversely, little habitat enhancement for terrestrial species has occurred in the Battle Creek area, except for a project at McCumber Reservoir to enhance meadow and wetland habitat. However, existing data show that the planning unit contains several special status terrestrial wildlife species including osprey, bald eagle, golden eagle, sharp-skinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, American peregrine falcon, yellow-breasted chat, ringtail, and several bat species, as well as at least seven special status plant species. The planning unit likely contains habitat for many other special status species, and recommended surveys may reveal additional special status plants and wildlife.

Once surveys are completed, potential habitat enhancements can be identified and developed into a comprehensive plan describing habitat and species goals and objectives, as well as measures needed to enhance and protect habitat for both plants and wildlife. Monitoring of species and/or

habitats would also be developed as a component of the plan. The wildlife and habitat management plan should be developed in conjunction with the rangeland, noxious weed, forest, and fuels management plans.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Coordinate with the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project and the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy.*

The Stewardship Council recommends also includes coordinating with the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project as appropriate. Additionally, the Stewardship Council recommends coordinating with the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, which has many programs throughout the area, including a Stewardship Phase II Program to assess watershed conditions and implement a watershed information system and a community strategy that addresses community issues and concerns. Data gathered for the planning unit could be shared with the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, and coordination with the Conservancy's efforts for public education and programs would facilitate a comprehensive vision and knowledge of the larger watershed area.

## **Open Space**

**Potential Measure:**

- *Apply permanent conservation easements to ensure a higher level of open space protection.*

The Stewardship Council recommends preserving open space values through permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed. Recommendations include only minor recreation development and are not expected to decrease the scenic quality of the viewsheds.

## **Outdoor Recreation**

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a day use area with an ADA fishing platform at Asbury Pump.*

Fishing is a primary recreation use of the planning unit; however, there are no ADA fishing facilities in the planning unit and thus, some users are being excluded. The Stewardship Council recommends developing a day use area at Asbury Pump that would include an ADA fishing platform along with day use facilities such as signage, restrooms, and picnic tables. This site is relatively flat, publicly accessible, and currently is heavily used by anglers in May, thus providing an excellent site for such facilities. Adjacent oak woodlands would provide shade and a pleasant setting for the day use area. Design and development of the day use area would need to be compatible with existing grazing operations.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Assess the potential for youth program opportunities.*

The presence of the Darrah Springs State Fish Hatchery adjacent to planning unit lands at Asbury Pump could provide potential for youth programs to visit the hatchery and learn about fish life cycles and production, and then go fishing on Baldwin Creek at Asbury Pump and use the

recommended day use area. Likewise, the presence of Mt. Lassen Trout Farm's two aquaculture facilities could offer a slightly different perspective on fish production compared to the State Hatchery, which does not grow fish to the size that the private facility does and provides different types of facilities.

In addition, Camp Latieze, a facility northeast of Manton that is owned and operated by the Shasta County Board of Education (not on planning unit lands) offers recreation facilities such as a volleyball court, swimming pool, hiking trails, and horseshoe pits. The camp provides classrooms, but does not provide access to working landscapes or a variety of habitats. Therefore, there is also potential to coordinate with this local camp to use planning unit lands for educational use including visitation to grazing or forestlands to demonstrate working landscape uses, management, and interactions.

There are numerous other opportunities within the planning unit for youth to learn about topics such as oak woodlands, sensitive species, grazing management, and sustainable forestry practices, among other topics. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends assessing the potential for youth program opportunities. Additionally, facilities located within the planning unit could provide staging areas for youth programs, including the recommended day use area at Asbury Pump.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Work with the USFS to resolve the boundary issue at North Battle Creek Reservoir Campground.*

North Battle Creek Reservoir is the easternmost point in the planning unit and contains one campground with both drive-in and walk-in campsites as well as a car-top boat ramp. The walk-in campsites are the only sites along the shoreline, a popular place to camp that can also be accessed by boat from the reservoir. A landline survey in the late 1980s determined that part of the five walk-in campsites are on USFS lands; however, there is no formal agreement with the USFS for these campsites. The Stewardship Council recommends working with the USFS to resolve this boundary issue to ensure that these special shoreline walk-in campsites continue to be available to campground visitors.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Install bear boxes and bear-proof trash cans at North Battle Creek Reservoir Campground.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends installing bear boxes at the North Battle Creek Reservoir Campground for users to store food in as well as bear-proof trash cans to prevent bears from eating trash. Currently, there are few reported bear-related incidents, but many bears have been seen in the area. To prevent the habituation of bears to human food and potential future conflicts between bears and campers, installation of special food boxes and trash cans would be worthwhile.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Install better directional and informative signage at North Battle Creek Reservoir in coordination with the USFS.*

Currently, there are some hand-written directional signs and little informative signage at the reservoir. The Stewardship Council recommends installing better directional and informative

signage regarding reservoir facilities, campground rules and regulations, and other recreation activities in the area. Such signage would be developed in coordination with the USFS as they also own land around the reservoir and provide nearby recreation opportunities.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Assess the potential to use a parcel along Highway 44 near Shingletown as public open space/park/outdoor education area.*

The planning unit contains two parcels along Highway 44 through Shingletown. The eastern parcel has a rest stop, but the western parcel is currently only being used as timberland. As this parcel is located in town and near the highway, it provides potential for local community use. The Stewardship Council recommends assessing the potential to use this parcel as public open space (as it is surrounded by development), a public park, or as an outdoor education area where local students could learn about forestry or conduct studies on topics such as water quality, air pollution, soil compaction, or forest regeneration.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Improve road crossings at Bluff Springs to enhance safety.*

Kayaking on South Fork Battle Creek does occur, though use is likely low. Proposed dam removals will likely enhance kayaking on South Fork Battle Creek due to less portages and increased flows. Though the put-in and take-out for the whitewater run from the Ponderosa Way road crossing to the Manton Road crossing are on public road rights-of-way and not on planning unit lands, access to the put-in via Ponderosa Way does cross planning unit lands in Bluff Springs. The Bluff Springs area also receives picnicking and hunting use. There are two water crossings on the dirt access road (Ponderosa Way) that can be deep and rocky enough to be dangerous to many drivers. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends improving these road crossings to enhance safety for recreationists and other users of Ponderosa Way through the Bluff Springs area. Enhancing these road crossings may also reduce sedimentation into the two creeks that are crossed.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Inventory recreation use on planning unit lands and evaluate need/demand for additional facilities.*

The guiding document for recreation use within the planning unit is the 1969 Battle Creek Recreational Use Plan (FERC Exhibit R), which focuses on North Battle Creek Reservoir, McCumber Reservoir, Lakes Grace and Nora, Coleman Forebay, and fishing at canal accesses. The five drawings in the plan were revised in 1980 and 1989. The plan is brief and focuses mainly on developed recreation facilities. Recording of recreation use is done through FERC Form 80s, which state the percent capacity of recreation facilities and are completed every four years. Documentation of recreation use is only performed within the planning unit by the campground hosts at North Battle Creek and McCumber Reservoirs and during occasional visits by PG&E to the area. Additionally, the Battle Creek FERC License does not expire until 2026, so relicensing and associated studies will not be completed for another 15-20 years.

Due to the lack of recreation use data, particularly for recreation use outside developed sites, and the long period of time until relicensing begins, the Stewardship Council recommends inventorying recreation use on planning unit lands and evaluating the need and demand for additional recreation facilities within the planning unit such as additional signage, trails, day use

areas, or campgrounds. In addition, the need for (and feasibility of providing) additional public access to areas within the planning unit would also be evaluated. A recreation use inventory is particularly important to identify type, quantity, and location of recreation uses on lands outside developed recreation sites, such as at Bluff Springs and in the Shingletown and Manton areas. The inventory of recreation use should also be coordinated with adjacent landowners such as BLM and USFS as recreation uses on planning unit lands may overlap with recreation use on adjacent lands. If additional recreation facilities are identified as needed, compatibility with existing land uses, such as grazing, would need to be evaluated.

### **Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a recreation management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary.*

The Stewardship Council recommends using the recreation inventory information to develop a recreation management plan for lands outside the FERC boundary as most of the planning unit is located outside of the FERC boundary and lands within the FERC boundary are covered under the existing FERC Recreational Use Plan. Suggested elements of the recreation management plan include developing a recreation monitoring program, developing a dispersed recreation use and access management component, and developing an operations and maintenance program for any recreational facilities developed outside of the FERC boundary.

The recreation management plan would also address the accommodation of recreation uses in and around the community of Manton. The planning unit contains many lands within the rural community of Manton including a lawn area adjacent to the PG&E Manton Service Center, lands across from the Manton Elementary School and Manton Joint Cemetery, as well as lands near the post office. There are currently no public recreation areas in the community; planning unit lands could potentially provide such space. Potential ideas for recreation development in Manton include using lands across from the elementary school as an outdoor classroom/lab, developing a local park/day use area potentially adjacent to the Service Center or across from the post office, and creating a loop trail through the lands across from the school. Any recreation development would need to be coordinated with the recommended forest management plan and management of plantations.

## **Sustainable Forestry**

### **Potential Measures:**

- *Evaluate existing timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate.*
- *Develop a forest management plan for the planning unit to promote natural forest development and structural and physical diversity in forests for long-term ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits.*

A significant portion of the planning unit is forested and primarily managed for sustainable timber production; however, there is no overall documented vision for the Timber Management Units (TMUs) within the planning unit or management of oak woodlands in the western portion of the planning unit not included within TMUs. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a forest management plan for the planning unit through the evaluation of existing forest inventory data and supplemental information, when appropriate.

In addition to supporting natural forest development, the forest management plan would promote holistic watershed management, supporting the enhancement of other beneficial public values

over the long term. There are several areas within the planning unit where forest management is not currently taking place, including the Coleman Forebay, Asbury Pump, Wildcat Diversion Dam, and Inskip Powerhouse areas. These areas are primarily oak woodlands, which provide for a rich diversity of plant and wildlife species. Both Shasta and Tehama Counties support oak woodland protection and conservation and have passed resolutions regarding oak woodland protection. The forest management plan would address management and regeneration of oaks, the potential for research on planning unit lands, and monitoring to evaluate effects of grazing on health of the woodlands. Development of the forest management plan should be coordinated with wildlife and habitat, noxious weed, rangeland, and fuels management plans.

In areas where timber extraction is consistent with the forest management plan, timber harvesting techniques would be promoted that maintain mosaics of forest stands of different age, size, and rotation period. In addition to utilizing PG&E's uneven-age selection harvest system, harvesting practices and a monitoring program would be included to protect watercourses and lakes and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests. Post-harvest, a monitoring plan would be developed to ensure that forest management and the harvesting schedule would be consistent with the forest management plan, promoting natural forest development in perpetuity.

#### **Potential Measure:**

- *Manage plantations to best mimic forests in the natural landscape.*

As mentioned before, there was a large fire in the community of Manton in 2005 that burned many acres of planning unit lands. PG&E has planted conifers in these areas, essentially creating plantations. There are also plantations at North Battle Creek Reservoir. Plantations are monocultures that provide low biological value and biodiversity compared to natural forests. Therefore, to enhance sustainable forestry management, the Stewardship Council recommends managing plantations to best mimic forests in the natural landscape. The scale and layout of plantation blocks would be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found in the natural landscape. Trees would be selected that are suitable for the natural conditions of the site. Unless unsuitable based on regeneration, native species would be selected and exotic species used minimally and only when determined to present no adverse ecological impacts. Plantation management would be included as a component of the forest management plan.

#### **Potential Measure:**

- *Protect sensitive habitats at North Battle Creek Reservoir and McCumber Reservoir from harvesting and grazing.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends protecting sensitive habitats at North Battle Creek and McCumber Reservoirs from harvesting and grazing. There are wetlands, meadows, and potentially a fen (peat bog) that could be damaged from timber harvesting activities. Harvesting should avoid these areas and potential impacts in other nearby locations that could affect these sensitive areas. Additionally, areas adjacent to USFS mapped spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs) at North Battle Creek Reservoir should be managed to be consistent with USFS goals in order to protect these habitats for special status wildlife.

Grazing use at both reservoirs has been terminated, at McCumber Reservoir by FERC order and at North Battle Creek Reservoir by PG&E. There is a grazing allotment on adjacent USFS land at North Battle Creek Reservoir; due to a lack of fencing, there could be grazing use of planning unit lands. To protect sensitive resources, including a potential peat bog, fencing of planning unit lands may be needed to restrict adjacent grazing use from encroaching on planning unit lands at

North Battle Creek Reservoir. However, a determination of grazing use on planning unit lands and its impacts (both positive and negative) on sensitive resources would need to be made prior to appropriate measures being taken. Any measures taken should be coordinated with the USFS and their grazing permittee.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a fuels management plan for the planning unit in coordination with the Lassen Foothills Fire Plan, Manton Fire Safe Council, and community of Shingletown to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard.*

Reducing fire risk is important in this planning unit due to its proximity to the communities of Manton and Shingletown and numerous housing developments, as well as the presence of fire-prone vegetation throughout the planning unit. Many fires have occurred in and around planning unit lands, with the most recent being the Manton Fire that burned many acres and homes in and around Manton. There is currently no plan for the management of fuels within the planning unit. Therefore, to protect the wildland-urban interface and increase forest health, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a fuels management plan for the planning unit to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard.

A concurrent effort in the region is the Lassen Foothills Fire Plan, which will address fire management on 500,000 acres in the lower elevations of the Lassen foothills. There is also a group in Manton, the Manton Fire Safe Council, which is working toward creating a fire safe zone in Manton and determining fuel break locations. Development of the fuels management plan should be completed in coordination with these two efforts and with any efforts by the community of Shingletown to reduce fuels around this community, as well as development of the noxious weed, wildlife and habitat, forest, and rangeland management plans.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a fire management and response plan for planning unit lands in the Manton and Shingletown areas in coordination with the CDF and communities of Shingletown and Manton to ensure fire preparedness.*

The Stewardship Council also recommends developing a fire management and response plan for planning unit lands in the Manton and Shingletown areas to ensure fire preparedness and guide fire fighting reporting methods and responsibilities. Most of the housing development within the planning unit areas is around the communities of Manton and Shingletown and around McCumber Reservoir, which is just east of Shingletown. It is important for residents to have reporting protocols and ways to escape the area if there is a fire. There is also a host for Lakes Grace and Nora and a campground host at McCumber Reservoir Campground, both of which could assist in fire management efforts. Training of site hosts is vital to evacuating visitors, as hosts are important points of contact. Therefore, the fire management and response plan should include the training of site hosts in fire response and safety, as well as other fire fighting and reporting methods. The fire management and response plan should be developed in conjunction with the communities of Manton and Shingletown, as well as the CDF, to ensure consistency with any already developed protocols.

## **Agricultural Uses**

### **Potential Measure:**

- *Evaluate the potential for additional grazing opportunities within the planning unit.*

Due to the availability of several potential grazing locations, the Stewardship Council recommends evaluating the potential for additional grazing opportunities within the planning unit. In addition to North Battle Creek and McCumber Reservoirs, there used to be grazing use at the Coleman Forebay area and an area near the two Volta powerhouses, but grazing leases were not renewed at the lessee's request. There is a ranch adjacent to the northern portion of Coleman Forebay that could be interested in grazing on adjacent planning unit lands. Though not currently grazed, the Bluff Springs parcel also has potential for agricultural use. On a site visit, cattle were seen in the planning unit, which were likely from an adjacent ranch as most, but not all, of the area is fenced. Forage and water are both available in the parcel.

There is also grazing potential on lands adjacent to The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Wildcat Ranch north of North Fork Battle Creek near Wildcat Diversion Dam. There are two parcels where grazing potential exists, one of which has grazing use currently occurring on the adjacent parcel south of North Fork Battle Creek. It is not possible for the current lessee to cross the creek to expand grazing operations to the northern parcel due to the steepness of the creek canyon. Because access is limited to only north of the parcels, grazing here would require identifying the interest of TNC or the subsequent owner of the ranch in grazing these parcels (if TNC does not retain ownership of the ranch).

Previously mentioned grazing areas could be reviewed for potential reintroduction or initiation of grazing and whether or not grazing is an appropriate use in these areas, impacts to other resources, compatibility with existing and recommended land uses, and whether or not a qualified lessee could be identified. If grazing is found to be an appropriate use of these areas, then a baseline conditions report would be prepared and a rangeland management plan developed.

### **Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement.*

Grazing use currently takes place in three areas under one lease: Asbury Pump, Inskip Powerhouse, and Wildcat Diversion Dam south of North Fork Battle Creek. Specific grazing practices and forage management are unknown. Thus, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a baseline conditions report that describes current agricultural, physical, and overall biological conditions of the area, including current uses and state of improvement. This report would help determine appropriate grazing practices, regime, and management.

### **Potential Measure:**

- *Develop a rangeland management plan for existing grazing use at Inskip Powerhouse, Wildcat Diversion Dam, and Asbury Pump areas that includes goals and objectives and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing practices that address soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management and habitat protection.*

Once the recommended baseline conditions report is completed, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a rangeland management plan for grazing use that includes goals and objectives and a monitoring and adaptive management strategy, and specifies grazing prescriptions that may address topics including soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, vegetation management, habitat protection, and cultural resources management. This plan would ensure that grazing use within the planning unit meets Stewardship Council policy for agricultural uses on Watershed Lands. To ensure consistency and complementary measures, the rangeland management plan should be developed in coordination with the noxious weed, fuels, forest, and wildlife and habitat management plans.

## **Preservation of Historic Values**

### **Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys of lands outside the Battle Creek Restoration Project boundary to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

There are documented cultural resources within the planning unit and a high likelihood for additional resources in areas that have not been surveyed. Surveys for cultural resource were completed for the Restoration Project, and surveys may also have been completed prior to development of the Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) for lands from Shingletown to North Battle Creek Reservoir. Therefore, the Stewardship Council recommends conducting surveys of lands outside the Restoration Project boundary to identify cultural resources and enable their protection. Documentation of cultural sites should be coordinated with Native American entities.

### **Potential Measures:**

- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Assuming that recommended surveys identify cultural sites within the planning unit, the Stewardship Council recommends developing a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit to ensure that cultural resources are provided adequate protection in the future. The plan would include appropriate measures for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of cultural resources (archaeological and historical), as well as traditional use areas. Treatment measures could include avoidance, specific protective measures (e.g., fencing), site monitoring, and methods to preserve, restore, or enhance cultural resource values through conservation easements, management agreements, or through public interpretation and education programs. Development of the cultural resources management plan should be coordinated with Native American entities.

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