

## **18.0 Chili Bar Reservoir Flatwater Boating Study**

### 18.1 Pertinent Issue Questions

This study focuses on the potential for low speed flatwater boating opportunities on the Chili Bar Reservoir. The Flatwater Boating Study addresses the following recreational resource question:

29. Is there a demand for flatwater recreation at Chili Bar Reservoir?

### 18.2 Background

The objectives of the Chili Bar Reservoir Flatwater Boating Study include:

- Identify and describe low-speed flatwater boating opportunities on Chili Bar Reservoir. Attributes analyzed shall include: aesthetics, access, location in relation to population centers, and season of use.
- Quantify how low-speed flatwater opportunities on Chili Bar Reservoir compare to other flatwater opportunities in the region. The region is defined as a 50-mile radius.
- Characterize how low-speed flatwater opportunities are affected by Project operations based on physical characteristics including reservoir elevations and project safety concerns. This will encompass operations between White Rock and Chili Bar Powerhouses.
- Characterize current and potential future demand for low-speed flatwater boating on Chili Bar Reservoir.

Because this study addresses an issue that is affected by the Upper American River Project (UARP) and the Chili Bar Project (Projects), SMUD and PG&E will cooperatively conduct the study so that results can be used in both the UARP relicensing and the Chili Bar Project relicensing. The TWG focused this study to low-speed boating based on the following circumstances: 1) narrow reservoir configuration, 2) potential hazards in the reservoir (e.g., sandbars) 3) reservoir fluctuation.

### 18.3 Study Area and Sampling Locations

The study area is defined as the Chili Bar Reservoir and points of access to the reservoir. Paddling opportunities that are within a one-hour drive from Placerville will be included in the study report as regional opportunities.

### 18.4 Information Needed From and Coordination with Other Studies

The flatwater boating study will draw, in part, upon information developed as part of other studies. Existing use information about flatwater boating use will be used from the UARP Carrying Capacity Study. Information about the current and future demand for flatwater paddling will be obtained from the Demand Study and visitor survey responses from the UARP Visitor Use and Impact Study. Hydrology data for reservoir elevations will be summarized. Information from the Aquatics Study (i.e., fish surveys, water temperature in Chili Bar) will be summarized. Information from the Pacific Gas and Electric Company shoreline recreation study relative to potential safety issues on the shoreline (e.g. safety of access points) will be summarized.

### 18.5 Study Methods And Schedule

Information gathering for this study will begin in April 2004 and should be completed by the end of July 2004.

#### *Project Opportunities*

The study shall describe the flatwater opportunities on the Chili Bar Reservoir. Attributes of quality shall include: aesthetics, access, contact with other users, availability of boat-in camping, seasonal constraints, impact of different reservoir elevations, travel time from population centers. A field reconnaissance will be conducted. A local guidebook author may attend these field reconnaissance visits in order to offer a reasoned judgment as to the relative

quality of the reservoir. GIS information will also be used to portray flatwater boating opportunities and constraints on the Project reservoir.

### *Regional Opportunities*

A review of the literature of the flatwater boating opportunities within the region will be conducted to determine the relative quality of these paddling opportunities as compared to those on Chili Bar Reservoir. Local Retailers and Paddling Clubs will be interviewed to gain additional information such as paddling locations, preferences and needs.

### *Project Operations*

Information on current Project operations will be used to determine and report the amount of surface level fluctuation that occurs at Chili Bar Reservoir under the current operation of the Projects.

### *Safety issues*

Current safety issues and security needs will be reported as they relate to project operations. This will include researching and summarizing any applicable license orders, licensee's operator logs (it is anticipated that Pacific Gas and Electric Company would have the records of any occurrences of events reported to public safety agencies), correspondence between FERC and the Licensee, and the results of FERC Environmental, Public Use Inspections. The study may also include researching and reporting existing boating restrictions imposed on other FERC Project reservoirs, particularly re-regulating reservoirs. Some of the information collected under the Pacific Gas and Electric Company Shoreline Recreation Study regarding safety at potential access points will be summarized.

### *Current and Future Demand*

Interviews with local retailers and public agency staff, or other entities with relevant information and interests will be conducted to investigate current trends in recreation. National publications such as Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends (Cordell 1999) and others will also be reviewed to determine trends in demand for flatwater boating recreation.

## 18.6 Analysis

The information developed in this study will be used to describe the Flatwater boating opportunities on Chili Bar Reservoir. The relative quality of the opportunity will be analyzed according to: aesthetics, access, contact with other users, availability of boat-in camping, seasonal constraints, impact of different reservoir elevations, and travel time from population centers. Other regional flatwater boating opportunities will also be evaluated to determine the available opportunities in the region.

Project operations, particularly reservoir elevations, will be analyzed to determine if there are changes that affect the quality of flatwater boating opportunities on the Project reservoir. Boating restrictions on the reservoir will be researched and the reasons for these restrictions will be provided.

Current and future demand for flatwater paddling and reservoir-based angling will be analyzed to assess the adequacy of the supply of opportunities within the region.

## 18.7 Study Output

A written report will be prepared to include documentation of findings with presentation in graphical and discussion format in a manner which appropriately answers the issue question. The study output will include a GIS map showing basic information about the reservoir including the potential location of the access points, the quality of boat launch areas, boat-in camp sites and areas with project safety concerns (GIS map will include surface elevation for low, mid and full pools). The study output will also include the summarized responses to the interviews with paddlesports retailers, paddle club members, interview sources, and Guidebook Authors. The report shall also include a synopsis of regional demand and opportunities for flatwater paddling and reservoir-based angling.

18.8            Recreation and Aesthetic TWG Endorsement

18.9            Literature Cited

None.

18.10          TWG and Plenary Group Endorsement

This study plan was approved on January 28, 2004 by the following entities of the TWG: ENF, BLM, American River Recreation Association/Camp Lotus, NPS, SWRCB, Charles Bertolette, FWS, Gold Country Paddlers/AW, EDC Parks and Recreation Dept., EDC Water Agency, Pacific Gas and Electric Company and SMUD.