

RECREATION OBJECTIVES, CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

FOR THE REACH DOWNSTREAM OF CHILI BAR AND CHILI BAR RESERVOIR

**Approved by the Recreation TWG on November 17, 2004,
for submittal to the Settlement Negotiations Group**

November 24, 2004

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document presents the recreation objectives, conclusions and potential actions (conclusions) determined by the Recreation and Aesthetics Technical Work Group (Recreation TWG) associated with the South Fork of the American River (SFAR) reach downstream of Chili Bar and the Chili Bar Reservoir. The Recreation TWG developed these recreation conclusions during several meetings in the fall of 2004, as documented in the Conclusions Matrix. At the November 17, 2004, Recreation TWG meeting, the group decided to convey the conclusions for the reach downstream of Chili Bar and Chili Bar Reservoir directly from the Conclusions Matrix to the Settlement Negotiations Group (SNG). They are not included in the Recreation Needs Assessment Technical Report prepared for the Upper American River Project (UARP) because the Recreation Needs Assessment Study Plan for the UARP, approved by the Plenary Group on March 6, 2002, did not include the reach downstream of Chili Bar and the Chili Bar Reservoir.

This document serves this purpose to convey the Recreation TWG's recreation objectives and conclusions for the reach downstream of Chili Bar and Chili Bar Reservoir and to provide the Settlement Negotiations Group with potential actions, including rationale, which should be considered for recreational resources.

The recreation objectives, conclusions and potential actions were developed by the Recreation TWG based upon: (1) the findings of information developed as part of the relicensing studies conducted for the UARP and the Chili Bar Project, (2) planning guidance found in documents for affected county, state, and federal management agencies, and (3) best professional judgment of Recreation TWG participants who are familiar with the recreational resources associated with these two areas.

The objectives, conclusions and potential actions documented here frame the recreational needs for the area, which are geographically limited to the two subject areas (the reach downstream of Chili Bar and Chili Bar Reservoir); however the character of the needs identified by the Recreation TWG are broad. The entire scope of recreational needs may include items such as providing for adequate recreation management; public health and safety; compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG); reducing, minimizing or eliminating resource damage related to recreational use; law enforcement; providing adequate public access to project lands and waters; and providing and maintaining adequate public recreation facilities.

Typically, the recreation needs associated with a FERC hydro project relate to project operations and water bodies and are usually located within the FERC project boundary. However, because it's more effective to approach recreation management considering the spectrum of recreation opportunities available, the recreation needs identified in this document are comprehensive in that they include all potential actions that relate to recreation resources in the SFAR downstream of Chili Bar and at Chili Bar Reservoir. Consequently, the recreation needs identified in this document are not bounded by what entity has the responsibility for instituting any specific change or improvement and the parties responsible for funding and implementing the elements listed in this document are not addressed.

The information in this document is organized by each of the two locations: (1) the SFAR downstream of Chili Bar and (2) Chili Bar Reservoir. Each section begins with a listing of the recreation objectives for the area followed by a table of the conclusions and potential actions developed by the Recreation TWG.

2.0 SFAR DOWNSTREAM OF CHILI BAR

2.1 Recreation Objectives

The Recreation TWG developed eight recreation objectives for the reach downstream of Chili Bar:

- A. Maintain, manage and enhance existing and future whitewater recreation.
- B. Ensure that flow schedule is consistent with applicable management plans and whitewater use demand. Whitewater boating flows are not intended to require more water being drafted from Ice House, Union Valley and Loon Lake reservoirs than would be drafted for other purposes in any given month.
- C. Ensure that adequate river access for the public is available.
- D. Provide for public health and safety.
- E. Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) listed river. Protect the outstandingly remarkable values (NRI-Historic and Recreation)
- F. Maintain, manage and enhance existing and future river dependent recreational activities in the area such as swimming, angling, trail access to river, recreational gold panning and dredging.
- G. Provide flow information to the public.
- H. Primary recreation objective at the Marshall Gold Discovery Site State Historic Park (MGDSHP) is to protect and interpret the historic resource of the gold discovery site.

2.2 Conclusions and Potential Actions-Reach Downstream of Chili Bar

Table 2.2-1 lists the conclusions and potential actions developed by the Recreation TWG for the reach downstream of Chili Bar. The information is organized by location or area of the reach and includes in brackets the study report, planning document or other source of information referenced in support of the conclusion. The acronyms listed in brackets correspond to the following:

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BLM SFAR Plan	Bureau of Land Management, SFAR Plan
BPJ	Best Professional Judgment. This refers to the informed opinions and beliefs of the TWG participants who are familiar with recreational resources of this area.
DPR	California Department of Parks and Recreation
EDC	El Dorado County
EDC RMP	El Dorado County River Management Plan
SRA	Folsom Lake State Recreation Area
MGDSHP	Marshall Gold Discovery Site State Historic Park
RFBCB	Recreational Flow Below Chili Bar Technical Report
SCDCB	Socio-economic Conditions-Reach Downstream of Chili Bar Technical Report

**Table 2.2-1.
Conclusions and potential actions identified by the Recreation TWG for the reach downstream of Chili Bar.**

LOCATION/ AREA	IDENTIFIED NEED/CONCLUSION [Rationale-Reference: Study, Agency Plans/Policy, other]	POTENTIAL ACTION
Entire Reach Downstream of Chili Bar	Changes in flows could affect shore based users' safety and activities.	Ensure shore based users are made aware of any changes in flows.
	Provide year-round whitewater boating opportunities for boating as well as economic benefit to the local community. Flows provided by the Projects in the reach during the summer and fall significantly enhance whitewater boating opportunities. [RFBCB]	
	Flow information exists but it could be improved by providing predictable flows (seasonal and daily forecasts) and real-time flow information. This would increase boating opportunities and economic benefit. [RFBCB, EDC RMP Element 1.5]	Provide predictions of seasonal and monthly releases and real-time flow information on website. Access to other information including telemetered CB reservoir elevation and flows coming out of WRPH.
	Reliability and predictability of flows has changed since SMUD exclusively managed dispatching flows for the UARP [RFBCB].	Conduct an annual preseason flow meeting between agencies, users and project operators to review upcoming operations.
	Manage the river consistent with the objectives of the RMP. Provide adequate flows to meet demand while reducing boat density, minimize user conflict and maximize boater safety. Providing whitewater flows on successive, multiple days requires coordination between UARP (upstream storage) and CB (timing of releases). [RFBCB, EDC RMP Element 7]	Coordinate releases between the projects to provide flows of sufficient magnitude and duration to provide whitewater boating opportunities consistent with demand. (e.g. proposed min/opt flow release table)
	The existing flow regime creates heavy demand for boating in the Gorge on Saturdays and in the Chili Bar Reach on Sundays [EDC RMP 2002 & 2003 Annual Reports, BPJ].	
	In order to allow visitors to get off the river at 2pm at Salmon Falls full release at CB needs to begin	

by 6am [BPJ].	
Late release from CB (e.g. after 6am) causes early takeout on the Gorge run to be infeasible thereby foreclosing this opportunity on Sundays. [EDC and Center, BPJ]	
A cut off prior to 2pm severely limits private and play boating access on the CB run. Under ideal conditions flows would continue to be provided until 2 hours before sunset. [EDC river patrol observations, BPJ]	
A release shorter than 6am to 2pm causes undesirable congestion at put in and key points on the river (Troublemaker, Fowlers Rock, Satan's Cesspool) and causes boater safety concerns. Also causes high density of boats along the reach diminishing the boaters' experience. [EDC, BPJ, EDC river patrol observations]	
Commercial boating usually precedes private boating launches and this can cause user conflicts. A longer launch window would reduce these conflicts. [BPJ]	
Commercial outfitters have greater numbers of user days on weekends than private boaters. [EDC RMP 2002 & 2003 Annual Reports]	
On weekdays, there is proportionately greater commercial use. [EDC annual report 2002&03]	
Daily weekend use is 2-4 times greater than daily weekday use (private and commercial). [EDC annual report 2002-03]	
Whitewater most popular form of recreation on the reach-60,000 to 150,000 boaters/yr. [SCDCB]	
6 public agencies responsible for managing land, recreation activities and resources in the reach [SCDCB]	
Whitewater boating visitor expenditures account for about 1/3 of annual earnings the SFAR Region. Whitewater recreation creates year-round and seasonal employment opportunities. [SCDCB]	
Commercial entities are heavily reliant on knowing the predicted flows for the season (as much a 3-6 months in advance). [SCDCB, BPJ]	
Boating is heaviest from June through August. Commercial use primarily occurs from March through Oct. Private use occurs on the river year-round. [EDC RMP 2002 & 2003 Annual Reports]	
The EDC RMP imposes use restrictions if the number of boats and/or boat densities hit certain triggers. The restrictions will apply first to commercial use, and second to institutional use. [EDC RMP Element 7]	
Whitewater use is important for economic reasons as well as being a significant recreation resource. [SCDCB, RFBCB]	

	Flows provided for whitewater boating do not impinge on other flow dependent recreational activities. [RFBCB]	
	Current level of BLM funding is inadequate to provide adequate level of law enforcement, facility maintenance and patrols. [BLM SFAR Plan]	BLM seeks adequate funding for patrols, facility maintenance and law enforcement.
	Deferred maintenance and capital replacement needs exist at all BLM constructed recreation facilities. (Miners Cabin, Greenwood Cr., Norton Ravine) [BLM staff]	BLM seeks adequate funding for capital replacement of existing facilities.
	Current level of EDC funding is inadequate to provide adequate level of law enforcement, facility maintenance and patrols. [EDC RMP Element 10.3]	EDC seeks adequate funding for patrols, facility maintenance and law enforcement.
SFAR in the Vicinity of Coloma (Mid-section of the river)	Greenwood Creek access is being developed by BLM (walk-in) There is currently inadequate funding to develop. [BLM SFAR plan p. 8, 10, 29]	If adequate funding is not secured, BLM seeks adequate funding to complete development at the site.
	During years with extended periods of low water, local businesses are adversely impacted. [SCDCB]	Create boating facilities or developments that can be boated at low flows (in-river play spots).
	EDC RMP has an element in the plan to continue to acquire new points of public access near, but not limited to, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. [EDC Plan Element 9.3]	Acquire Assessor's parcel numbers 006-340-15 and 006-001-041 as new point of public access and provide recreation facilities (EDC RMP Element 9.3).
	There is abundant and easy access for angling in the area near Coloma. Consequently there is heavy fishing pressure in this section of the SFAR. [RFBCB]	Continue existing stocking program.
	BLM has recently acquired a parcel of land downstream of Greenwood Cr. (Cronin Ranch). There are no existing public recreation facilities at the site. Suitable site for recreational use. [BLM, EDC RMP Element 5.7.4]	BLM seeks adequate funding to develop recreation facilities consistent with plan currently in development
	Deferred maintenance and capital replacement needs exist at EDC constructed recreation facilities (Henningsen Lotus Park). [EDC RMP Element 10.3]	EDC seeks adequate funding for capital replacement of existing facilities.
	Improved river access facilities for whitewater recreation use are needed at MGDSHP. There are exiting areas of bank erosion and there are conflicts between whitewater boating users and other park users. [MGDSHP General Plan p. 41,54,56,75, DPR staff]	DPR seeks adequate funding to improve river access facilities at MGDSHP including improved road access, parking area and beach launching area.
		DPR seeks funding to acquire riverfront parcels adjacent to MGDSHP and develop facilities to provide river access.
	Flows provided by the Projects in the reach during the summer and fall provide cold water in the reach which improves trout habitat. CDFG stocks in the area near the SHP. [RFBCB]	Continue existing stocking program and/or wild trout fishery.
	Additional river access facilities at MGDSHP would enhance experience for river users. [DPR staff]	DPR seeks adequate funding to acquire property adjacent to MGDSHP and develop river access facilities.

SFAR Highway 193 to Coloma	There are currently 4 portable toilets at the CB put-in. There is an element in the EDC RMP to provide adequate sanitation facilities in the river corridor. [EDC Plan Element 9.3]	Consider installing 2 double unit vault toilets at Chili Bar put-in (downstream of bridge). Out of flood plain on upper bench.
	There is limited access to the Upper Canyon (private land, steep canyon and no roads). Serious local anglers are interested in opportunities in the Upper Canyon. [RFBCB, BPJ, EDC RMP Element 9.7.2]	Consider trail access to remote sections of the Upper Canyon.
SFAR the Gorge	There is limited access to The Gorge (private land, steep canyon and no roads). Serious local anglers are interested in opportunities in The Gorge. [RFBCB, BPJ, EDC RMP Element 9.7.2]	Consider trail access to remote sections of reach The Gorge.
	A wild trout fishery may be developing in the Gorge. [BPJ]	
SFAR in the Vicinity of Folsom Lake (whitewater take-out)	DPR patrols SFAR and staffs Salmon Falls river access (take-out) during peak use. [DPR staff].	DPR seeks adequate funding to operate, maintain, whitewater recreation facilities and manage recreational uses on the river.
	DPR administers 1-5 raft towing and raft photography concessionaire permits on SFAR and within Folsom Lake SRA. ~\$100K/yr collected in fees of which \$50K/yr is available to district for administration. Current annual admin cost ~\$70K. [DPR staff]	DPR seeks adequate funding to fully administer concessionaire permits on the river.
	River access facilities at Skunk Hollow & Salmon Falls will eventually need replacement. [Folsom Lake SRA (1979) & revision in progress, DPR staff]	DPR seeks adequate funding for facility replacement at Skunk Hollow and Salmon Falls.
	Peak use at Skunk Hollow & Salmon Falls at Folsom SRA exceeds facility capacity (Skunk Hollow=37 vehicle spaces; Salmon Falls=33 vehicle & 12 vehicle/trailer spaces). There is limited ability to accommodate additional use within the existing public land base. [Folsom Lake SRA planning in progress Resource Inventory p. RR-10,11, Admin. Draft General Plan p. III-142, EDC RMP]	DPR seeks adequate funding for improvements to existing facilities at Skunk Hollow & Salmon Falls to improve traffic circulation.
		DPR seeks adequate funding to acquire land & develop & operate a staging area (parking, picnic table, restrooms & info kiosk)
		DPR seeks adequate funding to develop & fund a shuttle service between Lotus and Salmon Falls for non-commercial whitewater boaters.
	Existing trail from parking area to river is not fully accessible. Past funding has not been sufficient to make trail accessible consistent with ADAAG. [DPR staff]	DPR seeks adequate funding to construct a fully accessible river access trail at Skunk Hollow.