

11.7 Iowa Hill Wetlands Study Plan

11.7.1 Pertinent Issue Questions

This study addresses the following terrestrial resource question for the proposed Iowa Hill Pumped Storage Development Project, as identified by the Upper American River Project (UARP) Relicensing Terrestrial Resources Technical Working Group (TWG) and as adapted from previously approved UARP studies:

- What is the distribution of wetlands in the proposed project area and, if they occur, to what extent would they be affected by Project construction, operation, and maintenance?

11.7.2 Background

Wetlands are viewed as a sensitive resource and are afforded special protection under both state and federal regulations. Small wetlands (e.g., seeps, springs) may exist within the project area.

11.7.3 Study Objectives

The objectives of the Iowa Hill Wetlands Study are to: 1) determine if the Project has the potential to affect wetland communities and 2) determine how identified Project-related impacts can be mitigated through the protection and/or restoration of wetland/riparian types within environmental, economic, and engineering constraints.

11.7.4 Study Area and Sampling Locations

The study area will include the preliminary project boundary as described in Figures 2 and 14 of the Iowa Hill IIP (SMUD 2003), including the area surrounding the proposed reservoir (Figure 2 in IIP), intake structure, and the preferred alternative transmission line route proposed by the Licensee (Figure 14 in IIP).

11.7.5 Information Needed From Other Studies

This study will be supported by information generated from the Iowa Hill Vegetation Mapping Study and other field surveys in the Project area. Information from previous wetland/riparian surveys conducted in the project vicinity for the overall Upper American River Project will supplement the results of this effort.

11.7.6 Study Methods And Schedule

The Project area will be surveyed in conjunction with the Vegetation Mapping study during the first quarter of 2004. The identification and delineation of wetlands will be based on the US Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (1987, as revised). The Corps utilizes three parameters in wetland delineation: presence of hydric soils, permanency of water, and prevalence of wetland vegetation. Aerial photographs acquired during 2003 will be used to identify potential wetland areas. Potential for project-related effects on these wetlands will be assessed.

11.7.7 Analysis

The locations of all wetland areas observed will be recorded and these data used to prepare Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. This information will be analyzed to determine whether construction, operation, or maintenance of the proposed Project would have any adverse effects. If adverse effects to wetlands are anticipated, formal consultation with federal agencies will determine appropriate mitigation for the adverse effects.

11.7.8 Study Output

Study results will be presented to the Terrestrial Resources TWG in early spring of 2004. Ultimately, the results of the study will be incorporated into Exhibit E of the Licensee's application to FERC for a new license for the UARP.

The final study output will likely include the issues addressed, objectives, study area, methods, results (including GIS-maps of each wetland), analysis, discussion, and conclusions.

11.7.9 TWG and Plenary Group Endorsement

This study plan was approved on January 21, 2004 at the TWG by SMUD and the USFS. There was no one in attendance of the meeting who said they could not “live with” the study plan as written. The Plenary Group approved this plan on February 4, 2004. The participants at the meeting who said they could “live with” the plan were Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County, Friends of El Dorado County, USFS, American River Recreation Association & Camp Lotus, El Dorado County Water Agency, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, SMUD, El Dorado County, El Dorado Irrigation District, NPS, SWRCB, USBLM, City of Sacramento, CDFG, and FOR. None of the participants at the meeting said they could not “live with” this study plan.

11.7.10 Literature Cited

SMUD (Sacramento Municipal Utility District). 2003. Iowa Hill Pumped Storage Development Project Initial Information Package, revision 1. Sacramento, CA.