

6.10 Northern Sagebrush Lizard Study Plan

6.10.1 Pertinent Issue Questions

The northern sagebrush lizard study addresses Terrestrial Resource Issue Questions:

- 7(a). What are the relevant and known factors (limiting and beneficial) affecting special status terrestrial reptile populations in the Project area and how/where are these factors influenced by Project operation and maintenance?
19. What are the Project impacts on special status terrestrial reptiles?

6.10.2 Background

The northern sagebrush lizard is a Federal Special Concern species, a "term-of-art" designation for former Category 2 candidate species. It is relatively ubiquitous below 10,000 feet elevation throughout the Sierra Nevada range and Great Basin (M. Jennings, herpetologist, personal communication, November 1, 2001) and is expected to be common in suitable habitat throughout the Project area. These lizards generally occupy open habitat with scattered low bushes and nearby cover in the form of rocks, logs or thick brush (Stebbins 1966). They feed primarily on insects and arachnids.

The Project has no reasonable potential to have a substantial impact on northern sagebrush lizard populations or habitat of the species. As a result, no formal study is proposed to address this species in the context of Terrestrial Resource Issues 7a and 19.

6.10.3 TWG and Plenary Group Endorsement

Terrestrial TWG representatives from the following agencies/organizations approved this study plan on December 21, 2001: California Department of Fish and Game, Eldorado National Forest, California Sport Fishing Alliance, and SMUD. The Plenary Group approved this study plan on February 6, 2002. The participants at the meeting who said they could "live with" the study plan were California Department of Fish and Game, California Native Plant Society, California Outdoors, California Sportsfishing Protection Alliance, El Dorado County, El Dorado County Citizens for Water, Friends of El Dorado County, National Parks Service, Placer County Water Agency, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, State Water Resources Control Board, Taxpayers of El Dorado County, U.S Bureau of Land Management and Eldorado National Forest. None of the participants at the meeting said they could not "live with" the study plan though PG&E abstained since this study plan does not apply to the Chili Bar Project.

6.10.4 Literature Cited

Stebbins, R.C. 1966. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston. 279 pp.