
State Water Resources Control Board

**NOTICE OF SECTION 15063(g) INFORMAL CONSULTATION
WITH RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES REGARDING AN
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FOR WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION**

**MCCLOUD-PIT HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT,
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT NO. 2106**

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) plans to prepare an environmental document for Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Res. Code, § 21000 *et seq.*). The Project is located on the McCloud and Pit Rivers in Shasta County, California, and consists of three power generating developments (James B. Black, Pit 6, and Pit 7). These developments collectively include four reservoirs, three powerhouses, five dams, two tunnels, one afterbay, and associated equipment and transmission facilities. The locations of the Project facilities are depicted in the attached map (Figure 1.1). The majority of Project lands are managed by the United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service. The Project also occupies land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, as well as land owned by PG&E and other private land holders.

The Project, which is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), is identified as FERC Project No. 2106. FERC issues licenses for the operation of projects for 30 to 50 years. PG&E applied to FERC for a new license in 2009. The existing license expired on July 31, 2011, and the Project continues to operate under an annual license issued by FERC. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FERC prepared the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Hydropower License, McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project FERC Project No. 2106, California* (Issued: February 25, 2011). Copies of the Final EIS are available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Branch, Room 2A, located at 888 First Street, N.E., Washington DC 20426. The Final EIS is also available online at: <http://www.ferc.gov/industries/hydropower/enviro/eis/2011/02-25-11.asp>.

In accordance with section 401 of the Clean Water Act, PG&E also applied to the State Water Board for a water quality certification (certification) for the Project. PG&E's request for certification for the Project was received by the State Water Board on December 20, 2011. The State Water Board must comply with the CEQA prior to issuing a certification.

When a Final EIS for a project is complete, the CEQA lead agency should use the federal EIS as the environmental document, if the Final EIS complies with the CEQA Guidelines¹. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15221, subd. (a).) In this instance, the Final EIS meets many of the requirements of CEQA, and will form the basis for the State Water Board's environmental document. In some areas, however, to comply with CEQA the State Water Board's environmental document will need to differ from the Final EIS.

NOTICE OF INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Pursuant to CEQA (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15063, subd. (g).), notice is hereby given that the State Water Board is conducting informal consultation with the responsible and trustee agencies (Agencies) to solicit input on the Project's CEQA process. Recipients of this Notice are encouraged to inform others who are interested in the Project about this Notice.

The purpose of the consultation is to seek input from the Agencies responsible for resources affected by the Project. The State Water Board would like to obtain recommendations and supporting information from Agencies regarding whether an Environmental Impact Report or a Negative Declaration should be prepared. While it is not required by CEQA, the State Water Board will accept similar input and supporting information from interested members of the public.

Recommendations and supporting information should be provided to the staff person by the deadline indicated below in the Consultation Deadline and Contact section of this Notice.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PG&E's existing Project has an installed generating capacity of 368-megawatts. As part of the application for a new FERC license, PG&E proposes changes to the Project's existing operations. For additional information, see the FERC NEPA document mentioned in the second paragraph of this Notice. The following are the primary proposed changes between the Existing Project and the Proposed Project for the purposes of CEQA:

1. Changes to instream flows in Lower McCloud River and Iron Canyon Creek to improve aquatic resources;
2. Implementation of Management and Monitoring Plans to improve aquatic resources; and
3. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities, including construction to provide additional recreation facilities.

The range and schedule of river flow in the Proposed Project are intended to support the various beneficial uses and water quality of the Existing Project area and downstream reaches. These beneficial uses include providing new or improved water based recreational facilities. The State Water Board will utilize the CEQA analysis results to support an informed decision whether to issue certification and if so, under what conditions. Issuance of a certification requires an analysis of a project's overall effect on water quality and an analysis of whether the designated beneficial uses identified in the appropriate water quality control plan (basin plan) are adequately protected.

¹ Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15000 *et seq.*

CONSULTATION DEADLINE AND CONTACT

The State Water Board will accept written input **until 12:00 PM (noon) on November 30, 2012.** Written input should specifically identify that it is provided as part of the "McCloud-Pit CEQA Section 15063(g) Informal Consultation." Written input can be submitted by mail or electronically to:

Amber Villalobos
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights – Water Quality Certification Program
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000
or
Email: avillalobos@waterboards.ca.gov

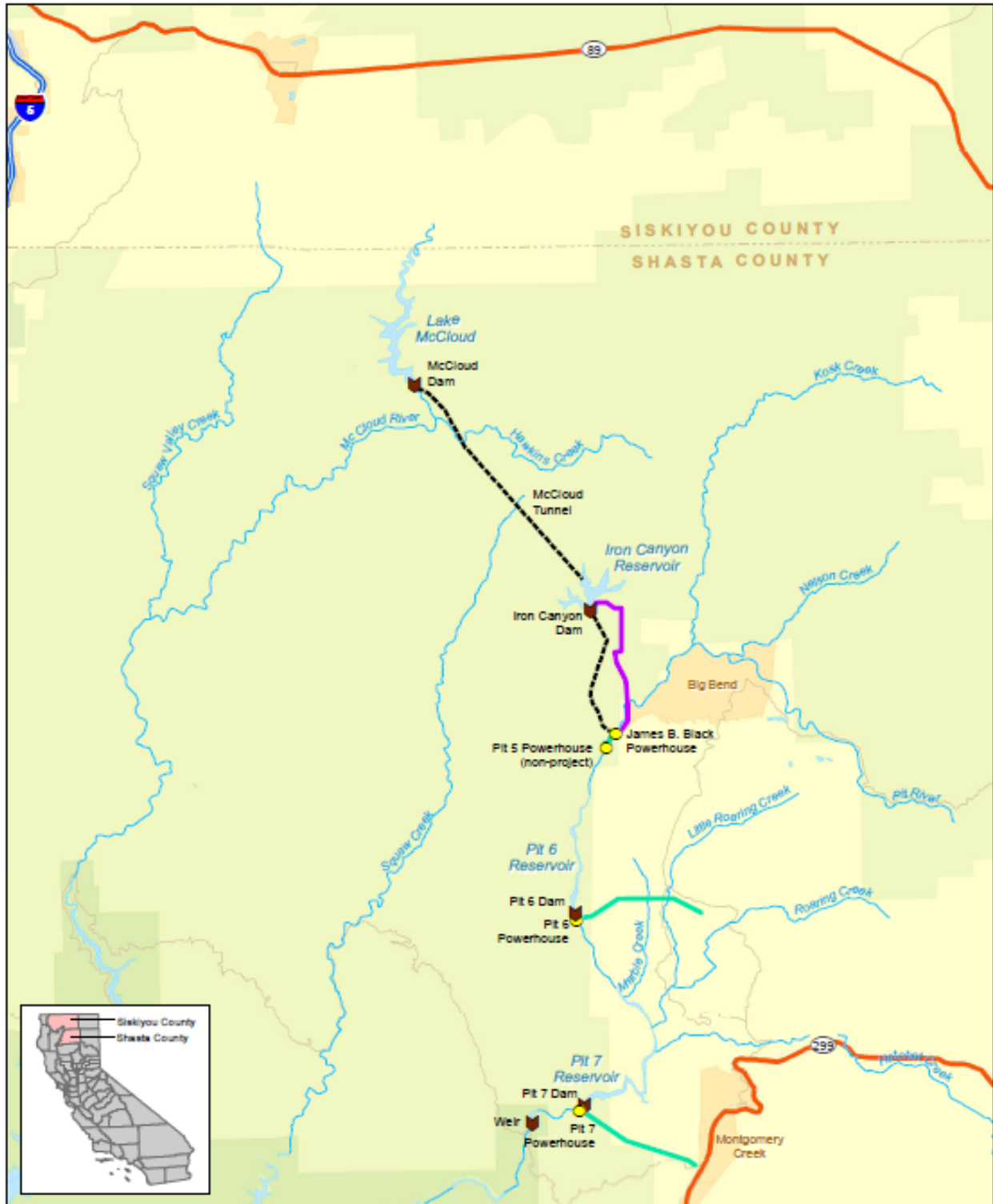
Questions regarding this Notice may be directed to Amber Villalobos at (916) 323-9389, or via email to avillalobos@waterboards.ca.gov.



Erin Ragazzi
Water Quality Certification Program Manager

Dated: **OCT 26 2012**

Enclosures: Figure 1.1: McCloud-Pit Project Location
Distribution List



McCloud-Pit Project
FIGURE 1-1
 McCloud-Pit Project Location

0 2 4 Miles



Existing Transmission Lines		Dam	Powerhouse	Tunnel
	12 kV distribution			
	230 kV transmission			



Date: 09-05-12

DISTRIBUTION LIST

MAILING LIST	
Water Rights & FERC Calif Department of Fish and Game PO Box 944209 Sacramento, CA 94244-2090	Director US Bureau of Land Management 2800 Cottage Way Ste W1834 Sacramento, CA 95825-1886
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Field Supervisor 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605 Sacramento, CA 95825-1846	Kathy A Valenzuela Shasta Trinity National Forest 3644 Avtech Pkwy Redding, CA 96002
STATE OF CALIFORNIA California Air Resources Board PO Box 2815 Sacramento, CA 95812-2815	Margaret J. Kim California Resources Agency 1416 9th Street, Suite 1311 Sacramento, CA 95814
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Attn: FERC Coordinator 911 NE 11th Ave Portland, OR 97232-4169	Chief US Army Corps of Engineers 333 Market Street, 8th Floor San Francisco, CA 94105-2102
District Chief US Geological Survey Placer Hall - 6000 J Street, Ste 2012 Sacramento, CA 95819-6129	US Environmental Protection Agency 75 Hawthorne Street San Francisco, CA 94105-3920
Ms. Alexis Strauss, Director Water Division USEPA, Region 9 75 Hawthorne Street San Francisco, CA 94105	Mr. Robert Crandall Assistant Executive Officer Regional Water Quality Control Board 415 Knollcrest Drive Redding, CA 96002
Ms. Kimberly D. Bose Secretary Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 888 First Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20426	Mr. David Moller Pacific Gas and Electric Company Mail Code N11E P.O. Box 70000 San Francisco, CA 94177-0001
FERC Contact California Fish and Game Commission Attn: Environmental Services Division 1416 9th Street Sacramento, CA 95814	Christopher Shutes FERC Projects Director 1608 Francisco Street Berkeley, CA 94703

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