
State Water Resources Control Board

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

SCH #: 2019059010

Project Title: McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project Relicensing

Lead Agency: State Water Resources Control Board

Contact Name: Savannah Downey

Email: Savannah.Downey@waterboards.ca.gov

Phone Number: (916) 322-1585

Project Location (City, County): Shasta and Siskiyou Counties

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences): The McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project (Project) is owned and operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). The Project is located on the McCloud River, Iron Canyon Creek, and Pit River, in Shasta and Siskiyou Counties, California. The 368-megawatt Project consists of three power-generating developments that include two storage reservoirs (McCloud and Iron Canyon), two regulating reservoirs (Pit 6 and Pit 7), one afterbay (Pit 7), three powerhouses (James B. Black, Pit 6, and Pit 7), five dams (Pit 6, Pit 7, Pit 7 Afterbay, Iron Canyon, and McCloud), two tunnels, and associated equipment and transmission facilities.

The Project is undergoing relicensing before the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission (FERC). The original FERC license for the Project expired on July 31, 2011. Since then, the Project has operated under annual licenses issued by FERC.

PG&E applied to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) for a Project certification on November 9, 2018. The State Water Board issued a final initial study and negative declaration on November 8, 2019. On November 8, 2019, the Executive Director issued a water quality certification (certification) for the Project.

On December 6, 2019, PG&E (separately) and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe and North Coast Rivers Alliance (NCRA) (jointly) filed petitions for reconsideration of the certification (Petitions) with the State Water Board. Each petition requests modification of the Project certification, and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe and NCRA's petition additionally challenges the CEQA analysis prepared for the Project certification. In response to the Petitions, the Executive Director directed staff to reinitiate consultation

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with the Winnemem Wintu Tribe to inform whether, and if so, what additional CEQA work may be necessary (Order WQ 2020-0041-EXEC). As part of the reinitiated consultation with the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, staff determined that preparation of a subsequent environmental impact report (SEIR) would be appropriate to analyze impacts to tribal cultural resources that were unknown during the original CEQA process. A Notice of Preparation for the SEIR was issued on March 10, 2022.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect:

The following impacts would be potentially significant without mitigation. Associated mitigation measures are listed after each impact.

Impact Bio-1: Would the Proposed Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or United States Fish and Wildlife Service?

Mitigation: Mitigation Measure (MM) BIO-1: Whitewater Flow Seasonality.

Impact Bio-4: Would the Proposed Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Mitigation: MM BIO-1: Whitewater Flow Seasonality.

Impact TCR-1 Water Quality: Would Proposed Project activities alter the baseline condition of water quality in a manner that would substantially and adversely change Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR)?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP), MM TRIBAL-2: Information Sharing, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance, MM WATER-1: Long-term Turbidity Control, MM WATER-2: McCloud Reservoir and McCloud River Turbidity Monitoring and Modeling.

Impact TCR-2 Flows: Would Proposed Project activities alter the baseline condition of McCloud River flows in a manner that would substantially and adversely change TCRs?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-2: Information Sharing, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM BIO-1: Whitewater Flow Seasonality.

Impact TCR-3 Physical Disturbance: Would Proposed Project activities involving physical disturbance (instream and upland locations) alter baseline conditions in a manner that would substantially and adversely change TCRs?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance.

Impact TCR-4 Hazardous Materials: Would Proposed Project activities alter the baseline condition through the release or application of hazardous materials that substantially and adversely change TCRs?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance.

Impact TCR-5 Spread of Invasive Species: Would Proposed Project activities alter baseline conditions through the spread or introduction of invasive species in Project area that could substantially and adversely change TCRs?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance.

Impact TCR-6 Aesthetics/Visual Character/Noise: Would Proposed Project activities alter baseline aesthetic conditions in a manner that substantially and adversely changes TCRs?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans.

Impact TCR-7 Terrestrial Species: Would Proposed Project activities change the baseline condition in a manner that substantially and adversely changes TCRs, including by substantially and adversely changing the character-defining features or contributing elements of the Winnemem Wintu Cultural Landscape TCR that are associated with terrestrial species habitats?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-2: Information Sharing, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance.

Impact TCR-8 Aquatic Species: Would Proposed Project activities change the baseline condition in a manner that substantially and adversely changes TCRs, including by substantially and adversely changing the character-defining features or contributing elements of the Winnemem Wintu Cultural Landscape TCR that are associated with aquatic species habitats?

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-2: Information Sharing, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance, MM WATER-1: Long-term Turbidity Control, MM WATER-2: McCloud Reservoir and McCloud River Turbidity Monitoring and Modeling.

Impact Water-1: Would the Proposed Project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Mitigation: MM WATER-1: Long-term Turbidity Control, MM WATER-2: McCloud Reservoir and McCloud River Turbidity Monitoring and Modeling.

Impact Cumulative-2: Turbidity.

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance, MM WATER-1: Long-term Turbidity Control, MM WATER-2: McCloud Reservoir and McCloud River Turbidity Monitoring and Modeling.

Impact Cumulative-3: Hazards/Hazardous Materials.

Mitigation: MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance.

Impact Cumulative-5: Aquatic Biological Resources.

MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance, MM WATER-1: Long-term Turbidity Control, MM WATER-2: McCloud Reservoir and McCloud River Turbidity Monitoring and Modeling.

Impact Cumulative-6: Tribal Cultural Resources.

MM TRIBAL-1: HPMP, MM TRIBAL-2: Information Sharing, MM TRIBAL-3: Tribal Consultation for Management Plans, MM TRIBAL-4: Construction and Maintenance, MM WATER-1: Long-term Turbidity Control, MM WATER-2: McCloud Reservoir and McCloud River Turbidity Monitoring and Modeling.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public:

McCloud River flows: The Winnemem Wintu Tribe, NCRA, and PG&E disagree regarding appropriate flows below McCloud Dam. Three flow alternatives are discussed in the SEIR.

TCRs: Identification of TCRs associated with the Winnemem Wintu Tribe could not be completed prior to the deadline for finalizing the State Water Board's 2019 IS/ND. The reinitiated consultation with the Winnemem Wintu Tribe resulted in development of extensive new information regarding the Winnemem Wintu Tribe Traditional Cultural Landscape that is identified as a TCR in the SEIR. As of the date of this document, PG&E has not agreed to implement mitigation measures proposed to address potential impacts of the project on the Winnemem Wintu Tribe Traditional Cultural Landscape TCR.

Salmonid reintroduction: In 2022, the National Marine Fisheries Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Winnemem Wintu Tribe successfully incubated and hatched a nonessential experimental population of Chinook salmon in McCloud River. Juveniles were captured and released in the

Sacramento River downstream of Keswick Dam. This effort continued each year thereafter and is ongoing. Because of this effort, the draft SEIR includes this salmon population as part of the environmental baseline. PG&E has stated that salmon should not be considered as part of the environmental baseline because they are not fully established in McCloud River.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

Trustee agencies: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of California Natural Reserve System, State Lands Commission, California Department of Parks and Recreation.