Notice of Preparation

From: Nevada Irrigation District

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Project Title: Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project FERC Relicensing

Project Location: Nevada, Placer, and Sierra Counties, California

Public Review Date: December 30, 2025 – January 28, 2026

Public Scoping Meeting (Online): January 21, 2026, 4PM-5:30PM

Login Link: https://hdrinc.zoom.us/j/95648311985 **| Dial-In:** (669) 444-9171

Webinar ID: 956 4831 1985

Passcode: 219905

Nevada Irrigation District (NID), as the Lead Agency, will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for acceptance of a new license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to continue operation of the Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project (Proposed Project). Responsible and trustee agencies, and other interested agencies, organizations and individuals, are invited to provide written comments on the scope and content of the Draft EIR.

NID provides drinking and irrigation water for 25,000 homes, farms, and businesses in Nevada, Placer, and Yuba Counties in the foothills of Northern California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. Annually, NID produces 3 billion gallons of drinking water and irrigation water for 30,000 acres of agricultural land. As a result, NID's hydroelectric power system generates more than 354 gigawatts of clean, hydroelectric energy per year while supporting environmental flows and serving public recreation.

The description, location, and potential environmental effects of the Proposed Project are described in the attached materials. Additional project information and this Notice of Preparation (NOP) can be found on the project website: https://www.nidwater.com/yuba-bear-project-relicensing-documents. Written comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR are encouraged to be submitted at the earliest possible date and must be sent no later than January 28, 2026 due to the time limits mandated by State law. For e-mailed comments, please include the project title in the subject line and include the commenter's name and U.S. Postal Service mailing address and indicate whether you would like to receive further information about the Proposed Project.

Please send your comments to:

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General Manager

12/30/2025
Date

Notice of Preparation
Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project FERC
Relicensing Environmental Impact Report

1.0 Introduction

Nevada Irrigation District (NID) intends to prepare a Draft EIR for the relicensing of NID's Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project (Yuba-Bear Project or P-2266). NID anticipates the relicensing will result in FERC issuing NID a new license, with a term up to 50 years, that will allow NID to continue to operate and maintain the Yuba-Bear Project. Therefore, for the purposes of this Notice of Preparation (NOP), it is assumed FERC will issue a new license for the Yuba-Bear Project, which constitutes the Proposed Project. The EIR will identify and evaluate possible environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, and alternatives, and will develop measures to avoid, reduce, or compensate for any significant impacts related to implementation of the Proposed Project and alternatives.

As the lead agency responsible for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), NID determined through preliminary environmental review that the Proposed Project may have a significant impact on the physical environment. Therefore, NID determined it is appropriate to prepare an EIR to provide ample opportunity for public disclosure and participation in the planning and decision-making process. This NOP is required under CEQA Guidelines California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section (§) 15082 and:

1) provides background information that is relevant to the Proposed Project;
2) describes the purposes and objectives of the Proposed Project;
3) describes location of the existing project, including facilities and operations;
4) lists resource areas to be analyzed in the EIR;
5) describes the EIR review process, including opportunities for responsible agencies and public involvement; and
6) provides contact information for NID.

NID is undertaking the CEQA environmental review process as part of the overall Proposed Project review and operations process. Pending the outcome of the environmental review process, the Proposed Project and EIR will be submitted to the NID Board of Directors for its consideration and potential approval. This process is aimed at providing the public and decision-makers with a clear understanding of the activities, elements, and methods involved should the Proposed Project be approved and implemented.

FERC is an independent agency that, among other responsibilities, regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil, and licenses hydroelectric projects. FERC, as a federal agency, does not lead or participate in the CEQA process but is informed of NID's compliance actions related to the relicensing process.

2.0 Background

The existing Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project under its original 50-year hydropower license, which was issued on June 24, 1963, had effective dates from May 1, 1963 to April 30, 2013. NID filed with

FERC an application to relicense its Yuba-Bear Project facilities on April 15, 2011, which NID amended on June 18, 2012 and August 17, 2012. Since 2013, the four developments within the existing hydroelectric project operate under an annual license.

In conformance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and FERC regulations (Title 18 Code of Federal Regulations Part 380), FERC issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on May 17, 2013 and a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Yuba-Bear Project on December 19, 2014. Until FERC completes its relicensing process, NID will continue operating the Yuba-Bear Project under an annual FERC license that contains the same terms and conditions as those in the initial license.

In June 2025, NID released a Draft CEQA Supplemental Analysis (State Clearinghouse No. 2024061139) to the 2014 FERC FEIS in an Initial Study format to supplement analysis from 2014 where necessary and focus on topics where the Proposed Project could have potentially significant or significant impacts. After receiving public and agency input on the Draft Initial Study, NID has made the decision to prepare an EIR in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15081.

3.0 Objectives of Proposed Project

NID owns and operates the Yuba-Bear Project. NID's overall goal is to renew the existing FERC license for hydropower facilities associated with the Yuba-Bear Project while offering a reliable source of irrigation and municipal water, providing environmental flows, enhancing environmental conditions, and continuing to generate clean energy regionally and statewide.

Preliminary objectives of the Proposed Project associated with obtaining the new FERC license include:

1. Providing a clean, plentiful, and economically affordable source of irrigation and municipal water in which NID's customers can rely now and in the future for the well-being and growth of Nevada and Placer Counties.

2. Assuring that operations of the Yuba-Bear Project do not degrade downstream water quality or significantly impact biological, cultural, and tribal resources; while enhancing recreation opportunities.

3. Assuring the Yuba-Bear Project provides, in proportion to its effects, for the protection of environmental resources, including aquatic habitats through the implementation of Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement (PM&E) measures. The Yuba-Bear Project should not take on the burden of mitigating for the impacts of past or present projects and activities that are outside of NID's control.

4. Providing carbon-free hydropower generation to meet capacity needs, CEC regulations and California Independent System Operator (CAISO) energy markets, and be able to provide additional power during power emergencies to support CAISO and the statewide electrical grid systems.

5. Maintaining operational consistency of the Yuba-Bear Project's historic benefits, including streamflow and water temperature beneficial uses for sensitive fish species in the Middle Yuba, South Yuba, and Bear Rivers, downstream of the Yuba-Bear Project facilities.

4.0 Project Description

4.1 Project Overview

NID proposes to relicense the Yuba-Bear Project under the FERC relicensing process and has applied to FERC for a license with a 50-year term. NID would accept a new FERC license in order to: continue to operate, maintain, and manage the existing Yuba-Bear Project facilities; remove from licensed facilities a segment of Chicago Park Forebay Road and the unnamed recreation road that provides access to the Jackson Meadows administrative site; construct a new proposed powerhouse (Rollins upgrade) that would be located within the existing FERC Project Boundary on NID-owned land adjacent to the existing Rollins Powerhouse; construct and rehabilitate existing facilities at the following recreation areas: Jackson Meadows reservoir, Milton diversion impoundment, Bowman Lake, Sawmill Lake, Canyon Creek, Dutch Flat No. 2 forebay, and Dutch Flat afterbay; make minor modifications to the existing FERC Project Boundary; and implement the other terms and conditions in the new license.

4.2 Project Location

The existing hydroelectric project is located in northern California in Nevada, Placer, and Sierra counties along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic provinces. A portion of the existing hydroelectric project is on United States land managed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service as part of the Tahoe National Forest, and a smaller portion on United States land administered by the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management as part of the Sierra Resource Management Area.

The existing hydroelectric project ranges in elevation from French Lake at elevation 6,660 feet (ft) to Rollins Reservoir at elevation 2,171 ft. The existing hydroelectric project is located within three major river basins, the Middle Yuba River, South Yuba River, and Bear River. The existing hydroelectric project consists of four developments: (1) Bowman; (2) Dutch Flat; (3) Chicago Park; and (4) Rollins. These four developments include several facilities that are described below. The existing hydroelectric project generates an average of approximately 354 gigawatts per hour (GWh) of energy annually. **Figure 1** below shows the existing hydroelectric project in relation to other water bodies.

4.3 Existing Facilities Related to the Proposed Project

The existing hydroelectric project's developments include Bowman (3.6-megawatt [MW] installed capacity), Dutch Flat No. 2 (24.6-MW installed capacity), Chicago Park (39.0-MW installed capacity), and Rollins (12.15-MW installed capacity) featured in **Figure 2** below. Among these four developments, there are 13 main dams; 11 reservoirs or impoundments; four major water conduits; four powerhouses with associated switchyards with a combined authorized installed capacity of 79.32-MW; one 9-mile-long, 60-kilovolt transmission line; 17 campgrounds and associated boat launches, trails, and recreation facilities; and other appurtenant facilities and structures. The FERC-jurisdictional facilities that comprise each of the developments are shown in detail in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** below.

Figure 1. Location of the Yuba-Bear Project

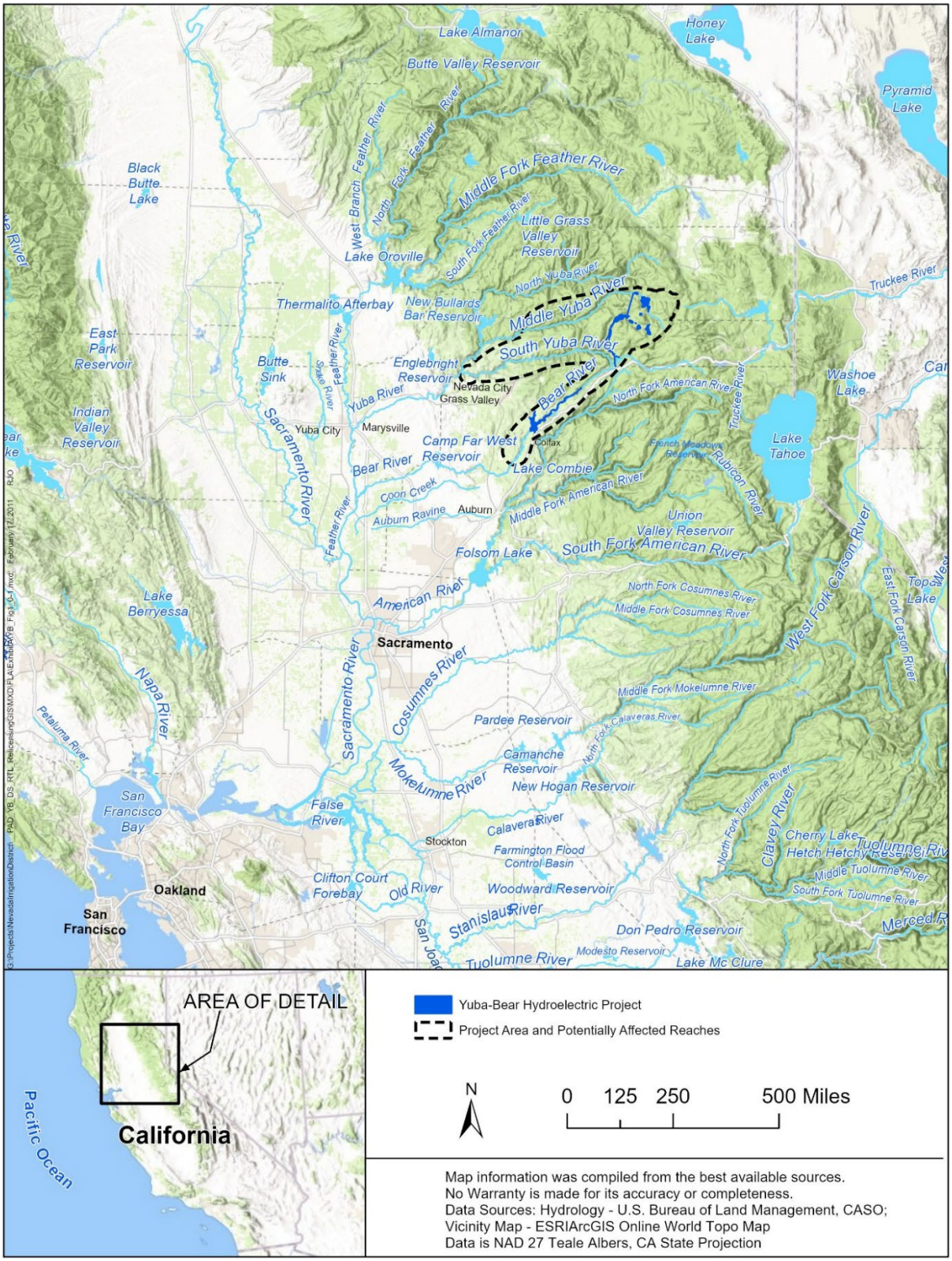


Figure 2. Yuba-Bear Project Facilities

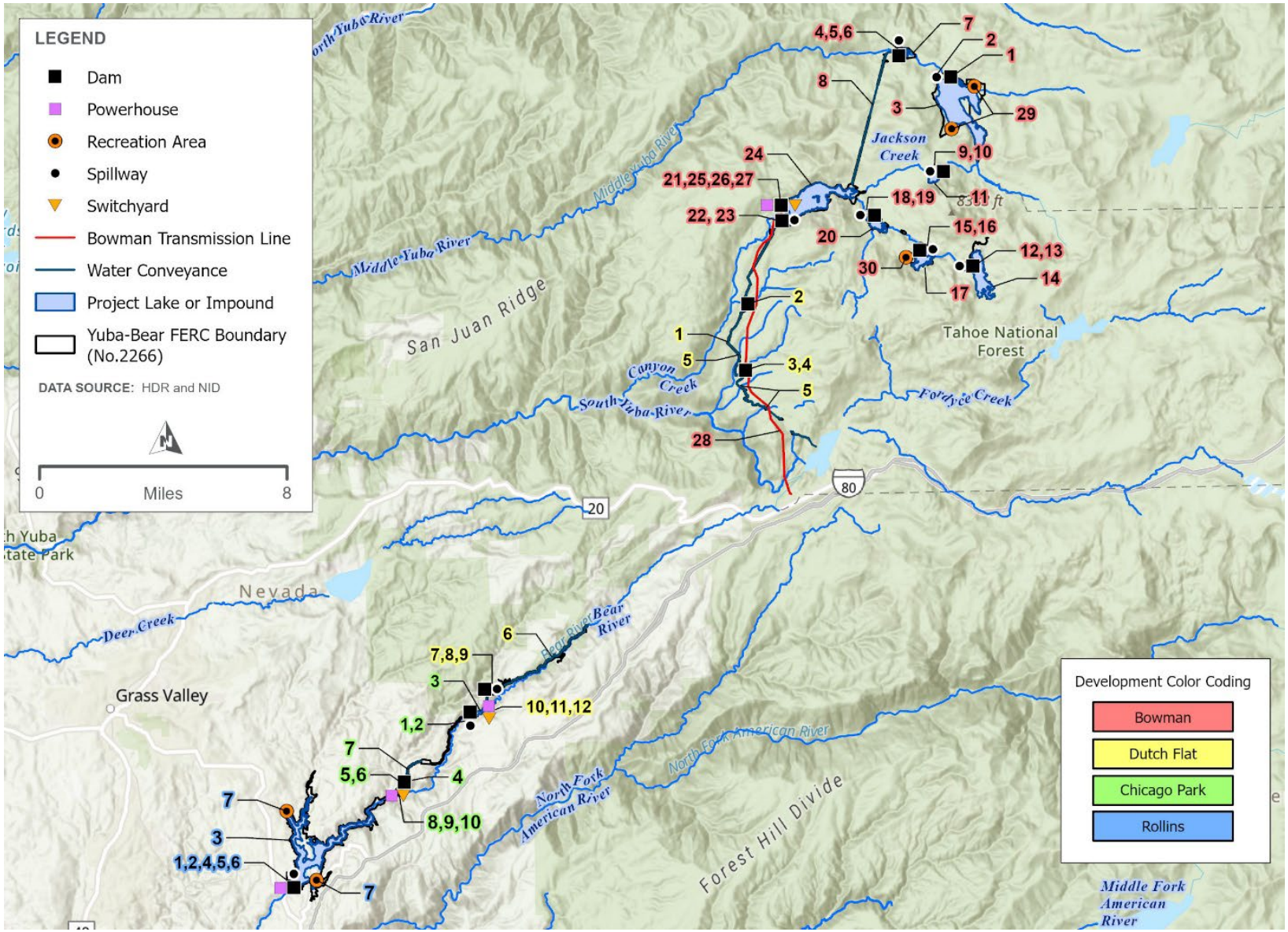


Figure 3. Yuba-Bear Facilities: Yuba River Development

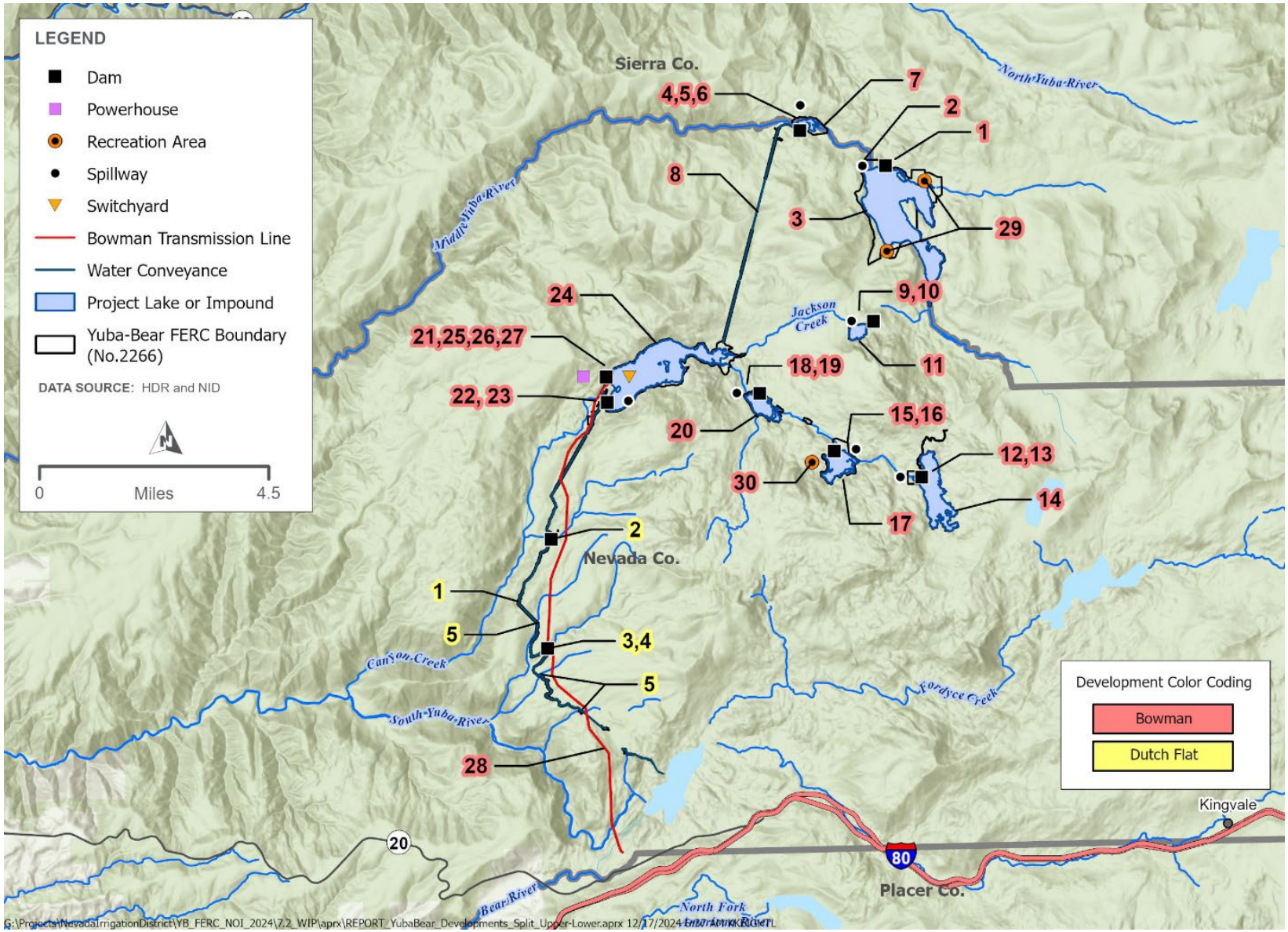
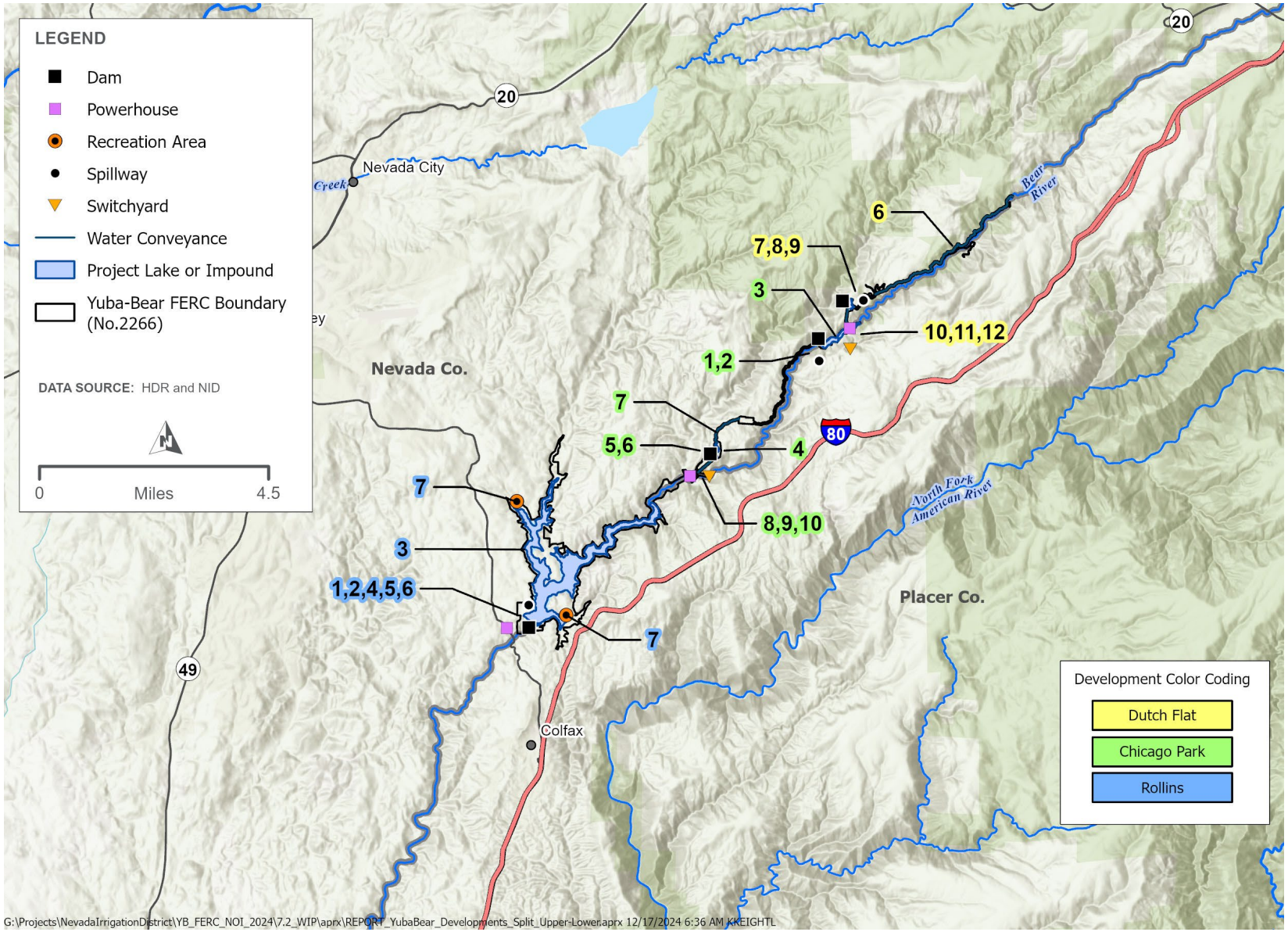


Figure 4. Yuba-Bear Facilities: Bear River Development



Bowman Development

The Bowman Development is composed of Jackson Meadows reservoir, dam, and spillway; Milton Main dam and spillway, Milton South dam, and Milton reservoir; Milton-Bowman diversion conduit; Wilson Creek diversion dam; Jackson Lake, dam, and spillway; French Lake, and French dam and spillway; Faucherie Lake, dam, and spillway; Sawmill Lake, dam, and spillway; Bowman Lake; Bowman North dam; Bowman South dam and spillway; Bowman penstock; Bowman powerhouse; and Bowman transmission line. The locations of the facilities within the Bowman Development are shown on **Figure 2** and in more detail on **Figure 3**, which correspond to the numbered descriptions below.

1. Jackson Meadows Dam, a zoned embankment structure with a core, filter zones, and rockfill shells located on the Middle Yuba River (MYR) 45.6 miles upstream of its confluence with the North Yuba River (NYR). The dam is 195 ft high with a crest length of 1,530 ft, a crest elevation of 6,044.5 ft^2, and a drainage area of 37.40 square miles. The dam includes two low-level outlets (El. 5,933.0 ft) with a combined maximum design capacity of about 760 cubic feet per second (cfs) at full pool;

2. Jackson Meadows Dam Spillway, a three-bay, gated spillway composed of reinforced concrete. The ogee crest elevation of the spillway is 6,021 ft. A reinforced concrete chute carries spillway flow about 200 ft past the gates and discharges into a rock-lined channel. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 40,000 cfs at zero freeboard;

3. Jackson Meadows Reservoir, a constructed storage reservoir on the MYR formed by Jackson Meadows Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (6,036.0 ft), Jackson Meadows Reservoir extends about 2.9 miles upstream, has an estimated usable storage capacity of 69,205 acre-feet (ac-ft), a surface area of 1,054 acres, and a shoreline of about 9.9 miles;

4. Milton Main (Diversion) Dam, a concrete arch dam located on the MYR about 42.2 miles upstream of its confluence with the NYR. The dam is 37 ft high with a crest elevation of 5,690.0 ft, and a drainage area of 39.77 square miles. The dam includes one low-level outlet (El. 5,663.0 ft) with a maximum design capacity of about 113 cfs at full pool and one 8-inch valve for minimum instream releases with a capacity of 5 cfs;

5. Milton South (Diversion) Dam, a concrete arch dam located on the MYR about 42.2 miles upstream of its confluence with the NYR. The dam is 30 ft high with a crest elevation of 5,696.0 ft;

6. Milton Diversion Dam Spillway, the main concrete arch dam acts as an ungated, uncontrolled spillway with a maximum design capacity of 40,000 cfs;

7. Milton Diversion Impoundment, a constructed impoundment on the MYR formed by Milton Diversion Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (5,690.0 ft), Milton Reservoir extends 0.5-mile upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 295 ac-ft, a surface area of 103 acres, and a shoreline of about 1.3 miles;

8. Milton-Bowman Diversion Conduit, composed of both pipeline (a 3,315 ft-long, 84 inch-diameter, concrete pipeline) and tunnel (22,623 ft-long, 7.5 foot by 9.5 foot tunnel) sections carrying water from Milton Reservoir to Bowman Reservoir;

9. Jackson Dam, a homogeneous, compacted earth fill dam located on Jackson Creek, about 2.9 miles upstream of Bowman Lake on Jackson Creek. The dam is 28 ft high with a crest

length of 772 ft and a crest elevation of 6,596.0 ft, and a drainage area of 0.65 square mile. The dam includes one low-level outlet (El. 6,570.0 ft) with a maximum design capacity of about 59 cfs at full pool;

10. Jackson Dam Spillway, a 50-foot-long, uncontrolled, sharp-crested weir with rubble masonry training walls at a crest elevation of approximately 6,592 ft. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 1,200 cfs;

11. Jackson Lake, a constructed storage reservoir formed by Jackson Dam on Jackson Creek. At normal maximum water surface elevation (6,592 ft), Jackson Lake extends 0.3-mile upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 1,330 ac-ft, a surface area of 58 acres, and a shoreline of about 1.1 miles;

12. French Dam, a rockfill dam with reinforced gunite and shotcrete on Canyon Creek, 1.3 miles upstream of Faucherie Lake. The dam is 70 ft high with a crest length of approximately 200 ft and a crest elevation of 6,665.5 ft, and a drainage area of 4.6 square miles. The dam includes one low-level outlet (El. 6,598.5 ft) with a maximum design capacity of about 657 cfs at full pool;

13. French Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled weir wall constructed of reinforced concrete. The crest of the spillway is 6,660 ft. A 100-foot-long unlined rock channel carries spillway flow into the river channel. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 4,300 cfs;

14. French Lake, a constructed storage reservoir on Canyon Creek formed by French Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (6,660.00 ft), French Lake Reservoir extends 1.3 miles upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 13,940 ac-ft, a surface area of 356 acres, and a shoreline of about 5.3 miles;

15. Faucherie Dam, a zoned embankment dam on Canyon Creek with sloping core and filter zones and riprap reinforcement, 1.5 miles upstream of Sawmill Lake. The dam is 65 ft high with a crest length of approximately 665 ft and a crest elevation of 6,131.0 ft, and a drainage area of 8.97 square miles. The dam includes two low-level outlets (El. 6,082.3 ft) with a combined maximum design capacity of about 289 cfs at full pool;

16. Faucherie Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled, 3 foot high sharp-crested concrete weir directing spillway discharge into an unlined rock channel that returns discharge to the creek downstream. The spillway is 150 ft long with a crest elevation of approximately 6,123 ft. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 10,000 cfs;

17. Faucherie Lake, a constructed storage reservoir on Canyon Creek formed by Faucherie Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (6,123.0 ft), Faucherie Lake extends 0.4-mile upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 3,980 ac-ft, a surface area of approximately 143 acres, and a shoreline of about 2.4 miles;

18. Sawmill Dam, a rockfill dam on Canyon Creek, 0.8-mile upstream of Bowman Lake. The dam is 60 ft high with a crest length of approximately 384 ft and a crest elevation of 5,865.0 ft, and a drainage area of 16.4 square miles. The dam includes one low-level outlet with a maximum design capacity of about 160 cfs at full pool;

19. Sawmill Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled, flat slab and buttress that direct spillway discharge into an unlined rock channel that returns discharge to the creek downstream. The spillway is

230 ft long with a crest elevation of approximately 5,860.0 ft. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 14,500 cfs at zero freeboard;

20. Sawmill Lake, a constructed storage reservoir on Canyon Creek formed by Sawmill Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (5,860.0 ft), Sawmill Lake extends 0.7-mile upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 3,030 ac-ft, a surface area of approximately 79.4 acres, and a shoreline of about 2.6 miles;

21. Bowman North Dam, a concrete-faced rockfill dam located on Canyon Creek, 10.3 miles upstream of its confluence with the SYR. The dam is 175 ft high with a crest length of approximately 700 ft and a crest elevation of 5,567.0 ft, and a drainage area of 27.1 square miles. The dam includes three low-level outlets (El. 5,400 ft) with a combined maximum design capacity of about 1,077 cfs at full pool;

22. Bowman South Dam, a constant radius arch dam constructed in nine monoliths, located on Canyon Creek. The dam is 135 ft high with a crest length of approximately 400 ft and a crest elevation of 5,563.6 ft;

23. Bowman South Dam Spillway, a reinforced concrete flat slab and buttress structure with 12 bays, 5 of which permit uncontrolled overflow and 7 of which are fitted with radial gates. The spillway is 175 ft long with a crest elevation of 5,563.6 ft for the 5 uncontrolled bays (85 ft in length) and 5,557.17 ft for the seven bays (90 ft in length) controlled by radial gates (144 inches wide by 70 inches high). The maximum design capacity of the combined spillway structures is 4,000 cfs at elevation 5,563 ft. In addition, the Bowman South Dam acts as an ungated, uncontrolled spillway with a maximum design capacity of 20,000 cfs;

24. Bowman Lake, a constructed storage reservoir on Canyon Creek formed by Bowman North and South dams. At normal maximum water surface elevation (5,562.0 ft), Bowman Lake extends 2.5 miles upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 68,510 ac-ft, a surface area of approximately 820 acres, and a shoreline of about 7.6 miles;

25. Bowman Penstock, a submerged, concrete encased, 60-inch-diameter penstock that diverts a maximum of 350 cfs to Bowman Powerhouse;

26. Bowman Powerhouse, an above-ground, indoor powerhouse constructed of reinforced concrete located near the base of Bowman North Dam, adjacent to Canyon Creek. The powerhouse consists of one horizontal Francis turbine with a nameplate rated capacity of 3.6 MW at a head of 135 ft and a flow of 313 cfs;

27. Bowman Switchyard, located adjacent to Bowman Powerhouse;

28. Bowman Transmission Line, an above-ground, 9.0-mile-long, 60 kV transmission line that connects the Bowman Powerhouse Switchyard to Pacific Gas & Electric's (PG&E) Drum-Spaulding 60 kV line approximately 1.5 miles west of PG&E's Spaulding No. 1 Powerhouse, which is part of PG&E's Drum-Spaulding Project (FERC Project No. 2310);

29. Jackson Meadows Reservoir Recreation Area, a recreation area that includes Findley Campground with 14 campsites, East Meadows Campground with 46 campsites, Fir Top Campground with 12 campsites Pass Creek Campground with 30 campsites, Woodcamp Campground with 20 campsites, Aspen Group Campground with a capacity for 100 people at one time (PAOT), Silvertip Group Campground with a capacity for 50 PAOT, and Jackson

Point boat in campground with 10 sites;

30. Faucherie Lake Recreation Area, a recreation area that includes Faucherie Group Campground with a capacity of 25 PAOT, and a day use area; and

31. all appurtenant facilities and features.

Dutch Flat Development

The Dutch Flat Development is composed of Bowman-Spaulding conduit diversion dam; Bowman-Spaulding conduit; Texas Creek diversion dam; Fall Creek diversion dam and flume; Clear Creek, Trap Creek, and Rucker Creek diversions; Dutch Flat No. 2 conduit; Dutch Flat dam, spillway, and forebay; and Dutch Flat No. 2 powerhouse and penstock. The locations of the facilities within the Dutch Flat Development are shown on **Figure 2** and in more detail on **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**, which correspond to the numbered descriptions below.

1. Bowman-Spaulding Conduit which diverts flows from Canyon Creek below Bowman Lake to Fuller Lake and Lake Spaulding (part of PG&E's Drum-Spaulding Project No. 2310) via 40,501 ft of canals and flumes and 16,192 ft of tunnels. Flow is diverted by the Bowman Spaulding Diversion Dam through a 12-foot-wide radial head gate into the conduit. The diversion dam has a 30-inch-diameter corrugated iron pipe controlled by a 30 inch-diameter slide gate used as a low-level outlet. Maximum design capacity of the conduit at the head gate is 300 cfs but increases to 325 cfs at its terminus into Fuller Lake;

2. Texas Creek Diversion Dam, a concrete reinforced diversion dam on Texas Creek, 0.6-mile upstream of its confluence with Canyon Creek, which diverts a portion of flow into the Bowman-Spaulding Conduit. The dam has a drainage area of 4.6 square miles, is 10 ft tall with a crest length of 50 ft and a crest elevation of 5,385.75 ft;

3. Fall Creek Diversion Dam, a concrete reinforced diversion dam on Fall Creek, 1.2 miles downstream of its confluence with Lake Creek, which diverts a portion of flow into the Bowman-Spaulding Conduit. The dam has a drainage area of 5.81 square miles, is 5.5 ft tall with a crest length of 74.5 ft and a crest elevation of 5,368.68 ft;

4. Fall Creek Diversion Flume, a 98-foot-long, 6-foot-4 inch-diameter steel flume that diverts water from Fall Creek Diversion Dam to the Bowman-Spaulding Conduit. Maximum design capacity of the flume is 100 cfs;

5. Other Bowman-Spaulding Conduit Diversions, including (in descending order) Clear Creek, Trap Creek, and Rucker Creek Diversions, each of which divert their entire streamflow. These diversions take place as each creek flows over the upstream wall or section into the Bowman-Spaulding Conduit. Dump gates (style and dimensions vary by diversion) are located in the downstream wall opposite the diversion which can carry flow into the downstream channel;

6. Dutch Flat No. 2 Conduit, a 24,728-foot-long combination of tunnel, flume, siphon, and canal that diverts water from Drum Afterbay (part of PG&E's Drum-Spaulding Project No. 2310) to Dutch Flat No. 2 Forebay at a maximum design capacity of 610 cfs;

7. Dutch Flat Forebay Dam, a zoned earthfill embankment dam located off-stream, adjacent to the Bear River, 0.4 mile north of Dutch Flat Afterbay. The dam is 77 ft high with a crest length of 440 ft and a crest elevation of 3,336.0 ft, and a drainage area of 0.1 square mile;

8. Dutch Flat Forebay Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled, concrete spillway 250 ft in length and a crest elevation of 3,331.75 ft. Discharge is routed through two 60 inch-diameter metal pipes down to a tributary of the Bear River. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 5,000 cfs;

9. Dutch Flat Forebay, an off-stream, constructed, re-regulating reservoir adjacent the Bear River formed by Dutch Flat Forebay Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (3,331.6 ft), Dutch Flat Forebay has a usable storage capacity of 185 ac-ft, a surface area of 8 acres, and a shoreline of about 0.5-mile;

10. Dutch Flat No. 2 Powerhouse Penstock, a 2,100 foot-long, 8 foot-diameter, steel penstock that diverts water, at a maximum design capacity of approximately 610 cfs, from Dutch Flat Forebay to Dutch Flat No. 2 Powerhouse;

11. Dutch Flat No. 2 Powerhouse, an above-ground, outdoor powerhouse constructed of reinforced concrete and located adjacent to Dutch Flat Afterbay, part of the Bear River. The powerhouse consists of one vertical axis Francis turbine with a nameplate rated capacity of 24.57 MW at a head of 581 ft and a flow of 600 cfs;

12. Dutch Flat No. 2 Powerhouse Switchyard, located adjacent to the Dutch Flat No. 2 Powerhouse; and

13. all appurtenant facilities and features.

Chicago Park Development

The Chicago Park Development is composed of Dutch Flat afterbay dam, spillway, and afterbay and Chicago Park conduit, forebay dam, spillway, forebay, penstock, and powerhouse. The locations of the facilities within the Chicago Park Development are shown on **Figure 2** and in more detail on **Figure 4**, which correspond to the numbered descriptions below.

1. Dutch Flat Afterbay Dam, a zoned embankment dam with rockfill shells located on the Bear River 6 miles upstream of its confluence with Rollins Reservoir. The dam is 165 ft high with a crest length of 495 ft and a crest elevation of 2,755.0 ft, and a drainage area of 21.5 square miles;

2. Dutch Flat Afterbay Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled, concrete-lined spillway 100 ft in length with a crest elevation of 2,741 ft. Discharge goes over an ogee crest and down a 405-foot-long concrete chute that discharges into the Bear River. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 20,000 cfs;

3. Dutch Flat Afterbay, a constructed re-regulating reservoir located on the Bear River formed by Dutch Flat Afterbay Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (2,741.0 ft), Dutch Flat Afterbay Reservoir extends about 0.9-mile upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 2,037 ac-ft, a surface area of 140 acres, and a shoreline of about 1.9 miles. The dam includes two low-level outlets (El. 2,640.0 ft) with a combined maximum design capacity of about 760 cfs at full pool;

4. Chicago Park Conduit, which diverts water from Dutch Flat Afterbay Dam to Chicago Park Forebay via 21,700 ft of concrete flume (18 ft wide by 10 ft deep) and gunite-lined ditch (14-38 ft wide and 10 ft deep). Maximum design capacity of the conduit is 1,100 cfs;

5. Chicago Park Forebay Dam, an earthfill dam with gunite face located off-stream, adjacent to the Bear River approximately 0.3-mile east of the confluence of the Bear River and Steephollow Creek. The dam is 35 ft high with a crest length of 200 ft and a crest elevation of 2,720.0 ft, and no associated drainage area;

6. Chicago Park Forebay Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled side channel spillway 63 ft in length, with a crest elevation of 2,717.4 ft, located on the Chicago Park Conduit 0.5-mile above the Chicago Park Powerhouse Penstock intake Structure. The maximum design capacity of the spillway is 1,100 cfs;

7. Chicago Park Forebay, a constructed re-regulating reservoir located adjacent to the Bear River formed by Chicago Park Forebay Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (2,717.3 ft), Chicago Park Forebay Reservoir has a usable storage capacity of 117 ac-ft, a surface area of 7 acres, and a shoreline of about 0.7-mile;

8. Chicago Park Powerhouse Penstock, an approximately 2,250-foot-long, 9.2-10.0 foot-diameter steel penstock that diverts water, at a maximum design capacity of approximately 1,070 cfs, from Chicago Park Forebay to Chicago Park Powerhouse;

9. Chicago Park Powerhouse, an above-ground, indoor powerhouse constructed of concrete and located adjacent the Bear River, approximately 800 ft southeast of the confluence of the Bear River and Steephollow Creek. The powerhouse consists of one vertical axis Francis turbine with a nameplate rated capacity of 39 MW at a head of 480 ft and a maximum flow of 1,100 cfs;

10. Chicago Park Switchyard, located adjacent to Chicago Park Powerhouse; and

11. all appurtenant facilities and features.

Rollins Development

The Rollins Development is composed of Rollins dam, spillway, reservoir, penstock, and powerhouse. The locations of the facilities within the Rollins Development facilities are shown on **Figure 2** and in more detail on **Figure 4**, which correspond to the numbered descriptions below.

1. Rollins Dam, a zoned embankment dam located on the Bear River approximately 12.1 river miles upstream of Combie Dam (non-project). The dam is 252.5 ft high with a crest length of 1,260 ft and a crest elevation of 2,187.5 ft, and a drainage area of 104 square miles. The dam includes one low-level outlet (El. 1,970.0 ft) with a maximum design capacity of about 2,008 cfs at full pool;

2. Rollins Dam Spillway, an uncontrolled concrete ogee crest spillway 620 ft in length, with a crest elevation of 2,171.0 ft and a maximum design capacity of 85,000 cfs;

3. Rollins Reservoir, a constructed storage reservoir located on the Bear River formed by Rollins Dam. At normal maximum water surface elevation (2,171.0 ft), Rollins Reservoir extends about 4.1 miles upstream, has a usable storage capacity of 65,989 ac-ft, a surface area of 825 acres, and a shoreline of about 19 miles;

4. Rollins Powerhouse Penstock, an approximately 484 foot-long, 8.5 foot-diameter, steel penstock partially encased in concrete that diverts water, at a maximum design capacity of approximately 866 cfs, from Rollins Dam to Rollins Powerhouse;

5. Rollins Powerhouse, an above-ground, outdoor powerhouse constructed of reinforced concrete and located at the toe of the dam. The powerhouse consists of one vertical axis Francis turbine with a nameplate rated capacity of 12.15 MW at a head of 208 ft and a maximum flow of 840 cfs;

6. Rollins Switchyard, located adjacent to the Rollins Powerhouse;

7. Four Project recreation facilities at Rollins Reservoir, which includes Peninsula Campground with 67 sites; Greenhorn Campground with 79 sites; Long Ravine Campground with 85 sites; and Orchard Springs Campground with 101 sites (each facility includes a boat launch); and

8. all appurtenant facilities and features.

4.4 Existing and Proposed Operations Related to the Yuba-Bear Project

The Yuba-Bear Project has a combined gross water storage capacity of about 228,618 ac-ft of water, generated an annual average of 354.3 GWh from 1972 through 2007 (periods for Rollins and Bowman powerhouses are shorter as they came online in 1981 and 1986, respectively), and has a historical dependable capacity of 44.2 MW. According to NID's Final License Application Exhibit B, the existing hydroelectric project's total installed capacity is 79.32 MW, and the dependable capacity is the same as historic at 44.2 MW.[1]

Proposed operation of the Yuba-Bear Project would be generally consistent with existing operations. However, future operations would include new and increased minimum flow releases and modified ramping rates. NID also proposes the following: (1) re-operation between PG&E's Dutch Flat No. 1 and NID's Dutch Flat No. 2 powerhouses based on water rights rather than operational or efficiency considerations; and (2) use of modified winter/spring operations implemented since 1997.

5.0 Scope of the EIR

Based on the Proposed Project's potential for significant impacts on the environment, NID will prepare an EIR. The EIR will assess the Proposed Project's effects on the environment, identify significant impacts, and identify feasible measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant environmental impacts. The EIR will also include an analysis of alternatives to the Proposed Project. NID will review comments received on this NOP and may modify or add to the scope of environmental issues evaluated in the EIR.

5.1 Alternatives to the Project

The EIR will identify and evaluate feasible alternatives to the Proposed Project that might reasonably be assumed to reduce significant impacts and will include a "No Project" alternative.

1) No Project Alternative. The "No Project" alternative assumes that NID would continue to operate and maintain the Yuba-Bear Project under the terms and conditions in the existing FERC license while meeting all existing water and contract demands.

[1] NID. 2011. Final License Application, Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 2266-096. Filed with FERC: April 2011.

2) Proposed Project Alternative. The Proposed Project Alternative assumes NID would operate and maintain the Yuba-Bear Project under the FERC Staff Recommendation with Mandatory Conditions analyzed in the 2014 FEIS. Minimum flow requirements under the Proposed Project Alternative would be consistent with the State Water Board's June 11, 2025, Draft Water Quality Certification (WQC). The Proposed Project Alternative does not include additional unimpaired flows (UIF) as they have not been established in the State Water Board's (SWB) Bay-Delta Plan for the Bear and Yuba Rivers.

3) Variable UIF Alternative. The Variable UIF Alternative assumes NID would operate and maintain the Yuba-Bear Project under the FERC Staff Recommendation with Mandatory Conditions analyzed in the 2014 FEIS. Minimum flow requirements under the Variable UIF Alternative would be consistent with the State Water Board's June 11, 2025, Draft WQC. The Variable UIF Alternative includes varying UIF (35% in driest third of years/55% in wettest third of years/45% in rest of years) according to the water year type proposed in the SWB's July 2025 Revised Draft Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed and incorporated into the Yuba-Bear draft WQC through Draft WQC Condition 2.

4) Maximum UIF Alternative. The Maximum UIF Alternative continues to assume NID would operate and maintain the Yuba-Bear Project under the FERC Staff Recommendation with Mandatory Conditions analyzed in the 2014 FEIS. Minimum flow requirements would be consistent with the State Water Board's June 11, 2025, Draft WQC. The Maximum UIF Alternative also analyzes the highest UIF (65% year-round maximum) included in the SWB's July 2025 Revised Draft Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed and incorporated into the Yuba-Bear draft WQC through Draft WQC Condition 2.

5.2 Resource Areas to be Analyzed in the EIR

Currently identified environmental issues to be evaluated in the EIR include:

Aesthetics	Agriculture & Forestry	Air Quality
Biological Resources	Cultural Resources	Energy
Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Hazards & Hazardous Materials
Hydrology and Water Quality	Land Use and Planning	Mineral Resources
Noise	Population and Housing	Public Services
Recreation	Transportation	Tribal Cultural Resources
Utilities and Service Systems	Wildfire	

5.3 Cumulative Impacts

The EIR will identify environmental impacts of the Proposed Project that may be individually limited but cumulatively considerable (i.e., meaning the incremental effects of the Proposed Project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of other projects). The cumulative impact analysis of the EIR will establish an appropriate cumulative setting that includes areas, watersheds,

and other hydroelectric operations that in combination may be affected by the operation of the Yuba-Bear Project.

5.4 Other Required Sections of the EIR

The EIR will also include other information required for an EIR. These other sections include the following:

1) Growth Inducing Impacts;
2) Significant, Unavoidable Impacts; and
3) Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes.

6.0 Environmental Review Procedures

This NOP initiates the EIR process through which NID will refine the range of issues and Proposed Project alternatives to be addressed in the EIR. Written comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR are encouraged to be submitted during the review period from December 30, 2025 – January 28, 2026. After the review period for the NOP is complete, a Draft EIR will be prepared in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.), and the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR § 15000 et seq.).

Once the Draft EIR is completed, it will be made available for at least a 45-day public review and comment period. Copies of the Draft EIR will be sent directly to interested parties, responsible and trustee agencies, and those agencies that commented on the NOP. Information about availability of the Draft EIR will also be posted on NID's website at https://www.nidwater.com/yuba-bear-project-relicensing-documents.

7.0 Contact Information

For further information regarding the NOP and to provide comments, contact:

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