

October 10, 2003

Dear Stakeholder:

Subject: Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process  
FERC Project Nos. 67, 120, 2085, and 2175  
2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package

Southern California Edison (SCE) is pleased to present for your review and comment the following 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package (2002 DTSRP) for the Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects (FERC Project Nos. 67, 120, 2085, and 2175). The 2002 DTSRP presents the results of study elements completed in 2001-2002 as part of the Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process (ALP). A second package, the 2003 Draft Technical Study Report Package (2003 DTSRP), will be distributed in early 2004 to present the results of study elements completed in 2003. The enclosed technical study reports were developed and approved in collaboration with numerous stakeholders, collectively referred to as the Big Creek Collaborative (BCC). The BCC includes representatives of state and federal resource agencies, Native American tribes, local and regional authorities, non-government organizations, local communities, local businesses, and individual members of the public.

The 2002 Draft Technical Study Reports are provided electronically in the enclosed compact discs in Adobe® Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF files can be viewed and printed from a computer using Adobe® Reader (version 5 or higher). Most computers come standard with Adobe® Reader, but if your computer does not have the software, or has a version lower than 5, you can download it for free by pointing your web browser to <http://www.adobe.com/> and clicking on the "Get Adobe Reader" button.

A hard copy of the 2002 DTSRP is available for review at the following locations:

Southern California Edison Company  
Northern Hydro Regional Office  
54205 Mtn. Poplar Road  
Big Creek, CA 93605  
Contact Person: Ms. Carla Anthony, Relicensing Coordinator  
(559) 893-3682

ENTRIX, Inc.  
7919 Folsom Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95826  
Contact Person: Ms. Eileen Dessaso, Project Coordinator  
(916) 923-1097

Fresno County Public Library  
2420 Mariposa Street  
Fresno, CA 93721  
(559) 488-3195

United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service  
Sierra National Forest  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611-0532  
Contact Cindy Whelan, Assistant Lands Officer  
(559) 297-7060

SCE encourages active participation in the Big Creek ALP by all parties interested in providing input on the future license terms and conditions for the Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects. A 30-day comment period is provided for you to submit any comments or recommendations to SCE on the technical study reports. Comments received by SCE within the comment period will be addressed appropriately by the BCC prior to finalizing this study report package. The goal is for the BCC to approve the 2002 Technical Study Report Package by December 2003. Instructions for providing comments on these reports are presented in the Introduction Section of the 2002 DTSRP. Please forward any comments you may have on the 2002 DTSRP in writing to Ms. Carla Anthony, at the address shown below by November 10, 2003.

Ms. Carla Anthony, Relicensing Coordinator

Southern California Edison  
Northern Hydro Regional Office  
P.O. Box 100  
Big Creek, California 93605

You may also attend a public meeting and provide verbal comments. A court reporter will be present to transcribe all comments. The public meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 30, 2003, beginning at 6:00 PM and ending at 8:00 PM, at:

Piccadilly Inn University  
Waldorf Room 3/4  
4961 North Cedar Avenue  
Fresno, California

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in the Big Creek ALP.

Sincerely,



Enclosures

cc. Distribution List

Southern California Edison (SCE) is pleased to present for your review and comment the following 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package (2002 DTSRP) for the Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects (FERC Project Nos. 67, 120, 2085, and 2175). The 2002 DTSRP presents the results of study elements completed in 2001-2002 as part of implementing the Final Technical Study Plan Package (FTSPP) approved by the Big Creek Collaborative (BCC). The technical studies are necessary to gather information that will be used to assess the environmental effects of relicensing SCE's Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects and to identify potential protection, mitigation and enhancement measures. The distribution of the 2002 DTSRP is a key milestone in SCE's Alternative Licensing Process (ALP) for the Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects.

The technical study plans were developed and approved over a 15-month period (May 2000-July 2001) in collaboration with numerous stakeholders, collectively referred to as the BCC. These stakeholders participate as individuals, or as representatives of state and federal resource agencies, Native American tribes, local and regional authorities, non-government organizations, local communities, and local businesses.

Implementation of the approved technical study plans was initiated in 2001 and will continue through 2004. Only results of technical study elements completed in 2001-2002 are presented in the enclosed 2002 DTSRP. The 2002 DTSRP contains technical study reports approved by the Working Groups for distribution to the Plenary and public for review and comment<sup>1</sup>. A second package of the technical study report (2003 Draft Technical Study Report Package) will be distributed in early 2004 to present the results of study elements completed in 2003.

The BCC should be commended for their dedication, hard work, and collaborative spirit demonstrated during the study development, implementation and reporting phase. SCE encourages active participation in the Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process (ALP) by all parties interested in providing input on the future license terms and conditions for the Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects. A comprehensive record of Big Creek ALP activities including process milestones, meeting dates, meeting participants, agendas, meeting notes, presentation materials, and formal correspondence is posted on SCE's Hydro Relicensing Website at: <http://www.sce.com/bigcreek>.

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<sup>1</sup> Working Group participants approved all the technical reports presented in the 2002 DTSRP with one exception. The CAWG-8 technical report was approved by all Working Group participants except the State Water Resources Control Board.

**OVERVIEW OF BIG CREEK SYSTEM AND RELICENSING PROCESSES**

SCE is relicensing its seven Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects, located in California's upper San Joaquin River watershed, about 27 miles northeast of the City of Fresno and 240 miles northeast of the City of Los Angeles (Figure 1-1). The seven hydroelectric projects consist of nine powerhouses, 23 generating units and six major reservoirs and have a combined dependable operating capacity of about 1,000 megawatts (MW). The seven Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects are referred to as the Big Creek System (BCS) (Figure 1-2). The BCS is operated to meet Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license conditions, physical constraints, downstream water rights agreements, and power production needs.

In relicensing the BCS, SCE is utilizing both the traditional and alternative licensing processes. A detailed description of these regulatory processes was provided in SCE's Initial Information Package (IIP) for the Big Creek Hydroelectric System – Alternative Licensing Process distributed in May 2000. An electronic copy of the IIP can be viewed on SCE's Hydro Relicensing Website.

The ALP is being used for four projects in the BCS including Big Creek Nos. 1 & 2 (FERC No. 2175); Big Creek Nos. 2A, 8, & Eastwood (FERC No. 67); Big Creek No. 3 (FERC No. 120); and Mammoth Pool (FERC No. 2085). The Traditional Relicensing Process was selected for the remaining three projects: Big Creek No. 4 (FERC No. 2017); Vermilion Valley (FERC No. 2086); and Portal Hydroelectric Power (FERC No. 2174). The traditional process is being used for these three licenses to meet earlier FERC regulatory deadlines required for submission of new license applications for those projects. Table 1-1 presents a summary of SCE's Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects.

SCE acknowledges that any settlement agreements and the subsequent Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA) developed in the Big Creek ALP may also recommend, if appropriate, protection, mitigation and enhancement measures for the three licenses undergoing the Traditional Relicensing Process (Big Creek No. 4, Vermilion Valley, and Portal Hydroelectric Power). If necessary, SCE will request that FERC amend these earlier licenses, to modify the protection, mitigation and enhancement terms and conditions to be consistent with any settlement agreements.

**Placeholder for Figure 1-1  
Southern California Edison  
Hydroelectric System**

**Non-Internet Public Information**

This Figure has been removed in accordance with the Commission regulations at 18 CFR Section 388.112.

This Figure is considered Non-Internet Public information and should not be posted on the Internet. This information is provided in Volume 4 of the Application for New License and is identified as “Non-Internet Public” information. This information may be accessed from the FERC’s Public Reference Room, but is not expected to be posted on the Commission’s electronic library, except as an indexed item.

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ELEVATION - FEET

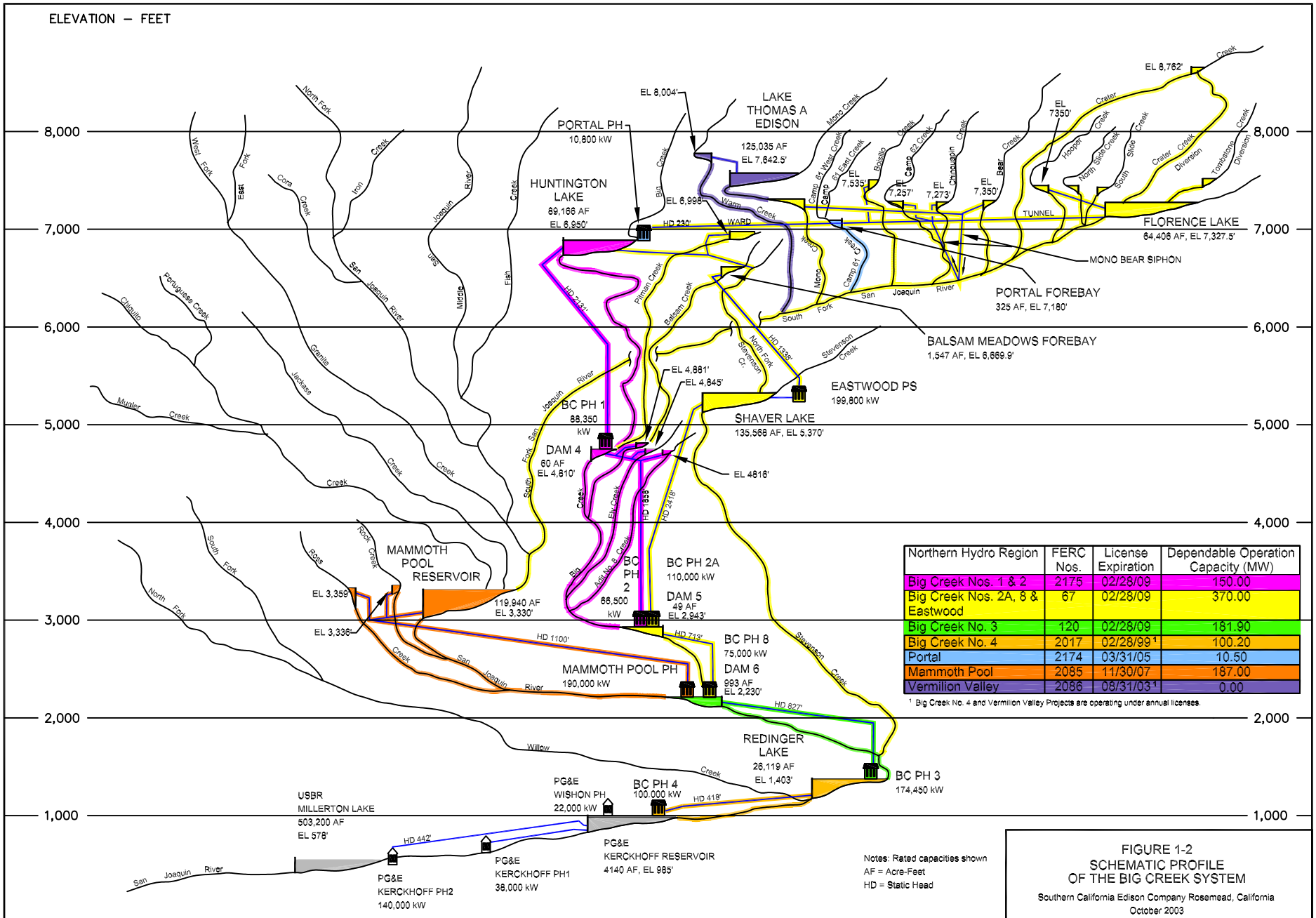


FIGURE 1-2  
SCHEMATIC PROFILE  
OF THE BIG CREEK SYSTEM  
Southern California Edison Company Rosemead, California  
October 2003

**Table 1-1 Southern California Edison's Big Creek Hydroelectric Projects in the Upper San Joaquin River Basin**

<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>FERC PROJECT NUMBER</b>	<b>LICENSE EXPIRATION DATE</b>	<b>EXHIBIT M GENERATOR CAPACITY (MW)</b>
Big Creek No. 4	2017	February 28, 1999 <sup>1</sup>	100.00
Vermilion Valley	2086	August 31, 2003 <sup>2</sup>	-- <sup>3</sup>
Portal Hydroelectric Power	2174	March 31, 2005 <sup>4</sup>	10.80
Mammoth Pool	2085	November 30, 2007	190.00
Big Creek Nos. 1 & 2	2175	February 28, 2009	154.85
Big Creek Nos. 2A, 8, and Eastwood	67	February 28, 2009	384.80
Big Creek No. 3	120	February 28, 2009	174.45

<sup>1</sup> Big Creek No. 4 Project is operating under an annual license. A license application prepared under the Traditional Relicensing Process was filed in 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Vermilion Valley Project is operating under an annual license. A license application prepared under the Traditional Relicensing Process was filed in 2001.

<sup>3</sup> The Vermilion Valley Project does not contain any generation.

<sup>4</sup> Portal Hydroelectric Power Project is being relicensed using the Traditional Relicensing Process. A license application was filed in March 2003.

### **SCE'S BIG CREEK ALTERNATIVE LICENSING PROCESS**

On December 9, 1999, SCE filed a formal request with FERC to use the ALP to relicense four hydroelectric projects in the BCS. The request followed extensive collaboration, input and support from many of the stakeholders regarding the appropriateness and design of the ALP and development of draft communication protocols. On March 15, 2000, the FERC approved SCE's request to follow the ALP. A kick-off meeting of the Big Creek ALP was conducted in May 2000. Over the last two and one-half years, numerous collaborative meetings have been held, leading to the preparation and distribution of the FTSP and 2002 DTSRP. The following provides an overview of the Big Creek ALP and specific activities conducted during the study development and implementation phase.



## GOALS OF THE ALP APPROACH

The specific goals of the Big Creek ALP are to:

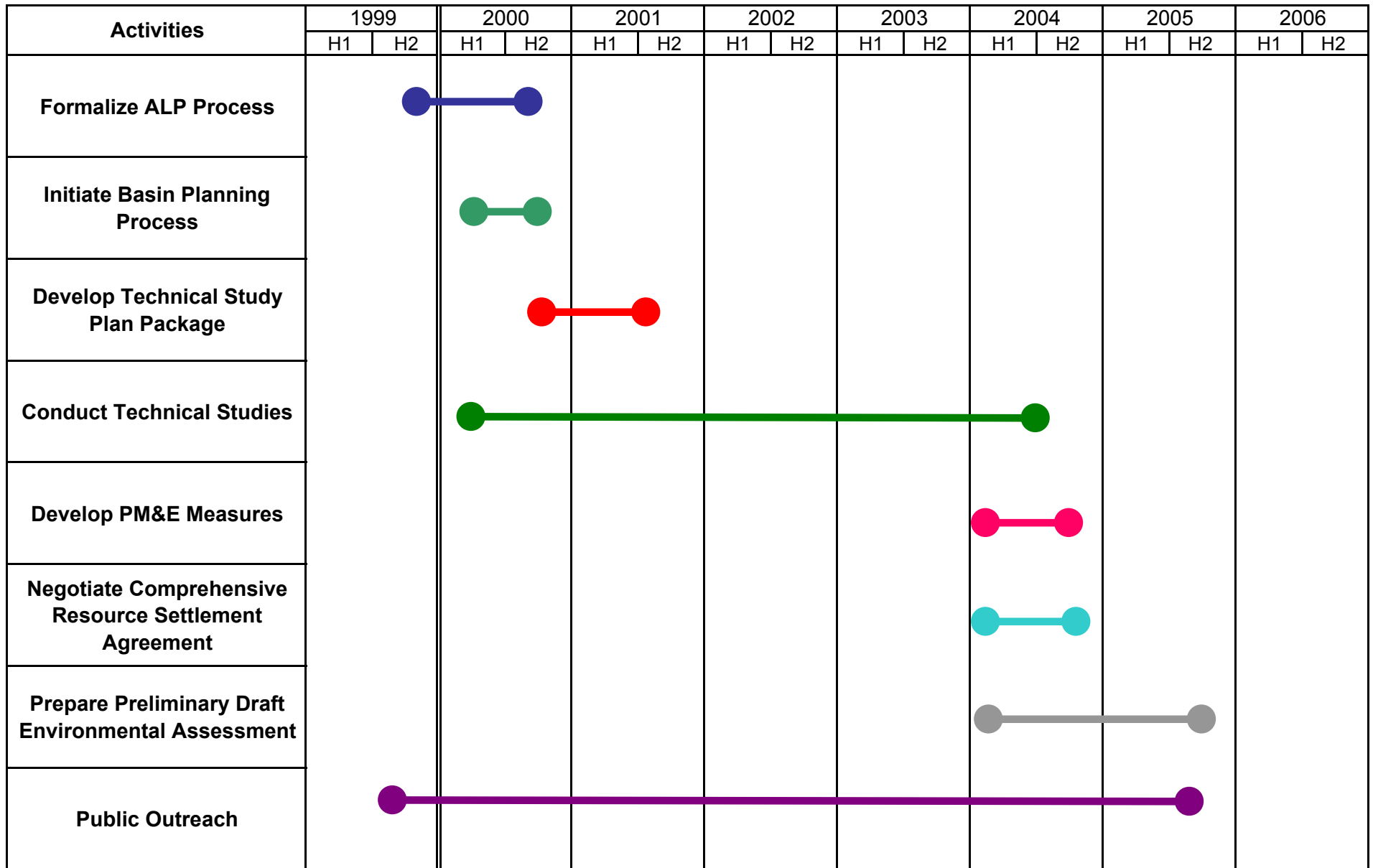
- Combine into a single process the pre-filing consultation, the environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act, and administrative processes for all four projects;
- Facilitate more effective participation by, and improved communication among, SCE, resource agencies, Native American tribes, local and regional authorities, private interests, the public and FERC staff in a flexible pre-filing consultation process;
- Promote cooperative efforts between SCE and the stakeholders to share information about resource impacts and mitigation and enhancement proposals and to narrow any areas of disagreement and reach a comprehensive settlement;
- Facilitate an expeditious review of any agreements or offers of settlement for use as a basis for protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures (PM&E measures) for new hydropower licenses; and
- Allow for the preparation of a PDEA by SCE with input from the stakeholders.

## HOW THE ALP WILL TAKE PLACE

An overview of key activities during the Big Creek ALP is presented in Figure 1-3. The Big Creek ALP consists of six major elements including:

1. Formalization by the stakeholders of the collaborative process for the ALP (i.e., ground-rules, communication protocols, and dispute resolution);
2. Initiation of a Basin planning process (i.e., identification of management objectives, key resource issues, existing information, and data gaps);
3. Development, implementation and interpretation of integrated technical studies for project resources (i.e., formulation of study objectives, scopes of work, study schedules, analytical methods, data analyses, and technical reports);
4. Development and prioritization of enhancement and mitigation measures (i.e., identification of resource management alternatives and evaluation of tradeoff opportunities);
5. Development and negotiation of a Comprehensive Resource Settlement Agreement supported by a consensus of the stakeholders and consistent with other associated regulatory processes (i.e., identification of proposed terms and conditions for new licenses); and
6. Submittal of a PDEA and license application for each of the licenses formally included in the ALP, along with any appropriate requests for license amendments for SCE's traditionally relicensed projects within the Basin.

**Figure 1-3. Overview of Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process Activities**



## OVERVIEW OF STUDY PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The FTSP was a culmination of input from 94 collaborative meetings/conference calls conducted between May 2000 and July 2001. During the 15 month period, the BCC convened as a Plenary Group and as smaller Working Groups. The Plenary Group is the decision-making group of the BCC responsible for approval of the ALP structure and technical study plans and reports. The Plenary Group will ultimately negotiate and approve the Comprehensive Resource Settlement Agreement. The Working Groups were formed at the direction of the Plenary Group to provide technical support during the study development and implementation phases of the ALP. To date, five technical Working Groups have been established to assist in development and implementation of the technical studies. These technical Working Groups are:

- Combined Aquatics Working Group<sup>2</sup>
- Cultural Resources Working Group
- Land Management Working Group
- Recreation Working Group
- Terrestrial Working Group

During the study plan development phase, the Plenary Group had the primary responsibility for identifying resource interests in the BCS, defining the overall relicensing basin study boundaries, developing stakeholder management goals and objectives, and identifying those resources and locations potentially affected by the BCS (Project Nexus). The Working Groups developed, in an iterative process, specific study plans that incorporated the resource interests and stakeholder management goals and objectives provided by the Plenary Group.

The study plan approval process used by the BCC occurred in three steps. The first step was reaching consensus (“willing to live with”) within each Working Group that the draft technical study plans under their purview were approved for distribution to the Plenary and the public. The Draft Technical Study Plan Package (DTSP) containing the technical study plans, as approved by the Working Groups, was distributed to the Plenary and the public for review and comment on May 17, 2001. The DTSP was the culmination of 82 collaborative meetings/conference calls conducted between May 2000 and May 2001.

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<sup>2</sup> This group was originally established as three working groups (Aquatic Group, Water Quality and Use Group, Geology Group) that early in the process were merged to form one group, the Combined Aquatics Working Group (CAWG).

The second step in the study plan approval process was obtaining and responding to comments received from the Plenary and the public on the DTSSP. Interested parties had the opportunity to provide written and/or verbal comments on the DTSSP during the 30-day comment period that ended on June 16, 2001. During the comment period, a public meeting was held on June 13, 2001 in Fresno, California to provide interested parties with an overview of the study plans and to receive verbal comments. The Plenary met on June 13 and 14, 2001 to review the study plans and discuss/resolve comments on the DTSSP.

A total of 11 collaborative meetings (Plenary, public, and Working Group) were conducted in June and July 2001 to receive and address comments on the DTSSP. The Working Groups revised, as needed, the study plans to reflect the responses to the comments received.

The third step in the study plan approval process was obtaining Plenary approval of the FTSSP. On July 12, 2001, the Working Groups met with the Plenary and recommended that the response to comments and revised study plans be approved. The Plenary approved both the response to comments and revised study plans at the July 12, 2001 meeting. A total of 67 study plans were approved by the Plenary consisting of 14 Combined Aquatics, five Cultural Resources, 11 Land Management, 22 Recreation, and 15 Terrestrial study plans. The FTSSP, including all 67 study plans, can be found on SCE's Hydro Relicensing Website.

### **STUDY IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

Implementation of the approved technical study plans was initiated in 2001 and will continue through 2004. Study implementation was scheduled over several years due to the large study area and the phased nature of some of the studies (i.e., results from initial data collection were used to make decisions on the focus and approach of subsequent data collection efforts). Results of technical studies completed in 2001-2002 are presented in the enclosed 2002 DTSRP, whereas, results of technical studies completed in 2003 will be distributed in the 2003 DTSRP in early 2004. Technical studies scheduled for 2004 are primarily focused on the evaluation of potential PM&E measures identified during settlement negotiation. Results of PM&E evaluations will be presented in the PDEA in early 2005.

Both the Plenary and Working Groups have remained engaged during the study implementation phase including providing technical input, participating in field activities, reviewing preliminary study results, developing consensus on field protocols and data analysis approaches, and reviewing/approving draft technical study reports. A total of 128 collaborative meetings/conference calls have been conducted to date during the study implementation phase (August 2001-September 2003).

## 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package

The 2002 DTSRP is a compilation of technical study reports detailing study elements completed in 2001-2002. Table 1-2 provides a list of technical reports contained in the 2002 DTSRP. Results of outstanding study elements and associated reports will be provided in 2004 and 2005, as described above.

Each Draft Technical Study Report is organized into six major sections, as follows.

- Executive Summary
- Study Objectives
- Study Implementation
- Study Methodology
- Study Results and Analysis
- Literature Cited

The 2002 Draft Technical Study Reports are provided electronically in the enclosed compact discs (CDs), in Adobe® Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF files can be viewed and printed from a computer using Adobe® Reader (version 5 or higher). Most computers come standard with Adobe® Reader, but if your computer does not have the software or has a version lower than 5, you can download it for free by pointing your web browser to <http://www.adobe.com/> and clicking on the "Get Adobe Reader" button.

The enclosed CDs provide individual study reports by Working Group. Each study report is identified by Working Group name and associated study plan number (i.e., CAWG-1). Each CD contains several draft reports, but each report is self-contained inside its own folder. Each report folder is in turn divided into a maximum of five components: Text, Tables, Figures and/or Maps, and Appendices. For some of the reports, one or more of these components do not exist and the respective folders (that would otherwise be empty) have been intentionally omitted.

To comply with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Rule RM02-4-000 Order No. 630, some of the figures in the 2002 DTSRP have been labeled "Non-internet Public" in the upper left corner. Per the regulations, Non-Internet Public information is available to the public but is not to be posted or accessible online through the Internet. Non-Internet Public information includes: (1) USGS 7.5-minute topographic maps showing the general location of pipelines, dams, or other aboveground facilities; (2) alignment sheets showing the location of pipeline and aboveground facilities, right-of-way dimensions, and extra work areas; (3) drawings showing site or project boundaries, footprints, building locations and reservoir extent; and (4) general location maps. Therefore, SCE requests that you do not post on the Internet any of the figures labeled "Non-internet Public" in the 2002 DTSRP.

**Table 1-2 List of 2002 Draft Technical Study Reports**

<b>TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES</b>	
TERR-1	Vegetation Communities
TERR-2	Invasive/Exotic Plants
TERR-3	Special-Status Plant Populations
TERR-4	Native American Plants
TERR-5	Common and Special-Status Wildlife Species
TERR-6	Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle
TERR-7	Migratory Waterfowl
TERR-8	Raptors
TERR-9	Bald Eagle and Osprey
TERR-10	Great Gray Owl
TERR-11	Riparian-Nesting Songbirds
TERR-12	Special-Status Bat Species
TERR-13	Mesocarnivores
TERR-14	Mule Deer
TERR-15	Other Game
<b>RECREATIONAL RESOURCES</b>	
REC-3	Whitewater Recreation Assessment Study
REC-8	Angling Opportunities and Experience Assessment
REC-9	Recreation Resources and Facility Inventory Assessment
REC-10/17	Recreation Opportunities and Needs Assessment (Developed) Dispersed Recreation Opportunities and Needs Assessment
REC-11	Compliance with ADA Assessment
REC-12	Hunting
REC-21	Winter Recreation
<b>LAND MANAGEMENT</b>	
LAND-6	Traffic/Circulation Study
LAND-9	Visual Quality Assessment
LAND-11	Volcanic and Seismic Assessment
<b>COMBINED AQUATICS</b>	
CAWG-1	Characterize Stream and Reservoir Habitats
CAWG-2	Geomorphology
CAWG-3	Flow-Related Physical Habitat in Bypass Reaches
CAWG-4	Chemical Water Quality
CAWG-7	Characterize Fish Populations
CAWG-8	Amphibians and Reptiles
CAWG-11	Riparian

A hard copy of the 2002 DTSRP is available for review at the following locations:

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54205 Mount Poplar Road  
Big Creek, CA 93605  
Contact Person: Ms. Carla Anthony, Relicensing Coordinator  
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ENTRIX, Inc.  
7919 Folsom Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95826  
Contact Person: Ms. Eileen Dessaso, Project Coordinator  
(916) 923-1097

Fresno County Public Library  
2420 Mariposa Street  
Fresno, CA 93721  
(559) 488-3195

United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service  
Sierra National Forest  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611-0532  
Contact Person: Cindy Whelan, Assistant Lands Officer  
(559) 297-0706

#### **APPROVAL PROCESS AND SCHEDULE FOR 2002 TECHNICAL STUDY REPORT PACKAGE**

The Plenary Group has not yet approved the 2002 DTSRP presented in the CDs accompanying this document. These study reports have been prepared and approved by the Working Groups for distribution to the Plenary and public for review and comment<sup>1</sup>. All comments received by SCE within the comment period will be reviewed and addressed appropriately by the Plenary Group prior to finalizing this study report package. The goal is for the Plenary Group to approve a 2002 Final Technical Study Report Package (2002 FTSRP) by December 2003.

The 2002 DTSRP is provided for your review and comment. A comment period is provided for you to suggest any comments or recommendations to SCE regarding the 2002 DTSRP. When commenting on the document, please be clear to differentiate general comments regarding the document from specific comments or

recommendations on individual study reports. Comments of a technical nature should include the basis for the comments and any appropriate citations to scientific literature. When providing specific comments or recommendations, please identify the specific study report that you are commenting on and the specific section, page or line(s). This will help SCE and the BCC to more effectively address your comments. In addition, please identify whether you are commenting as an individual or a representative of an agency or other organization.

Please forward any comments you may have on the 2002 DTSRP in writing to Ms. Carla Anthony, at the address shown below by November 10, 2003.

Ms. Carla Anthony, Relicensing Coordinator

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Room: Waldorf 3 and 4  
4961 North Cedar Avenue  
Fresno, California

SCE and the BCC welcome your participation in this process.



**Southern California Edison**  
**Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process**  
**Distribution List for the 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package**

Wayne Allen  
Relicensing Specialist  
Southern California Edison Company  
P.O. Box 100  
Big Creek, CA 93605

Carla J. Anthony  
Licensing Coordinator  
Southern California Edison Company  
P.O. Box 100  
Big Creek, CA 93605

Brent Auernheimer  
Camp Keola  
1166 N. Klein Avenue  
Reedley, CA 93654

Bob Baiocchi  
Chairman  
Anglers Committee Against Artificial Whitewater  
P.O. Box 1790  
Greagle, CA 96103

Maureen Barile  
Huntington Lake Big Creek  
Historical Conservancy  
P.O. Box 232  
Lakeshore, CA 93634

Stephen Barile  
County of Fresno  
2220 Tulare Street  
Sixth Floor  
Fresno, CA 93721

Lou Beihn  
Interested Mono  
32024 Poy-ah-now Road  
North Fork, CA 93643

John Beuttler  
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance  
1360 Nelson Street  
Berkeley, CA 94702

Edward Bianchi, Jr.  
ENTRIX, Inc.  
7919 Folsom Boulevard,  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 96826

Randy J. Bolt  
2320 Coachman Road  
Mariposa, CA 95338

Chuck Bonham  
California Hydro Coordinator  
Trout Unlimited  
828 San Pablo Avenue  
Suite 208  
Albany, CA 94706

Kathy Boone  
Executive Director  
Central Sierra Historical Society  
P.O. Box 617  
Shaver Lake, CA 93664

Greg Burton  
36881 Peterson Road  
Auberry, CA 93602

Jim Canaday  
Environmental Review Unit  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Paul Bonderson Building  
901 P Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Van Button  
FERC  
888 First Street, NE  
PJ-11.2, 6J-01  
Washington, DC 20426

Kelly Catlett  
Hydro Reform Advocate  
California HRC Friends of the River  
915 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Southern California Edison**  
**Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process**  
**Distribution List for the 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package**

Joanna Clines  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Laughing Coyote  
Native Earth Foundation  
34329 Shaver Springs Road  
Auberry, CA 93602

Jerome (Jerry) DeGraff  
Province Geologist  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Denise De Joseph  
Pacific Legacy  
1525 Seabright Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Eileen Dessaso  
ENTRIX, Inc.  
7919 Folsom Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95826

Holly Eddinger  
South Zone Fisheries/Aquatic Biologist  
USDA Forest Service  
29688 Auberry Road  
Prather, CA 93651

Steve Edmondson  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
SW022  
777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404-6528

James M. Fargo  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, N.E.  
PJ-11.7 Room 6I-03  
Washington, DC 20426

Britt Fecko  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Elaine Fink  
Tribal Chair  
North Fork Rancheria  
P.O. Box 929  
North Fork, CA 93643

Earle W. Franks  
Hydrologist  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Fresno County Library  
Business Office  
2420 Mariposa Street  
Fresno, CA 93721

John Gangemi  
Conservation Director  
American Whitewater Affiliation  
482 Electric Avenue  
Bigfork, MT 59911

Deborah A. Giglio  
Biologist  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2800 Cottage Way  
Room W-2605  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Ron W. Goode  
Chairperson  
North Fork Mono Tribe  
13396 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Bryan Harland  
Account Executive  
Kearns & West  
475 Sansome Street  
Suite 570  
San Francisco, CA 94111

**Southern California Edison**  
**Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process**  
**Distribution List for the 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package**

Mike Henry  
Fishery Biologist  
FERC  
101 Southwest Main Street  
Suite 905  
Portland, OR 97204

Rick Hopson  
Hydrologist  
USDA Forest Service  
PO Box 559  
Prather, CA 93651

Katie Horst  
SAMS  
36281 Lodge Road  
Tollhouse, CA 93667

Toby Horst  
Director  
Sierra Resource Conservation District  
36281 Lodge Road  
Tollhouse, CA 93667

Donny Jack  
Vice Chair  
Mono Nation  
PO Box 1377  
North Fork, CA 93643

Thomas Jackson  
Principal  
Pacific Legacy  
1525 Seabright Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Samaya Jones  
North Fork Rancheria  
PO Box 929  
North Fork, CA 93643

Wayne Lifton  
ENTRIX, Inc.  
590 Ygnacio Valley Road  
Suite 200  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Larry Lockwood  
SAMS  
37999 Peterson Road  
Auburn, CA 93602

Toni Marie  
Friant Water Users  
854 N. Harvard Ave.  
Lindsay, CA 93247

Dave Martinez  
MTZ Associates  
425 Coloma Heights Road  
PO Box 136  
Coloma, CA 95613-0136

Paul Martzen  
Conversation Chair  
San Joaquin Paddlers Club  
942 N. Harrison  
Fresno, CA 93728

Nino Mascolo  
Senior Attorney  
Southern California Edison Company  
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue  
Rosemead, CA 91770

Steve McDonald  
President  
Central Sierra Historical Society  
2975 S. MacDonough  
Sanger, CA 93657

T.J. "Jeff" McPheeters  
Manager, Big Creek  
Southern California Edison Company  
PO Box 100  
54205 Mountain Poplar  
Big Creek, CA 93605

Julie Means  
Environmental Specialist  
California Department of Fish & Game  
1234 East Shaw #155  
Fresno, CA 93710

**Southern California Edison**  
**Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process**  
**Distribution List for the 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package**

Jerry Mensch  
Director  
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance  
2553 Stonehaven Lane  
Sacramento, CA 95827

Karen Miller  
Forest Heritage Program Manager  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Dale Mitchell  
California Department of Fish & Game  
1234 East Shaw #155  
Fresno, CA 93710

Mary Motola  
Picayune Rancheria  
46575 Road 417  
Coarsegold, CA 93614

John Mount  
President  
Central Sierra Historical Society  
PO Box 217  
Shaver Lake, CA 93664

National Park Service  
California Hydropower Program  
C/O BLM  
2800 Cottage Way  
Suite W-1834-CA-942  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mark Newquist  
Relicensing Specialist  
Southern California Edison  
PO Box 100  
Big Creek, CA 93605

Janelle Nolan-Summers  
ENTRIX, Inc.  
7919 Folsom Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95826

Chris Oberti  
President  
Huntington Lake Association  
8116 N. Preuss  
Clovis, CA 93611

Martin Ostendorf  
ENTRIX, Inc.  
7919 Folsom Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95826

John Perez  
Department of the Interior  
111 Jackson Street, #520  
Oakland, CA 94607

Picayune Rancheria  
46575 Road 417  
Coarsegold, CA 93614

Bill Pistor  
Vice President  
Kearns & West  
475 Sansome Street  
Suite 570  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Lorrie Planas  
Tribal Relations Officer  
USDA Forest Service  
40885 Tollhouse Road  
PO Box 300  
Prather, CA 93664

Donald Price  
PG&E  
3400 Crow Canyon Road  
San Ramon, CA 94583

Polly Quick, Ph.D.  
Bechtel Group, Inc.  
PO Box 193965  
San Francisco, CA 94119-3965

**Southern California Edison**  
**Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process**  
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Geoff Rabone  
Manager, Big Creek Relicensing  
Southern California Edison Company  
300 N. Lonehill Avenue  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
San Dimas, CA 91773

Shirley Ramirez  
Table Mountain Rancheria  
PO Box 410  
Friant, CA 93626

Brent Roath  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Roger Robb  
Consultant  
Friant Water Users  
822 West Grand Avenue  
Porterville, CA 93257

John Roldan  
Friant Water Users Authority  
854 N. Harvard Ave  
Lindsay, CA 93247

Patricia Sanderson Port  
Department of Interior  
1111 Jackson Street  
Suite 520  
Oakland, CA 94607

Paul Sanders  
Road Manager  
USDA Forest Service/Sierra National  
Forest  
PO Box 559  
Prather, CA 93651

Sheldon Sandstrom  
Owner  
Sierra Marina  
PO Box 56  
Shaver Lake, CA 93664

Mario Santoyo  
Water Environmental and Facilities  
Resources Manager  
Friant Water Users  
854 N. Harvard Ave.  
Lindsay, CA 93247-1715

Lonnie Schardt  
Kokanee Power  
7184 North Dewey  
Fresno, CA 93711

Monty Schmitt  
Restoration Scientist  
Western Water Project  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
71 Stevenson Street, Suite 1825  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2964

Gary Seput  
California Trout, Inc.  
870 Market Street, #1185  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Risa Shimoda  
American Whitewater  
1424 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dennis Smith  
USDA Forest Service  
850 Capitol Mall  
Suite 8-200  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4706

**Southern California Edison**  
**Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process**  
**Distribution List for the 2002 Draft Technical Study Report Package**

Kim Sorini-Wilson  
District Wildlife Biologist  
USDA Forest Service – Sierra National  
Forest  
PO Box 559  
Prather, CA 93651

State of California  
Office of Attorney General  
PO Box 944255  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

Phil Strand  
Fisheries Program Manager  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Tom Taylor  
Southern California Edison Company  
PO Box 800  
Rosemead, CA 92701

Wayne Thompson  
Conservation Officer  
Fresno Flyfishers for Conservation, Inc.  
4295 E. Copper Ave.  
Clovis, CA 93611

Julie Tupper  
Hydrologist  
USDA Forest Service  
650 Capitol Mall  
Suite 8-200  
Sacramento, CA 95814

L. C. Turnquist  
PO Box 133  
Big Creek, CA 93605

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2800 Cottage Way  
Room W-2605  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

Cynthia Whelan  
Assistant Lands Officer  
USDA Forest Service  
1600 Tollhouse Road  
Clovis, CA 93611

Jesse Wild  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2800 Cottage Way  
Room W-2605  
Sacramento, CA 95864

Tina Williams  
Acting Tribal Chair  
Cold Springs Rancheria Tribal Office  
PO Box 209  
Tollhouse, CA 93667

Gary Woods  
Quail Unlimited  
6434 N. Rafael  
Fresno, CA 93711-0900

David Young  
US Bureau of Reclamation  
1243 N Street  
Fresno, CA 93721