

Volume 3 | Issue 2



Don Pedro



December 2013

A newsletter about the relicensing of the Don Pedro Project

Draft License Application filed with FERC

November 26 marked a major milestone in the relicensing of the Don Pedro Project. That is when the Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District filed their Draft License Application (DLA) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The purpose of the DLA is to provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the application prior to filing of the Final License Application (FLA), to be filed by April 30, 2014.

The relicensing process chosen by the Districts, FERC's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), requires that the applicant for a new license file a Draft License Application with FERC and interested parties no later than 150 days prior to the date of filing the final license application.

The DLA is a compilation of the information and studies accumulated since the start of the relicensing process and includes proposals for future plans for operating the Don Pedro Project in the next license term. However, because some relicensing studies remain in progress, there are a limited number of firm proposals for future operations contained in the draft. Relicensing participants have 90 days to comment on the DLA. The plans proposed in the DLA include development of a Bald Eagle Management Plan,

The Relicensing Process

The joint MID-TID relicensing of the Don Pedro Project formally began in 2011. Below are some of the major stages of the process.

1. Districts filed PAD and Notice of Intent in February 2011.
2. FERC conducts scoping in May 2011.
3. Interested parties discuss issues and develop study requests.
4. Districts file Proposed Study Plan (PSP) in July 2011 and undertake a series of meetings with relicensing participants to discuss study plans.
5. FERC issues Study Plan Determination in Dec. 2011.
6. Studies begin in 2012.
7. Initial Study Report issued for review and comment in Jan 2013.
- 8. Districts file Draft License Application with FERC on Nov. 26, 2013.**
9. Districts file Final License Application with FERC by April 30, 2014.
10. FERC issues new license with new terms and conditions in 2016.

Historic Properties Management Plan and a Vegetation Management Plan.

The Districts are continuing with the development of the FLA, which will include detailed proposals for future Project operations.

Important dates

Nov. 26, 2013
Draft License Application filed with FERC

Dec. 10, 2013
Updated Study Report filed with FERC

Dec. 18, 2013
Updated Study Report Meeting at MID, 9 a.m.

by April 30, 2014
Final License Application to be filed with FERC



What's inside

- Updated Study Report meeting set for Dec. 18
- Study statuses
- Additional study notes
- Flow proposal update

Effort for river flows progresses

The State Water Resources Control Board is looking for water to benefit fish, as well as to control salinity in the south Delta – and it's targeting three tributaries of the San Joaquin River.

Citing a preferred alternative of 35 percent unimpaired flow from each of the Merced, Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers from February to June annually, the Substitute Environmental Document (SED) is part of Phase 1 of the Board's update to its Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan.

MID, TID and many others opposed the flow proposal at a March 2013 public hearing in Sacramento, citing potential harm to water and power customers and the region's economy, as well as implications on groundwater and domestic water supply.

State Board staff is modifying the SED and expects to have a revised document released for comment around February 2014.



A Chinook salmon smolt is removed from the stomach of a striped bass. A 2014 Predation Study (W&AR-07) will be conducted to learn more about fish predators of salmon and predation hot spots.

2014 study to further focus on predation

The Districts will undertake a second, extensive effort to study predation of salmon smolts and juveniles in the lower Tuolumne River in 2014. This will be done in compliance with FERC's May 21, 2013 Study Plan Determination on Requests for Study Modifications and New Studies for the Don Pedro Hydroelectric Project.

Extensive field work on Water & Aquatic Resources (W&AR)-07 will be conducted from January to July and a report will be filed by March 2015. The Districts' 2014 predation study proposal was approved by FERC with few modifications. The 2014 study is dependent upon approval of the necessary permits from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The 2014 study comes on the heels of the 2012 predation study. The 2014 study will provide data to further understanding of predation effects on rearing and outmigrating juvenile Chinook salmon and *O. mykiss* in the lower Tuolumne River.

Data obtained from the 2014 study will supplement existing information to estimate relative abundance of predator fish species (such as bass) using in-channel habitats, estimate predation rates by stomach content sampling, document predator movement, and identify hot-spots that potentially result in higher predation mortality on outmigrating juvenile Chinook salmon on the Tuolumne River from River Mile 42 to the confluence with the San Joaquin River.

STUDY NOTES

O. mykiss Workshop No. 2

The Districts hosted a second public workshop on Nov. 5 regarding the modeling effort as part of the W&AR-10 study. The purpose of the workshop was to update relicensing participants on study progress, review a model that evaluates all life stages of *O. mykiss* in the lower Tuolumne River, and solicit input regarding the study.

Lowest Boatable Flow Study

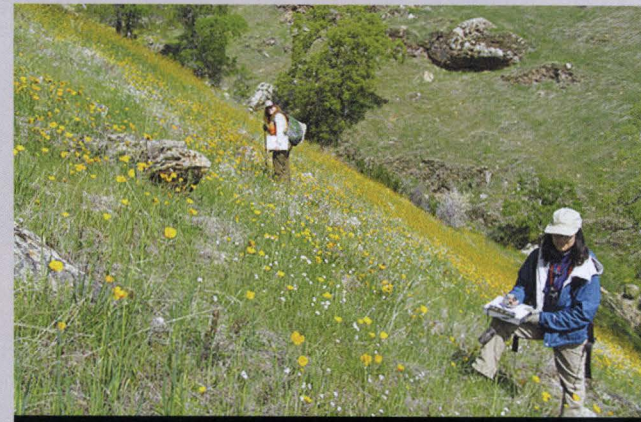
In accordance FERC's May 21, 2013 Determination, the Districts conducted an additional volunteer boater study in 2013 as part of the Lower Tuolumne River Lowest Boatable Flow Study (Recreational Resources - 03).

A previous river boating study was conducted in Spring 2012 with flows ranging from 171 cubic-feet per second (cfs) to 256 cfs. The 2012 study concluded that 100 cfs is boatable and lower flows would not provide enjoyable boating in inflatable kayaks or any other craft.

During the second iteration of the study requested by FERC's May 21, 2013 Determination, flows of approximately 200 cfs, 175 cfs, 150 cfs, and 125 cfs were employed in August and September 2013. A revised study report presenting results of the 2012 and 2013 volunteer boater effort is to be filed with the Updated Study Report.

Status of Relicensing Studies

Study No.	Study Name	Status
Cultural Resources (CR)-01	Historic Properties Study	Field work complete; Report in progress
CR-02	Native American Traditional Cultural Properties Study	Field work complete; Report in progress
Recreational Resources (RR)-01	Recreation Facility and Public Accessibility Assessment	Complete
RR-02	Whitewater Boating Take Out Improvement Feasibility	Complete
RR-03	Lower Tuolumne River Boatable Flow Study	Complete
RR-04	Visual Quality Study	Complete
Terrestrial Resources (TR)-01	Special-Status Plants	Complete
TR-02	ESA- and CESA-Listed Plants Study	Complete
TR-03	Wetland Habitats Associated with Don Pedro Reservoir	Complete
TR-04	Noxious Weed Survey	Complete
TR-05	ESA-Listed Wildlife - Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (VELB)	Complete
TR-06	Special-Status Amphibians and Aquatic Reptiles	Complete
TR-07	ESA-Listed Amphibians - California Red-Legged Frog (CRLF)	Complete
TR-08	ESA-List Amphibians - California Tiger Salamander (CTS)	Complete
TR-09	Special-Status Bats	Complete
TR-10	Bald Eagle Study	Complete
Water & Aquatic Resources (W&AR)-01	Water Quality Assessment	Complete
W&AR-02	Project Operations/Water Balance Model	In progress
W&AR-03	Reservoir Temperature Model	In progress
W&AR-04	Spawning Gravel Study	In progress
W&AR-05	Salmonid Populations Information Integration	Complete
W&AR-06	Tuolumne River Chinook Salmon Population Model	Report in progress
W&AR-07	2012 Predation Study	Complete
W&AR-07	2014 Predation Study	Field work planning in progress
W&AR-08	Salmonid Redd Mapping	Complete
W&AR-10	Oncorhynchus mykiss Population Study	Report in progress
W&AR-11	Chinook Salmon Otolith Study	Study in progress
W&AR-12	Oncorhynchus mykiss Habitat Assessment	Complete
W&AR-13	Fish Assemblage and Population Study	Complete
W&AR-14	Temperature Criteria Assessment	Report in progress
W&AR-15	Socioeconomics Study	Complete
W&AR-16	Lower Tuolumne River Temperature Model	Complete
W&AR-17	Don Pedro Reservoir Fish Population Study	Complete
W&AR-18	Sturgeon	Complete
W&AR-19	Riparian Information Synthesis	Complete
W&AR-20	O. mykiss scale & age	Complete
—	Lower Tuolumne Instream Flow (IFIM)	Complete; supplemental analysis in progress
W&AR-21	Floodplain Hydraulic Assessment	Study in progress



Work conducted on a range of relicensing studies, such as the terrestrial study above, will be discussed at a Dec. 18 meeting held at Modesto Irrigation District.

Dec. 18 meeting to focus on Study Report

As part of FERC's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), the Districts as co-applicants will file an Updated Study Report (USR) with FERC on Dec. 10.

The USR is a compilation of all the studies completed in the second year of relicensing. The USR includes a second year of bald eagle studies, a study of salmon and steelhead/rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*) spawning redds, the development of a computer model of *O. mykiss* populations

in the lower Tuolumne River, the completion of the Operations Model, and two water temperature models.

Additionally, the USR updates several other relicensing studies, such as studies of boating flows in the lower Tuolumne River, with new information.

Following the filing, a public meeting will be held to review the USR on Dec. 18 at MID beginning at 9 a.m. Study work will be summarized and questions will be answered.

Updated Study Report Meeting

When: December 18, 2013 | 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: MID Multipurpose Room, 1231 11th St., Modesto, CA

What: Work on studies will be summarized and questions about studies will be answered.