



DRAFT MEETING NOTES*
LEE VINING, FERC PROJECT NO. 1388
RECREATION AND LAND USE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING
MARCH 15, 2023, 9:00 AM–10:00 AM

**These meeting notes are documentation of general discussions from the meeting held on the above-noted date and focus on stakeholder questions and comments. These notes are not a verbatim account of proceedings and do not represent any final decisions or official documentation for the project or participating agencies.*

1.0 OBJECTIVE

- Review methods and approach for 2023 surveys and locations per Recreation and Land Use Study Plans

2.0 ATTENDEES

Relicensing Team Members

Martin Ostendorf, Southern California Edison (SCE)
Matt Woodhall, SCE
Finlay Anderson, Kleinschmidt
Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt
Kelly Larimer, Kleinschmidt
Angela Whelpley, Kleinschmidt
Lauren Rosenkranz, Kleinschmidt
Carissa Shoemaker, ERM

Technical Working Group Members & Interested Parties

Adam Barnett, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Stephanie Heller, USFS
Sheila Irons, USFS
Adam Cohen, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
Bryan Muro, SWRCB

3.0 COMPILED ACTION ITEMS

- **Relicensing Team** will review scales of options for questions in the REC-1 survey sheet; it will be made similar to the 1-9 scales used in the Bishop Creek REC survey(s).
- **Relicensing Team** will update REC-1 user survey data sheets to be comparable with past studies.
- **Relicensing Team** will adjust language on question #9 of the REC-1 user survey data sheet to replace “reservoir” with “lake.”
- **Relicensing Team** will add language about holiday use to question #13 of the REC-1 user survey data sheet.

- **Relicensing Team** will adjust language on questions #16-19 of the REC-1 user survey data sheet to include “Lee Vining Canyon” as well as provide a map to orient users.
- **Relicensing Team** will develop an alternative survey timeframe to account for potential delays due to weather.
- **Relicensing Team** will send meeting invite for 4/19/2023 at 9 am to 10 am Pacific Time. Complete.

4.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Shannon Luoma, Kleinschmidt, welcomed Technical Working Group (TWG) members to the meeting, and provided an overview of the agenda. Shannon provided a safety moment.

5.0 REC-1 SURVEY DATES, SCHEDULE, and DATA SHEETS

Angela Whelpley, Kleinschmidt, provided an overview of the REC-1 study sites, schedule, and data sheet package. Angela asked for questions.

Question (Q) (Adam Barnett): Can you explain the counter site selection?

Response (R) (Angela Whelpley): One traffic counter will be installed to count all the traffic at the proposed sites. To collect more realistic use numbers, we intend to work with US Forest Service (USFS) to gather count data at sites that don’t have counters.

Angela Whelpley described the methods of choosing and randomizing survey dates, including holidays and Fishmas.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): Is this for both creel surveys and the user survey?

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Yes, the methods are the same. User survey dates are expanded through October to gather data for sites that don’t open until July.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): How many user survey dates are there?

(R) (Shannon Luoma): Confirmed 15 days of user surveys.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): Question #9 on the survey data sheets mentions trail use or hiking in wilderness areas. These terms are not realistic and may limit user data to within or outside of John Muir Wilderness Area. There are other wilderness areas, and people aren’t expected to know the difference. An option would be to differentiate by day use hiking or backpacking.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Agreed, it may be worthwhile for us to understand if people are day hiking or overnight backpacking. This might be more beneficial information.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): Yes, that’s a more common way of understanding that type of use. Also, we discussed at our last meeting to include snow activities.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Yes, we intend to include snow activities on these data sheets.

(Q) (Matt Woodhall): Good comment on hiking versus trail use. Would it be more appropriate to use the term “backpacking” or “overnight hiking?”

(R) (Adam Barnett): Yes, distinguish overnight backpacking from day use hiking. Also on question #9, the language “fishing in the reservoir” may be confusing to users. “Lake” might be more common nomenclature as opposed to reservoir.

Angela and Matt agreed that the term “lake” would be more appropriate.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): Could you provide something a bit more meaningful on question #12, with a wider scale of options for more useful information.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): We looked at this scale with our statistician and she said the opposite, that with more options for the data is not as valid. Data collection is more succinct with a smaller number range.

Comment (C) (Adam Barnett): Sure, that makes sense; but a larger scale makes it easier to assign meaning to the results.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): I can absolutely review that comment with the statistician.

(Q) (Matt Woodhall): Adam which option would you prefer?

(R) (Adam Barnett): I’m not going to second guess the statistician and Angela’s decision; just thinking out loud. I would defer to your statistician.

(C) (Matt Woodhall): We want to make sure we’re collecting appropriate information.

(C) (Adam Barnett): It would be more useful to have comparable data, considering other surveys done in the Inyo National Forest. We would like to use this data for other information.

(Q) (Martin Ostendorf): Did other surveys use 1-10 scale?

(R) (Angela Whelpley): We used a 1-9 scale at Bishop Creek recreation surveys.

(C) (Adam Barnett): So maybe for comparability we stick to 1-9.

(C) (Martin Ostendorf): I’m comfortable using the scale to remain consistent.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): For question #13 [on the user survey data sheet], does it make sense to include “avoiding holidays”? That’s a typical response.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Yes, we know that holidays tend to have higher use than peak season. We can add some language about holiday use.

(C) (Adam Barnett): I have no comments with questions #14 or 15 [on the user survey data sheet]. I also have not heard comments from Jameisha [Washington].

(Q) (Angela Whelpley): Would you prefer that we keep these questions consistent with prior surveys?

(C) (Adam Barnett): Yes.

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): To clarify, all scales that are 1-5 we will change 1-9?

(R) (Angela Whelpley): We will change any scales to make them consistent with surveys conducted at Bishop Creek.

(Q) (Adam Barnett): [In regard to questions #16-19 on the user survey data sheet] I wonder how people interpret the Lee Vining “Area?” Typically, recreation areas are referred to as Lee Vining “Canyon.”

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Yes, we can adjust language on questions #16-19 to include Lee Vining Canyon as well as provide a map to orient users.

(C) (Adam Barnett): Agreed, that makes sense.

Angela Whelpley briefly reviewed the Angler Survey Data sheet for creel surveys.

(Q) (Matt Woodhall): Was this derived from our previous creel surveys and approach? Since California Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is not on the call, I wanted to make sure we covered these.

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Yes, this was developed similar to Bishop Creek work.

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): So everyone knows, we have been discussing with Alyssa Marquez at CDFW who can’t be on the call. But we have been reviewing these data sheets and haven’t heard any comments thus far. Just want to make sure the TWG knows we are coordinating with CDFW on creel surveys.

No further stakeholder comments or questions.

6.0 REC-2 SURVEY DATES AND SCHEDULE

Angela Whelpley provided an overview of the REC-2 study sites and schedule. Angela asked for questions.

(Q) (Angela Whelpley): Given that some of the recreation facilities do not open until July, we’ll be conducting these surveys in mid-July. Does USFS have suggestions on better timing to conduct an effective survey?

(Q) (Martin Ostendorf): Adam, will those sites be open by July?

(R) (Adam Barnett): They should be, but we may not know for certain for a while.

(Q) (Martin Ostendorf): If needed could we push these dates to August?

(R) (Angela Whelpley): Yes, we want to factor in adjustments to the schedule based on weather and would like to communicate any changes as necessary.

No further stakeholder comments or questions.

7.0 LAND-2 SURVEY DATES AND SCHEDULE

Shannon Luoma reviewed the LAND-2 study sites and KOP locations.

(C) (Adam Barnett): That works, thank you for adding that location [on the north side of Ellery Lake as a key observation point].

No further stakeholder comments or questions.

8.0 SCHEDULE AND NEXT STEPS

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): Can we formalize a process for delaying the start of REC-1 studies, if necessary, due to weather and varied opening dates for sites? Should we check in again in April to discuss?

(Q) (Matt Woodhall): We should definitely have some sort of check-in as it relates to schedule updates. We're looking at the overall study approach for items that may push if needed due to snow. We would like inputs on what stakeholders could see as potential impacts due to weather. We would like to take a segmented approach. Is our current plan going to provide useful data? Will pushing the study for a year be more effective? We're trying to get ahead of a unique year.

(R) (Adam Barnett): That makes sense to me to develop a plan B survey frame now, without compressing the survey sampling frame.

(Q) (Shannon Luoma): Currently there are 15 days scheduled for user surveys and 108 spot counts; is there a threshold (for USFS) of surveys for a sufficient study plan? Let's go ahead and schedule another check-in for the last week of April.

(Q) (Martin Ostendorf): One of our concerns, Adam, is that the survey is going to provide adequate user data in a unique year. Will this data be valid and representative?

(R) (Adam Barnett): We want to capture data at the low and moderate use locations also. We should pursue this year, there are a lot fewer normal years than we used to have.

(C) (Martin Ostendorf): Let's have a check-in in April, please understand our concerns with cost. We need the data for the licensing but want to make sure it's representative.

(C) (Adam Barnett): Understood.

Shannon asked the group if an April 19 meeting from 9 am to 10 am would work to discuss any updates to the schedule. No objections were heard. Relicensing Team will send out an invitation.

9.0 FINAL Q&A

Shannon concluded that the primary objectives of the meeting have been met. Shannon asked for any additional discussions around responses to comments received from technical memos. Shannon confirmed that official responses to these comments are being developed in the next few weeks, including meeting minutes, which will be shared and filed with FERC.

No further stakeholder comments or questions.

The Relicensing Team adjourned the meeting.