

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20426  
November 4, 2019

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 1394-080 – CA  
Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project  
Southern California Edison

VIA FERC Service

Mr. Matthew Woodhall  
Project Lead  
Southern California Edison  
1515 Walnut Grove Avenue  
Rosemead, CA 91770

**Reference: Study Plan Determination for the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project**

Dear Mr. Woodhall:

Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 5.13(c) of the Commission's regulations, this letter contains the study plan determination for the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric Project, located on Bishop Creek in Inyo County, California. The determination is based on the study criteria set forth in section 5.9(b) of the Commission's regulations, applicable law, Commission policy and practice, and the record of information for the project.

Background

On May 1, 2019, Southern California Edison (SCE) filed a Preliminary Application Document (PAD), which included as an appendix a Proposed Study Plan (PSP) for 15 studies in support of SCE's intent to relicense the project. The PSP included studies on aquatic resources, water quality, wildlife resources, recreation, land use, and cultural resources.

On August 29, 2019, SCE filed a Revised Study Plan (RSP) based on stakeholder comments received during the scoping process. On September 4, 2019, SCE filed a letter requesting a waiver of sections 5.11 (Potential Applicant's Proposed Study Plan and Study Plan Meetings) and 5.12 (Comments on Proposed Study Plan) of the Commission's regulations to expedite the study plan process.<sup>1</sup> In its request, SCE stated that the waiver would shorten the study plan determination process by four months, and

---

<sup>1</sup> 18 C.F.R §§ 5.11-5.12 (2019).

that the expedited process and associated waiver would allow more time for SCE and the stakeholders to collaboratively assess project effects and develop proposed license conditions during the pre-filing period. SCE added that they had met the intent of these regulations through early collaborative efforts with stakeholders in developing the study plans included in its PAD. On October 3, 2019, Commission staff granted the waiver request and established a deadline of October 18, 2019, for stakeholders to file comments on the RSP. No comments on the revised study plan were filed.

### Study Plan Determination

SCE's RSP is approved, with the staff-recommended modification discussed in Appendix B. As indicated in Appendix A, of the 15 studies proposed, 14 are approved as filed, and one is approved with a staff-recommended modification.

The specific modification and basis for modifying the RSP are discussed in Appendix B. Commission staff considered all study plan criteria in section 5.9 of the Commission's regulations. However, only the specific study criteria particularly relevant to the determination are referenced in Appendix B.

Studies for which no issues were raised in comments on the RSP are not discussed in this determination, except for the study addressed independently by Commission staff in Appendix B. Unless otherwise indicated, all components of the approved studies must be completed as described in SCE's RSP. Pursuant to section 5.15(c)(1) of the Commission's regulations, the Initial Study Report for all studies in the approved study plan must be filed by November 4, 2020.

Nothing in this study plan determination is intended, in any way, to limit any agency's proper exercise of its independent statutory authority to require additional studies. In addition, SCE may choose to conduct any study not specifically required herein that it feels would add pertinent information to the record.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Wolcott at (202) 502-6480.

Sincerely,

for  
Terry L. Turpin  
Director  
Office of Energy Projects

Enclosures: Appendix A – Summary of Determinations on Proposed and Requested  
Studies  
Appendix B – Staff’s Recommendations on Proposed and Requested  
Studies

**APPENDIX A****SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS ON PROPOSED AND REQUESTED STUDIES**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Approved with Modifications</b>	<b>Not Required</b>
Assessment of Bishop Creek Riparian Community Study Plan (TERR 1)	<b>X</b>		
Invasive Plants Study Plan (TERR 2)	<b>X</b>		
Assessment Special Status Plant Study Plan (TERR 3)	<b>X</b>		
Wildlife Study Plan (TERR 4)		<b>X</b>	
Bishop Creek Instream Flow Needs Assessment Study Plan (AQ 1)	<b>X</b>		
Bishop Creek Operations Model Study Plan (AQ 2)	<b>X</b>		
Bishop Creek Fish Distribution Baseline Study Plan (AQ 3)	<b>X</b>		
Bishop Creek Reservoirs Baseline Fish Distribution Study Plan (AQ 4)	<b>X</b>		
Bishop Creek Water Quality Technical Study Plan (AQ 5)	<b>X</b>		
Sediment and Geomorphology Study Plan (AQ 6)	<b>X</b>		
Recreation Use and Needs Study Plan (REC 1)	<b>X</b>		
Recreation Facilities Condition and Public Accessibility Study Plan (REC 2)	<b>X</b>		
Project Boundary and Lands Study Plan (LAND 1)	<b>X</b>		

<b>Study</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Approved with Modifications</b>	<b>Not Required</b>
Cultural Resources Study Plan (CULT 1)	<b>X</b>		
Tribal Resources Study Plan (CULT 2)	<b>X</b>		

## APPENDIX B

### STAFF'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROPOSED STUDIES

The following discusses staff's recommendation on the proposed wildlife study plan. We base our recommendation on the study criteria outlined in the Commission's regulations [18 C.F.R. section 5.9(b)(1)-(7)].

#### Wildlife Study Plan (TERR 4)

##### Applicant's Proposed Study

The purpose of the wildlife study is to assess the effects of the project on the migrating, foraging, nesting, and roosting behaviors of wildlife within the project boundary, with an emphasis on special-status species. The study includes three primary components: (1) a literature review; (2) field surveys; and (3) reporting.

The field survey component of the wildlife study would consist of a general pedestrian wildlife survey as well as targeted surveys for willow flycatcher nesting habitat, U.S. Forest Service Management Indicator Species, mule deer, northern goshawks, bat habitat, and amphibians. The proposed study area for the field surveys includes a 500-foot buffer area around the following project facilities: powerhouses, dams, diversions, flowline starting at Intake No. 2, valve houses and other outbuildings, and access roads. The proposed study area also includes the areas of lakes and other impoundments that are located within 500 feet of project facilities.

##### Discussion and Staff Recommendation

###### *Project Facilities*

The proposed study area for the field surveys does not include the project transmission facilities.<sup>2</sup> These facilities were designed and constructed prior to the advent of avian protection measures such as those developed by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee; as such, the current license for the project does not require any avian protection measures. Including the project transmission facilities in the study area

---

<sup>2</sup> As described in SCE's Preliminary Application Document, existing project transmission facilities under the current license include: (1) a 3.7-mile-long, 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line from Powerhouse No. 3 to the Control Substation; (2) a 0.7-mile-long, 115-kV transmission line from the Powerhouse No. 4 switchyard to the transmission line connecting Powerhouse 3 to the Control Substation; and (3) a 150-foot-long, 55-kV transmission line from Powerhouse No. 5 to tap the transmission line between the Powerhouse No. 6 switchyard and the Control Substation.

would provide information on the use of the transmission lines by avian species that would help Commission staff assess any potential risk that the transmission lines pose to avian species in the project area [sections 5.9(b) (5) and (6)]. Therefore, staff recommends that SCE modify the study area for the field surveys to include the project transmission facilities. Given the limited number of transmission lines associated with the project, staff anticipates that the additional survey effort would be minimal and not substantially increase the overall cost of this study [section 5.9(b)(7)].