



Don Pedro



A newsletter about the relicensing of the Don Pedro Project

Relicensing studies set to be reviewed

A major milestone of the Don Pedro Project relicensing process will occur January 17, 2013, when the Initial Study Report (ISR) is issued by the Districts and filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The ISR is a requirement of the Integrated Licensing Process as overseen by FERC. The ISR will contain progress reports on the more than 30 studies being implemented by the Districts as required by FERC's December 2011 Study Plan Determination.

MORE INSIDE: Take a look inside for more detailed information about 2012 relicensing studies.

This large document will serve as part of the record of official information that FERC must consider as it deliberates over issuance of a new license, and what new conditions might be appropriate to accompany a new license.

This issuance of the ISR will then be followed up by an Initial Study Report Meeting on January 30-31, 2013 to be held in Modesto. Representatives from FERC will attend this public meeting along with other interested parties. The studies completed will be reviewed, the study results will be summarized and there will be a question and answer session.

Another important date comes 45 days later when relicensing participants can file comments on all the studies and request additional studies.

These dates are in accordance with an Oct. 12, 2012 letter issued to the Districts from FERC detailing target

Initial Study Plan Meeting

When: January 30-31, 2013 | 8 a.m.

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

What: Studies will be reviewed, results will be summarized and Q&A will be held.

dates associated with the ISR. FERC issued its 140-page Study Plan Determination (SPD) in late 2011. In it, FERC approved a total of 34 studies to be conducted by the Districts as part of the relicensing process.

Most of the studies involve extensive field work and considerable coordination of logistics to execute the studies efficiently and consistent with the study plans approved by FERC. Some field work began as early as January 2012.



Studies like the one pictured here will be summarized at a Jan. 30-31 meeting.

Important dates

January 17, 2013
Initial Study Report filed with FERC

January 24, 2013
Training for Relicensing Participants interested in using the temperature models

January 30-31, 2013
Initial Study Report Meeting

February 8, 2013
Districts issue Initial Study Report Meeting Summary

March 10, 2013
Relicensing Participants file with FERC any requests for new studies or modifications to studies

What's inside

- More than 20 different relicensing studies took place in 2012
- Workshops the cornerstone of public input process

Dispute resolution process decision

On January 11, 2012, The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) filed a Notice of Study Dispute contesting several aspects of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Study Plan Determination issued Dec. 21, 2011 regarding the Don Pedro Project.

As part FERC's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), a hearing was held on the matter in front of a three-member advisory Technical Panel.

FERC issued its final decision on May 24, 2012, largely agreeing with the Districts' study plans and FERC's Determination, resulting in minor modifications to the Districts' studies. NMFS was disputing FERC's decisions about studies the Districts did not adopt in their plans.

The dispute process is detailed in the ILP regulations and involves the convening of a Technical Panel to consider the areas of dispute, and provide an opinion to FERC's Director of the Office of Energy Projects. The FERC Director makes the final decision giving due consideration to the opinion of the three-member Technical Panel.



Numerous workshops, meetings highlight importance of public input

Public input is a critical component in the relicensing of the Don Pedro Project. This component is well illustrated in the fact that the Districts have held eight workshops with relicensing participants (RPs) since March 2012.

Three workshops regarding salmon and *O. mykiss* were held. There were three workshops on hydrology and operations modeling and one workshop each held discussing reservoir and river temperature modeling. Here's a rundown of the eight workshops.

Water & Aquatics Resources Study 5 (W&AR-5) Workshop No.1 was held in April 2012 and featured discussions about issues affecting Tuolumne River salmonids. W&AR-5 Workshop No.2 was held in June and covered similar issues in additional detail.

Water & Aquatics Resources Study 2 (W&AR-2) Workshops Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were held in April, September and October, respectively, and focused in areas surrounding Project Operations Model Development and hydrology.

A pair of workshops on Water & Aquatics Resources Study 3 (W&AR-3) discussed a Don Pedro Reservoir Temperature Model in April and October. Additionally, one workshop on the lower Tuolumne River Temperature Model was held in October.

Eight public workshops regarding Don Pedro relicensing have been held since March 2012.

Socioeconomic Study Plan

In addition to the workshops, a public meeting discussing the Socioeconomic Study Plan was held in November 2012. The purpose of this meeting was to give an update on the progress of the Socioeconomic Study Plan, share information, seek relevant socioeconomic information from the public, and hear comments with respect to the plan.

The primary goals of the study on socioeconomic resources are to quantify the baseline economic conditions and resources in the region affected by the Don Pedro Project's water supply, flood control, and power benefits. In addition, the study will quantify the socioeconomic effects of the current project operations and develop methodologies and a framework that can be used to evaluate the potential socioeconomic effects of any proposed changes to project operations that may be considered as part of the relicensing process, including scenarios affecting the availability of agricultural and urban water supplies.

As usual, information about upcoming meetings and workshops is available on the relicensing website at donpedro-relicensing.com. Additionally, documents and filings are available.

Sampling of 2012 studies

As part of the relicensing process, the Districts are wrapping up the numerous studies that took place in 2012.

These include wide-ranging studies of recreation resources, cultural resources, botanical, wildlife and wetlands, and fish and river riparian resources.

What follows is a brief sampling of a few details from selected studies as part of the relicensing process. Reports from these studies and many others will be included in the Initial Study Report (ISR) to be filed Jan. 17, 2013.

Spawning Gravel Study (Water & Aquatics Resources Study 4)

The purpose of the spawning gravel study is to examine gravel availability and spawning utilization as a means of determining the current spawning capacity and spawner/recruit relationships for Chinook salmon and *O. mykiss* in the lower Tuolumne River. Specific information obtained by this study will update information from prior studies in order to:

- characterize the current area, distribution, and use of spawning riffles in the lower Tuolumne River,
- develop average annual gravel transport rates from channel geometry and mapped changes in riffle areas since 1988, and 1999–2000, and
- provide estimates of maximum spawning run sizes supported by the spawning riffles under current conditions.

Bathymetric surveys and fine sediment and gravel mapping were completed in summer 2012. Depth and velocity measurements to include in the assessment of habitat criteria were collected in the field in October 2012 when flows were within suitable salmonid spawning ranges.

Amphibians listed under the Endangered Species Act (Terrestrial Resources Studies 7 and 8)

The specific objectives of these studies are to:

- Identify and map known occurrences of the California Red-Legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander and determine, if appropriate, the closest known breeding locality;

- Evaluate the likelihood that either of these species currently exist in the study area using habitat assessments and historical records;
- Compile incidental observations of these species from other relicensing studies; and
- Provide information that can be used to develop a Biological Assessment and support a Biological Opinion.

GIS-based habitat assessments were completed for the study area. Surveys and field verification of potential habitat were completed between April and June 2012, including site visits during optimum temperatures for observations of the target species. No California Red-Legged Frog or Tiger Salamanders were observed.

Don Pedro Recreation Use Assessment (Recreation Resources Study 1)

The goal of the recreation facility condition, public accessibility, and recreation use assessment is to provide information about the need for maintenance or enhancement of existing recreation facilities to support current and future demand for public recreation at the Don Pedro Reservoir. The objectives of the study are to:

- assess the condition of existing developed recreation facilities at the Don Pedro Project, including dispersed use areas
- estimate present capacity of recreation facilities at the Project to support present and future demand for public recreation (i.e., facility carrying capacity),
- describe the preferences, attitudes, and characteristics of the Project's recreation users
- collect information about current Project recreation activities and future demand for activities, and
- undertake a creel survey in coordination with Study Plan W&AR-17, Reservoir Fish Population.

In accordance with the study plan, visitor surveys have been conducted on a monthly basis since January 2012 at Blue Oaks, Fleming Meadows and Moccasin Point recreation areas. Visitor surveys will continue through December 2012. The facilities inventory and dispersed recreation impact evaluations were conducted in October 2012.





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