

SECTION 4.9
RECREATION

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This section evaluates the potential impacts of the project on recreational opportunities and facilities. Of particular concern are the impacts project activities would have on the quality of recreation at nearby recreational areas, which include McArthur Burney Falls Memorial State Park and Lake Britton. The impact analysis is based upon field reconnaissance and a review of documents.

4.9.1 SETTING

MCARTHUR BURNEY FALLS MEMORIAL STATE PARK

The project is located within a region that has numerous recreational opportunities. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile north of the project site boundary is McArthur Burney Falls Memorial State Park. The park is approximately 910 acres in size and encompasses primarily pine and oak forest. It also contains approximately five miles of streamside and lake shoreline. The major attraction of the park is Burney Falls, a waterfall approximately 129 feet in height and with a flow volume of approximately 100 million gallons per day. The main source of the water for the falls are underground springs. The water from this aquifer emerges as springs at and above the falls, and flows both over and out of a porous basalt cliff, giving the waterfall its unique character. Burney Creek contributes to the waterfall flow except during the summer, when the creek is dry.

McArthur Burney Falls State Park is open all year, but it is most heavily visited during the summer. Since 1987, the park has averaged approximately 200,000 visitors per year, most of whom pay for day use (California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1997). There are 128 campsites within the park, which include tables, fire stoves, water faucets and restrooms with hot showers. The Pacific Service Employees Association (PSEA) campground, a private campground for Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) employees, is located on Burney Creek Cove within the park boundaries. Picnic areas are available near the falls and in the area adjacent to Lake Britton. A boat launching ramp, with canoe and motor boat rentals, is also available in the area adjacent to Lake Britton. A swimming beach is maintained at the lake, but no lifeguard service is provided. Approximately five miles of hiking trails are located within the park, including a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail.

In 1997, the General Plan for McArthur Burney Falls State Park was prepared. The General Plan envisions the same number of individual and family campsites as now currently exists. However, four new group campsites are proposed. The General Plan also proposes relocating day use facilities further away from the falls and restoring the vicinity of the falls to a more natural appearance. The campfire center would be relocated further away from noise generated by traffic on SR 89. The main entrance to the park is proposed to be relocated further north along SR 89, to enhance vehicle safety and to improve vehicle access. Roads within the park would be realigned to improve internal park circulation and to route traffic away from campsite areas.

OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Lake Britton is adjacent to Burney Falls State Park. The lake is a reservoir owned and operated by (PG&E). The lake was formed by the damming of the Pit River. Recreational activities permitted

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at Lake Britton include fishing, swimming, boating and water skiing. Recreational fishing at the lake is very light, because cloudy waters and algal blooms reduce its suitability for fish (Lassen National Forest, 1992). The Northshore Campground, containing 30 sites and a boat launch ramp, is located on the northern shore of the lake approximately two miles west of SR 89. Also on the northern shore is The Pines Picnic Area and Jamo Point, located west of SR 89 just north of the bridge. These facilities, all operated by PG&E, have picnic sites, a boat ramp and a large fishing pier accessible to disabled persons.

The project site is surrounded by National Forest land. While the National Forest land is part of the Shasta National Forest, it is administered by the Lassen National Forest. Although the area adjacent to the project site is designated as Timber by the Shasta County General Plan, National Forest land is available for multiple uses, including recreation. The Lassen National Forest has the Dusty Campground, located north of the project site on Lake Britton and operated by PG&E. There are 12 campsites at the Dusty Campground, including two group sites and five family sites.

A portion of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail is located north and east of the project site. The Pacific Crest Trail extends approximately 2,650 miles from Canada to Mexico, traversing the states of Washington, Oregon and California. Its closest approach to the project site is approximately 900 feet east of the eastern boundary. As previously mentioned, the trail passes through McArthur Burney Falls Memorial State Park. From there, it generally follows the southern shoreline of Lake Britton before turning south and going through Arkright Flat on its way toward Lassen Volcanic National Park and other destinations. It is not known how many people annually hike this segment of the Pacific Crest Trail, though it is estimated that 50 to 60 people per year hike the entire length of the trail.

The Lassen National Forest contains approximately 465 miles of developed trails. These include 125 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail and 30 miles of National Recreation Trails. Trail use totals approximately 30,000 recreation visitor days per year. One "recreation visitor day" equals 12 hours of recreation use by one person or any combination thereof that equals 12 hours (Lassen National Forest, 1992). Other than the Pacific Crest Trail, there are no known Lassen National Forest trails in the vicinity of the project site.

Private recreational facilities are located in the vicinity of the project site. The Burney Falls Trailer Park is located west of the project site near the intersection of SR 89 and Clark Creek Road. The McArthur Burney Falls General Plan states that private resorts are located along Clark Creek Road.

4.9.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 1992, the Lassen National Forest prepared its Land and Resource Management Plan, also called the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the 1974 Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, as amended by the 1976 National Forest

Management Act, and its implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations 219). The purposes of the Forest Plan are to guide the integrated protection and use of the resources of the Lassen National Forest, and to address local, regional and national issues. To accomplish this, the Forest Plan sets Forest Goals and Objectives for the next 10-15 years. It also sets Standards and Guidelines and the approximate timing and location of practices necessary to achieve the goals and objectives. Finally, it sets the requirements for monitoring and evaluation needed to ensure that management direction is implemented and its objectives are met, and to make changes in that direction if needed. Although the management guidelines within the Forest Plan do not apply to the project site, since it is located on private property, the Forest Plan does affect National Forest lands and facilities adjacent to the project site.

The Forest Goals for the Lassen National Forest as they pertain to recreation are as follows:

- Provide a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities to meet public demand by furnishing different levels of access, service, facilities and information.
- Provide interpretive services and facilities to inform the public about Forest resources and management.
- Provide diverse opportunities for off-highway vehicle recreation.
- Provide diverse opportunities for winter sports.
- Manage recreational residences as components of the overall National Forest recreation program. Work in partnership with the holders of recreation residence permits to utilize the recreational benefits of these residences.
- Continue private operation of National Forest developed recreational sites where it best serves public recreation needs.
- Work in partnership with local communities to expand recreational facilities, programs and trails on both private and public land.
- Provide a stable and cost-efficient trail system through appropriate construction, reconstruction and/or maintenance.
- Continue to coordinate with concerned agencies to preserve unique resources in the Eagle Lake, Lake Britton and Lassen Volcanic National Park areas.

The Forest Plan also provides specific management direction for the Britton Management Area, within which the project is located. Standards and guidelines within the Britton Management Area as they relate to recreation include the following:

- Maintain Dusty Camp as a campground to be administered by PG&E.
- Manage the undeveloped camping area at Rock Creek as a dispersed campsite.

The Forest Plan includes the portion of the Shasta National Forest that is administered by the Lassen National Forest.

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SHASTA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The County General Plan contains the following objectives and policies concerning recreation that pertain to the project:

Open Space and Recreation

Objectives

OSR-1. Protection of the open space and recreation resources of Shasta County for the use and enjoyment by County residents both now and in the future.

4.9.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that a project may have significant impacts on recreation if it does any of the following:

- 1) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- 2) Require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

In addition, the Environmental Checklist form used by Shasta County in preparing its Initial Studies indicates that a project may have significant impacts on recreation if the project does the following:

- 3) Affect the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities. For the purposes of this analysis, recreational opportunities would be affected qualitatively if the following occurs:
 - a) Recreational areas are exposed to substantial air pollutant concentrations (refer to Section 4.3, Air Quality).
 - b) The project impedes the use of native wildlife nursery sites in a recreational area, or alters wildlife behavior such that there is substantially less utilization of the recreational area by wildlife species.
 - c) Recreational areas are exposed to excessive noise levels, as set forth in the County Noise Element, or to excessive groundborne vibration (refer to Section 4.6, Noise).

The above criteria are based upon the assumption that most people who use the recreational areas located in the project vicinity desire a more natural and less noisy setting in which to enjoy their recreational activities.

METHODOLOGY

PMC reviewed all documents pertaining to the potential recreational impacts of the project. The most significant of these documents was the *McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park General Plan*, prepared in 1997. It also gathered maps, brochures and other information describing the major recreational areas and facilities in the vicinity of the project. Field reconnaissance was conducted to identify the recreational areas in the project vicinity and to verify the existence of various recreational facilities.

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 4.9.1 Noise and air pollutant emissions from project operations may disturb users of recreational facilities in the vicinity of the project. [LS]

Project activities would involve noise and the emission of air pollutants. The nearest recreational facility to the project site is the Burney Falls Trailer Park. Noise impacts of the project were analyzed in Section 4.8, Noise. The conclusions of the analysis were that both individual and cumulative noise impacts would not exceed significance thresholds established by the County, but that monitoring of cumulative noise effects is advised. Mitigation Measure 4.8.9a specifies that monitoring of noise shall occur in the short term. Air quality impacts were discussed in Section 4.3, Air Quality. The results of the analysis concluded that PM_{10} would be significant but can be mitigated. Other emissions would have no significant impacts on nearby residences, which are located in the vicinity of the Trailer Park. Other recreational facilities, such as the state park, are located farther away from the project site. Therefore, potential noise and air quality impacts would be correspondingly less. Impacts on recreational facilities are considered *less than significant*.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 4.9.2 The project is expected to have only an incremental effect on recreation in the area. [LS]

Most of the land surrounding the project site is National Forest land or State Park land. Therefore, future development in the area would be limited. Also, it is expected that the project would rely on local residents for employees, and not attract employees from outside the area. It is possible that there may be future development of visitor and tourist facilities in the region, in places such as Burney, Johnson Park and Fall River Mills. This would have a greater impact on recreation, as more tourists may be encouraged to visit and to stay in the region. However, such development is speculative at this time, and is dependent upon market conditions that are difficult to forecast with great accuracy. In any case, the project is not expected to contribute to demands or significantly impact recreational facilities in the area. Cumulative impacts are *less than significant*.

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REFERENCES

California Department of Parks and Recreation. *McArthur Burney Falls Memorial State Park General Plan*. Sacramento, Calif., June 1997.