

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

New Melones Lake Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Final Alternatives Development Workshops Summary Report



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
Central California Area Office

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Summary

The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), is preparing a resource management plan/environmental impact statement (RMP/EIS) for Reclamation-managed lands at New Melones Lake in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, California. The New Melones Lake Area is managed by Reclamation's Central California Area Office, part of its Mid-Pacific Region.

The RMP/EIS will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate contemporary resources and recreation needs for the New Melones Lake Area, while ensuring the Eastside Division of the Central Valley Project continues to meet its authorized purposes of flood control, water supply, power, recreation, water quality, and fish and wildlife enhancement.

The alternatives development process involves creating a reasonable range of alternatives to address Reclamation's stated Goals and Objectives and the Purpose and Need for the RMP/EIS. To this end, Reclamation held two Alternatives Development Workshops for the purpose of obtaining further public input on the possible management actions and opportunities for the New Melones Lake Area.

Public Outreach

On September 28 and 29, 2007, Alternatives Development Workshops were held at the New Melones Lake Visitor Center. Fifty-one people attended these meetings, which are described in greater detail in Section 2.

The public was notified of the Alternatives Development Workshops by several media. The project Web site at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccaof/field_offices/new_melones/index.html provides background information about the project, a public involvement timeline and calendar, maps and photos of the planning area, and copies of public information documents, such as the Notice of Intent and project updates. A project update was mailed on September 19, 2007, to 738 individuals from the public, agencies, and local organizations. The project update announced the upcoming workshops, informed individuals of how they could be involved and of how input given at the workshops would be used in creating the RMP/EIS. Reclamation submitted a press release regarding the meetings to seven area newspapers on September 20, 2007.

Public Input Results

One hundred forty-seven comments were submitted as of October 31, 2007, and they have been incorporated into this Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report. Most comments at the alternatives development workshops were verbal, with the rest coming in during the ensuing comment period. Reclamation will consider all comments during alternative formulation and project planning.

Issue Summary

Most comments focused on recreation (31 percent), public safety (21 percent), and fees (9 percent). Written comments were tallied with verbal comments received during the alternatives development meetings and through consultations and discussions with individuals, organizations, and agencies. The comments were compared and considered in the alternatives development evaluation. Section 3 contains a numeric breakdown of the comments received, a summary of the issues identified in those comments, and a list of the comments received.

Future Steps

Reclamation will use the input from the workshops to further develop a reasonable range of feasible alternatives that will be analyzed in the RMP/EIS. The alternatives will be a combination of individual management actions that together would meet Reclamation's stated goals and the purpose and need for the RMP/EIS. The reasonable range of alternatives will include the continuation of current management, also known as the No Action Alternative, as well as several other feasible action alternatives. These alternatives will be released to the public and the public will be allowed to comment on the draft alternatives prior to their inclusion in the draft RMP/EIS.

Upon completion of the draft alternatives, the next phase of Reclamation's planning process is to develop a draft RMP/EIS that analyzes the alternatives. Availability of the draft RMP/EIS will be published in the *Federal Register*, along with meeting schedules.

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Public Involvement

Acronyms

Acronym	Full Phrase
CCAO	Central California Area Office
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
HQ	headquarters
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	notice of intent
RMP	resource management plan

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1. Introduction

The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, is preparing a resource management plan/environmental impact statement (RMP/EIS) for Reclamation-managed lands at New Melones Lake in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, California. The New Melones Lake Area is managed by Reclamation's Central California Area Office (CCAO), part of the Mid-Pacific Region.

1.1 Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act and Public Involvement Process

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, Federal agencies are required to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions before taking action. Actions that are subject to NEPA include those involving federal funding or requiring federal permits, those involving federal facilities and equipment, or those affecting federal employees. The actions proposed as part of the RMP/EIS, being developed for the CCAO, are subject to the requirements of NEPA. Pursuant to NEPA, Reclamation will fulfill the requirements of an EIS with an integrated RMP/EIS document for the New Melones Lake Area.

Public involvement is a component of NEPA, which requires that federal agencies involve the public in the decision making process, while considering environmental factors. Guidance for implementing public involvement is codified in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1501, Part 7 (40 CFR 1501.7), thereby ensuring that federal agencies make a diligent effort to involve the public in preparing NEPA documents.

Public involvement for the New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS is being conducted in five phases:

- Public scoping before NEPA analysis to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the RMP/EIS;
- Public outreach via public meetings, project updates, a project Web site, news releases, and newspaper advertisements;
- Collaboration with federal, state, local, and tribal governments;
- Public review and comment on the draft alternatives developed to frame the analysis of the RMP/EIS evaluation; and
- Public review and comment on the draft RMP/EIS, which is an analysis of likely environmental effects and includes Reclamation's preferred alternative.

Section 1.2 is a summary of the results to date of the first through third phases of the public involvement process.

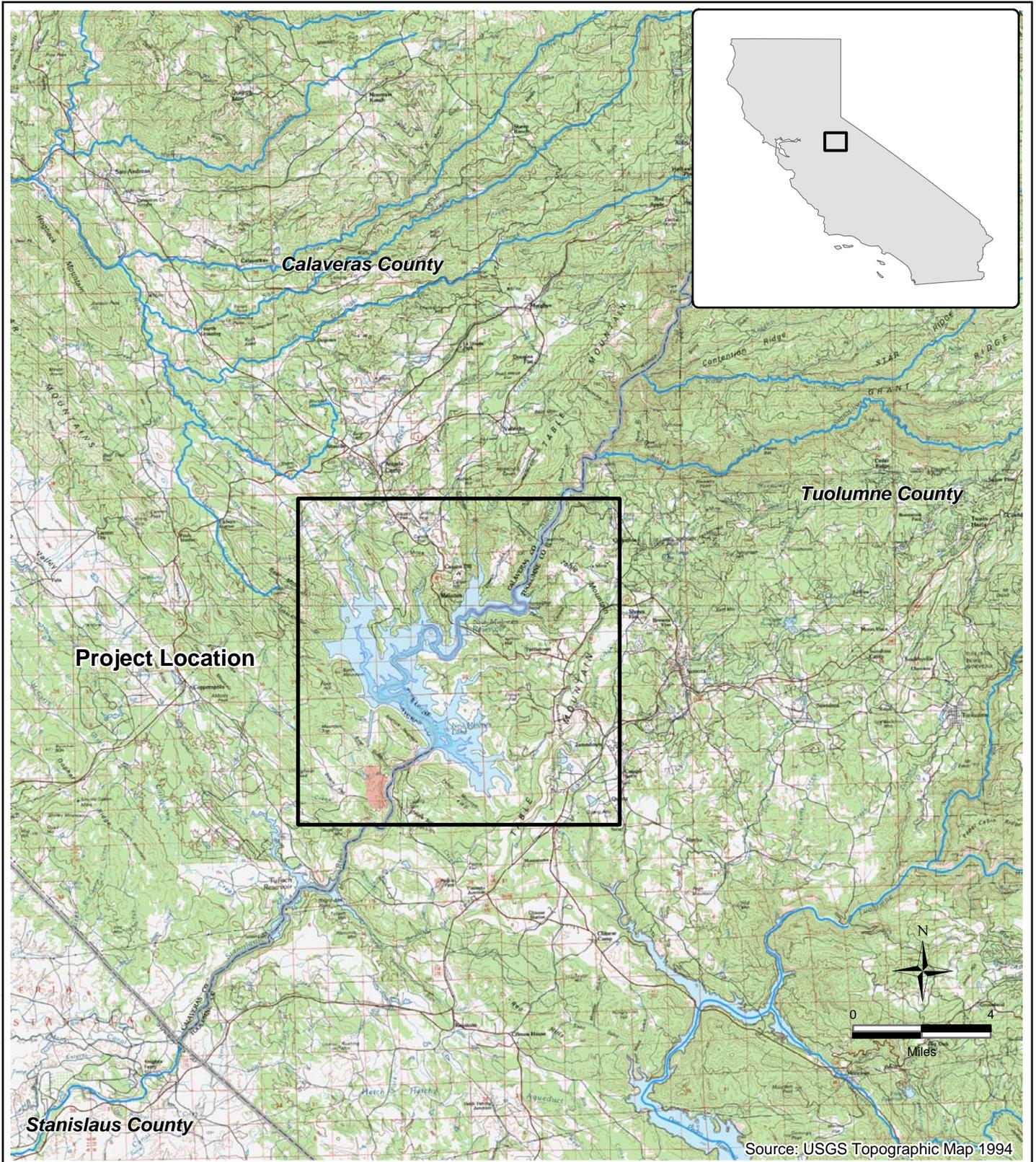
The purpose of this report is to review and summarize verbal, written, and electronic comments received from the public during and following the alternatives development workshops held September 28 and 29, 2007. Input given during these workshops will allow Reclamation to further develop and refine management actions that encompass the range of issues identified during scoping.

1.2 Description of the Public Involvement Process to Date

Reclamation follows the public involvement requirements according to the CEQ regulations set forth in 40 CFR 1501.7. Reclamation requests comments from agencies and the public, organizes and analyzes all of the comments received, and then reviews the comments to identify issues that will be addressed during the planning process. These issues and those identified by Reclamation staff are the scope of analysis for the RMP/EIS and are used to develop the project alternatives. In addition to holding the alternatives development workshops, Reclamation has used the following means to communicate with the public regarding preparation of the RMP/EIS.

- **Notice of Intent:** The formal public scoping process for the New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS began on December 18, 2006, with the publication of the notice of intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*. The public comment period lasted until March 19, 2007, providing 92 days for public input. Although the formal comment period has ended, Reclamation will continue to consider all comments received during the planning process.
- **Project Web Site:** In November 2006, a New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS public Web site was launched to serve as a clearinghouse for project information during the planning process. The Web site is at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/field_offices/new_melones/index.html. It provides background information about the project, a public involvement timeline and calendar, maps, and photos of the planning area, and copies of public information documents, such as the NOI and project updates. The site also provides contact information for submitting comments and for obtaining further information about the project.
- **Project Updates:** The first project update for the New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS project was mailed on January 22, 2007, to 791 individuals from the public, agencies, and local organizations. The second project update was mailed on September 19, 2007, to 738 individuals identified during the scoping process. The project update announced the upcoming alternatives workshops, provided information on how individuals could be involved, and included a discussion of how input given at the workshops would be used in creating the RMP/EIS.

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Project Location

New Melones Lake, California
Central California Area Office

Figure 1-1

- **News Release and Newspaper Advertisement:** Advertisements were published in local newspapers to notify the public of the project, to announce the public scoping meetings, to request public comments, and to provide comment information.
- **Scoping Meetings:** During the last week of January 2007, public meetings were held in three locations within the project planning area. A fourth meeting, just for agency officials, was held at the beginning of the week. Project team members from Reclamation and its consultants staffed informational workstations and interacted with meeting participants to provide information and to answer questions. In addition to Reclamation representatives, 93 people attended the meetings.
- **Mailing List:** Reclamation compiled a list of 738 individuals, agencies, and organizations that have participated in past Reclamation projects, that are known stakeholders for this project, or who requested to be on the mailing list. These include 635 members of the general public, 24 federal agency representatives, 24 state agency representatives, 65 local agency representatives, six members of Congress, two tribal members, and representatives from one school. Requests to be added to or to remain on the official New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS mailing list will continue to be accepted throughout the planning process.

1.3 Agency Coordination

To initiate the collaborative alternatives development process, on September 19, 2007, Reclamation mailed 738 postcards inviting federal, state, local, and tribal organizations to the public alternatives development workshops held on Friday, September 28 and Saturday September 29, 2007. Each of these organizations was also included on the original distribution list to receive the project update.

2. Meeting Overview

The alternatives development process involves creating a reasonable range of alternatives to address Reclamation's stated goals and objectives, in addition to the purpose and need for the RMP/EIS. The goal of the Alternatives Development Workshops was to obtain further public input on the possible management actions and opportunities for the New Melones Lake area.

The workshops were held on a weekday and on a weekend day in an effort to accommodate various schedules. All visitors were guided to a central area to watch a short presentation discussing the overall goal of the workshop and the layout. The New Melones Lake Resource Manager, Peggi Brooks, welcomed everyone and introduced the

project team. Reclamation's project manager, Elizabeth Vasquez, then conducted an informal introduction session for participants to introduce themselves and then described how the workshop would be conducted. Commentors were encouraged to provide written comments in addition to their discussions to ensure their intent was received accurately.

Following the introduction, the group divided up into three prepared venues. Each venue focused on one of the three major types of management areas: rural natural, rural developed, and open water. At each venue, a short presentation preceded a comment session lasting approximately 45 minutes, during which attendees were encouraged to comment on actions that they thought may improve management of resources covered at that venue. All comments were recorded on flip charts. This process was repeated three times so that all attendees could attend a session at each of the three venues.

3. Comment Summary

3.1 Method of Comment Collection and Analysis

The end of the New Melones Lake RMP/EIS alternatives development input period was October 31, 2007. One hundred forty-seven comments were received as of this date and have been incorporated into this Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report. All comments will be considered in alternative formulation and project planning.

Individuals were encouraged to submit comments in writing. Reclamation will continue to accept comments throughout the planning process. The comments received and evaluated in this Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report will be considered in alternative formulation and initial impact evaluations. A total of 147 submissions were received, broken down as follows:

- 130 during the workshops;
- Nine by mail; and
- Eight by e-mail.

Some individual comment letters included numerous comments, and some discrete comments were relevant to numerous resource issues and therefore were classified based on more than one issue.

To ensure that public comments were properly registered and not overlooked, Reclamation transcribed comments during the meetings and then logged them into a comment database, along with comments received by mail and e-mail. Issues and concerns within each comment submission were categorized into one of the issue categories. The database was structured to organize comments by issue category. These

identifiers could then easily be queried and tallied to provide quantitative information on issue themes.

3.2 Summary of Public Comments Received

3.2.1 Comments by Issue

One hundred forty-seven comments were submitted, which were assigned to the categories listed in Table 3-1. Some comments fit into several issue categories. Where this occurred, the comment was counted only once and placed in the issue category where it was most relevant.

**Table 3-1
Summary of Comments**

Issue Category	Number of Individual Comments	Summary of Comments
Access	6	Most comments related to improving access to the lake.
Biological resources	7	Control of invasive species and decline in species habitats were mentioned several times.
Concessions	4	Expanded concessions could help to fund facility improvement and increased law enforcement.
Erosion	1	Wake control should be implemented to reduce erosion.
Facilities	7	Commentors felt that facilities throughout the lake area need to be expanded and improved.
Fees	13	Most commentors understood that fees were inevitable and suggested ways to lessen the effect on local frequent users. Other commentors were concerned that fees would become as high as those of other lakes.
Fire management	2	Fuel reduction was a concern. Cattle could be used to reduce the fire risk.
Land use	4	Commentors' concerns related largely to zoning the lake area.
Livestock grazing	1	Grazing was mentioned only in the context of reducing fire risk or regarding cattle trespass.
Noise	2	Commentors advocated noise control.
Public safety, law enforcement, and emergency management	31	Commentors mentioned lack of Reclamation ranger enforcement power, recommended various measures for increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement staff from various agencies, and noted that law enforcement needs will increase as use increases. Others pointed out various measures that would increase public health and safety.
Recreation	45	Commentors recommended a large number of measures to improve recreational opportunities at NML, including increasing equestrian opportunities, extending nonmotorized trails, and maintaining seaplane presence on the lake.
Socioeconomic/environmental justice	2	Both commentors mentioned providing ADA access.
Traffic/transportation	3	Commentors requested improved roads and signs near the lake.
Trespassing	2	Comments were in regard to cattle trespassing.
Water resources	2	Comments were in regard to water storage and release.
Other	15	Most comments were general recommendations on how to manage or where to look for ideas for the RMP.

3.3 Comments Received

Table 3-2 lists the comments that were submitted to Reclamation during and following the Alternatives Development Workshops and also lists questions that arose during the workshops. Most comments were received verbally at one of the meetings, but those marked with an asterisk were received by mail or e-mail. In most cases, the comments in Table 3-2 were paraphrased to save space or to communicate an overall theme that would encompass more than one comment. In some cases, similar comments appear in more than one section. For each comment, the commentor’s intent was determined before it was assigned to a category.

**Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation**

Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closing areas to vehicle traffic by adding gates would decrease illegal dumping.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boat docks are too high.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signs for trails/ trailheads need improvement; interpretive signs are needed as well.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There needs to be road access to Parrott’s Ferry. People would be willing to pay an access fee if the road were to be maintained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a road to the west side was planned and provided for by the county and other interests aside from [Reclamation], that would remove the feasibility constraint mentioned in the presentation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to assess the feasibility of improved access to the Parrott’s Ferry area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road access to Camp 9 needs to be maintained due to the costs of putting a boat in elsewhere and navigating to Camp 9 area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A road to the west side would allow many more people to access this area, which hikers and equestrians currently use for an isolated, backcountry experience.
Biological Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Star thistle invasion is an issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A noxious weed plan is needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Star thistle control plans are needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a decline in fish and lakeshore habitat due to boat wakes and lake activity (e.g., wakes have increased erosion along shoreline, and the erosion has depleted the habitat).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cattle should be allowed to prescriptive graze in the Peoria Wildlife Area periodically (however need to preserve special status species’ habitats at the same time).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wildflower habitat has been negatively affected by boat wakes. Also, large boats reduce tranquility, cause birds to flee the area, and lead to a reduction in habitat value.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed management actions don’t include a single goal to enhance wildlife habitat or to minimize human impacts on wildlife. Ospreys and other birds are leaving nesting areas due to large boat intrusions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there any planning regarding star thistle or other invasive species?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with landowners for fire control/weed control can offset the costs associated with this control.

Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning needs to reflect habitat values for eagles and other wildlife, as well as the needs [of] nonmotorized boaters.
Concessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation needs to make it easier for concessionaires to operate on the lake. ▪ Expanding concessions (especially near Tuttletown) could help fund law enforcement and first responders. ▪ Encourage development of concessions in Tuttletown. ▪ Encourage additional concessions to meet user needs, encourage competition, and provide additional facilities in different locations (such as septic pumping, fueling, etc.) ▪ Please describe concessions planning in the RMP with respect to boat facilities.
Erosion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a decline in fish and lakeshore habitat due to boat wakes and lake activity (e.g., wakes have increased erosion along shoreline, and the erosion has depleted the habitat). ▪ Designate wake-boarding zones (for safety and erosion concerns). ▪ Boat wakes are eroding shorelines.
Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation needs to provide more floating bathrooms and facilities in outlying areas to deal with public health issues. ▪ Are there any plans for increased marina facilities, especially at Tuttletown? ▪ What's the status of a campground/equestrian center at Peoria Wildlife Management Area? Commentor advocated for an equine center and campground, and mentioned that restrooms in the area are in need of maintenance. ▪ Reclamation only needs a small facility to launch smaller boats (motorized and nonmotorized). ▪ The argument against new facilities based on cost is not legitimate, since recreation has been shown to have a positive cost/benefit ratio. ▪ When considering additional facilities at Bear Creek, consider Tuolumne County's possible plans for a road through Peoria WMA. More facilities at this area may encourage Tuolumne County to go through with this road. ▪ Consider restroom facilities at Natural Bridges, including chemical toilets or composting toilets like they have at Yosemite. ▪ Encourage launch facilities at Parrott's Ferry, for improved access and reduced fuel use.
Fees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a concern about additional fees leading to increased development of camp sites that strain other recreation types. ▪ Shouldn't have separate fees for day use in addition to special event right of use fees— look at other lake fee management (e.g., Shasta). ▪ Gate fees could reduce vandalism. ▪ \$10 for public access to the lake would be too expensive. Consider free access for residents of Calaveras, Tuolumne, and possibly Amador Counties.* ▪ Need to charge more for lake use (would increase funding and decrease misuse). ▪ How do you manage fees and distribution? Need local control. ▪ Passes are needed for lower income families/persons.

Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make fees applicable only to boat access, launch, and campgrounds, not for hikers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Melones fees are not comparable with other lakes. Need to keep fees reasonable as BLM fees are too expensive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the revenue go to the treasury? Would be willing to pay fees for an annual launch pass.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Angels shoulders law enforcement cost and other first responder costs, and these costs should be considered when setting fee policy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One of the promises at the beginning of the project was “no fees.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would ccess fees for houseboat users be charged every time? This seems unfair. Consider access fees for launch, day use, pets.
<p>Fire Management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider local cattlemen to help with fire control.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fuel reduction plan is needed—identify strategic areas to reduce fire risk.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow cattle to prescriptive graze in the Peoria Wildlife Area periodically (however need to preserve special status species’ habitats at the same time).
<p>Land Use</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning should provide diversity to satisfy different recreational interests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boundaries of land are often unclear.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting aside lands that would be less used would off-set more intensive land use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning needs to reflect habitat values for eagles and other wildlife, as well as the needs [of] nonmotorized boaters.
<p>Livestock Grazing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider local cattlemen to help with fire control.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cattle trespassing issues are a problem.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow cattle to prescriptive graze in the Peoria Wildlife Area periodically (however need to preserve special status species’ habitats at the same time).
<p>Noise</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request quiet zones (including no radios).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep seaplanes on the water. Technical information can be provided regarding safety and noise as potential issues.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need decibel control on the lake (music).
<p>Public Health and Safety</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can you make the rangers law enforcement officers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a safety issue with float planes and density of use on the lake (felt that float planes haven’t been on the lake until the last 3 or 4 years).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boat wakes are a safety issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggest buoys, 5 mph zones, and no ski zones in various reaches and coves around the lake (e.g., Coyote Creek, Angels Creek; etc.).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Illegal activities are an issue—need increased law enforcement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need more wake control areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kayak safety an issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upriver issues/safety.

**Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If zones are established, enforcement needs to be increased.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide educational seminars on boat ramp etiquette/safety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation needs to provide more floating bathrooms and facilities in outlying areas to deal with public health issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation should look into new waste management techniques (e.g., biological).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More law enforcement presence on the lake needed (staff shortages)/Time of response an issue, want a list of who to call.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanded concessions (especially near Tuttletown) could help fund law enforcement and first responders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need a more effective way to address the safety issue of people swimming in areas assigned for motorboat operation and mooring.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redefine swimming rules (e.g., no swimming from public docks, marina, fueling areas; no swimming in an unsafe manner; swimming around houseboats could be safe).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase flood storage capacity by creating a partial reservoir. Recreation would benefit from having a stabilized water level as well.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep seaplanes on the water. They're safer and cleaner than boaters.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seaplanes are safer, more environmentally friendly, and provide access to a diversity of users.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boat docks are too high.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would law enforcement be enhanced with the RMP/EIS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve low water launch and safe beach at Tuttletown.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate wake-boarding zones (for safety and erosion concerns).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is law enforcement adequate and does the county provide law enforcement at NML?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who provides boat patrol?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the west side were developed, wouldn't that require more law enforcement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation's power plant should be considered as a safety issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Logjam at Camp 9 is a safety issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Camp 9 bridge is a safety issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The PG&E diversion dam at Camp 9 is a safety issue; did PG&E remove this structure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why not have the CCC clean out the logjam at Camp 9?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation has approached Tuolumne County Sheriff's Dept. with an offer to contract for additional law enforcement services at NML. Reclamation has the funds to enter into such a contract, however Tuolumne County does not have sufficient personnel to dedicate a staff member to a contract with Reclamation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boating enforcement funding is provided by the State of California Dept. of Boating and Waterways. Tuolumne County receives these funds, but has insufficient staff to fully utilize them on NML, in addition to the other lakes competing for law enforcement services in Tuolumne County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can hunting be restricted at French Flat for safety reasons?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend restricted hunting area south through French Flat, including the islands.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are plans for waste/garbage removal? Can we organize volunteer group for cleanup? Get publicity in local media.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water safety plan is needed, especially for submerged obstacles.

Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Angels shoulders law enforcement cost and other first responder costs, and these costs should be considered when setting fee policy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written and verbal comments regarding excessive noise and the hazard posed by flight patterns/aircraft operations were expressed by a neighbor to the New Melones Lake Area. These comments resulted in an agency meeting with Tuolumne County, the airport director, and Reclamation. During this meeting it was discussed that while FAA has primary jurisdiction over airplane operations in the air space above New Melones Lake, Reclamation or other authorized officials also have the ability under 43 CFR Part 423.41 to establish and require compliance with restrictions on aircraft operations.
Recreation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish equestrian staging areas and trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add mountain biking/hiking trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Tuolumne County Trail Council proposes the development of a specific nonmotorized trail system.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Melones has been a float plane base for several years, and float plane operators want it to continue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seaplanes are guided by both FAA and boating regulations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a safety issue with float planes and density of use on the lake (felt that float planes haven't been on the lake until the last 3 or 4 years).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a decline in fish and lakeshore habitat due to boat wakes and lake activity (e.g., wakes have increased erosion along shoreline, and the erosion has depleted the habitat).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boat wakes are a safety issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggest buoys, 5 mph zones, and no ski zones in various reaches and coves around the lake (e.g., Coyote Creek, Angels Creek; etc.).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kayak safety an issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upriver issues/safety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add swimming zones/beaches.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning should provide diversity to satisfy different recreational interests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need a more effective way to address the safety issue of people swimming in areas assigned for motorboat operation and mooring.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redefine swimming rules (e.g., no swimming from public docks, marina, fueling areas; no swimming in an unsafe manner; swimming around houseboats could be safe).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow swimming in houseboat mooring area by redefining the designated mooring area to include only the public docks and fueling area. The rest of the marina area should be excluded from the designated mooring area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and extend seaplane access.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep the lake at a lower level for whitewater rafting; this would also benefit flood control.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create boat access (for smaller boats) farther upstream. There's a small point that sticks out just above the Parrott's Ferry Bridge that would be a good candidate.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't restrict seaplane access and operation on the lake; work with boaters to find common sense solutions to potential conflicts.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would access fees for houseboat users be charged every time? Seems unfair. Consider access fees for launch, day use, pets.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 mph markers at the marina have been very helpful.*

Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep seaplanes on the water. They're safer and cleaner than boaters.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designated seaplane facilities would enhance the desirability of the area.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to allow seaplane access. Seaplanes are safe, would not congest roadways, bring in a diversity of users, and are viewed romantically by the public.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow seaplanes where you allow motorboats. Rules governing both would be the same except for speed limits during takeoff.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seaplanes are safer, more environmentally friendly, and provide access to a diversity of users.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why are seaplanes a problem on Reclamation waters? Who are the cooperating agencies?*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There used to be plans for equestrian activities in Glory Hole Recreation Area; would like this to be reactivated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need defined nonmotorized boating areas (e.g., in the river arm).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trail development—need more hiking biking trails (need to connect Glory Hole to Tuttle town).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider ADA access when creating trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make more equestrian trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there any plans for walk-in or environmental campsites?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boat-in campsites would be popular.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make one weekend per month only for equestrian trail use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve trail connectivity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It would be nice to have designated equestrian-only trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Picnic tables needed at Glory Hole point.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation Camp/Prisoner Corps should be available to build new trails/also need a trail plan where are trails located.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need at least 2 equestrian staging areas with corrals and parking areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mountain biking/hiking paths and access needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve low water launch and safe beach at Tuttle town.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a catch and release program only in the upper reaches (fly fisherman especially).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate wake-boarding zones (for safety and erosion concerns).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New modern houseboats are between 16-18 ft wide and 65 ft long (current size limitation is now 15 ft by 60 ft).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What's the advantage of having a nonmotorized use area?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing mooring balls wouldn't impact management of marina areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What's the status of a campground/equestrian center at Peoria Wildlife Management Area? Commentor advocated for an equine center and campground, and mentioned that restrooms in the area are in need of maintenance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What's the policy on hunting on the west side, including Bowie Flat?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is it feasible to develop boat-in campgrounds (campgrounds along shoreline that would allow boaters to camp overnight)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commentor is against a boat ramp on the west side. Reclamation should not encourage

Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation

greater use of large boats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find out what agreements regarding high pool vs. low pool were made at the beginning of the project, especially in terms of the cost benefit analysis that showed greater recreation benefits from the high-pool alternatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At Coyote Creek, there are good opportunities to enhance trails, reduce erosion, enhance access, and enhance aesthetic values.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A road to the west side would allow many more people to access this area, which hikers and equestrians currently use for an isolated, backcountry experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend restricted hunting area south through French Flat, including the islands.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commentor is opposed to having Parrott's Ferry and above as exclusively nonmotorized.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do we know what use patterns occur at the Parrott's Ferry area?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wildflower habitat has been negatively affected by boat wakes. Also, large boats reduce tranquility, cause birds to flee the area, and lead to a reduction in habitat value.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning needs to reflect habitat values for eagles and other wildlife, as well as the needs [of] nonmotorized boaters.
Socioeconomic and Environmental Justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need ADA access for boat launches.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider ADA access when creating trails.
Traffic/Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signage could be clearer for the casual tourist (e.g. distance, details).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The road to Parrott's Ferry needs to be restored.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old Parrott's Ferry Road is silted over; can it be cleared for vehicular access?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When considering additional facilities at Bear Creek, consider Tuolumne County's possible plans for a road through Peoria Wildlife Management Area. More facilities at this area may encourage Tuolumne County to go through with this road.
Trespassing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cattle trespassing is an issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closing areas to vehicle traffic by adding gates could decrease illegal dumping.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gate fees could reduce vandalism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to charge more for lake use (would increase funding and decrease misuse).
Water Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase flood storage capacity by creating a partial reservoir. Recreation would benefit from having a stabilized water level as well.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irrigation: conjunctive use of surface water (in wet years) and groundwater (in dry years) should be recommended; fits in well with recreation and flood control priorities.*
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A request was made to look at Shasta Lake management as a guide to developing the plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation should disclose how much it costs to run New Melones to the public in order for them to understand the management constraints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't want New Melones to turn into Lake Tulloch.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would like to see the direct communication contact regarding agreements with Angels

**Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation**

Camp or Calaveras County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The maps don't include lands managed by other government agencies. Will the RMP consider opportunities to manage in partnership with other agencies, including USFS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The county could partner with Reclamation in some ways, but that may present a conflict with policing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Since staffing is a constraint, does Reclamation have any arrangements for use of volunteers, camp host, and seasonal staff?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How could Reclamation use volunteer staff to assist at Parrott's Ferry?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at documents prepared at the beginning of the project to see what was promised.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How have laws passed or enforced subsequent to the creation of the master plan changed what Reclamation is able to deliver vs. what was promised at the beginning of the project?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We should forget about what was promised at the beginning of the project and work with Reclamation to help them implement the conditions that we want.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has there been consideration of having State Parks as a managing partner?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try not to be too programmatic in the RMP, give the measures some substance and clarity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is it possible to harvest dead/downed wood?

*Denotes comments submitted by mail or email.

4. Future Steps

4.1 Summary of Future Steps and Public Participation Opportunities

The goal of the alternatives development workshop summary report is to summarize public input on the possible management needs and opportunities for the New Melones Lake area. The next phase of Reclamation's planning process is to further refine and develop management alternatives that will address planning issues identified during the scoping and alternatives development meetings. In compliance with NEPA, CEQ regulations, and the Reclamation planning regulations and guidance, alternatives should be reasonable and implementable. Reclamation will also continue to meet with collaborating agencies, community groups, and individuals. A detailed analysis of the alternatives will be documented. Based on the analyses of the alternatives, Reclamation then will select a preferred alternative and will analyze it in detail. The preferred alternative is often made up of a combination of management option components from

the various alternatives to provide the best mix and balance of multiple lands and resource uses to resolve the issues.

The analysis of the alternatives will be documented in a draft RMP/EIS. Although Reclamation welcomes public input at any time during the planning process, the next official public comment period will begin when the draft RMP/EIS is published. The draft RMP/EIS will be widely distributed to elected officials, regulatory agencies, and members of the public and will be available on the project Web site.

At the conclusion of this public comment period, Reclamation will revise the RMP/EIS and will publish a proposed RMP/Final EIS. The availability of the proposed document will be announced in the *Federal Register*, and a public comment period will follow. If necessary, Reclamation will publish a notice in the *Federal Register* requesting comments on significant changes that were made as a result of comments received.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, Reclamation will address all comments, will resolve inconsistencies, and will publish the approved RMP/EIS and record of decision. The availability of these documents will be announced in the *Federal Register*.

Figure 4-1 outlines the major milestones of the New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS planning process and the dates when the public will be asked for input.

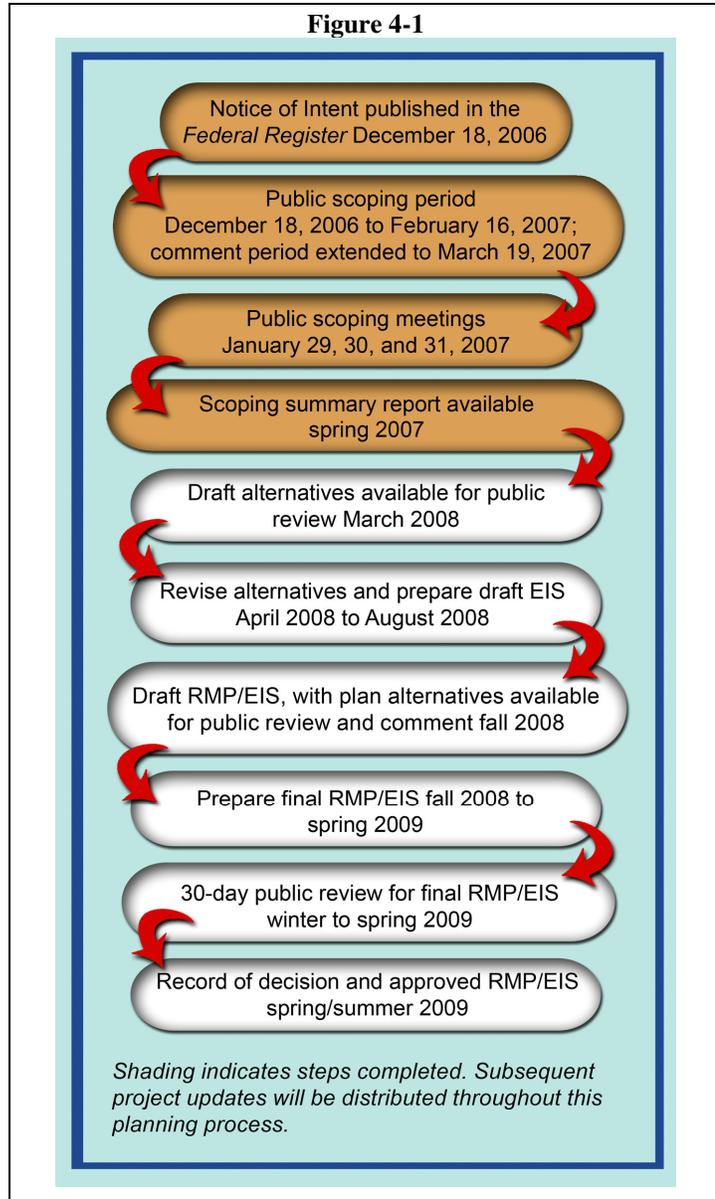
All publications, including this report, project updates, draft alternatives, the draft RMP/EIS, and the notice of availability, will be published on the official New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS Web site. In addition, pertinent dates regarding solicitation of public comments will be published on the Web site.

4.2 Contact Information

The public is invited and encouraged to participate throughout the planning process for the RMP/EIS. Progress of the RMP/EIS may be viewed online at the official New Melones RMP/EIS Web site, at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cca/field_offices/new_melones/index.html. The Web site will be updated with information, documents, and announcements during the RMP/EIS preparation.

Interested parties may be added to the official New Melones RMP/EIS mailing list to receive future mailings and information. Anyone wishing to be added to or deleted from the distribution list or requesting further information may e-mail Elizabeth Vasquez at evasquez@mp.usbr.gov, or they may call her at (916) 988-1707. Please provide your name, mailing address, and e-mail address, as well as your preferred method of receiving information.

Figure 4-1



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Appendix: Public Involvement

The following items were used to notify the public of the alternatives development meetings and how to provide comments:

- **Second project update;**
- **Postcard;**
- **News Release;**
- **“How to contact us” poster; and**
- **Comment cards.**

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

The Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an integrated Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for Reclamation-managed lands and waters located at New Melones Lake in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties. Two workshops to request input from the public on alternatives development have been scheduled at the New Melones Visitor Center at 6850 Studhorse Flat Rd, Sonora, CA 95370. Come to one of the workshops and share your vision of what opportunities should be considered in the RMP/EIS!

Alternatives Workshop

New Melones Visitor Center
Friday, September 28, 2007
1 - 4 p.m.

Alternatives Workshop

New Melones Visitor Center
Saturday, September 29, 2007
9 a.m. - noon

Please RSVP by Friday, September 14, 2007, via fax to 916-989-7208 or e-mail your RSVP to evasquez@mp.usbr.gov or call Ms. Elizabeth Vasquez at 916-989-7192.

For more information on the Alternatives Workshop and to view the just released Scoping Report and Resource Inventory Report please visit the project website at:

http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccaol/recreation/new_melones.html.



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New Melones RMP/EIS Alternatives Workshop News Release

A news release was sent to the following newspapers:

- Lodi Sentinel
- Calaveras Enterprise
- The Union Democrat - Sonora
- San Francisco Chronicle, SF
- The Record, Stockton
- Sun Star, Merced
- Manteca Bulletin

Example below:

9/26/07

Melones Lake Offers Workshops The Record

ANGELS CAMP - Boaters, hikers and others with a stake in the development of New Melones Lake are invited to attend workshops at 4 p.m. Friday and from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday at the New Melones Lake Visitors Center, 6850 Studhorse Flat Road.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is updating its plans for the lake. Those plans will help determine what recreation sites, boat ramps, trails, roads and other infrastructure might be built at the lake in the future. Calaveras County officials, for example, have been urging the bureau to build a road from Copperopolis for quicker access to the west end of the lake.

The workshops this week focus specifically on "opportunities to be considered," according to a written statement from the Bureau.

People unable to attend the workshop can also send written comments to Elizabeth Vasquez, Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630-6610 or by e-mail to evasquez@mp.usbr.gov.

Information: www.usbr.gov/mp/ccaof/field_offices/new_melones/rmp.html.

How to Contact Us

If you would like to submit a comment or if you have questions about the RMP/EIS, please send them to us:

Ms. Elizabeth Vasquez
Central California Area Office
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630-6610

Fax: 916-989-7208
E-mail: evasquez@mp.usbr.gov

For further information: Call Ms. Vasquez at (916) 988-1707

Visit the project Web site at
http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/field_offices/new_melones/index.html

In order for Reclamation to formally consider your concerns during development of alternatives for the RMP/EIS, you must submit a written comment.



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Central California Area Office
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630**

Attn: Elizabeth Vasquez

Please fold, staple, stamp, and mail