

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

New Melones Lake Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Open House Summary Report



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

January 2010

This page intentionally left blank.

Summary

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, which is part of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region.

The RMP/EIS will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act 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 Draft New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS was released on October 30, 2009. It presents four alternatives, including a preferred alternative, to address Reclamation's stated goals and objectives. The document is an analysis of the impacts of the alternatives on a range of resources, such as natural and cultural resources and recreation. The Draft RMP/EIS was made available for public review and comment until January 4, 2010.

Reclamation held two open houses to obtain public feedback on the alternatives and on the potential impacts that the alternatives would have on New Melones Lake Area resources.

Public Outreach

On December 2, 2009, Reclamation held two open houses at the New Melones Lake Visitor Center. Twenty-five people attended these meetings, which are described in greater detail in Section 2.

The public was notified of the Draft RMP/EIS open houses by several media. The project Web site at www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/rmp.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 November 4, 2009, to 700 individuals from the public, agencies, and local organizations. This update accomplished the following:

- Presented an RMP/EIS timeline;
- Announced the upcoming open houses;
- Summarized RMP content and alternatives;
- Informed individuals of where Reclamation is in the RMP process;

- Explained how the public could be involved and how input given at the open houses would be used in revising the Draft RMP/EIS.

Reclamation submitted a press release regarding the meetings to 147 media sites, including newspapers, on November 20, 2009.

Public Input Results

By the end of the review period, 202 comments had been submitted, and 17 additional comments were received after the January 4, 2010 deadline. All 219 comments received have been incorporated into this Draft RMP/EIS Open House Summary Report. Verbal comments were received at the open houses; written comments were submitted at the open houses as well as during the ensuing comment period.

Issue Summary

Twenty-six percent of the comments received focused on access, and 25 percent focused on water-based recreation. Eight percent of comments were general comments, and another eight percent were regarding general recreation and land management. Written comments were tallied. In addition, Reclamation collated verbal comments received either during the open houses or through consultations and discussions with individuals, organizations, and agencies. Reclamation will consider the comments when revising the Draft RMP/EIS. Section 3 contains a numeric breakdown of the comments received and a summary of the issues identified in those comments.

Future Steps

Reclamation will use the input from the open houses to further refine the alternatives, including the preferred alternative, and analysis to be presented in the Final RMP/EIS and adopted in the Record of Decision. All comments received within the comment period will be considered. Public comments and Reclamation's responses to the comments will be included as an appendix to the Final RMP/EIS.

Availability of the Final RMP/EIS will be published in the *Federal Register*, and a press release will be written to notify the public of its availability. A 30-day release will follow before Reclamation signs the Record of Decision and adopts the RMP.

Contents

	Page
Summary	S-1
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act and Public Involvement Process	1
1.2 Description of the Public Involvement Process to Date	2
1.3 Agency Coordination	4
2. Meeting Overview	5
3. Comment Summary	5
3.1 Method of Comment Collection and Analysis.....	5
3.2 Summary of Public Comments Received	6
3.2.1 Comments by Issue	6
4. Future Steps	8
4.1 Summary of Future Steps and Public Participation Opportunities	8
4.2 Contact Information	8

Figures

	Page
1-1 Project Location	3
4-1 RMP/EIS Timeline.....	9

Tables

	Page
3-1 Summary of Comments	7

Appendix

Draft RMP/EIS Public Involvement Materials

Acronyms

Acronym	Full Phrase
CCAO	Central California Area Office
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

This page intentionally left blank.

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 and waters 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), which part of Reclamation's 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 regulations for implementing NEPA, federal agencies are required to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions beforehand. Actions that are subject to NEPA include those involving federal funding or requiring federal permits, those involving federal facilities and equipment, and 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. In accordance with 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. 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 six 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;
- Public review and comment on portions of the draft RMP/EIS, including the Introductory chapter, description of alternatives, and affected environment; 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 fifth 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 Draft RMP/EIS open house sessions held December 2, 2009. Input provided during the public comment period, which extended from October 30, 2009 through January 4, 2010, will allow Reclamation to further refine the alternatives presented in the Draft RMP/EIS, and if necessary, revise the analysis of impacts to resources within the New Melones Lake Area.

1.2 Description of the Public Involvement Process to Date

Reclamation follows the public involvement requirements according to the Council on Environmental Quality 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 Draft RMP/EIS open houses, Reclamation has used the following means to communicate with the public about preparing 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.
- **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 (www.usbr.gov/mp/cca0/newmelones/rmp.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, project updates, and Draft RMP/EIS. 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 third project update was mailed on July 29, 2008, to 713 individuals; the fourth project update was mailed on November 4, 2009, to 700 individuals. It announced the upcoming open houses, provided a summary of RMP content and alternatives, informed individuals of where Reclamation is in the RMP process, and included a timeline for the RMP/EIS.
- **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. Reclamation e-mailed the press release regarding the open houses to 147 media sites, including newspapers, on November 20, 2009.
- **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 consultant staffed informational work stations and interacted with meeting participants to provide information and to answer questions. Ninety-three members of the public attended the meetings. A summary report was produced and is available for review on the New Melones RMP/EIS Web site.
- **Alternatives Development Workshops**—On September 28 and 29, 2007, two public alternatives development workshops were held at the New Melones Lake Visitor Center. Fifty-one people attended these meetings, and 147 comments were submitted. Reclamation used this input to further develop a reasonable range of feasible alternatives that it incorporated and analyzed in the RMP/EIS.
- **Draft Chapters 1 to 3 Open Houses**—On September 4 and 5, 2009, two open houses were held, one at Columbia College, the other at the Calaveras County Fairgrounds. Postcards were sent on August 25, 2008 to recipients on the mailing list notifying them of these meetings. Thirty-four people attended these meetings, and 224 comments were submitted. Reclamation used this input to further refine the alternatives and affected environment portions of the document. A summary report was produced and is available for review on the New Melones RMP/EIS Web site.
- **Mailing List**—Reclamation compiled a list of 700 individuals, agencies, and organizations that have participated in past Reclamation projects, that are known stakeholders for this project, or that requested to be on the mailing list. Throughout the planning process, Reclamation will continue to accept requests to be added to or to remain on the official New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS mailing list.

1.3 Agency Coordination

Invitations to participate as cooperating agencies in the RMP development process were sent to Tuolumne County on July 31, 2007, and to Calaveras County on August 1, 2007. To initiate the collaborative alternatives development process, on Friday, 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.

On September 22, 2009, Reclamation met with cooperating agencies to review an advanced copy of the Draft RMP/EIS. The agencies were asked to provide input to further refine the document before releasing it to the public. The cooperating agencies were given 30 days, in addition to the public review period, to provide comments.

2. Meeting Overview

The goal of the Draft RMP/EIS open house sessions was to obtain further public input on the alternatives that have been developed and analyzed in the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS. In addition, Reclamation sought comments on potential impacts resulting from the four alternatives.

The open houses were held on a Wednesday afternoon and evening to accommodate various schedules. At the open houses, each alternative was represented at its own station, where an alternative summary was presented, along with maps showing proposed zoning areas for each alternative. Visitors were free to stop at any or all stations and in any order. New Melones staff members were at each station to explain the alternatives, to answer questions, and to record comments. Commenters were encouraged to provide written comments in addition to their discussions to ensure their intent was received accurately.

3. Comment Summary

3.1 Method of Comment Collection and Analysis

The end of the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS public comment period was January 4, 2010. Two hundred two comments were received as of this date, and 17 late comments were received. All comments have been incorporated into this Draft RMP/EIS Open House Summary Report and will be considered in revising the Draft RMP/EIS.

Individuals were encouraged to submit written comments. The comments received and evaluated in this Draft RMP/EIS Open House Summary Report will be considered in refining the alternatives, affected environment, and impact evaluations.

The 219 comments received are broken down as follows:

- 27 during the open houses;
- 136 by mail;
- 17 by fax; and
- 39 by e-mail.

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, and 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

Two hundred nineteen 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. Twenty-six percent of the comments received focused on access, 25 percent focused on and water-based recreation. General comments, as well as comments regarding general recreation and land management, were also common, comprising eight percent each of the total comments received.

**Table 3-1
Summary of Comments**

Issue Category	Number of Individual Comments	Summary of Comments
Air quality	6	Consider greenhouse gases in the alternatives analysis.
Access	57	Improve ADA access; Comments supporting and opposing a road to the Westside Management Area; Improve access to certain areas for vehicles and boats; Concerns over the environmental impact of having more impervious surfaces
Biological resources	5	Protect biological resources
Caves	2	Strengthen cave management language
Cultural resources	1	Concern regarding the environmental effects of relocating the archaeological storage facility
Cumulative effects	2	Disagreements over the discussion of cumulative effects in the Draft RMP/EIS
Facilities	2	Comments regarding the number, type, and location of facilities
Fire management	1	Suggest grazing for fuels reduction
Geologic resources	1	Concern over grazing impacts on geological resources
Hydrology/water resources	7	Concern over effects of development on water quality in the lake and downstream
Interpretive services	1	Include more language to ensure mitigation or prevention of impacts
Invasive species	3	Expand the level of analysis of impacts from invasive species control
Land management	17	Desire to maintain existing conditions and facilities Concern regarding new development and Reclamation's capacity to handle more users Include more specifics regarding certain actions, particularly proposed development
Noise	1	Desire for mandatory noise reduction on the lake
Public health and safety	5	Concerns over funding/siting of sheriff substation; need for more law enforcement
Recreation—general	18	Concern over not fulfilling development included in the 1976 Master Plan Include more language to ensure mitigation or prevention of impacts
Recreation— water-based	55	Comments for and against seaplane access and zoning for such access Desire for increased houseboat size limits Include more language to ensure mitigation or prevention of impacts
Recreation—land-based	13	Suggestions for trail and campsite improvements, expansion, and creation
Socioeconomic	1	Encourage more economic development in the area
Utilities	2	Concern over Tuolumne County's utilities that currently depend on New Melones
General comments	19	Support for a particular alternative or actions under a given alternative
Total	219	

4. Future Steps

4.1 Summary of Future Steps and Public Participation Opportunities

The goal of the Draft RMP/EIS Open House Summary Report is to summarize public input on the alternatives and analysis presented in the Draft RMP/EIS. All comments and Reclamation's response to comments will be included as an appendix to the Final RMP/EIS. Using public input, 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 30-day release 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 review 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, the Draft and Final RMP/EIS, and the notice of availability, will be published on the official New Melones Lake Area RMP/EIS Web site, along with pertinent dates regarding solicitation of public comments.

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 Lake Area RMP/EIS Web site, at www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/rmp.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 Lake Area RMP/EIS mailing list to receive future mailings and information. Those wishing to be added to or deleted from the distribution list or requesting further information may e-mail Melissa Brockman-Vignau at mbrockman@mp.usbr.gov, or they may call her at (916) 989-7182. Please provide your name, mailing address, and e-mail address, as well as your preferred method of receiving information.

Figure 4-1 RMP/EIS Timeline

RMP/EIS Timeline
Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register December 18, 2006
Public Scoping Period December 18, 2006, to February 16, 2007 Comment Period extended to March 19, 2007
Public Scoping Meetings January 29, 30, and 31, 2007
Scoping Summary Report available Spring 2007
Alternatives Workshops September 28 and 29, 2007
Revised Alternatives and Prepared Draft Chapters 1-3 November 2007-August 2008
Draft Alternatives Chapter 1-3 available for public review August 2008-September 2008
Public Open Houses on Draft Chapters 1-3 September 4 and 5, 2008
Revise Chapters 1-3 and prepare Draft RMP/EIS October 2008-August 2009
Draft RMP/EIS available for public review October 2009-January 2010
Public Open Houses on Draft RMP/EIS December 2, 2009
Prepare Final RMP/EIS January/February 2010
30-day Release for Final RMP/EIS February/March 2010
Record of Decision and approved RMP/EIS March/April 2010
<i>Shading indicates steps complete. Subsequent project updates will be distributed throughout this planning process. Schedule is subject to change.</i>

This page intentionally left blank.

Appendix: Draft RMP/EIS Public Involvement Materials

The following items were used to notify the public of the Draft RMP/EIS open house sessions, to describe the draft alternatives, and to provide the opportunity to comment:

- **News releases;**
- **Fourth project update;**
- **Letter from Reclamation Project Manager;**
- **Written summary of draft alternatives;**
- **Table ES-1 from the Draft RMP/EIS, an alternatives comparison chart;**
- **Figures showing draft alternative zoning;**
- **Reclamation's contact information; and**
- **Comment cards.**

Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, CA

MP-09-141

Media Contact: Pete Lucero, 916-978-5100, plucero@usbr.gov

For Release On: October 30, 2009

Reclamation Releases Draft RMP/EIS for the New Melones Lake Area; Open House Sessions Scheduled

The Bureau of Reclamation has released the Draft New Melones Lake Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for a 60-day public review and comment period. Located in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, New Melones Lake is managed by the Central California Area Office, part of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region.

The Draft RMP/EIS evaluates current and future resource conditions at the New Melones Lake Area and analyzes alternative management actions. These alternatives provide for public health and safety, recreational and land use, traffic and transportation, cultural and archaeological resources, and sensitive species and habitats. Reclamation will be selecting an alternative that will be used to guide the management of the lake's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

Reclamation will hold two Open House sessions to provide project information and receive comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. The public is welcome any time during the two Open Houses to visit with Reclamation staff at information stations, ask questions, and provide comments:

Wednesday, December 2, 2009

Afternoon Open House 1-4 p.m. -or- Evening Open House 6-9 p.m.
New Melones Lake Visitor Center, 6850 Studhorse Flat Road, Sonora, CA 95370

The Draft RMP/EIS may be viewed at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=2536. If you encounter problems accessing the document online, please call 916-978-5100 or e-mail mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov.

Written comments on the Draft RMP/EIS are due by close of business Monday, January 4, 2010. Comments may be submitted at the Open Houses or mailed to Ms. Melissa Brockman-Vignau, Project Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630, or faxed to 916-989-7109, or e-mailed to mbrockman@usbr.gov.

For additional information, please visit the project website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/rmp.html> or contact Ms. Brockman-Vignau at 916-989-7182, TDD 916-989-7285, or e-mail mbrockman@usbr.gov.

###

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at <http://www.usbr.gov>.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, CA

MP-09-159

Media Contact: Pete Lucero, 916-978-5100, plucero@usbr.gov

For Release On: November 20, 2009

Reclamation to Hold Two Public Open House Sessions on the New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS

The Bureau of Reclamation will hold two Open House sessions on Wednesday, December 2, 2009, to provide the public with information on the Draft New Melones Lake Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) and receive public comment on the project. The public is welcome to arrive at any time during either Open House to visit with Reclamation staff at information stations, and provide their written comments:

Wednesday, December 2, 2009

Afternoon Open House between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

OR Evening Open House between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.

New Melones Lake Visitor Center, 6850 Studhorse Flat Road, Sonora, CA 95370

Reclamation released the Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment on Friday, October 30, 2009. Written comments are due by close of business Monday, January 4, 2010. Comments may be submitted at the Open Houses or mailed to Ms. Melissa Brockman-Vignau, Project Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630, or faxed to 916-989-7109, or e-mailed to mbrockman@usbr.gov. The Draft RMP/EIS may be viewed at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=2536. If you encounter problems accessing the document online, please call 916-978-5100 or e-mail mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov.

The Draft RMP/EIS evaluates current and future resource conditions at the New Melones Lake Area and analyzes alternative management actions. These alternatives provide for public health and safety, recreational and land use, traffic and transportation, cultural and archaeological resources, and sensitive species and habitats. Reclamation will be selecting an alternative that will be used to guide the management of the lake's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Located in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, New Melones Lake is managed by the Central California Area Office, which is part of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region.

For additional information, please visit the project website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/rmp.html> or contact Ms. Brockman-Vignau at 916-989-7182, TDD 916-989-7285, or e-mail mbrockman@usbr.gov.

###

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at <http://www.usbr.gov>.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Planning for the Future at the New Melones Lake Area

RMP/EIS TIMELINE
Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register December 18, 2006
Public Scoping Period December 18, 2006, to February 16, 2007 Comment Period extended to March 19, 2007
Public Scoping Meetings January 29, 30, and 31, 2007
Scoping Summary Report available Spring 2007
Alternatives Workshops September 28 and 29, 2007
Revised Alternatives and Prepared Draft Chapters 1-3 November 2007-August 2008
Draft Alternatives Chapter 1-3 available for public review August 2008-September 2008
Public Open Houses on Draft Chapters 1-3 September 4 and 5, 2008
Revise Chapters 1-3 and prepare Draft RMP/EIS October 2008-August 2009
Draft RMP/EIS available for public review October 2009-January 2010
Public Open Houses on Draft RMP/EIS December 2, 2009
Prepare Final RMP/EIS January/February 2010
30-day public review for Final RMP/EIS February/March 2010
Record of Decision and approved RMP/EIS March/April 2010
<i>Shading indicates steps complete. Subsequent project updates will be distributed throughout this planning process. Schedule is subject to change.</i>

The Bureau of Reclamation is preparing an integrated Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the New Melones Lake Area. New Melones Lake is managed by the Central California Area Office, part of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region.

The RMP/EIS will evaluate current and future resource conditions and analyze whether updated or new management actions are needed. These management actions include public health and safety, recreational and land use, traffic and transportation, cultural and archeological resources, and sensitive species and habitats. All actions will be incorporated into a single document to guide the management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources at the lake.



Where Are We In The RMP/EIS Process?

During winter 2006/2007, Reclamation solicited input from the public and cooperating agencies regarding the RMP/EIS through a formal scoping process. At two workshops held in fall 2007, Reclamation collected additional public and cooperating agency input, and these suggestions and concerns were considered as we began to develop the range of draft alternatives for the RMP/EIS. A Visitor Use Survey and Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WROS) inventory were completed and used in drafting Chapters 1 through 3 of the RMP/EIS. We then held Public Open Houses on September 4 and 5, 2008, to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the RMP/EIS draft chapters. Reclamation has now scheduled two Public Open Houses on December 2, 2009 (one in the afternoon and one in the evening), to give the public an opportunity to provide comments on the RMP/EIS directly to Reclamation.

RMP Content And Alternatives

The purpose of the RMP is to establish a conceptual plan detailing the management framework for the conservation, protection, enhancement, development, and use of the physical and biological resources in the New Melones Lake Area.

The RMP proposes new management areas for the New Melones Lake Area to reflect updated information, current use, and potential future management actions. Four alternatives were developed to address the planning issues determined in previous scoping meetings:

- A. No Action: Continues current management.
- B. Increased Use: Emphasizes development of recreational resources and increased visitation while protecting natural and cultural resources as required by law.
- C. Conservation: Emphasizes active management of natural and cultural resources and less intensive recreation use.
- D. Multiple Use: Balances accommodating projected increased visitor use and demand with the need to enhance and conserve natural and cultural resources.



Reclamation Mission Statement

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Water Information

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits.

Mark Your Calendars

The New Melones Lake Area Draft RMP/EIS was released on October 30, 2009, for public review. Please send your comments on the Proposed Action Alternative by Monday, January 4, 2010, to Melissa Brockman Vignau (see contact information below).

Please Join Us

Public Open Houses
New Melones Lake Visitor Center
Wednesday, December 2, 2009
First meeting: 1-4 p.m. -or-
Second meeting: 6-9 p.m.

For Additional Information

For more information on the Draft RMP/EIS Open Houses, please visit the project website:

<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/newmelones/rmp.html>

Contact Information

Project Manager: Melissa Brockman Vignau
E-mail: mbrockman@usbr.gov
Phone: 916-989-7182
Fax: 916-989-7109

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

Welcome:

My name is Melissa Vignau. I am the Project Manager for the New Melones Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) project. I would like to welcome you to this Open House. We are holding this open house today for you to provide your comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. Your comments will assist us in the development of a strong Resource Management Plan that will benefit all interested parties. As a result of the feedback we obtain from the public review process, the open houses, and some additional work from Reclamation, we hope to revise and publish our Final RMP/EIS by March 2010.

The RMP/EIS is a plan that will describe the management of the New Melones Lake area natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the next 20 years. The new resource management plan will fulfill the need at New Melones to have an updated management framework. The RMP/EIS will be programmatic in nature. Meaning it will be specific enough to guide overall management of resources, but not so specific as to dictate day-to-day operations. Lastly but certainly not least, the plan must be consistent with Reclamation fiscal goals and objectives.

This open house is your opportunity for us to answer any questions you may have and provide us with your comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. Please go around the room and visit all four of our information booths. Please help yourself to any literature on the table. Copies of all handouts are also provided in this folder. Each information booth represents an Alternative. There are four alternatives, Alternative A (No Action-Continue Current Management), Alternative B (Increased Use), Alternative C (Conservation), and **Alternative D (Multiple Use), also known as our Preferred Alternative**. This is an open discussion atmosphere. We hope you will provide us with written comments at this open house, but will gladly accept them within the remaining public review period.

In each packet there are maps, a project update letter, an alternatives comparison chart, alternative summaries, and a comment card. Each of these maps correspond to a booth, some booths have two maps. At each booth there is a moderator that will be available to take your comments and a note taker who will record your comments on a flip chart. You are welcome to visit every booth or just the booth you have interest in.



Alternative Summary

Alternative A (No Action—Continue Current Management)

Alternative A is the continuation of current management and would continue present management practices based on the existing land use plan and plan amendments. Valid and feasible decisions contained in the 1976 Master Plan would be implemented, if they are not already completed. Direction contained in existing laws, regulations, policies, and standards would also continue to be implemented, sometimes superseding provisions of the 1976 Master Plan. The current levels, methods, and mix of multiple use management of public lands in the New Melones Lake Area would continue, and resource values would generally receive attention at present levels. Existing facilities, roads, and trails would not be expanded or updated unless it was done under the direction of specific health and safety or ADA guidelines. BMPs would continue to be used to address fire response at New Melones Lake. Land management would also comply with land allocation identified in the 1976 Master Plan.

Alternative B (Increased Use)

Alternative B emphasizes active management for access and recreation. Protecting other resources would be secondary to accommodating recreational interests, although all resources would be managed, at minimum, to the levels required by law. This alternative also emphasizes opportunities for developed and motorized recreation. This alternative would focus on increasing access (roads and trails) and expanding facilities (such as concessions and fish cleaning stations). The key components of this alternative are to evaluate adding recreation facilities at Glory Hole, Tuttle town, Bowie Flat, Westside, French Flat, Bear Creek, Parrotts Ferry, Mark Twain, and Greenhorn Green Management Areas and to allow increased levels of houseboat, water vessel, and equestrian use, in addition to relocating the equestrian staging area. Prescriptive grazing may be allowed to assist in invasive weed removal and fire protection.

Alternative C (Conservation)

Alternative C deemphasizes recreational goals and facilities in favor of natural resource values. There would be less active management of recreational resources and facilities than under the other alternatives. Alternative C emphasizes tighter controls on motorized recreation. The key components of this alternative include potentially decreasing the level of houseboat use and minimizing development of recreation areas in Rural Natural and Rural Developed Management Areas, in addition to relocating the equestrian staging area. New trails would not be developed unless needed to protect sensitive species and habitats. Access to caves and rock climbing routes would also be restricted to protect unique and special species habitats. This alternative would allow the use of chemical, biological, and mechanical controls to help eradicate invasive species.

Alternative D (Multiple Use)-Preferred Alternative

Alternative D is intended to balance management of recreational uses and resources with management of natural and cultural resources. This alternative was developed by combining those aspects of Alternatives A, B, and C that provide the most balanced outcome for managing public lands within the New Melones Lake Area. This alternative incorporates many management objectives and actions from the first three alternatives and may include new management direction as necessary. This alternative also generally allows for more uses and active resource management than Alternative C but less than Alternative B. The key components of this alternative include allowing increased watercraft use, minimizing development of recreation areas in Rural Natural Areas and relocating the equestrian staging area. This alternative, like Alternatives B and C, would update land use allocations based on input from the public and results of the visitor use survey, WROS, and the commercial services plan.

Table ES-1: Alternatives Comparison of Effects on Visitor Use Opportunities

Resource (Management Action(s))	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Noise (N1, N2)	- Voluntary compliance with boat and visitor noise regulations	- Same as Alternative A	- Mandatory compliance with boat and visitor noise regulations	- Same as Alternative A
Caves (C4, C5)	- Manage cave access to comply with laws and regulations; maintains current management of caves	- Expand cave access and provide interpretive opportunities	- Control cave access and close caves to interpretive activities	- Manage cave access as in Alternative A (would not expand access). - Provide interpretive opportunities as in Alternative B.
Water Resources (WR 28)	- Close former roadways in Rural Developed Management Areas when necessary for public health and safety (would limit visitor access)	- Update/improve former roadways for lake access in Rural Developed Management Areas, if funded (would improve visitor access)	- Close former roadways as in Alternative A. - Restrict vehicle use in Semi Primitive Management Areas.	- Update/improve select roads in Rural Developed Management Areas, if funded. - Restrict vehicle use in Semi Primitive Management Areas.
Fish and Wildlife - Peoria Wildlife Management Area (FW 13)	- Restrict vehicles year-round - Build trails - Allow group camping	- Restrict vehicles from December to May - Build trails - Allow group camping	- No public vehicle access - Close trails - No camping allowed	- Same as Alternative A
Fisheries and Fishing (FW 22, FW 23, AR 16, AR 17)	- Restrict/minimize disturbance of trout and warm water fish spawning areas (may limit fishing opportunities)	- Same as Alternative A	- Increased restrictions of trout and warm water fish spawning areas compared with Alternative A	- Increased use restrictions of trout spawning areas compared with Alternative A - Same use restrictions of warm water fish spawning areas compared with Alternative A

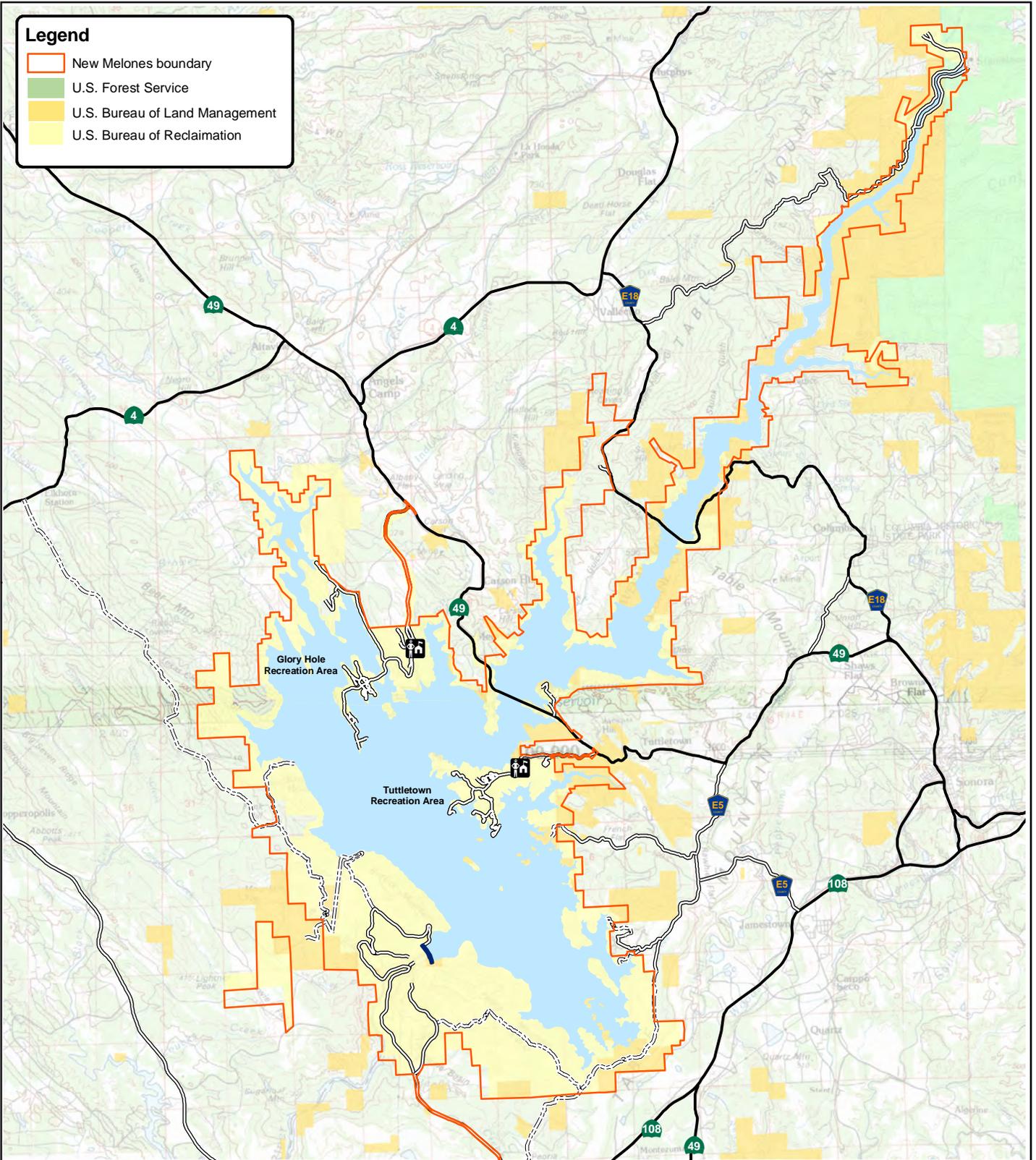
Resource (Management Action(s))	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Special Status Species (SSS 1, SSS 3, SSS 5)	- Implement a climbing management plan if effects on sensitive species are identified (may limit climbing opportunities)	- Same as Alternative A	- Consider visitor use restrictions to protect special status species, including raptors and bats (may limit recreation opportunities)	- Same as Alternative A
Land Management (LM 13, LM 19)	- Do not allow OHV use - Continue closure of overlook facilities at Peoria Flat	- Allow OHV use in a designated OHV park - Reopen overlook facilities at Peoria Flat	- Same as Alternative A	- Same as Alternative A, but allow public access to Peoria Flat through guided tours
Access and Transportation (General) (TA 4, TA 5)	- Close identified roads to public vehicles - Operate/maintain substandard lake access routes/facilities	- Close the fewest roads compared with Alternative A - Update/modernize lake access routes/facilities	- Same as Alternative A	- Close roads: fewer than Alternative A, more than Alternative B - Update/modernize lake access routes/facilities
Aircraft Use (TA 12, TA 13, AR 26, AR 27)	- Continue to implement the New Melones seaplane policy	- Same as Alternative A	- Restrict access to New Melones for seaplanes - Enforce additional zoning for all aircraft	- Same as Alternative A
Access to Westside and Bowie Flat (TA 14, TA 16, TA 17)	- Operate/maintain the existing trail system - Manage Bowie Flat, while emphasizing conservation	- Consider allowing development of an access road to Westside - Optimize trail connectivity in the Westside - Increase use of Bowie Flat (multiuse trails)	- Allow access to the Westside by trails or boat - Optimize trail connectivity in the Westside - Increase use of Bowie Flat (hiking/equestrian)	- Allow access to the Westside by trails or boat - Optimize trail connectivity in the Westside - Increase use of Bowie Flat (multiuse)
Public Health and Safety (PHS 10)	- Hunting would be allowed, except in restricted areas	- Shotgun-only hunting would be allowed, except in restricted areas	- Develop/implement a strategy to manage hunting, which may include restrictions	- Same as Alternative C, but shotgun-only hunting would be allowed

Resource (Management Action(s))	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Recreation - Commercial services/concessions (R 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 36, 38, 39, 40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to operate a marina and marina-based store at Glory Hole - Continue to issue Special Event permits - Reclamation would operate/maintain New Melones facilities - Do not permit a seaplane school - Continue to operate/maintain the existing water-ski course - Do not allow skeet/target shooting - Continue to operate/maintain a radio-controlled flying facility in Peoria Flat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construct additional marina(s) and provide additional marina amenities - Construct floating and land-based overnight lodging facilities - Issue permits for rental operations - Construct a new RV park - Construct/operate a mountain bike course through a managing partner/concession agreement - If feasible, assign operation/management of developed recreation areas to another entity - Issue permits to allow seaplane training - Allow another entity to construct/operate an equestrian trail riding business and/or skeet/target shooting range - Develop an additional water sports course - Develop additional radio-controlled flying facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide additional marina services - Construct eco-friendly land-based lodging - Reclamation would operate/maintain New Melones facilities - Do not permit a seaplane school - Allow another entity to construct/operate an equestrian trail riding business, though with less development than Alternative B - Continue to operate/maintain the existing water-ski course - Do not allow skeet/target shooting - Continue to operate/maintain a radio-controlled flying facility in Peoria Flat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide more additional marina services compared with Alternative C - Construct floating campsites and land-based overnight lodging facilities - Issue permits for rental operations - Construct a new RV park - Construct/operate a mountain bike course through a managing partner/concession agreement - Reclamation would operate/maintain New Melones facilities - Do not permit a seaplane school - Allow another entity to construct/operate an equestrian trail riding business - Continue to operate/maintain the existing water-ski course - Do not allow skeet/target shooting - Continue to operate/maintain a radio-controlled flying facility in Peoria Flat

Resource (Management Action(s))	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Aquatic Recreation (General) (AR 5, AR 15, AR 24)	- Continue to implement lake zones to address ongoing safety concerns	- Implement additional lake zones to promote safety and protect the public by reducing user conflicts (would restrict some aquatic recreation activities in designated areas)	- Same as Alternative B, but including more restrictive zones	- Implement more restrictive lake zones compared with Alternative B, but less than Alternative C
Boating, water-skiing, wake boarding, and rafting (AR 21, AR 22, AR 23, AR 25)	- Continue operation of a water-ski course in the current location - Allow the current level of watercraft use - Continue status quo management of houseboats - Continue to issue Special Event permits	- Relocate the water-ski course to Carson Creek Cove - Allow an increased level of watercraft use - Prepare/implement a moored vessel plan - Issue permits for white-water rafting services in Camp Nine	- Continue operation of a water-ski course in the current location; do not relocate the water-ski course until a more suitable location is identified - Decrease the level of watercraft use - Prepare/implement a moored vessel plan - Do not issue permits for white-water rafting services	- Continue operation of a water-ski course in the current location; do not relocate the water-ski course until a more suitable location is identified - Allow an increased level of watercraft use - Prepare/implement a moored vessel plan - Issue permits for white-water rafting services in Camp Nine
Land-Based Recreation (General) (LR 17, LR 18, LR 21, LR 22)	- Operate/maintain the existing trail system	- Optimize connectivity between trail systems - Develop new trails - Provide for multiuse trail activities	- Optimize connectivity between trail systems - Do not develop new trails - Encourage hiking and low-impact recreation	- Same as Alternative B

Resource (Management Action(s))	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Hunting (LR 33, LR 34)	-Maintain existing hunting closure areas	-Maintain existing hunting closure areas -Shotgun-only hunting would be allowed - Develop agreements to allow special hunting events	-Maintain existing hunting closure areas - Develop and implement long-term strategy for managing hunting (may increase restrictions)	- Develop and implement long-term strategy for managing hunting (may increase restrictions) -Shotgun-only hunting would be allowed -Hunting would be restricted within 150 yards of the Reclamation boundary at French Flat and Bear Creek - Develop agreements to allow special hunting events

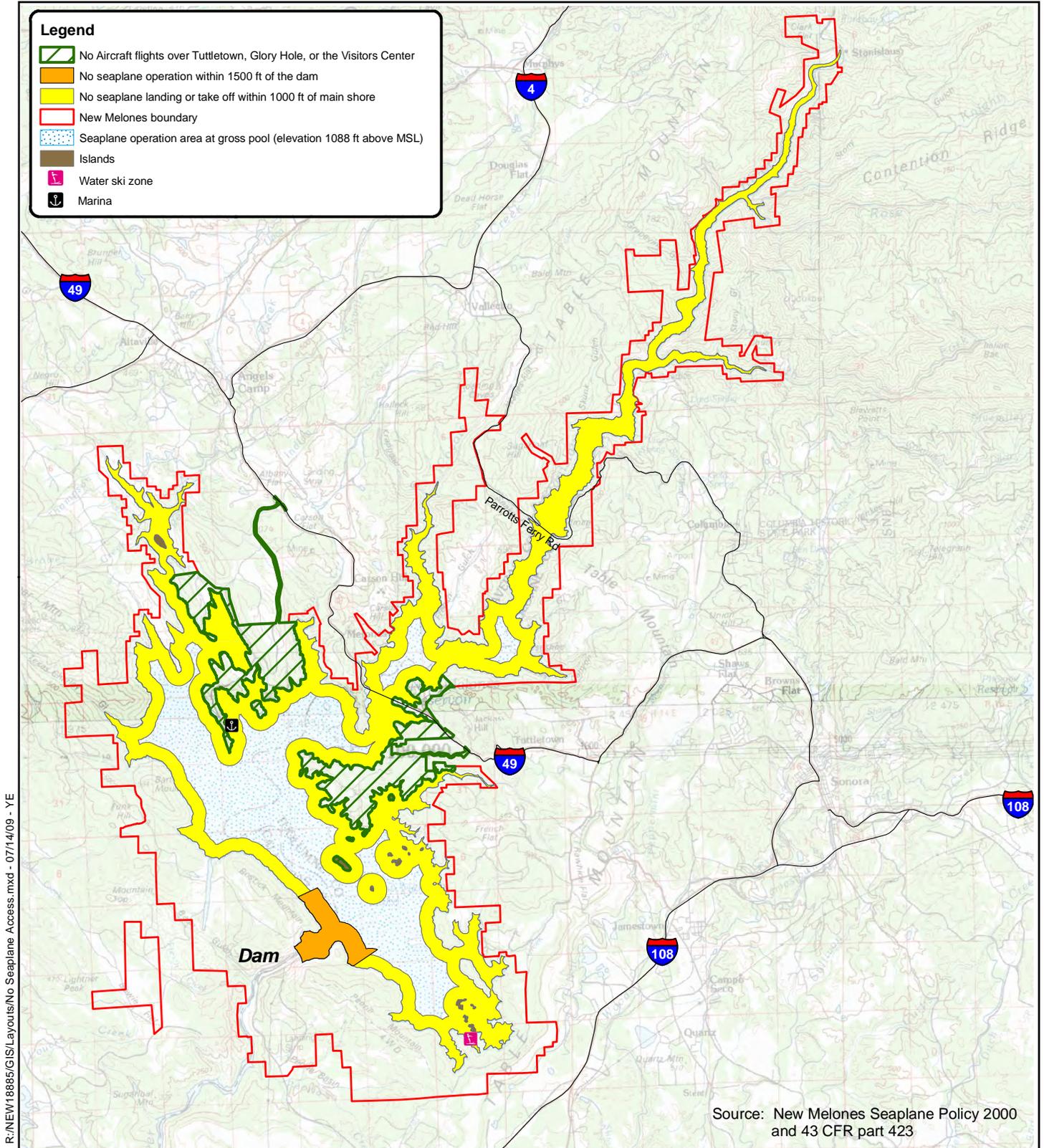
R:\NEW\8885\GIS\Layouts\Planning Area Boundary_2009.mxd - 10/14/09 - YE



New Melones Planning Area Boundary

New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office

Figure 1-2



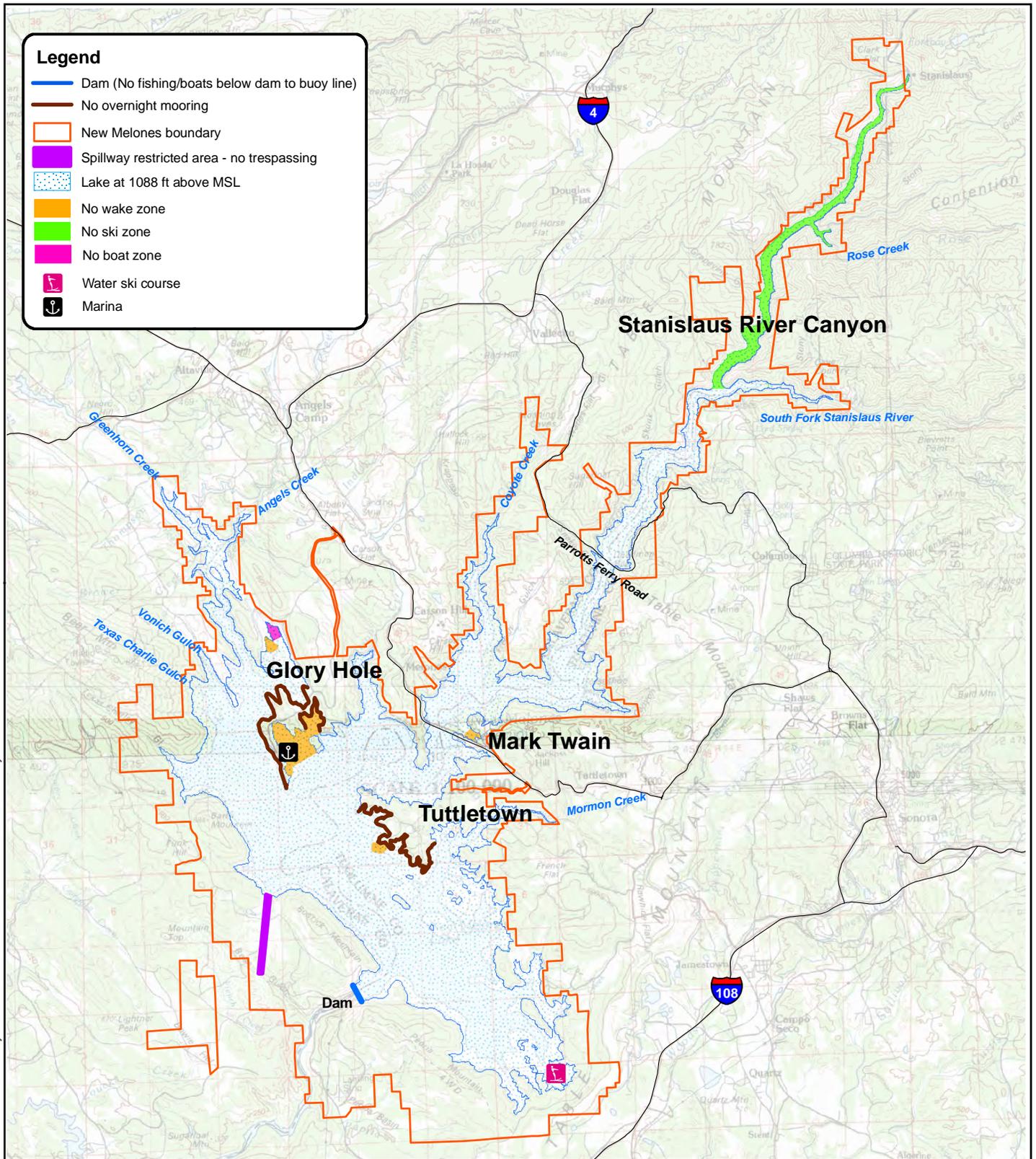
New Melones Current and Proposed Seaplane and Aircraft Operation Policy

New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office



Figure 3-1

R:\NEW\8885\GIS\Layouts\Current Water Use Zone - With House Boat Policy.mxd - 07/17/09 - YE



-  No wake zone - 200 ft around marina, boat launches, and lake access
-  No ski zone - Areas where it has been determined that, due to the nature of the area, it is too dangerous to tow a person behind a vessel. No waterskiing, tubing, wakeboarding or kneeboarding is permitted.
-  No boat zone - No boats within designated area
-  Marina - No swimming within marina area

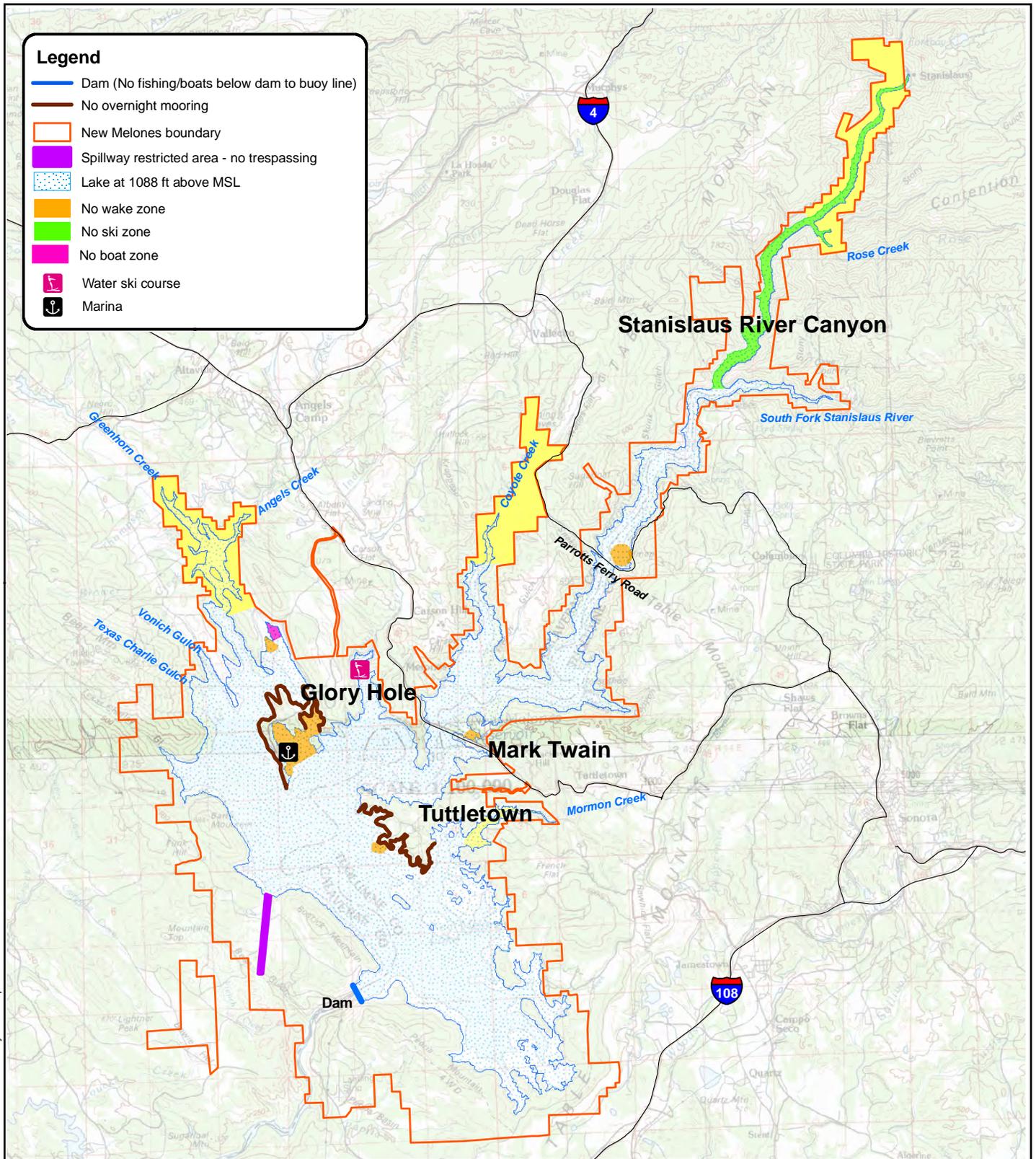


New Melones Water Use Zones No Action Alternative

New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office

Figure 3-2

R:\NEW\18885\GIS\Layouts\Proposed New Melones - Increased Wated Use Zone.mxd - 07/17/09 - YE



-  No wake zone - 200 ft around marina, boat launches, and lake access
-  Environmentally sensitive area - No overnight use, no wake zone, no ski zone, no excessive noise, and no mining
-  No ski zone - Areas where it has been determined that, due to the nature of the area, it is too dangerous to tow a person behind a vessel. No waterskiing, tubing, wakeboarding or kneeboarding is permitted.
-  No boat zone - No boats within designated area
-  Marina - No swimming within marina area

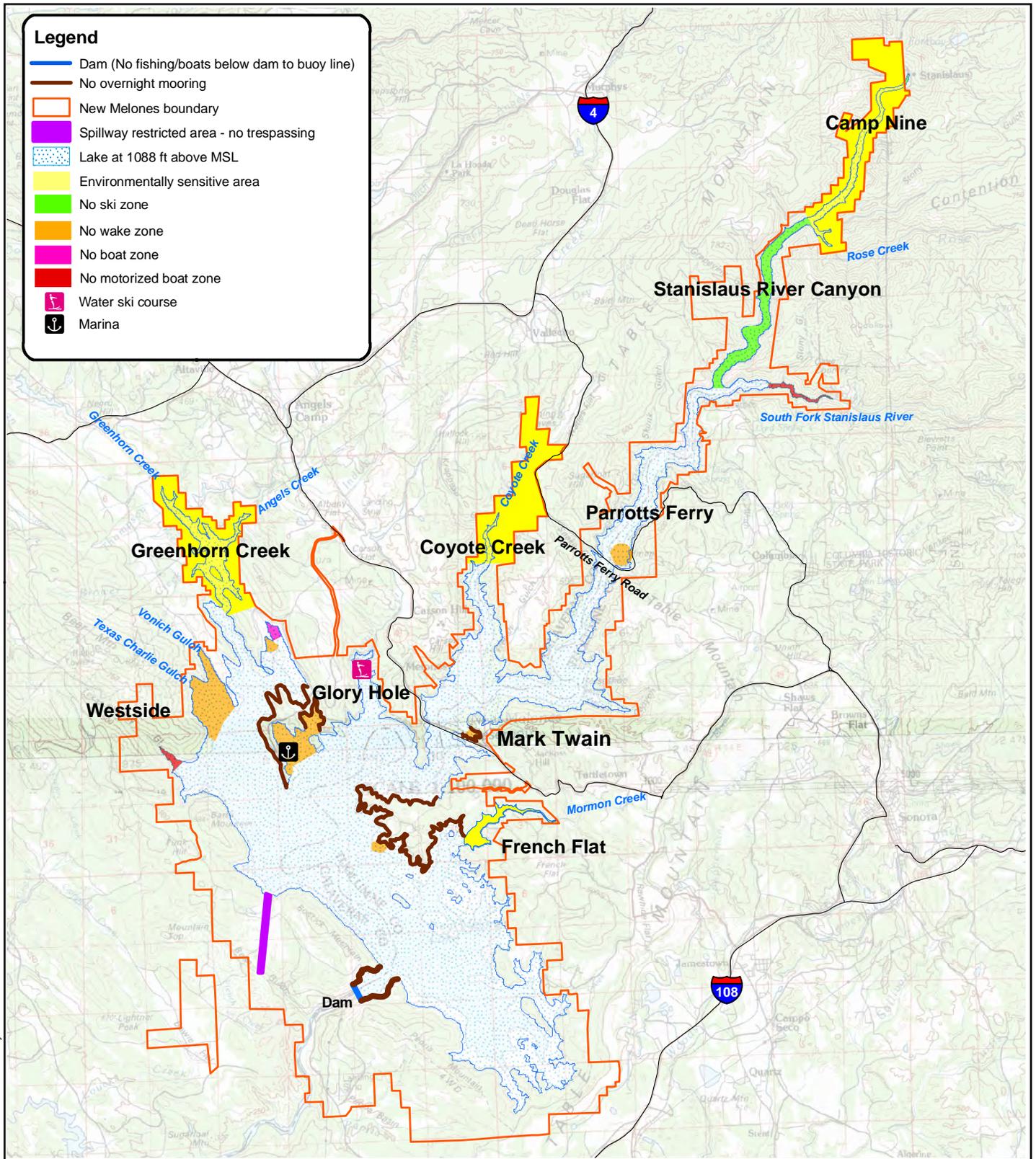
New Melones Water Use Zones Increased Use Alternative

New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office



Figure 3-3

R:\NEW18885\GIS\Layouts\New Melones Water Use Zones - Conservation Alternative.mxd - 07/28/09 - YE



-  No wake zone - 200 ft around marina, boat launches, and lake access, and other designated areas.
-  Environmentally sensitive area - No overnight use, no wake zone, no ski zone, no excessive noise, and no mining
-  No ski zone - Areas where it has been determined that, due to the nature of the area, it is too dangerous to tow a person behind a vessel. No waterskiing, tubing, wakeboarding or kneeboarding is permitted.
-  No boat zone - No boats within designated area
-  Marina - No swimming within marina area

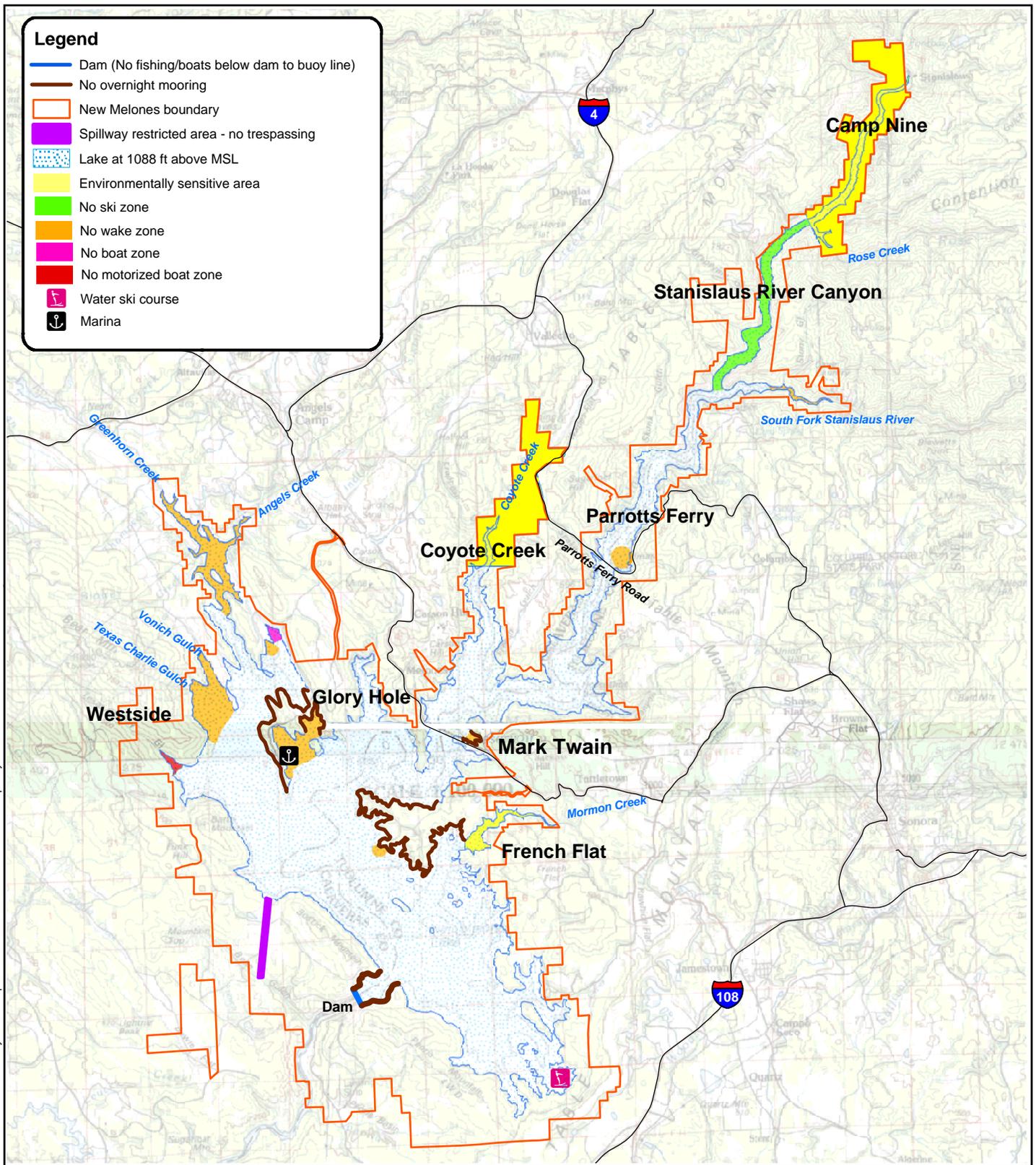
New Melones Water Use Zones Conservation Alternative

New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office



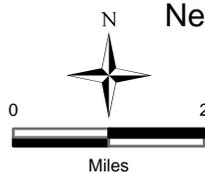
Figure 3-4

R:\NEW18885\GIS\Layouts\Multiple Water Use Zone - With house boat policy.mxd - 07/29/09 - YE



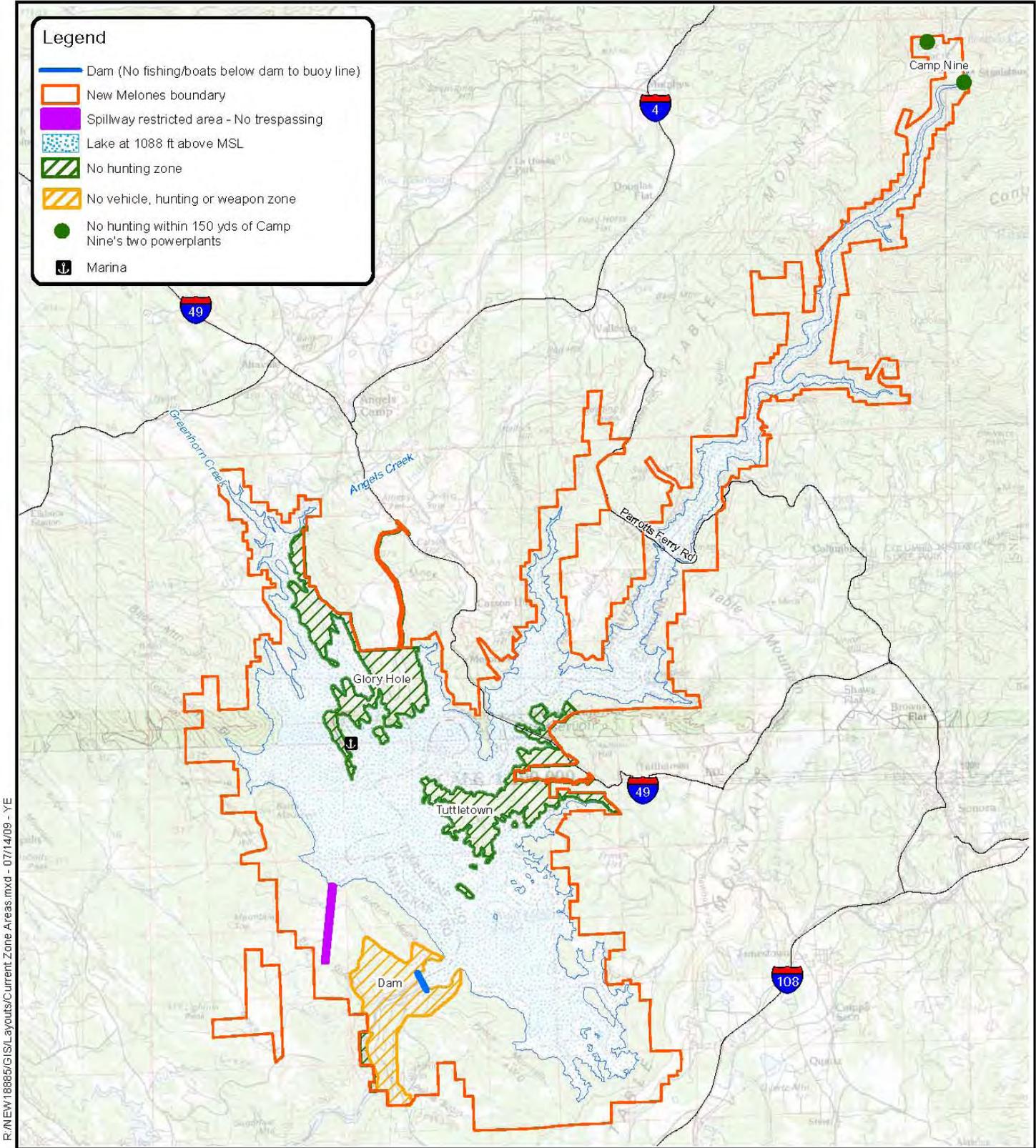
New Melones Water and Land Use Zones Multiple Use Alternative

- No wake zone - 200 ft around marina, boat launches, and lake access, and other designated areas.
- Environmentally sensitive area - No overnight use, no wake zone, no ski zone, no excessive noise, and no mining
- No ski zone - Areas where it has been determined that, due to the nature of the area, it is too dangerous to tow a person behind a vessel. No waterskiing, tubing, wakeboarding or kneeboarding is permitted.
- No boat zone - No boats within designated area
- ⚓ Marina - No swimming within marina area



New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office

Figure 3-5



R:\NEW\18885\GIS\Layouts\Current Zone Areas.mxd - 07/14/09 - YE

 No hunting within 150 yds of any developed recreation area, campgrounds, or other facilities, boat ramp parking area, day use area, neighboring residences, or within 150 yds of Camp Nine's two power plants

Dam zone - No vehicles, hunting or weapons

New Melones Land Use Zones No Action Alternative

New Melones Lake Area, California
Central California Area Office



Figure 3-7

How To Contact Us

If you would like to submit a comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, please send them to the below address.

Mail:

Mrs. Melissa Vignau
C/o Central California Area Office
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630-6610

Fax:

916-989-7109, Attention Mrs. Melissa Vignau

For further information:

Call Mrs. Vignau at (916) 989-7182 or visit the project Website at
<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cca0/newmelones/rmp.html>

In order for Reclamation to formally consider your comments on the development of the New Melones Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, you must submit a written comment no later than January 4, 2010.



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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

Attn: Melissa Brockman-Vignau

Please fold, staple, stamp, and mail