

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

New Melones Lake Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Chapters 1-3 Public Open House 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, 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 the 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 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 public open houses to obtain further public input on the possible management actions and opportunities for the New Melones Lake Area and updated affected environment conditions.

Public Outreach

On September 4 and 5, 2008, open houses were held on the Draft Chapters 1-3 of the RMP/EIS. The meeting on September 4 was held at Columbia College from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. The September 5 meeting was held in the Frogeteria at the Calaveras County Fairgrounds from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Thirty-four people attended these meetings, which are described in greater detail in Section 2.

The public was notified of the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses by several media. The project Web site at www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/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 July 29, 2008, to 713 individuals from the public, agencies, and local organizations. This update accomplished the following:

- Announced the upcoming open houses;
- Informed individuals of where Reclamation is in the RMP process;
- Notified the public of how to review the Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report from the Fall 2007 Alternatives Development meetings;
- Notified the public of the visitor survey and Final Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum reports; and

- Explained how they could be involved and how input given at the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses would be used in creating the RMP/EIS.

Reclamation submitted a press release regarding the meetings to 144 local newspapers on August 22, 2008.

Public Input Results

As of September 17, 2008, 224 comments were submitted, and they have been incorporated into this RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 Public Open House Summary Report. Most comments at the open houses were verbal, with the rest coming in writing during the ensuing comment period. Reclamation will consider all comments during formulation of the Draft RMP/EIS.

Issue Summary

Most of the comments received focused on recreation (24%), biological resources (16 %), and access (10 %). Written comments were tallied. In addition, Reclamation collated any verbal comments received either during the open houses or 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 open houses 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. The affected environment will also be updated based on comments received.

On completion of the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3, the next phase of Reclamation's planning process develops a Draft RMP/EIS that systematically analyzes the environmental impacts of each alternative. 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 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), 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 beforehand. 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. 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, 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 fourth phases of the public involvement process.

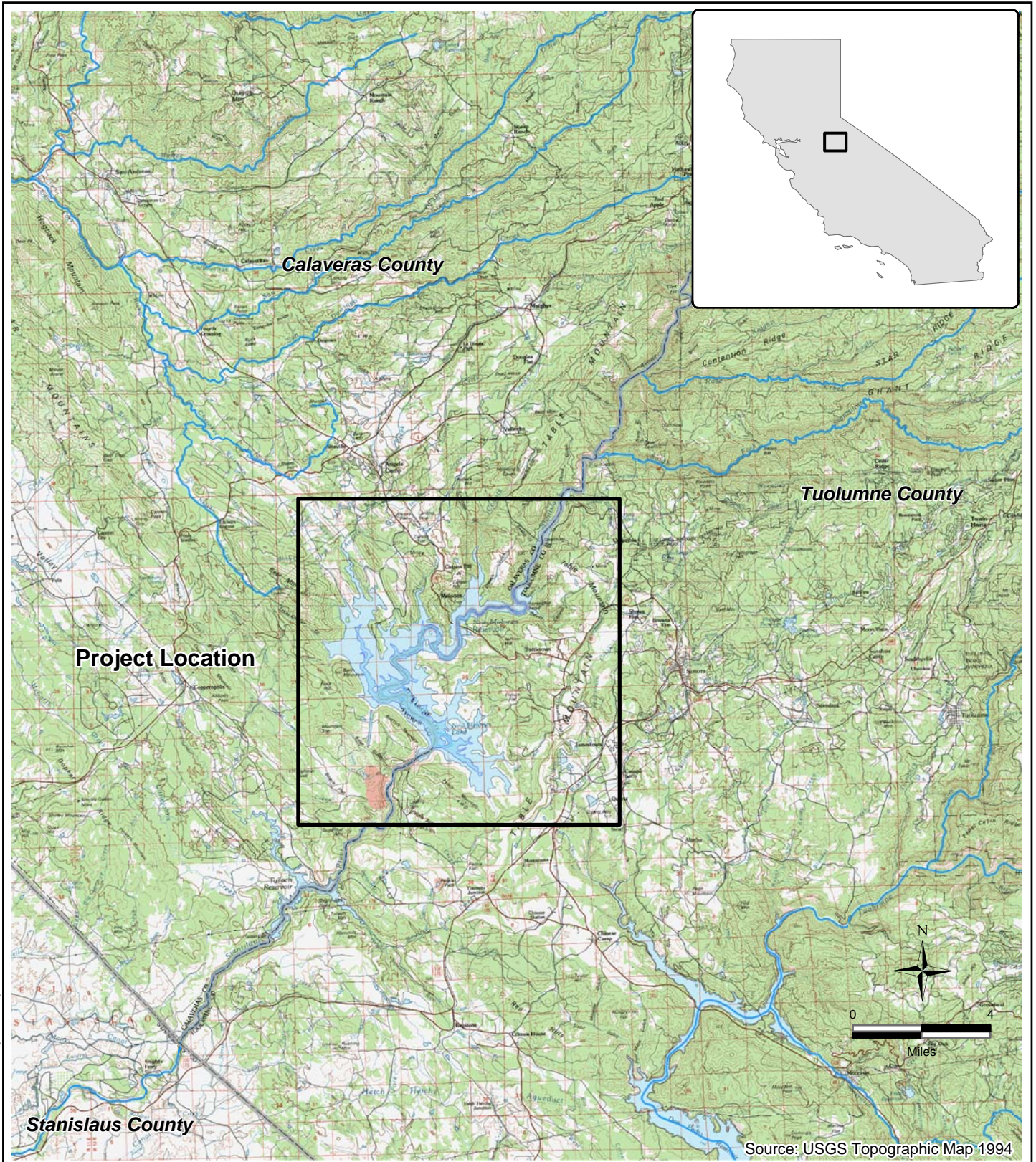
The purpose of this report is to review and summarize verbal, written, and electronic comments received from the public during and following the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses held September 4 and 5, 2008. Input given during these open houses will allow Reclamation to further develop and refine 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 RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses, Reclamation has used the following means to communicate with the public about 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 entire 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 (www.usbr.gov/mp/ccaof/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 third project update was mailed on July 29, 2008, to 713 individuals identified during the scoping process. The third project update announced the upcoming open houses, informed individuals of where we are in the RMP process, notified the public of how to review the Alternatives Development Workshop Summary Report from the Fall 2007 Alternatives Development meetings, notified the public of the visitor

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Project Location

New Melones Lake, California
Central California Area Office

Figure 1-1

survey and Final WROS reports, explained how they could be involved and how input given at the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses would be used in creating 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 144 local newspapers on August 22, 2008.
- **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. In addition to Reclamation representatives, 93 people attended the meetings.
- **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. One hundred forty-seven comments were submitted as of October 31, 2007, most of which focused on recreation (31%), public safety (21%), and fees (9%). Reclamation used this input to further develop a reasonable range of feasible alternatives that will be incorporated and analyzed in the RMP/EIS. A summary report was produced and is available for review on the New Melones RMP/EIS Web site at www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/field_offices/new_melones/rmp.html.
- **Mailing List:** Reclamation compiled a list of 713 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. 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

Letters inviting Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties to participate as cooperating agencies in the RMP development process were sent on July 31, 2007 and August 1, 2007, respectively. 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 May 16, 2008, Reclamation met with cooperating agencies to review an advanced copy of the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3. The agencies were asked to provide input to further refine the document before releasing it to the public. The cooperating agencies were given 60 days to provide comments. On October 24, 2008, Reclamation invited the

cities of Sonora and Angels Camp, as well as Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, to provide input on the RMP/EIS.

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 RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses was to obtain further public input on the possible management actions and opportunities and existing conditions at the New Melones Lake Area.

The open houses were held on a Thursday evening and on a Friday afternoon in an effort to accommodate various schedules. At the open houses each alternative was represented at its own station. An alternative summary was presented at these stations, along with maps showing proposed zoning areas for each alternative. Visitors were free to stop at any or all stations and in any order they chose. New Melones staff members were at each station to explain the alternatives, answer questions, and 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 RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 public comment period was September 17, 2008. Two hundred twenty-four comments were received as of this date and have been incorporated into this RMP/EIS Chapters 1-3 Public Open House Summary Report. All comments will be considered in alternative formulation and project planning.

Individuals were encouraged to submit written comments, and Reclamation will continue to accept comments throughout the planning process. The comments received and evaluated in this RMP/EIS Chapters 1-3 Public Open House Summary Report will be considered in refining the alternatives and affected environment and initial impact evaluations. A total of 224 submissions were received, broken down as follows:

- 114 during the open houses;
- 94 by mail; and

- 16 by e-mail.

Some individual comment letters included numerous comments, and some 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

Two hundred twenty-four 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. Most of the comments received focused on recreation (24%), biological resources (16%), and access (10%).

**Table 3-1
Summary of Comments**

Issue Category	Number of Individual Comments	Summary of Comments
Air quality	2	Consider greenhouse gases in the alternatives analysis.
Access	23	Reopen certain access areas (e.g., Parrotts Ferry).
Biological resources	35	Protect biological resources (e.g., address Quagga mussel invasion).
Caves	5	Protect caves and the special status species that use caves; restrict access as necessary.
Concessions	1	A concessionaire could operate at new facilities on the west side.
Erosion	2	Monitor erosion and consider impacts of erosion.
Facilities	5	Repair existing facilities; create facilities on the west side.
Fees	2	Fees will help New Melones with law enforcement issues.
Fire management	2	Support implementation of the Fire Management Plan.
Geological resources	1	Limit suction dredging.
Land use	9	Minimize or prohibit development around the lake.
Livestock grazing	13	Grazing needs to be implemented carefully (i.e., with restrictions, enforcement, and management).
Noise	3	Need mandatory noise reduction on the lake.
Public safety, law enforcement, and emergency management	11	Unsafe boat use is a concern; increase patrols and enforcement on the lake.
Recreation	26 3 25	-Diversify and expand nonmotorized recreation; -Consider expanded recreation on the west side; and -Other recreation comments.
Socioeconomic/environmental justice	1	Increase ADA access.
Socioeconomic/environmental justice	1	Promoting nonmotorized recreation would help the local economy.
Traffic/transportation	14	Construct a new access road on the west side; other commenters were concerned about the west side road.
Visitor use	2	Include improvements in the RMP that would encourage visitor use.
Water resources	18	Protect and monitor water quality; promoting nonmotorized recreation would improve water quality.
Other	20	Many commenters support either Alternative A or C.

3.3 Comments Received

Table 3-2 lists the comments that were submitted to Reclamation during and following the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses and also lists questions that arose during the open houses. 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 commenter's intent was determined before it was assigned to a category.

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

Air Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenhouse gases should be considered when deciding between alternatives.* ▪ Consider management actions that encourage non-motorized activities to help reduce greenhouse gases.*
Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase access to the lake. Don't keep taking away lake access areas. ▪ Restore access via old Highway 49 for launching with trailers. ▪ Re-open access at Parrotts Ferry or provide access at the upper end of the lake. ▪ Stop closing off access areas. Instead, manage the lake's access areas. ▪ Provide better access, since getting down to the lake is too difficult. ▪ Make more access for small crafts/vessels to launch easily. ▪ Convert Parrotts Ferry and/or Bear Creek into hand-launch access points. ▪ Create a launch ramp for small boats at Parrotts Ferry. ▪ Repave the road at the Parrotts Ferry launch ramp. Lake users will volunteer to help complete the necessary work. ▪ Include a new ramp at Camp Nine. ▪ Certain updates and modernizations of the minimum basic facilities at the Mark Twain and Camp Nine areas are warranted.* ▪ Support designated no-fly zones near critical infrastructure (Action TA 13C).* ▪ Continue to manage the Westside Management Area with an emphasis on conservation.* ▪ Support Action TA 17D which includes uses of the trail system for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.* ▪ Provide access from the westside, including a boat marina and trails system for pedestrians, bikers, and equestrians.* ▪ A new access road to the westside would provide enhanced recreational opportunities for the residents of Calaveras County and the Central Valley.* ▪ Access to New Melones from Highway 49 is adequate and no access from the west (Copperopolis) or north (Highway 4) is needed and should be avoided.*

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

Biological Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The North Bay should be off-limits to power boaters or limited to small and non-motorized vessels in order to preserve osprey habitat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include Quagga mussels under Invasive Species Control, Section 3.2.13 (page 3-65).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct wildlife/plant surveys to see what species and habitats are the healthiest, and determine public access from those results. Habitat for vulnerable species should be limited to public access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove and/or monitor snakes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conserve bird habitat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage natural resources as in the current plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage ecosystems for sustainability, especially for "At Risk" species.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have coves/areas for non-motorized vessels instead of, or in addition to, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas to protect species, especially during nesting seasons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect known populations of special status plants and federally-protected endangered species.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chemicals used for invasive plant management are acceptable as a last resort.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current star-thistle removal programs are not cost-effective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use pesticides for short periods in small doses to curb the start of the invasive plant/pest cycle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balance pesticide use with other IPM techniques.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action FW 13C to integrate the preferred actions in the Peoria Wildlife Interim Management Plan into the long-term management.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the footprint of the Baseline Conservation Camp (Action FW 14C).*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action FW 15C for no new road to be allowed in PWMA to access the conservation camp.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement additional restrictions to minimize disturbance of spawning areas during the trout spawning season (Actions FW 23C and 24C).*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rock climbing on Table Mountain may be able to be balanced with the ecological resources of the area if management strategies are appropriately publicized and enforced.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct monthly inventories of sensitive bat species at Table Mountain and restrict climbing as necessary based on the results.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a rock climbing management plan.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned with ISC 7C to allow grazing in all areas except for high-density recreation areas.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the implementation of the Fire Management Plan, especially prescribed burning where feasible.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action V 5C, reseeding with native seed only.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the development of a full survey of special status plants on serpentine soil (Action V 14C).*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a fully funded Quagga and zebra mussel inspection program as recommended by the California Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A written plan to prevent the introduction of invasive non-native mussel species should be included in the RMP/EIS as per AB 2065.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect the watersheds, birds (osprey, hawks, and owls) and wildlife surrounding New Melones.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of invasive weeds should be prioritized as it can have both economic and ecological consequences.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the protection of the Camp Nine and Coyote Creek habitats under Alternative C.*
Caves
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caves with significant suitable habitat and/or populations of special status species (especially bats) should be closed to the public.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caves that do not contain significant suitable habitat and/or populations of special status species can be open to recreational access as long as the health and safety concerns are low.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not support expanding cave access.*
Concessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A concessionaire can operate the enhanced recreational opportunities on the west side, including a future marina.*
Erosion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor the levels of sediment deposits near the dam.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the impacts of erosion on the lake proper.
Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marina policies should change and facilities should be able to be self-sustaining.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modify boat docks to eliminate low-sitting boats (bass boats, canoes, etc.) from getting caught underneath.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repair and enhance the facilities that New Melones already has; don't expand the facilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any new expansion of facilities should be carefully considered as to whether agency dollars are adequately providing for management of the lake.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construct a boat launch, marine, parking and day use recreational facility at the west side.*
Fees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fee structures to maintain facilities and increase law enforcement should be a priority.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new fee changes will likely reduce vandalism by youth.
Fire Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the new recommendations for the fire management plan as listed in Action FM 1B, 1C, and 1D.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not allow low-intensity prescribed burns to establish firebreaks within wetland/riparian buffer zones.*
Geological Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation should petition CDFG to limit the number of permits issued for suction dredging.*

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

Land Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not allow residential development around the lake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not allow housing or future development on New Melones Lake proper.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A landowner is offering to donate land on the west side that would not be allowed to be developed and would be intended for trails, public use, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimize development around the lake, especially housing development. Equestrian and hiking uses are fine.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strongly disagree with the proposal in Alternative B to dispose of or transfer lands not needed for project purposes.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support retention of all the lands within the New Melones Lake Area.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The maps showing the project boundaries may not include lands that have been acquired by the government, particularly near the dam and extending towards Tulloch Reservoir.*
Livestock Grazing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grazing should be increased on Reclamation lands.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grazing will have negative environmental effects in all zones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclude grazing from areas that are environmentally sensitive (riparian, wetland, seep spring areas, etc.).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish smaller, more gradual leases on the land in order to assess impacts (on species, sensitive habitats, etc).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grazing would be good for yellow star-thistle control.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enforcement will be a key issue with grazing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commenter would like to see grazing proposed in the preferred alternative with balanced management when the New Melones staff finds it appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A grazing management plan would be needed if New Melones lands are opened up to grazing again.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not implement Action LM 11, which allows grazing and stock watering as a means to control invasive plants and to reduce fire danger.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grazing should be allowed only after special status plant surveys have been conducted and a range management plan is developed to protect sensitive species and habitats.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of grazing to control invasive plants should be used judiciously, as it can damage the vegetative cover that remains in an area.*
Noise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease the noise on the lake. Boomboxes should not be allowed on the lake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandatory noise reduction is needed, since voluntary compliance is ineffective.*
Public Health and Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floating buoys should be pulled out when not needed, especially in times of drought.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The buoy in the dam cove is not visible enough, as it is too low in the water. There is the danger of trolling lines/downriggers catching on the buoy anchor and damaging boats, especially while trolling at night.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase boat patrols on the lake, especially during busy months. Jet skiers often do dangerous things on the water.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More enforcement needed for marine/sport vessels.

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unsafe boat use and reckless jet skiers and wake boarders are a safety concern.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a long-term hunting strategy as proposed in Action PHS 10C.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action PHS 16B, to site a sheriff substation with lake access to each county.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If access were reopened along old SR 49 and Parrots Ferry Road, boaters could be responsible for their own safety at these launch sites.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement more volunteer programs such as trash pickup and efforts to prevent vandalism.*
Recreation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate a jet ski area so jet skiers don't have to worry about bothering other recreational users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor trails for snakes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No jet skis should be allowed on the lake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not expand RV sites or hook-ups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-open Bear Creek cove as a day use area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make a family-friendly beach as well as a nearby launch area for jet-skis. Parrotts Ferry used to be a good jet-ski launch area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow the same use for pontoon boats as in the past, particularly for overnight and day use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nudity at the Camp Nine Area (Candy Rock) is offensive. Please control this issue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connectivity in the trails plan would be good.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase zones with non-motorized boats, especially in Alternative C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation needs to manage trails to specific needs if they open up new trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't increase use at the lake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create protective (no-wake) zones for kayakers and non-motorized vessels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase areas with natural and original values, such as pristine areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Houseboats should be regulated by size and number allowed on the lake.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommend no motorized boating in proposed sensitive habitat zones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enforcement of rock climbing restrictions would be an issue. Monitor the response and add tighter protection to these areas if needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a higher risk on the lake without zones now.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jet skiers and wake boarders often have no courtesy and do risky maneuvers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Angels Camp and Coyote Creek should be made into no-wake zones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not allow houseboats to park at campgrounds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make more equestrian trails to access Shell Road from the staging area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-motorized activity and quiet recreation should be brought forward in the RMP.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to add "non-motorized areas" on the maps, not just "Environmentally Sensitive Areas".
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage Reclamation to analyze the proportion of the budget that supports motorized versus non-motorized recreation.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not pursue additional commercial services as proposed under Alternative B.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action R 22C, which discourages development in rural natural management areas.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action R 23D, which would assess the feasibility of future development in rural developed management areas, may be a reasonable action to accommodate growing visitation.*

**Table 3-2
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue current status quo management of houseboat activities on the lake (Action AR 23A).*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action AR 27B, to designate additional water play areas.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain current equestrian uses in the Peoria Wildlife Management Area (Action LR 16C).*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action LR 17A, which would promote the use of existing trails and unpaved roads in the development of future trail systems, may be appropriate in certain previously impacted areas, such as Glory Hole and Tuttle town.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not opposed to new trails in Action LR 18B, which would encourage multiuse trail activities in trail development, if no sensitive wildlife, plants, or other resources would be significantly affected.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow 16 foot wide houseboats on the lake.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand the recreational offerings on the western shore of the reservoir. Calaveras County and Reclamation should work together to facilitate this.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add hiking, biking, and equestrian trail systems in the western portion of the New Melones Lake Area.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include recreation actions from Alternative B, such as more and improved multi-use trails (pedestrian/bike/equestrian), connecting trails, boat and fishing facilities, camping, and day use facilities. Also, augment these with additional facilities as identified in the 1976 Master Plan.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permit commercial rafting trips on the stretch of river below Camp Nine when the water level is low.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes to New Melones Lake management should enhance fishing opportunities.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the diversity of recreation in the lake.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a plan to regulate whitewater rafting in the event of a severe drought.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not develop additional recreation facilities within Westside/Bowie Flat.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreational uses of the lake are fine, especially fishing, but power boats and wake riders need to be restricted to deep water areas.*
<p>Socioeconomic and Environmental Justice</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand and diversify non-motorized water recreational uses to secure Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties' futures, since rising gas prices may decrease motorized water recreation users.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a ramp allowing ADA-access for swimming at the Tuttle town and/or other major lake areas.*
<p>Traffic/Transportation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build a road from Copperopolis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the entrance stations, speed bump signs need to be placed further away, giving drivers more notice to slow down.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve maintenance of Shell Road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed Westside access road should have more detail in Alternative B. It should not just be a single line item.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The access road on the Westside would help to redirect boats and traffic off of Lake Tulloch to New Melones.

Table 3-2
Comments and Questions Submitted to Reclamation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Westside road access should be included in Alternative A since the government promised future development in the Master Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not create a new access road from the Westside, as this would impact wildlife and habitat values in that area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the proposal to modernize and update Camp Nine Road and Parrotts Ferry Road.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the continued closure of the various areas listed in Action TA 4C.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider a new public access road beginning at the existing roadway from O'Byrnes Ferry Road leading to a point near the California Asbestos Monofill/Waste Management facility and then following the best northerly route to an acceptable access point on the shoreline at Texas Charlie gulch.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calaveras County can study all available sources of funding to help fund the acquisition and construction of a new access road.*
<p>Visitor Use</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not opposed to the development of an amphitheater in the Tuttle town Area (Action IS 7B).*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Action IS 10C, for a new outdoor classroom at the Visitor Center.*
<p>Water Resources</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation should have begun water rationing and allocation processes a long time ago, especially during drought conditions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The plan should include changes to water management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Melones needs regular water quality testing for MTBE and heavy metals (mine tailing contamination) to protect downstream water quality and fish habitat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation should use bio-remediation for mercury/cyanide clean up.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reclamation should implement mitigation measures for water contaminants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Melones has become too muddy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zero tolerance of chemicals is not needed in Alternative A.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alternative B contradicts itself. Under Action WR 27B, it states that there will be no prescribed burns. Under Action V 3B, it states that it will implement the Fire Management Plan that will allow prescribed burning.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alternative C has appropriate sanitation and erosion actions to protect water resources.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand non-motorized water-recreational uses to improve water quality for the reservoir and for downstream users.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commenter has concerns about mercury and cyanide in the water and downstream of the dam from historic Melones mine tailings.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement monthly water testing during one year to establish a baseline knowledge of annual levels of concentration.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep reservoir water levels below the Old Parrots Ferry Road access road and the old bridge to provide for white water river recreation.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a balanced approach to herbicide use to allow cautious use of chemical controls as a last resort where contamination or risk to sensitive plant or animal species is not a concern.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing recreation would increase pollution in and around the lake.*

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

Other
▪ Commenter is in favor of Alternative A.
▪ Commenter prefers Alternative B.
▪ Make minor improvements to lake management, but keep the area natural.
▪ Create alternatives for drought conditions.
▪ Incorporate more actions from Alternative C into Alternative D.
▪ The Conservation Alternative (Alternative C) is the best of the action alternatives.*
▪ Alternative B (increased use) is critical to the City of Angels Camp's economic well-being.*
▪ Alternative A is not accurately represented, since it should include development that was planned in the 1976 Master Plan.*
▪ Does Reclamation have a plan to clear the Spillway of vegetation or to clean up the damage (debris) to Tulloch Reservoir should a spill occur?*
▪ Alternative D (Multiple Use) would best serve the needs and desires of the general public and would be in the best interest of the local economy.*

*Denotes comments submitted by mail or e-mail.

4. Future Steps

4.1 Summary of Future Steps and Public Participation Opportunities

The goal of the RMP/EIS Chapters 1-3 Public Open House 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, the alternatives development meetings, and the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses. 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 and will document a detailed analysis of the alternatives. 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 the Draft RMP/EIS public comment period, Reclamation will revise the RMP/EIS and will publish a proposed Final RMP/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 Lake Area RMP/EIS Web site, at www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/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 Lake Area 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 Melissa Brockman at mbrockman@mp.usbr.gov, or they may call her at (707) 966-2111. Please provide your name, mailing address, and e-mail address, as well as your preferred method of receiving information.

Figure 4-1 Public Participation Milestones

Public Participation Milestones
Notice of Intent published in the <i>Federal Register</i> 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
Alternatives workshops September 28 and 29, 2007
Revised alternatives and prepared draft Chapters 1-3 November 2007 to August 2008
Draft alternatives Chapter 1-3 available for public review August to September 2008
Public workshops on draft Chapters 1-3 September 4 and 5, 2008
Revise Chapters 1-3 and prepare draft RMP/EIS October to December 2008
Draft RMP/EIS with plan alternatives available for public review and comment winter 2008/2009
Prepare final RMP/EIS spring 2009
30-day public review for final RMP/EIS summer 2009
Record of Decision and approved RMP/EIS fall 2009
<i>Shading indicates completed steps. Future project updates will be distributed during this planning process. Schedule is subject to change.</i>

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Appendix: Public Involvement

The following items were used to notify the public of the RMP/EIS Draft Chapters 1-3 open houses, describe the draft alternatives, and provide the opportunity to comment:

- **News release;**
- **Third project update;**
- **Letter from Reclamation Project Manager;**
- **Written summary of draft alternatives;**
- **Revision to Section 2.6.5 of Draft Chapters 1-3;**
- **Figures showing draft alternative zoning;**
- **WROS classification and definitions; and**
- **Comment cards.**

