

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact
College Campground Rehabilitation

USDA Forest Service
Township 8S, Range 26 E, Section 8 Mount Diablo Baseline & Meridian
High Sierra Ranger District, Sierra National Forest
Fresno County, California

Decision Summary

Based upon my review of the College Campground Rehabilitation environmental assessment (EA), the *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Hydropower Licenses: Mammoth Pool Project—FERC Project No. 2085; Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Project—FERC Project No. 2175; Big Creek Nos. 2A, 8, and Eastwood Project—FERC Project No. 67; and Big Creek No. 3 Project—FERC Project No. 120* and the project record, I have decided to implement the Proposed Action as described in the EA as well as below. This project is designed to rehabilitate College Campground to satisfy the requirements of the Big Creek Alternative Licensing Process (ALP) Settlement Agreement (SA) and USDA-FS 4(e) conditions as well as reducing the likelihood of campground rehabilitation related tree stress, catastrophic forest fire, or insect invasion, while preserving or enhancing public safety, the campground's scenic character and recreation setting.

USDA-FS proposes to implement the following actions to rehabilitate campground facilities and to protect and/or restore culturally and biologically sensitive resources:

- Replace or recondition College Campground facilities and amenities including:
 - Campsites and associated amenities (e.g., picnic tables, fire rings, and food storage containers);
 - Restroom and trash enclosures;
 - Storm water drainage;
 - Gate replacement;
 - Water and electrical utilities;
 - Campground roads and trails;
 - Parking facilities (i.e., campsite parking spurs and additional parking areas);
 - Directional and other informational signage; and
 - Vista points
- Upgrade a percentage of College Campground facilities and amenities to meet Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines, Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines, and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards.

Introduction

Implementation of the College Campground Rehabilitation Project is required as part of the

collaboratively agreed upon Settlement Agreement (SA) and USDA-FS 4(e) conditions developed during the Big Creek ALP for the Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Project (FERC Project No. 2175). The Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Project is one of four Big Creek Projects that are part of the Big Creek ALP and are currently undergoing relicensing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or FERC).

The rehabilitation of College Campground has undergone environmental analyses by the Commission in the FEIS (FERC 2009). This document is part of the project record that supports the Commission's prospective issuance of a new license for the four projects. (The license is expected to be issued in 2011.) The document may be viewed on the FERC e-library website: <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/eLibrary.asp>. Analysis included in the FEIS is pertinent to the rehabilitation of College Campground and was incorporated by reference into the College Campground Rehabilitation EA. Information in the FERC FEIS incorporated into the EA included the analysis of Big Creek ALP level aquatic resources, terrestrial wildlife resources, threatened & endangered species, recreation, cultural resources, land use and aesthetic resources, air quality and noise and the project's cumulative effects on these resources. (See EA Appendix E for the FEIS Executive Summary that lists the environmental impacts of the FERC Project of which the rehabilitation of College Campground is only a small component.)

As part of the alternatives analyzed, the Commission's FEIS includes detailed environmental analyses of the Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement (PM&E) measures recommended for inclusion in the new project licenses. These measures included implementation of a program to rehabilitate recreation facilities located in the vicinity of the four Big Creek ALP Projects. College Campground is one of the facilities identified for rehabilitation in the program. Rehabilitation includes reconditioning or replacement of an existing facility to restore the functionality of the site. Replacement is the substitution or exchange of an existing fixed asset or component with one having essentially the same capacity and purpose (i.e., in-like-kind). As campground rehabilitation is occurring in advance of FERC making a decision based on the FEIS, the Forest Service is the decision-maker in allowing the rehabilitation to move forward at this time.

PROPOSED ACTION

This section describes specific construction activities associated with the removal, replacement, and/or rehabilitation of existing College Campground facilities, including campsites, roads and parking areas, a storm water drainage ditch, restroom facilities, trash enclosures, water distribution system, electrical system, gates, trails, vista points, signage, and construction-related tree removal.

Appendix D provides an engineering site plan for the campground. Photographs and schematics of proposed new facilities are provided as Appendix G. The proposed construction schedule is included as Appendix F.

During the construction period, existing campsites or other previously disturbed ground within College Campground will serve as staging areas for construction equipment and materials. Ground-disturbing activities associated with the Proposed Action may include, but are not limited to, timber removal, asphalt removal, re-grading, leveling, trenching, widening, lengthening, and/or resurfacing. Asphalt removed from the existing paved roads will be recycled

onsite and used as a base for the roads. Timber removed will be removed off site and either chipped or burned.

Campsites

The Proposed Action rehabilitates and replaces existing College Campground campsites and associated parking spurs to update campground facilities, and meet current accessibility standards. Following completion of the Proposed Action, College Campground will have a total of ten campsites, two of which will be designed as universally accessible sites (i.e., consistent with FSORAG and ABAAS guidelines). The ten campsites will include:

- Eight single-capacity sites (two universally accessible),
- Two double-capacity sites.

Rehabilitation of the campsites will include the following specific actions:

- Retain the eight existing single-capacity sites,
- Combine three existing single-capacity sites into two double-capacity sites.

Campsite and parking spur removal will require the removal and disposal or off-site storage of existing picnic tables, food storage containers, and fire rings. All material will be either disposed of at an approved refuse disposal site, or stored by USDA-FS in an existing storage facility. All campsites will be regraded using earth-moving equipment (e.g., motor graders and excavators) to restore natural contours or to level the site to meet accessibility standards and to better conform to existing topography.

Rehabilitation of a single-capacity campsite will include development of a camp living area (approximately 25 feet wide and 18 feet long), tent pad area (approximately 16 feet wide and 16 feet long), and a parking spur (approximately 10 to 16 feet wide and 30 to 40 feet long). The new double-capacity campsites will include a camp living area (approximately 30 feet wide and 26 feet long), two tent pad areas (each approximately 16 feet wide and 16 feet long), and a parking spur (approximately 20 to 36 feet wide and 30 to 40 feet long).

The rehabilitated campsite living areas will be composed of compacted aggregate and equipped with new universally accessible picnic tables, bear-proof food storage containers, and fire rings. Tent areas will consist of compacted onsite soils. Parking spurs associated with each site will be paved with bituminous asphalt. Access routes to restrooms and parking facilities from the accessible campsites will comply with universally accessible slope and surface requirements.

Roads and Parking Areas

The Proposed Action reconstructs the existing campground road and entrance. The existing asphalt will be removed, ground, and re-compacted to form the composite base for the new road. The new composite base will follow the existing road grades except for several areas that will require minimal re-grading to conform to current safety design criteria. The new asphalt roads will include a 20-foot-wide two-lane entrance road and a 12-foot-wide one-lane campground road.

Under the Proposed Action the existing overflow parking area will be removed and a new parking area that includes five 10-foot by 20-foot parking spaces, including one van accessible parking stall, will be developed. Materials used for the parking area will be the same as those described above for the roads.

Storm Water Drainage

A single 18-inch culvert is located under Huntington Lake Road and discharges storm water runoff north of the campground entrance. To prevent this storm water from draining into the campground, a new rock-lined ditch will be constructed from the outlet of the culvert and around the north-eastern perimeter of the campground where storm water will be allowed to infiltrate into the ground. The new drainage ditch will be approximately 282 feet long, 4 feet wide, 2 foot deep. Due to the project's adherence to the BMPs and the installation of the rock-lined ditch rerouting stormwater away from surface stormwater drainages allowing for stormwater infiltration into the ground, a determination was made that a SWPPP was not required for the project and a SWPPP waiver has been signed.

Restroom Facilities

Two existing restroom facilities, one flush and one vault, will be removed and replaced with one flush and one vault that meet current accessibility standards. The new flush restroom facilities will house a total of two toilet seats and the new vault restroom facility will also house a total of two toilet seats.

Prior to demolition and removal of the existing restroom facilities, each vault or septic tank will be pumped and waste materials will be removed from the site and disposed of by a permitted septic hauler. Each building will then be demolished using an excavator. Materials will be loaded into a dump truck and disposed of at a USDA-FS approved location. Following demolition, the lid of the vault or septic tank will be removed, and disposed of at an approved facility. Exposed vault or septic tank walls will then be collapsed.

The absorption fields of the existing flush toilet facility will be abandoned in place. The construction of an absorption field for the new flush toilet facilities will be designed to avoid the existing absorption field where possible.

The new restroom facilities will be constructed as pre-fabricated concrete buildings. The buildings will have a peaked, concrete roof with simulated delta ribbed metal. The base of the building will have a unique rock texture, and the walls will have wood-like, textured paneling in light, natural colors (i.e. beige, browns, and grays). The buildings will include cast-in doors and windows, directional outdoor lighting, and roof-top ventilation pipes or exhaust fans. All buildings will meet current accessibility standards.

The flush toilet building will have a footprint of 17 feet by 10 feet, and will reach a height of 13 feet at the peak. The flush toilet building will sit on a 6-inch, compacted, aggregate base. The two-seat flush toilet building will be plumbed into one 1,500-gallon septic tank. The septic tank will be a pre-cast concrete septic tank with at least one baffle, and will include an effluent filtration screen. The septic tank effluent will then flow into an absorption field, designed for the soil and site characteristics of the Project area.

The vault toilet building will have a footprint of 15 feet by 12 feet, and will reach a height of 12 feet at the peak. The vault toilet building will sit on two 1,000-gallon vault lined with a cast-in ABS plastic liner. The vault will slope to the rear of the building, where an access hatch will be located for pumping the waste.

Trash Enclosures

Under the Proposed Action, the two existing trash enclosures will be removed. The wooden enclosures around the trash bins will be demolished, and the concrete slab will be broken up and removed. Two new enclosures will be constructed adjacent to each of the restroom facilities. Each will consist of a 10-foot by 12-foot concrete slab with a 5-foot-high wooden enclosure along three sides.

Water Distribution System

As a part of the College Campground rehabilitation, the existing distribution system and features within the campground will be abandoned in place. Any features that are above ground or exposed during construction will be removed and disposed of. The existing water supply line running into the west side of the campground will continue to be used to supply water to the campground.

Under the Proposed Action, approximately 250 linear feet of HPC piping will be installed underground for the water distribution system. HPC piping will also be used for lateral connections from the main water lines to restroom facilities and water spigots. The water system will also include gate valves, ball valves, air release valves, drain valves and pressure reducing valves throughout the system as necessary. Installation of the pipe will require digging trenches (e.g., using a trencher) approximately 2.5 feet wide and approximately 2 to 3 feet deep. Four new water spigots, including two stand-alone spigots and two spigots adjacent to restroom facilities, will be installed. A gravel drain will be constructed at the base, and filled with soil and gravel. A pipe and water faucet will be attached to posts and to a concrete bowl that will channel the water and allow it to leach into the gravel drain.

Electrical System

Under the Proposed Action, a new transformer and electrical panel will be installed near the existing overhead primary lines. From this point, approximately 320 feet of new power line will be trenched underground to the new flush and vault toilet buildings. Installation of the system will require digging trenches (e.g., using a trencher) approximately 2.5 feet wide and approximately 2 to 3 feet deep. After installation, any soil removed will be replaced.

Gates

Under the Proposed Action, the existing entrance gate will be replaced (similar style to the existing gate). The gate will be replaced in a similar location and will provide a similar function of restricting vehicle access to the campground.

Trails

Under the Proposed Action, the one existing trail will be repaired and upgraded and two new trails will be developed. This will include the following specific actions:

- Develop an approximately 50-foot-long universally accessible trail from campsite #3 to the flush restroom facility. This trail will be approximately three feet wide and will comply with FSORAG, and will be constructed with hardened aggregate to provide a firm and stable surface.
- Repair and upgrade the existing 120-foot-long trail from the campground road to Huntington Lake. This trail will meet current FSORAG guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Access Routes (ORAR), and will be approximately 5 feet wide and composed of a hardened aggregate base.
- Develop a loop lake trail starting from the campground road just before the overflow parking area that continues toward Huntington Lake (intersecting with the end of the existing trail described above) and loop back to the campground road near campsite #4. The trail will be approximately 520 feet long and approximately 5 feet wide and composed of a hardened aggregate base. This trail will also meet ORAR FSORAG requirements.

In addition, rehabilitation of the existing trail and construction of two new trails under the Proposed Action will direct recreational users and allow for several existing informal trails that are located in the wetland area east of the campground to return to their native condition. The proposed action also includes installing removable bollards in front of the trail the crosses the wetland area east of the campground to prevent vehicular access during the recreation season. The trail is a snowmobile trail, so the removable bollards will be removed during the winter recreation season.

Vista Points

Two new vista points will be developed along the loop lake trail to provide scenic views of Huntington Lake. Each vista point will be approximately 25 feet by 10 feet and consist of two benches and two wheelchair-accessible seating areas. The ground surface will be constructed with hardened aggregate to provide a firm and stable surface.

Signage

New signage will be installed within the Project area for the purpose of directing traffic around the campground road loop and will include (but is not limited to) speed limit, campground number markers, and stop signs. In addition, new entrance, accessibility, bulletin board, and trail signs will also be installed within the campground to replace or supplement the existing signage. Signs will be constructed from suitable materials (i.e., wood, metal, or recycled plastic) in accordance with all state and federal specifications.

Construction Related Tree Removal

The rehabilitation of College Campground (including a two-foot-buffer around the construction footprint) will require the removal of approximately 93 trees. This includes an estimated 13 trees measuring between 8 and 11 inches diameter at breast height (DBH), an estimated 59 trees

between 12 and 23 inches DBH, 20 trees between 24 and 35 DBH, and one tree greater than 36 inches DBH.(See Appendix A)

Slash Removal as a Result from Related Tree Removal

All slash from the related tree removal and construction activities will be removed from the campground facility to an approved location or off NFS system land.

Design Measures and BMPS

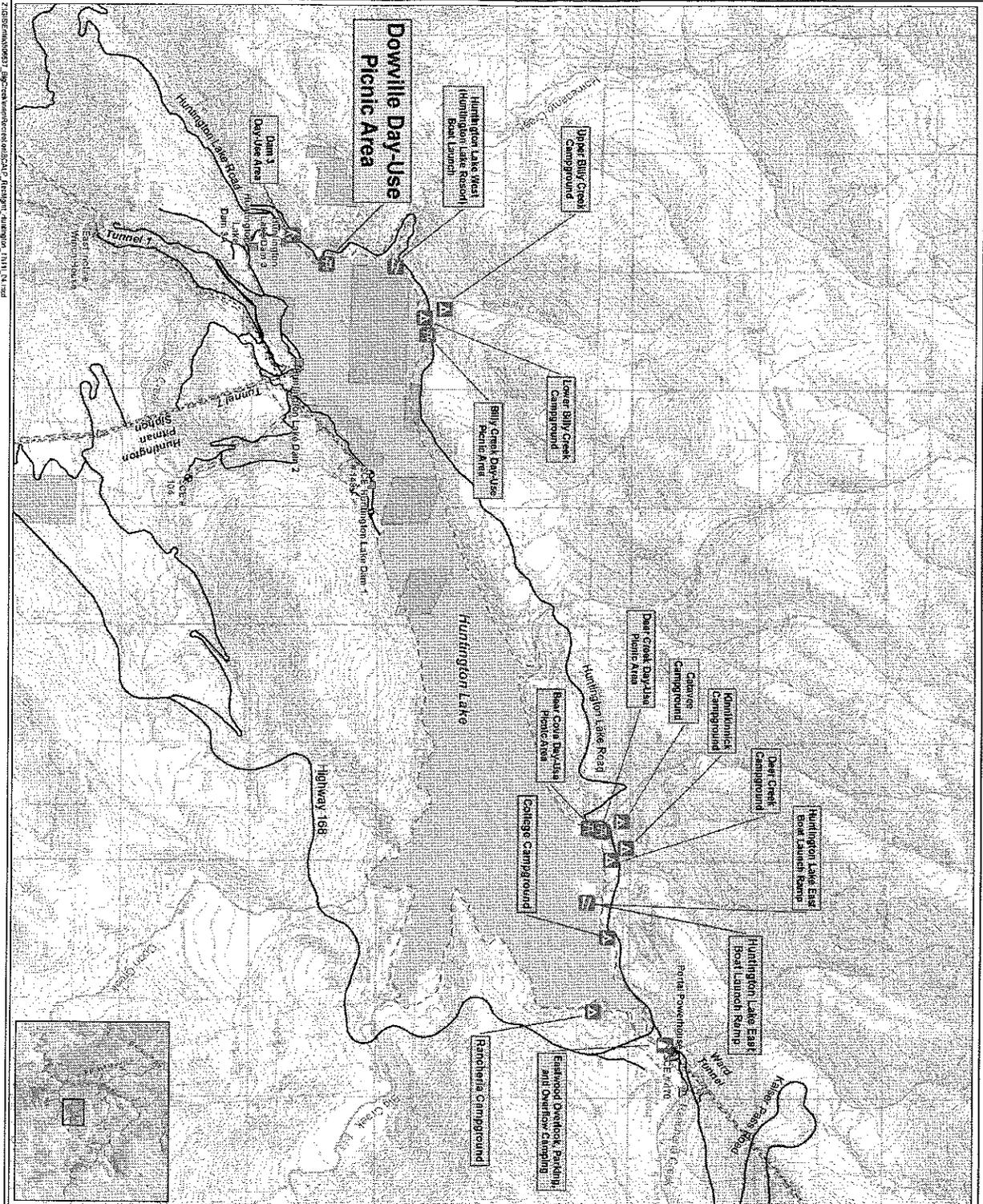
Design features and BMPs are included as part of the decision to reduce potential impacts. My decision includes implementation of the project specific design features and BMPs shown in Appendix B & C respectively. These design features and BMPs minimize, reduce or eliminate impacts on sensitive resources.

Monitoring

My decision includes monitoring erosion control after each rain event and as well as monitoring the effectiveness of all applicable BMPS (as described in Appendix C).

Proposed Schedule

Currently SCE intends to begin construction on College Campground in the summer or early fall of 2012. The project is expected to take approximately 6 to 8 weeks to complete. The proposed Project schedule is included as Appendix F.



Recreation Facilities

- Campground
- Day Use Picnic Area
- Boat Ramp
- Day Use Area
- Visitor Center

Other Features

- Road
- Lake
- Stream
- FERC Boundary
- SCE Owned Land

SCE Facilities

- Powerhouse
- Dam
- Utility
- Water Conveyance Feature
- Gaging Station
- Water Control

EDISON
An American Electric Company

Big Creek Hydroelectric System
Alternative Licensing Process
Figure 2
Recreation Opportunities:
Huntington Lake

Scale: 0 to 1 mile
Projection: UTM Zone 11
2020/07

Map of California showing the location of Huntington Lake in the northern part of the state.

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Decision Rationale

The existing College Campground facilities, last upgraded in the late 1950s, are in a deteriorated state and are in need of rehabilitation. The rehabilitation of College Campground will satisfy the requirements of the SA and USDA-FS 4(e) conditions as well as tree removal as required mitigation of trees within the construction area. With this mitigation, we are reducing the likelihood of campground related stress, catastrophic forest fire due to a higher mortality rate of trees, or insect invasion that would occur if trees were not mitigated. It will also preserve or enhance the campground's scenic character and recreation setting. Implementation of these actions will provide aesthetically pleasing year-round campground services at College Campground that will meet the public's recreation needs over the term of the new license for the Big Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Project.

In designing the alternative that I have selected, an internal interdisciplinary team worked on the project from their various specialty areas looking to design the campground rehabilitation to meet new accessibility standards (implementing two campsites that are completely universally accessible); maximize recreational opportunities for a variety of public needs (including adding more group campsites); protect natural resources (e.g. deserting old trails near meadow to allow for enhancement of wetland naturally); and maintain or enhance the aesthetic experience at the campground (improvement and development of trails and two vista points.).

No comments were received during the public comment period indicating a low level of controversy regarding the project. Since the project benefits public recreation and no concerns were raised I feel my decision addresses the public interest.

The health of the forest surrounding the campground post rehabilitation was a concern. In the Sierra National Forest (SNF)'s experience, campground rehabilitation is stressful on the forest and has led to forest mortality at other campgrounds. To forestall this likely scenario at College Campground, I have decided to add a removal of construction related trees component to the project to maintain the vigor of the trees in light of the rehabilitation activities. Construction mitigation of trees is required in the project area due to the diminishing health of other trees surrounding the area if mitigation was not enforced. This would lead to tougher competition amongst trees for resources of water, species of trees would become more susceptible to bug invasion, and mortality rates of trees would rise.

Public Involvement

NEPA requires that a federal agency, when preparing an environmental analysis, seek the involvement and input of other agencies and the public whenever possible. The FERC FEIS (including the assessment of the rehabilitation of College Campground) was developed based on the input of a number of stakeholders in the Big Creek ALP, including government resource agencies, non-governmental organizations, Native American tribes, and interested public members. A total of 360 meetings were held during the relicensing process for the development of the SA and the PM&E measures, as well as to support USDA-FS in the development of their 4(e) Conditions (Appendix H).

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the SNF Schedule of Proposed Actions beginning January 1, 2012 and updated periodically throughout the environmental analysis. USDA-FS posted the draft EA for public review on the USDA-FS website for 30 days and advertised the availability to comment in the Fresno Bee. No comments were received.

The environmental assessment lists agencies and persons consulted on page 39.

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have reviewed the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed activities in the EA. I have also reviewed the project record for this analysis and the effects of the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative as disclosed in the EA. Implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1508.27) provide criteria for determining the significance of effects. Significant, as used in NEPA, requires consideration of both context and intensity.

(a) Context. This means that significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR 1508.27).

This disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. The project area is limited in size and the activities limited in duration. Effects are local in nature and are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources.

(b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following are considered in evaluation intensity (40 CFR 1508.27).

Beneficial and adverse impacts – Environmental effects associated with the project are discussed in the Environmental Consequences section of the EA for potentially affected resources (Sections 3.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2). Botanical and aquatic resources would benefit long term due to the abandonment of unused trails, leading to the restoration of wetlands and meadows where trails are near. Analysis shows there would be no impact to special status raptors or bats and a beneficial effect for the foraging habits of Ringtail and Red Fox species. There is no effect to cultural resources within the construction area. With the implementation of the project as designed to meet Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), as amended and visual quality objectives, there would be no effect on visual resources. Although College Campground will have the number of campgrounds reduced by one, the upgraded campground will be able to handle the occupancy for the average week day and weekend during the peak summer season and therefore there is no significant adverse effect on recreation. The campground rehabilitation will reduce the density of the tree stands increasing tree vigor and decreasing the potential for tree stress, insect attack and uncharacteristically severe wildfire. Overall effects analysis showed that the Proposed Action would not have significant impacts on resources identified and described in the EA.

1. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety* – Treatment activities would be conducted in a safe manner to protect the public. Campground will be

closed during rehabilitation. Therefore there will be no significant effects on public health and safety.

2. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area* – There are no anticipated effects to historic places or loss of scientific, cultural, historical, or other unique resources. The project area includes .4 acres of wetland on the perimeter, which is considered a unique characteristic of the geographic area. There will be no significant effects on this wetland environment because design criteria have been developed to protect the area (EA Section 3.2.2).
3. *The degree of controversy over environmental effects* – The effects of the Proposed Action on resources in the Project area is not considered to be highly controversial by professionals, specialists, and scientists from associated fields of forestry, wildlife biology, fisheries, and hydrology, etc. Public involvement with interested and affected individuals and agencies throughout the environmental analysis was attempted with the result being one substantive comment provided during scoping. The EA adequately addressed this concern.
4. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment is highly uncertain or involves unique or unknown risks* – Public comment and internal analysis did not identify highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. The technical analysis conducted for determinations of the impacts to resources are supportable with the use of accepted techniques, reliable data, and professional judgment. The SNF has extensive experience and success with the types of activities to be implemented (i.e. required mitigation of tree removal within construction area to provide lower mortality rates and causes while reducing competition amongst species). The effects analysis in the EA shows the effects from thinning and removal of commercial trees, and campground rehabilitation are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (EA, Chapter 3, Sections 3.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2)).
5. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration* – This decision is like one of many that have previously been made and will continue to be made by Forest Service responsible official regarding campground rehabilitation and forest thinning on National Forest System lands. This decision is within the scope of the LRMP and is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. No significant effects are identified (EA, Chapter 3, Sections 3.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2)), nor does this action influence a decision in principle about any future considerations.
6. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts* – There are no significant cumulative effects on the environment when combined with the effects created by past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions. The effects of other foreseeable future actions as well as past actions and ongoing actions were included in the analysis (EA, Chapter 4).

7. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources* – The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because there are not direct effects on these resources and management requirements derived from the Regional Programmatic Agreement would be in place to ensure that the potential for inadvertent effects is minimized(EA, Section 3.3.2).
8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973* – The action will have “no affect” on any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (EA, Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2). No federally-listed endangered or proposed species were identified by the FWS within the analysis area. No critical habitat for federally-listed threatened or endangered species is designated within College Campground Project area. The project Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment determined no proposed or designated critical habitat exists in or near the project action area.
9. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment* – The action complies with Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (EA, Chapter 3, Sections 3.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.2). The action was designed to be consistent with the LRMP, as amended.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the SNF National Forest Land Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with relevant land management plan direction. College Campground and adjacent lands administered by the SNF are managed in accordance with the SNF Land LRMP, as amended. The purpose of the LRMP and its amendments is to guide the integrated protection and use of Forest resources. College Campground falls within the LRMP Analysis Area 47 (Huntington Lake) that is designated as a Developed Recreation Management Area (USDA-FS. 1992).

Management objectives for the 77-acre stand are identified in the LRMP. The primary management objective for the Huntington Lake Recreation Area is recreation. Visual quality objectives (VQOs) for the stand are for full Retention, and fuels objectives identify the stand as part of the threat zone of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

LRMP Management Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) apply to the College Campground Rehabilitation Project (USDA-FS. 1992) and will be implemented as part of my decision. The S&Gs are categorized per the sections listed in the LRMP. EA Section 1.3 describes these applicable S&Gs.

Endangered Species Act

I find that this decision is consistent with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service list of “endangered and threatened species that may be affected by Projects in the SNF”. The action will have “no affect” on any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (EA, Chapter 3, 3.2.2) .

National Historic Preservation Act

I find that this decision is consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89.665, as amended) also requires federal agencies to afford the State Historic Preservation Officer a reasonable opportunity to comment. Surveys were conducted for Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, and historic properties or areas that may be affected by this decision (EA, Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2). All national Register eligible and potentially eligible properties would be managed for no effect as per the Regional Programmatic Agreement.

Clean Water Act (Public Law 92-500)

I find that this decision is consistent with the Clean Water Act, which requires all Federal agencies to comply with the provisions of the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act regulates forest management activities near federal waters and riparian areas. The design features and Best Management Practices associated with the proposed action ensure that the terms of the Clean Water Act are met, primarily pollution caused by erosion and sedimentation (EA, Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2).

After consideration of the Finding of No Significant Impact, findings required by other laws and regulations and the EA, I determined that College will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, and that an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Administrative Review (Appeal) Opportunities

On April 30, 2012, a legal notice was published in the Fresno Bee to announce that a pre-decisional EA and other project-related information were available for a 30-day public review period, as required by Forest Service regulations as per 36 CFR 215. No comments were received during the EA review period. After signature of this DN/FONSI, a legal notice announcing this DN/FONSI will be published in the Fresno Bee. Since no substantive comments were received during the comment period, this decision is not subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 215.13.

Implementation

As no comments were received during the comment period the project may be implemented immediately.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Judi Tapia, Environmental Coordinator, SNF Supervisor's Office, 1600 Tollhouse Road, Clovis, California, 93611 and at (559) 297-0706 extension 4938.



Ray Porter
District Ranger

7.19.12
Date