

File

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC USE INSPECTION REPORT

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Francisco Regional Office

Logistics

Project Name Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project No. 2130-CA

Licensee Pacific Gas and Electric Company License Type Major

License Issued March 21, 1955 Expires December 31, 2004

Location Stanislaus River Stanislaus National Forest
(waterway) (reservation)

Tuolumne and Calaveras California
(counties) (state)

Recreation and Environmental Amendment Dates December 8, 1986

Previous Environmental Inspection Date August 7, 1989

FERC Inspector Philip A. Scordelis Date September 13, 1993

Licensee Representatives John Perrault, Kathy Petersen,

Phil Longo

Other Participants Bill Ferrell - U. S. Forest Service

Weather Conditions Warm; clear; calm

Summary of Findings

Most recreational facilities at this project are provided by the Forest Service, although the licensee provides a small day-use area at one forebay; some erosion of the access trail was noted. The licensee contains no cultural resource requirements. The required fish and wildlife measures have been provided. The licensee employs a number of measures to protect miscellaneous resources; some improvements to the handling and storage of hazardous materials were identified. Public safety is adequately addressed.

Submitted NOV 10 1993
PHILIP A. SCORDELIS
Philip Scordelis
Fisheries Biologist

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A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

1. Project Area Description

The Spring Gap-Stanislaus Project, located in California between 10 and 30 miles (16 and 48 kilometers) from Sonora, can be reached by driving east from San Francisco on Interstate Highways 80, 580, and 205 to Manteca; east on State Highways 120 and 108 to Sonora; and north and east on local roads to the project area (Figures 1 and 2).

The project is located on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, at elevations ranging from 1,500 to 5,600 feet (460 to 1,700 meters) above sea level (Photo No. 1). This range of elevation includes chaparral, oak woodland, and coniferous forest communities, which are inhabited by mule deer, black bear, puma, coyote, bobcat, and numerous other fur-bearing species. Avian inhabitants include eagle, hawk, vulture, raven, quail, and a variety of songbird species. Lakes and streams in the area contain bass, sunfish, trout, and char. Aboriginal Americans inhabited the area until displaced by settlers in the 19th century. The economy of the area currently depends on logging, mining, ranching, and tourism.

2. Description of the Development

The project consists of Relief Dam and Reservoir; Strawberry Dam and Pinecrest Lake; the Philadelphia and Sand Bar Diversion Dams; the Stanislaus Forebay and Afterbay; several conduits, including ditches, flumes, a tunnel, and penstocks; two powerhouses containing one unit each, with a combined capacity of 87,900 kW; one transmission line and three tap lines; and appurtenant facilities.

B. PROJECT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

1. Public Use Resources and Facilities

a. Description of Resources and Facilities

The licensee allows public access to the Stanislaus Forebay for day-use recreation such as fishing and picnicking, but swimming and boating are not allowed for safety concerns. Access to this low elevation forebay occurs over a long, occasionally rough gravel road and usage is light. Facilities provided by the licensee include a gravel parking area, chemical toilets, and an access trail to the forebay (Photo Nos. 2 and 3). The licensee contracts with a local resident for maintenance of the facilities, which was adequate. A minor amount of erosion occurring on the access trail required attention.

No facilities are provided by the licensee at the Stanislaus Diversion Dam; however, a 10-unit campground operated by the U. S. Forest Service (FS) is located just upstream of the dam.

No recreational facilities are provided at Relief Reservoir, a high elevation reservoir accessible primarily by a hiking trail from Kennedy Meadow, located about 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) north of the reservoir. Oligotrophic conditions in the reservoir limit fish production here, and overall use is light.

Pinecrest Lake is the focus of recreation in the project area and receives extremely heavy use. The licensee has provided no facilities at this lake. The FS operates family and group campgrounds, an amphitheater, a swimming beach, a boat launching ramp and trailer parking area, and hiking trails. The FS also permits operation of a marina, shops, a service station, and private cabins (Photo Nos. 4 through 7). A number of the private cabin permittees moor their small craft along the lake shoreline, and the licensee reported that permits for these mooring facilities are required. The moorage arrangement appeared to be somewhat chaotic and the licensee was requested to provide more control (Photo No. 8).

b. Compliance with Conditions and Orders

An Exhibit R or a Recreation Plan was not required for this project. Article 16 requires the licensee to allow the public reasonable, free access to project lands and waters. The licensee has complied with this requirement.

Article 29 requires the licensee to maintain the water surface elevation of Pinecrest Lake at as high a level as is practicable between June 1 and September 15; and to maintain a minimum pool of about 10 acres (4 hectares), with a depth no less than 10 feet (3 meters). Data to document compliance with these requirements have been requested.

The licensee has provided signs in compliance with Part 8 of the Commission's regulations at the Stanislaus Forebay and at Pinecrest Lake (Photo No. 9).

c. Adequacy of Public Use Resources and Facilities

Recreation demand at the project is extremely high and the existing facilities are well-used. The FS has provided nearly all of the facilities available in the project area. Additional facilities may be needed to accommodate future demand; this concern should be addressed when the current license expires.

NORTH

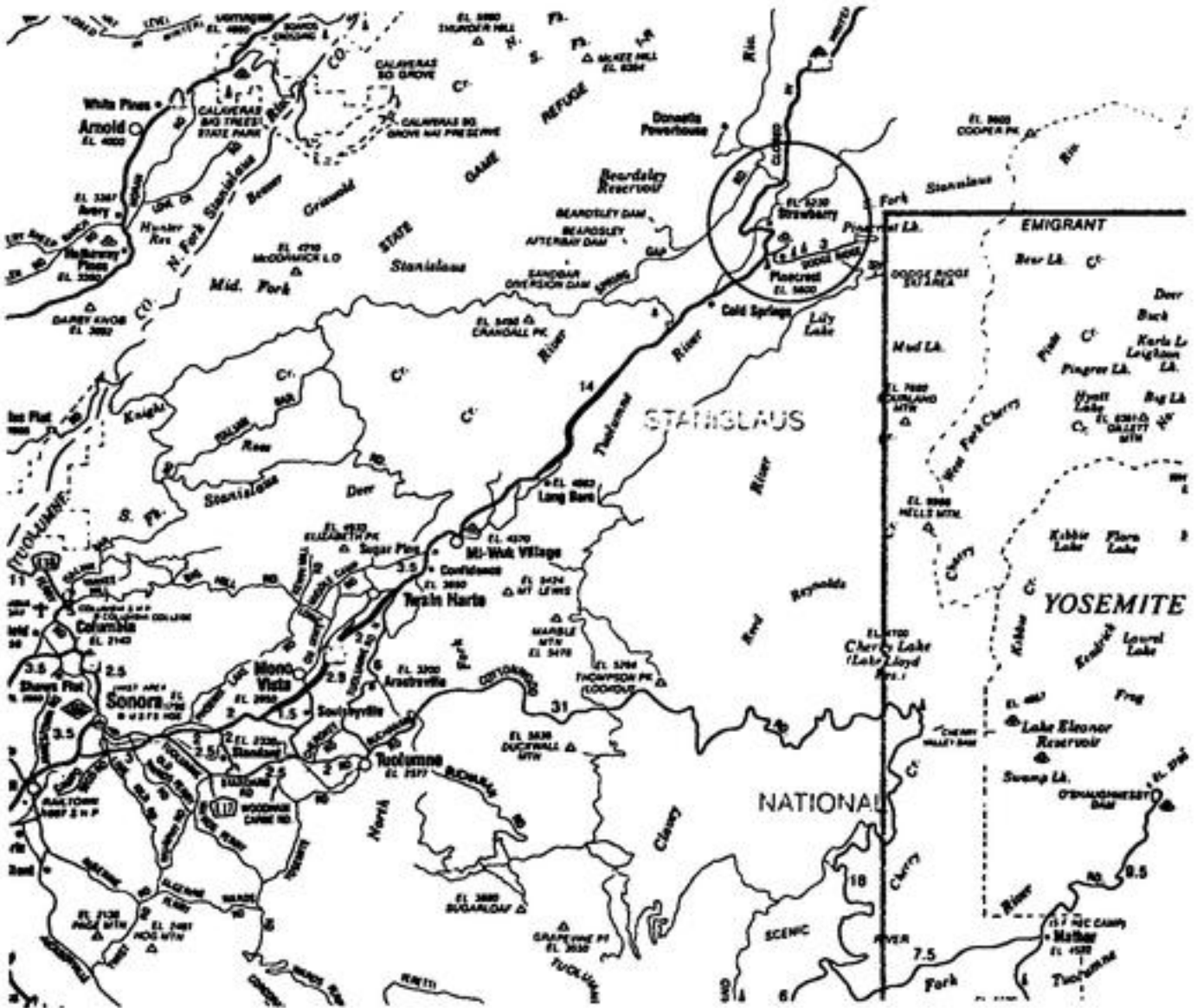


Figure 2. Project access map.



Photo 1. Relief Reservoir and the Sierra Nevada Mountains.



Photo 2. Parking area at the Stanislaus Forebay.

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