

Chapter 25

Wild and Scenic River Considerations for McCloud River

This chapter describes the effects of the dam and reservoir modifications proposed under SLWRI action alternatives on the wild and scenic river values of the lower McCloud River, one of the major tributaries to Shasta Lake.

This chapter differs from the other chapters in this EIS in that it concerns only the McCloud River and does not discuss other portions of the primary study area nor the extended study area. The study area for this chapter consists of the lower McCloud River from the McCloud River Bridge to the confluence with Little Bollibokka Creek (Figure 25-1).

The primary focus of this chapter is the wild and scenic river values of the lower McCloud River, particularly the reach that would periodically be newly inundated if Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake were enlarged. The discussion and analysis concentrate on the values for which the McCloud River has been determined eligible for listing under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ((Federal WSRA); Public Law 90-542, as amended; 16 U.S. Code 1271-1287) and for which a portion of the river is protected under the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5093.542. Section 5093.542 was established through enactment of the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended (Sections 5093.50 – 5093.70).

This chapter also differs from the other chapters in this EIS; it first provides background information and then discusses the regulatory framework to provide context for the affected environment section.

25.1 Background

Segments of the McCloud River have been determined eligible for listing under the Federal WSRA and are protected under the PRC. The river has not been formally listed as wild and scenic under either the Federal WSRA or PRC and is not part of either the national or State river system.

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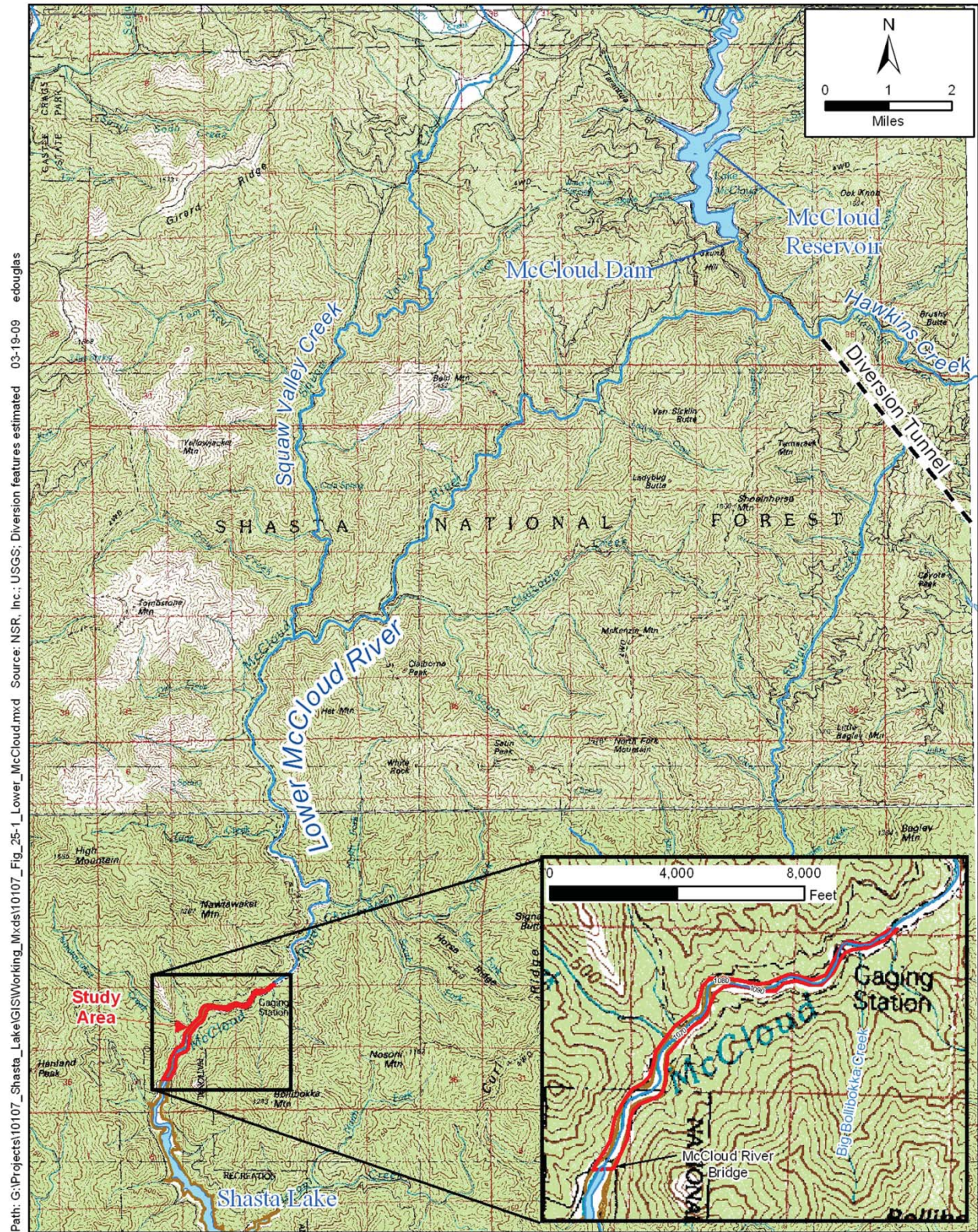


Figure 25-1. Lower McCloud River Study Area

The USFS evaluated the eligibility of the McCloud River for listing as wild and scenic under the Federal WSRA during preparation of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF) Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) in 1994 (USFS 1994). Although the LRMP found the McCloud River eligible for listing, the LRMP direction was to not formally designate any reach of the river as wild and scenic. Instead, the direction was to manage the lower McCloud River under a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP; USFS 1995a). The CRMP is a coordinated effort between landowners and stakeholders with a vested interest in the river. The CRMP requires its signatories to protect the outstandingly remarkable values (ORV) on lands they own or manage to ensure that the river remains eligible for Federal designation as wild and scenic. The CRMP contains a provision stating that the USFS reserves the right to pursue designation if the CRMP is terminated or fails to protect these values.

The California Natural Resources Agency (Resources Agency) evaluated the McCloud River in the late 1980s (Jones & Stokes Associates 1988) to determine whether it was eligible for listing under the PRC. The Resources Agency study found it eligible, but the California legislature declined to add the river to the California wild and scenic river system. The legislature instead passed an amendment to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect the river's free-flowing condition and the river's fishery below McCloud Dam through the PRC.

As described in more detail under “Regulatory Framework,” the PRC and Federal WSRA share several similar components: the establishment of a wild and scenic rivers system; the purpose of protecting certain rivers in their “free-flowing” condition; the identification of extraordinary or outstandingly remarkable values that make such rivers eligible for protection; a study process and procedure for including rivers in the system; and classifications of “wild,” “scenic,” and “recreational.” Both the Federal WSRA and PRC prohibit new water impoundments on designated rivers, and both contain directives to government agencies to use their powers to further the policies of the legislation.

The Federal WSRA establishes a larger wild and scenic river corridor—typically at least 0.25 mile on each side of the river—than the PRC and requires Federal agencies to manage the public lands in the corridor to protect the river's free-flowing character and ORVs. In addition, the Federal agency managing rivers that are Federally designated as wild and scenic is required to develop and implement a management plan that will ensure the river's protection. In contrast, the PRC provides protection only to the first line of permanent riparian vegetation and does not require a management plan.

The length of the lower McCloud River that was determined to be eligible for wild and scenic river status differs between the Federal and State evaluations. The USFS defined the lower McCloud River more narrowly than the Resources Agency, considering the portion of the river that is currently periodically

inundated by Shasta Lake – referred to in this chapter as the *transition reach* – as part of the lake rather than part of the river. The USFS defined the lower river as extending from McCloud Dam downstream to an elevation of 1,070 feet mean sea level (msl) (approximately 22 total river miles), which corresponds to the current full-pool elevation of Shasta Lake. The Resources Agency’s study report included approximately 5,400 feet of the existing transition reach (down to the McCloud River Bridge) as part of the lower river’s segments (approximately 23 total river miles). Both the USFS and Resource Agency documents disclosed that this portion of the reach, protected under the State PRC, does not meet the definition of natural or free flowing because it is downstream of McCloud Dam and some portions of the river offer public access. It is important to note that CDFW designated the Wild Trout Management Area downstream to the boundary of The Nature Conservancy property; the management area did not extend downstream in the reaches primarily controlled by private fishing clubs. The public benefit component of the wild trout fishery is concentrated in the upper 7 miles of the lower McCloud River.

In its evaluation, the USFS divided the McCloud River into 10 segments encompassing 46 total river miles: three segments along the upper McCloud River (24 river miles above McCloud Reservoir) and seven segments along the lower McCloud River (22 river miles below McCloud Dam). Numbering of the upper McCloud River segments began at the headwaters and counted downstream, but numbering of the lower McCloud River segments began at the downstream extent and counted upstream. The USFS concluded that all 10 segments of the McCloud River were eligible for listing as a Federal wild and scenic river because they are free flowing, possess good water quality, and exhibit ORVs in the areas of cultural and historical resources, fisheries, geology, and scenic resources. Part of the lowermost segment – Segment 4 – would be periodically inundated if Shasta Lake is expanded. Segment 4 extends from about 5,400 feet upstream from the McCloud River Bridge, beginning at an elevation of 1,070 feet msl, to about Little Bollibokka Creek. The lower extent of this segment corresponds with the current full-pool elevation of Shasta Lake based on Reclamation geographic information system data. Figure 25-2 shows the downstream extent of Segment 4.

The Resources Agency’s report also identified 10 segments, but its evaluation encompassed only 43 total river miles and the numbering of segments began at the headwaters and counted downstream along the entire river. The segments included six along the upper river (20 river miles above McCloud Reservoir) and four along the lower river (23 river miles below McCloud Dam). Eight of the 10 segments were determined eligible for State wild and scenic river status. Segment 10 extends from the McCloud River Bridge to the northern border of Section 9, Township 36 North, Range 3 West, which is just upstream from the river’s confluence with Tuna Creek. Approximately 5,400 feet of the transition reach is included in Segment 10; the portion of the transition reach downstream

from the bridge was determined ineligible. The downstream extent of Segment 10 is shown on Figure 25-2.

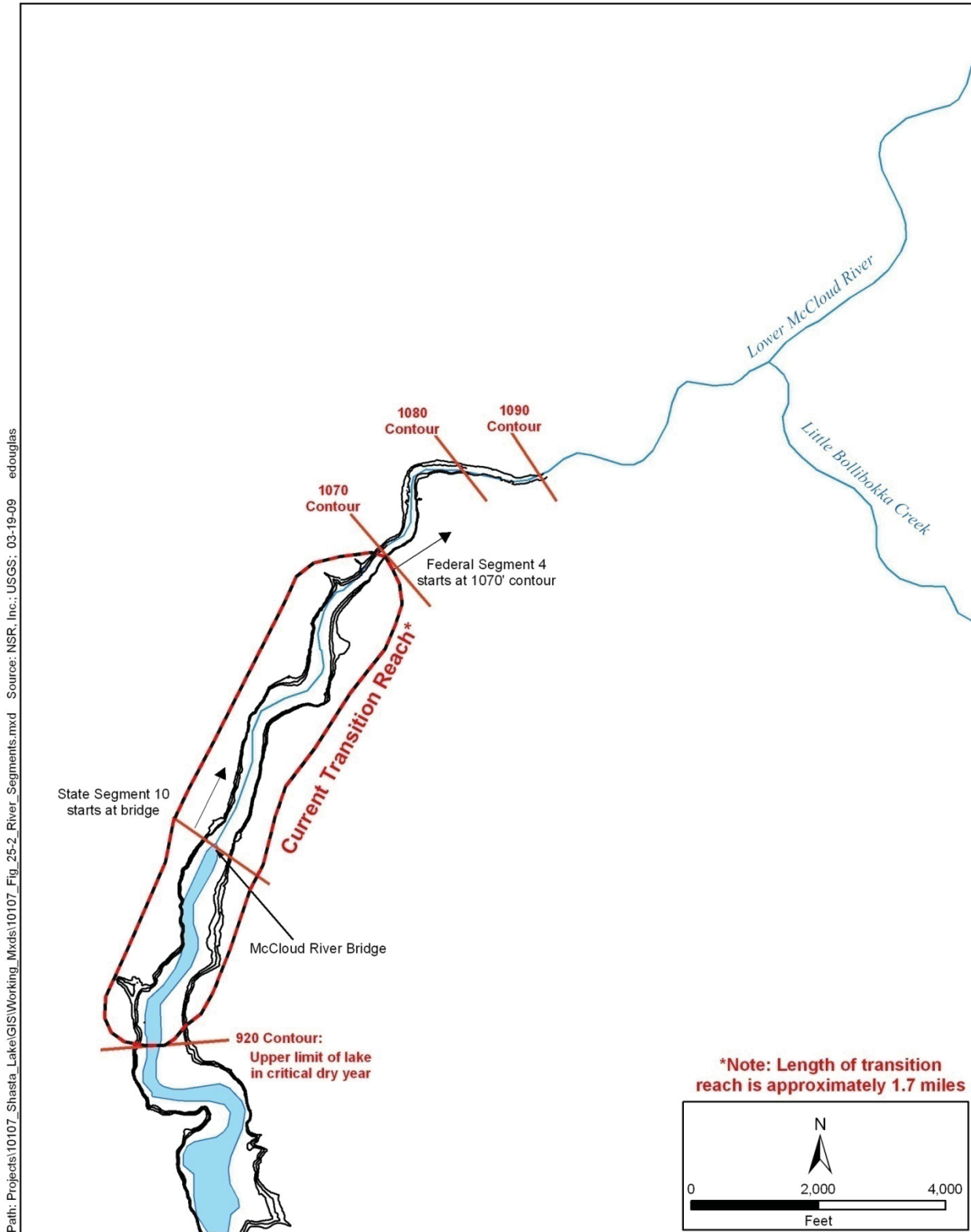


Figure 25-2. Differences in State and Federal Segments and Transition Reach

25.2 Regulatory Framework

25.2.1 Federal

Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

The Federal WSRA, enacted in 1968, established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System “to preserve rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.” To be eligible for inclusion in the system, a river must be free-flowing and exhibit ORVs. Free-flowing means “existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway” (16 United States Code (USC) Section 1286). ORVs are scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values (16 USC Section 1271). Depending on the specific conditions of a river, it may be designated as “wild,” “scenic,” or “recreation.” Different segments of a single river can receive different designations; in other words, some segments can be designated wild, some scenic, and some recreation or combinations of these designations.

The Federal WSRA does not prohibit water developments that may affect portions of rivers that are eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Section 5(d)(1) of the act does, however, require that in all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources, consideration be given to potential national wild, scenic, and recreational river areas by all Federal agencies involved.

Through the development and approval of the STNF LRMP, the USFS determined that segments of the McCloud River are eligible for inclusion in the national system; however, the river has not been formally designated and thus is not afforded protections under the Federal WSRA. Instead, the McCloud River CRMP was developed “to protect the [river’s] unique and outstandingly remarkable features,” thereby maintaining its eligibility.

The USFS evaluation concluded that the lower McCloud River, from McCloud Dam downstream about 22 miles to the river’s transition to Shasta Lake at about 1,070 feet msl, provides outstanding cultural, fisheries, and geologic values, and its corridor has been classified as a highly sensitive visual area by the USFS (USFS 1994 and 1995b). The entire river corridor contains prehistoric and historic sites from past use by Indian tribes, late 1800 and early 1900 resorts, and evidence of historic logging. The lower river provides habitat for several salmonid species: bull trout/Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus confluentus*), which is believed to be extinct; rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*), which has been transplanted all over the world; and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), a non-native species. Collectively, the rainbow and brown trout in the lower McCloud River are considered to be a “blue ribbon trout fishery” (USFS 1994). Outstanding geologic values include rock outcrops, cascades, and pools. Based on the ORVs,

the STNF determined that the lower McCloud River meets the eligibility requirements for designation under the Federal WSRA.

Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan

The STNF LRMP is a forest-wide land use plan developed to guide resource management within the forest (USFS 1995b). For planning purposes, the STNF is divided into six land allocations for which specific management prescriptions are identified. The land allocations include Congressionally Reserved Areas, Late-Successional Reserves, Administratively Withdrawn Areas, Riparian Reserves and Key Watersheds, Matrix Lands, and Adaptive Management Areas. Management areas were identified within the STNF to establish management direction in response to the issues and resources of each distinct area. The Management Area defined for the McCloud River provides resource direction for recreational use, specifically fishing (i.e., fishery) and viewing waterfalls, and management of old-growth habitat. Management of the wild and scenic river ORVs of the McCloud River is deferred to the CRMP.

Coordinated Resource Management Plan

In 1990, certain public agencies and private parties with interests in the management of lands adjacent to the McCloud River executed a memorandum of understanding to pursue preparation of a CRMP. The memorandum was signed by representatives of the USFS, CDFW, The Nature Conservancy, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the Bollibokka Land Company, Crane Mills, McCloud River Co-Tenants, Sierra Pacific Industries, and the Hearst Corporation. In 1991, the same signatories, along with California Trout Inc., signed another memorandum of understanding to establish the framework for and approve the CRMP. The CRMP was adopted in July 1991. In 2007, the property owned by the Bollibokka Land Company was sold to Westlands Water District, which is not a party to the CRMP. Although Reclamation and representatives of Westlands Water District have attended periodic meetings with the CRMP members to provide updates on the SLWRI planning process, neither agency is a party to the CRMP.

The purpose of the CRMP is to protect the ORVs through coordinating the actions of signatory members on their individual properties. The CRMP has no authority, responsibility, or jurisdiction for protection of the ORVs beyond the actions of the signatory members on their properties. The CRMP provides a framework for coordinating management activities among the participants to ensure that the characteristics of the river that make it eligible for Federal wild and scenic river designation are protected.

Under the terms of the CRMP, the USFS “reserves the right to pursue [Federal wild and scenic river] designation” if the CRMP is terminated or significantly impaired or if it fails to protect the values that make the river suitable for such designation. This would occur if, for any reason, the actions of a signatory member of the CRMP on the signatory member’s land failed to protect the ORVs, as described in the CRMP Memorandum of Understanding.

25.2.2 State

California Public Resource Code, Sections 5093.50-5093.70

Sections 5093.50–5093.70 were added to the PRC in 1972, through enactment of the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, to preserve certain rivers that possess extraordinary scenic, recreational, fishery, or wildlife values in their free-flowing state. The PRC identifies, classifies, and provides protection for specific rivers or river segments, as approved by the legislature. Rivers or river segments that are specifically identified and classified in the PRC comprise the State Wild and Scenic Rivers System. As described in Section 5093.50, rivers or river segments included in the State system must possess “extraordinary scenic, recreational, fishery, or wildlife values”; the PRC does not define what constitutes “extraordinary.”

Various amendments to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act have been passed, adding related legislation to the PRC. In 1986, Assembly Bill (AB) 3101 (Statutes 1986, Chapter 894) established a study process to help determine eligibility for potential additions to the State system (PRC Section 5093.547 and Section 5093.548). Additionally, protection for river segments can be provided without formally identifying them as part of the State system.

In 1989, an amendment to the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed, adding Section 5093.542 to the PRC to protect the McCloud River fishery, which it describes as “one of the finest wild trout fisheries in the state.” It further declares that “The continued management of river resources in their existing natural condition represents the best way to protect the unique fishery of the McCloud River” and that “maintaining the McCloud River in its free-flowing condition to protect its fishery is the highest and most beneficial use of the waters of the McCloud River.” The amendment provides protection to the McCloud River fishery and its “natural” and “free-flowing” condition from Algoma to the confluence with Huckleberry Creek (upper McCloud River), and 0.25 mile downstream from the McCloud Dam to the McCloud River Bridge (lower McCloud River). Although the Legislature declared that the McCloud River possessed “extraordinary resources” in the context of the PRC, the Legislature’s action stopped short of formally designating the river as wild and scenic.

In addition, the State PRC is also relevant to the recently passed Proposition 1, “Water Bond. Funding for Water Quality, Supply, Treatment, and Storage Projects,” for \$7.5 billion, which includes \$2.7 billion for storage projects. Proposition 1, section 79751 specifies:

Projects for which the public benefits are eligible for funding under this chapter consist of only the following:

(a) Surface storage projects identified in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Record of Decision, dated August 28, 2000,

except for projects prohibited by Chapter 1.4 (commencing with Section 5093.50) of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code.

Section 79751 does not amend or modify the State PRC. Whether the State of California can use Proposition 1 funds in support of any alternative potentially authorized related to enlargement of Shasta Dam and Reservoir is outside of Reclamation's authority and to be determined by the State of California.

Several key terms in the State PRC are used, but not fully defined with respect to protection of the McCloud River. This chapter adopts the definition of free-flowing as defined in the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. While the State PRC does not specifically define "Wild Trout Fishery", CDFW does identify several key elements that are relevant to and useful in developing a working definition of a wild trout fishery as it relates to this discussion. Fishery is a generally accepted term referring to an activity leading to the harvesting or use of a fishery resource (e.g., fishing, aquaculture) (CDFG 2003). It also includes a more inclusive definition that relates to the ecological conditions that provide fish habitat and self-sustaining populations (e.g., wild trout) (CDFG 2003).

25.3 Affected Environment

This section defines "affected environment" as the wild and scenic characteristics of the lower McCloud River that could be affected by the proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake. It briefly describes the McCloud River from its headwaters to the McCloud Arm of Shasta Lake. It then describes the wild and scenic values of Segment 4 identified in the USFS evaluation and the values provided protection in the PRC.

Descriptions of the river and its characteristics were derived primarily from the following sources:

- Wild and Scenic Rivers Evaluation, Appendix E to the EIS for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan (USFS 1994)
- Lower McCloud River and McCloud Arm Watershed Analyses (USFS 1998a and 1998b)
- McCloud River Wild and Scenic River Report (Jones & Stokes Associates 1988)
- Lower McCloud River Wild Trout Area Fishery Management Plan, 2004 through 2009 (Rode and Dean 2004)
- Lower McCloud River Habitat Typing Report (USFS 2001)

25.3.1 The McCloud River

McCloud River Basin

The McCloud River basin drains an area of approximately 800 square miles (USFS 1998a) in northern Shasta County and southern Siskiyou County, southeast of Mount Shasta. The river originates in an area of the STNF near Colby Meadows at approximately 4,250 feet above msl (Rode and Dean 2004). From its headwaters to Shasta Lake, the river is approximately 59 miles long. McCloud Reservoir, part of PG&E's McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project, separates the upper river from the lower river. The lower McCloud River transitions into the McCloud Arm of Shasta Lake upstream from the McCloud River Bridge (Figure 25-3).

Upper McCloud River

The upper McCloud River is an approximately 36-mile reach from the river's origins at Colby Meadows downstream to the transition with McCloud Reservoir. The river basin above the reservoir drains an area of approximately 403 square miles. Mean monthly flows in the upper McCloud River range from 766 cubic feet per second (cfs) in October to over 1,000 cfs in March, April, and May (PG&E 2006).

McCloud Reservoir

The McCloud Reservoir is a major component of PG&E's McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project, which was constructed in 1965 and operates under license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The McCloud Reservoir is approximately 5 miles long and has a storage capacity of approximately 35,200 acre-feet of water. The McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project diverts approximately 75 percent of the upper McCloud River's flow through a pipeline to Iron Canyon Reservoir, then conveys it downslope and discharges it into the Pit River at the Pit 6 powerhouse, upstream from the Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake (PG&E 2006). The remaining 25 percent of flows provide base flow for the lower McCloud River, a considerable reduction from historic flow volumes (Jones & Stokes Associates 1988).

Lower McCloud River

The lower McCloud River flows southwesterly through a deep canyon with steep slopes approximately 22 miles from McCloud Dam downstream to the transition with Shasta Lake. Vegetation along the lower river is predominately mixed-conifer and Douglas-fir forest. This stretch of river receives runoff from a 404-square-mile area of the lower McCloud River basin and the 95-square-mile Squaw Valley Creek basin. It provides exceptional fishing opportunities and includes two long-established fishing clubs, the Bollibokka Club and the McCloud River Club. The Nature Conservancy's McCloud River Preserve also encompasses a portion of the lower McCloud River.

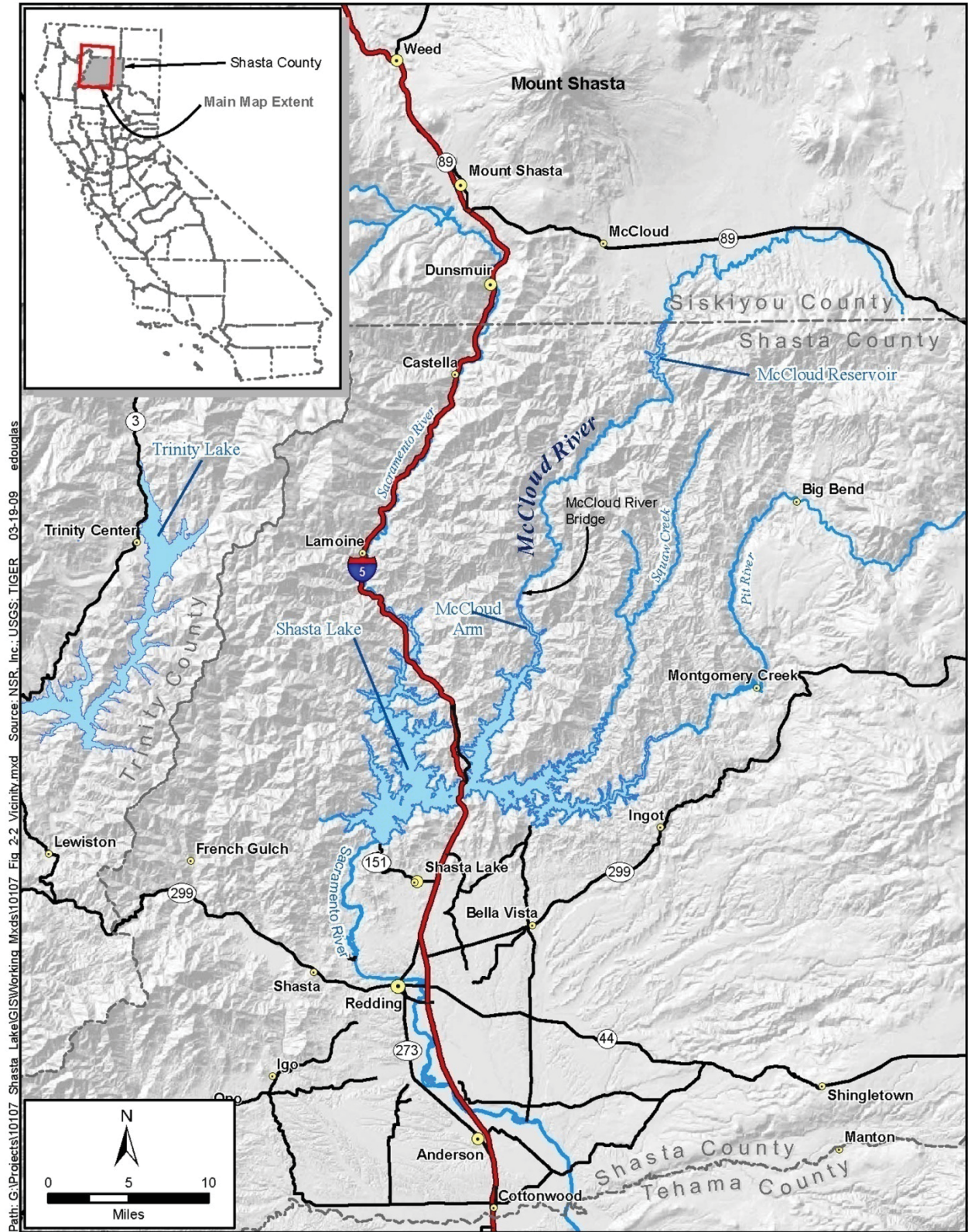


Figure 25-3. Regional Location

Flows in the lower McCloud River have been controlled by releases from McCloud Dam since 1965 (PG&E 2006). Under its current FERC license, PG&E's McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project maintains a minimum instream flow of 50 cfs from May through November and 40 cfs from December through April through controlled releases. Accordingly, flows in the lower McCloud River are highly regulated, and annual flows in the river below McCloud Dam do not follow a pattern typical of an unimpaired mountain river in northern California. Before dam construction, flows in the lower river were considerably higher, estimated to be in the range of 924 to 1,245 cfs (mean monthly flows) from June to October (Jones & Stokes Associates 1988, citing U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for the period of 1967 to 1985).

McCloud Arm of Shasta Lake

The construction of Shasta Dam between 1938 and 1945 converted part of the lower McCloud River into the McCloud Arm of Shasta Lake. The McCloud Arm is more than 16 miles long, with approximately 70 miles of shoreline. It drains an area of approximately 41,000 acres (USFS 1998b). Water levels in the arm fluctuate with the lake's water levels, and during periods of lower water levels, a water line, known as the "bathtub ring," is evident along the banks; this bathtub ring extends about 1 mile upstream from the McCloud River Bridge. During extended periods of lower water levels, vegetation may become established on the exposed banks.

The upper extent of the lake encompasses the transition reach, which varies between about 920 and 1,070 feet msl. Because of the effects of Shasta Lake on the McCloud Arm, the STNF determined that the transition reach did not meet the eligibility requirements of a wild and scenic river (USFS 1994). The USFS defined the upper limit of the McCloud Arm as an elevation of 1,070 feet, or approximately 5,400 feet above the McCloud River Bridge. This elevation corresponds to the lower limit of Segment 4 as defined in the STNF LRMP. A portion of the transition reach – from the McCloud River Bridge to the 1,070-foot elevation – is included in the segments of the river provided protection under the PRC.

The transition reach provides a corridor for fish migrating between Shasta Lake and the lower McCloud River and contributes to the unique fishery of the river. Common fish in the McCloud Arm include native species such as rainbow trout, riffle sculpin, and speckled dace, as well as non-native species (e.g., brown trout, spotted bass) (North State Resources, Inc. 2008).

Water temperatures in the McCloud Arm become warmer as the river transitions to Shasta Lake. The warmer temperatures associated with Shasta Lake support warmwater fish, but the cooler temperatures of the transition reach may prevent some fish from migrating upstream into the lower river. Water temperatures in the transition reach may be suitable for warmwater species.

25.3.2 The McCloud River's Wild and Scenic Values

This section focuses on the wild and scenic river characteristics and ORVs of the lower McCloud River identified by the USFS in the wild and scenic river evaluation performed for the STNF LRMP (USFS 1994) and the wild and scenic river characteristics and extraordinary value protected under the PRC.

The McCloud River's fishery and its free-flowing condition are identified in both the USFS evaluation and the PRC. These characteristics are discussed first, followed by a discussion of the wild and scenic characteristics and values – water quality, geology, cultural/historical resources, and visual quality/scenery – that are identified only in the USFS evaluation.

Throughout the SLWRI planning process, Reclamation has worked closely with private landowners to collect information, perform technical investigations, and incorporate the best available science to support this EIS. Since the DEIS was prepared, information included in Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 25 of this EIS has been updated to include data from recent surveys and investigations performed on both Federal and private lands in the general vicinity of Shasta Lake. Reclamation worked closely with private land owners, including the signatories to the CRMP, to incorporate available information on the McCloud River into this EIS. The following section includes a brief description of the current transition reach (see Figure 25-1) because the reach of the river that would be newly inundated would likely take on the characteristics of the existing transition reach.

Fishery

The fishery of the lower McCloud River is unique; the river is considered a premier trout fishery and is managed according to CDFW's wild trout policy for the reach from Algoma Campground downstream to the lower end of the Nature Conservancy property, despite the ongoing effects of McCloud Dam and Shasta Lake on the river's flows and water quality, and the more recent impacts of the 2012 Bagley Fire on the lower McCloud River watershed. To characterize the fishery, this section includes descriptions of the aquatic habitat in USFS Segment 4, the Resources Agency's Segment 10, and the transition reach as well as the fish species that inhabit the study area.

Aquatic Habitat The lower McCloud River is characterized as a series of alternating riffles, pools, and cascading pocket water occurring along a broad, boulder-studded river channel within a confined, heavily timbered valley. A narrow band of montane riparian vegetation (typically less than 25 feet wide) dominated by willows, white alders, and Oregon ash occurs along the river banks adjacent to steep hill slopes with mixed conifer-Douglas-fir forest (USFS 2001).

In 2001, the USFS prepared a Habitat Typing Report to characterize aquatic habitats in the lower McCloud River from the McCloud River Bridge to McCloud Dam. The report divided the lower river into four reaches: McCloud

Dam to Ladybug Creek, Ladybug Creek to Clairborne Creek, Clairborne Creek to Tuna Creek, and Tuna Creek to McCloud River Bridge. The reach from Tuna Creek to McCloud River Bridge includes all of Segment 4 and nearly all of Segment 10, including the portion of the transition reach that is part of Segment 10. Data are not available for the transition reach below the McCloud River Bridge downstream to Shasta Lake.

The dominant aquatic habitat in the reach of the lower river from Tuna Creek to McCloud River Bridge includes runs (20 percent), mid-channel pools (18 percent), low-gradient riffles (18 percent), lateral scour pools from bedrock (11 percent), and pocket water (10 percent) (USFS 2001). This reach provides most of the corner pool (100 percent), glide (89 percent), and cascade (50 percent) habitats in the lower McCloud River.

The portion of the transition reach upstream from McCloud River Bridge is dominated by low-gradient riffles and mid-channel pools, with some pocket water, glides, runs, and lateral scour pools. Glide habitat is the dominant aquatic habitat between the 1,070-foot and 1,080-foot elevations, and pocket water is the dominant aquatic habitat between the 1,080-foot and 1,090-foot elevations. The habitat within the current transition reach represents a fraction of the total available aquatic habitat within the lower McCloud River and provides a small portion of the habitats within the reach from the McCloud River Bridge to Tuna Creek.

The diversity of riffles, flatwater habitat, and pools is influenced by the presence of boulders and cobble substrate and variations in flow conditions. The lower river is dominated by boulders with pockets of gravel present at pool tailouts and in velocity breaks behind large boulders. The riffles are generally higher gradient channel sections with turbulent surface flow and uniform cobble and boulder substrates. While swift pocket water in the lower McCloud River often appears more like a riffle than a run, the habitable eddies, or pockets, created behind the boulders that characterize this habitat type make it functionally more similar to the other flatwater habitats (USFS 2001). Typically, flatwater and pools are the principal habitats used by the trout in the McCloud River for rearing and feeding (Wales 1939, Rode and Dean 2004, USFS 2001).

The USFS (2001) reported that the aquatic habitat within the transition reach has undergone type conversions caused by aggradation and scour of sediments for about 3,700 feet upstream from the McCloud River Bridge. When Shasta Lake is drawn down, large, wide, low-gradient riffles with channel braiding dominate in this reach. When the lake is at full pool and at intermediate levels of drawdown, the transition reach becomes inundated, but a unidirectional current created by the lower McCloud River's inflow is detectable throughout the inundation zone, slowing as it approaches the flat water of Shasta Lake. To varying degrees, this fluctuating backwater effect converts this reach to a deep,

wide, slow-moving riverine habitat transitioning to lacustrine habitat near the bottom of the transition reach.

Fish Species The current composition and distribution of fish species inhabiting the lower McCloud River and Shasta Lake reflect the historic fishery, the operational effects of Shasta Dam and McCloud Dam, and the introduction of nonnative fish species into the river and Shasta Lake. The completion of Shasta Dam in 1945 eliminated all runs of anadromous fish in the river (Rode and Dean 2004). The historic fishery included Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), steelhead (*O. mykiss irideus*), rainbow trout, and the only known California occurrence of the bull trout. The bull trout is believed to have been extirpated from the lower McCloud River and is possibly extinct in California. Today, the fishery is dominated by rainbow trout and brown trout, an introduced species that migrates between Shasta Lake and the lower McCloud River. Other nonnative species also migrate up the lower McCloud River, including spotted bass (*Micropterus punctulatus*), but bass have not been confirmed upstream from Tuna Falls, a high-gradient rapid at the confluence with Tuna Creek. Despite the change in fish species in this 22-mile reach, the lower McCloud River is still considered one of California's premier trout streams.

Fish observed in the river downstream from the Tuna Creek confluence during a survey conducted in summer 2007 included rainbow trout, spotted bass, speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*), sculpin spp. (*Cottus* spp.), Sacramento sucker (*Catostomus occidentalis*), and Sacramento pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus grandis*) (North State Resources, Inc. 2008). Other fish that occur in this reach include brown trout, brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), hardhead (*Mylopharodon conocephalus*), and smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*). The status of the riverine fish species of the lower McCloud River is identified in Table 25-1.

Rainbow Trout Fluvial and adfluvial populations of rainbow trout use the habitat available throughout the lower McCloud River. The McCloud River rainbow trout became known as "the rainbow of the fish culturist" because eggs from that population accounted for transplants of rainbow trout in the 1880s to the eastern states and several other countries.

The rainbow trout that inhabit the McCloud River are a vigorous, active fish that primarily inhabit swifter portions of pool and pocket water habitats. Adults migrate into the lower McCloud River from Shasta Lake in the spring and fall months, presumably to spawn. Suitable spawning habitat in the study area is limited, and the trout likely migrate further upstream to spawn (North State Resources, Inc. 2008).

Although the genetic origin of these fish has not been evaluated, the numerous strains of rainbow trout planted in Shasta Lake over the years have likely resulted in some introgression among migratory rainbow trout in the lower McCloud River. The degree to which this migratory population of rainbow trout

contributes to the native trout fishery of the river is not specifically known; however, available data do not indicate that it is substantial.

Table 25-1. Riverine Fish Species of the Lower McCloud River

Species	Current Status	Comments
Sacramento sucker (<i>Catostomus occidentalis</i>)	Common	Native, non-game species, observed during 2007 surveys
Riffle sculpin (<i>Cottus gulosus</i>)	Common	Native, non-game species, observed during 2007 surveys
Smallmouth bass (<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>)	Uncommon	Introduced sport species in Shasta Lake, moves into lower river from lake, warmwater species
Spotted bass (<i>Micropterus punctulatus</i>)	Uncommon	Introduced sport species in Shasta Lake, moves into lower river from lake, observed during 2007 surveys, warmwater species
Hardhead (<i>Mylopharodon conocephalus</i>)	Uncommon	Native, non-game species
Rainbow trout (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>)	Abundant	Native trout species, subject to special angling regulations, coldwater species, observed during 2007 surveys
Sacramento squawfish (=pikeminnow) (<i>Ptychocheilus grandis</i>)	Common	Native, non-game species, observed during 2007 surveys
Speckled dace (<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i>)	Common	Observed during 2007 surveys
Brown trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>)	Common	Introduced sport species found throughout the river, migrates from Shasta Lake to spawn in lower river, subject to special angling regulations, coldwater species
Bull trout (<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>)	CE; Extinct	Native, believed extirpated from entire river by mid-1970s, a few restoration experiments performed in upper river tributaries, coldwater species
Brook trout (<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>)	Rare	Introduced sport species, stocking in upper river and tributaries discontinued, very rarely observed in lower river, coldwater species

Sources: Wales 1939, Tippetts and Moyle 1978, Rode and Dean 2004, Moyle 2002, CDFW, unpublished data, North State Resources, Inc. 2008

Key:

CE = California Endangered

CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Rainbow trout typically mature in their second to third year and move upstream to spawn in the lower McCloud River and its tributaries from February to June. The eggs typically hatch in 3 to 4 weeks, depending on water temperature, and fry emerge 2 to 3 weeks later. The fry remain in quiet waters close to shore, among cobbles, or under overhanging vegetation for several weeks. As the fish grow, they move into swifter water habitats.

In the river, this species forms feeding station hierarchies, which they aggressively defend, and prey on aquatic and terrestrial insects drifting in the current. They also eat active bottom invertebrates. It has been reported that

McCloud River rainbow trout tend to be more bottom-oriented when feeding than rainbow trout elsewhere.

In reservoirs, rainbow trout form loose schools and feed on both invertebrates and other fish, although fish dominate their diet as they grow larger. Preferred prey in Shasta Lake is the threadfin shad. Trout growth in Shasta Lake is more rapid than for fluvial trout. The optimum temperature range for growth and for completion of most life stages of rainbow trout is between 50 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), though they seem to prefer and thrive at temperatures in the lower two-thirds of this range. Rainbow trout in lakes and streams seldom live for more than 6 years.

Brown Trout Like the rainbow trout, fluvial and adfluvial populations of non-native brown trout use habitat throughout the lower McCloud River, but this species migrates more between the lake and river. It is not as abundant as the rainbow trout. CDFW biologists suggest that this species occupies an ecological niche previously occupied by bull trout in the lower McCloud River (Rode and Dean 2004).

Only some of the brown trout migrating from Shasta Lake that passed a lower river counting weir were observed upstream in the CDFW Wild Trout Management Area (Segments 7, 8, 9, and 10), so the actual extent of the spawning grounds of migratory brown trout is not fully known.

Brown trout mature in their second or third year. Some fish may mature in the river while others may migrate to Shasta Lake to feed, returning to spawn on a recurring basis. The stimulus for upstream migration is often a rise in stream flow or changing lake temperatures. Spawning takes place from November through December when water temperatures fall below 50°F. Eggs typically hatch within 7 to 8 weeks, depending on water temperature. Fry emerge from the gravel 3 to 6 weeks later. The habitats used by juvenile brown trout are similar to those used by rainbow trout; however, as brown trout grow, they tend to select habitats with slower water and more cover. In the riverine environment, brown trout prefer slow, deep pools with abundant boulder and bedrock ledge cover. The timing of emigration of juvenile brown trout to Shasta Lake is not known.

Fluvial brown trout have diets similar to those of rainbow trout, but appear to feed more on the stream bottom for benthic prey than rainbows. As brown trout grow, their diet expands to include larger invertebrate prey and fish. Larger brown trout are voracious predators, especially on fish, including young salmonids. In Shasta Lake, adult brown trout prefer threadfin shad as a staple prey.

Brown trout growth in the lower McCloud River appears to increase after age 3, which has been attributed to their migration to Shasta Lake to exploit the forage fish populations. Brown trout growth is best at temperatures ranging from 45 to

69°F, though they seem to prefer and dominate other trout species near the upper half of this range.

Spotted Bass and Smallmouth Bass Black basses and other sunfishes dominate in the littoral zones of Shasta Lake. Spotted bass and smallmouth bass are now the most common species of black bass in Shasta Lake, with spotted bass having become most frequent over the past 20 years. Both spotted and smallmouth bass occupy shallow, low-gradient habitat offered by Shasta Lake and its tributaries. They can be found throughout Shasta Lake and in the lower ends of the main tributary streams, including the lower McCloud River. However, the extent to which black bass have colonized the lower McCloud River is not currently known.

Smallmouth bass and spotted bass share similar life histories, and these similarities may account for their persistence in Shasta Lake compared to that of largemouth bass, which have declined in numbers. Both smallmouth and spotted bass mature in their second or third year and spawn in the late spring. Smallmouth will spawn at cooler temperatures (55 to 61°F) than spotted bass (greater than or equal to 65°F). Both species seek quiet shallow areas over mud, sand, gravel, and rocky, debris-littered bottoms to spawn in both lakes and streams. This type of spawning habitat is available in the transition reach of the lower McCloud River, especially when lake levels are high.

Juvenile bass feed on small invertebrates until they are large enough to prey on small fish and large invertebrates. Temperature preferences and optimal growth for both species of black basses is attained in the range from 68 to 81°F. Because of the year-round cool temperatures (less than or equal to 68°F) of the lower McCloud River, temperatures preferred by bass only occur during the late summer and early fall months upstream from the transition reach. Therefore, the temperature regime of the lower McCloud River may limit intrusions of bass from the lake. However, spotted bass were observed in the lower river below the confluence of Tuna Creek during summer fish surveys (North State Resources, Inc. 2008).

Free-Flowing Condition

The Federal WSRA defines *free flowing* as “existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway” (16 USC Section 1286). The PRC defines free-flowing as “existing or flowing without artificial impoundment, diversion, or other modification of the river.” It states, however, that the “presence of low dams, diversion works, and other minor structures does not automatically bar a river’s inclusion in the system.”

Base flows in the lower McCloud River are partially controlled by releases from McCloud Reservoir in accordance with PG&E’s FERC license and include precipitation and inflow from tributaries. The lower McCloud River experiences seasonal fluctuations and large variations in base flows (USFS 1998a). Releases

from McCloud Reservoir into the lower river are heavily regulated, with a minimum release requirement of 50 cfs from May through November and 40 cfs from December through April; the releases are typically well above these minimum requirements and tend to stay above 100 cfs (USFS 1998a). Tributary contributions are the most noticeable flows during storm events, but are substantially reduced during low-flow conditions. Because of the minimum release requirements from McCloud Reservoir, spring and summer flows are considerably more stable than they would be under unregulated conditions.

PG&E monitors lower McCloud River flows in accordance with its FERC license at a gaging station in Segment 4 upstream from Shasta Lake (0.2 mile downstream from Big Bollibokka Creek); the most recent available water data record covers the water year October 2012–September 2013 (USGS 2013). For this period, measured mean monthly flows ranged from 271 cfs in August to a high of 26,179 cfs in February, with maximum flows as high as 30,100 cfs on December 2, 2012.

Over the course of the year, the transition from lake to river expands and contracts over a distance of about 1.7 miles due to changing water levels in Shasta Lake (Figure 25-2). During April and May of wet years, the transition reach extends about 1 mile (5,400 feet) upstream from the McCloud River Bridge to the full pool elevation of 1,070 feet msl, the downstream boundary of Segment 4. As described in Chapter 6, “Hydrology, Hydraulics, and Water Management” Shasta Lake reaches full-pool elevation about one year in three.

Despite upstream and downstream dams and diversions, the lower McCloud River meets the definition of a free-flowing river under both the Federal WSRA and PRC.

Water Quality

The water quality of the lower McCloud River is influenced by natural processes and land use activities, including PG&E’s McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project, timber management activities, and roads. Overall, the water quality of the river is rated as good (USFS 1998). Glacial silt gives the river “a beautiful turquoise color typical of rivers draining glacial valleys in British Columbia and Alaska” (Jones & Stokes Associates 1998).

Turbidity and water temperature are two important factors that influence the water quality of the river and affect aquatic habitat. Turbidity is caused by suspended sediment transported from upstream waters and in surface runoff, particularly from disturbed landscapes, such as areas burned by fire, timber harvest areas or roads. Water temperature is affected by a variety of conditions, such as river flows, solar radiation, and density of vegetation along the river, but is closely tied to the temperature of the flows released from the McCloud Reservoir.

The turbidity of the lower McCloud River is influenced by the water quality and water levels of the McCloud Reservoir and runoff from upland areas throughout the basin. Turbidity levels are generally low during most of the year, ranging from 5–10 nephelometric turbidity units, but can spike to more than 900 units during periods of intense rainfall and flood flows (PG&E 2006).

Sediment becomes trapped at McCloud Dam and is released into the lower river during large storm events, temporarily increasing turbidity levels, especially in the upper segments of the lower river. Testing of the McCloud Dam bypass valve can cause high turbidity for a short period when sediment is discharged from the reservoir into the lower McCloud River. Surface runoff, especially after the first storms of the wet season, can contribute large amounts of turbid runoff from upland areas.

The length of the transition reach depends on the water year type. As the transition reach moves upstream, sediment within the reach is remobilized and turbidity levels respond accordingly. Periodic fluctuations in water levels can result in erosion along the banks and localized increases in turbidity levels in the transition reach and the McCloud Arm.

The year-round cool water temperature regime of the lower McCloud River inhibits the productivity of its fishery, but provides high-quality holding habitat for salmonids, contributing to the river's unique value as a tributary to Shasta Lake. The controlled releases from McCloud Dam appear to have a direct bearing on the water temperatures downstream. Water temperatures tend to be higher in Segment 4 than immediately below McCloud Dam. Data recorded at PG&E's monitoring station on the river just upstream from Shasta Lake (0.2 mile downstream from Big Bollibokka Creek) indicate that water temperature ranges from the high 30s to the upper 60s (°F), with lower temperatures in the winter and higher temperatures in the summer (PG&E 2006).

The infusion of cooler water from the lower McCloud River influences water temperatures in the transition reach throughout the year. The degree of influence depends on the amount of discharge from the river and Shasta Lake levels. The temperatures throughout the lower McCloud River also control to some degree the distribution of the warmwater fishery known to occupy the river below Tuna Falls.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values Identified in USFS Evaluation

Cultural/Historical Resources Cultural resources include archaeological sites, historical structures and sites, and areas of religious or cultural significance to Native Americans. Significant resources that provide important information on the prehistory and history of an area or that are considered sacred to Native Americans can contribute to wild and scenic river values.

The McCloud River basin was part of a major center of occupation by the Wintu people, who occupied the McCloud River area at the time of Euro-

American contact in the 1800s. Although much of the Wintu territory was overrun with miners and other opportunistic Euro-Americans, the lower McCloud River was left largely untouched due in part to a lack of easily mined materials and the ruggedness of the terrain (Yoshiyama and Fisher 2001), but also because of the resistance of the Wintu to incursions into their territory. Because of its generally undisturbed nature, the significance of the lower McCloud River to prehistoric and ethnographic records of this area of California's history is considered to be great (Jones & Stokes Associates 1988).

Within the 0.25-mile corridor deemed eligible by the USFS, three formally recorded sites and other known sites contribute to the lower river's ORVs because they provide important information on the use of the area from before the Late Archaic Period (1300 to 150 before present, calibrated using radiocarbon dating) to the Historic Era (1840 to present). Three Wintu villages, called Tsekerenwaitsoji, Klolwakut, and Boloibaki, are thought to have been located in the general area of the present-day Bollibokka Club headquarters (Guilford-Kardell 1980), which is part of the former Wintu territory. These villages likely represent the typical lifestyle of the Wintu at the time of Euro-American contact, when they lived in permanent villages near rivers and streams and were semi-sedentary, foraging people (DuBois 1935). As part of the Wintu occupation of this area, prehistoric, historic, and modern Traditional Cultural Properties, sacred locations, and important use areas are located throughout the lower McCloud River basin (outside of the 0.25 mile corridor), including features such as mountains, unique landforms, caves, distinctive rock outcrops, waterfalls, pools, springs, and resource gathering areas.

Point McCloud Bridge (known as McCloud River Bridge in this chapter) is a historical resource that was constructed in 1940 and altered in 1986; the bridge would be subject to relocation in conjunction with SLWRI activities. The Bollibokka Club is a historical resource located on the north bank of the river between the confluence of Big Bollibokka Creek on the east and Wittawaket Creek on the west. Buildings associated with the club were built between the 1860s and 1920s by Austin and Rueben Hills, the founders of Hill's Brothers Coffee, and previous owners (Lucas and Stienstra 2007). A log cabin dates from the 1860s, and other structures date from the ownership of the Hills Family, including the clubhouse built in 1924 and a structure built of river cobble in 1915 (Whitney 2004). Although these resources could be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, they have not been formally evaluated.

The fishery of the lower McCloud River was also very important to prehistoric and historic uses of the area. The Native Americans in the lower McCloud River basin conducted communal fish drives of salmon or steelhead at night, which brought together many communities and provided opportunities for trade and social networking, including the parsing out of the catch among the people and villages involved (DuBois 1935). Fish, including salmon, steelhead, Sacramento sucker, freshwater shellfish, and lamprey, were an important part of the Native American diet in this area. When the northern mines opened in the 1800s,

settlers moved into the area, and the McCloud River and other rivers' fisheries provided important sources of food. In the early years of settlement, fish and game in the area were used for subsistence; however, this changed with the formation of the State of California and increased fishery management and recreational fishing.

Geology The lower McCloud River flows through a number of geologic formations, including the McCloud Limestone formation. This formation contains fossilized remains of invertebrate and vertebrate fauna that provide important scientific information on the history of California, and it has a high potential for research. According to the USFS (1998b), the limestone features exposed at a number of locations around Shasta Lake are unique and contribute to worldwide paleontological knowledge. The McCloud Limestone contains 36 species of corals, some of which may form the basis of a new taxonomic group.

Because of its very diverse fossil faunas, the mountainous terrain between the McCloud and Pit arms of Shasta Lake is perhaps California's single most important area for paleontological research (Munthe and Hirschfield 1978, cited in USFS 1998b). The limestone outcrops on the ridge immediately northwest of McCloud River Bridge (several hundred vertical feet above Shasta Lake) have produced several large Mississippian and Pennsylvanian invertebrate faunas. Because this period is poorly represented on the West Coast, this fossiliferous limestone is important to understanding the late Paleozoic evolution in this part of the country (USFS 1998b). Limestone outcrops adjacent to the McCloud Arm also provide habitat for several special-status species, such as Shasta salamander, Shasta eupatorium, Howell's cliff-maids, and Shasta snow-wreath (Reclamation 2003).

Exposed outcrops of the limestone formation are visible from the lower McCloud River in and upslope of the transition reach and contribute to its scenic values.

Visual Quality/Scenery The visual setting of the lower McCloud River upstream from Shasta Lake includes views of the river, limestone rock outcrops, adjacent coniferous and oak forests, and infrastructure associated with the Bollibokka and McCloud River clubs. A USGS stream gage has also been in place for a number of years. The pristine nature of the lower river provides for high-quality scenic views. However, the scenic views of the lower McCloud River are enjoyed by only a limited number of viewers, consisting primarily of private landowners, club members, and their guests.

Views of the river include "picturesque cascading whitewater, and deep, long, green- or turquoise-colored pools," with Douglas-fir and black and canyon oaks dominating the steep slopes and hillsides along the river (Jones & Stokes Associates 1988). Several buildings are present at the Bollibokka Club headquarters, but these structures blend in with the visual setting. The transition reach exhibits some evidence of fluctuating surface water elevations associated

with changes in water levels of Shasta Lake. Areas that are noticeably affected by the reservoir levels exhibit “a bathtub ring of steep, treeless slopes with occasional deposits of alluvium.”

The scenic views make most of the lower McCloud River, including Segment 4, eligible as a scenic river under the Federal WSRA (USFS 1994). To be classified as a scenic river, the river must be free of impoundments, be accessible in places by roads, and have a river basin/shoreline that is largely undeveloped. Segment 4 does not contain any human-made or other impoundments that affect its free-flowing conditions. Roads to the Bollibokka Club provide access to portions of Segment 4 for members of the club and their guests. Currently, public access is limited to pedestrians on USFS lands along the shoreline of Shasta Lake. For these reasons, the USFS has determined that this segment meets the eligibility requirements of a scenic river under the Federal WSRA.

25.4 Environmental Consequences and Mitigation Measures

This section identifies how the characteristics of the lower McCloud River that make it eligible for listing under the PRC and Federal WSRA could be affected by each alternative and whether the alternatives would conflict with the provisions of the STNF LRMP and the CRMP.

25.4.1 Methods and Assumptions

This analysis of environmental consequences focuses on the effects of proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake on the McCloud River’s free-flowing conditions, its water quality, and the ORVs (cultural resources, fisheries, geology, and scenery) that make it eligible for listing as a wild and scenic river under the Federal WSRA. In large part, the environmental effects are based on computer modeling of water levels, known elevations of the existing bathtub ring that is observable in the transition reach, and the anticipated changes in the environment due to fluctuations in water levels and expansion of the transition reach. Physical effects to the free-flowing conditions, water quality, and ORVs are analyzed in terms of their effects on the eligibility of the river for wild and scenic river designation. While aquatic habitat data are used to quantify the relative impact to the fishery values, a qualitative analysis is provided for most resources because of a lack of quantitative data and the subjective nature of the values. Information to support the analysis was generated from available literature and planning documents and technical studies prepared as part of the SLWRI as well as other chapters in this EIS.

CalSim Modeling

The CalSim-II computer model was used to assist in the evaluation of the potential impacts of the project alternatives on water-related resources. The model used historical data on California hydrology to represent the variety of

weather and hydrologic patterns, including wet periods and droughts, under which water storage and conveyance facilities would be operated. Two scenarios (base cases) of demands for, and storage and conveyance of, water were used in model runs: 2005 facilities and demands (“existing conditions”) and forecasted 2030 demands and reasonably foreseeable projects and facilities (“future conditions”). A model run was conducted for each of these base cases combined with each alternative so that the effects of the No-Action Alternative and the action alternatives could be evaluated for both existing and future conditions.

The analysis focuses on the environmental effects in the portion of Segment 4 that would periodically be inundated. These effects are discussed in the following section.

Gage Data

PG&E, in coordination with USGS, monitors lower McCloud River flows in accordance with its FERC license for the McCloud-Pit Hydroelectric Project at a gaging station just upstream from the McCloud River Bridge, approximately 0.2 mile downstream from Big Bollibokka Creek (USGS 11368000 McCloud River above Shasta Lake, California). The station measures mean, minimum, and maximum monthly flows in the lower McCloud River. The most recent available water data record covers the water year of October 2012 to September 2013 (USGS 2013). This data was used to describe flow conditions in the lower McCloud River.

Water Quality Monitoring

Current and historical water quality monitoring data for the McCloud River have been collected by Federal and state agencies as well as PG&E and The Nature Conservancy. The California Department of Water Resources maintains water quality information on the McCloud River in the California Data Exchange Center database. The Nature Conservancy monitors water quality at the McCloud River Preserve. Water quality monitoring of the lower McCloud River includes measures of water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, specific conductance, and turbidity, as well as correlated data on weather, air temperature, and debris movement. PG&E monitors water quality in compliance with its FERC license. Available information on water quality was used to describe the setting of the lower river and assess changes in water quality that would occur as a result of the Shasta Dam modification alternatives.

Habitat Typing

The USFS stream habitat typing performed in 1999 and 2000 (STNF, December 2001 unpublished data report, as found in USFS 2001) was used to describe aquatic habitat in the lower McCloud River and to assess the changes in aquatic habitat from implementation of the Shasta Dam modification alternatives. The habitat typing data were used in conjunction with the CalSim-II modeling results, digitized orthophotographs, and high-resolution topographic data to provide habitat maps and graphic depictions of the distribution of aquatic

habitat in the lower river below Little Bollibokka Creek. A longitudinal profile, using water surface elevations, was generated to illustrate habitats; it does not provide an accurate representation of channel geometry.

A quantitative evaluation of the aquatic habitats was performed using digital images and the USFS habitat typing data in an integrated geographic information systems environment. Longitudinal habitat delineation was determined from the habitat typing data, with minor adjustments to match photo-interpreted habitat, and incorporated into the geographic information systems in conjunction with water surface elevations generated through the CalSim-II modeling results. Estimates of aquatic habitat areas were generated from digitized wetted stream perimeters. These measurements were based on orthophotographs taken April 25, 2001. While the absolute amount of riverine habitat can vary with flow, the relative proportions of different types of habitat remain relatively constant. Therefore, we used the relative proportions of aquatic habitat types to compare impacts to the transition reach with the entire lower river.

25.4.2 Criteria for Determining Significance of Effects

The following significance criteria were developed based on guidance provided by the State CEQA Guidelines, other Federal and State guidance, and consider the context and intensity of the environmental effects as required under NEPA. (Please see Chapter 3, “Considerations for Describing the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences) for an explanation of the distinction between significance under NEPA and significance under CEQA.) Impacts of an alternative on the wild and scenic river values of the lower McCloud River would be significant if project implementation would:

- Affect the eligibility for Federal listing as a wild and scenic river of any portion of the lower McCloud River above the 1,070-foot elevation
- Conflict with the STNF LRMP or with management of the McCloud River under the CRMP
- Impact the wild trout fishery and free-flowing conditions as described in the State PRC

25.4.3 Direct and Indirect Effects

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, Reclamation would not pursue an action to enlarge Shasta Dam to help increase anadromous fish survival in the upper Sacramento River and address the growing water supply reliability issues in California. Water levels in Shasta Lake and the transition reach would continue to fluctuate similar to current conditions. USFS Segment 4 and the Resources Agency’s Segment 10 would not be affected by this alternative.

Impact WASR-1 (No-Action): Effect on McCloud River’s Eligibility for Listing as a Federal Wild and Scenic River

Under the No-Action Alternative, the current maximum elevation of water levels in the transition reach would not be increased, and Segment 4 would not be affected. Fluctuations in water levels would continue to be similar to current conditions, with water levels reaching the maximum elevation of 1,070 feet msl – the downstream boundary of Segment 4 – in the transition reach for a brief period (typically a few days in May) during wet years.

The average monthly water surface of Shasta Lake would continue to fluctuate based on the water year, with a maximum elevation of 1,053 feet msl in April of an average water year and 1,070 feet msl in April and May of a wet year. These fluctuations would not affect the free-flowing conditions and water quality of Segment 4. The ORVs that make the river eligible for designation as a Federal wild and scenic river would continue to be affected only by ongoing natural processes and land use activities, and all of Segment 4 would remain eligible for listing under the Federal WSRA. Therefore, there would be no impact. Mitigation is not required for the No-Action Alternative.

Impact WASR-2 (No-Action): Conflict with Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

Under the No-Action Alternative, the STNF LRMP would continue to be implemented as it has in the past, with no changes in the management of the McCloud River’s free-flowing condition, water quality, and ORVs. Therefore, there would be no impact. Mitigation is not required for the No-Action Alternative.

Impact WASR-3 (No-Action): Effects to McCloud River Wild Trout Fishery, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542

Under the No-Action Alternative, the protections afforded the McCloud River by the PRC would not be affected. River conditions would not be modified, and the provisions of the PRC would continue to protect the river. Therefore, there would be no impact. Mitigation is not required for the No-Action Alternative.

Impact WASR-4 (No-Action): Effects to McCloud River Free-Flowing Conditions, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542

Under the No-Action Alternative, the protections afforded the McCloud River by the PRC would not be affected. River conditions would not be modified, and the provisions of the PRC would continue to protect the river. Therefore, there would be no impact. Mitigation is not required for the No-Action Alternative.

CP1 – 6.5-Foot Dam Raise, Anadromous Fish Survival and Water Supply Reliability

CP1 would involve a 6.5-foot raise of Shasta Dam, which would increase the lake’s gross pool by 8.5 feet and enlarge the total storage space in the lake by 256,000 acre-feet. This increase would equate to an increase of about 1,100

acres of surface area occupied by Shasta Lake when the lake is full. CP1 includes measures to increase water supply reliability while contributing to increased survival of anadromous fish. Shasta Dam operational guidelines would continue essentially unchanged, except during dry years and critical years, when 70,000 acre-feet and 35,000 acre-feet, respectively, of the increased storage capacity in Shasta Reservoir would be reserved to specifically focus on increasing municipal and industrial (M&I) deliveries.

Impact WASR-1 (CP1): Effect on McCloud River's Eligibility for Listing as a Federal Wild and Scenic River Under CP1, the increased gross pool of Shasta Lake would expand the current transition reach up to the 1,078-foot elevation, resulting in adverse effects on the characteristics of approximately 1,470 feet of Segment 4. The rest of the McCloud River would remain eligible for designation as a Federal wild and scenic river. This impact would be significant.

Under CP1, approximately 1,470 feet, or 11 percent, of Segment 4 would be periodically inundated. This increase in the transition reach to a maximum elevation of 1,078 feet msl would equate to a 16 percent increase over the current transition reach. The length of time during the year when the transition reach is inundated and the maximum elevation of the inundation area would vary by the type of water year (wet, above normal, below normal, average, dry, or critical).

Within the expanded transition reach, flow conditions and fisheries would periodically be affected, with the timing and duration of the effects similar to those that occur in the current transition reach. Over time, the expansion of the bathtub ring would affect water quality, geology, and visual quality/scenery in the affected portion of Segment 4. Erosion of soils along the river could expose buried cultural resources, and periodic inundation could permanently alter cultural resource values and features in the transition reach important to Native Americans. These effects could reduce the total length of the lower McCloud River that is eligible for wild and scenic river designation by about 1,470 feet (approximately 1.2 percent of the total length of the lower river).

Free-Flowing Conditions Under CP1, the currently free-flowing section of the lower McCloud River would be reduced by about 1,470 feet or about 1.2 percent. The flow characteristics of the affected portion of Segment 4 would periodically be modified, resulting in slower moving waters and a wider river channel. When inundated, the affected portion would retain some current, but flow velocities would decrease with distance downstream. This modification would not meet the definition of a free-flowing river under the Federal WSRA.

Because free-flowing conditions are a fundamental requirement for wild and scenic river eligibility, the 1,470-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected by CP1 would become ineligible for listing under the Federal WSRA.

Water Quality As Shasta Lake's water levels rise, vegetation and soils along the banks of the affected portion of Segment 4 would become inundated. Most or all of the vegetation that is inundated would eventually die and be washed or fall into the river, bringing with it sediment and other materials that could affect water quality. Soils in the affected portion of Segment 4 would erode as water levels rise and fall, causing an increase in turbidity. These effects would likely be most noticeable during the initial inundation periods, since the river corridor is likely to eventually stabilize as the soil is eroded to bedrock.

Within the approximately 1,470-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected under CP1, water temperatures would fluctuate relative to temperatures immediately upstream. Similar to flow, these changes would vary by water year type. Increased turbidity and warmer water temperatures would be most noticeable along the affected portion of Segment 4 because this area has not been previously exposed to periodic inundations.

Adverse effects on water quality would be associated with the periodic fluctuations in the water levels of Shasta Lake. Because water quality is a fundamental requirement for wild and scenic river eligibility, the 1,470-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected by CP1 would become ineligible for listing under the Federal WSRA.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values As described above under Affected Environment, the ORVs that make Segment 4 of the McCloud River eligible for listing as a wild and scenic river are cultural/historical resources, fisheries, geology, and visual quality/scenery.

Cultural/Historical Resources Under CP1, erosion of rock outcrops and expansion of the bathtub ring in an approximately 1,470-foot reach of Segment 4 could expose buried or previously undiscovered prehistoric cultural resources associated with Wintu occupation of the area and historic recreational uses of the area. As this reach becomes inundated, any exposed resources would be susceptible to the effects of water, which could damage or otherwise alter their values, affecting their eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and reducing their importance for providing information on past use within the corridor. As the water recedes, exposed resources would be susceptible to wind and rain and could be visible, potentially exposing them to theft or vandalism. These adverse effects would be localized along the corridor of the affected portion of Segment 4 and would likely only affect a small portion of the cultural resources that may be associated with the lower McCloud River basin.

The historic structures associated with the Bollibokka Club occur outside of the area that would be affected by the expanded transition reach and would not be affected. However, unrecorded resources associated with the Wintu village locations may occur within the corridor along the river and could be subjected to periodic inundation, deposition, and scour within the upper portions of the

expanded transition reach. Portions of three other recorded sites could also be subject to similar impacts within the expanded transition reach, which could result in damage to resources within the sites. Although these sites may provide information on the area's history or prehistory, none of these sites has been evaluated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sacred sites important to Native Americans have not been specifically identified, and access to lands adjacent to the reach that would be periodically inundated under CP1 is limited because all of these lands are privately owned.

The cultural resources located along the 1,470-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected under CP1 would be subject to the effects of periodic inundation.

Fisheries Aquatic habitat in the 1,470-foot extension of the transition reach would be affected during periodic inundations, resulting in potential adverse effects on the fish that occur in the river. Potential adverse effects on fish could include a reduction in spawning habitat for trout in the expanded transition reach and an increase in the range of warmwater fish in the lower McCloud River. Fishing opportunities would not be affected more than they are now with the periodic fluctuations in river levels.

Under CP1, the transition reach would be extended by about 1,470 feet to the 1,078-foot elevation, resulting in a larger inundation area when Shasta Lake water levels are the highest. Aquatic habitat in the affected portion of Segment 4 consists primarily of flatwater habitat (52 percent glide, 19 percent mid-channel pool, and 13 percent run), with pocket water (11 percent) and a small, low-gradient riffle (5 percent) in the lower portion of the segment. With the periodic inundations, sediment deposition could cause flatwater habitat to convert to riffle habitat, resulting in a reduction in flatwater habitat of less than 3 percent of the total lower McCloud River's flatwater habitat. During the inundation period, riffle and pool habitat (approximately 1.2 percent of the total lower McCloud River) would be converted to flatwater habitat. Also, riparian vegetation along the newly inundated banks of the affected portion of Segment 4 would be expected to die, which could affect water temperatures and reduce cover for fish in this reach. The extent of these effects would depend on the frequency, duration, and surface elevation of the inundation, which would vary depending on the type of water year and water levels of Shasta Lake.

The migration of fish, especially trout, between the lower McCloud River and Shasta Lake is an important attribute of the unique trout fishery. Many of the rainbow and brown trout that occupy the lower McCloud River spend part of their lives rearing in Shasta Lake, feeding on the abundant prey in the lake and attaining large sizes that would not be possible if they reared only in the river. Upon returning to the river to spawn, these lake-reared fish provide the trophy-sized trout, particularly brown trout, for which the lower McCloud River is renowned (Rode and Dean 2004). Based on a survey that extended up to Tuna

Falls (North State Resources, Inc. 2008), the reach of Segment 4 that would periodically be inundated does not contain any barriers or impediments to fish movement or migration, and CP1 would not create any. Consequently, trout migration through the transition reach to upstream spawning areas would not be impaired.

Conversely, warmwater fish movement between the lake and river is not likely to be facilitated by the expanded transition reach. Warmwater fish from Shasta Lake, such as spotted bass, have been observed throughout the lower McCloud River, at least up to the confluence with Tuna Creek (North State Resources, Inc. 2008). Nonnative warmwater species inhabiting Shasta Lake (e.g., smallmouth bass and spotted bass) are known to exploit riverine and transitional habitats and are effective predators of juvenile trout. No barriers have been observed in the transition reach that could prevent warmwater fish from moving upstream, and no barriers would be created by the expansion of the transition reach. Warmwater fish would continue to be able to move between the lake, the transition reach, and lower McCloud River (Segment 4).

Aquatic habitat changes could affect how fluvial resident trout use habitat within the affected portion of Segment 4. General effects may range from temporary displacement of trout to upstream habitats at high water levels to degraded riverine habitat suitability within the transition reach.

Suitable spawning habitat for rainbow and brown trout in the expanded transition reach is limited because of the few pools and riffles available during the spring and fall when these species spawn. Based on the USFS habitat data and more recent reconnaissance surveys, the amount of spawning gravels in the expanded transition reach represents only a small percentage of the suitable spawning habitat in the lower McCloud River. However, any effect on spawning habitat would be considered adverse.

Geology During periods of maximum inundation in the 1,470-foot portion of Segment 4 that would be affected under CP1, some rock outcrops may become inundated and could erode, but the overall geologic value of the McCloud Limestone features would not be adversely affected.

Visual Quality/Scenery The visual quality of the affected portion of Segment 4 would decrease as the vegetation along the banks becomes inundated and eventually dies, the bathtub ring expands, and evidence of flow is reduced. These conditions would be similar to those in the current transition reach. The affected portion of Segment 4 would no longer have the qualities that contributed to its classification by the USFS as “scenic.”

CP1 would result in making approximately 1,470 feet of the lower McCloud River ineligible for listing as wild and scenic. This impact would be significant. Mitigation for this impact is not currently available. If authorized, additional studies will be conducted by Reclamation to determine if feasible mitigation

measures could be developed. Since no mitigation is currently available, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact WASR-2 (CP1): Conflict with Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan The inundation of approximately 1,470 feet of Segment 4 would not conflict with the provisions in the STNF LRMP to protect the ORVs that make the McCloud River eligible for listing under the Federal WSRA. Although raising Shasta Dam would result in inundation of part of Segment 4, the McCloud River and the adjoining lands in this part of the segment are not National Forest System lands and therefore not subject to the LRMP. Management of the river's ORVs under the STNF LRMP and the CRMP would not be affected. No land use changes would occur along the river, and the USFS and signatories to the CRMP would be able to continue implementing provisions of their plans that apply to the river. Because the LRMP does not apply to the private lands in Segment 4, there would be no impact and no mitigation is required.

Impact WASR-3 (CP1): Effects to McCloud River Wild Trout Fishery, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542 The State PRC includes provisions that protect the wild trout fishery of the lower McCloud River. Under CP1, this equates to about 1,470 feet of the river that would be modified and function as an additional portion of the existing transition reach. This reach of the river provides limiting spawning habitat for wild trout (NSR 2009) and during runoff conditions is subject to sedimentation and erosion of the bed and banks similar to upstream reaches. Public access to utilize the fishery offered in this reach is limited to the area below the high-water mark (State Lands) and lands managed by the STNF similar to the other portions of Segment 10 upstream of the McCloud River Bridge. Implementation of proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake could affect the wild trout fishery (access and ecology) of the lower McCloud River identified in the State PRC. This impact would be potentially significant.

The proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake would result in periodic fluctuations in water levels within the expanded transition reach, permanently affecting about 1.2 percent of the lower McCloud River and its associated fishery habitat. Under CP1, the transition reach would be extended by about 1,470 feet, a 16 percent increase over the current transition reach; this entire area would be inundated only during peak water levels in the spring of wet years. The primary impact of the expansion of the transition reach would be conversion of aquatic habitat in a manner similar to that described under Impact WASR-1 and Impact WASR-2 and comparable to the habitat conversion that can be observed in the current transition reach downstream. While the overall impacts to the fishery (populations and habitat) are small in the context of the entire lower McCloud River. This impact would be potentially significant. Mitigation for this impact is proposed in Section 25.4.4.

Impact WASR-4 (CP1): Effects to McCloud River Free-Flowing Conditions, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542

The State PRC includes provisions that protect the free-flowing conditions of the McCloud River, including the conditions in the transition reach upstream of the McCloud River Bridge. Implementation of proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake could affect the free-flowing conditions of the McCloud River, as identified in the State PRC. This impact would be significant.

The proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake would result in periodic fluctuations in water levels within the expanded transition reach, permanently affecting about 1.2 percent of the lower McCloud River. Under CP1, the transition reach would be extended by about 1,470 feet, a 16 percent increase over the current transition reach; this entire area would be inundated only during peak water levels in the spring of wet years. The free-flowing conditions of the river would not be adversely affected beyond the upstream extension of the transition reach. The primary impact of the expansion of the transition reach would be modifications to the free-flowing character in a manner similar to that described under Impact WASR-1 and Impact WASR-2. While the overall impacts to the free-flowing conditions that would occur within this transition reach are small in the context of the lower McCloud River (1.2 percent), this impact would be significant and unavoidable. Mitigation for this impact is proposed in Section 25.4.4. If authorized, additional studies will be conducted by Reclamation to refine this mitigation measure. Although mitigation has been identified, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CP2 – 12.5-Foot Dam Raise, Anadromous Fish Survival and Water Supply Reliability

CP2 would involve a 12.5-foot raise of Shasta Dam, which would increase the lake's gross pool by 14.5 feet and enlarge the total storage space in the lake by 443,000 acre-feet. This increase would equate to an increase of about 1,850 acres of surface area when the lake is full. CP2 also includes measures to increase water supply reliability while contributing to increased survival of anadromous fish. Shasta Dam operational guidelines would continue essentially unchanged, except during dry years and critical years, when 120,000 acre-feet and 60,000 acre-feet, respectively, of the increased storage capacity in Shasta Reservoir would be reserved to specifically focus on increasing M&I deliveries. CP2 would help reduce future water shortages through increasing drought year and average year water supply reliability for agricultural and M&I deliveries. In addition, the increased depth and volume of the cold-water pool in Shasta Reservoir would contribute to improving seasonal water temperatures for anadromous fish in the upper Sacramento River.

Impact WASR-1 (CP2): Effect on McCloud River's Eligibility for Listing as a Federal Wild and Scenic River Impact WASR-1 (CP2) would be similar to Impact WASR-1 but would affect 1,270 feet more of Segment 4 than CP1.

Implementation of CP2 would reduce the total length of the McCloud River that is eligible for wild and scenic river designation by about 2,740 feet (approximately 2.3 percent of the total length of the lower river). The rest of the lower McCloud River would remain eligible for listing.

Under CP2, approximately 2,740 feet, or 21 percent, of Segment 4 would be periodically inundated. The transition reach would increase to a maximum elevation of 1,084 feet msl, which would extend it by about 2,740 feet (a 30 percent increase over the current transition reach), inundating a larger portion of the lower McCloud River within the study area and Segment 4. The inundated area would increase to approximately 51 total acres (an increase of 18 acres over existing conditions and 9 acres more than CP1 conditions), with a maximum width of approximately 530 feet (an increase of 60 feet over existing conditions) and a total length of approximately 11,740 linear feet (2.22 miles). The extension of the transition reach by approximately 2,740 feet would affect approximately 21 percent of Segment 4. Additional impacts under CP2 compared with CP1 would be minimal and would be limited to the additional 440-foot extension of the transition reach and about 15 additional feet on both sides of the river.

During a wet year, the maximum average water surface elevation of Shasta Lake would be 1,080 feet msl, with a peak elevation of 1,084 feet msl during May. This is an increase of 15 feet above the existing maximum average. During an average water year, the maximum average water surface elevation would increase to 1,051 feet msl, an increase of 11 feet above existing conditions. During dry and critical water years, the change would be on the order of 5 to 9 feet in elevation.

The increased gross pool of Shasta Lake would expand the current transition reach up to the 1,084-foot elevation, a 30 percent increase. Flow conditions and fisheries in the 2,740-foot reach of Segment 4 would periodically be affected, with the timing and duration of the effects similar to those in the current transition reach. Over time, the expansion of the bathtub ring would adversely affect water quality, geology, and visual quality/scenery. Erosion of soils along the river could expose buried cultural resources, and periodic inundation could permanently alter cultural resource values and features in the transition reach important to Native Americans.

Free-Flowing Conditions As discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1), the flow characteristics of the extended transition reach under CP2 would be periodically modified, resulting in slower moving waters and a wider river channel. This modification would not meet the definition of a free-flowing river under the Federal WSRA. The width of the transition reach would be increased by approximately 30 feet on both sides of the river. Flow conditions and the river's free-flowing nature upstream from the expanded transition reach would remain similar to current conditions.

Because free-flowing conditions are a fundamental requirement for wild and scenic river eligibility, the 2,740-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected by CP2 would become ineligible for listing under the Federal WSRA.

Water Quality Under CP2, increased turbidity and warmer water temperatures would be most noticeable along the expanded 2,740 feet of the transition reach and in the 30-foot corridor on either side of the transition reach because these areas have not been previously exposed to periodic inundations. As discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1), effects on water quality would be associated with the periodic increases in water levels of Shasta Lake.

Because water quality is a fundamental requirement for wild and scenic river eligibility, the 2,740-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected by CP2 would become ineligible for listing under the Federal WSRA.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values As described above under Affected Environment, the ORVs that make Segment 4 of the McCloud River eligible for listing as a wild and scenic river are cultural/historical resources, fisheries, geology, and visual quality/scenery.

Cultural/Historical Resources Impacts would be the same as discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1); however, a slightly larger portion of the three recorded sites and possible resources associated with the known Wintu villages would be inundated.

The cultural resources located along the 2,740-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected under CP2 would be subject to the effects of periodic inundation.

Fisheries Aquatic habitat in the affected 2,740-foot segment consists of pocket water and a lateral scour pool. The potential conversion of flatwater habitat to riffle habitat in the 2,740-foot segment would be similar to but greater than under WASR-1 (CP1), and overall impacts to aquatic habitat and fish would be similar to those discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1).

Geology Impacts would be the same as discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1); the geologic values of the lower McCloud River would not be adversely affected.

Visual Quality/Scenery Impacts would be the same as discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1). The affected portion of Segment 4 would no longer have the qualities that contributed to its classification by the USFS as “scenic.”

CP2 would result in making approximately 2,740 feet of the lower McCloud River ineligible for listing as wild and scenic. This impact would be significant. Mitigation for this impact is not currently available. If authorized, additional studies will be conducted by Reclamation to determine if feasible mitigation measures could be developed. Since no mitigation is currently available, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact WASR-2 (CP2): Conflict with Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan The inundation of approximately 2,740 feet of Segment 4 would not conflict with the provisions in the STNF LRMP to protect the ORVs that make the McCloud River eligible for listing under the Federal WSRA. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

Impact WASR-3 (CP2): Effects to McCloud River Wild Trout Fishery, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542 The impact would be similar to WASR-3 (CP1) but the magnitude of the impact would be greater under CP2 because of the longer transition reach. Under CP2, the proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake would result in temporary and periodic fluctuations in water levels within the expanded transition reach, affecting about 2.3 percent of the lower McCloud River. Under CP2, the reach affected by Shasta Lake water levels would be extended by about 2,740 feet, a 30 percent increase over the current transition reach; this entire area would be inundated only during peak water levels in the spring of wet years. An impact of the expansion of the transition reach would be conversion of aquatic habitat in a manner similar to the habitat conversion that can be observed in the current transition reach downstream. While the overall impacts to the wild trout fishery, including public access and management opportunities in conjunction with fish habitat and populations, are small in the context of the entire lower McCloud River, this impact would be potentially significant. Mitigation for this impact is proposed in Section 25.4.4.

Impact WASR-4 (CP2): Effects to McCloud River Free-Flowing Conditions, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542 The impact would be similar to WASR-4 (CP1) but the magnitude of the impact would be greater under CP2 because of the longer transition reach. Under CP2, the proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake would result in temporary and periodic fluctuations in water levels within the expanded transition reach, affecting about 2.3 percent of the lower McCloud River. Under CP2, the reach affected by Shasta Lake water levels would be extended by about 2,740 feet, a 30 percent increase over the current transition reach; this entire area would be inundated only during peak water levels in the spring of wet years. The free-flowing conditions of the lower McCloud River would not be adversely affected beyond the upstream extension of the transition reach. While the overall impacts to the free-flowing conditions that would occur within this transition reach are small in the context of the lower McCloud River (2.3 percent), the impacts would be significant. Mitigation for this impact is proposed in Section 25.4.4. If authorized, additional studies will be conducted

by Reclamation to refine this mitigation measure. Although mitigation has been identified, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 – 18.5-Foot Dam Raise, with Variations

CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would involve an 18.5-foot raise of Shasta Dam, which would increase the lake's gross pool by 20.5 feet and enlarge the total storage space in the lake by 634,000 acre-feet. This increase would equate to an increase of about 2,500 acres of surface area when the lake is full. CP3 focuses on increasing agricultural water supply reliability and increasing anadromous fish survival. CP4, CP4A, and CP5 increase water supply reliability and include enhancements in the upper Sacramento River for anadromous fish survival including gravel augmentation and the restoration of riparian, floodplain, and side channel habitat.

CP3 would increase the ability of Shasta Dam to make cold-water releases and regulate water temperatures for fish in the upper Sacramento River, primarily in dry and critical water years. CP3 would help reduce estimated future water shortages by increasing the reliability of dry and critical year water supplies for agricultural deliveries by at least 63,000 acre-feet per year and average annual deliveries by about 62,000 acre-feet per year. Under CP3, operations for water supply, hydropower, and environmental and other regulatory requirements would be similar to existing operations, with the additional storage retained for water supply reliability and to expand the cold-water pool for downstream anadromous fisheries.

CP4 would be used to improve the ability to meet temperature objectives and habitat requirements for anadromous fish during drought years and increase water supply reliability. Of the increased reservoir storage space under CP4, about 378,000 acre-feet would be dedicated to increasing the supply of cold water for anadromous fish survival purposes. For CP4, operations for the remaining portion of increased storage (approximately 256,000 acre-feet) would be the same as in CP1, with 70,000 acre-feet and 35,000 acre-feet reserved to specifically focus on increasing M&I deliveries during dry and critical years, respectively. CP4 includes augmenting spawning gravel and restoring riparian, floodplain, and side channel habitat in the upper Sacramento River.

CP4A reserves a portion of the increased storage in Shasta Lake for maintaining cold-water volume or augmenting flows in the Sacramento River as part of an adaptive management plan for anadromous fish survival. Of the increased reservoir storage space under CP4A, about 191,000 acre-feet would be dedicated to increasing the supply of cold water for anadromous fish survival purposes. For CP4A, operations for the remaining portion of increased storage (approximately 443,000 acre-feet) would be the same as in CP2, with 120,000 acre-feet reserved in dry years and 60,000 acre-feet reserved in critical years for M&I deliveries. CP4A includes augmenting spawning gravel and restoring riparian, floodplain, and side channel habitat in the upper Sacramento River. CP5 would help reduce future water shortages through increasing drought year

and average year water supply reliability for agricultural and M&I deliveries. Shasta Dam operational guidelines would continue essentially unchanged, except during dry years and critical years, when 150,000 acre-feet and 75,000 acre-feet, respectively, of the increased storage capacity in Shasta Reservoir would be reserved to specifically focus on increasing M&I deliveries. CP5 also includes constructing additional fish habitat in and along the shoreline of Shasta Lake and along the lower reaches of its tributaries; augmenting spawning gravel and restoring riparian, floodplain, and side channel habitat in the upper Sacramento River; and increasing recreation opportunities at Shasta Lake.

Impacts associated with CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would be very similar to those described for CP1 and CP2, but the increased water levels of Shasta Lake would affect a longer reach of the lower McCloud River. Because of their similarities, and in an effort to reduce redundancy, only the differences between the plans are described below.

Impact WASR-1 (CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5): Effect on McCloud River's Eligibility for Listing as a Federal Wild and Scenic River Implementation of CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would reduce the total length of the McCloud River that is eligible for wild and scenic river designation by about 3,550 feet (less than 3 percent of the total length of the lower river). The rest of the lower McCloud River would remain eligible for listing.

Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, the extent of the transition reach would increase to a maximum elevation of 1,090 feet msl, which would extend the current transition reach by about 3,550 feet (a 39 percent increase over the current transition reach), inundating a larger portion of the lower McCloud River within the study area and Segment 4. The inundated area would increase to approximately 60 total acres (an increase of 27 acres over existing conditions, and 9 acres more than CP2 conditions), with a maximum width of approximately 610 feet (an increase of 140 feet over existing conditions) and a total length of approximately 12,550 linear feet (2.38 miles). The extension of the transition reach by approximately 3,550 feet would affect approximately 26 percent of Segment 4. Additional impacts under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 compared with CP1 and CP2 would be minimal and would be limited to the additional 810-foot extension of the transition reach and about 20 additional feet on either side of the river.

During a wet year, the maximum average water surface elevation of Shasta Lake would be 1,086 feet msl, with a peak elevation of 1,090 feet msl during May. This is an increase of 21 feet above the existing maximum average. During an average water year, the maximum average water surface elevation would increase to 1,054 feet msl, an increase of 14 feet above existing conditions. During dry and critical water years, the change would be on the order of 6 to 13 feet in elevation.

The increased gross pool of Shasta Lake would expand the current transition reach by approximately 3,550 feet (810 feet beyond CP2's effects) up to the 1,090-foot elevation, resulting in a 39 percent increase in the transition reach. Within the expanded transition reach, flow conditions and fisheries would periodically be affected, with the timing and duration of the effects similar to those in the current transition reach. Over time, the expansion of the bathtub ring would affect water quality, geology, and visual quality/scenery. Erosion of soils along the river could expose buried cultural resources, and periodic inundation could permanently alter cultural resource values and features in the transition reach important to Native Americans.

Free-Flowing Conditions As discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1), the flow characteristics of the extended transition reach under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would be temporarily modified, resulting in slower moving waters and a wider river channel. This modification would not meet the definition of a free-flowing river under the Federal WSRA. The width of the transition reach would be increased by approximately 70 feet on either side of the river. Flow conditions and the river's free-flowing nature upstream from the expanded transition reach would remain similar to current conditions.

Because free-flowing conditions are a fundamental requirement for wild and scenic river eligibility, the 3,550-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected by CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would become ineligible for listing under the Federal WSRA.

Water Quality Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, increased turbidity and warmer water temperatures would be most noticeable along the expanded 3,550-foot reach of the transition reach and in the 70-foot corridor on either side of the transition reach because these areas have not been previously exposed to periodic inundations. Under these plans, the wider affected river corridor could result in greater temporary effects on water quality because more vegetation would be temporarily inundated and more soils would be exposed. As discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1), effects on water quality would be associated with the periodic increases in water levels of Shasta Lake.

Because water quality is a fundamental requirement for wild and scenic river eligibility, the 3,550-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected by CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would become ineligible for listing under the Federal WSRA.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values As described above under Affected Environment, the ORVs that make Segment 4 of the McCloud River eligible for listing as a wild and scenic river are cultural/historical resources, fisheries, geology, and visual quality/scenery.

Cultural/Historical Resources Impacts would be similar to those discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1). Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, the

wider affected river corridor could result in greater effects on cultural resources because of the wider inundated area and increased erosion. Larger portions of the three recorded sites and known Wintu villages would become inundated.

The cultural resources located along the 3,550-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would be subject to the effects of periodic inundation.

Fisheries Aquatic habitat in the additional 810-foot segment under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 consists of a mid-channel pool and a lateral scour pool. The potential conversion of flatwater habitat to riffle habitat in the 3,550-foot reach of Segment 4 that would be affected under these plans would be similar to but greater than under WASR-1 (CP1), and overall impacts to aquatic habitat and fish would be similar to those discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1).

Geology Impacts would be the same as discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1), except additional rock outcrops could become inundated because of the wider affected corridor.

Visual Quality/Scenery Impacts would be similar to those discussed under Impact WASR-1 (CP1). Under these plans, the wider affected river corridor could result in greater effects on the visual setting because of the wider inundated area and increased impacts on vegetation. The water line would also be visible at a higher elevation and could be more noticeable. The affected portion of Segment 4 would no longer have the qualities that contributed to its classification by the USFS as “scenic.”

CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 would result in making approximately 3,550 feet of the lower McCloud River ineligible for listing as wild and scenic. This impact would be significant. Mitigation for this impact is not currently available. If authorized, additional studies will be conducted by Reclamation to determine if feasible mitigation measures could be developed. Since no mitigation is currently available, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact WASR-2 (CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5): Conflict with Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan The inundation of approximately 3,550 feet of Segment 4 would not conflict with the provisions in the STNF LRMP to protect the ORVs that make the McCloud River eligible for listing under the Federal WSRA. There would be no impact, and no mitigation is required.

Impact WASR-3 (CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5): Effects to McCloud River Wild Trout Fishery, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542 The impact would be similar to WASR-3 (CP1), but the magnitude of the impact would be greater under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 because of the longer transition reach. Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, the proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake would result in

temporary and periodic fluctuations in water levels within the expanded transition reach, affecting about 3 percent of the lower McCloud River. Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, the reach affected by Shasta Lake water levels would be extended by about 3,550 feet, a 39 percent increase over the current transition reach; this entire area would be inundated only during peak water levels in the spring of wet years. The primary impact of the expansion of the transition reach would be conversion of aquatic habitat in a manner similar to the habitat conversion that can be observed in the current transition reach downstream. While the overall impacts to the wild trout fishery including public access and management opportunities in conjunction with fish habitat and populations are small in the context of the entire lower McCloud River, this impact would be potentially significant. Mitigation for this impact is proposed in Section 25.4.4.

Impact WASR-4 (CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5): Effects to McCloud River Free-Flowing Conditions, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542 The impact would be similar to WASR-4 (CP1), but the magnitude of the impact would be greater under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5 because of the longer transition reach. Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, the proposed modifications to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake would result in temporary and periodic fluctuations in water levels within the expanded transition reach, affecting about 3 percent of the lower McCloud River. Under CP3, CP4, CP4A, and CP5, the reach affected by Shasta Lake water levels would be extended by about 3,550 feet, a 39 percent increase over the current transition reach; this entire area would be inundated only during peak water levels in the spring of wet years. The free-flowing conditions of the river would not be adversely affected beyond the upstream extension of the transition reach. The primary impact of the expansion of the transition reach would be conversion of aquatic habitat in a manner similar to the habitat conversion that can be observed in the current transition reach downstream. While the overall impacts to the free flowing conditions that would occur within this transition reach are small in the context of the lower McCloud River (3 percent), the impacts would conflict with the State PRC. This impact would be significant. Mitigation for this impact is proposed in Section 25.4.4. If authorized, additional studies will be conducted by Reclamation to refine this mitigation measure. Although mitigation has been identified, this impact would be significant and unavoidable.

25.4.4 Mitigation Measures

Table 25-2 presents a summary of mitigation measures for wild and scenic rivers.

The mitigation measures described in the following section were developed partly in response to comments on the DEIS. While these measures are considered to be potentially feasible and effective in their ability to reduce impacts, this EIS acknowledges that there is uncertainty with respect to reducing impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Table 25-2. Summary of Mitigation Measures for Wild and Scenic Rivers

Impact		No-Action Alternative	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4/CP4A	CP5
Impact WASR-1: McCloud River's Eligibility for Listing as a Federal Wild and Scenic River	LOS before Mitigation	NI	S	S	S	S	S
	Mitigation Measure	None required.	No feasible mitigation available to reduce impact at this point in the planning process.				
	LOS after Mitigation	NI	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU
Impact WASR-2: Conflict with Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Land and Resource Management Plan	LOS before Mitigation	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
	Mitigation Measure	None required.	None required.				
	LOS after Mitigation	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
Impact WASR-3: Effects to McCloud River Wild Trout Fishery, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542	LOS before Mitigation	NI	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS
	Mitigation Measure	None required.	WASR-3 (CP1-CP5): Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Multi-scale Fishery Protection, Restoration and Improvement Program for the Lower McCloud River Watershed.				
	LOS after Mitigation	NI	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS
Impact WASR-4: Effects to McCloud River Free-Flowing Conditions, as Identified in the California Public Resources Code, Section 5093.542	LOS before Mitigation	NI	S	S	S	S	S
	Mitigation Measure	None required.	Mitigation Measure WASR-4 (CP1-CP5): Implement Protection, Restoration, and Improvement Measures to Benefit Hydrologic Functions Within the Lower McCloud River Watershed				
	LOS after Mitigation	NI	SU	SU	SU	SU	SU

Key:

CP = Comprehensive Plan

LOS = level of significance

NI = no impact

PS = potentially significant

S = significant

SU = significant and unavoidable

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, no action would be taken, including implementation of mitigation measures; rather, existing conditions would continue to change in response to natural processes and human activities. No mitigation measures are required for the No-Action Alternative.

Mitigation Measure WASR-3 (CP1-CP5): Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Multi-scale Wild Trout Fishery Protection, Restoration and Improvement Program Within the Lower McCloud River Watershed

The inundation of a portion of the lower McCloud River will affect the habitat available to wild trout and other aquatic organisms. The impacts are similar to, but more specific to the lower McCloud River watershed than those described under Impact Geo-2 in Chapter 4, "Geology, Geomorphology, Minerals and Soils"; Impact WQ-1 in Chapter 7, "Water Quality"; and Impacts Aqua-4 and Aqua-7 in Chapter 11, "Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems." This mitigation measure incorporates Mitigation Measures Geo-2, WQ-1, and Aqua-4.

This mitigation measure also includes the commitment to identify suitable sections of the lower McCloud River protected under the State PRC that may be available for acquisition from willing sellers for purposes of protecting, restoring and improving the wild trout fishery. This element of the mitigation measures is intended to be consistent with CDFW's wild trout policy as defined in the Strategic Plan for Trout Management, Appendix E, Section C (CDFG 2003), emphasizing designation and management of the wild trout fishery available to the public.

Watershed analysis and assessments prepared for the lower McCloud River watershed document that roads and modified fire regimes have increased sediment contributions to receiving waters, particularly in those watersheds that have been subjected to mining, forest management, and other types of large-scale developments and disturbances (CVWRCB 2011). Reclamation will apply this element of this mitigation measure to protect, restore, and improve the wild trout fishery in the lower McCloud River watershed.

The STNF, through the efforts of the interagency mitigation working group described in Chapter 2, "Action Alternatives," identified that acquisition of lands along the lower McCloud River is a priority and is consistent with the LRMP to meet a number of resource goals and objectives (e.g., cultural resources, recreation, biological resources). Under Impacts WASR-3 and WASR-4, the wild trout fishery and free-flowing conditions in the main stem lower McCloud River that would be affected in the protected reach would be at most 3,550 feet. This element of Mitigation Measure WASR-3 would include acquisition of private lands along the river corridor commensurate with the selected action alternative, if authorized, and available from a willing seller.

This mitigation measure requires that Reclamation work with the watershed stakeholders (e.g., CRMP members) to develop a basin plan that identifies deficient areas where riparian and watershed improvements can be made and work with landowners to improve those areas. Reclamation will commit to funding the planning effort, which will be completed within 10 years after construction has been initiated. This plan is intended to reduce the impacts of inundation on the wild trout fishery in the McCloud River and its tributaries. This program would be performed in conjunction with the efforts of the interagency work group described in Mitigation Measure Geo-2.

Although implementation of this mitigation measure will reduce the impacts associated with WASR-3, Reclamation acknowledges that the impact would remain potentially significant.

Mitigation Measure WASR-4 (CP1-CP5): Implement Protection, Restoration, and Improvement Measures to Benefit Hydrologic Functions Within the Lower McCloud River Watershed The inundation of a portion of the lower McCloud River will impede the free-flowing nature of as much as 3,550 feet of the river, thereby affecting the hydrologic and hydraulic

characteristics of the affected reach. These impacts are similar to other inundated tributaries, but more specific to the lower McCloud River. These impacts are described in Chapter 4, “Geology, Geomorphology, Minerals and Soils” (Impact Geo-2); Chapter 7, “Water Quality” (Impact WQ-1); and Chapter 11, “Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems” (Impacts Aqua-4 and Aqua-7). This mitigation measure incorporates Mitigation Measures Geo-2, WQ-1, and Aqua-4, specifically in the context of increasing the overall hydrologic function of the lower McCloud River watershed in a variety of ways. Examples of the measures that may be implemented include the following:

- Silviculture treatments that improve fuel conditions, reduce runoff from high intensity fires and enhance the functions and values of wetlands and riparian areas
- Road decommissioning and drainage improvement projects that reduce concentrated road-related runoff and reestablish flows to tributaries to the lower McCloud River
- Restoration/improvement of in-channel habitat to enhance potential for sustained flows from tributaries

This measure also includes the mitigation measures described in Chapter 12, “Botanical Resources and Wetlands,” intended to support land acquisition and wetland mitigation. Five mitigation measures would be applicable to WASR-4: Bot-2, Bot-3, Bot-4, Bot-5 and Bot-7. Land acquisition and wetland mitigation measures are intended to offer a certain level of protection from future development (e.g., diversions) as well as opportunities to improve the hydrologic function at multiple scales that could provide an overall benefit to the free-flowing conditions of the lower McCloud River.

Although implementation of this mitigation measure will reduce the impacts associated with WASR-4, Reclamation acknowledges that the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

25.4.5 Topics Eliminated from Further Consideration

No topics related to the eligibility of the McCloud River for listing under the Federal WSRA, the compatibility of the alternatives with the STNF LRMP or the CRMP, or their compatibility with the PRC providing protection to the McCloud River were eliminated from further consideration.

25.4.6 Cumulative Effects

Chapter 3, “Considerations for Describing the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences,” gives an overview of the cumulative effects analysis, including significance criteria, and discusses the relationship of this analysis to the CALFED Programmatic Cumulative Impacts Analysis. Table 3-1, “Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions Included in the Analysis of Cumulative Impacts, by Resource Area,” in Chapter 3, lists the

projects considered quantitatively and qualitatively within the cumulative impacts analysis. This cumulative impacts analysis accounts for potential project impacts combined with the impacts of existing facilities, conditions, land uses, and reasonably foreseeable actions expected to occur in the study area on a qualitative and quantitative level. None of the projects listed in Table 3-1 under Quantitative Analysis would have impacts on the McCloud River in the primary study area and the SLWRI would not have adverse impacts in the extended study area; therefore, the following analysis is based on programs and projects listed in Table 3-1 under Qualitative Analysis that would have potential effects in the primary study area as explained below.

Significant effects were identified related to the compatibility of the project with the PRC, Section 5093.542. The potential effects would be of greater magnitude and duration with the larger dam raises (i.e., CP3 through CP5 would have greater potential effects than CP1 and CP2). These impacts may also be associated with two reasonably foreseeable future actions that could affect the McCloud River: the relicensing of PG&E's McCloud-Pit Project and the pilot project to reintroduce anadromous salmonid populations upstream from Shasta Dam. FERC has issued the Final EIS for the relicensing of the McCloud-Pit Project. However, the relicensing process for the McCloud-Pit Project is ongoing, and the conditions that may be required under a new FERC license are uncertain. The potential effects of the relicensing on the lower McCloud River are therefore unknown.

In 2012, the Bagley Fire and subsequent winter flood events resulted in significant changes to vegetation conditions, erosional processes, and water quality in the lower McCloud River watershed. The impacts of this combination of natural disturbances are ongoing and there is considerable uncertainty on how they are affecting the physical processes and biological resources of the lower McCloud River watershed. Subsequent management activities (e.g., road reconstruction, silviculture) are ongoing throughout the Bagley Fire area.

The 2009 NMFS Biological Opinion described in Chapter 3 requires Reclamation to implement a pilot project that would provide passage for anadromous salmonids upstream from Shasta Dam. This project is listed in Table 3-1 as the Fish Passage Program at Shasta. This project could reintroduce anadromous salmonids to the lower McCloud River. At this point in the planning process, the details of this project are ill-defined and the potential for success is uncertain. Therefore, the potential effects of this future action on the lower McCloud River are unknown. Given the information available on these future actions, the potential for project-related impacts to be cumulatively considerable would be less than significant and could, in fact, result in benefits to some of the values and resources of the lower McCloud River.