



Don Pedro

WATER & POWER
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A newsletter about the relicensing of the Don Pedro Hydroelectric Project

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Don Pedro Relicensing - Where We've Been

Relicensing of the Don Pedro Project follows the Integrated Licensing Process as designated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Modesto Irrigation District (MID) and Turlock Irrigation District (TID) took the first step in this multi-year process by filing a Notice of Intent (NOI) and Pre-Application Document (PAD) in February 2011, which summarized existing information relevant to the relicensing process.

Following this filing, FERC conducted a pair of scoping meetings in May 2011. Many local public figures attended and spoke at these meetings as the purpose of the meetings was to identify relevant issues of public interest involving the Don Pedro Project. Information gathered at these scoping meetings proved helpful to MID and TID in the development of the Proposed Study Plan (PSP). There were 130 study requests, which were all carefully considered. The PSP was filed in July 2011 and outlined 30 studies proposed by MID and TID.

In December 2011, FERC issued its 140-page Study Plan Determination (SPD). With FERC's SPD issued, MID and TID immediately planned to undertake the approved studies in accordance with FERC's directive. Most of the studies involved extensive field

work; considerable coordination and logistics needed to be worked out to execute the studies efficiently and consistent with the study plans approved by FERC.

As directed by FERC, MID and TID conducted more than 35 studies to examine the Project's potential to affect resources in the lower Tuolumne River and within and adjacent to Don Pedro Reservoir. Results from the studies were presented at the Initial Study Report meeting in January 2013 and the Updated Study Report meeting in January 2014.

The Districts filed the Draft License Application (DLA) in November 2013. The purpose of the DLA is to provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the application prior to filing the Final License Application (FLA).

MID and TID filed the FLA for the Don Pedro Project with FERC in April 2014. The FLA contains a number of new proposed measures to protect the environment and promote recreational use of the Project area. The FLA may be modified in 2017, or sooner, awaiting completion of the last of the studies.

MID and TID may propose additional future protection, mitigation and enhancement measures, including potential river flow proposals.

Relicensing Milestones

- 1. Districts filed Pre-Application Document and Notice of Intent in 2011.**
- 2. FERC conducts scoping in May 2011.**
- 3. Interested parties discuss issues and develop study requests.**
- 4. Districts file Proposed Study Plan in July 2011 and undertake a series of meetings with relicensing participants to discuss study plans.**
- 5. FERC issues Study Plan Determination in December 2011.**
- 6. Studies begin in 2012.**
- 7. Initial Study Report issued for review and comment in January 2013.**
- 8. Districts file Draft License Application with FERC in November 2013.**
- 9. Districts filed Updated Study Report in January 2014.**
- 10. Districts filed Final License Application in April 2014.**

License Set to Expire in April 2016

The current Don Pedro Project FERC license will expire April 30, 2016. Upon license expiration, FERC will begin issuing annual licenses for the Project until the relicensing process is complete. It's not unusual for larger projects to have their existing license expire while the relicensing proceeding is still underway.

The annual license will most likely have the same terms and conditions as the expired license, although FERC reserves its authority to incorporate additional or revised conditions. MID and TID don't anticipate that FERC will add any new license conditions while it considers the issuance of a new license for the Don Pedro Project.

Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan

Federal law requires that MID and TID obtain a Water Quality Certificate from the State attesting that the Don Pedro Project, as proposed, complies with water quality objectives applicable to the Tuolumne River. Through this process, the State can impose requirements on MID and TID to increase river flows or implement non-flow measures beyond those ordered by FERC. Currently, the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) is considering a proposal to amend the current Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP) which would require that the Merced, Tuolumne and Stanislaus rivers dedicate up to 60% of unimpaired flow from February through June annually. Those flows would be in addition to what is already required to be released during warmer summer months.

The Don Pedro Project was constructed as a water storage project and is operated to provide a safe, reliable source of water. It supplies water to approximately 300,000 acres of Central Valley farmland, which is among the most productive in the world. The water stored behind Don Pedro also supplements the drinking water supply for the City of Modesto, La Grange and, through a "water banking" arrangement with the City and County of San Francisco, supports the Bay Area's water supply for more than two million people. If the Water Board approves this proposal, known as the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, it will undoubtedly have significant and unavoidable impacts on Don Pedro's water supply and, ultimately, all those who benefit from that water.

Chinook Salmon Otolith Study (W&AR-11) Update

MID and TID filed the final Chinook Salmon Otolith Study report with FERC on February 8, 2016. The purpose of this study was to understand the interaction between operations of the Don Pedro Project, hydrology and Chinook salmon emigration patterns from the Tuolumne River.

The study examined the microstructure and microchemistry of fish “earstones,” or otoliths, to identify (1) whether returning adults originated from hatcheries or other rivers and (2) the age and size of “wild” fish when they moved from their river of origin into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and when they moved from the Delta into the ocean.

The results of this study indicated relatively high straying of hatchery fish into the Tuolumne River. Results also showed that fish emigrating as fry were very unlikely to return to the river as adults. Consistent with other San Joaquin River basin studies, larger outmigrants represented the vast majority of returning adults, which implies a survival advantage for larger emigrants.

History of Don Pedro Relevant as Project’s Future Weighed by FERC

As we continue the relicensing process, it is important to reflect on how Don Pedro came to be.

Formed in 1887, the Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District are the oldest irrigation districts in California. They were created by a vote of the people in accordance with the laws of California to provide irrigation water for agricultural purposes in their respective irrigation service areas which today total approximately 300,000 acres of trees, vines and forage crops.

Soon after formation, the Districts acquired a water diversion site on the Tuolumne River located downstream of the Don Pedro site along with “pre-1914” water rights; MID and TID have added other water rights to these over time.

An original Don Pedro Reservoir with approximately 290,400 acre-feet of storage and its associated powerhouse were brought online in 1923 to improve water availability for the long growing season of the Central Valley and to bring electricity to a portion of this rural area. MID and TID have been providing retail electricity to the communities’ farms, homes, municipalities, business and industry since that time. Today, the Districts serve approximately 200,000 customers in a 1,000 square mile area.

The Tuolumne River has a long history of cooperative water planning. The need to provide a reliable water supply to a growing Bay Area and concerns over the need to withstand multiple dry years and the growing demand for electricity resulted in MID, TID, and City and County of San Francisco developing the current Don Pedro Project.

The New Don Pedro Project inundated the original dam and impoundment, and the resulting current Don Pedro Reservoir has a storage capacity of 2,030,000 acre-feet, over seven times that of its predecessor; the new Don Pedro Powerhouse constructed with the dam has a generating capacity of 203 megawatts.



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