Potter Valley Project License Surrender Application Public Presentation-20250811-Meeting Recording

0:56
Good afternoon everyone.

0:59
I'm Janet Walther.

1:00
I'm the PG&E Director for Hydro Licensing and Compliance and we really appreciate your participation in this virtual Potter Valley Project to town hall meeting today.

1:11
Is that FYI to keep in mind that we the meeting will be recorded, which will allow you to review the meeting later if you would like.

1:19
It will be available on the Potter Valley website and we will share that information later in the day.

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As always with PG&E meetings, we do start out with safety, so I would like you to just take a moment.

1:33
We have a safety slide.

1:35
We won't spend much time here, but you're thinking of safety and the heat that many of us are seeing.

1:40
Just be sure that you are paying attention to the heat around you and being cautious that you're drinking plenty of water and watching those friends and family around you as well.

1:50
And following the guidance that many of us see on a quite regular basis with the with the news.

1:58
With that, we'll move on.

2:00
As most of you are aware, PG&E recently filed with FERC the License Surrender Application and Decommissioning Plan for the Potter Valley Project.

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And in that plan, we included a plan for construction of a new water diversion facility.

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And we're here today to walk through the FERC filing and share with you how your participation can occur in the FERC process and moving forward.

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And then also we just thank you for joining the meeting today as we also will share with you how you continue to be involved in public involvement throughout this regulatory process.

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I would like to spend a couple minutes or really a very short minute.

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I have introduced myself again, Janet Walther, Director of Hydro Licensing and Compliance; Tony Gigliotti, who you will meet in a few minutes, is the Senior License Project Manager.

2:55
He will be going over a large portion of the information and materials today.

3:00
We also have with us David Manning, the Executive Director of ERPA, the Eel-Russian Project Authority, and he will be sharing components and information regarding the new water diversion facility.

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And we also have Diane Barr, who is the facilitator today that will be helping us through this process.

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And with that, I would like to turn it right on over to Diane, who will share and explain how this virtual town hall meeting will work.

3:28
Thank you.

3:28
And we look forward to further discussion later in the meeting.

3:33
Thank you, Janet.

3:35
So everyone should be able to see on their screen how we are going to work in a town hall style.

3:43

So you will notice that the unmute chat and hand raise functions are turned off for today's presentation.

3:50
That is what constitutes a town hall style.

3:54
There will be a very important Q&A, question and answer period, after approximately or at the very last 30 minutes.

4:01
And we're specifically want to address FERC regulatory surrender process, the organization of the surrender application.

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You're gonna hear more about that today, your opportunities to participate in this process going forward, as well as specific questions on the information presented.

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We're further gonna describe how you can submit comments to the license surrender application that was filed that we're gonna discuss in this presentation.

4:32
So more importantly, let's talk about today's meeting purpose.

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Many of you probably know that PG&E filed with FERC on July 25th their application containing the Potter Valley License Surrender as well as what's called the Non-Project Use of Project Lands Application.

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That sounds pretty complicated and we're here for the next hour and a half to talk about it and walk through it with everyone.

5:00
But specifically today's process is going, our purpose is going to hit the regulatory process, the documentation organization.

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It was a very large filing.

5:11
So if any of you have looked at it, you might have some questions about how it's organized as well as the public participation opportunities that you will have under FERC's process. Specifically we're going to hit these things that are shown on the agenda.

5:27
First thing up is my agenda review.

5:29
Second thing is the meeting overview.

5:33
Then Tony Gigliotti's going to go into the project location and history.

5:38
He's also gonna talk about the FERC surrender process.

5:42
He's also gonna specifically talk about the Potter Valley decommissioning.

5:47
And then David Manning is gonna talk about the New-Eel Russian Facility.

5:52
We're then gonna move back to Tony and we're gonna talk about what's actually in that FERC submittal, what constitutes the filing, how you can participate.

6:04
And that's where I'll come back in, is the engaging with FERC.

6:07
FERC has a pretty active and easy to use website and I'm going to walk people through how to get into the FERC website and how to participate in the information that FERC will be sharing throughout this proceeding.

6:20
And then we're going to have 30 minutes that we're going to hold on the end for Q&A.

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And as that gets closer, I will go back through and explain how the Q&A session works and then we will close the meeting.

6:37
So just as an overview for today, we want to provide a full background on the project history.

6:46
So people who may have attended the last town hall or maybe this is your first town hall, have an understanding as to how we got to here.

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Then we also want to summarize the license surrender process and public involvement.

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It's pretty complex.

7:00
There's a lot of processes in play when surrender happens in a decommissioning.

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And we want to make sure the people that are attending this call or people perhaps you'll talk to understand how there's public involvement.

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More specifically, we're going to dive a little deeper into actually the submittal components that were put into the FERC, you know, in the application and filed with FERC on the 25th.

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There's actually a guidance for reading FERC submittals.

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FERC does a pretty good job of sharing information how to get through their system.

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And then we're gonna explain more specifically the FERC submittal, what's in it, Why are there 2 applications?

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How are those applications split out?

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So when you do get into the application, you're not trying to figure that out by reading the table of contents.

7:49
And then as I said in the agenda review, we're going to go into a Q&A 30 minute session.

7:55
So with that, I'm going to move this over to Tony and he's going to give you some background on the pathway and how we got to here.

8:05
Good afternoon, everyone.

8:07
Tony Gigliotti, As Janet said, I'm the License Project Manager, so I'll just give a quick overview.

8:12
So the Potter Valley Project consists of two dams with their associated reservoirs.

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So the larger of the two dams is Scott Dam, which impounds Lake Pillsbury Reservoir that's located in Lake County, and then Van Arsdale Reservoir is impounded by Cape Horn Dam and that's located in Mendocino County.

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Waters diverted from the Eel River upstream of Cape Horn Dam and then through a series of tunnels and conduits passes through the powerhouse before it enters the East Branch Russian River post powerhouse.

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And currently the powerhouse is not in operation.

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So just want to provide some context into how we got to where we are today.

8:57
So prior to 2018 PG&E determined that the Potter Valley Project was not economical for our customers.

9:04
The cost to the customers to keep it running was higher than the value that the customers received from continuing operation of the project.

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We understood that the project is, you know there there's a community that utilizes the water that that passes through our project.

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And with that in mind and understanding the importance of the project to the region, PG&E worked to find a new owner while we were going through the licensing process.

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Ultimately, no transfer was completed and in 2019 we informed FERC that we would stop relicensing the project.

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That decision is not reversible and at this point in time PG&E cannot relicense the project.

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When we informed FERC that we were going to stop the relicensing of the project, FERC went through what's known as the orphan process.

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So the orphan process is a formal process with FERC where they open up the current project to non-current licensees.

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So a third party could come forward and relicense the project.

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That's a non typical process.

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Typically it's the licensee that goes through the relicensing process.

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Parties came forward and went through the process to start the relicensing, but ultimately no party completed those steps.

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And in 2022, when nobody completed those steps, FERC requested that PG&E provide a plan and schedule for the surrender and decommissioning of the project.

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We provided the plan and schedule, made two drafts of our surrender application and decommissioning plan available to the public and then filed that last month July 25th.

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That submittal also included a Non-Project Use of Project Lands which we'll talk about a little bit later in the meeting.

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But it was one submittal with two separate applications.

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So what is required for FERC to issue a surrender order.

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So the next part of the slides are the process more than the details of the application.

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So the surrender process, you know, is different than a more typical relicensing process.

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It's a discrete action where FERC is looking at a project from a construction standpoint and their jurisdiction is ultimately going to end.

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So rather than in a relicensing where a licensee is submitting to FERC and requesting to continue operating for 30 to 50 years, the licensee is requesting to FERC that we would like to surrender the project and here's how we're going to go about decommissioning it.

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With FERC's jurisdiction ending, there's a much larger focus on the engineering.

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So you'll see a large focus in terms of the safety aspect of how we go about decommissioning our project and also what's left.

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FERC wants to make sure that when their jurisdiction ends, whatever PG&E is leaving in place,

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FERC is also comfortable with leaving that because they will no longer have oversight over what's going on on the property.

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And then the last part is FERC can't require a licensee to keep and operate a project.

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So as I mentioned on the previous slide, it's an irreversible decision when you pull back your relicensing documents.

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And at that point in time work cannot require us to continue to operate the project post for I guess the foreseeable future, right?

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We continue to operate based on our current license and we'll do so until we receive the surrender order.

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So this next slide it you work left to right and it lays out the various steps to get to the decommissioning and ultimate termination of the license.

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So starting on the far left and blue, that's the surrender application and decommissioning plan.

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So that's what we just submitted to FERC last month.

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In that application;

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It includes an environmental analysis and potential measures that PG&E would put in place as we go about the decommissioning.

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Excuse me; it's a pretty comprehensive document.

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Inside of that document, you know, there's the project description, the various measures, but it's really the start of the process.

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As you can see, there's multiple steps further down the line that need to be completed.

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Some of those steps allow for public participation similar to what we had when the document went out for review, but they're a much more formal process.

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So the next step is the federal permits.

14:03
So on the federal permit side, there's two types of federal permits or authorization.

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So there's ones that FERC needs to comply with as the federal entity that is issuing the order to surrender and decommission the project.

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And then there's permits that PG&E needs to obtain from other federal agencies besides FERC to move forward with the construction.

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So at this point in time though, one of the key points is there's no regulatory timeline for FERC to complete their steps.

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So we don't know how long this process is going to take.

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We just know that these are the various steps that need to be done. On the PG&E side,

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We know that we're going to be impacting waterways through our construction project.

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So that's where the Army Corps, the US Army Corps of Engineers comes into play, as does the California State Water Board.

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And, and those are our processes.

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PG&E will be submitting those permits to those agencies, working through their permit process or authorization process.

15:07
But then there's also ones that FERC needs to work through.

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So ESA, Endangered Species Act, and then the National Historic Properties Act Section 106.

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Those are FERC requirements as a federal agency who's taking an action of issuing the order.

15:23
And while PG&E may be the non-federal designee who can interact with the various agencies, FERC is ultimately responsible for ensuring that their authorization and their issuance of the order complies with the requirements in those sections of code.

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Next is the NEPA and CEQA processes.

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So these aren't permits, right?

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These are processes and NEPA is on the federal level.

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So FERC will comply with NEPA in in the NEPA process is a very robust public participation process and FERC is going to be responsible for that in implementing that NEPA.

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I apologize for the acronyms.

16:08
The National Environmental Protection Act and then CEQA is the California equivalent of that. With CEQA, CEQA will be led by the Water Board very similar public participation process reviewing the environment from a very high level perspective while also getting into the details.

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So when we say environment, we don't just mean aquatic fish or just birds.

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It's all aspects of the environment that could be impacted by the project.

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Next FERC will issue a surrender order.

16:44
So the surrender order is going to contain a list of conditions that need to be implemented by PG&E.

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So that order is the big next step for FERC, right?

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That there's the NEPA process obtaining the permits and complying with them.

17:03
But the issuance of the surrender order is when FERC says to PG&E, "yes, your plan is approved."

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"Here are all the conditions that you need to meet and put in place to protect the environment, ensure that you're doing the work safely."

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Next is the dam safety approvals.

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So the issuance of that order from FERC doesn't mean that construction starts right away, that's the "you may start following, or implementing the following conditions."

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One of those conditions, for example, is ensuring that FERC's regional office reviews and approves our engineering plans from a dam safety perspective.

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There's also the state Division of Dam Safety that will review those plans.

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There are other requirements that are going to be in that order from FERC so construction doesn't start right away.

17:57
There could be a one to two year gap between the issuance of the order and when PG&E is out in the field performing construction activities.

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Some other examples of that are pre-construction surveys related to birds that there may be some water quality aspects as well as other environmental resources.

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Below that you'll see that there's the other permits, that's the state and local permits.

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So there may be state and local permits that are ministerial in nature.

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Examples of that are traffic control permits, a Caltrans permit.

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PG&E is going to be required to obtain some additional permits.

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We don't know exactly which ones yet as we're still working on our engineering and final design, but those will need to be obtained before we start construction.

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Finally, after we obtain the ministerial permits we need, we get the FERC surrender order.

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We've complied and implemented the various pre-construction measures that they're requiring us to do, including the FERC safe-; the FERC Dam Safety Team and the California Division of Dam Safety approval.

19:12
Then we can start the construction.

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So construction starts, we finished with our decommissioning of the dam in terms of the removal, but then there's a restoration process and we'll implement the restoration plan.

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We'll talk a little bit about that later.

19:29
There's various management plans that will be implemented post dam removal and with that will be some sort of monitoring requirements.

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We don't know what those will be yet.

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We are working on those management plans now and we will submit those to FERC within the next year or two.

19:47
But once we've met all those requirements, we let FERC know that yes, we've gone through, we've done the restoration, we've monitored. They'll issue the license termination and at that point in time,

20:01
The license doesn't exist in terms of FERC jurisdiction.

20:05
So their jurisdiction has ended and there is no longer a Potter Valley Project.

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So next I'll talk a little bit about the project description.

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So there's two sections in here.

20:21
There's the Potter Valley project decommissioning and then there's the Non-Project Use of Project Lands, which is the third party water diversion that David Manning will be discussing.

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So in our application to, to help understand it and just lay it out, we, we split it up into two areas.

20:43
So there's the Scott Dam area, which consists of work required at Scott Dam, Lake Pillsbury Reservoir, any recreation and other facilities.

20:54
So there are rec sites around Lake Pillsbury, but other facilities and features, for example, the dams have other features that are not specifically related to the dam such as those that monitor movement.

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Those are also discussed in in that.

21:12
And then at Cape Horn Dam, Cape Horn Dam was split into kind of two sections and it got the powerhouse got put into that section as well.

21:21
So there's Cape Horn Dam. Van Arsdale Reservoir.

21:24
So what work is happening there?

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There's also a rec facility located in that area as well as communication lines.

21:32
And then the fish ladder, for example, and the diversion are other facilities there.

21:41
So first is the Scott Dam.

21:43
We're really going to focus on the two dams in terms of what the project description is.

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So there are some pre-construction efforts that occur at both sites and throughout the work areas.

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Those pre-construction efforts consist of things related to road work or road

22:03
improvements, ensuring that our crews can get out there safely and efficiently, lay down yards where the crews are going to stage their equipment, keep the equipment overnight, materials would be there et cetera.

22:17
Then when we get all of those in place, we'll start what we're calling the initial low-flow season activities.

22:24
So this schematic is of Scott Dam at the top in the gray is the current height of the dam.

22:32
And what we are proposing in the initial low flow season is to start draining the reservoir as low as we can go.

22:42
We will then start removing the top of the reservoir down to a specific level.

22:47
And these are all preliminary plans at this point, engineering has not been finalized.

22:54
And then we're going to install a hole at the bottom of the dam, we call it an adit in the application and then that would be plugged, and that will be utilized in the next season.

23:06
But the, the key thing that to keep in mind as you're reviewing the document and understanding what we're doing is this occurs during a low flow season.

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So when there's not a lot of water in the reservoir.

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The idea behind that being that it'll give us more time to complete the work because the reservoir is naturally lower and we need to drain the reservoir to complete this work.

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So I mentioned the initial low flow season, that the next season is a high flow season and that's not necessarily directly after that low flow season.

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So we need a high flow season to remove the plug in the adit.

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At that point in time, we'd be flushing and pushing sediment downstream of the dam.

23:56
And that initial high flow season is what most people would envision as the dam removal.

24:03
Most of the dam would be removed at that point so that the plug in the hole at the bottom of the dam's been removed.

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The sediment that's been behind the dam has been mobilized.

24:13
It's going downstream.

24:15
And you want that to happen when there's a lot of water.

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So a wet year, a rainy year.

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And then after that there's going to be another low flow season and we call it the first low flow season after the sediment is flushed.

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So the initial low flow season is when we're bringing the dam down, installing the hole at the bottom.

24:37
Then you have a high flow season where we're pulling the plug and pushing the sediment downstream.

24:43
And then the first low flow season is when we are completing the removal of Scott Dam.

24:49
So some aspects of Scott Dam may be remaining in place related to the footings for to help with stabilization et cetera.

24:57
But there are three distinct seasons and those may not happen concurrently.

25:03
We could unfortunately have a situation where there's multiple dry or low flow seasons concurrently, at which point PG&E is not proposing to remove the plug in the adit until there's a high flow season.

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So Cape Horn Dam, Cape Horn Dam is a little simpler on this one.

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We don't have drawings, or preliminary drawings,

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I would say, to show. We're going to construct a flow bypass channel and dewater the work area.

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So the river's going to be routed around the current dam.

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We're dewatering that area.

25:48
And then we're going to go through and start the removal of Cape Horn Dam.

25:54
We're going to remove Cape Horn Dam and associated features within that.

25:59
But I mentioned the third party, the Non-Project Use of Project Lands and the construction of this third party diversion project.

26:08
We are coordinating closely with them in terms of what features need to remain.

26:14
So some features may remain such as the diversion tunnel and the conveyance system.

26:19
And that's laid out in the document, that the two takeaways at Cape Horn Dam are that the dam is going to be removed to a level that allows a natural flow, so no impoundment of water, and fish passage.

26:33
And it's also setting it up for this third party to come in at the same time that we are removing the dam so they can construct their project.

26:41
And then the last work at Cape Horn Dam is to remove the coffer dams.

26:46
And then once the coffer dams are removed, the river will naturally go, you know, it's no longer routed around, the dam's not there, and it returns to a natural flow.

27:00
So I mentioned this in one of the earlier slides, the decommissioning action is not just the removal of the dams.

27:11
So there's a lot of work that needs to occur after that, that initial removal of the dams, which is likely to take a much longer period of time.

27:21
So as we move forward, there's you'll see them called out in our application as management plans.

27:30
Those management plans are not yet completed.

27:32
Those management plans, we have goals and objectives within the application, but we have not completed them.

27:39
The management plans will be worked on in the next year or two.

27:44
Those will be submitted to FERC for approval and FERC will make those a condition of our surrender order.

27:52
So we'll be required to do them.

27:54
The two big ones are related to the restoration aspect and the sediment transportation.

28:02
So again, the removal of the dams is kind of what we've talked about mostly in our past meetings, but there's also this process after the dams are removed.

28:13
So what are we doing in that area and what's going to be required?

28:17
So there's going to be restoration of the areas impacted by our, directly by PG&E's construction activities.

28:24
And some of that restoration may be active, some of it may be passive.

28:29
The river is going to come back, right.

28:33
And in some cases we may need to actively go in and ensure that our sediment hasn't blocked tributaries.

28:40
So we'd actively go and remove that.

28:42
And in other areas passive restoration may be the appropriate course of action.

28:47
It may be appropriate that we've abandoned and left a road in place and the vegetation naturally comes back.

28:56
There's a call out for the revegetation of the former reservoir areas.

29:01
And then there's non, there's aspects that are not related necessarily to the river itself.

29:08
So there's public safety measures that we'll have to ensure that we implement.

29:12
And then there's the restoration of recreation facilities that aren't directly related to, to waterways at that point.

29:21
This is not a complete list.

29:23
So the complete list is in our application.

29:26
These are just some of the actions that would be taken related to management plans and post dam removal actions.

29:38
So I've talked about it, Non-Project Use of Project Lands.

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It's a long term, but PG&E needs FERC authorization before we can allow a third party to occupy or utilize portions of the project lands or features.

29:56
It's formally called a Non-Project Use of Project Lands.

29:59
And what FERC is reviewing is that the Non-Project Use of Project Lands does not impede the licensee,

30:09
so in this case PG&E, from implementing our license, or in this case, implementing our license or the surrender and decommissioning of the project.

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So this is not, it's not something new to FERC.

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It there's a lot of common examples, boat marinas, non-project rec facilities, there's public water intakes.

30:29
What is unique, and what's important, is that we submitted this at the same time we submitted our surrender application decommissioning plan.

30:37
It was one submittal to FERC, and part of part of the discussion today, later on will be how are those separated?

30:47
But with that, I will hand it over to David Manning to talk about the specifics of that project.

30:56
Tony, thank you very much.

30:57
Just doing a quick sound check.

31:00
Got it, very good.

31:02
As Janet and Tony mentioned, I'm David Manning, the executive director of the Eel-Russian Project Authority.

31:10
I'll turn my camera on so that you can, you can see me. Next slide, please, and you can advance it there to the final image.

31:25
So you've heard a bit, and I'm sure you're familiar with Scott Dam, Lake Pillsbury, Cape Horn Dam, Van Arsdale Reservoir.

31:33
Really the third dam and reservoir that's at stake here is Coyote Valley Dam, which creates Lake Mendocino, created in the 1950s by the Army Corps of Engineers.

31:46
The Sonoma County Water Agency, the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission are local sponsors of this project, and the water that results from the historic diversion from the Eel to the Russian River is critical to the reliability of this reservoir, which is really the top end of the system in the Russian River that we manage for all the beneficial uses of water in the Russian River, agriculture, municipalities, recreation and the environment.

32:18
In fact, the historic connection between the Eel and the Russian River

32:21
via the Potter Valley project is so strong that the hydrologic conditions, so whether it's a wet or a dry year in the Russian River watershed, has been historically set by the inflow to Lake Pillsbury.

32:36
Next slide please.

32:38
So talk a little bit about that history.

32:41
So if we look at the time that Lake Pillsbury is created and the Potter Valley project's been operating from 1922 to 2005, on average 150,000 acre-feet of water was diverted from the Eel into the Russian.

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Due to changes in environmental regulations, more protection for fish in the Eel River, implementation of a biological opinion in the Eel River, that diversion volume decreased starting at about 2006 or 2007.

33:12
Up to 2020, the volume was down by about half to 60,000 acre-feet per year and more recently due to the combined effects of drought, some equipment failures, that average volume diverted from the Eel to the Russian is now about 40,000 acre-feet per year.

33:29
Next slide please.

33:35
So in order to preserve this diversion in the face of the decommissioning and surrender process in the Eel River, partners came together and what's termed the Two Basin Partnership to try to achieve two equal goals, co-equal goals.

33:53
One is to improve fish migration habitat on the Eel River with the objective of achieving naturally reproducing, self-sustaining anadromous fish populations, and the second is to continue diversion from the Eel to the Russian through the existing tunnel,

34:09
that's a part of the existing Potter Valley Project, in a way that supports all the beneficial uses of water in the Russian River basin.

34:17
And the group of partners that have come together to make that happen include Sonoma Water, the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, Humboldt County, the Round Valley Indian Tribes, California Trout, Trout Unlimited, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

34:34
So an outgrowth of that process and a way to implement this continued diversion is the Eel-Russian Project Authority created in December of 2023 as a joint powers agency among Sonoma Water, Sonoma County, Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, as well as the Round Valley Indian Tribes, which has a seat on the Board of Directors.

34:58
ERPA,

34:59
As we've termed this new agency, its purpose is to construct, operate and maintain the New Eel-Russian Facility.

35:07
You'll hear us often refer to this as the NERF, to continue that water diversion at the site of the existing

Cape Horn Dam following the decommissioning removal of Cape Horn Dam, but really simultaneous to the removal of Cape Horn Dam.

35:23
I can talk about that just a little bit more.

35:26
Next slide please.

35:30
So here's an image of Cape Horn Dam as it exists now.

35:33
This is an artist rendering that was done using current survey information and aerial photography.

35:40
So its scale is accurate.

35:41
You can see the tunnel entrance, that mile long tunnel between the basins is in the upper left hand portion of the image.

35:47
Next slide please.

35:51
Here's our concept for the New Eel-Russian Facility that would exist after PG&E removes Cape Horn Dam.

35:59
You can see that the center spillway portion of the dam has been removed.

36:03
In its place on the river left side, sort of in the middle of the image is a pump house.

36:09
Water will be pumped from the river elevation as it exists naturally without the dam, upstream to the existing tunnel diversion entrance where it would then flow via gravity down to the Russian.

36:22
There are a lot of facilities that are removed in this image.

36:26
You can go to the next one.

36:27
Thank you very much.

36:29
This is a perspective looking from downstream to upstream.

36:33
There's a new retaining wall that protects a conduit that connects that pump station to the diversion tunnel, but most of the dam itself is removed.

36:43
There's nothing impeding the movement of fish either up or downstream.

36:47
The dam removal activities will be conducted by PG&E, and we can discuss this a bit more and I'm happy to answer some questions about the timing, but it's to be coincident with the removal, the construction of this new facility.

37:01
And that's really a critical point of the inclusion of this New Eel-Russian Facility in PG&E's license surrender application.

37:11
The coffer dams that Tony described to be created isolate the river, allowing it to be diverted around this zone where the dam would be removed.

37:21
And this pump station and retaining wall will be constructed in the same season so that there's only one season of disturbance to that section of the river.

37:31
Next slide, please.

37:34
So how does this new facility divert water from the Eel to the Russian River?

37:39
We've developed, in concert with the Round Valley Indian Tribes and these Two Basin Partners, a water diversion agreement that specifies how the water can be diverted seasonally.

37:49
So in this table, you can see that each season, fall, winter, spring, summer has a different set of conditions.

37:57
Those conditions are designed to protect the ecosystem in the Eel River.

38:02
There's a floor, so a flow below which there can be no diversion.

38:07
And there's a maximum diversion rate, a percentage of the flow in the Eel River that's entering into the site.

38:14
Thank you.

38:16
Of the diversion facility, no more than 20 or 30% of that flow above the floor up to the maximum diversion capacity of the tunnel, which is 300 cubic feet per second, can be taken.

38:29
Next slide please.

38:34
So this is the same image I showed previously.

38:36
With these rules in place, the resulting amount of water on average that could be diverted from the Eel to the Russian River is represented by that bar on the far right hand side.

38:47
That's 30,000 acre feet, and that 30,000 acre feet represents a combination of the diversion rules and when diversions are allowed, but also the amount of storage that's available, especially in Lake Mendocino to accommodate that flow when it can be diverted safely from the Eel River.

39:04
Next slide please.

39:07
We can see that by looking at and we're switching our perspective on acre feet here to look at the average storage at the end of a water year, beginning of the next water year in Lake Mendocino.

39:21
Currently that volume on average is about 57,000 acre-feet.

39:27
With the New Eel-Russian Facility, that average storage drops a bit to 51,000 acre-feet. With no diversion at all -

39:34
If the diversion were to stop, and the Eel-Russian Project Authority and the New Eel-Russian Facility didn't come online, that average amount of storage would be 25,000 acre-feet.

39:43
And these are averages.

39:44
So there are some years where the amount of storage would be scant at best and allow for very little water to continue to be released into the Russian River.

39:53
One thing that I would like to mention here, the diversion is seasonal, but it does not occur only during times of high flow.

40:01
It occurs when the conditions in the table that I showed previously present themselves.

40:09
The one limitation on the amount of water that can be diverted is its ability to be stored in Lake Mendocino.

40:18
So the water does flow from the tunnel through the East Branch of the Russian River into Lake Mendocino.

40:25
But at times when Lake Mendocino is in its flood pool and releases are being made to manage flood control, the flood control space in Lake Mendocino, the project wouldn't operate and water wouldn't be diverted.

40:37
So at times when there is space in the reservoir to capture it, the resulting storage is what you see on this plot here.

40:46
And that water is stored and available for release all throughout the course of the dry season, the summertime.

40:52
Next slide, please.

40:55
So in order to construct this New Eel-Russian Facility, just as Tony mentioned for PG&E, there will be a California Environmental Quality Act process.

41:05
We're anticipating that will be an EIR.

41:07
We're in the early phases now of scoping that work.

41:11
There is a hearty public participation component of this where we're trying at this point to determine the kinds of analysis that need to be conducted, clarifying the project description as objectives.

41:26
We're hoping that this work will begin this fall.

41:29
Next slide please.

41:34
We're going to closely coordinate that environmental process with the member agencies that compose the Eel-Russian Project Authority as well as the State Water Resources Control Board and PG&E.

41:45
We expect a total of about 24 months, once this works begins, and it will again be closely coordinated with PG&E's process.

41:54
Next slide, please.

41:58
So here are some potential next steps and a potential schedule.

42:04
As Tony mentioned, there's some uncertainty about the federal process and its timing, but the Eel-Russian Project Authority is preparing to have the New Eel-Russian Facility permitted and able to be constructed as the dam decommissioning proceeds.

42:25
So a couple of milestones have already passed.

42:28
PG&E filed its license surrender application with FERC.

42:32
The parties to the water diversion agreement, those two basin partners that I mentioned earlier, they all signed this water diversion agreement to allow that flow schedule to be implemented at the end of July for the next several years.

42:45

There are some steps for the Eel-Russian Project Authority, including development of the business plan,

42:49
how this new diversion will be monetized, the completion of the 60 and 90% engineering design, as I mentioned, the California Environmental Quality Act process, the US Army Corps of Engineers will need to conduct NEPA for Clean Water Act compliance specifically for the Eel-Russian Project Authority.

43:09
That is sort of parallel and a little bit different than PG&E's process with the Army Corps of Engineers.

43:15
Likewise with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

43:17
A biological opinion will need to be issued for the New Eel-Russian Facility construction and operations.

43:23
And that biological opinion is separate than a biological opinion that would be issued to PG&E for its surrender and decommissioning process. Between 2020 and 2030,

43:34
there's some more engineering, permitting, bidding and contracting.

43:37
Next bullet, please.

43:39
A pretty broad range on the potential for constructing the New Eel-Russian Facility sometime between 2030 and 2035.

43:47
Next bullet, please.

43:50
And that process, you know, we will stay connected and communicating with stakeholders in the Eel and the Russian River.

44:01
We have a way of doing that now via the Eel-Russian Project Authority's website and we have developed some tools to help explain this project that that website is eelrussianauthority.org.

44:14
You can see it there on the lower right hand, the banner and the slide here.

44:19
Next image, please.

44:22
That website, it'll include updates on this process, the CEQA process as we step forward.

44:29
Any reports that are available include some historical information about how we got to this point.

44:34
We know that there has been, there have been several websites out there.

44:38
We're hoping that at least for the Eel-Russian Project Authority and the work going forward, this can be a common repository for information as we move ahead.

44:46
Next slide, please.

44:48
And this is just an example of some of the materials you can find.

44:51
They're printable fact sheets about our project, about how it will affect water supply.

44:59
We'll have additional future sheets that talk about effects to the Eel River, more details about the diversion schedule and how it was developed moving forward.

45:11
And I think with that, I will turn it back over to Tony.

45:23
Okay, so the next couple slides are about how our document is organized and the content.

45:31
So for those that have reviewed our two previous documents that went out for public review and comment, there have been some slight changes.

45:38
We've taken feedback and in terms of how everything was organized, again, the we had a submittal to FERC in July and within that submittal were two separate applications.

45:52
So it's one document, it's designed that it coordinates with each other, but there are two separate applications within that document.

46:01
So there's a license surrender application and then there's the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application.

46:08
Again the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application,

46:11
That's an application that PG&E as the licensee submits to FERC to allow a non-PG&E entity to utilize lands and facilities.

46:22
So starting with the contents of the application in the package, there's Volume 1A and Volume 1B.

46:31
So Volume 1A is the license surrender application and that's on the left side of this.

46:37
And you can see that there's, you know, 7 sections within Volume 1A.

46:43
And then Volume 1B also has seven sections.

46:46
And the, the idea and some of the feedback we got was it was previously a little confusing to review the document, understanding that they're two different applications.

46:57
So we split those up into two separate volumes. On volume two, which is the Exhibit E and that's the detailed environmental report,

47:06
There are 4 sections.

47:08
There's the introduction and then Section 2 and 3 are separate and that Section 2 is the Surrender Application environmental review and Section 3 is the Non-Project Use of Project Lands environmental review.

47:23
Next slide.

47:25
So this is the contents of Volume 1A and 1B and again it very similar documents, but the scope of work is very different between PG&E's Surrender and Decommissioning and the Non-Project Use of Project Lands.

47:43
So Section 2 is the why.

47:46
So why are we submitting the two applications?

47:51
So what's the purpose and need for the Surrender and what's the purpose and need for the Non-Project Use of Project Lands?

47:58
Section 3 discusses the regulatory framework.

48:01
So this section has some slight nuances and differences.

48:07
In Section 3 for Volume 1A that is a section about what additional permits is PG&E going to be required to obtain for this surrender and decommissioning.

48:17
Section 3 for the Non-Project Use of Project Lands is focused on what does the third party need to obtain for their permitting so that they can construct the project. FERC oversight for the non project use of project lands is very different from their oversight on the surrender and the decommissioning.

48:40
So on the surrender and decommissioning, they're PG&E's regulator and then we'll continue or we will obtain permits as needed for our project.

48:51
And on the Non-Project Use of Project Lands, they're still PG&E's regulator, but PG&E is not completing that work, right?

48:58
We're asking FERC:

49:00
"Can we get a permission slip to give to this third party?"

49:04
And Section 3 lays out what permits that party needs to obtain to complete their work.

49:11
Section 5 is the proposed action and alternatives.

49:15
So on the on the decommissioning side, that section has a couple things.

49:23
So the proposed action is what's our actual decommissioning plan.

49:27
Our decommissioning plan consists of the removal of both dams, removal of additional facilities.

49:33
Some facilities remain in place, but we did have two drafts go out with alternatives at one point in time, right.

49:43
Our first draft had different ways of the dams being removed.

49:48
So those are listed as alternatives.

49:51
And then there's a, within the submittal, the regulatory process, the alternative of keeping the dams, the status quo, is listed because it's part of the process, even though that's not a regulatory option, right?

50:10
You heard me mention that earlier that PG&E pulling back and stopping our relicensing of the project meant that we cannot relicense the project now and that FERC can't deny a surrender application.

50:25
But you still put that in there as the alternative because that's just part of the, the process that FERC needs to go through.

50:31
It's listed even though that's not a viable alternative and that alternative says that PG&E would continue to operate the project as-is the status quo.

50:44
There is not an alternative for the Non-Project Use of Project Lands,

50:50
So it is not listed there.

50:52
And then section 6 is the conclusion and recommendations.

50:57
So it also lists what are the unavoidable adverse impacts.

51:03
Volume 1A and 1B do not have the full environmental analysis, but what they do have is I'd say a summary of what, what are the unavoidable impacts of each action.

51:19
So those are listed there.

51:20
So if you didn't want to get into the why and how we analyzed it to get to that point, you can go to Section 6 and understand that there's an impact to X resource.

51:37
In this case, I'll use aquatic species as an example.

51:41
So there is an unavoidable adverse impact to aquatic species and that would be listed in section 6.

51:47
And that will be the case for both the Surrender Application as well as the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application. Next slide.

51:58
So Volume 2 is different than what we previously released.

52:05
Previously I'd say it was a little more commingled than it is now.

52:11
So each proposed action has a separate impact analysis.

52:16
So Section 2 is the surrender application.

52:20
So you can read Section 2 start to finish and get a complete understanding of what are the details of the impact to various resources that that can be visual resources that can be recreational, aquatics, birds, et cetera.

52:41
But you can read it from start to finish and there's no circling back like on our previous application of the Non-Project Use of Project Lands being commingled with that.

52:52
So Section 3 is the same as Section 2, but that's for the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application.

52:59
So again you can read that completely start to finish without reading essentially the same section for the surrender application like it previously was.

53:11
The other thing I'd like to note is that both these sections include a cumulative effects assessment.

53:20
So in cumulative effects what you're doing is acknowledging that there is another project that is that has a high likelihood of happening or is happening that also has an effect on the same area and the same resources.

53:40
So as Dave mentioned, the idea between the Non-Project Use of Project Lands and the Surrender and Decommissioning plan is that they're happening concurrently.

53:50
So with that we acknowledge each project in the other section.

53:55
So Section 2, the surrender application acknowledges that yes, there is a cumulative impact of the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application and the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application acknowledges, yes, there's an impact from the Surrender Application and Decommissioning plan that adds on to what we are doing.

54:19
Those assessments are not the same level of detail, cumulative impacts is not the same level of detail as you get with the direct impacts.

54:29
So the direct impacts are the very lengthy sections and again you can get a summary of those.

54:37
I say summary in quotes of in Volume 1A and 1B. Next slide.

54:44
So inside the effects analysis, the different, there's two phases of how we have impacts.

54:54
So phase one are the construction effects that are during construction.

55:00
So think of these as very direct, like a piece of equipment coming in, driving a road,

55:07
expanding a road,

55:09
There's a potential for a direct effect of that, right?

55:11
The equipment's on the road, it's pushing dirt, moving dirt, it's very direct.

55:17
And that's during the construction. That could happen during the removal of rec facilities, that happens during the widening of a road or road

55:27
improvement.

55:29
And they're very discrete actions.

55:32
So that that's what we're calling phase one construction effects.

55:37
Phase two gets broken up into two sub phases and those are the effects post removal.

55:44
So removal has occurred, the direct, you know, construction impact of the excavator doing something has happened, but there's still an impact, right?

55:54
So phase 2A is what is the initial condition and preliminary restoration.

56:02
What does that look like?

56:03
It it's a very temporary physical condition, right?

56:07
We've removed the plug from the adit, the sediment is initially going down. At that point,

56:14
It it's very temporary, right?

56:15

The sediment's not going to continue to go downstream in terms of that quantity forever, but there is a change and what is that change?

56:25
So phase 2A is an analysis of what is occurring in a very initial temporary condition, whereas phase 2B is the resulting condition and restoration.

56:38
So after the temporary physical condition has ended, so 2A has ended, what does the impact look like?

56:49
And phase 2A and 2B could be happening at different times for different resources and in different areas.

56:58
So for example, the sediment. The sediment in 2A is that the initial flush and then 2B may take a little bit of time as the sediment travels downstream.

57:12
Whereas if you think of Phase 2A and 2B on something that's a campground, for example, there's a very short initial temporary physical condition that has changed.

57:25
And then the resulting condition could happen very quickly as we work to restore the site.

57:31
And the resulting condition is after we've done our restoration.

57:36
And that next slide, so the FERC milestones and next steps.

57:45
So again, we filed our submittal to FERC July earlier, or late last month, included the Surrender Application and Decommissioning plan, Non-Project Use of Project Lands, 1 submittal, 2 separate applications.

58:02
We had that document out for public review twice that was outside of the FERC regulatory process.

58:09
So moving forward, everything is within the FERC regulatory process or were associated with that.

58:17
So FERC will issue a public comment period.

58:20
That public comment period will be for a minimum of 30 days.

58:25
They will notify subscribers to the docket.

58:29
We say P-77 because that's what the project is known as to FERC, It's P-77, PG&E's Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project.

58:38
And they'll let parties know that they've officially accepted the application and are opening up for public comment period.

58:46
We don't know when that will be.

58:49
Don't expect that to be tomorrow.

58:53
But there's also no timeline on that, right?

58:55
And we'll go through in subsequent slides and show you how to follow the docket.

59:01
And then comments must be submitted directly to FERC to be considered by FERC.

59:06
And this is a change to what we've previously done in terms of the project to date, right?

59:13
Comments were being submitted directly to PG&E, not to FERC because the project wasn't in the docket.

59:20
Moving forward, in order for FERC to consider a comment, it needs to be submitted directly to them, and correctly, and we'll show how to do that.

59:32
And with that, I will hand it over to Diane.

59:38
Thank you, Tony.

59:40
So with that, we're going to move into the portion of this presentation about how would you engage with FERC.

59:46
Tony's teed that up very nicely, but now I want to give you more specifics of how to actually work within FERC's website.

59:55
So here's the first step.

59:57
The first step would be actually getting into their eLibrary system,

1:00:01
Where you can find the application that was filed on the 25th. There's a QR code here. I think, so that people don't feel the need to either copy these slides quickly or rush through this,

1:00:14
I want to remind everybody that this slide deck will be posted on PG&E's website.

1:00:20
So that way the information that we're sharing here including these next few steps on how to navigate through FERC's website, you will get an opportunity to see that again or as many times as you need to from the PG&E website.

1:00:37
So moving past the you've now accessed the document here via this QR code or clicking on the link,

1:00:45
if you go to the eventual PowerPoint. Then I want to share with you what actually FERC has put together for their engagement with the public.

1:00:59
And the information here is directly from their guidance document.

1:01:06
So we've made it slightly prettier colors, but the first thing is the documents filed.

1:01:12
So we've talked about that happened on the 25th.

1:01:15
And the second step on that is the public comment opportunity.

1:01:20

So FERC will public notice through the Federal Register and the eLibrary system that is beginning the comment period.

1:01:28
That's an official start date.

1:01:30
So when you hear terms like Federal Register, that means it the clock has started and FERC and the Federal Power Act establishes the time frame and that's a 30 day time frame and then the public input is considered.

1:01:45
That's the next step.

1:01:46
So the 30 days comes and goes and then FERC gets to read and consider all the comments filed during the comment period before finalizing their analysis.

1:01:56
And then lastly, FERC will adopt decisions.

1:01:58
Finally,

1:01:59
FERC therefore decides what issues are relevant before it in terms of the public interest as well as the licensee's interest to decommission the facility.

1:02:12
And then what as Tony described in an earlier graphic, FERC will issue an order and in that order will come all the terms and conditions related to the decommissioning.

1:02:23
So that's the FERC process.

1:02:25
Again, if you look at the source at the bottom of the screen, you're gonna see that you can find this on FERC website.

1:02:31
They do a pretty good job of sharing how the public can participate.

1:02:36
And the other important thing between step one and two, Tony hit this, but FERC establishes this timeline between the moment that document is filed and when the public comment opportunity can occur.

1:02:49
There is no statutory timeline that sets that up.

1:02:52
FERC has to review the document, decide if it's complete and decide if it's ready to go to public comment.

1:02:59
So at this point in the process, it's within FERC's hands and PG&E has done their step in filing the document as #1 shown there.

1:03:11
So that I want to move into first release of a notice on what's called the P-77 docket.

1:03:19
Tony mentioned that is the Potter Valley project number.

1:03:22
That's a unique number for this project.

1:03:25
You can tell by its issue date.

1:03:27
It was early in the FERC issue series and that's where all filings will come from, the docket, and FERC will actually create a sub docket when it goes into public comment period.

1:03:43
But right now what you would need to do in order to get those notifications is you need to be what's called an eSubscriber on FERC's website.

1:03:52
So again, you go to FERC's website, there's a hydro page and you're going to go into the hydro page and you're going to see opportunity for the step by step instructions on how to do the notifications through this link here.

1:04:07
But it's pretty self-explanatory.

1:04:09
Once you're on the website, there's a little arrow that shows it here, but basically you're just going to follow first steps and what you will get from that point on is everything that gets filed in eLibrary on the P-77 docket, you will get a notification of, and be prepared,

1:04:28
It could be a few notifications that you might get.

1:04:32
So moving next to the next step, first has really moved into an electronic recipient process for getting comments.

1:04:45
So they call it an eComment or an eFiling for submitting comments.

1:04:49
And to access this again, you're gonna go to FERC's website, you're gonna go to the FERC online feature and then you're gonna go to eComment.

1:04:58
Tony mentioned what's really important here.

1:05:00
While you can go and do this while we're giving this presentation or tomorrow.

1:05:07
The really important time to do it though is during that 30 day public comment period because then your comment becomes an official record and up until that it will go into eLibrary, it'll go into the eComments and then potentially post it in eLibrary, but it's not part of the FERC record in terms of the comment period.

1:05:30
Moving to the next option here is, as we said earlier, eComment and eFiling for submitting is FERC recommendation.

1:05:41
If you want to submit a hard copy, what we call a .PDF comment letter or a comment on behalf in the agency or organization, you also must use eFiling.

1:05:52
So that's two separate things.

1:05:53
If you want to submit, like I want to submit, upload, that's the keyword here.

1:05:58
I want to upload a comment letter.

1:06:01
You've got to do it here through eFiling.

1:06:04
So eComment would be "I want to just type something in live and put in a comment" versus I actually have a letter I want to provide.

1:06:13
So that's the difference.

1:06:15
You'd use the eFiling process for a .PDF comment letter versus the eComment would just be you typing in your comment on this proceeding.

1:06:26
Again, additional guidance can be participating online here with FERC.

1:06:31
These are the fields that you would fill in secret codes down here at the bottom.

1:06:38
But all in all, FERC makes it pretty straightforward for putting comments in.

1:06:43
And then there's always, you can do a paper copy.

1:06:47
What is really interesting and important, if you want to send it via hard copy U.S.

1:06:57
Postal Service, you need to send it to the Secretary of the Commission at this address at 1st St.

1:07:05
Or if you want to send it from another delivery service besides U.S.

1:07:11
Postal Service, you actually send it to Rockville, MD.

1:07:15
So these are your two options if you just want to send in a hard copy and you don't want to either eComment or eFile.

1:07:24
So with that, we're going to move now into the Q&A, how this process works.

1:07:31
I'm going to walk you through that.

1:07:37
So you're gonna see a feature that has popped up on your side of this town hall, and it's called the Q&A feature.

1:07:44
You're gonna see it right next to the leave meeting button.

1:07:48
So be very careful that you only hit the Q&A, not the leave.

1:07:53
And with that, you're gonna get a screen that's gonna allow you to put a question in.

1:07:59
But right now I wanna remind everyone the question fields that we're going to review and then respond to include the FERC regulatory surrender process, the organization of the actual application, specific questions on the information presented today and opportunities for you to participate.

1:08:23
Questions on other topics than this will not receive a response today.

1:08:29
But as I said, there's always the eComment and that and the eFiling option if you would like your question or topic to be heard on the FERC website.

1:08:39
So whether I'm going to go through how you're going to submit a question, you're going to see this Q&A.

1:08:45
So you're going to click on that at the top and it's going to say ask a question and you're going to just type your question into the box and when you are ready to submit your question to PG&E, just click ask.

1:08:59
And then that's, you're gonna see a start discussion.

1:09:02
That function is not live here.

1:09:04
So just making sure that everybody can follow through the Q&A question.

1:09:11
At the very top near the leave button, you're gonna type in your question and then just below that on the right hand side is an ask button.

1:09:19
And that's like you saying I'm asking this question.

1:09:23
So with that, we're gonna move into the Q&A.

1:09:27
We're gonna leave this screen up at this point so that way people can still see the process to ask your question.

1:09:37
But please note that questions aren't posted for everyone who is participating in this call today to see. And you can send them anonymously.

1:09:49
Don't feel compelled to put your name in there.

1:09:52
And if we do get several questions on the same subject matter, we will likely combine them into one answer opportunity.

1:10:03
And Tony Giglotti is here to answer questions as well as Dave Manning.

1:10:08
And with that, we're gonna just pause for one second while we get ready for a question.

1:10:24
First question, Tony, I think this is probably for you.

1:10:29
Will there be opportunities for the public to participate in management plan development?

1:10:37
So management plans, I stated that we're working on developing those.

1:10:42
We will coordinate with appropriate parties for those management plans and we will submit those to FERC.

1:10:50
The public will be able to comment on those directly to FERC when we submit them.

1:10:55
So that's a very open process, right.

1:10:58
Anything that gets submitted to FERC is going to hit the docket and then any party can participate and respond and provide comments at that time.

1:11:10
Thank you, Tony.

1:11:12
David, the next question is going to go to you.

1:11:15
You mentioned ERPA is going through a similar regulatory and permitting process as PG&E.

1:11:20
Are these separate processes or are they done jointly?

1:11:26
Thanks, Diane.

1:11:27
They are separate processes, but they're obviously related to each other.

1:11:32
So there's information from PG&E's surrender decommissioning processes relevant to the permitting process, the regulatory compliance process for the New Eel-Russian Facility, but they are in fact independent.

1:11:45
So the Eel-Russian Project Authority will be conducting the CEQA analysis and applying for the permits required.

1:12:00
Thank you, David.

1:12:03
Tony, you have used the term surrender and decommissioning.

1:12:07
Are these the same thing?

1:12:09
If not, what is the difference?

1:12:14
So they are not the same, but they are related.

1:12:17
So the surrender process is the regulatory pathway in which a licensee with a FERC license surrenders or lets FERC know that we're not going to continue operating the project and we're going to give up the license to operate it.

1:12:39
Whereas the decommissioning is the physical work that is going to occur to decommission the project.

1:12:47
The decommissioning can take a variety of paths, but it is what are you physically doing with the facilities and features that you have out in the field,

1:12:57
while the surrender is the paperwork side of things,

1:13:02
I'd say.

1:13:07
Thank you, Tony.

1:13:10
Dave, I've got a question for you.

1:13:11
Tony mentioned that the public comments are to be submitted to FERC.

1:13:14
How does the public provide NERF comments?

1:13:21
So when there is a product through this environmental compliance effort that opens for public comments, the public can make comments.

1:13:31
There is no regulatory filing that the Eel-Russian Project Authority has made independent of the Non-Project Use of Project Lands component of PG&E's license surrender application.

1:13:45
There are Eel-Russian Project Authority meetings.

1:13:49
Those are open public meetings.

1:13:51
We recently had one at the end of July.

1:13:54
We do not have one scheduled yet.

1:13:56
We anticipate one will be occurring this fall.

1:13:58
Those would be posted on the Eel-Russian Project Authority's website.

1:14:03
There's an open public comment period during those meetings and anyone is welcome to come and speak to the board members and make comments directly.

1:14:12
But all of the processes, the California Environmental Quality Act, the various steps for us to obtain permits have their own independent public comment components where appropriate.

1:14:25
And we're just not there yet in the stage of development with the new the Russian facility, but we anticipate we will be sometime next year.

1:14:34
Thanks, David.

1:14:37
Tony, here's one, what is being done to address the damages to Potter Valley agriculture and the fire preparedness in the area.

1:14:49
So in terms of the impacts or fire preparedness, we've had some discussions with the entities responsible for fire suppression, fire protection.

1:15:02
We are open to a fund, a mitigation fund for that.

1:15:07
Nothing has been finalized to date and that will be done outside of the FERC surrender process.

1:15:15
From a FERC regulatory perspective, they are reviewing and analyzing the work from a construction impact, not necessarily from the perspective of the absence of the reservoirs and the dams, but we are committed to continuing conversations on those.

1:15:37
Thanks, Tony.

1:15:39
I'm gonna kick another one to you.

1:15:40
What facilities from Cape Horn Dam facilities will be used as part of the NERF?

1:15:46
This actually might be a dual question.

1:15:49
Yeah.

1:15:50
So at Cape Horn Dam, there's a diversion and then the water is diverted, enters a series of tunnels, a penstock water conveyance system.

1:16:02
NERF is going to utilize the diversion system as well as the water conveyance system.

1:16:11
So anything having to do with the diverting the water and getting that water to the powerhouse is going to be utilized by the NERF as well as portions of the powerhouse because that's where the tunnels end up.

1:16:31
Dave, did you want to add any to that?

1:16:34
The only thing I would I would add is on the powerhouse side, of course, you know, the Eel-Russian Project Authority, the New Eel-Russian Facility will not be generating hydroelectric power.

1:16:45
There is an energy dissipation device to allow the water to be diverted at that maximum capacity of the tunnel and then regulated and safely discharged into the East Branch Russian River side.

1:17:00
That equipment is in the same location as the existing powerhouse, but there'll be no power created there.

1:17:06
So everything else that that Tony mentioned is accurate using the tunnel, the way the water is conveyed.

1:17:14
But some of the facilities to be removed, they're very prominent and obvious at Cape Horn Dam like this dam spillway itself, the fish hotel, the fish ladder, those elements are unnecessary for NERF's operation and will be removed.

1:17:31
Thanks, David.

1:17:32
We have a question about sequencing.

1:17:36
Will the construction of NERF, the removal of Cape Horn Dam and the removal of Scott Dam occur slash start sequentially or simultaneously?

1:17:47
So not necessarily an easy answer, it depends.

1:17:53
So Scott Dam is a multi year project with the that initial low flow season and then the high flow season and then another low flow season.

1:18:05
That said, the intent is to remove, have that large load of sediment being removed at Scott Dam going downstream the same season that we are removing Cape Horn Dam.

1:18:22
Cape Horn Dam would be coming out first and then Scott Dam would shortly come out after is likely how we're looking at it, but the engineering hasn't been finalized at that point.

1:18:34
Construction of NERF is intended to be simultaneous with the deconstruction at Cape Horn Dam.

1:18:41
Dave mentioned this in his presentation.

1:18:46
We worked towards the goal and ended up on the Non-Project Use of Project Lands as a solution to allow the construction of NERF to occur at the same time as we're decommissioning so that there's the least impact to that area right there.

1:19:05
There's one impact to the river.

1:19:06
The cofferdams have gone up once. PG&E is already there

1:19:09
removing Cape Horn Dam, and NERF's building at the same time, and hopefully to also allow diversions to continue almost uninterrupted.

1:19:21
Dave, I don't know if there's anything you'd like to add.

1:19:25
No, just to emphasize that second point.

1:19:28
We want to minimize any delay in the ability to continue to divert water so that the simultaneous deconstruction and construction is really a key feature of the of this effort.

1:19:41
Thank you both.

1:19:43
Tony, is there an option for PG&E to decommission the turbine project without removing the dam infrastructure?

1:19:53
Yeah.

1:19:53
So I mentioned very early on in the presentation that.

1:20:00
You know, PG&E took a close look at the project.

1:20:04
It was not an easy decision for us, but the project was uneconomical for our customers.

1:20:10
It cost more to operate and run and generate than what our customers got back.

1:20:18
So with that, no party has come to PG&E that has the technical and financial capability to operate both dams or either dam at this point.

1:20:30
If a party were to come to us that we thought had the technical and financial ability to operate the dams and was interested in that, we would certainly sit down with them and discuss that possibility.

1:20:43
But that has not occurred at this time.

1:20:46
Thank you.

1:20:47
Tony, there's another sequencing question.

1:20:50
Is it possible that NERF will begin operating prior to the removal of Scott Dam?

1:20:58
No.

1:20:58
So the Non-Project Use of Project Lands, the way it's been constructed, or shouldn't say constructed, that the way that we have packaged that together is that Scott Dam would be coming out at the same time as Cape Horn Dam, right.

1:21:16
But the Non-Project Use of Project Lands, it cannot be operated until PG&E has completed the work that we need to do within that area.

1:21:28
And then that land would be removed and those aspects or facilities would be removed from the FERC license.

1:21:34
But we are not planning on having operations occur prior to Scott Dam removal.

1:21:39
The idea is that Scott Dam would be coming out at the same time as Cape Horn Dam.

1:21:44
So there's no need to separate those out.

1:21:49
Thanks, Tony.

1:21:51
Dave, I'm going to toss a couple your way.

1:21:53
How long will it take to construct the NERF facility?

1:21:58
It's a two-part question.

1:22:00
That's your first part.

1:22:01
Sure.

1:22:02
So about an 18 month process there is that initial construction season that we've been discussing that involves isolating the river between the cofferdams, constructing the pieces of the NERF that are essentially in-water.

1:22:21
And there are other elements of the NERF facility that are upland of the limits of the water that can be constructed after that.

1:22:31
But we're thinking it's an 18 to 24 month process in total.

1:22:38
Second part to that question is will there be a period where there are no quotes "flow" to the Russian River?

1:22:45
So that is one element of the management plans that the Tony discussed.

1:22:49
So an ability to continue to divert water during the construction.

1:22:54
Will be something we're discussing with PG&E and I believe you know Tony that you may want to speak to this, but there is an East Branch diversion management plan that will be a product of this next phase of your work.

1:23:08
And that is something we're certainly intent on resolving with PG&E to prevent any, any delays in diversion.

1:23:20
Thank you.

1:23:22
I have an invasive species question.

1:23:24
How does PG&E plan to manage pikeminnow during and after dam removal?

1:23:30
So we do plan on addressing that through the creation of a management plan.

1:23:35
It's discussed in our application, we have goals and objectives for management plans.

1:23:41
Some of those are more fleshed out than others, but we do anticipate a plan specific to pikeminnow and working with resource agencies and other parties as appropriate to come up with a comprehensive plan.

1:23:57
Thanks, Tony.

1:23:59
What is the benefit in removing the dam?

1:24:03
I'm not understanding why this needs to be done.

1:24:07
Yeah.

1:24:08
So it comes down to PG&E's,

1:24:13
So the, the project itself is uneconomical for our customers, right.

1:24:17
So it's a pretty small project from a generation capacity.

1:24:22
At it's peak it was roughly a 9.3 MW project.

1:24:27
For reference, there's other projects in our system 200, over 400 megawatts.

1:24:36
So it's a very small project.

1:24:38
It's very costly to operate for us.

1:24:41
It has not generated at that capacity for quite some time.

1:24:46

And ultimately, it's in our customers best interest for the project to be surrendered and decommissioned because we could purchase the generating capability on the open market for less than what it was costing us to generate.

1:25:02
And I, I'd just like to say, it's not an easy decision for us.

1:25:08
You know, we are a utility company.

1:25:10
We understand the importance of the project to the area.

1:25:14
It's not something that we took lightly and it took a lot of thought for us to come to that determination.

1:25:23
Thanks, Tony.

1:25:24
I actually have a question.

1:25:26
The question came in, is I stated that comments are only part of the record if filed within the 30 days after the FERC notice.

1:25:34
Isn't it true that FERC will also consider comments filed after that?

1:25:38
Yes, that is true and it's sorry if I misspoke on that.

1:25:41
FERC will consider comments outside of that 30 day.

1:25:45
As well as through, you'll also see through the other public comment processes that we talked about through CEQA as well as Army Corps, will also have a comment period process.

1:25:58
So thanks for that question and making sure that people are no longer confused on that.

1:26:07
OK, Tony, if FERC is officially approving PG&E, giving permission to ERPA to build and operate the NERF, then is FERC reviewing and improving the flow and the operations plan? Could go to Dave also.

1:26:24
I can start and then pass it off to Dave.

1:26:27
So FERC is not reviewing and approving the flow operation plan.

1:26:32
What FERC is, FERC is allowing PG&E to, or authorizing PG&E to allow a third party to utilize lands and project features.

1:26:43
Their review is focused on is there an impact to the licensee?

1:26:48
So PG&E at this point, so you can think of it from the perspective of does the construction and utilizing the lands within the license prevent PG&E from working on our decommissioning and completing our decommissioning plan?

1:27:06
We will still be able to complete our full decommissioning plan.

1:27:11
We'll be able to do any restoration that's required.

1:27:13
But all other permits and including the operation aspects that need to be covered would be completed outside of the FERC process.

1:27:23
And Dave, I don't know what you'd like to add from your permitting side.

1:27:28
Tony, I think you answered it.

1:27:29
So I'd be looking to the CEQA process, at the NEPA process for ERPA and FERC, the State Water Board, the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Marine Fisheries Service, as well as California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the regulatory approvals, considering the impact of not only the construction, but the operations, the maintenance, the flow implications of operating the NERF facility.

1:28:02
Thanks, David.

1:28:04
Tony, is it true that PG&E's ratepayers are the ones who will pay for the decommissioning?

1:28:11
Yes.

1:28:13
So in our previous general rate case, which is where PG&E submits to the California Public Utilities Commission for a return, we started a decommissioning fund understanding that the physical assets depreciate over time.

1:28:34
And theoretically as it kind of, as you go through a time, you're going to reach a point where they either need to be replaced, decommissioned, and that fund is intended to collect.

1:28:48
So the people who are having a benefit from that facility are paying into the cost to have it removed.

1:28:57
But yes, ratepayers will be funding this. Or we have, I should restate, that we have asked the CPUC for us to be able to collect from ratepayers to fund this.

1:29:10
Thank you.

1:29:12
Dave.

1:29:14
Will increase in Lake Mendocino storage be completed prior to the NERF construction?

1:29:22
So what's contemplated in the feasibility study to look at increased storage potential, dam height raises of Lake Mendocino is a separate process entirely from the surrender, the decommissioning, the development of the NERF.

1:29:37
You know, I think that I would defer that question to the Mendocino Inland Water and Power Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers who are conducting that study related to its timing.

1:29:49
We're proceeding the Eel-Russian Project Authority as expeditiously as we can to stay on the same schedule that PG&E has kept so that we can, you know, achieve our goals simultaneously preserving the diversion.

1:30:06
Whether that meets the same timeline as the development of increased storage in Lake Mendocino would be fantastic, but I think that question is best posed directly to the proponents of that feasibility study.

1:30:20
Thank you, Dave.

1:30:22
Tony, if FERC is officially authorizing PG&E to give permission to ERPA to build and operate the NERF, then is FERC reviewing and approving the flow operations plan.

1:30:37
I think this one might be redundant, but I can follow up and rephrase it because I'd like to clarify.

1:30:47
So FERC is not giving PG&E permission for ERPA to operate.

1:30:53
What FERC is authorizing to PG&E, is PG&E has the ability to allow a third party use that is not necessarily the operations.

1:31:07
So what the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application asks for is the ability for PG&E to allow the construction of a facility and it lays out in in the Non-Project Use of Project Lands application that regulatory framework will layout how ERPA will go about obtaining other permits necessary for the operation.

1:31:31
So it would be discussed in the cumulative effects section because that that is an effect that is likely to occur.

1:31:41
But we are not requesting that FERC authorize the operation.

1:31:47
Thanks Tony for that clarification.

1:31:51
Dave, I have a question for you.

1:31:53
Did Sonoma Water ever try to get the project from PG&E prior to conceiving of the ERPA solution?

1:32:00
If yes, what happened?

1:32:05
So Sonoma Water independently no, but in concert with some of the parties that represent that two basin solution, we did file a notice of intent to relicense the project potentially that required some study for the intense study to meet the timelines laid out by FERC.

1:32:29
We also considered some of the requirements for continuing operation of the dams like fish passage, the age of the infrastructure and frankly the expense to conduct the relicensing studies.

1:32:44
All were beyond the capabilities of the groups that were looking at alternatives for the project after PG&E's decision to no longer pursue the license.

1:32:56
So the short answer is yes, there was not by Sonoma Water, but by a group of interested parties a look at what it would take to operate the facilities as they existed with the dams or with some combination of dam removal and was not feasible in the group's assessment to proceed. And the resources, financial resources weren't available to continue that effort.

1:33:29
Thanks, Dave.

1:33:31
Tony, we have a response question to an answer that you have provided.

1:33:36
Let me read that out.

1:33:38
Thanks for the answer about FERC approval.

1:33:40
However, FERC can and does on occasion add mitigation requirements to Non-Project Use of Lands and Water's approval.

1:33:50
Will FERC do the same for the NERF operations?

1:33:55
So I obviously can't speak to FERC, in terms of what they will or will not do.

1:34:02
I can say that our submittal and application on Non-Project Use of Project Lands we feel explains the project and the regulatory framework from a permitting standpoint that ERPA's going to do such that they will not necessarily do that.

1:34:22
However, that may be something they do and if it is, you know, PG&E will work through any additional information requests as appropriate.

1:34:33
Thank you.

1:34:33
Tony, I have another one for you.

1:34:35
Is there a concern by how old these structures are from a safety relationship?

1:34:44
So I'll start off with the, the project, the dams and the facilities are all safe.

1:34:51
If they were not safe, we would be doing something to address that immediately in terms of the reservoir restriction that we have at Scott Dam.

1:35:01
The dam is safe.

1:35:02
The reservoir restriction was put in place after a third party analysis was completed and then PG&E submitted that analysis to our state regulator as well as FERC who's our federal regulator.

1:35:17
And to mitigate the increase in risk, PG&E proposed a 10 foot reservoir restriction and our state regulator agreed with that and directed us to implement that.

1:35:32
So we have implemented that.

1:35:33
That has reduced the risk to a level that PG&E is comfortable with, but the dams and facilities are safe.

1:35:41
Thank you.

1:35:41
Tony, there's a specific question about cultural resources.

1:35:47
When is the soonest cultural resource surveys and the evaluation process begin.

1:35:54
So we understand that that section in our application may not have been as robust as others.

1:36:00
We do plan on starting those.

1:36:02
I would expect to start those Q1/Q2 next year.

1:36:08
Great.

1:36:09
Thank you.

1:36:15
OK.

1:36:16
We are pretty close to out of questions.

1:36:23
Is it possible that FERC may have a comment period longer than 30 days?

1:36:30
So they may again, the 30 days is the minimum and as Diane mentioned, comments can be submitted after that initial 30 days and comments may be submitted on any of the documents that others also submit to the docket.

1:36:49
So I mentioned additional information request, that's the formal term of Alford asks For more information from our application.

1:37:00
Anything that PG&E submits goes into the docket except for the confidential information and a third party can review that and submit a comment to FERC directly at any time.

1:37:17
Thank you, Tony.

1:37:20
So we have not received questions in the last five minutes and I want to emphasize I've reposted the slide about the questions that will be fielded.

1:37:31
So if you did send a question in that didn't align with these 4 topical areas, your question was not presented to us to answer.

1:37:43
And we've discussed other ways in which your interest can be expressed.

1:37:49
And again, going to the FERC website, if you need to, you can go back to this PowerPoint presentation once it's posted on PG&E's website.

1:37:58
And with that, I want to hand it over to Janet Walther to close the meeting out.

1:38:09
Great, thank you, Diane.

1:38:11
Just want to take a moment and thank everyone for their participation today.

1:38:17
As you heard, you know, we are still very early in the process.

1:38:20
There are many opportunities moving forward as we continue to develop the management plans as well with PG&E as well as with FERC through the regulatory process.

1:38:33
So again, we just appreciate your involvement today, which is really intended to lay out what is in this decommissioning plan and what is in the surrender, you know, application itself that we submitted to FERC.

1:38:45
We thank you for joining us today and hope that we have answered many of your questions.

1:38:50
We understand there are some that we don't have the answers to right at this time.

1:38:54
But again, this process there, there is time as well as there's more work to do.

1:38:59
And as we move forward, there'll be additional answers that we will have available for questions as we move through this process.

1:39:06
So thank you everyone.

1:39:07
Have a great evening and be safe.

1:39:09
Thank you.