

*Weber Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 1744
Comments on Preliminary Study Plans
& Final Resolution
November 2015*

Study Plan	Commenter (initials/ agency)	Section #/Title	Comment	Resolution
Terrestrial TES Species and Noxious Weeds	RB/BOR	N/A	Informal email response: I've reviewed the study plan provided. Looks really good to me. In addition, I've spoken with the folks in charge of putting it together. We addressed that we were in the mode of surveying for ULT and that we would make sure we didn't duplicate any efforts.	None needed
	BJ/UDWR	N/A	Informal email response: My terrestrial counterparts and I are not interested in either y-b cuckoo or smooth green snake issues at this site. Only the two fishes matter in the mouth of Weber Canyon, in my book. There's just not much habitat or reason to be worried about the bird and snake species, at this locale, other than regarding process. In other places, quite possibly we would be interested, but not here.	None needed
	KS/BOR	3.1 Special Species Plants	Informal email response: The preliminary study report and at first glance I noticed they only included two of the rare state riparian plant species.	Surveys included Ute ladies'- tresses, and Utah angelica and Wasatch fitweed at the request of USFS. No species of concern located.
	KS/BOR	3.2 Noxious Weeds	No comments	None needed
	AM/FERC		We reviewed your study plan and have no comments at this time.	None needed
	QE/FERC	4.1 Special Status Terrestrial Wildlife	Provide more detail on analysis of potential habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo.	Additional detail on surveys for potential habitat for yellow- billed cuckoo in the Project Area was added to section 4.1, new paragraphs 5&6.
			<i>Editorial comments:</i> none	

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Cultural Resources	BDY/UDOT		No comments	None needed
	CJ/BOR		[Aside from editorial comments noted below] This study plan seems well designed and should provide Reclamation with all of the documentation necessary to play its role in the relicensing process.	None needed
	FW/FERC		In the Preliminary Study Plan, Cultural Resources, July 2015, under section 3.0.3 (page 7), PacifiCorp describes the Area of Potential Effects. We request that PacifiCorp send a description and map of the APE to the Utah SHPO and seek their concurrence on the APE, within 30 days of issuance our response to the preliminary study plans.	Completed Oct. 30, 2015
	CJ/BOR		Editorial comments: 1) The table identifying previous cultural resources projects within the “Project Area” is missing. 2) The table for known sites within 1 mile of the Project Area is numbered Table 3.6- 3) This is the number assigned in the text on page 4 to the table for previous projects within the Project Area. 4) There is no site table referenced in the text.	Addressed

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Water Quality	BD/DWQ	1.0 Introduction, paragraph 4	<p>Add a goal:</p> <p><i>This water quality study plan aims to achieve two <u>three</u> goals: 1) to gain a better understanding of current water quality in the Project area; 2) to <u>determine the effect of Project operations on water quality and address the specific 401 water quality certification standards to ensure that the federally permitted or licensed activities are conducted in a manner that complies with applicable discharge and water quality requirements in order to maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters of the United States within the State and 3) determine any minimum instream flows to meet goal #2.</u> Achievement of the study plan goals will identify whether there is a need to develop project-specific mitigation measures for water quality in the Project area. The guiding principles behind the water quality study plan and monitoring strategy will be the beneficial uses and associated Utah water quality standards assigned by the Utah Division of Water Quality to the portion of the Weber River within the Project Area.</i></p>	<p>After a follow-up discussion with UDWQ, UDWR and TU, current minimum instream flows are considered protective of water quality, therefore goal #3 proposed by UDWQ will be removed from the study plan. Additional regulation language was agreed upon between PacifiCorp and UDWQ and added to goal #2 in all sections of the study plan where project goals are referenced.</p>
	BD & KL/DWQ	3.1 Table 1	<p>Correct language for the 2B beneficial use:</p> <p><i>“Protected for infrequent primary contact recreation where there is a <u>low</u> likelihood of ingestion of water or a <u>low</u> degree of bodily contact with water.”</i></p>	<p>Accepted. Changes made to Table 1.</p>

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	BD/DWQ	4.1 paragraph 1	<p>Add language:</p> <p><i>PacifiCorp will evaluate the current water quality conditions in the Project Area to determine if beneficial uses and associated Utah state water quality standards are being met, to determine the effects of the Project on water quality parameters and address the specific 401 water quality certification standards of: <u>to ensure that the federally permitted or licensed activities are conducted in a manner that complies with applicable discharge and water quality requirements in order to maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters of the United States within the State and to determine any minimum instream flows to meet goal #2</u></i></p>	After a follow-up discussion with UDWQ, UDWR and TU, current minimum instream flows are considered protective of water quality, therefore goal #3 proposed by UDWQ will be removed. Additional regulation language was agreed upon between PacifiCorp and UDWQ and added to goal #2 in all sections of the study plan where project goals are referenced.
	BD/DWQ	4.3	Will a state certified laboratory be used?	Yes. Text was added to section 4.3 stating the name of the state certified lab to be used for water quality analyses.
	BD/DWQ	4.4	Approximately when will the water quality technical report be issued?	Within 6 months of completion of water quality data collection.
	BD/DWQ	4.4	<p>Second to last bullet - add language:</p> <p>Discussion and summary of findings <u>with a comparison to State water quality standards both up and down gradient of the Project area.</u></p>	Accepted. Suggested text was added to section 4.4.
	BD/DWQ	4.4	<p>Last bullet – add language:</p> <p>Identification of project impacts on water quality (if any) <u>including a discussion on any impacts from proposed Project upgrades. [Are there any that impact water quality?]</u></p>	Text was added to section 4.4 with a change in comment text from “proposed project upgrades” to “proposed facility modifications.”
	DA/USFS		No comments	None needed
	PB/TU		TU approves the study plan	None needed

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	CV/AW		AW has no comments on the study plan at this time	None needed
	JH, CM/FERC		<p>The PAD states that, Utah’s 2014 Integrated Report lists the Weber River-3 AU as “not supporting” designated uses due to a biological impairment. This reach, about 12 miles long, includes the portion of the Weber River that encompasses the project. The existing water quality information in the PAD, mostly physical measurements such as DO and temperature are from a station above and a station way below the project, give little indication as to the source of this impairment. Water quality standards are mostly met, at least for temperature and dissolved oxygen. The chosen study locations above and below the project and in the bypass reach will show whatever impact the project has on water temperature and dissolved oxygen.</p> <p>However, because the larger reach, Weber River -3 AU is listed as impaired for biological reasons. PacifiCorp may want to consider whether some effort to characterize the river’s macroinvertebrate populations upstream of the reservoir and in the bypass reach is worthwhile to inform stakeholders whether the project potentially contributes to, or possibly acts counter to, the biological impairment designation. The lower of the two Utah water quality monitoring stations is located 12.6 miles downstream for the project and due to its location may not be representative of project area conditions.</p>	<p>None needed</p> <p>Section 4.2.1 was added to the study plan discussing the biological impairment and rationale for not including additional macroinvertebrate sampling.</p> <p>We agree, the lower existing WQ site is not representative of project area conditions.</p>
	JH, CM/FERC		You note that QA/QC measures include calibrating water quality sondes monthly. We recommend that data be downloaded from all sondes monthly to decrease likelihood of data loss. Sondes should be placed in locations least likely to be affected by ice and/or dewatering. If sondes are found to be affected by ice, sediment, or dewatering, ensure that this is noted in field notes.	None needed

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	JH, CM/FERC		We agree that additional data collected from sites spaced closer together than the historical upstream and downstream sampling stations (13.6 miles apart) will be needed to characterize how the Weber Project effects water quality.	None needed
	JH, CM/FERC		The Study Plan shows that conductivity and turbidity are highly variable. Dissolved and particulate solids may increase during winter when deicer is used. What material is used to deice roads?	Deicer is used on Interstate-84 in the winter and includes the distribution of magnesium chloride before a storm and a mix of salt and sand post-storm. Additionally, potassium chloride is distributed on the bridge just west of the rest area.

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Fisheries	BD/DWQ	1.0	Please make a reference in fish study purpose that this effort is being undertaken in part to meet WQ Standards for aquatics.	Yes, if referencing beneficial uses. The following language was added to the final paragraph of Section 1.0: These studies are being conducted, in part, to determine ways to protect the sensitive fish species in the project area and to meet water quality standards by improving beneficial uses for aquatic species.
	BD/DWQ	1.0	Should include a minimum flow requirement investigation to maintain aquatics.	After follow-up discussion with DWQ, UDWR and TU, current minimum instream flows are considered protective of the resource
	PB/TU	N/A	TU approves the Fisheries Study Plan	None needed
	BJ/UDWR	3.4	Glad to see downstream migration is included in this preliminary phase of study planning.	None needed
	DA/USFS		No comments	None needed
	CV/AW		AW has no comment on the study plan.	None needed

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	PT/UDWR	General Page 4, section 3.1.1	<p>We are pleased to see that upstream passage has been identified as a need as well as the studies to determine downstream passage and entrainment.</p> <p>Remove the statement "Pure-strain Bonneville cutthroat are rare throughout their historic range but several Utah Populations exist in Bear Lake and Strawberry Reservoir." There are actually quite a few pure BCT populations remaining and the population in Strawberry is introduced so it isn't a good example.</p> <p><i>Editorial comments:</i> Page 4, section 3.1 - change UWDR to UDWR. Page 6, section 3.1.2 - The reference Webber et al.2012 is not in the references.</p>	<p>None needed</p> <p>Accepted - the following edit was made to Section 3.1.1, first paragraph:</p> <p>Pure-strain Bonneville cutthroat are relatively rare throughout their historic range, but several Utah populations exist.</p> <p>Accepted – acronym corrected and the following reference added to Section 4.0 References:</p> <p>Webber, P.A., P. D. Thompson, and P. Budy. 2012. Status and structure of two populations of the bluehead sucker (<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>) in the Weber River, Utah.</p>
	BJ/UDWR	4.0	<p><i>Editorial comment:</i> Typos noted in the following reference:</p> <p>Holden, P.B. 1973. Distribution, abundance and life history <u>for</u> the fishes in the upper Colorado River Basin. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of <u>Doctor</u> of Philosophy in Wildlife Science (Ecology). Utah State University, Logan, Utah.</p>	<p>Accepted – corrected as shown in column 2 (underline).</p>

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	PT/UDWR	3.4.2	On Page 10, Phase One, 1st paragraph - Please remove all references to purchasing fish from local fish hatcheries/private fish farmers and indicate that UDWR hatcheries will provide the sterile fish for the study. The one size class that our hatcheries may struggle providing are the 16" fish, but you have already indicated that this size class may or may not be used depending on their availability.	Accepted – First paragraph, sentence 2 edited as follows: Investigators will secure a group of sterile triploid rainbow trout or some other species of sterile trout from local UDWR hatchery facilities.
	CM/FERC		<i>Upstream Passage Engineering Feasibility Study:</i> The preliminary plans are reasonable and we have no comments at this time.	None needed
	CM/FERC		<i>Downstream Migration Study:</i> Phase 1. Rate of injury and mortality for various size classes of fish that are entrained through turbine. Comments: 1) Will the study be conducted at different flows? Phase 2. Entrainment of different size classes of fish. Comments: 1) Because the upstream population sizes will not be described, entrainment rates relative to population sizes will remain unknown. 2) How will you verify detection efficiency of the acoustic camera?	Not as currently planned. Study will be conducted at full load to address worst case conditions. If considered appropriate, can use UDWR population sizes to estimate potential entrainment rates. Detection probability is high in the 6-ft diameter pipe. Additional information on camera use and placement was added to Section 3.4.2, Phase Two, paragraph two, as well as a diagram that shows camera placement and coverage area (new Figure 2).

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	CM/FERC		We are pleased to see that UDWR, TU, and USU fisheries biologists with local expertise have been involved in conceptualizing and developing studies. Further details related to the fisheries studies should continue to be developed in consultation with stakeholders, including Commission staff.	None needed
	CM/FERC		Construction of a new fish passage facility will likely cause temporary geology and soil impacts. Appropriate protective measures should be developed to mitigate any impacts and described in your license application.	Accepted, standard permit conditions
	CM/FERC		The latest Fisheries study plan looks fine to me. My only comment is on the timing for the downstream entrainment study. Seems like post-spawn is sensible for expecting the most movement, but you should be cautious about assumptions on migration timing. Does the existing PIT tag data support your expectations of late spring/early summer?	Currently very little is known about downstream sucker migration but Utah State is looking into sucker migration and PacifiCorp will incorporate any new knowledge into the study as it becomes available.

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Recreation	PB/TU		TU approves the study plan in principle. We request that, if the whitewater recreation study identifies a need for enhanced boater flows through flow releases, considerations be made to assessing ramping rates (e.g. the rate at which water levels and flows increase or decrease). Our two primary concerns related to ramping rates is associated with safety among anglers who may be wading in the river at the beginning of a release and ensuring that fish stranding is limited during the descending limb of the hydrograph.	Accepted – Down-ramp contemplated The following sentence was added to Section 3.4.3.1: “If this analysis and the use and demand analysis described below identify a potential need for enhanced boater flows through flow releases ramping rates will also be assessed to ensure the safety of anglers and that fish stranding is limited.”
	PT/UDWR		Glad there is discussion on improving the trail along the river/under the interstate to where it connects to the old highway.	None needed
	CV/AW		AW has no comment on the study plan	None needed
	CV/AW (added 11/5/15)	App A & B	The following suggestions would likely improve the data collected in the surveys: - Appendix A, Question 19. I would suggest adding a check box for paddlers doing laps, i.e. put -in and take out are the rec site. - Appendix B, question 12. This question about the "class of difficulty" is very difficult to answer objectively without reference to the current flow in the river. - Appendix B - The data collected from this question about the paddler experience for different flows could be flawed without a common reference regarding the flow. For example is the flow rate measured at Gateway, is the plant running, and any other variables that can impact the actual cfs in the river channel.	Draft surveys to be finalized in early 2016 prior to initial boater focus group meeting.

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	HO/NPS	Comment on SD1	<p>On September 10, 2015, Hugh Osborne of the National Park Service’s Hydropower Assistance Program visited the Weber River Hydro project’s recreation area near Morgan, Utah. The following recommendations on accessibility issues are offered as a result of that site visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add parking sites designated with the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA) near the accessible fishing dock and near the first picnic table at the entrance into the recreation site. • Reduce the height of the grass hump at the top of the ramp that leads to the first picnic table near the entrance of the recreation site. It creates an obstacle to visitors that may use mobility-assistive devices. • Modify the concrete pad of the orientation of the picnic table at this site to provide more room for maneuverability around the table. The current situation allows only about 20 inches of clearance. • Modify the fencing around the accessible fishing dock to conform to current design guidelines. These guidelines generally call for a reduced height (maximum of 34 inches) of the railing in order to make it easier for anglers using wheelchairs to cast. A sample design checklist is attached. 	License implementation issue; comments will be utilized to inform existing recreation site assessment.
	AB/FERC		<p><i>Recreation Supply Analysis – Facility inventory and condition assessment</i></p> <p>The applicant proposes to inventory recreation features and amenities at project recreation facilities. We recommend that the applicant compile this inventory in accordance with FERC project recreation table guidance.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to conduct a condition assessment for project recreation facilities. We recommend that the condition assessment also include informal</p>	<p>The first sentence of Section 3.4.1 now reads “In this subtask, existing recreation inventory information will be reviewed, compiled and updated as needed following FERC Project recreation table guidance”</p> <p>The last paragraph of Section 3.4.1 has been revised to</p>

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			<p>recreation sites. Additionally, we recommend that any condition assessment use systematic and objective criteria for rating each site.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to include an inventory of recreation facilities in the vicinity of the project to provide additional local context. Because the Commission evaluates project recreation differently than non-project recreation or recreation in the vicinity of a project, please ensure that this inventory clearly identifies these recreation sites relationship with the project boundary (i.e., inside or outside) and who is responsible for the management of each recreation site.</p>	<p>include discussion of informal recreation sites including the user-defined trail from the Weber Recreation Site under I-84.</p> <p>The following sentence was added to Section 3.4.1. “The inventory of recreation facilities in the vicinity of the Project will clearly identify the relationship of these recreation facilities to the Project Boundary and who is responsible for the management of each inventoried recreation site.”</p>
	AB/FERC		<p><i>Recreation Use and Demand Analysis</i></p> <p>The applicant states that a recreation questionnaire may be distributed at the Weber Recreation Site and list a number of items that may be assessed by the questionnaire. The applicant also states (see below in the <i>Whitewater Boating Feasibility Study</i>) it will analyze the influence of fluctuating river flows on whitewater boating opportunities in the bypassed reach and determine the relative ‘importance’ of whitewater boating in comparison to other resources or foregone generation. Considering alternative operations may be deliberated to improve boating opportunities at the project, any changes to operations may impact other recreational resources, specifically fishing opportunities in the bypassed reach. Further, any changes in operation may depend upon current and future recreation demand, segmented by activity. Therefore, we</p>	<p>Survey planned for Weber Recreation Site, as that is the only access to the by-passed reach of the river.</p> <p>The following statement was added to Section 3.4.2 to clarify why the Weber Recreation Site is the only one where recreation visitor surveys will be distributed and conducted:</p>

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			<p>recommend a recreation questionnaire be distributed at project access points, including Weber Recreation Site and possibly other access points, to capture an accurate recreation user profile for project recreation.</p>	<p>“This is the only location where recreation visitor surveys will be conducted or distributed because this is the only safe, legal access point to the by-passed reach of the river.”</p>
	<p>AB/FERC</p>		<p><i>Whitewater Boating Feasibility Study</i></p> <p>The Level 1 recreation flow study outlined by the applicant is an appropriate starting point for understanding the whitewater resources are the project. Further details related to the formal survey of boaters, including questionnaire development, should continue to be developed during consultation with stakeholders, include Commission staff.</p> <p>Section 2.7 of the Commission regulations requires Commission staff to seek the ultimate development of recreational resources at licensed projects. Currently, access to the downstream portion of the project is limited due to topographical and developmental constrains. Public access to this portion of the project is important because it could provide egress for whitewater boaters. The applicant proposes to identify, map, and describe any existing and potential sites of access and portage along the bypassed reach. However, this portion of the study plan needs more detail to ensure adequate steps are taken to consider the feasibility of providing a whitewater boating take-out. Specifically, we recommend that each existing and potential access site be evaluated with specific metrics to identify the benefits and constraints of each sites, including: proximity to the terminus of the whitewater run, site topography and bank slope to the river, the number of vehicles that could be accommodated, potential cost or range of costs for developing the site, current property ownership, and identifying specific constrains (other than cost) unique to each site.</p>	<p>None needed</p> <p>Section 3.4.3.2 was modified to address comments concerning the consideration of boater take-outs.</p>

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			We also recommend that a minimum of three sites be considered: (1) the area east of the powerhouse, (2) the area across the river from the powerhouse, and (3) the gated area that provides access to the 'old highway.'	
	AB/FERC	App A&B	<p>Onsite Survey</p> <p>1) be sure you include (likely on a separate form) notes about survey refusals, including (as best you can) their activity and reason for refusal</p> <p>2) (suggestion only) move Qs 5-8 to the end of the survey. This information is secondary to the primary purpose of the survey.</p> <p>3) Change Q11 to "How long did you/are you going to be recreating at this site (hours)"</p> <p>4) Q12 do not convert to range. Leave as smallest unit. Also consider 2 part question - number of visits & number of visits over the past 12 months</p> <p>5) Merge Q13 with Q25</p> <p>6) Q14 - add neutral anchor - 5 point scale</p> <p>7) Q15 - (suggestion only) strike this question. I am not sure how this information would be used</p> <p>8) Q16 - Strike or change this question. Multi-dimensional - does not really tell us anything.</p> <p>9) Q17 - there are no questions about the season distribution of use. This question can be reformatted (activities in left column, seasons in top row) to answer questions about activities within seasonal use. A separate question would need to be included about primary activities for <u>this</u> trip.</p> <p>10) Q25 - "expected" is poor word choice (how would a regular visitor "expect" something) use "excellent" or "very good"</p> <p>11) Q26 - add "no improvements are needed" as a selection option</p> <p>12) Need question about whether flows in river were adequate to participate in their primary recreation activity - too low, just right, too high</p> <p>13) Each survey, as reported, should include the flows for the time of their visit. This can be done post processing by using Q3, or you could have a spot</p>	Draft surveys to be finalized in early 2016 prior to initial boater focus group meeting.

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			<p>on the survey that the survey administrator could mark by checking the gauge every couple of hours.</p> <p>Boater Interview Survey</p> <p>***Unclear on exact method. Is this an on-site study, a focus group, or an invited internet survey? Page 29 (of pdf numbering) states "Also, encourage fellow boaters to participate in this study." This suggest that the survey will be conducted over the internet. However, the methods section only suggest a focus group. However, many questions seem to be directed to a single run (rather than a multiple experiences) which suggests an onsite flow study. Please clarify. This survey will need a second review once this is made clear.***</p> <p>1) Q4 - change to be similar to above survey. Add second question with time constraint like "over the past 12 months" for us to get an understanding of current use.</p> <p>2) Q7 - this question is weird in the context of a focus group. "What factors influence your decision to boat this run" is better.</p> <p>3) Q11 - again no reason for range here</p> <p>4) Q14 - change anchor 3 from "marginal" to "neither acceptable nor unacceptable"</p> <p>5) Q14 - I am unsure it will be clear to boaters how the cfs number is derived. Therefore, also include, in parentheses, the cfs that is on the gauge. In other words, provide the gauge data <u>and</u> the flow in the bypassed reach.</p> <p>6) Q16 and Q17 - change "did" to "do" because this is not a single experience survey</p> <p>7) Q17 & Q18 - why not just ask - Where do you take out?</p> <p>8) Add a question about possible improvements - parking, takeout, flows, nothing, etc. Similar to Q26 on the other survey. This would also make Q18 a more simple question.</p> <p>9) Q5 and Q16 are same question - I like Q5 better. Should be "do" not "did"</p>	

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			10) Q6 - language needs to be changed to be clear about multiple experiences not a single run.	