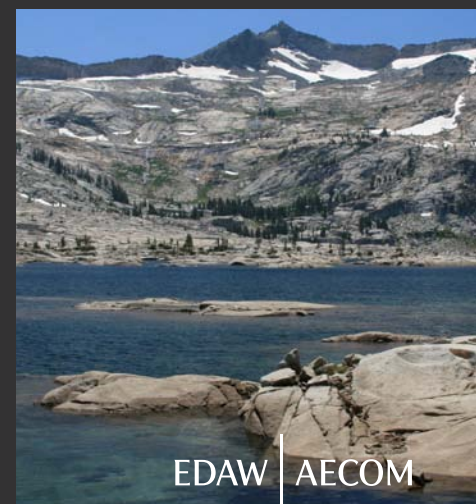




Visual Resource Management Plan

FERC Project No. 184
El Dorado Irrigation District

El Dorado Irrigation District
2890 Mosquito Road
Placerville, CA
95667



Visual Resource Management Plan

El Dorado Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 184)
El Dorado Irrigation District
Placerville, CA

Prepared by:

EDAW, Inc.
Seattle, WA

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Exhibits

- Exhibit A – Consultation Record
- Exhibit B – Project Area Photographs

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
EID	El Dorado Irrigation District
ENF	Eldorado National Forest
EVC	Existing Visual Condition
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FS	Forest Service
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
LTBMU	Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
PCT	Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
PM&E	Protection, mitigation, and enhancement
SFAR	South Fork of the American River
SH	State Highway
SMS	Scenery Management System
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
U.S.	United States
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VMS	Visual Management System
VQO	Visual Quality Objective
VRMP	Visual Resource Management Plan

Visual Resource Management Plan

1.0 Introduction

The El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) operates the El Dorado Hydroelectric Project (Project)(FERC Project No. 184) under a new license that was granted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on October 18, 2006. The aesthetic/visual appearance of the Project influences the overall experience of visitors to the Project area and environs, including the Eldorado National Forest (ENF). As stipulated by the new FERC license for the Project, EID has prepared this Visual Resource Management Plan (VRMP) to manage visual resources in the Project area throughout the term of the new license. Note, the VRMP is specific to Project facilities and lands within the FERC Project boundary and does not provide guidance regarding reservoir levels or river flows (the FERC license establishes minimum instream flows and new target reservoir levels).

The purpose of the VRMP is to satisfy the terms and conditions of the new FERC license for the Project (License Article 402, Condition 54) and to guide the decision-making process and facilitate the aesthetic/visual enhancement and management of specific Project facilities and lands affecting the visual character of the Project area. To meet this purpose, the VRMP:

- Provides a vision of the desired future condition for several Project facilities specifically identified by FERC (in the new license) as requiring improvement; and
- Establishes long-term actions and processes for the management of visual resources in the Project area through the term of the new FERC license.

The VRMP provides a summary of existing aesthetic/visual resource conditions in the Project area, an overview of other management plans that guide visual resource management in the region, and identifies potential visual resource protection and enhancement measures that may be used during the term of the new FERC license (in addition to those specifically identified in the license).

1.1 FERC License Requirements

FERC issued a new license for the Project on October 18, 2006, for a term of 40 years. License Article 402 of the license requires EID to develop and implement a VRMP. Specifically, License Article 402 states:

“Visual Resource Management Plan – Within one year of license issuance, the licensee shall file with the Commission for approval, a visual resource management plan. The plan will coordinate the provisions required by the Forest Service (FS) final 4(e) condition 54, in Appendix A [see below]. In addition to the provisions of condition 54, the plan shall include a description of the process for visual resource protection, such as when a visual resource protection plan would be needed (i.e., new

construction and type of maintenance activities) and shall address all lands within the project boundary.

The licensee shall develop the plan in consultation with the FS. The licensee shall include with the plan, documentation of agency consultation, copies of comments and recommendations made in connection with the plan, and a description of how the plan accommodates the comments and recommendations. The licensee shall allow a minimum of 30 days for the agencies to comment and to make recommendations before filing the plan with the Commission. If the licensee does not adopt a recommendation, the filing shall include the licensee's reasons, based on project-specific information.

The Commission reserves the right to require changes to the plan. The plan shall not be implemented until the licensee is notified that the plan is approved. Upon Commission approval, the licensee shall implement the plan, including any changes required by the Commission.”

In addition to License Article 402, Condition 54 of the new FERC license also provides direction regarding the management of visual resources in the Project area. Condition 54 (Visual Resource Protection) states:

“During planning and prior to any new construction or maintenance of facilities that have the potential to affect visual resources of National Forest System lands (including, but not limited to, the recreation related construction), the licensee shall file with FERC a plan approved by the FS for the protection and rehabilitation of National Forest System visual resources affected by the Project. At a minimum, the plan shall address clearings, spoil piles, and Project facilities like diversion structures, penstocks, pipes, ditches, powerhouses, other buildings, transmission lines, corridors, and access roads. The plan shall address facility configurations, alignments, building materials, colors, landscaping, and screening. The plan shall provide a proposed mitigation and implementation schedule to bring the Project facilities affecting visual resources on National Forest System lands into compliance with visual resource standards and guidelines in the Eldorado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Land and Resource Management Plan. The licensee shall implement the plan upon approval by the FS.

Mitigation measures identified for either the visual resource plan for new construction or the measures identified for existing facilities shall include, but are not limited to: (1) surface treatments with FS-approved colors and natural appearing materials that will be in harmony with the surrounding landscape, (2) use of non-specular conductors for the transmission lines,

Visual Resource Management Plan

(3) use of native plant species to screen facilities from view, (4) reshaping and revegetating disturbed areas to blend with surrounding visual characteristics, and, (5) locating transmission facilities to minimize visual impacts.

The licensee shall implement the following measures at existing facilities within 2 years of license issuance:

1. *Lower Echo Lake Spillway*: Paint the metal components of the walkway across the spillway a non-reflective black color. Perform a visual inspection every 2 years and touch-up or re-paint as necessary to maintain the facility in good condition.

2. *Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam*: Paint the metal components of the stairway to the dam and walkway across the dam a non-reflective black color. Perform a visual inspection every 2 years and touch-up or re-paint as necessary to maintain the facility in good condition.

3. *Silver Lake Dam*: Paint the metal components of the stairway, ramps, and handrail associated with the west side dam that are visible from the new bridge a non-reflective black color. Perform a visual inspection every 2 years and touch-up or re-paint as necessary to maintain the facility in good condition.”

Both License Article 402 and Condition 54 require consultation with the USDA Forest Service (FS). A record of consultation (with FS) regarding development of the VRMP is provided in Exhibit A.

1.2 Explanation of Terms

Key terms used in the VRMP include:

FERC Project Boundary/FERC Boundary – the boundary of the Project as approved by FERC under the new license.

License – the new license issued by FERC to operate and maintain the El Dorado Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 184).

Operations and Maintenance – the act of keeping fixed assets in acceptable condition, including, but not limited to preventative maintenance, normal repairs, and replacement of parts and structural components, among others.

Project – the El Dorado Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 184), including all Project facilities, lands, and water associated therewith as described in the new FERC license.

Project Area – the area of potential influence of the Project, principally located within the FERC Project boundary.

Visual Quality Objectives – VQOs are established by a Forest Plan for each management area within a National Forest based on guidelines provided in the FS Visual Management System (VMS). Lands are identified as to the public's concern for scenic quality (sensitivity levels), as well as diversity of natural features (variety classes). The VQOs are designed to be measurable standards or objectives for the visual management of these lands. VQOs referenced in the VRMP include the following:

- **Preservation** – The VQO of preservation allows ecological changes only. Management activities, except for very low visual-impact recreation facilities, are prohibited. This objective applies to Wilderness areas, primitive areas, other special classified areas, areas awaiting classification, and some unique management units that do not justify special classification.
- **Retention** – The VQO of retention provides for management activities that are not visually evident. Under retention, activities may only repeat form, line, color, and texture that are frequently found in the characteristic landscape. Changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc. should not be evident.
- **Partial Retention** – Under the VQO of partial retention, management activities remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities may repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the characteristic landscape, but changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, and pattern remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities may also introduce form, line, color, or textures that are found infrequently or not at all in the characteristic landscape, but they should remain subordinate to the visual strength of the characteristic landscape.
- **Modification** – Under the VQO of modification, management activities may visually dominate the characteristic landscape. However, activities of vegetative and land form alternation must borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture so completely and at such a scale that its visual characteristics are those of natural occurrences within the surrounding area or character type. Additional parts of these activities, such as structures, road, or slash, must remain visually subordinate to the proposed composition. Activities that are predominately introduction of facilities such as buildings, signs, and roads should borrow naturally established form, line, color, and texture so completely and at such scale that its visual characteristics are compatible with the natural surroundings.

Wilderness – A federally designated wilderness area, as defined by the 1964 Wilderness Act.

2.0 Existing Visual Setting and Resource Management

This section describes the existing aesthetic/visual setting of the Project area specific to existing Project facilities (e.g., hydroelectric, recreation, etc.), as well as other scenic routes and regional management plans that provide guidance regarding visual resources in the Project area.

2.1 Existing Project Facilities

Facilities associated with the Project are located along the upper reaches of the South Fork of the American River (SFAR) and its tributaries, from near the crest of the Sierra Nevada range to its western foothills (Figure 2.1-1). These facilities include reservoirs, dams, canals, pipelines, and other features associated with EID's hydropower services. This section provides a summary of existing Project facilities and primary viewsheds (as identified primarily in the ENF Land and Resource Management Plan [LRMP]), grouped by proximity to one another, as well as associated Project area conditions.

Project area conditions are presented in terms of Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs), standards defining the degree to which alterations to the landscape detract from its natural character, and Existing Visual Conditions (EVC), the VQO which the area appears to currently meet. The VQOs assigned to each of the areas are determined according to the FS VMS (USDA-FS 1974). This system is summarized in Section 1.2, as well as described in the ENF LRMP (USDA-FS 1988a) and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) LMRP (USDA-FS 1988b). Descriptions of Project area conditions are based on recent field observations and input and coordination with FS. Photographs of select Project facilities and areas are provided in Exhibit B.

Lake Aloha

Located within the Desolation Wilderness, Lake Aloha lies five miles southwest of Lake Tahoe. Situated at the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the lake is located within an irregularly-shaped granite basin. The area surrounding Lake Aloha consists mainly of large expanses of rocky terrain and very limited tree cover (juniper, pine, and hemlock). The western and northern shores of Lake Aloha are characterized by steep, rocky areas, while land adjacent to the eastern and southern shores has more level terrain. Due to limited vegetation, views to the lake and adjacent mountains are fairly unobstructed. The vegetation and rocky terrain screen some views.

The Desolation Wilderness is managed according to the federal Wilderness Act of 1964, which places very strict limitations on human manipulation of the natural environment. Restrictions limit the construction of trails and permanent campsites, and the placement of signage; administrative structures, and constructed visitor facilities are generally not permitted. Although Project facilities are located on the southern bank of Lake Aloha, they actually predate designation of the Wilderness and have been excluded from the Wilderness boundary. To help minimize impacts on the adjacent Wilderness, Project facilities are generally designed to mimic the native landscape.

Management of the Wilderness is the responsibility of the ENF and the LTBMU. A VQO of Preservation is applied to the Wilderness area in the ENF LRMP. This designation allows only ecological changes to the existing landscape character. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), which skirts the eastern shore of the lake, is a designated National Scenic Trail under the federal National Trails System Act (16 U.S. Code 1231 et seq.).

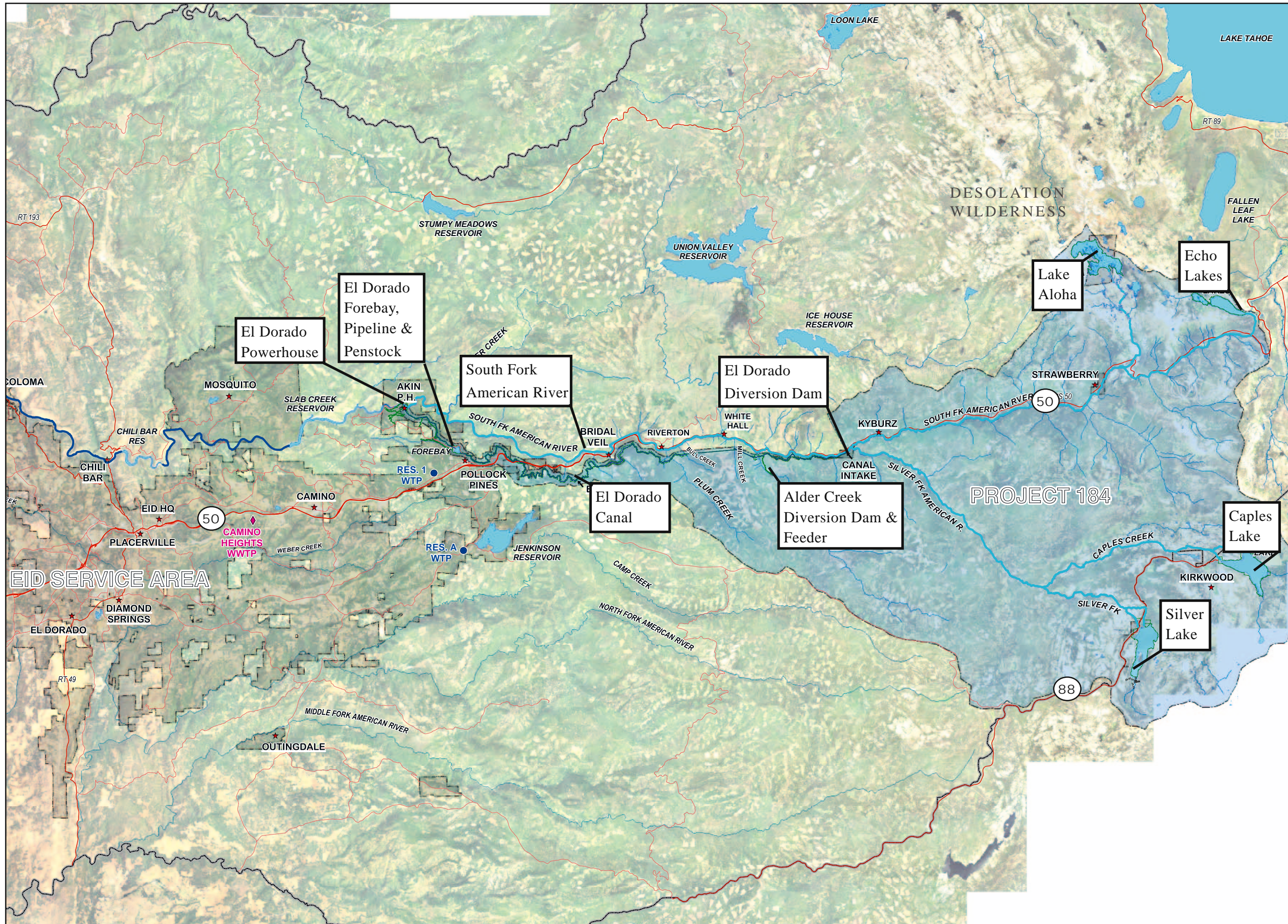
Project facilities at Lake Aloha include the main dam and 11 auxiliary dams. In general, these structures are not highly visible to visitors, due to native construction materials, the small size of some of the structures, and screening by rocky terrain. Views of these structures meet a VQO of Partial Retention.

Echo Lake

Echo Lake lies immediately southeast of Desolation Wilderness. It consists of two lakes, Upper and Lower Echo Lakes, connected by a small channel. Echo Lake is located in the Echo Lakes Management Unit of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) LMRP (USDA-FS 1988b). The LTBMU's LMRP guides management of the Echo Lake shoreline and surrounding areas for developed (VQO of Partial Retention) and dispersed (VQO of Retention) recreation.

Project facilities at Lower Echo Lake include a 320-foot-long, 14-foot-high concrete dam; an adjacent 30 foot-wide spillway, crossed by a metal bridge; a small operations building near the dam; and a 1.16-mile-long conduit (consisting of a canal, tunnel and steel pipe) from the lakes to the SFAR. Public use areas on Echo Lake include the Echo Lake Chalet, marina, and associated facilities on the eastern shore as well as the PCT. In addition, various private cabins are located along the shoreline. The PCT/Tahoe Rim Trail crosses the dam at the eastern outlet of Lower Echo Lake and parallels the northern shores of Lower and Upper Echo Lakes for about two miles.

Project facilities, along with developed recreational facilities (Echo Lake Chalet, marina, trailhead, etc.), are visible from the upper parking lot and surface area of Echo Lake. The EVC of Project facilities, Echo Lake Chalet, marina, and trailhead at Lower Echo Lake meet a VQO of Type IV Modification as viewed from the reservoir surface, the first segment of the PCT/Tahoe Rim Trail, and Echo Lake Chalet (including the marina and parking area).



El Dorado Irrigation District

El Dorado Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 184)

Figure 2.1-1. El Dorado Hydroelectric Project Area and Facilities



Back of Figure 2.1-1

Visual Resource Management Plan

Caples Lake

Caples Lake is an artificial impoundment on the site of two smaller natural lakes. The lake lies immediately south of State Highway (SH) 88, a National Forest Scenic Byway and State Scenic Highway that follows the northern shore of the lake. Caples Lake is within the boundaries of the ENF, though EID owns several parcels along the lake's southern shoreline. The ENF LRMP applies VQOs of Retention for the landscape surrounding the lake, and Partial Retention for areas with developed recreation facilities. The Mokelumne Wilderness is located to the south of Caples Lake, generally paralleling the lake's 3.5-mile long southern shoreline.

The main dam, located on the northern shore of the lake above Caples Creek, consists of a 1,200 foot-long earthen fill structure rising to a maximum height of 63 feet. SH 88 extends across the top of the dam. A gatehouse and associated solar panels are located on the east side of the dam beside the lake, and a pipeline and outlet are located on its west side. The auxiliary dam, at the northwest corner of the lake, consists of a 237-foot-long, 33-foot high earthen fill section and a 300-foot-long, 19-foot-high concrete section. A metal catwalk and handrail are located on top of the auxiliary dam.

Recreation facilities and public areas adjacent to the lake include a private resort, the Caples Lake Campground (FS), 13 summer recreation cabins, a picnic area and parking lot near the main dam, fishing access parking area near Woods Creek, a planned boat launch and picnic area (the boat launch component of this site must be constructed by 2013, 7 years after license issuance per 4(e) conditions; however, EID plans to construct this boat launch in 2008, pending appropriate environmental reviews), and the Emigrant Lake Trail (which begins near the auxiliary dam, parallels the southwestern shore of Caples Lake and continues into the Mokelumne Wilderness) and associated Caples Lake trailhead parking area.

Because of the shoreline's configuration, the main dam is not visible from the Caples Lake Resort, the Caples Lake Campground, or the Emigrant Lake Trail. The main dam is barely visible from the Woods Creek lake access, though the gatehouse is visible. The auxiliary dam, including the catwalk and handrail, are visible from the Caples Lake trailhead, the first section of the Emigrant Lake Trail, SH 88, and the surface of Caples Lake. However, further down the trail away from the trailhead, the dam is barely distinguishable from the shoreline, though the required bright orange safety booms can be seen. The EVC of views with Project facilities meets the ENF LRMP VQO of Modification as viewed from SH 88, Caples Lake Trailhead, the beginning of the Emigrant Trail, and by boaters on the lake (foreground views only). They meet a VQO of Partial Retention as viewed in the middle-ground by boaters on the lake.

Silver Lake

Located near Kirkwood in Amador County, Silver Lake is a naturally-occurring lake that has been enlarged by the dam. The ENF LRMP has designated VQOs of Retention and Partial Retention around the reservoir shoreline.

Project facilities at Silver Lake consist of a 280 feet long, 30 feet high concrete and wet masonry faced dam, and an adjacent concrete and steel fish ladder. Both are located on the northern shore of the lake. Public-use areas around Silver Lake include the currently closed Silver Lake Resort (formerly Kay's Resort), Kit Carson Lodge, Plasse's Resort, Silver Lake East and West Family Campgrounds, Sandy Cove and Ferguson Point picnic and parking areas, Oyster Creek roadside rest area, Martin Meadows overflow area, recreational residences (East and South Silver Lake Recreation Residence Tracts), and 3 organizational camps. Hiking trails extend along the western, southern, and eastern shorelines.

The Silver Lake dam is only visible in the immediate vicinity of the dam, such as from the recently realigned SH 88 or from the reservoir surface (by boat). The east side of the dam is visible from a few public use areas. Existing views of the dam and its associated facilities (fish ladder, metal walkway and railings, and floating boom) from SH 88 and the reservoir surface area (in the immediate vicinity of the dam), meet a foreground VQO of Modification. Limited views from other public access areas around the lake likely meet a middle-ground VQO of Partial Retention (in part because the dam and its associated facilities, not including the floating boom, are less visible due to topography).

South Fork of the American River

The SFAR is a very popular location for whitewater rafting and a highly scenic waterway that has been proposed as a "Recreation River" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. ENF viewsheds along the SFAR include the river corridor, U.S. Highway 50 and Ice House Road. The ENF LRMP describes these viewsheds and landscapes along the SFAR using two variety classes (note, all Project facilities along the SFAR are located between Kyburz and Slab Creek Reservoir). Landscapes within the SFAR/Hwy 50 viewshed fall within areas designated by the ENF LRMP as variety class A (distinctive landscapes) and variety class B (common landscapes). The entire foreground and some of the middleground is within variety class A landscapes. These areas are managed for a VQO of retention. The remainder of the middleground variety class B landscape is managed for a VQO of partial retention.

There are multiple Project facilities along the SFAR that capture and transport water from the river, to generate hydroelectric power and to provide consumptive water supplies. The main facilities include the El Dorado Diversion Dam, El Dorado Canal, Alder Creek Diversion Dam and Feeder, El Dorado Forebay, Pipeline and Penstock, and Akin (El Dorado) Powerhouse (there are also several other small tributary diversions along the canal). In general, there are limited views of these Project-related facilities along the SFAR. Each of these main Project facilities is briefly described below, including specific public viewing opportunities.

- El Dorado Diversion Dam – The El Dorado Diversion Dam and intake structure are located on private property along the SFAR, about 1.5 miles south of Kyburz, off U.S. Highway 50. The dam is only visible from areas directly adjacent to it, including nearby upstream and downstream areas, and from the small private road

Visual Resource Management Plan

- used for access. Fishing, hiking, and whitewater boating are some of the activities which take place in the vicinity of the diversion dam. While not on FS-managed land, EVC foreground views of the diversion dam and surrounding area likely meet VQO designations of Partial Retention or Modification.
- El Dorado Canal – The 22.3-mile long El Dorado Canal carries diverted water from the El Dorado Diversion Dam to the El Dorado Forebay along a route that parallels the SFAR. The canal consists of several different types of features including lined ditch, lined and unlined tunnel, wood and pre-cast concrete flume, and steel pipe. The canal runs along steep slopes, which are heavily vegetated in most places, making only portions visible from U.S. Highway 50 and Ice House Road. It is not visible from the SFAR because of the steep terrain, vegetation, and distance. However, some Alder Tract Recreation Residences may have partially obstructed views of the El Dorado Canal between the Alder Siphon and the El Dorado Tunnel. The canal meets an EVC of Type III partial retention as viewed in the middleground from Ice House Rd. The canal meets an EVC of Type II retention from the SFAR and the majority of Hwy 50. It meets an EVC of Type III partial retention in the middleground from Hwy 50, where visible for short durations.
 - Alder Creek Diversion Dam and Feeder – The Alder Creek Diversion Dam and Feeder are located in a steep, inaccessible area and are generally not visible from area viewpoints.
 - El Dorado Forebay, Pipeline and Penstock – The El Dorado Forebay is a small reservoir located about a quarter mile south of the SFAR, immediately north of Pollock Pines and outside the ENF. A steel pipe carries the water from the Forebay to a surge tank. Two penstocks then transport the water to the Akin (El Dorado) Powerhouse. Several day use areas are located along the Forebay shoreline. Views of the forebay, pipeline, and penstock are available from these day use areas, as well as along Forebay Road. Given that the Forebay is not located within the ENF, the ENF LRMP does not provide VQOs for this area. However, based on existing conditions and VQOs described in the ENF LRMP, views of the forebay (and vicinity including the pipeline and penstocks) would likely meet a VQO of Partial Retention.
 - Akin Powerhouse – The Akin Powerhouse is located on FS-managed land within the ENF in the steep, rugged canyon of the SFAR. FS manages the SFAR viewshed for a foreground VQO of Retention and middle-ground VQO of Partial Retention. The Powerhouse is only accessible via a gated road or by boat on the river. Very little use is reported along this reach of the river and land-based viewing opportunities of the Powerhouse are limited (though it may be viewed by river users). Views of the Powerhouse and vicinity, while limited, would likely have an EVC of Type IV Modification.

2.2 Scenic Routes

Three scenic routes in the Project area have been designated or proposed by Federal, State, and/or County agencies: U.S. Highway 50, SH 88, and Ice House Road. Management of actions along these scenic corridors is jointly handled by FS, Caltrans, and Counties with jurisdiction. Management actions may include regulation of development along the roadway, roadway maintenance and other improvements, and roadside advertising. Each of these scenic routes is briefly described below.

U.S. Highway 50

U.S. Highway 50, a heavily traveled route across the Sierra Nevada Mountains, is designated as a State Scenic Highway in the vicinity of the Project. Foreground and middle-ground views from U.S. Highway 50 include forested inclines, glimpses of the SFAR, rock cliffs, ridges, and peaks. In general, most of the Project facilities are not highly visible to travelers along U.S. Highway 50. The ENF manages this viewshed to meet a foreground VQO of Retention and a middle-ground VQO of both Retention and Partial Retention, depending on the variety class.

State Highway 88

SH 88, which traverses along both Silver Lake and Caples Lake, is designated as a State Scenic Highway, as well as a National Forest Scenic Byway. From the highway, travelers are afforded views of vast granite landscapes, massive peaks, sparkling lakes, aspen groves, ancient junipers, and bright summertime flowers. Also visible along this route is the dam on Silver Lake and the auxiliary and main dams on Caples Lake. Viewsheds along this section of SH 88 are managed for a foreground and middle-ground VQO of Retention. Project facilities at the Caples Dam and Auxiliary Dam and the re-aligned section of the highway at Silver Lake Dam meet an EVC of Type IV Modification.

Ice House Road

Ice House Road joins U.S. Highway 50 at Riverton and provides access to the Crystal Basin Recreation Area. This route has been identified by El Dorado County as an important public scenic viewpoint and is a likely candidate for visual resource protection management by the County. Pursuant to policies listed under Objective 2.6.1 of the El Dorado County General Plan (El Dorado County 2004), Ice House Road (between U.S. Highway 50 and Loon Lake) may be considered for protection under a new County Scenic Corridor Ordinance. From the Cleveland Corral Information Site and adjacent sections of Ice House Road, portions of the El Dorado Canal are visible in the middle-ground. Loss of significant forest vegetation due to a recent forest fire, the Cleveland Fire, has increased the visibility of the canal. However, recent plantings are expected to provide visual screening when mature. The Ice House Road viewshed is managed by FS for foreground retention and middle-ground partial retention. The middle-ground Canal view from Ice House Road and Cleveland Corral meets a Partial Retention VQO.

2.3 Regional Resource Management Plans

Several federal regional resource management plans provide guidance for aesthetic/visual resource management in the Project area. These plans are briefly described in this section and were considered during the development of appropriate visual resource implementation actions, described in Section 4.0 of the VRMP.

Land and Resource Management Plan: Eldorado National Forest

Adopted in 1988, the current ENF LRMP (USDA-FS 1988a) was intended to guide management of the Forest for a period of 10 to 15 years. Many of the Project facilities (including those located at Caples Lake and Silver Lake) are located on FS-managed lands and are described in this plan. In terms of visual resource management, the ENF LRMP contains a systematic discussion of VQOs (using the older FS Visual Management System (VMS), not the newer FS Scenery Management System [SMS]). The ENF LRMP also discusses the application of VMS VQO's to particular FS management areas and land use types. Additionally, discussion of public issues and management concerns related to energy production provides direction regarding future hydroelectric development, including general goals for addressing visual impacts on FS-managed lands. For example, "hydroelectric development will be made inconspicuous in locations where the Forest's visual quality objective is retention or partial retention of the natural landscape." However, the ENF LRMP does not provide specific visual quality guidelines or prescriptions, beyond those that are associated with the VMS VQOs (see Section 2.1).

Land and Resource Management Plan: Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

As with the ENF LRMP, the current LTBMU LRMP (USDA-FS 1988b) was adopted in 1988 and intended to guide management of the Forest for a period of 10 to 15 years. This plan is currently being updated (see Land and Resource Management Plan: Comprehensive Evaluation Report, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit).

Discussion of aesthetic/visual resources in the LTBMU LRMP is framed in general, strategic terms. The LRMP defines as a goal to "[m]aintain an attractive forest appearance by meeting or exceeding established visual quality objectives" and predicts that "[m]an-created alteration, in the form of ... structural improvements ... will be designed to retain the natural or rural mountain appearance of the setting." The section of the LRMP devoted to discussion of Visual Quality Restoration or Improvement provides a number of general practice standards and guidelines and references the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) visual quality system.

Information specific to Echo Lake, the only Project facility within the LTBMU, consists of a map of the Echo Lake Management Area, which delineates management prescriptions for adjacent lands. The details of these prescriptions are provided in the accompanying text, but do not include discussion of visual quality or of specific Project facilities. VQOs for each of these management prescriptions appear elsewhere in the document (see Section 2.1).

Land and Resource Management Plan: Comprehensive Evaluation Report, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

A 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation Report (USDA-FS 2006) identifies necessary changes to the 1988 LTBMU LRMP that will be addressed in the final amended document (expected to be completed in mid- to late-2008). As with the current LRMP, this report contains a general discussion of the importance of visual quality in the LTBMU. The Scenic Quality section of the report includes an evaluation of the existing LRMP's goal statements, addresses current trends, identifies changes which have occurred since the LRMP's adoption, and lists reasons for an amended LRMP. Summary information on existing VQOs is also provided.

Desolation Wilderness Management Guidelines: Land Management Plan Amendment

Desolation Wilderness Management Guidelines (USDA-FS 1998) were developed in 1998 and consist of amendments to the portions of the ENF LRMP and LTBMU LRMP that address the Desolation Wilderness. The main topics addressed in the guidelines relate to ecological and recreation management. While the guidelines only apply to Project facilities at Lake Aloha, they only provide general strategic guidance including:

- “Manage facilities in a manner that prevents unnecessary or undue degradation of the Desolation’s wilderness character;”
- “Protect wilderness values when operating and maintaining existing power projects and other related facilities;”
- “...require materials that harmonize with the environment to maintain existing facilities;” and
- “New development of hydroelectric facilities requires presidential approval.”

The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands

In 2001, FS adopted The Built Environment Image Guide (USDA-FS 2001). This document provides a range of design guidelines for facilities according to the region in which they are located, as well as provides guidelines which apply across all regions. Guidelines focus on issues such as ecological and cultural influences on design, and address architectural form, materials, color, and sustainability. All Project facilities located on FS-managed lands are subject to these guidelines, in addition to LRMP requirements and other regulations specific to those lands.

3.0 Overview of the VRMP

The overall intent of the VRMP is to define EID's involvement, role, and responsibilities in implementing visual resource management directives as described in the FERC license terms and conditions (License Article 402 and Condition 54). In general, EID's responsibilities include enhancing the visual appearance of specific Project facilities and lands, and establishing a process for visual resource protection, as directed by the new FERC license.

Taken as a whole, the VRMP represents a single "umbrella" protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PM&E) measure for visual resources. More specifically, the VRMP is an implementation tool to be used to manage the visual appearance of Project resources throughout the term of the new FERC license. The VRMP is specific to EID's visual resource roles and responsibilities in the Project area. It does not make management or resource commitments for other entities, such as FS.

3.1 Goals

During the term of the new FERC license, the following three goals shall be used to help direct Project improvements/enhancements to visual resources and guide visual resource-related decision-making:

Goal 1: Comply with FERC License Terms and Conditions Related to Project Visual Resources

EID will meet the terms and conditions set forth in License Article 402 and Condition 54. The appearance of specific Project facilities (including metal walkways, stairways, ramps, and/or handrails at the Lower Echo Lake Spillway, Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam, and Silver Lake Dam) described in the new FERC license will be enhanced by EID, resulting in the overall improvement of visual resources seen by the public in the Project area.

Goal 2: Ensure that Implementation of Project Resource Specific Management Plans Including the VRMP are Coordinated and Consulted

To fulfill its new license requirements, EID has developed this VRMP, plus several other Project resource-specific management plans (e.g., facilities operation and maintenance, recreation, heritage properties, etc.). Relevant resource-specific management plans that may affect aesthetic/visual resources should be consulted during the term of the new license as potential facility actions and/or operational changes are considered that may impact visual resources.

Goal 3: Ensure that Ongoing/Routine Maintenance Practices Incorporate Applicable VRMP Implementation Actions

Ongoing and routine maintenance activities at the Project will be amended, as needed, to incorporate monitoring/inspection and other actions required by implementation of the VRMP. In addition to periodic inspection of Project facilities, ongoing maintenance practices will also be revised to incorporate VRMP processes (described herein) prior to actions that may affect visual resources in the Project area (e.g., painting, new facility construction, etc.).

3.2 VRMP Assumptions

The identification and understanding of relevant assumptions are important for the long-term successful implementation of the VRMP. Because the Project may potentially change over the term of the new FERC license, the issues and assumptions identified at this time may need to be reviewed and potentially revised in the future. Current VRMP issues and assumptions include the following:

- The VRMP applies to all Project facilities and lands within the FERC Project boundary, regardless of whether or not they are located within the ENF.
- At this time, no significant improvements to existing Project hydroelectric facilities and/or new Project hydroelectric facilities are planned (per the new FERC license). The FERC license does require improvements and enhancements to several Project area recreation sites (Silver Lake East Campground, Caples Lake Campground, Caples Lake Dam Parking, etc.); however, most of these improvements/enhancements are not anticipated to affect the visual character of the Project area. As such, additional visual resource management actions, beyond those described in the license and the VRMP, are not anticipated.

An assessment of the visual impacts of the new Caples Lake Boat Launch and Access Road Project determined that there would be significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to the visual character of Caples Lake from the development of this new facility (EID 2008). Appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed though to potentially render these impacts to less than significant levels under CEQA in the long-term. It is anticipated that any visual impacts from the boat launch will remain significant at least until appropriate landscaping (a proposed mitigation measure) has matured (approximately 10 years). However, if Caltrans does not grant the boat launch a design exception for the SR88 westbound shoulder (a proposed mitigation measure), the visual impact of rock excavation for the shoulder has the potential to remain significant (even with proposed landscaping).

- Stakeholders (FS) will periodically be given the opportunity to consult on future visual resource protection plans (Section 4.0), as needed, as well as the VRMP.

4.0 Roles, Responsibilities, and Coordination

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of EID as licensee, as well as those of other stakeholders related to the implementation of the VRMP. This section also describes the coordination of EID's various resource management plan implementation actions (including those described in this plan) and the need for periodic review and update of the VRMP.

4.1 EID and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Implementation of the VRMP is the sole responsibility of EID as licensee. EID's expectations of the basic roles of the stakeholders related to implementation of the VRMP are listed below. At this time, the primary VRMP stakeholder is FS (representing the ENF and the LTBMU). It is acknowledged that EID cannot assign funding, staffing, or other resource allocation responsibilities to other entities unless specified in an adopted memorandum of agreement or understanding (or other legal document).

Implementation of the VRMP will involve the following anticipated responsibilities during the term of the new FERC license:

EID Roles and Responsibilities

- Implement the VRMP following FERC approval.
- Coordinate VRMP implementation actions with other Project resource management plans or actions.
- Review potential visual resource changes over time (via the visual inspection process described in Section 5.1.4), if any, and prepare periodic updates of the VRMP, if needed (an update would only be needed if there are significant changes to the visual character of the Project area).
- Ensure that EID facility operations and maintenance staff are aware of the requirements of the VRMP so that they can help implement applicable actions.

FS Roles and Expected Responsibilities

- Provide timely review and feedback on the Draft VRMP and any future updates, if needed, prior to submittal to FERC for approval.
- Provide timely review and feedback on VRMP implementation actions per the visual resource protection plan process described in Section 5.2 of this plan, including approval of visual resource protection plans (as stipulated in Condition 54 – see Section 1.1).
- Participate in periodic VRMP review meetings, if needed.

4.2 EID Management Plan Coordination

In addition to the VRMP, EID is required in the new FERC license (and associated Settlement Agreement) to also develop other resource-specific management plans (e.g., Historic Properties Management Plan, Recreation Resource Management Plan, Facility Management Plan, etc.) to help guide the decision-making process over the term of the new license. Prior to potential implementation of resource-specific management plan actions, specific actions will be reviewed for potential impacts to the visual resources of the Project area. For potential actions (e.g., new facility construction, maintenance, vegetative clearing, etc.) that may impact the visual quality of the Project area, applicable VRMP actions may be considered to mitigate identified impacts.

4.3 Periodic Review and Update

Implementation actions associated with the VRMP essentially involve repainting several Project facilities so as to help improve the existing visual conditions in the Project area. However, given the term of the new license (40 years), unanticipated changes may affect the visual quality of the Project area. As such, the VRMP should be periodically reviewed and updated, as necessary. EID will review and potentially update the VRMP at least every 10 years (see Section 5.3) or to coincide with other periodic license implementation reviews. Note, an updated version of the VRMP will only be completed if there are significant changes to the visual character of the Project area in a given 10-year review period.

5.0 Implementation Actions

This section describes implementation actions of the VRMP. These actions are grouped into two broad categories: (1) Visual Enhancement/Mitigation Techniques, and (2) Visual Resource Protection Plan Process. Each of these categories of implementation actions, as well as an implementation schedule is described below.

5.1 Visual Enhancement/Mitigation Techniques

The visual enhancement/mitigation techniques described in this section are either required within the first 2 years of the new FERC license (see Section 4.3 Implementation Schedule), as specified in Condition 54, or are recommended actions that may be implemented, as needed, throughout the term of the new FERC license to help minimize and/or mitigate potential impacts to visual resources in the Project area. Any potential actions (excluding those actions directly required by Condition 54 within the first 2 years of the new license) that are taken in the future related to visual resources should adhere to the visual resource protection plan process described in Section 5.2, which includes coordination with FS.

5.1.1 Painting

Selecting appropriate paint colors can help reduce the visual impact of Project facilities on the surrounding natural landscape. Per Condition 54, EID will re-paint several Project facilities using a non-reflective black paint. These facilities include metal components of the walkways and/or stairways (including any handrails, ramps, etc.) at the Lower Echo Lake Spillway, Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam, and Silver Lake Dam.

In addition to applying non-reflective black paint on these Project facilities, other appropriate paint colors may be considered for future Project facility painting to help reduce the contrast between these facilities and the surrounding natural landscape (e.g., greens against forested backgrounds, grays against rock outcrop backgrounds, etc.). Paint colors will be chosen on a site and/or Project facility basis and will be coordinated with the FS through the Visual Resource Protection Plan process (as described in Section 5.2). Regardless of the exact color that is chosen, paints with low levels of reflectivity are recommended.

5.1.2 Vegetative Screening

Vegetative screening is another technique for helping to reduce the visual impact of Project facilities on the surrounding natural landscape. Where feasible, native vegetation and landscaping will be used to visually screen Project facilities from public view points. Plantings will be chosen on a site-specific basis and will be coordinated with the FS through the Visual Resource Protection Plan process (as described in Section 5.2).

5.1.3 Facility Siting and Materials

New Project facilities may be needed over the term of the new license. Any new Project facilities constructed during the license term will be assessed for potential impact to visual resources. If visual impacts will likely result from new facility construction, then the facility will be sited and constructed so as to minimize these impacts, to the extent practicable.

When siting a new facility, EID will consider the following to minimize visual impacts:

- Designing the new facility to conform to the natural contours of the site's topography; and
- Orienting the facility to minimize visual exposure within the viewshed.

Additional measures that may be considered to help reduce any potential visual impacts include the use of natural-looking building materials that mimic the colors/textures in the surrounding environment, use of non-specular conductors for the transmission lines, use of appropriate paint colors (Section 5.1.1), landscaping and vegetative screening (Section 5.1.2), and berming, among others. Also, if a Project facility is no longer required for Project operations during the new license term, EID will consider it for potential removal.

5.1.4 Visual Inspections

Per Condition 54, EID will perform visual inspections on applicable Project facilities every 2 years and touch-up or re-paint as necessary to maintain the facility in good condition. Those facilities identified in Condition 54 include:

- Lower Echo Lake Spillway
- Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam
- Silver Lake Dam

For those Project facilities not identified in Condition 54, periodic visual inspections will occur, as specified in the Facility Management Plan. Appropriate maintenance actions will be taken should issues be identified during this periodic visual inspection process.

5.2 Visual Resource Protection Plan Process

During the term of the new FERC license, changes to Project area conditions may necessitate additional actions to protect, enhance, or mitigate existing visual resources. As such, EID will file a visual resource protection plan with FERC for any potential licensee-induced change (e.g., new facility construction, significant renovations, etc.) to the existing Project area visual environment that is planned during the term of the new license. In general, a visual resource protection plan will be required for any new, relocated, or significantly modified Project facility or other disturbance that has been determined by EID and/or the FS to affect the overall visual quality of the Project area. If

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a Visual Impact Assessment is completed as part of California Environmental Quality Act and it has been reviewed and approved by the FS, then a visual resource protection plan will not be required.

At a minimum, the visual resource protection plan will include:

- A description of planned modifications to the existing visual environment;
- Appropriate PM&E measures (see Section 5.1 for potential actions) that will be implemented related to the modifications;
- A schedule for implementation of appropriate measures; and
- A record of consultation with the FS regarding the modification and appropriate visual measures.

For Project area modifications that may result in changes to the visual environment, the process by which a visual resource protection plan would be developed is as follows (this process assumes a plan/design for any potential modification has already been developed):

- Notify the FS of planned facility modifications and identify any potential impacts to the existing visual environment of the Project area;
- If determined by the FS that a visual resource protection plan is required, develop a draft visual resource protection plan that identifies the actions that will be taken to protect, enhance, and/or mitigate the visual resources impacted by the planned modification;
- Provide a draft visual resource protection plan to the FS for review (a minimum of 30 days will be provided to the FS for their review);
- Revise and finalize the visual resource protection plan, based on FS review comments;
- Submit final visual resource protection plan to the FS for approval (per Condition 54); and
- File a final visual resource protection plan with FERC. A copy of the final plan will also be provided to the FS after being finalized.

For Project facility modifications that the FS has deemed not significant enough to warrant the development of a visual resource protection plan, the following process shall be followed:

- Provide a narrative, drawings and/or photographs of the planned modifications to the FS; and
- Acquire documented approval of modifications by the FS.

5.3 Implementation Schedule

Table 5.3-1 provides an overview of the VRMP implementation schedule.

Table 5.3-1. VRMP implementation schedule.

Implementation Action	Year
Develop VRMP and file with FERC	2008
Condition 54 – Project Facility Painting	2008
Condition 54 – Visual Inspections	2008 + every subsequent 2 years (e.g., 2010, 2012, 2014, etc.)
VRMP Review	2017 + every subsequent 10 years (2027, 2037, 2047)

6.0 References and Literature Cited

- El Dorado County. 2004. 2004 El Dorado County General Plan: A Plan for Managed Growth and Open Roads; A Plan for Quality Neighborhoods and Traffic Relief. Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on July 19, 2004. El Dorado County Planning Commission. Placerville, CA.
- El Dorado Irrigation District (EID). 2008. Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report: Caples Lake Boat Launch and Access Road. Placerville, CA. January 2008.
- FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission). 117 FERC ¶ 62, 044. Available at URL = <http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/common/opennat.asp?fileID=11159485>. Accessed August 15, 2007.
- USDA-FS (United States Dept. of Agriculture-Forest Service). 1974. *National Forest Landscape Management, Vol. 2, Chapter 1 (Visual Management System)*. USDA Handbook Number 462. Washington, DC.
- USDA-FS. 1988a. *Land and Resource Management Plan: Eldorado National Forest*. Placerville, CA: USDA Forest Service.
- USDA-FS. 1988b. *Land and Resource Management Plan: Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit*. South Lake Tahoe, CA: USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.
- USDA-FS. 1998. *Desolation Wilderness Management Guidelines: Land Management Plan Amendment*. Placerville, CA: USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Eldorado National Forest and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.
- USDA-FS. 2001. *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands*. Available at URL = <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/beig/>. Accessed August 15, 2007.
- USDA-FS. 2006. *Land and Resource Management Plan: Comprehensive Evaluation Report, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit*. Available at URL = <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/forest-plan/cer/cer-index.shtml>. Accessed August 15, 2007.

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EXHIBITS

Exhibit A – Consultation Record

Visual Resource Management Plan

Consultation Record

Consultation regarding the development of the El Dorado Hydroelectric Project Visual Resource Management Plan (VRMP) includes:

- A field meeting between Vicki Jowise, Landscape Architect with the Eldorado National Forest, and Sergio Capozzi, Environmental Planner with EDAW (consultant to the El Dorado Irrigation District), on June 26, 2007;
- An informal review of the internal Draft VRMP by Vicki Jowise at the ENF (internal Draft VRMP was emailed to Vicki Jowise on August 30, 2007; comments on the internal Draft VRMP were returned by email on September 11, 2007). Comments received from Vicki Jowise and applicable revisions to the Draft VRMP are listed in Table A-1; and
- A formal review of the Draft VRMP by Beth Paulson at the ENF (Draft VRMP was provided to Beth Paulson on September 17, 2007; comments on the Draft VRMP were returned by email on September 26, 2007). Comments received from Beth Paulson and applicable revisions to the Draft VRMP are listed in Table A-2.
- A formal review of the Revised VRMP by Vicki Jowise at the ENF (Revised Draft VRMP was emailed to Beth Paulson and Vicki Jowise on October 8, comments on the Revised Draft VRMP were returned by email on October 16). Comments received from Vicki Jowise and applicable revisions to the Revised Draft VRMP are listed in Table A-3.
- A formal review of the November 2007 VRMP by Beth Paulson at the ENF (November 2007 VRMP was emailed to Beth Paulson; comments on the November 2007 VRMP were returned by email on January 18, 2008). Comments received from Beth Paulson and applicable revisions to the VRMP are listed in Table A-4.

Forest Service Comments on Internal Draft VRMP

The comments in the Table A-1 below were received from Vicki Jowise at the Eldorado National Forest (via an email on September 11, 2007). The second column indicates the revisions that were made to the Draft VRMP based on the Forest Service’s comments.

Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Pg. 4, para. 2: the statement in parenthesis is incorrect in context of Eldorado NF management. We haven’t replaced VMS with SMS and won’t until our plan revision which is scheduled for a 2013 completion date. VQOs are not a component of the SMS system. Although similar, Visual Quality Objectives are replaced by Scenic Integrity Objectives under SMS and are defined differently.</p>	<p>The comment about SMS was removed (comment was in regard to VMS/SMS in general and not specific to the Eldorado National Forest). New paragraph reads: <u>“Visual Quality Objectives</u> – VQOs are established by a Forest Plan for each management area within a National Forest based on guidelines provided in the Forest Service’s VMS. Lands are identified as to the public’s concern for scenic quality (sensitivity levels), as well as diversity of natural features (variety classes). The VQOs are designed to be measurable standards or objectives for the visual management of these lands. VQOs referenced in the VRMP include the following:”</p>
<p>Pg. 7, para. 3: “Actual VQOs” is erroneous. It is not a term that is used in the VMS. We use Existing Visual Condition (EVC). The “O” is for objective so the actual objective is not necessarily the existing condition.</p>	<p>The term “Actual VQO” was replaced by “Existing Visual Condition” (EVC). This change was made throughout the plan, where appropriate.</p>
<p>Pg. 7-8, Table 2.1-1: This table is difficult for me to interpret. It would be easier if you listed “Viewsheds” in the first column. I don’t understand what “Areas with developed facilities” means. Is it EID facilities or Eldorado NF developed recreation facilities? The viewsheds associated with Caples Lake would include: Hwy. 88, Mokelumne Wilderness, Emigrant Lake trail, developed recreation sites (i.e. Caples Lake C.G., Caples Lake Recreation Residences, Caples Dam Trailhead) and the lake itself as viewed by boaters.</p>	<p>Table 2.1-1 was removed to alleviate confusion regarding the content presented therein (the intent of Table 2.1-1 was to summarize the text that follows the table). Forest Service comments regarding the table were made in the appropriate text sections of the plan, as needed.</p>
<p>Same comment as above for Silver Lake. The viewsheds would be Hwy. 88, the lake, developed recreation sites, and trails surrounding the lake.</p>	<p>See previous revision.</p>
<p>Are all of the facilities included in the second column of this table? I know I worked on an approval for the Spillway 20 building on the canal near Alder. Are there any other buildings or random facilities associated with the project? The penstock is visible from Forebay Rd. which is managed for a VQO of foreground partial retention and middleground modification.</p>	<p>As noted previously, Table 2.1-1 was removed. The VQO/EVC for the penstock was revised in Section 2.1 (under Project facilities along the SFAR).</p>

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Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
Foot-note 1 – VMS should be VQO. They are not “recommended”, they are required. Foot-note 2 – Should be EVC for reason discussed above.	Table 2.1-1 was removed.
Pg. 12, para. 3: SH 88 is a Forest Service Scenic Byway, not a Federal Scenic Byway.	This sentence was revised to read: “The lake lies immediately south of State Highway (SH) 88, a Forest Service Byway and State Scenic Byway...”
Pg. 12, para. 4: The boat launch near Woods Creek is not yet built. It is planned for completion in probably 2 – 3 years.	This sentence was revised to read: “...a picnic area and parking lot near the auxiliary dam, a planned boat launch lake access near Woods Creek (the boat launch component of this site must be constructed by 2013, seven years after license issuance per 4(e) conditions; however, EID plans to construct this boat launch in 2008, pending appropriate environmental reviews),...”
Pg. 12, para. 4: Add “and associated trailhead” after “Emigrant Lake Trail”.	This sentence was revised to read: “...and the Emigrant Lake Trail (which begins near the auxiliary dam, parallels the southwestern shore of Caples Lake and continues into the Mokelumne Wilderness) and associated trailhead.”
Pg. 12, para. 5, last sentence: the project facilities meet modification from Hwy 88, Caples Lake Trailhead, the beginning of the Emigrant Trail and from the lake as viewed by boaters in the foreground. They meet partial retention as viewed by boaters on the lake when viewed in the middleground.	The last sentence was revised to read: “The EVC of views with Project facilities meets the ENF LRMP VQO of “Modification” as viewed from SH 88, Caples Lake Trailhead, the beginning of the Emigrant Trail, and by boaters on the lake (foreground views only). They meet a VQO of “Partial Retention” as viewed in the middleground by boaters on the lake.”
Pg. 13, para. 2: “Silver Lake Resort” should be Kays Resort.	Per EID, this resort should now be called Silver Lake Resort. To clarify, the text has been revised to read: “...Silver Lake Resort (formerly Kay’s Resort)...”
Change “East Silver Lake Tract private residences and others” to East and South Silver lake Recreation Residence tracts.	This sentence was revised to read: “...recreational residences (East and South Silver Lake Recreation Residence Tracts)...”
Change last sentence to “Hiking trails extend along the west, south and eastern shorelines”.	This sentence was revised to read: “Hiking trails extend along the western, southern, and eastern shorelines.”

Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Pg. 13, para. 3: The paragraph is somewhat confusing. The cumulative visual impact of the dam, railings, fish ladder, cat-walk and boom as viewed from the newly re-aligned Hwy 88 and the lake are not described clearly. The facilities currently have an EVC of modification from that viewpoint. I haven't been on the trails on the east side of the lake but assume that the facilities (mostly the orange boom) would meet middleground partial retention.</p>	<p>This paragraph was revised to read:</p> <p>“The Silver Lake dam is only visible in the immediate vicinity of the dam, such as from the recently realigned SH 88 or from the reservoir surface (by boat). The east side of the dam is visible from a few public use areas. Existing views from SH 88, as well as the reservoir surface area (in the immediate vicinity of the dam), of the dam and its associated facilities (fish ladder, metal walkway and railings, and floating boom) meet a foreground VQO of “Modified.” Limited views from other public access areas around the lake likely meet a middleground VQO of “Partial Retention” (in part because the dam and its associated facilities, not including the floating boom, are indistinguishable from the highway).”</p>
<p>Pg. 13, para. 4: It would be helpful to describe the facilities separately by viewshed. The affected viewsheds are Hwy 50, SFAR and Ice House Rd. The level of development is not a factor in deciding the VQOs for the viewsheds. The foreground and middleground of Hwy 50 is managed for retention with a few areas with lesser variety managed for middleground partial retention. The SFAR falls within the same corridor and is therefore managed with the same VQOs. The Ice House Rd. is managed for foreground retention and middleground partial retention.</p>	<p>The intent of this section is to describe the existing visual/aesthetic condition of Project facilities, including viewsheds where appropriate. The discussion of viewsheds has been clarified, as needed in Section 2.1, but the primary focus is still on Project facilities.</p>
<p>Scenic attractiveness used in this paragraph is associated with the SMS. The VMS uses variety classes. There is no VQO of “Modified” or Modification in any of the affected viewsheds.</p>	<p>In regard to scenic attractiveness, the appropriate sentence was revised to read:</p> <p>“The ENF LRMP describes landscapes along the SFAR using two variety classes (note, all Project facilities along the SFAR are located between Kyburz and Slab Creek Reservoir).”</p> <p>In regard to the VQO, the appropriate sentence was revised to read:</p> <p>“Given these two variety classes, the ENF LRMP has designated VQOs for foreground views of the SFAR as “Retention,” with smaller areas of foreground and middleground views as “Partial Retention.””</p>

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Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Pg. 13, para. 5: Rather than saying “Note, most Project facilities located along and in the vicinity of the SFAR are generally not visible to the public” it should be noted which ones are. For example the El Dorado Diversion Dam and associated facilities are visible to the rafting, kayaking, fishing public.</p>	<p>This sentence was revised to read: “In general, there are limited views of these Project-related facilities along the SFAR. Each of these main Project facilities is briefly described below, including specific public viewing opportunities.”</p>
<p>Pg. 14, para. 1: “Being a developed area along the river (foreground), the ENF VQO designation of “Partial Retention” applies to the diversion dam and surrounding area.” This is not a true statement. The VQO would be retention but actually I believe the Diversion Dam is not on FS land so VQOs don’t apply.</p>	<p>This sentence was revised to read: “While not on Forest Service land, foreground views of the diversion dam and surrounding area likely meet an ENF VQO designation of “Retention.”</p>
<p>Just as a note: I am sometimes confused throughout the document when you imply that anytime there are developed facilities, regardless of whose and what they are, the ENF lowers the VQO. This is not true. The VQOs are associated with management areas 1 – 30 and none of those are based on hydro development. The developed facilities that are associated with management areas are MA 9 - existing developed recreation sites, 10 – potential developed recreation sites, 11 – existing winter sports sites, 12 – potential winter sports sites, 13 – private sector developed recreation, 14 – administrative sites, 15 – Placerville nursery and 16 – Forest Genetics.</p>	<p>The intent of the description of existing conditions in the Project area (Section 2.1) is not to imply that VQOs are “lowered” given the presence of developed facilities. Rather, it is meant to describe existing Project facilities and their associated visual conditions.</p>
<p>Pg. 14, para. 2, last sentence: You do not need to address the canal from hikers viewpoint along the canal because it is not a viewshed.</p>	<p>This sentence was revised to read: “In general, foreground views of the canal meet the “Partial Retention” VQO set in the ENF LRMP, while the middleground views meet the “Retention” VQO.”</p>
<p>As stated above “...meet the “Partial Retention” VQO set in the ENF LRMP for developed areas ...” is incorrect.</p>	<p>This sentence was revised to read: “In general, foreground views of the canal meet the “Partial Retention” VQO set in the ENF LRMP, while the middleground views meet the “Retention” VQO.”</p>
<p>I’m not sure, but I believe there may be some recreation residences in the Alder Creek tract that view the canal and appurtenances in the foreground.</p>	<p>The following sentence was added to this section: “However, some Alder Tract Recreation Residences may have partially obstructed views of the El Dorado Canal between the Alder Siphon and the El Dorado Tunnel.”</p>

Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Pg. 14, para. 5: I've never heard of "Akin" powerhouse. I'm assuming it is the El Dorado powerhouse. It is in the SFAR viewshed which is managed for foreground retention and middleground partial retention. It is visible to rafters, kayakers and fishing people. It meets an EVC of Type IV Modification not "Modified".</p>	<p>Akin Powerhouse is the name used in the new FERC license. To clarify, the text has been revised as follows:</p> <p>"...Akin (El Dorado) Powerhouse..."</p> <p>In regard to the appropriate VQO, this section has been revised to read:</p> <p>"The Akin Powerhouse is located on land within the ENF in the steep, rugged canyon of the SFAR. The Forest Service manages the SFAR viewshed for a foreground VQO of "Retention" and middleground VQO of "Partial Retention." The Powerhouse is only accessible via a gated road or by boat on the river. Very little use is reported along this reach of the river and land-based viewing opportunities of the Powerhouse are limited (though it may be viewed by river users). Existing views of the Powerhouse and vicinity, while limited, would likely meet a VQO of "Modified" (EVC Type IV modification)."</p>
<p>Pg. 15, para. 2: First sentence under U.S. Highway 50 doesn't make sense.</p>	<p>This sentence was revised to read:</p> <p>"US Highway 50, a heavily traveled route across the Sierra Nevada Mountains, is designated as a State Scenic Byway in the vicinity of the Project."</p>
<p>Pg. 15, para. 3: First sentence makes it sound like the highway starts at Silver Lake. It is a scenic highway from Jackson.</p>	<p>This sentence was revised to read:</p> <p>"SH 88, which travels along both Silver Lake and Caples Lake, is designated as a State Scenic Byway, as well as a National Forest Byway."</p>
<p>It is a National Forest Scenic Byway not a National Scenic Byway. There is a difference in management.</p>	<p>See previous revision.</p>
<p>The description "From the highway, travelers are afforded views of forested ridges, rock outcroppings, and tributaries of the SFAR." Sounds like it should go with Hwy 50. The views from Hwy 88 are of vast granitic landscapes, massive peaks, sparkling lakes, aspen groves, ancient junipers and summertime wildflowers.</p>	<p>The views from each highway have been clarified.</p>
<p>Project facilities at Caples Dam Trailhead and the re-aligned section of the highway at Silver Lake dam meet an EVC of Type IV modification.</p>	<p>The following sentence was added to this section:</p> <p>"Project facilities at the Caples Dam and Auxiliary Dam and the re-aligned section of the highway at Silver Lake Dam meet an EVC of "Modified" (Type IV modification)."</p>

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Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Note: Seems like this information has already been stated in previous sections. These are the viewsheds that we manage from so the information that was displayed earlier would be easier to follow if it was put in this section associated with each of the road corridor viewsheds.</p>	<p>The revisions listed above should help clarify viewsheds, as discussed in this section.</p>
<p>Pg. 15, para. 4: I had never heard that the county manages Ice house Rd. as a Scenic County Road. Are there any standards and guidelines that go with that designation? If so, can they be stated here?</p>	<p>This section was revised to read: “It has been identified by El Dorado County as an important public scenic viewpoint and is therefore a likely candidate for county-specific visual resource protection. Pursuant to policies listed under Objective 2.6.1 of the El Dorado County General Plan (El Dorado County 2004), Ice House Road (between US Highway 50 and Loon Lake) may be considered for protection under a new Scenic Corridor Ordinance.”</p>
<p>Cleveland Corral is an Information Site not an Overlook.</p>	<p>This revision was made.</p>
<p>Icehouse in the middle of the paragraph should be Ice House.</p>	<p>This revision was made.</p>
<p>Pg. 23, para. 4: We would prefer if you did not include a color chart. Please just put in a sentence saying that colors will blend with the surrounding natural environment and shall be approved by the Forest Service. We get into a lot of trouble and squabbling when people have been given charts with colors that cover a bunch of situations. They may choose a color from the chart but it doesn't fit into their specific situation and because they have already moved ahead with planning, ordering or whatever, we sometimes are pressured into living with a color that is not acceptable because it was on an “official” chart. Reproductions of color charts also cause problems. For instance the blue chips are not acceptable for any component of any facility on FS land. Most of the grays and beiges are too light.</p>	<p>Example colors were deleted from the plan.</p>

Table A-1. Forest Service Comments on the Internal Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

Forest Service Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Pg. 24, para. 5: I just spoke with the Forest Botanist. We would prefer it if you would please delete the table of recommended plantings. Plantings need to be chosen on a site specific basis and should be done by our botanist. The Forest Service is moving toward collecting seeds and cuttings from the immediate surroundings and propagating the plants prior to planting. Plant selection is something that should be decided by the Forest Service and not EID. Our preference would be to add a statement saying "Selection of plant material shall be done under the direction of the Forest Service" or something like that.</p>	<p>The plant list was be deleted from the plan.</p>

Visual Resource Management Plan

Forest Service Comments on Draft VRMP

The comments in the Table A-2 were received from Beth Paulson (Hydro/NEPA/ Appeals/Litigation) at the Eldorado National Forest (via an email on September 26, 2007). The second column indicates the revisions that were made to the Draft VRMP based on the Forest Service’s comments.

Table A-2. Forest Service Comments on the Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
Pg. 5, para. 3, sentence 1: delete "or structures in the landscape". VQO's only address changes to the natural appearing landscape.	Sentence revised to read: "Project area conditions are presented in terms of Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs), standards defining the degree to which alterations to the landscape detract from its natural character..."
Pg. 5, para. 3, sentence 4: Apparently the comments that the FS made to the EIP study were never incorporated. Referring to it in this study would infer that the FS approved the descriptions of the Project area conditions which we did not.	Comment acknowledged. The EIP relicensing study was one of several sources that was used to describe existing conditions in the Project area. Other sources of information included field observations and input received from the Forest Service. This sentence has been clarified to indicate various sources of information were used. Revised sentence reads: "Descriptions of Project area conditions are based on descriptions provided in the visual resource study that was completed for relicensing (EIP Associates 2003), as well as on recent field observations and input and coordination with the Forest Service."
Pg. 6, para. 2, sentence 1: Management of the Desolation Wilderness is the responsibility of both the Eldorado and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU).	Sentence revised to read: "Management of the Wilderness is the responsibility of the ENF and the LTBMU."
Pg. 6, last para., last sentence: The Echo Lake Chalet, marina, trailhead, and project facilities are on the LTBMU so it is their call but I would say that they cumulatively meet an EVC of Type IV modification as viewed from the lake, the first part of the trail that goes to lake Aloha and from within the site itself. I agree that the cabins meet an EVC of Type III partial retention.	Paragraph revised to read: "Project facilities, along with developed recreational facilities (Echo Lake Chalet, marina, trailhead, etc.), are visible from the upper parking lot and surface area of Echo Lake. The EVC of Project facilities, Echo Lake Chalet, marina, and trailhead at Lower Echo Lake meet a VQO of Type IV Modification as viewed from the reservoir surface, the first segment of the PCT/Tahoe Rim Trail, and Echo Lake Chalet (including the marina and parking area). The 139 cabins and individual boat docks (managed under special permits from the Forest Service) clustered around Upper Echo Lake and the western half of Lower Echo Lake meet a VQO of Partial Retention as viewed from the reservoir surface and the PCT/Tahoe Rim Trail."

Table A-2. Forest Service Comments on the Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
Pg. 7 is missing.	Pagination has been fixed. Page 7 is figure 2.1-1.
Pg. 9, para. 1, sentence 2: SH 88 is a state scenic highway not a state scenic byway. This is an error throughout the document. It is a national forest scenic byway.	This correction has been made through the plan.
Pg. 9, para. 1, sentence 4: Add "recreation" between "developed" and "facilities".	Sentence revised to read: “...and Partial Retention for areas with developed recreation facilities.”
Pg. 9, para. 3, sentence 1: There is only one private resort/lodge on Caples Lake.	Sentence revised to read: “Recreation facilities and public areas adjacent to the lake include a private resort...”
Pg. 9, para. 4, sentence 3: The auxiliary dam and appurtenances are visible from the trail, lake and highway 88. The following sentence "however, once on the trail," should read "further down the trail".	Sentence revised to read: “However, further down the trail away from the trailhead, the dam is barely distinguishable...”
Pg. 10, para. 2, last sentence: Change "indistinguishable" to "less noticeable". If it was indistinguishable, it would meet retention.	To an untrained eye, the dam and the highway appear to be part of the same structure, as viewed in the middleground, and are thus indistinguishable from each other. However, to clarify, this sentence was revised to read: “Limited views from other public access areas around the lake likely meet a middleground VQO of Partial Retention (in part because the dam and its associated facilities, not including the floating boom, are less noticeable).”
Pg. 10, para. 3, last half of paragraph beginning with "Variety class A...": Much of the middleground in the Hwy 50/SFAR viewshed is variety class A and is managed for a VQO of retention. All of the foreground is managed for a VQO of retention. None of the middleground in the Hwy 50/SFAR viewshed is managed for Modification. Note: we don't use the term "Modified"; all references throughout the document should be checked to ensure they have been changed.	Sentence revised to read: “Given these two variety classes, the ENF LRMP has designated VQOs for foreground views of the SFAR as Retention and middleground views as Partial Retention.” Changed “Modified” to “Modification” throughout plan.

Visual Resource Management Plan

Table A-2. Forest Service Comments on the Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
Pg. 11, para. 1, last sentence: Does the sentence mean that the Forest Service would manage for a VQO of retention or that the Existing Visual Condition meets retention? If you mean the former, then this sentence is not stated correctly. The EVC is retention as viewed from Hwy 50 because of vegetative screening but judging from the photo in the appendix, the EVC is Partial Retention or Modification as viewed from the SFAR. Vicki hasn't been there so can't make a judgement regarding PR or Mod.	This sentence is not intended to mean that the Forest Service would manage this area for a VQO of Retention; rather, this sentence is intended to state the fact that these facilities are not on Forest Service land, but they likely meet (i.e., have a EVC) of Partial Retention or Modification (as noted by the reviewer). Sentence revised to read: “While not on Forest Service land, EVC foreground views of the diversion dam and surrounding area likely meet VQO designations of Partial Retention or Modification.”
Pg. 11, para. 3, last sentence: Delete the sentence. The surrounding landscape is not a viewshed therefore the concept is incorrect. We wouldn't analyze the improvements from the surrounding landscape.	Sentence deleted.
Pg. 11, para. 5, last sentence: Delete "VQO of "Modified". You are talking about existing condition not management. VQO applies to management, EVC applies to existing condition.	Sentence revised to read: “Views of the Powerhouse and vicinity, while limited, would likely have an EVC of Type IV Modification.”
Pg. 12, para. 1, 1st sentence: delete "byway" before routes. They are not all byways.	Byway deleted from sentence. Revised to read: “Three scenic routes in the Project area have been designated...”
Pg. 12, para. 1, 2nd sentence: add "Forest Service," in front or behind Caltrans. Delete "landscaping". Add maintenance and improvements to list.	Sentence revised to read: “Management of the routes’ scenic corridors, which is handled jointly by the Forest Service, Caltrans, and Counties with jurisdiction, includes regulation of development, maintenance, improvements, and advertising.”
Pg. 12, para. 2, 1st sentence: change "State Scenic Byway" to "State Scenic Highway".	Correction made throughout plan.
Pg. 12, para. 2, last sentence: change sentence to read "The ENF manages this viewshed to meet a foreground VQO of Retention and a middleground VQO of both retention and partial retention depending on the variety class.	Sentence revised as recommended.
Pg. 12, para. 3, 1st sentence: change "State Scenic Byway" to "State Scenic Highway".	Correction made throughout plan.

Table A-2. Forest Service Comments on the Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
Pg. 12, para. 3, last sentence: delete "Modified" and delete parenthesis around (Type IV modification).	Sentence revised to read: "Project facilities at the Caples Dam and Auxiliary Dam and the re-aligned section of the highway at Silver Lake Dam meet an EVC of Type IV Modification."
Pg. 17, para. 5, Add a bullet stating that the Forest Service is responsible for approving plans.	As stated in this section, the Forest Service will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the VRMP. Per Condition 54, the Forest Service will also be responsible for approving any visual resource protection plans that are developed during the new license term. This clarification has been made in this section.
Pg. 18, para. 2, 1st sentence: change "comply with existing VQOs" to "improve visual condition". Those catwalks, railing etc. will never meet the desired VQO of retention for the Hwy 88 viewshed.	Sentence revised to read: "Implementation actions associated with the VRMP essentially involve repainting several Project facilities so as to help improve the existing visual conditions in the Project area."
Pg. 19, para. 4, 2nd sentence: "chose" should be "chosen".	Correction made in plan.
Pg. 19, para. 5: Delete entire paragraph. The premise is incorrect. Paint colors are most effective in the middleground because dark colors cause facilities to blend into the shadows. In the foreground, facilities will always be noticeable but their appearance may be improved. We don't have background views on the ENF. In addition, the table was deleted so the reference to it should also be deleted.	Paragraph deleted.

Visual Resource Management Plan

Forest Service Comments on Revised Draft VRMP

The comments in the Table A-3 were received from Vicki Jowise at the Eldorado National Forest (via an email on October 16, 2007). The second column indicates the revisions that were made to the Revised Draft VRMP based on the Forest Service’s comments.

Table A-3. Forest Service Comments on the Revised Draft VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Page 9, Paragraph 4, Sentence 3 – revise to read: The auxiliary dam, including the catwalk and handrail, are visible from the Caples Lake trailhead, the first section of the Emigrant Lake Trail, highway 88 and the surface of Caples lake.</p>	<p>Sentence has been revised in plan.</p>
<p>Page 10, Paragraph 3, Sentence3 – revise to read: The ENF LRMP describes these view sheds and landscapes along the SRAR using two classes (note, all Project facilities along the SFAR are located between Kyburz and Slab Creek Reservoir). Variety class A is assigned to areas immediately along the SFAR riverbank (foreground) due to their distinctive visual quality. Within the SFAR corridor, all project facilities are located between Kyburz and Slab Creek reservoir. Landscapes within the SFAR/Hwy 50 viewshed fall within areas designated as variety class A (distinctive landscapes) and variety class B (common landscapes). All of the foreground and some of the middleground is within variety class A landscapes. Thaes areas are managed for a VQO of retention. The remainder of the middleground variety class B landscape is managed for a VQO of partial retention.</p>	<p>Sentence has been revised in plan.</p>
<p>Page 11, Paragraph 2, Last Sentence – revise to read: The canal meets an EVC of Type III partial retention as viewed in the middleground of Ice House Rd. The canal meets an EVC of Type II retention from the SFAR and the majority of Hwy 50. Where visible for short durations in the middleground from Hwy 50, it meets an EVC of Type III partial retention.</p>	<p>Sentence has been revised in plan.</p>
<p>Page 12, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 – revise to read: SH 88, which traverses along both Silver Lake and Caples Lake, is designated as a State Scenic Highway, as well as a National Forest Scenic Byway.</p>	<p>Sentence has been revised in plan.</p>

Forest Service Comments on November 2007 VRMP

The comments in the Table A-4 were received from Beth Paulson at the Eldorado National Forest (via an email on January 18, 2008). The second column indicates the revisions that were made to the VRMP based on the Forest Service’s comments. In addition to the comments in Table A-4, the Forest Service also provided a MS Word track-changes version of the VRMP with multiple text-based revisions. These revisions were accepted in the February 2008 VRMP.

Table A-4. Forest Service Comments on the November 2007 VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Page 6, paragraph 1 (partial paragraph, from previous page), last sentence: Can this statement be clarified. I don’t understand how built project facilities can be managed the same as a wilderness.</p>	<p>This sentence was not meant to imply that built Project facilities are managed as a wilderness. Instead, it describes the actual management direction of Project facilities at Lake Aloha – that is, these facilities are managed so as to minimize their potential effect on the adjacent wilderness characteristics.</p> <p>To help clarify this point, this sentence will be revised to read: “To help minimize impacts on the adjacent Wilderness, Project facilities are generally designed and maintained to mimic the native landscape.”</p>
<p>Page 6, paragraph 6, last sentence: I’m not sure why it is pointed out that the cabins meet a VQO of partial retention when viewed from the lake and trails. They are not project facilities. Are you saying that the project facilities meet a VQO of partial retention as viewed by the cabin owners</p>	<p>The existing description of the 139 cabins will be removed, as they are not Project facilities. The sentence was included in this paragraph to help provide context regarding built facilities in the Project area.</p>
<p>Page 15, last paragraph, second sentence: This statement needs to be verified. I’m not aware of anyone cross checking all of the individual plans for consistency.</p>	<p>EID, as licensee, is responsible for reviewing all license-required resource management plans. However, to avoid confusion, this sentence has been deleted.</p>
<p>Page 16, second bullet, second sentence: This is a new recreation site. Not an improvement or enhancement Apparently comments received from the public during CEQA scoping say this project does affect the visual character of Caples Lake. This needs to be checked.</p>	<p>Note, the VRMP was developed prior to the Draft EIR for the Caples Lake Boat Launch and Access Road Project. As such, at the time of development of the VRMP, no significant impacts resulting from the project had been identified. Given this new information, this paragraph will be revised to read:</p> <p>“At this time, no significant improvements to existing Project hydroelectric facilities and/or new Project hydroelectric facilities are planned (per the new FERC license). The FERC license does require improvements and enhancements to several Project area recreation sites (Silver Lake East Campground, Caples Lake Campground, Caples Lake Dam Parking, etc.); however, most of these improvements/enhancements are not anticipated to</p>

Visual Resource Management Plan

Table A-4. Forest Service Comments on the November 2007 VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
	<p>affect the visual character of the Project area. As such, additional visual resource management actions, beyond those described in the license and the VRMP, are not anticipated.</p> <p>An assessment of the visual impacts of the new Caples Lake Boat Launch and Access Road Project determined that there would be significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to the visual character of Caples Lake from the development of this new facility (EID 2008). Appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed though to potentially render these impacts to less than significant levels under CEQA in the long-term. It is anticipated that visual impacts from the boat launch will remain significant at least until appropriate landscaping (a proposed mitigation measure) has matured (approximately 10 years). However, if Caltrans does not grant a design exception for the SR88 westbound shoulder (a proposed mitigation measure), the visual impact of rock excavation for the shoulder has the potential to remain significant.”</p>
<p>Page 17, third bullet (EID Roles and Responsibilities): What is the intent here. This is potentially quite a workload for EID. I would suggest replacing this bullet with: Update the VRMP in the event of significant changes to the visual character of the Project area, as determined by the FS.</p>	<p>To clarify, sentence has been revised to read: “Review potential visual resource changes over time (via the visual inspection process described in Section 5.1.4), if any, and prepare periodic updates of the VRMP, if needed (an update would only be needed if there are significant changes to the visual character of the Project area).”</p>
<p>Page 17, second bullet (FS Roles and Expected Responsibilities): Section 4.0 is Roles & Responsibilities above</p>	<p>This reference has been updated.</p>
<p>Page 19, second paragraph, last sentence: Section 4.2 is EID Management Plan Coordination</p>	<p>This reference has been updated.</p>
<p>Page 20, second paragraph, last sentence: Is EID required to do a feasibility study for this or is a new work-load being introduced here?</p>	<p>The removal of Project facilities, if no longer needed for Project operations, was recommended by the Forest Service at the beginning of the development of the VRMP. As noted in the plan, EID will consider the removal of Project facilities (that are no longer needed for Project operations) during the term of the new license.</p> <p>To avoid confusion, sentence has been revised to read: “Also, if a Project facility is no longer required for Project operations during the new license term, EID will consider it for potential removal.”</p>

Table A-4. Forest Service Comments on the November 2007 VRMP and Applicable Revisions.

FS Comment	Plan Revision
<p>Page 20, third paragraph, second sentence: Rather than requiring a separate inspection process, this requirement should be included and coordinated with EID's regular facility inspection process.</p>	<p>Paragraph has been revised to read: "Per Condition 54, EID will perform visual inspections on applicable Project facilities every 2 years and touch-up or re-paint as necessary to maintain the facility in good condition. Those facilities identified in Condition 54 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower Echo Lake Spillway• Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam• Silver Lake Dam <p>For those Project facilities not identified in Condition 54, periodic visual inspections will occur, as specified in the Facility Management Plan required by the FERC license. Appropriate maintenance actions will be taken should issues be identified during this periodic visual inspection process."</p>

Exhibit B – Project Area Photographs

This exhibit presents photographs of select Project facilities and views of the Project area.

Visual Resource Management Plan

Lake Aloha



Photograph B-1. Lake Aloha.



Photograph B-2. Lake Aloha Main Dam.



Photograph B-3. Lake Aloha Spillway.



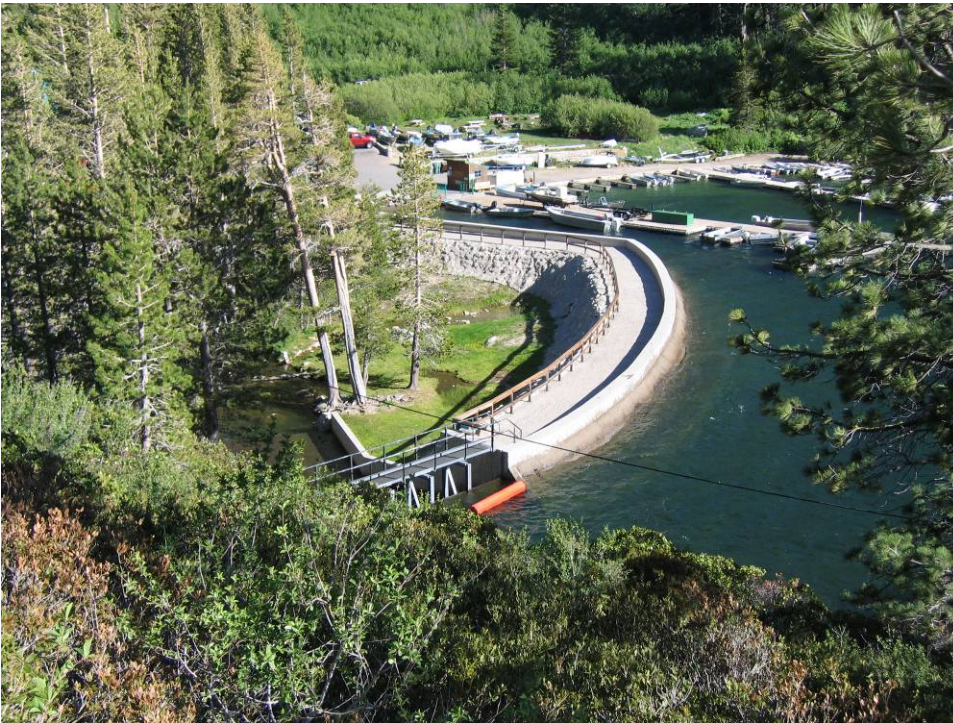
Photograph B-4. Lake Aloha Auxiliary Dam.

Visual Resource Management Plan

Echo Lake



Photograph B-5. Echo Lake (Lower Echo Lake viewed from West).



Photograph B-6. Echo Lake Dam, Spillway, and Marina (Viewed from PCT).



Photograph B-7. Echo Lake Spillway.



Photograph B-8. Echo Lake Dam and Metal Walkway over Spillway.

Visual Resource Management Plan

Caples Lake



Photograph B-9. Caples Lake Main Dam.



Photograph B-10. Caples Lake Main Dam and State Highway 88.



Photograph B-11. Caples Lake Main Dam and State Highway 88.



Photograph B-12. Caples Lake Main Dam (Viewed from Woods Creek Lake Access).

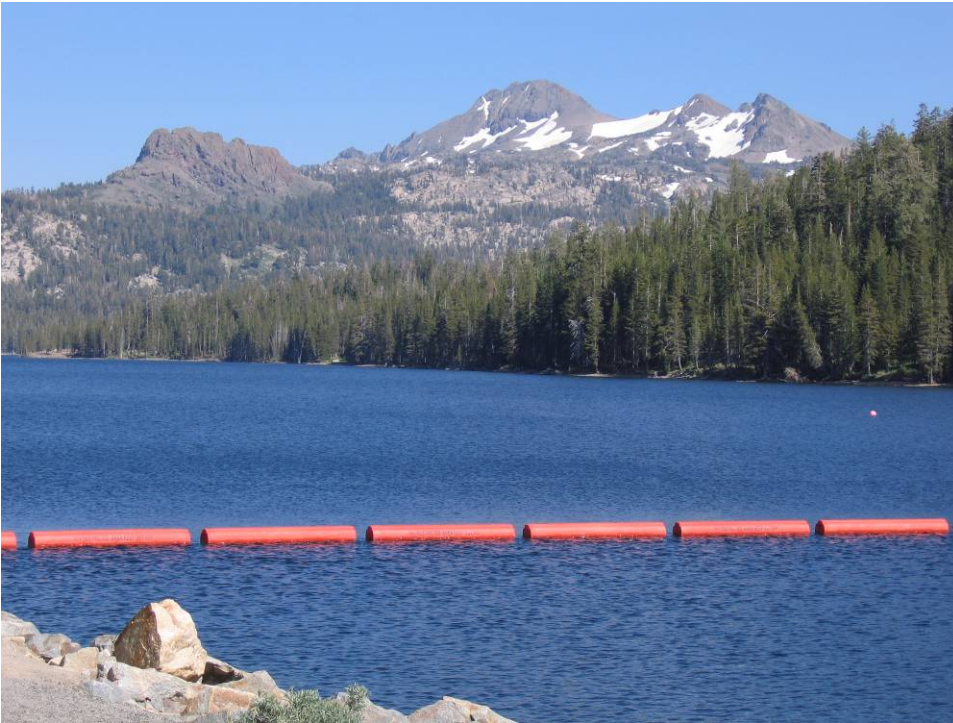
Visual Resource Management Plan



Photograph B-13. Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam.



Photograph B-14. Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam and Metal Staircase/Walkway.



Photograph B-15. Caples Lake Floating Boom (Viewed from Auxiliary Dam).



Photograph B-16. Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam (Viewed from Emigrant Lake Trail).

Visual Resource Management Plan

Silver Lake



Photograph B-17. Silver Lake (Viewed from Pullout on State Highway 88).



Photograph B-18. Silver Lake Dam and Spillway.



Photograph B-19. Silver Lake Floating Boom (Viewed from Dam).



Photograph B-20. Silver Lake Resort (closed) and Boat Launch on Silver Lake.

Visual Resource Management Plan



Photograph B-21. Silver Lake Dam and State Highway 88.



Photograph B-22. Silver Lake Dam (back) and Fish Ladder.



Photograph B-23. Silver Lake Dam Metal Walkway and Railings.



Photograph B-24. Silver Lake Dam (Viewed from Eastern Shoreline).

Visual Resource Management Plan

South Fork of the American River



Photograph B-25. El Dorado Diversion Dam.



Photograph B-26. El Dorado Canal.



Photograph B-27. El Dorado Canal.



Photograph B-28. El Dorado Forebay Dam.

Visual Resource Management Plan



Photograph B-29. El Dorado Forebay and Dam.



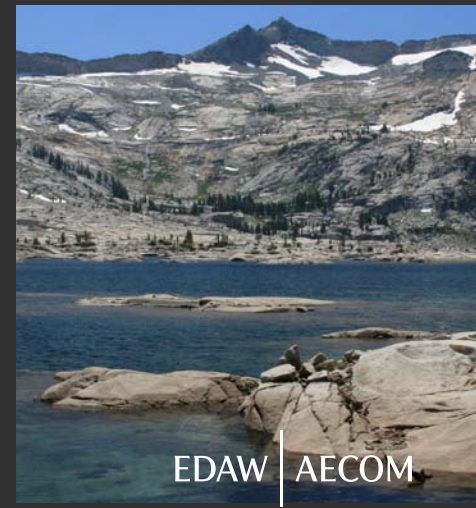
Photograph B-30. El Dorado Pipeline.



Photograph B-31. El Dorado Surge Tank.



Photograph B-32. Akin (El Dorado) Powerhouse.



El Dorado
Irrigation District

2890 Mosquito Road
Placerville, CA
95667

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 125 FERC ¶ 62,072
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

El Dorado Irrigation District

Project No. 184-159

ORDER APPROVING VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 402 AND CONDITION 54

(Issued October 21, 2008)

On May 22, 2008, the El Dorado Irrigation District (licensee) filed a visual resources management plan (plan) pursuant to article 402 and U.S. Forest Service (FS) condition 54 of the Order Issuing New License for the El Dorado Project, issued on October 18, 2006.¹ The El Dorado Project is located on the South Fork of the American River and its tributaries in El Dorado, Alpine, and Amador Counties, California. The project is partially located within the Eldorado National Forest.

Article 402 requires the licensee to file with the Commission for approval, a visual resource management plan that coordinates the provisions required by the FS final 4(e) condition 54. In addition to the provisions of condition 54, the plan is to include a description of the process for visual resource protection, such as when a visual resource protection plan would be needed. The plan is to be developed in consultation with and approved by the FS.

Condition 54 requires the licensee, during planning and prior to any new construction or maintenance of facilities that have the potential to affect visual resources of National Forest System lands, to file a plan approved by the FS for the protection and rehabilitation of National Forest System visual resources affected by the project. The plan is to provide proposed mitigation measures and an implementation schedule. Mitigation measures identified for new construction or existing facilities are to include, but are not limited to: (1) surface treatments with FS-approved colors and natural appearing materials that will be in harmony with the surrounding landscape, (2) use of non-specular conductors for the transmission lines, (3) use of native plant species to screen facilities from view, (4) reshaping and revegetating disturbed areas to blend with surrounding visual characteristics, and, (5) locating transmission facilities to minimize visual impacts.

¹ 117 FERC ¶ 62,044.

LICENSEES PLAN

The licensee's plan includes a summary of the existing visual conditions of project facilities and the surrounding area, provides an overview of other management plans that guide visual resource management in the area, and identifies potential visual resource protection and enhancement measures that may be used during the license term. The following implementation actions are planned for visual enhancement and mitigation: painting; vegetative screening; designing and orienting new facilities to conform to natural contours and to minimize visual exposure within the viewshed; visually inspecting the Lower Echo Lake spillway, Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam, and Silver Lake Dam every two years, and repainting as necessary to maintain facilities (as specifically required by condition 54). The licensee proposes to paint the required components of Lower Echo Lake spillway, Caples Lake Auxiliary Dam, and Silver Lake Dam with non-reflective black paint in 2008, and inspect these facilities every two years. The licensee will review the plan at least every 10 years, beginning in 2017, and will update it if there are any significant changes to visual resources in the project area.

For any changes to project area conditions, such as new, relocated, or significantly modified project facilities, the licensee will file a visual resource protection plan to address any effects to the overall visual quality of the project area. This plan will include a description of planned modifications; appropriate protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures; a schedule for implementation of these measures; and a record of consultation with the FS.

CONSULTATION AND CONCLUSION

The licensee consulted with the FS on numerous occasions during the development of the visual resources management plan, including a June 26, 2007 field meeting, and reviews of drafts of the plan between August 30, 2007 and January 18, 2008. The final plan was approved by the FS by letter dated April 25, 2008.

The filed plan satisfies the requirements of article 402 and FS condition 54. The plan should be approved.

Project No. 184-159

3

The Director orders:

(A) The visual resources management plan filed May 22, 2008, pursuant to article 402 and U.S. Forest Service Condition 54 of the Order Issuing New License for the El Dorado Project, is approved.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order, pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 385.713.

Robert J. Fletcher
Chief, Lands Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower
Administration and Compliance