

Foothills Water Network River Reach Access Proposal 9/19/2015

Our House Dam

We have reviewed the licensee's proposal for River access at Our House Dam and we are in agreement with licensee's proposal to have seasonal restroom facilities available at OHD and a permanent information board. We are also in agreement in regards to the trail that would allow access to the river below Our House Dam. We understand the licensee's concern regarding vehicle or access to the area adjacent to the dam. Our interest is enabling boaters, particularly those with rafts, to access the reach more easily. Under the licensee's proposal, paddlers would have to carry their kayaks and rafts over 1400 feet to reach the river. We propose that the licensee provide a handcart, capable of carrying rafts or kayaks, to be located behind the locked gate. This would allow paddlers to easily transport their craft from the parking area at the closed gate to the beginning of the river access trail, while avoiding the licensee's concern for having vehicles parked near the dam.

Oregon Creek Day Use Area

We recommend that the Oregon Creek Day use area be opened for parking and restroom facilities during the boating season. The portion of the day use area that is located on river right should be open until the covered bridge that crosses Oregon Creek in the day use area is reconstructed and open for vehicle traffic. After the bridge construction is complete, consultation with American Whitewater, USFS, and other interested recreational users, should determine if one or both sides of the day use area are opened during the boating season.

Bullards Bar Dam

We have heard, and understand, the concerns expressed by YCWA regarding safety and security below New Bullards Bar Dam. We seek to find a solution that recognizes this safety/ security concern, while allowing the public to access this important section of the North Fork Yuba River. We believe that there is a solution that exists between zero public access and unfettered access. The standard FERC license article 7, which is part of the existing license, describes the desire for public access that is balanced with the need for public safety.

We recommend a phased approach to providing access below New Bullards Dam. The first phase is to use existing facilities to provide limited vehicular access during times when flows are at levels that provide for whitewater boating opportunities. We propose that the boaters should be allowed to use the same road to access the area that was used during the whitewater boating study. The trigger for this access is proposed to be when flows are between 2000 cfs and 500 cfs, (essentially the period when condition AR 4 is in effect). Pedestrian access on this road should be allowed at all times, unless YCWA has specific project operations that would make it unsafe to have pedestrians on the access road. Temporary restroom facilities should be provided at a location determined after consultation with FWN and the USFS.

The second phase of this process will be to develop long-term recreation access as part of the proposed New Bullards Bar Dam Flood Control Outlet project. Some form of new road access below the dam will be constructed as part of this project. Because this access could be located away from the dam and downstream of the spillway, it could provide unfettered public access to the river for an array of recreational interests. At a minimum, parking and permanent restroom facilities should be provided at this location.

New Colgate Powerhouse

Currently, there exists a pathway (catwalk) around the powerhouse to give anglers access to the North Fork Yuba River above the powerhouse. Unfortunately, the configuration of this catwalk makes it extremely difficult for paddlers to carry their boats around the powerhouse. We recommend that the licensee construct a trail from the roadway, downstream of the new Colgate powerhouse, to the river's edge. There is parking for at least 10 to 20 cars at this location. A restroom needs to be provided to serve all of the recreation that occurs at this location.

Provide Shuttle Service From North Yuba River Whitewater Run To Marina

We recommend that the Licensee work with the marina concessionaire to offer a shuttle service that would be available during the paddling season. This shuttle service should cost a reasonable fee, to be determined jointly by the Licensee and American Whitewater. While it is true that the licensee does not control the flows on this reach, it does control all of the take out locations and the distance from the end of the whitewater run to the take-out, via reservoir levels. Similar shuttle programs have worked successfully at other projects with similar access issues. Increasing opportunity on this reach would have no impact on power generation.



Figure 1, Existing Powerhouse Catwalk

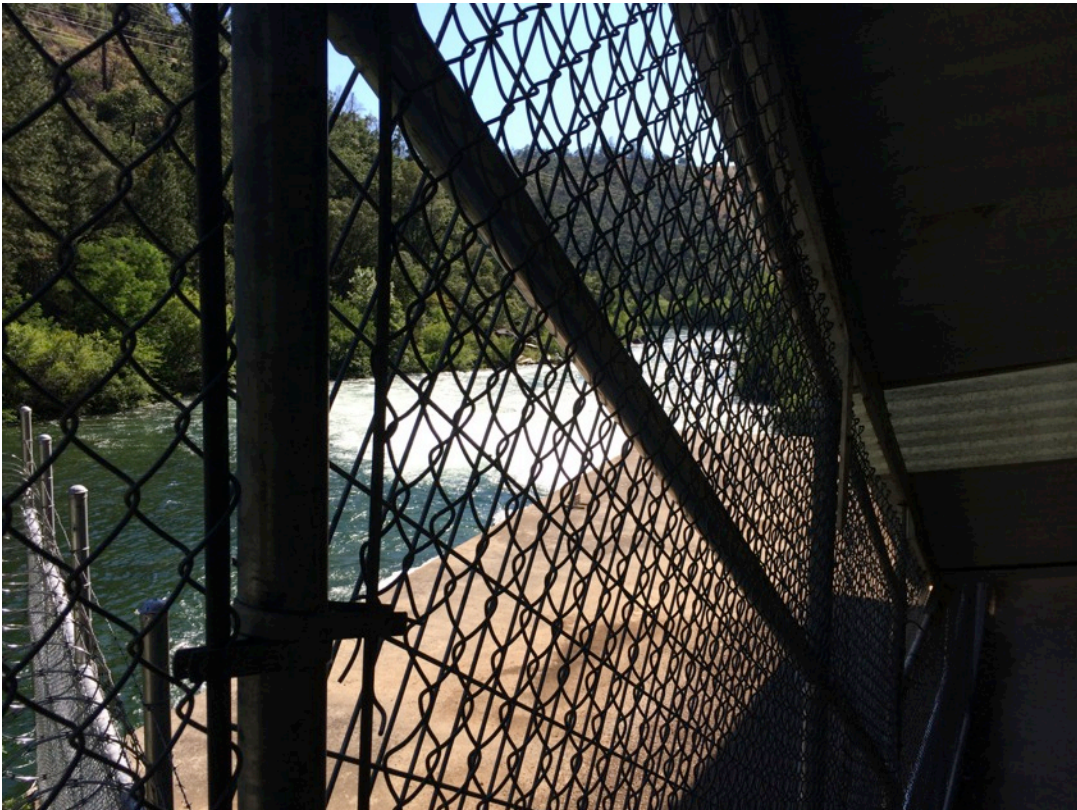


Figure 2, Enclosed Portion of Catwalk



Figure 3, New Colgate Powerhouse Parking



Figure 4, Potential Trail location below New Colgate Powerhouse.

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