

## **7.10 Aesthetic Resources**

### **7.10.1 Overview**

This section discusses aesthetic resources associated with Yuba County Water Agency's (YCWA or Licensee) Yuba River Development Project (Project). In addition to this overview, this section is divided into three general subsections: Section 7.10.2, Regional Context; Section 7.10.3, Visual Resource Management Plans; and Section 7.10.4, Aesthetic Character in the Project Area.<sup>1</sup>

A detailed description of Project facilities and features can be found in this Preliminary Information Package in Section 6, Project Location, Facilities, and Operations, and a detailed description of the land use and ownership can be found in Section 7.9, Land Use.

### **7.10.2 Regional Context**

The Project is located primarily in eastern Yuba County, with a small portion in south western Sierra County and a very small portion in Nevada County, California, along the Yuba River, North Yuba River, Oregon Creek, and the Middle Yuba River. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (Forest Service) manages a majority of United States-owned land in the Project Area as National Forest System (NFS) land. In addition, Narrows 2 Powerhouse is located on United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) lands including 0.1 acre of land withdrawn from the United States Department of the Interior (USDO) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and managed by USACE. NFS lands north of the North Yuba River are part of the Plumas National Forest (PNF), and NFS lands to the south are part of the Tahoe National Forest (TNF). BLM administers scattered parcels of public land within the Project Vicinity<sup>2</sup> downstream of New Bullards Bar Reservoir. YCWA is the major private landowner in the Project Area. New Bullards Bar Reservoir, the main Project storage reservoir, is located 11 miles north of Nevada City in Nevada County, and 30 miles northeast of the City of Marysville in Yuba County. Powerhouses and associated facilities downstream from New Bullards Bar Dam are closer to Marysville than the 30 miles described above. Portions of the Project (*i.e.*, New Bullards Bar Reservoir and Log Cabin Diversion Dam) are located near California State Highway 49, and other portions (*i.e.*, Narrows 2 Powerhouse just below USACE's Englebright Reservoir) are near State Highway 20. However, none of the Project facilities are visible from these state highways. Marysville Road (County Road 8) provides access to New Bullards Bar Dam and Reservoir, crosses the dam, and provides views of the reservoir and access to the recreation facilities associated with the reservoir.

Timber, wildlife management, gold mining, and grazing are the primary land uses in the Project Vicinity from New Bullards Bar Dam to the upper reaches of the Project. Downstream of the

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, the Project Area is defined as the area within the FERC Project Boundary and the land immediately surrounding the FERC Project Boundary (*i.e.*, within about 0.25 mile of the FERC Project Boundary) and includes Project-affected reaches between facilities and downstream to the next major water controlling feature or structure.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this document, the Project Vicinity is defined as the area surrounding the Project on the order of a United States Geological Survey (USGS) 1:24,000 topographic quadrangle.

Project, the primary land uses are grazing, and scattered ranching/residential sites with some timber and wildlife management. In addition, recreation uses are focused at New Bullards Bar Reservoir and along parts of the Yuba River and its tributaries. Hydroelectric facilities including reservoirs, dams, powerhouses, penstocks, and transmission lines are established elements within this landscape setting.

The visual character of the landscape setting encompasses moderately rugged, forested terrain with deeply incised river canyons in the upper half of the Project Area. This terrain is typical for lower elevations in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The lower half of the Project Area is located in the foothills and is characterized by rolling open terrain with incised river canyons. Lush and dense mixed conifer forest including ponderosa and sugar pine, Douglas and white fir, incense cedar, black oak, and madrone dominate the vegetative pattern in the upper half of the Project (TNF 1990). At lower elevations, oak woodlands and grasslands, interspersed with chaparral, dominate the vegetative pattern, with alder and willow occurring along the riparian corridors (Yuba County 1973). Elevations within the Project Vicinity range from 4,027 feet at Alaska Peak to 300 feet along the Yuba River just below the Narrows 2 Powerhouse. People experience close-in views due to the dense forest in the upper half of the Project Area. New Bullards Bar Reservoir is a major visual attraction due to the wide expanse of water and open views afforded on and beside the reservoir. New Bullards Bar Reservoir is also associated with camping and boating recreation opportunities.

The visibility of Project facilities to the public varies widely. New Bullards Bar Dam and Reservoir are highly visible due to road access and the use of the reservoir for boating, fishing, and water skiing. The dam is also a viewing attraction due to the dramatic height (645 feet) of the dam. Public viewings of Log Cabin Diversion Dam, New Colgate Powerhouse, and Narrows 2 Powerhouse are very limited because access to the facilities is gated and locked and the facilities are tucked down in steep river canyons where there is virtually no public access. However, some people do access the rivers for fishing, but the access is difficult due to either rugged terrain or dense vegetation, so the numbers of people are quite low.

### **7.10.3 Aesthetic Resource Management Plans**

#### **7.10.3.1 Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans for the Tahoe National Forest and the Plumas National Forest**

Approximately 4,228 acres of the area within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project Boundary<sup>3</sup> are located on NFS land. This represents about 54 percent of the total area within the FERC Project Boundary. All of the NFS lands within the Project Boundary are located around New Bullards Bar Reservoir and Dam or around the Project facilities of Our House Diversion Dam, Lohman Ridge Diversion Tunnel, Log Cabin Diversion Dam, and Camptonville Diversion Tunnel. The New Colgate Power Tunnel and Penstock, New Colgate Powerhouse and Switchyard, Narrows 2 Powerhouse and Penstock Project facilities do not include any lands managed by the Forest Service.

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<sup>3</sup> The FERC Project Boundary is the area that Licensee uses for normal Project operations and maintenance, and is shown on Exhibits J, K, and G of the current license.

TNF and PNF land and resource management plans (LRMP) established Visual Quality Objectives (VQO) for areas within the TNF and PNF and specify management activities and projects to meet adopted VQOs. Management activities are evaluated in light of the adopted VQO, as well as TNF’s and PNF’s LRMP Management Area policies and prescriptions. The VQO standards applicable to the above ground portions of the Project are “Retention,” “Partial Retention,” and “Modification.” Table 7.10.3-1 below describes the three VQOs in detail. The overall goal of the Forest Service visual quality standard is for land use activities to blend substantially into the landscape so as not to appear noticeable (USFS 1990).

**Table 7.10.3-1. Forest Service Aesthetic Visual Quality Objectives in the Project Vicinity.**

Visual Quality Objectives	Description	Sections of Project Vicinity Within Class
Retention	Management Activities may only repeat form, line, color, and texture, which are frequently found in the characteristic landscape. Changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., should not be visually evident.	New Bullards Bar Dam and Reservoir, including foreground views from the Reservoir.
Partial Retention	Management Activities may repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the characteristic landscape but changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., remain visually subordinated to the characteristic landscape.	Areas seen in middle ground from New Bullards Bar Reservoir.
Modification	Management Activities of vegetative and landform alteration 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. Additional parts of these activities such as structures, roads, slash, root wads, etc. must remain visually subordinate to the proposed composition.	Our House Diversion Dam and Log Cabin Diversion Dam.

In addition to forest-wide management goals, the TNF and PNF LRMPs provide standards and guidelines pertinent to aesthetics and visual resources for specific management areas. Our House Diversion Dam and Log Cabin Diversion Dam are located in TNF’s 024 Oregon Management Area. New Bullards Bar Reservoir and Dam are located in TNF’s 034 Bullards Bar Management Area, and PNF’s 11 Challenge Management Area. The corresponding visual policies that are applicable to individual Project features are discussed in Section 7.10.4.

### 7.10.3.2 BLM Sierra Resource Management Area

No BLM-administered public land occurs within the FERC Project Boundary. However, there are small, scattered BLM-administered parcels near the two powerhouses and additional parcels of BLM land along the North Yuba River below New Bullards Bar Dam continuing below USACE’s Englebright Dam and along the Middle Yuba River. These lands have not been identified by BLM as Visual Resource Management (VRM) areas in either the Sierra or Eagle Lake resource management plans (RMP); therefore, these lands receive a VRM Class III.

The Sierra RMP assigns inventory classes to visual resource areas within the Sierra Resource Management Area (RMA). Management activities are evaluated in light of the adopted VRM class. The VRM classes of areas within or near the Project Vicinity are Class I, Class II, and Class III. Table 7.10.3-2 below describes the three classes in detail. The overall goal of the VRM classes is to retain the existing visual quality of the landscape. The Sierra RMP goal described for BLM lands is to “Protect and enhance the scenic and visual integrity of the characteristic landscapes.”

**Table 7.10.3-2. BLM Visual Resource Management Objectives.**

Visual Resource Management Class	Description	Sections of Project Vicinity Within Class
Class I	To preserve the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.	North Fork American Wild and Scenic River. Not in Project Vicinity.
Class II	To retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.	South Yuba River Management Plan. Near but not in Project Vicinity
Class III	To partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate.	All other BLM areas. New Colgate Powerhouse, Narrows 2 Powerhouse

### 7.10.3.3 Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Management Direction

The USACE has management responsibilities for Englebright Reservoir and Dam as well as lands acquired for purposes associated with the reservoir. These lands are located at the base of USACE’s Englebright Dam and several parcels are located at the northern end of USACE’s Englebright Reservoir. In addition, USACE has management responsibility for lands withdrawn from BLM located at the base of USACE’s Englebright Dam opposite Narrows 2 Powerhouse. USACE does not have a formal visual management system but does have a master plan. The Harry L. Englebright Lake, Yuba River California 1975 Master Plan under G. Scope states:

- It is intended to serve as a guide for the further development of public use facilities and protection of scenic, biological, and recreational resources consistent with the authorized purposes of the project and other project purposes.

Descriptions in the master plan of steep topography, limited road access, and boating recreation, make it clear the focus is on managing boating recreation and protecting scenic values associated with views from the reservoir surface. There is no visual management direction for those lands associated with the Narrows 2 Powerhouse and access road. Due to gated access to the powerhouse, limited public roads, and steep topography there is very little opportunity for the public to see the Narrows 2 Powerhouse and access road.

### 7.10.3.4 County General Plans

The Project is located primarily within Yuba County, with a small portion in Sierra County, and a very small portion in Nevada County. Aesthetic goals and plan direction for all three counties are described below.

#### Yuba County General Plan

Most of the Project Area lies within Yuba County. Currently, the Yuba County General Plan (Yuba County 1973) is in the process of being updated. Part of the updating process resulted in a document titled *Yuba County Environmental Setting and Background Paper* that summarizes the environmental setting and describes direction for aesthetics in the 1973 Plan as follows:

- *Section 16.1 Local Regulation and Planning for Aesthetics Resource Protection.* The Yuba County General Plan, Open Space and Conservation Element (OSC) (Yuba County 1973), has as its general goal, “To maintain and enhance the natural resources, open space land uses,

and scenic beauty of Yuba County in order to protect the quality of the environment, the County's economy, and the health and well-being of present and future residents." In support of this goal is a policy to "encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and areas of scenic beauty, and native vegetation." The OSC, along with the Yuba County *Circulation Plan* (1970), designated scenic roads and highways, and has thus made a commitment to preserving their scenic values.

- *Section 12 Transportation and Circulation Plan, Section 12.1.3 County Roadways, Scenic Corridors:* Because of the special qualities of certain areas of Yuba County, those roads traversing this area are recommended in the current *Circulation Element* for protection by special ordinances to enhance scenic view sheds. They are 1) New Route (Marysville Road to Nevada County), and 2) State Route 49. Nine other roads are listed following State Route 49.

#### Sierra County General Plan

The northern shoreline of Our House Diversion Dam lies within Sierra County. In the Sierra County General Plan (Sierra County 1996), under the Land Use Element, fundamental goals were set that address aesthetic goals for county lands as follows:

- It is the County's most fundamental goal to maintain its culture, heritage, and rural character and preserve its rural quality of life.
- It is the County's goal to defend its important natural features and functions. These have included and always will include scenic beauty, pristine lakes and rivers, tall mountain peaks, and rugged forested canyons, abundant and diverse plants and animals, and clean air, water, and watershed values.

Sierra County Zoning Code includes a scenic highway designation for State Highway 49 and State Highway 89 under 15.12.280 SC Scenic Highway Corridor District stating the following purpose:

- "a. Purpose: To protect the scenic qualities of public highways designated a scenic highway by the State of California and/or the Board of Supervisors. To protect the recreational, social, and economic values derived from the protection and enhancement of the scenic qualities of the County for the benefit of residents and visitors."

#### Nevada County General Plan

The southern shoreline of Our House Diversion Dam lies within Nevada County. In the Nevada County General Plan (Nevada County 1996), the following aesthetic goals were described for county lands:

- Promote and provide for aesthetic design in new development that reflects existing character.
- Protect and preserve important scenic resources.
- In addition, Nevada County, with assistance from CalTrans, has identified roads in or near the Project Vicinity as scenic highways. Scenic route designations include:

- Route 20 from near Grass Valley to Interstate 80 near emigrant Gap
- Route 49 throughout the entire County
- Route 174 throughout the entire County
- Interstate 80 throughout the entire County
- Route 89 throughout the entire County

#### **7.10.4 Aesthetic Character in the Project Area**

The following section provides a description of the existing visual resources found in the Project Area, as well as applicable Forest Service Visual Management System (VMS) VQOs. Photos of Project facilities and features are located at the end of Section 6.0, Project Location, Facilities, and Operations.

##### **7.10.4.1 New Colgate Development**

The New Colgate Development from higher to lower elevation consists of Our House Diversion Dam and Impoundment, Lohman Ridge Diversion Tunnel, Log Cabin Diversion Dam and Impoundment, Camptonville Diversion Tunnel, New Bullards Bar Reservoir, New Bullards Bar Dam and Spillway, New Colgate Power Tunnel and Penstock, and New Colgate Powerhouse and adjacent Switchyard. The tunnels are below ground and not visible and therefore will not be addressed further. Below is a description of each facility, the public visibility of the facility, an aesthetic description, and a summary table.

##### **Our House Diversion Dam and Impoundment**

Our House Diversion Dam is located on the Middle Yuba River 12 miles upstream from the confluence with the North Yuba River. The diversion dam and impoundment are located fully on TNF lands. The access road is located primarily on private land and some TNF land. The dam is 70 feet high and 368 feet long. The crest of the dam elevation is 2,049 feet. The Lohman Ridge Diversion Tunnel begins at the edge of this impoundment. The dam and impoundment are nestled deep in the Middle Yuba River canyon, which was formed by the Middle Yuba River. Lush mixed conifer is the dominant vegetation type in the canyon. The access road to the site is a paved narrow road open to the public. There is light public use at this facility and local foreground views on site. Views from further away are screened due to dense vegetation and its location deep in the Middle Yuba River canyon. People fishing at the impoundment or the river are the primary users who see this facility.

This dam and impoundment are in TNF's 024 Oregon Management Area. The VQO for this area is Partial Retention for areas viewed in middle ground from State Highway 49, and Modification for the rest of the Management Area (USFS 1990). The dam and impoundment are located in a Modification VQO area.

The Sierra County General Plan (Sierra County 1996) under the Land Use Element established "Fundamental Goals." The relevant goal for Our House Diversion Dam and Impoundment is as follows:

- 2. It is the County's goal to defend its important natural features and functions. These have included and always will include scenic beauty, pristine lakes and rivers, tall mountain peaks, and rugged forest canyon, abundant and diverse plants and animals, and clean air, water, and watershed values.

The County's General Plan set out aesthetic goals for county lands. The relevant goal for Our House Diversion Dam and Impoundment is as follows:

- Protect and preserve important scenic resources.

#### Log Cabin Diversion Dam and Impoundment

Log Cabin Diversion Dam is located on Oregon Creek, a tributary to the Middle Yuba River. The dam is located approximately 4 miles upstream from the confluence with the Middle Yuba River. The dam and impoundment is located on TNF lands and YCWA lands. The access road is located on both TNF and private lands. Camptonville Diversion Tunnel begins at the edge of this impoundment. The access road to this site is closed to the public by a locked gate at the top of the canyon. There is no public use at this facility and there are no public views of this site from local roads or Forest Service roads primarily due to dense vegetative screening and its location deep in the Oregon Creek canyon.

The dam and impoundment are in TNF's 024 Oregon Management Area. The VQO for this area is Partial Retention for areas viewed in middle ground from State Highway 49 and Modification for the rest of the management area (USFS 1990). The dam and impoundment are within a zone mapped for Partial Retention, but due to vegetative and topographic screening is not seen; therefore, this facility would be managed for a Modification VQO.

Yuba County's General Plan policy is to "encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks..." and from the Circulation Plan "enhance scenic view sheds" from scenic roadways including Marysville Road and State Highway 49.

#### New Bullards Bar Reservoir

New Bullards Bar Reservoir is located on the North Yuba River. It is a large reservoir, which at normal maximum pool covers 4,790 acres and creates a shoreline of 71.9 miles. The normal maximum water surface elevation is 1,956 feet, and extends upstream on the North Yuba River for about 8.5 miles. The water surface is high and wide in the North Yuba River Canyon near the dam; however upstream the reservoir is deeper as the canyon becomes narrower. Mixed conifer interspersed with black oak and madrone is the dominant vegetation type. NFS lands north of the North Yuba River and New Bullards Bar Reservoir are part of the PNF. NFS lands to the south are part of the TNF. TNF, under agreement with PNF, manages all the recreation facilities around the reservoir under agreement with Licensee. The Emerald Cove Marina near the dam provides a boat launch, boat rentals, houseboat rentals, a store, and dock space for boats and houseboats, and is run by a concessionaire. There are six other developed recreation facilities: Hornswoggle Group Campground, Schoolhouse Campground, Dark Day Campground, Dark Day boat ramp, Garden Point Campground, and Madrone Cove Campground.

The major access road to New Bullards Bar Reservoir is Marysville Road (County Road 8) which branches off of State Highway 49 north of the Middle Yuba River. There are local and Forest Service gravel roads that provide access primarily for timber management that surrounds the reservoir, but none of these roads provide significant public views of the reservoir. The primary view of the reservoir from a road is from Marysville Road (County Road 8) as it approaches, and crosses, the dam. A hiking and biking trail starts at TNF Vista Point and parallels the southeast shoreline almost back to Camptonville. This trail provides occasional views of the reservoir. The main viewing opportunity of the reservoir is by boaters using the water surface for fishing, water skiing, and boating. The other views are from the two boat-in campgrounds, the boat ramps, and one local access road on the north side of the reservoir.

New Bullards Bar Reservoir is in TNF's 034 Bullards Bar Management Area. The VQOs for this area are Retention in foreground as viewed from New Bullards Bar Reservoir and recreation sites and Partial Retention for the remainder of the management area, including developed recreation sites. The north side of New Bullards Bar Reservoir is in PNF's 011 Challenge Management Area. Management area direction is to maintain pleasing visual corridors. The VQOs are the same as TNF's VQOs, which are Retention and Partial Retention for New Bullards Bar Reservoir.

Yuba County's General Plan policy is to "encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks..." and from the Circulation Element "enhance scenic view sheds" from scenic roadways including Marysville Road and State Highway 49.

#### New Bullards Bar Dam and Spillway

New Bullards Bar Dam and Spillway are located on the North Yuba River about 2.3 miles above the confluence with the Middle Yuba River. The dam is 645 feet high and is a 1,110 foot-radius double curvature concrete arch dam. The maximum elevation of the dam is 1,965 feet. The spillway associated with the dam is 106 feet wide with a crest elevation of 1,902 feet. There are three control gates, each 30 feet wide and 54 feet high, with a combined maximum design capacity of 160,000 cubic feet per second (cfs).

Marysville Road drops slightly down to the dam and spillway and provides access to the dam. There is an interpretive stop just south east of the dam that provides a view of the reservoir and dam. The dam is also viewed from boaters on the reservoir. Due to the spectacular height of the dam, people sometimes stop to look at the dam and the canyon below. Views of the downstream side of the dam are limited by a fence and lack of a walkway on the downstream side. Mixed conifer and hardwoods are the dominant vegetation types (USFS 1990).

As described above, there are TNF lands south of the dam and PNF lands to the north of the dam, but the dam and spillway facility are located on private land owned by Licensee. Yuba County General Plan policy is to "encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks..." and from the Circulation Element "enhance scenic view sheds" from scenic roadways including Marysville Road and State Highway 49.

New Colgate Power Tunnel and Penstock

New Colgate Power Tunnel and Penstock starts just west of New Bullards Bar Dam and extends to the south west 5.2 miles to the New Colgate Powerhouse on the Yuba River. The tunnel is not visible to the public and therefore will not be discussed further. The 2,809 foot long penstock drops down to the powerhouse at the end of the tunnel. The penstock is between 9 feet and 14.5 feet in diameter, located on the surface of the ground, and at a steep angle facing down a steep hillside. The penstock is located on land owned by the Licensee. While potentially visible, few people see the penstock due to the remote public access to the canyon. Lake Francis road just south of Dobbins provides access near the penstock and road access to the penstock and powerhouse is closed to the public with a locked gate. People fishing or hiking in the canyon on the North Yuba River could see the penstock, but the numbers are few due to the remote access and rugged terrain. The predominate vegetation types are oak woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral transitioning to mixed conifer depending on soil type and slope aspect to the sun.

Yuba County’s General Plan policy is to “encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks...” A small parcel of BLM land, due south of the penstock, is within 0.5 mile.

New Colgate Powerhouse and Switchyard

New Colgate Powerhouse and Switchyard are located along the North Yuba River adjacent to the penstock and approximately 3 miles due north of the South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport (Pleasant Valley Road). Access to the powerhouse and switchyard is by a gated road off of Lake Francis Road just south of Dobbins. Similar to the penstock, views of this area are quite limited and consist primarily of people fishing or hiking in the canyon in this remote rugged canyon. Views of the facilities from Lake Francis Road are very limited due to the location deep in the canyon.

These facilities are on private land owned by Licensee and subject to Yuba County Plan direction, not Forest Service VQOs. BLM has an interest because BLM lands are located in the Yuba River Canyon nearby including a parcel on the opposite canyon wall. The predominant vegetation types are oak woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral transitioning to mixed conifer depending on soil type and slope aspect to the sun.

Yuba County General Plan policy is to “encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks...” A small parcel of BLM land, due south of the powerhouse and switchyard, is within 0.5 mile.

The aesthetic character of Project features within the New Colgate Development is summarized in Table 7.10.4-1.

**Table 7.10.4-1. Aesthetic character of Project features within the New Colgate Development.**

Existing Project Feature	Elevation (feet)	Form of Access	Relationship to Land Form	Predominant Vegetation	Visibility from Surrounding Areas	Relative Number of Viewers	USFS Visual Objectives
Our House Diversion Dam	2,049 feet at dam crest	paved road from Pliocene Ridge Road	Inundated stream valley	Mixed conifer and hardwoods	Local views on site	low	Modification VQO

**Table 7.10.4-1. (continued)**

Existing Project Feature	Elevation (feet)	Form of Access	Relationship to Land Form	Predominant Vegetation	Visibility from Surrounding Areas	Relative Number of Viewers	USFS Visual Objectives
Log Cabin Diversion Dam	TBD feet at the outlet elevation	Gated access road from State Hwy. 49	Inundated stream valley	Mixed conifer and hardwoods	Very low – limited access	Very Low	Modification
Bullards Bar Reservoir	1,956 feet	Marysville road and boat ramps	Inundated stream valley	Mixed conifer and hardwoods	Moderate to high. Visibility primarily from recreation sites and boating	High number of viewers	Retention VQO in foreground and Partial Retention in middle ground
Bullards Bar Dam and Spillway	Maximum is 1,965 feet at dam crest	Marysville road from State Hwy. 49	Inundated stream valley	Mixed conifer and hardwoods	High visibility from local views from Marysville road and Bullards Bar Reservoir	High number of viewers	Retention VQO in foreground and Partial Retention in middle ground
New Colgate Penstock	TBD at the powerhouse	Gated access road Lake Francis Road	Steep side hill of deep river Canyon	Oak woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral Transitioning to mixed conifer	Very low – limited access	Very Low	County plan direction BLM Class III
New Colgate Powerhouse and switchyard	TBD feet	Gated access road Lake Francis Road	At the bottom of rugged steep canyon	Oak woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral transitioning to mixed conifer	Very low – limited access	Very Low	County plan direction BLM Class III

#### 7.10.4.2 New Bullards Minimum Flow Development

The New Bullards Minimum Flow Development consists of New Bullards Minimum Flow Powerhouse Penstock, New Bullards Minimum Flow Powerhouse, New Bullards Minimum Flow Transformer, and appurtenant facilities and features. Below is a description of each facility, the public visibility of the facility, an aesthetic description, and a summary table.

##### New Bullards Minimum Flow Powerhouse Penstock

New Bullards Minimum Flow Powerhouse Penstock is a 70-foot long and 12-inch diameter steel pipe located at the bottom of the North Yuba River canyon next to New Bullards Bar Dam. Predominate vegetation in the area is mixed conifer and oak woodland transitioning to riparian vegetation along the North Yuba River. The penstock is visible from the top of the dam if a viewer takes the time and effort to locate the penstock. Most people would not see this facility due to limited access and fencing that restricts views downstream close to the dam. The penstock is located on private land owned by Licensee.

Yuba County’s General Plan policy is to “encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks...” and from the Circulation Element “enhance scenic view sheds” from scenic roadways including Marysville Road and State Highway 49.

##### New Bullards Minimum Flow Powerhouse and Transformer

New Bullards Minimum Flow Powerhouse and transformer are small facilities located at the bottom of the North Yuba River canyon next to New Bullards Bar Dam. Predominate vegetation

in the area is mixed conifer and oak woodland transitioning to riparian vegetation along the North Yuba River. Both the powerhouse and the transformer are visible from the top of the dam but quite small in comparison to the size of the dam. As discussed above, views downstream of the dam are limited by fencing and lack of a walkway on the downstream side of the dam. The powerhouse and transformer are located on private land owned by Licensee.

Yuba County’s General Plan policy is to “encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks...” and from the Circulation Element “enhance scenic view sheds” from scenic roadways including Marysville Road and State Highway 49.

Appurtenant Facilities and Features

The appurtenant facilities and features are primarily an access road down to the bottom of the dam and associated facilities. The road is located on the east facing slopes, slowly working its way to the bottom of the dam. Predominate vegetation in the area is mixed conifer and oak woodland transition to riparian vegetation along the North Yuba River. The access road is visible primarily from the southeast end of the dam. As the road heads to the south and climbs up the canyon wall, the road becomes less visible from the dam as it diminishes in size. The road is located on a combination of private land owned by Licensee, other private lands, and a short segment across PNF lands.

Yuba County General Plan policy is to “encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks...” and from the Circulation Element “enhance scenic view sheds” from scenic roadways including Marysville Road and State Highway 49.

The aesthetic character of Project features within the New Bullards Minimum Flow Development is summarized in Table 7.10.4-2.

**Table 7.10.4-2. Aesthetic character of Project features within the New Bullards Minimum Flow Development.**

Existing Project Feature	Elevation (feet)	Form of Access	Relationship to Land Form	Predominant Vegetation	Visibility from Surrounding Areas	Relative Number of Viewers	County Plan direction
New Bullards powerhouse, penstock, and transformer	Approx. 1,320 ft. elev.	gated Access Road	Bottom of steep canyon	Mixed conifer and oak woodland	Low for moving vehicles. High for the few viewers who get off the sidewalk to view the dam.	Moderate for vehicles. Low for pedestrians	Yuba County: encourage preservation and enhancement of natural features
Appurtenant facilities and features	From approx. 1,900 ft. down to 1,300 ft.	2.5 mi. road from Oregon Hill road	On the steep canyon wall	Mixed conifer and oak woodland	Low for moving vehicles. High for few viewers who get off the sidewalk to view downstream.	Moderate for vehicles. Low for pedestrians	Yuba County: encourage preservation and enhancement of natural features

#### 7.10.4.3 Narrows 2 Development

The Narrows 2 Development consists of Narrows 2 Powerhouse Penstock, Narrows 2 Powerhouse, Narrows 2 Switchyard, and appurtenant facilities and features. The Narrows 2 Penstock is a tunnel below ground and not visible to people and therefore will not be addressed further. Below is a description of each facility, the public visibility of the facility, an aesthetic description, and a summary table.

##### Narrows 2 Powerhouse and Switchyard

The Narrows 2 Powerhouse and Switchyard are located at the base of USACE's Englebright Dam on the west side of the Yuba River in a deep, rugged canyon. The powerhouse is an above ground, concrete powerhouse (YCWA 2009). Across the river is Narrows 1 Powerhouse, which is owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) as part of its Narrows 1 Project (FERC Project No. 1403). Predominate vegetation in the area is annual grassland, scattered chaparral, and other vegetation. This facility is relatively difficult for the public to view because there is gated access to the powerhouse, which is located at the bottom of the canyon out of general view. Some people fish or hike in the canyon below USACE's Englebright Dam and can view the powerhouse, but the numbers are few due to difficult access and rugged terrain. BLM lands are more than a mile downstream from the powerhouse and switchyard. From BLM lands there are no views of the powerhouse and switchyard.

The powerhouse and switchyard are on USACE lands. Within the FERC Project Boundary, there is 0.1 acre of withdrawn BLM land that is managed by the USACE. The USACE does not have any specific visual management direction. The VRM is Class III for BLM lands. Yuba County General Plan policy is to "encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks..."

##### Appurtenant Facilities and Features

The appurtenant facility and feature of note is primarily the access road to the powerhouse. The access road is located on the north side of the Yuba River and cuts across a steep slope down to Narrows 2 Powerhouse. Predominant vegetation on this hillside is annual grasses, oak woodland, and chaparral. This road is visible to scattered residences in the area as it starts down the steep canyon walls. The further it drops down the canyon, the less visible the road is to the public. Some people who fish or hike in the canyon along the Yuba River can see this road but the numbers are very small. The access road crosses primarily State-owned land, a small amount of private land, and USACE's land near the dam. The closest BLM lands are more than a mile downstream from the dam and do not have views of the dam at USACE's Englebright Reservoir. Yuba County General Plan policy is to "encourage the preservation and enhancement of the natural features of the County, including rivers and streams and their banks..."

The access road to the Narrows 2 Powerhouse primarily crosses University of California lands for over a mile and then crosses other private land as it approaches Scott Forbes Road. The University of California lands are managed under the auspices of the Sierra Foothill Research Extension Center and Field Station, which is part of the Agriculture and Natural Resources branch of the University system. The main purposes of the Field Station are to promote research tied to cattle grazing in the foothills and associated issues such as water quality issues related to

grazing, management of the oak woodland resources and effects of both grazing and logging to wildlife and other natural resources. The Sierra Foothill Research and Extension Center Strategic Plan 1993/1994, focuses on research needs and opportunities. There is no mention of aesthetics or scenery as a resource or management issue and there is no discussion of how activities next to their lands might affect their research activities. Bill Frost, Associate Director of the Research Extension Centers, UC Davis confirmed by phone that REC does not have formal direction for aesthetic issues and would address them on a case by case basis primarily related to how aesthetic concerns might affect research goals and activities.

The aesthetic character of Project features within the Narrows 2 Development is summarized in Table 7.10.4-3.

**Table 7.10.4-3. Aesthetic character of Project features within the Narrows 2 Development.**

Existing Project Feature	Elevation (feet)	Form of Access	Relationship to Land Form	Predominant Vegetation	Visibility from Surrounding Areas	Relative Number of Viewers	BLM Visual Objectives
Narrows 2 Powerhouse and Switch-yard	Just above 300 ft at the river	gated Access Road	Bottom of steep canyon	Riparian and annual grassland	Very low limited access	Very low	Class III
Appurtenant facilities and features	Just above 300 ft. to top of the canyon	1.75 mi. road from Scott Forbes road	On the steep canyon wall	annual grassland, oak woodland, and chaparral	Low – limited access	very low	Class III

## 7.10.5 List of Attachments

None.

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