



# Save Lake McCumber Community Public Outreach Meeting

**4-30-2026**

**Van Stellman Hall**

- SLM Outreach Agenda –
  - Welcome Intro - **Erik ( 5-10 minutes)**
    - Identify Special Guests:
    - SLM Mission Statement
  - Update/Explain where PG&E Decommissioning process : **Trey (10 -15 minutes)**
  - Brief Update and progress on what SLM has done **Mark (10-15 minutes )**
  - How can you help. **Rima (3 minutes )**
  - Allow special guests to speak on behalf of their organization **(3 minutes each)**
  - Q & A **(30 minutes)**
  - Additional Resources
    - <https://www.pge.com/en/about/pge-systems/hydroelectric-system/battle-creek-hydro.html#accordion-3b52e42208-item-a93113086d><https://www.pge.com/en/about/pge-systems/hydroelectric-system/battle-creek-hydro.html#accordion-3b52e42208-item-a93113086d>
    - <https://www.pge.com/en/about/pge-systems/hydroelectric-system/battle-creek-hydro.html>

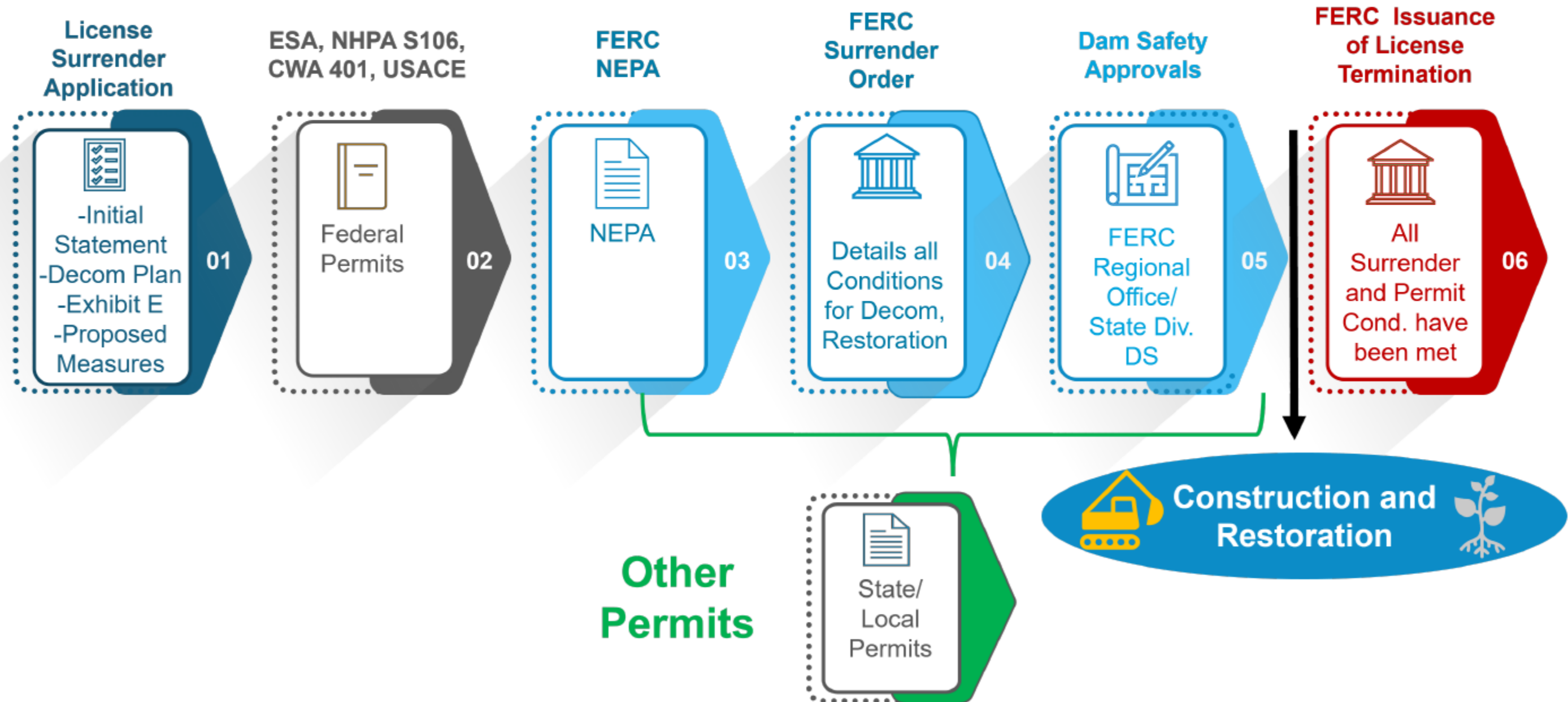


## **Save Lake McCumber**

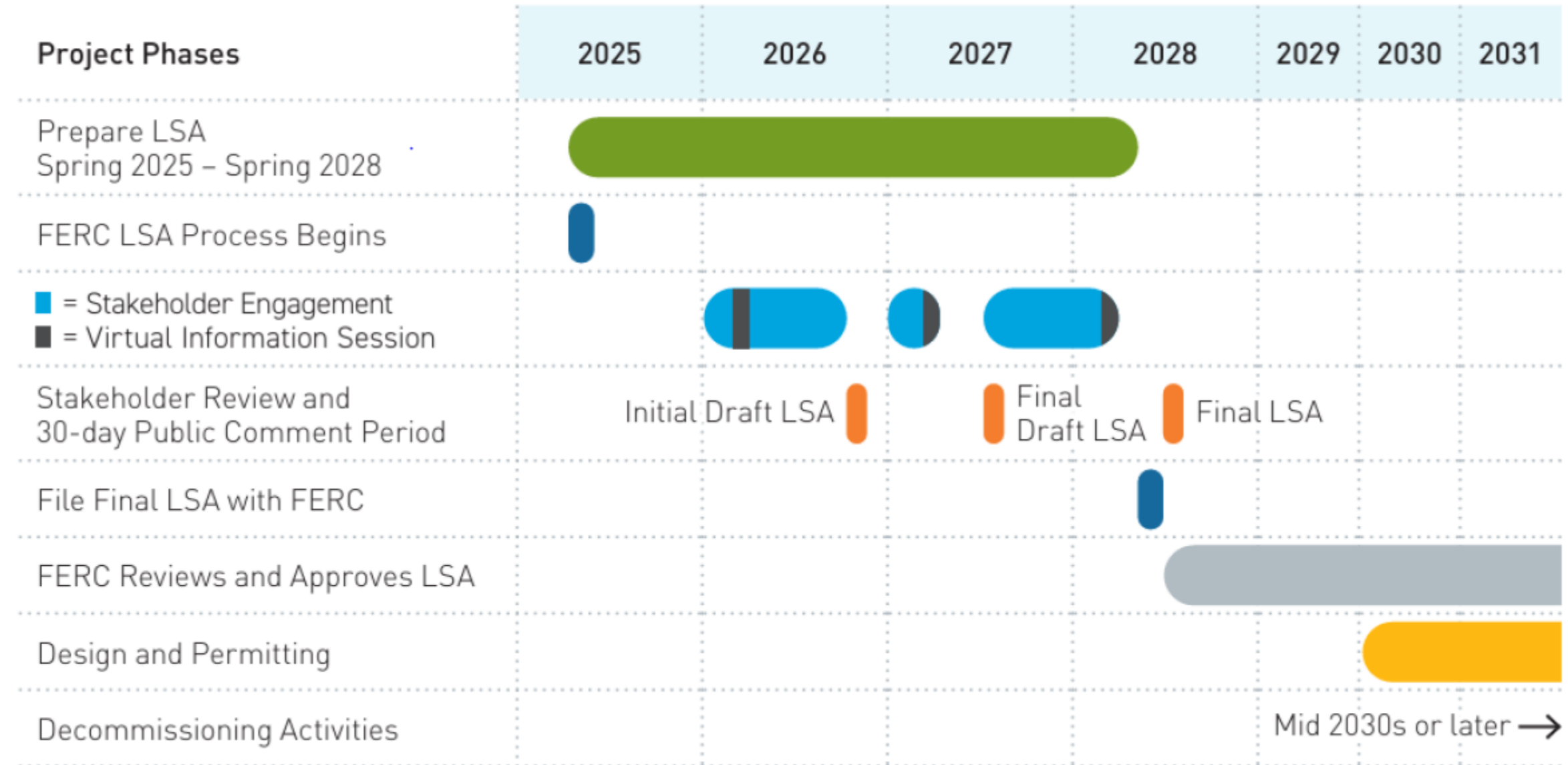
### **Mission Statement**

The Save Lake McCumber Committee's mission is to preserve the natural splendor, wildlife sanctuary, economic prosperity, safety, and rural recreational lifestyle of our Lake McCumber community. A fundamental aspect of this objective is the imperative for adequate resources to effectively combat wildfires, safeguard against uncontrolled floodwaters, and preserve the integrity of our drinking water. We endeavor to identify viable and collaborative solutions to PG&E's proposed decommissioning of these dams, thereby ensuring that Lake McCumber retains its unique value as a haven for hiking, fishing and the appreciation of the abundant wildlife, both for residents and visitors.

# FERC License Surrender Process



# Surrender and Decommissioning Timeline



\* Dates Subject to Change

## Save Lake McCumber (SLM) Presentation



April 30, 2026

We started the Save lake McCumber committee after attending a meeting by the Battle Creek Conservancy regarding the decommissioning of the Battle Creek hydroelectric project on February 1, 2025. On February 11, we met with a group of people to start this committee and have met every two weeks for over a year. In that time, we created a logo, we created the Save McCumber website, assessed the values of homes in Lake McComber in North Battle Creek, subdivisions, and in surrounding community, and established compelling arguments for retaining the dams. We did broad community outreach through mailers, meetings, booths at community events, including the first annual Save Lake McCumber Community Picnic and the personally tailored letter writing campaign to 70+ officials and NGOs to inform them of the issues and ask for support in our efforts.

The initial focus of our efforts on the community outreach was to gain community support and ask you in the community to reach out to your elected officials with your concerns about the removal of the dams at Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek reservoirs. This has been very successful. We grew the membership of the Battle Creek Water Shed Conservancy greatly and Melinda has been elected to the board of Directors and Trey is the Executive Director. We now have a seat at the table and we report on our efforts during their annual meetings.

Since our last community outreach at this hall in November 20, 2025, our focus continues to evolve. The shift of focus moved from outreach asking community members to contact agencies and NGOs for support, to requesting their assistance in funding and conducting a feasibility study that would show the pros and cons of maintaining the dams versus dam removal. We also created Scopes of Work (SOW) for both dam removal and dam retention and compared them in order to strengthen our argument that keeping these dams was necessary to the community and less costly.

The letter campaign was successful in disseminating information and getting us collaboration with the Shasta County Board of Supervisors, a meeting with the Department of Water Resources, a pledge of support from the Shasta County Board of Realtors, a presentation to the Board of Camp McCumber, followed by a strong letter of support from Kristin Lyons, meetings with the NGO's, specifically Cal Trout, an upcoming meeting with PG&E, as well as increased visibility to and meetings with higher levels of California political leadership. We have reached out to our senators and California Representatives and will continue to attempt to gain attention and support from the highest levels of the US Government.

We reached out to the Shasta County Historical society who provided a letter confirming the state historical designation number for Nobles Immigrant Trail, lumber and milling histories and potential archaeological interests. The land so designated is McCumber Flats, now known as Lake McCumber. This means that the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) will apply during the proposed decommissioning process.

## Save Lake McCumber (SLM) Presentation



April 30, 2026

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Chris Kelstrom and Mark Mezzano, the Field Rep for Assembly Member Heather Hadwick, attended our SLM committee meeting, where we presented our arguments and the SOW's. We have their support for saving our lakes. We are continuing to engage with Mr. Mezzano and Mr. Kelstrom to the ultimate end of securing funds from the CA government to conduct this feasibility study. We believe a feasibility study is a necessary step so we can present the short term and long-term cost of operation and the technical requirements that an organization must possess in order to take over ownership and operation of the dams.

This shifted focus to try to determine sources of funding and partner with NGOs to do the study by convincing them that in this instance, where there's no impact anadromous fish, that damn retention is preferable for the community and environment.

In their position with the Battle Creek WS Conservancy, Trey and Melinda have been lobbying for this approach. To that end on May 27. We had an in-person meeting with four members of Cal Trout, where they toured Lake McCumber and the surrounding community and met to see a video that showed the wildlife, the recreational (including Camp McCumber), environmental impacts that these lakes have. They listened closely to our arguments for saving the lakes and stated that they would not oppose their retention if the ongoing scientific investigations and feasibility study confirm that retention will not have an effect on the downstream anadromous fish migration. We consider this very important win in that they agree to study dam retention.

Many of you probably attended the zoom meeting where PG&E did their first community outreach and introduced Sean Murphy, who will be the interface with the community on the decommissioning process. We have a commitment that Sean will meet with the SLM committee shortly. We will present our arguments and attempt to have them include the scenario for retaining the lakes in their decommissioning study plans.

The path to saving the lakes is not straightforward. We may go down some dead ends, but we will redirect our efforts as we have done before to achieve the goal we all want.



## Save Lake McCumber (SLM) Committee History

04/30/2026

February 1, 2025 First meeting regarding PG&E decommission of Battle Creek Hydroelectric project at 2025 Annual Membership Meeting - 1 PM, Saturday, @ Manton Parks. This activated a group of interested individuals to form an Ad Hoc committee under the guidance of Trey Hiller of the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy (BCWS) in order to Save Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek reservoirs from dam removal.

February 11, 2025 First meeting of what has become the Committee to Save Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek reservoirs was held at Camp McCumber.

We have held meetings every 2-4 week resulting in:

- The creation of the SLM logo and the creation of the [savelakemccumber.com](http://savelakemccumber.com) website with a means of joining the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy and sign a petition to save these lakes.
- Conducted an extensive survey to determine the property values of the affected surrounding community
- Conducted broad community outreach through mailers, meetings, booths at community events and the First Annual SLM Picnic listed below.
- Conducted a letter writing campaign to elected officials, government agencies and NGO's asking for their support in this effort.
- Installed water temperature gauges at the inlet and outlet of these lakes to aid in understanding the effects of the on the downstream water temperature.
- We have attended group get togethers with NGO member of the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, who are in favor of Dams out, to find common ground for our efforts to SLM.

SLM Outreach Dates and Activities:

April 23-2025 First Public Meeting held by the SLM Committee at the Shingletown Volunteer Fire Department.

Attended by 85+ Community members. We signed up people for membership in the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy and Presented arguments for saving the lakes

May 19-2025 Battle Creek Adaptive Management Technical Team Public Meeting

We volunteered to setup and aid in this well attended community meeting on the status of the Battle Creek Restoration project and met with the NGOs to look for common ground in the SLM effort.

June 14-2025 10:00am-4:00pm Shingletown Library Book Sale outreach booth where we shared information, signed up new Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy members, added many SLM petition signatures and asked for personal letters of support.

June 28-2025 12:00-3:00pm 1st Annual Lake McCumber Community Picnic was held were we provided a Hotdog lunch/Potluck with a SLM Cake. It was well attended. We had an information booth and presentation by Trey and words of support by Supervisor Chris Kelstrom.

August 9-2025 Shingletown Founders Day Parade and celebration. We entered a float in the parade where we showcased activities at Lake McCumber and handed out candy with invitations to our upcoming info/update meeting. We won first place. October 10-2025, we hand mailed 75 letters to elected officials, government agencies and NGO's asking for their support in this effort. These were hand signed by each committee member. We received responses from a few of these

## Save Lake McCumber (SLM) Committee History

04/30/2026

agencies, asking who we were and what we wanted. We are following up with another letter in January with a proposed path forward.

November 12-2025 BCWS Annual Meeting. A decommissioning process presentation and discussion was given by Meghan Quin (American Rivers). After we met with NGOs to discuss our SLM agenda and to seek common ground.

November 16-2025 SLM Community Update meeting held by the SLM Committee at the SVFD hall. And update on the SLM Committee outreach was given by Eric and Trey. It was poorly attended. Advertisement was done by sign posting but no mailer.

December 10-2025 Sent a letter to the Shasta County Board of Realtors, explaining the issues and asking for their support in obtain a feasibility study from Department of Water Resources (DWR) that will include dam retention and operation. The board responded with a letter of support.

December 19-2025, we sent a committee letter to DWR asking that they fund the feasibility study that would determine options, impacts and cost for retention of the existing dams and their continued operation and help identify organizations that are capable of operating these dams. We are following up in 2026.

January 8-2026 SLM Committee Meeting where we discussed follow-up outreach to DWR Department of Water Resources asking for meeting and asked for Letter from Shasta County Board of Supervisors to elected officials.

January 14-2026 BCWS Annual Meeting we presented summary of the SLM outreach to community and elected officials. We now have a seat at their table for all future meetings.

January 22-2026 Hydrological Model Zoom meeting to teach how to use model followed by SLM Committee Meeting where we discussed outreach to NGO Cal Trout offering a tour of Lake McCumber to share our concerns and look for common ground

January 28-2026 Zoom Meeting between DWR's Deputy Director, team members and SLM Committee members. They had reviewed our arguments and concerns regarding removal of our reservoirs and expressed concern that the removal of Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek reservoirs would affect the cold-water supply for the salmon. We asked for help in identifying sources of grant money to then have our scenarios of dam retention be included in a Cal Trout study they want to commission. Though they identified this as an action item we have been unsuccessful in reaching them again even after three follow-up outreaches.

February 5-2026 SLM Committee Meeting where we discussed pivot to SOW Scope of Work for decommissioning study for both dam removal and retention.

February 7-2026 Meeting with Shasta Historical Society to ask for their help in identifying our dams and reservoirs as historical sites. Resulted in attached letter identifying McCumber Flats as a California Historical Site.

February 17-2026 Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group Online Meeting.

February 19-2026 SLM Committee Meeting where we presented SOW's for both dam removal and retention that show more complexity and higher upfront cost for removal.

March 12-2026 SLM Committee Meeting where we met in person meeting Chris Kelstrom and Mark Mezzano the Field Rep for Assembly Member Heather Hadwick garnering their support for saving our lakes.

March 27-2026 Cal Trout and SLM Committee in person tour and Meeting. We had a very productive meeting with four high ranking members of Cal Trout. We built relationships and presented our arguments for saving our lakes and having scenarios, for retaining the lakes, included in any feasibility study they conduct. They were very open to our continued meeting to find common ground. They agree that retention scenarios should be studied.

March 31 2026 Committee members attended PG&E Battle Creek Decommissioning Online Information Session. This was PG&E's first community outreach.

Save Lake McCumber (SLM) Committee History

04/30/2026

April 9-2026 and April 23 SLM Committee Meetings where we met to plan advertising and to prepare the presentation and handout for the Community Outreach Meeting.

# SOW For Retaining Dams.

2/16/2026

Cost of owning and operating Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek Reservoir dams and their reservoirs.

- Assessment of dam/spillway condition and immediate maintenance/restoration requirements and costs. Expected interval and cost of major maintenance.
- Assessment of reservoirs condition and immediate maintenance requirement and cost Including sediment dredging, water plant control, invasive plant and animal species control, and maintenance of reservoir banks
- Determination of level of financial capability necessary to own these Dams
- Cost of Monitoring and Regulating water levels, flow rates
- Cost and interval of regulation compliance Including inspections and reports
- Cost of day use, overnight campgrounds and boat launch maintenance and operation.
- Procedures, work instruction, manuals, and drawings for the above
- Cost of roads and access maintenance
- Lessor's for Camp McCumber responsibilities and costs
- Cost of maintaining forest, reservoir banks, campgrounds, fire trails, and hiking trails
- Who incurs liability under California Recreational Use Statute\*
- Insurance requirements and cost

Is Forest Service going to maintain campgrounds at North Battle Creek ?

From AI:

The scope of work for transferring ownership of a dam and associated reservoir involves a comprehensive legal, technical, and environmental process to ensure safety, liability management, and operational continuity. Key steps typically include a professional engineering inspection, demonstration of financial capability by the new owner, and approval from state or federal regulatory agencies.

Key Components of the Scope of Work

- Due Diligence and Inspection (Pre-Transfer):
  - Comprehensive Engineering Inspection: A certified professional engineer must assess the dam's

structural, hydraulic, and geotechnical integrity to identify needed repairs or maintenance.

- Record Review: Review all as-built drawings, previous inspection reports, operation and maintenance (O&M) manuals, and Emergency Action Plans (EAP).
- Liability Assessment: Identify existing safety deficiencies, environmental liabilities, and potential for dam failure.
- Legal and Administrative Transfer:
  - Permit/License Transfer: File for a transfer of ownership permit with the state's dam safety regulatory agency (e.g., Department of Natural Resources, Department of Water Resources).
  - Water Rights Transfer: Update records with the appropriate water resource control board regarding changes in point of diversion, place of use, or ownership.
  - Land and Easement Transfer: Legal transfer of the land, structural components, and necessary access easements.
- Technical and Operational Requirements:
  - Financial Capability Demonstration: The new owner must prove they have the financial resources to operate, maintain, and repair the dam for a minimum period (e.g., 10 years in some jurisdictions).
  - Update Emergency Action Plan (EAP): Revise the EAP to reflect new ownership and contact information.
  - Compliance with Safety Regulations: Ensure the dam meets current hazard classification standards.

- Environmental and Public Interest:
  - Environmental Review: Compliance with environmental regulations, such as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or Endangered Species Act (ESA), if applicable.
  - Public Notice: A mandatory public notice period (often 30 days) may be required for dams on navigable waterways.

### Specific Considerations

- Federal vs. Private: If the dam is federal, the transfer requires specific legislation, such as the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act.
- Failed or Substandard Dams: If the inspection reveals significant deficiencies, the transfer may be contingent upon a plan for immediate repairs or decommissioning.

The entire process, from initial inspection to final approval, can take 30 to 120 days or longer, depending on the complexity of the dam and regulatory requirements.

\*The California Recreational Use Statute provides landowners with limited liability for injuries sustained by individuals engaging in recreational activities on their property, encouraging land usage for public enjoyment. Under this statute, unless there is evidence of willful misconduct or gross negligence by the landowner, they typically cannot be held liable for injuries that occur during these activities, thereby significantly affecting how premises liability claims are evaluated in such contexts.



## OFFICE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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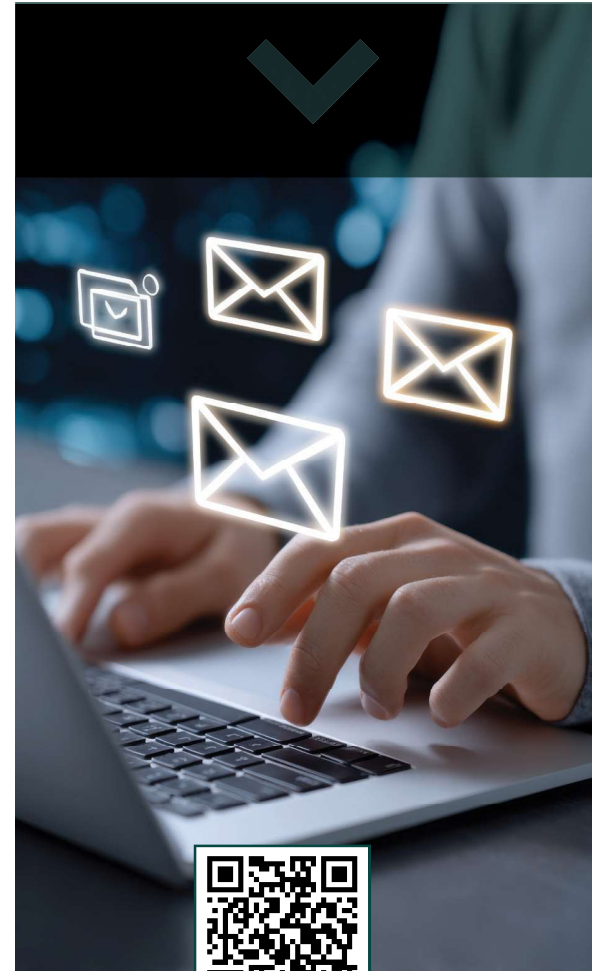
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## How You Can Help

April 30, 2026

So, before we go to questions, we would like to thank you for coming to this Townhall Update meeting. Your continued support will be key to us going forward. We are requesting that you go home and look at the material in the handout and think about how you can help us.

We have some suggestions:

Weigh in with letters during the community comment period. The handouts give you the instructions to send your comments. The focus should be FERC and PG&E. The FERC period for public comment starts now and goes throughout this decommissioning. PG&E letters should be addressed to Mr. Sean Murphy, who is the PG&E official representative. The public comment period for PG &E starts in October of this year. We are suggesting that the letters be personal and not a “form” letter.

Please sign into [SaveLakeMcCumber.com](http://SaveLakeMcCumber.com) and become a member so that you can continue to be informed of our activities, challenges, accomplishments and future efforts. This way you can also be part of the growing list of people who are looking for a way to save our dams.

We invite you to join us at community events, help run fair booths, show up and take on some of SLM’s action items. We will have a second annual Save McCumber Picnic on August 8<sup>th</sup>. More information about the exact time and venue will be coming out soon.

If any of you have any photos of the helicopters fighting fire by retrieving water from Lake McCumber, please contact us. Also, if any of you have photos of flooding in the Lake McCumber area, we would appreciate adding those to our library.

We are also looking to increase the size of the original committee, now at 8 members. If you have Website/IT experience, grant writing experience, home insurance experience, or media connections, we would welcome you to contact us and perhaps join us at our meetings every other week. Basic requirements for membership are your commitment to the Mission Statement, your time to show up and/or host meetings and work on our various tasks.

We are always open to new ideas and solutions. Even creative ones. We would like all of you to consider the ultimate possibility that the community could own and operate the dams. Wilson Hill did a combination of land grants, LLC’s and funds from local sponsors and CalFire and home owner annual fees to pay for the operation and maintenance of the dam at Woodridge Lake.



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

March 19, 2026

Dear Mr. Kelstrom,

I'm writing to ask you to please consider the impact that removing Lake McCumber Dam would have on Camp McCumber and the many kids and families who depend on it.

It is our understanding that Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is in the process of developing a surrender application which will impact Lake McCumber. Removal of the dam, as part of a broader effort to decommission the Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project, would have a dramatic impact on Camp McCumber. While this process involves regulatory review and long-term planning, it also carries significant local consequences for community institutions like Camp McCumber that rely on the lake's continued existence.

Camp McCumber has been a special place for generations. As part of the YMCA, it gives kids a chance to step away from screens, try new things, and grow in ways that just don't happen at home or in school. At overnight camp, kids learn independence. They make friends on their own. They build confidence by paddling a canoe for the first time, performing in front of a group, or simply being away from home and realizing they can handle it.

The lake is the heart of camp. It's where kids swim, canoe, kayak, fish, and gather for games and traditions that have been part of camp for decades. Some of the most meaningful camp memories happen at the waterfront — early morning paddles, campfires by the shore, and cheering each other on during swim time. The lake isn't just scenery. It shapes the entire camp experience.

If the dam is removed and the lake disappears, camp won't be the same. Many of the activities and traditions that define Camp McCumber would be lost. More importantly, future kids wouldn't get to experience the same sense of adventure, connection, and growth that so many before them have had.

I understand that decisions about dams and waterways are complex. I simply ask that you consider the real and lasting impact this would have on young people and families in our community. Camp McCumber changes lives. Protecting the lake helps protect that opportunity for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kristen Lyons  
CEO, Shasta Family YMCA

Lake McCumber, near Shingletown, CA, began as a historic meadow and stop on the Nobles Emigrant Trail before being dammed in the early 1900s for hydroelectric power by [PG&E](#), named for the first white settler there. Its history includes logging operations by McCumber's Mill, but its future is uncertain as PG&E plans to decommission its dam after 2026, potentially draining the lake, though local groups are working to preserve it for recreation and water resources.

### **Early History & Naming**

- **Original Site:** A meadow and ranch, part of the historic Nobles Emigrant Trail.
- **Named For:** The first white man to settle in the area, whose last name was McCumber.
- **Logging:** An early sawmill, McCumber's Mill, operated nearby, utilizing steam-powered traction engines for hauling logs.

### **The Reservoir Era (Early 1900s - 2026)**

- **Purpose:** A reservoir was established for electrical power generation, forming Lake McCumber.
- **PG&E Operation:** PG&E managed the dam and hydroelectric facilities along Battle Creek.
- **Recreation:** The area became a spot for picnicking and camping, with a trail marker for the Emigrant Trail located in the campground.

### **Current & Future Uncertainty (Post-2026)**

- **PG&E Exit:** PG&E is not renewing its license for the Battle Creek facilities, leading to planned decommissioning of the dam.
- **Decommissioning:** Without PG&E's maintenance, the dam could be removed, draining the lake.
- **Preservation Efforts:** The [Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy](#) is working to find ways to save the lake and its recreational, fishery, and wildfire-fighting assets.

Located in Shasta County near Shingletown, California,

#### **Lake McCumber**

(historically known as McCumber Reservoir) has a history tied to 19th-century industry and early 20th-century hydroelectric development.

## 19th-Century Origins

- **McCumber Flat & Mill:** The area was originally known as McCumber Flat. In approximately 1853, McCumber's Mill was established nearby on Mill Creek, playing a foundational role in the local lumber industry by producing materials for cabins, flumes, and mining equipment.
- **Settlement:** The reservoir is located near the historic **Nobles Emigrant Trail**, which was used by westward settlers in the 1850s.

## 20th-Century Development

- **Dam Construction:** The Lake McCumber Dam is nearly **115 years old**, having been built around 1910-1911 as part of a hydroelectric system along the Battle Creek watershed.
- **Hydroelectric Use:** The reservoir was primarily utilized by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) to manage water for downstream power plants in the Manton area.
- **Recreation and Community:** For decades, the lake has been a central site for local recreation and youth programs, most notably hosting the **YMCA Camp McCumber**, which has served campers for generations.

## Current Status and 2026 Decommissioning

As of **January 2026**, the future of Lake McCumber is a subject of significant local concern:

- **License Expiration:** PG&E's license to operate the hydroelectric facilities expires in 2026. The utility has chosen not to renew this license, leading to plans for decommissioning the dam.
- **Preservation Efforts:** Local groups, including the **Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy**, are actively working to save the reservoir from being drained. They argue the lake is critical for firefighting operations, local fisheries, and wildlife habitat.
- **Impact of Removal:** If a transfer of ownership or alternative maintenance agreement is not reached, the dam may be removed, potentially draining the lake to its original state as McCumber Flat.

14 sites

- **McCumber Flat has two histories. In the 1800s, it was a ...**  
Jul 18, 2021 – They were respectively called McCumber Flat and McCumber reservoir. Today, some people called the reservoir Lake McCumber. If you ...



Shasta Historical Society



- **Local group hopes to save Lake McCumber and North Battle ...**  
Jan 27, 2025 – the future of two eastern Shasta County reservoirs along Battle Creek are in question after P Gene's decision not to renew their l...



YouTube Action News Now



- **Shasta - Did you know that Shingletown, CA, began as a ...**  
Mar 19, 2025 – Shasta - Did you know that Shingletown, CA, began as a humble tent community in 1848 called Shingle Camp? This early settlement ea...

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What are the community's alternative plans for Lake McCumber?

In response to PG&E's planned 2026 decommissioning, the Lake McCumber

community and the **Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy** (BCWC) have proposed alternatives focused on preservation and local control. As of **January 2026**, these efforts center on preventing the dam's removal and finding a path for continued operation.

## 1. Transfer of Ownership and Management

The primary alternative plan is to identify a **new owner and operator** for the 115-year-old dam and reservoir.

- **Community-Owned Utility:** Local residents have discussed pooling resources to transform Lake McCumber into a community-owned facility, potentially maintaining small-scale hydroelectric power to help offset costs.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** There are calls for local, state, or federal agencies—or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—to step in and assume responsibility for the infrastructure.

## 2. Repurposing Decommissioning Funds

Community leaders, including Trey Hiller of the BCWC, argue that the millions of dollars PG&E would spend on dam removal should instead be redirected toward **restoring and maintaining** the assets.

- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** These funds would be used for necessary dredging and seismic retrofitting to ensure the dam remains functional and safe for the next generation.
- **Strategic Staging:** Plans include developing permanent all-weather access roads and staging areas to facilitate long-term maintenance.

## 3. Integrated Watershed Management

Advocates propose a "multi-benefit" strategy that aligns with state goals while preserving the lake:

- **Wildfire Suppression:** Maintaining the lake as a critical water source for aerial firefighting operations in the heavily forested Shingletown area.
- **Flood Mitigation:** Preserving the dam's role as a flood barrier to protect downstream homes, roads, and culverts from the free-flowing North Battle Creek.
- **Habitat Maintenance:** Ensuring the survival of local fisheries and wetlands that depend on the existing reservoir's water table.

## 4. Public Engagement and Advocacy

The community is utilizing a "**Save Lake McCumber**" committee and website to organize their response:

- **Legislative Pressure:** Residents are encouraged to contact elected officials, such as Congressman Doug LaMalfa, to seek government intervention or funding.

- **Grant Applications:** Local groups are exploring state grants, such as the "Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access" program, to fund the transition.

- 

## 2. Repurposing Decommissioning Funds

- Community leaders, including Trey Hiller of the BCWC, argue that the millions of dollars PG&E would spend on dam removal should instead be redirected toward **restoring and maintaining** the assets.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** These funds would be used for necessary dredging and seismic retrofitting to ensure the dam remains functional and safe for the next generation.
- **Strategic Staging:** Plans include developing permanent all-weather access roads and staging areas to facilitate long-term maintenance.

## 3. Integrated Watershed Management

Advocates propose a "multi-benefit" strategy that aligns with state goals while preserving the lake:

- **Wildfire Suppression:** Maintaining the lake as a critical water source for aerial firefighting operations in the heavily forested Shingletown area.
- **Flood Mitigation:** Preserving the dam's role as a flood barrier to protect downstream homes, roads, and culverts from the free-flowing North Battle Creek.
- **Habitat Maintenance:** Ensuring the survival of local fisheries and wetlands that depend on the existing reservoir's water table.

## 4. Public Engagement and Advocacy

The community is utilizing a "**Save Lake McCumber**" committee and website to organize their response:

- **Legislative Pressure:** Residents are encouraged to contact elected officials, such as Congressman Doug LaMalfa, to seek government intervention or funding.
- **Grant Applications:** Local groups are exploring state grants, such as the "Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access" program, to fund the transition.

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS3NMkryJxg>

<https://www.facebook.com/ShastaHistoricalSociety/videos/mccumber-flat/221190649872002/>

Battle Creek Reservoirs, like [Lake McCumber](#), originated in the early 1900s as part of the pioneering [Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project](#), built by Northern California Power Company (now PG&E) to power mining and industry, creating a network of dams, canals, and reservoirs to divert water for power generation, but this development severely impacted native salmon and steelhead, leading to major multi-agency restoration efforts since the 1990s to remove dams and restore fish passage, with some dams slated for removal by 2026.

### **Early Hydroelectric Development (1900s-1920s)**

- **Purpose:** To meet the massive power demands for mining operations, especially Iron Mountain Mine, in Shasta County.
- **Construction:** The project began with the Volta Powerhouse (1901) and expanded to include South, Inskip, and Coleman Powerhouses, creating several reservoirs like Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek Reservoir.
- **System:** A complex system of dams, tunnels, and canals diverted water from Battle Creek, a tributary of the Sacramento River, for power generation, not large-scale storage.
- **Ownership:** PG&E acquired the system in 1919.

### **Impact on Fish & Later Restoration (1940s-Present)**

- **Habitat Loss:** The dams blocked access to historic spawning grounds for Chinook salmon and steelhead, devastating native fish populations.
- **Coleman Hatchery:** The Coleman National Fish Hatchery was built in 1943 as mitigation for habitat loss, notes the [Sacramento River Watershed Program](#).
- **Restoration Project:** Starting in 1995, the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project (led by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation) began a multi-agency effort to restore fish passage and habitat.
- **Dam Removal:** This project involves removing some dams and installing fish ladders on others, with plans for significant removal work to begin in the coming years.

### **Current Status & Future**

- **Decommissioning:** With PG&E's license expiring, there are plans to decommission parts of the project, including North Battle Creek Reservoir and Lake McCumber, potentially by 2026, though some groups advocate for preserving the reservoirs.

- **Ongoing Efforts:** The goal remains to reestablish viable salmon and steelhead populations in the watershed.

### [Battle Creek Reservoir](#)

(officially known as **North Battle Creek Reservoir**) is part of a larger hydroelectric system in Shasta and Tehama counties, California. Its history is defined by the early development of hydropower to fuel the mining industry and more recent efforts to restore the watershed for endangered fish.

#### **Early Development and Construction**

- **Purpose and Origins:** The reservoir and the broader Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project were originally developed in the early 1900s to provide electricity for mineral extraction, specifically the **Iron Mountain Mine** near Redding.
- **Initial Construction (1901–1911):** The project was spearheaded by the **Northern California Power Company** (and its predecessor, the Keswick Power Company). They constructed four powerhouses and a network of diversion dams and canals to harness water from Mount Lassen's west-facing rivers.
- **Acquisition by PG&E:** Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) acquired the facility in **1919** and continued to expand the system.

#### **The Hydroelectric System**

- **Infrastructure:** The reservoir is one of two small storage reservoirs in the system, the other being **Lake McCumber**. Together, they support five powerhouses: Volta, Volta II, South, Inskip, and Coleman.
- **Water Management:** The system utilizes a complex network of approximately 42 miles of diversion canals, pipelines, and flumes.

#### **Environmental Impact and Restoration**

- **Fisheries Decline:** For decades, the system's dams and reduced water flows blocked migration routes for **Chinook salmon** and **steelhead trout**, virtually eliminating access to 42 miles of prime historical habitat.
- **Restoration Project (1999–Present):** In 1999, a multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) launched the **Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project**. This initiative focuses on removing specific diversion dams and installing fish ladders and screens on others to restore habitat.

- **Recent Milestone:** As of **2025**, significant progress has been made, including the removal of the **Inskip Diversion Dam** to reopen miles of fish habitat.

### **Current Status (2026)**

- **License Expiration:** PG&E's federal license for the Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project is set to expire in **2026**.
- **Decommissioning Discussions:** There is an active movement toward decommissioning the project to ensure fish have full access to their historical range, while local community groups are simultaneously working to preserve certain reservoirs like Lake McCumber and North Battle Creek for their aesthetic and recreational value.

### **What decommissioning plans exist for the Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project?**

PG&E is currently proceeding with the decommissioning and license surrender of the Battle Creek Hydroelectric Project, as the utility has decided not to renew its federal operating license when it expires on

**July 31, 2026.**

The decommissioning plan is deeply integrated with the long-running **Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project**, which is being executed in multiple phases to reopen roughly 48 miles of fish habitat.

### **Project Surrender and Deadlines**

- **Surrender Application:** PG&E has a deadline of **May 2028** to submit its final Surrender Application and Decommissioning Plan to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).
- **Transition to Decommissioning:** Because no other party has stepped forward to assume responsibility for the project, it is transitioning from a restoration effort into a full-scale decommissioning.

### **Recent and Scheduled Dam Removals**

Decommissioning efforts are currently focused on the removal of several key diversion dams:

- **Inskip Diversion Dam**

: Removed in the **summer of 2025** following its failure in 2022 and PG&E's subsequent decision not to restore it to service.

- **South Fork Removals (Phase 2):** Construction to remove the

**South Diversion Dam**

,

**Soap Creek Feeder Diversion Dam**

, and

**Lower Ripley Creek Feeder Diversion Dam**

is scheduled to begin in 2026, with an expected completion date of **August 2026**.

- **Coleman Diversion Dam**

: Scheduled to be removed last, with construction planned for **2026–2027**.

### **Future of Reservoirs**

The status of the two primary storage reservoirs remains a point of local concern:

- [North Battle Creek Reservoir](#)

&

**Lake McCumber**

: Both are slated for decommissioning following the license expiration in 2026.

- **Community Preservation Efforts:** Local groups, such as the **Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy**, are actively seeking ways to preserve these reservoirs for their recreational, agricultural, and aesthetic value before they are potentially drained.

### **Restoration Objectives**

The ultimate goal of the decommissioning is to maximize benefits for native fishes, specifically by restoring natural instream flows and removing man-made barriers to provide full access to prime spawning grounds for **Chinook salmon** and **steelhead**.

**What are the timelines for North Battle Creek Reservoir and Lake McCumber decommissioning after 2026?**

What are the community's alternatives for preserving the reservoirs?

Tell me more about the removal of the South Fork dams



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