

## Decommission Hamilton Branch Powerhouse?

Since PG&E has not operated the turbines at the Hamilton Branch Powerhouse in 2019, and is not planning on operating the turbines in the near future, hydropower operations at Mountain Meadows Reservoir is not producing any revenue for PG&E. The main reason that the Powerhouse is not being operated is because it is not cost effective to do so at the present time. But, if not now, when? If the Reservoir is not producing any revenue for PG&E now, it is not an asset, it is a liability.

The Hamilton Branch Powerhouse is about 100 years old. It has two generators. One has been out of commission for some time. The other is marginally profitable. If PG&E is considering abandoning operations at the Hamilton Branch Powerhouse, now is the time to study environmental impacts of decommissioning the Powerhouse and removing the Clear Creek Diversion Dam and the canal from the Diversion Dam to the Powerhouse.

This study should consider the replacement, or enhancement, of Indian Ole Dam with a permanent, low maintenance structure. The spillway could be set at an elevation 4957', with no storage of water above that level. (The existing dam spills over the top of the removable flashboards at a maximum elevation of 4958.8')

This downsizing would reduce the capacity of Mountain Meadows Reservoir from 24,000 acre feet, to 14,000 acre feet for Mountain Meadows Lake. As a lake, with a relatively stable level, Mountain Meadows Lake could be managed to maximize wildlife habitat. Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Mountain Meadows is a crucial rest stop for migratory waterfowl on the Pacific Flyway, and should be protected, and enhanced. It could be a National Wildlife Refuge. And, it should be public land.

There is plenty of storage capacity downstream at Lake Almanor. Any water that spills from Mountain Meadows Lake will still be available for PG&E hydropower operations downstream from Lake Almanor.

Meanwhile, PG&E is facing bankruptcy again, with billions in wildfire liabilities. Will PG&E assets be sold off? What will happen to PG&E watershed lands? Will there be another Stewardship Council? Will The State of California take over management?

Since it is worth nothing to them, PG&E could donate Mountain Meadows Reservoir to the California Wildlife Conservation Board as a part of their next bankruptcy settlement, launching a major environmental restoration effort. If not now, when?