



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Ross Branch, PCWA
(530) 823-1937

Chris Gray-Garcia, Placer County
(530) 886-4629

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW 40-YEAR LICENSE ISSUED FOR MIDDLE FORK AMERICAN RIVER PROJECT

AUBURN, Calif. (June 11, 2020) – Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) and Placer County announced today that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has issued a new a 40-year operating license for the Middle Fork American River Project (MFP).

The MFP provides water supplies, clean hydroelectric power, public recreational opportunities and environmental stewardship for the people of Placer County and the region.

PCWA and Placer County have a joint interest in the safe and efficient operation of the MFP – a relationship formalized through the Middle Fork Project Finance Authority (MFPFA), a joint powers agency that oversees energy contracting and financial matters.

The first license for the MFP was issued in 1963 - the same year construction began on the project. Issued by the then Federal Power Commission (now FERC), that license granted a 50-year operating window. The new license is the culmination of more than a decade of preparation and collaboration by PCWA and Placer County.

“The process of getting a new FERC license is extremely rigorous,” explained Andy Fecko, PCWA’s General Manager. “We began our relicensing effort in 2005.”

Over the following six years, project leaders hosted more than 300 stakeholder meetings to collaboratively develop and reach agreement on new operating conditions. In 2011, PCWA filed its application with FERC for a new operating license. That application triggered the next step of environmental review, which included completion of both the California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act processes, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on potential impacts to endangered species. PCWA and Placer County completed those reviews in 2013 at a cost of over \$30 million.

Since 2013, PCWA and Placer County have been working with the Tahoe and Eldorado National Forests, where the MFP is located, to plan and develop improvements to implement upon receipt of the license. With the issuance of the new license, PCWA, Placer County, and other stakeholders can begin implementing the license requirements.

“The Middle Fork Project is an essential resource for the prosperity of our communities,” said Placer County District 3 Supervisor and MFPFA Chairman Jim Holmes. “Our new FERC license affirms our commitment to preserving and protecting it for decades to come.”

Under the new license, PCWA and Placer County will implement higher streamflows to support environmental and recreational resources, and a variety of improvements to recreation facilities including campgrounds, day use areas, and boat ramps. In addition, numerous infrastructure improvements, designed to enhance project operations and environmental conditions, will begin construction.

“We are eager to get to work on the new FERC requirements,” said PCWA Board Chairman Robert Dugan. “These important environmental, recreational, and water supply improvements have been a priority for our Board for many years, and will provide long-term benefits for Placer County residents.”

News of the new license prompted reaction from other local elected officials:

“Issuance of the new MFP license has been a long time coming. This is no small lift, and I commend our talented staff who have played an important role achieving this significant milestone.” – Primo Santini, PCWA District 2 Director and MFPFA Vice-Chairman

“With the new license in hand, we can now get to work on improvements that will protect Placer County’s natural resources for future generations. The MFP is essential to the many recreational opportunities in Placer County and a testament to our responsible stewardship of the environment.” – Robert Weygandt, Placer County District 2 Supervisor

“The continued operation of the MFP is vitally important. The new license assures that we can continue to generate clean hydroelectric energy for the California grid and use the proceeds to improve water resilience throughout Placer County, including underserved rural communities.” – Joshua Alpine, PCWA District 5 Director

Located on the Middle Fork American River, and the Rubicon River, the MFP consists of five powerhouses, five diversion impoundments, five tunnels, and two reservoirs. It is the eighth largest public power project in California.

###

About PCWA

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) is the primary water resource agency for Placer County, California, with a broad range of responsibilities including water resource planning and management, retail and wholesale supply of drinking water and irrigation water, and production of hydroelectric energy.

About Placer County

Breath-taking scenery, a rich history and year-round recreation are just a few of the reasons more than 390,000 people call Placer County home. Placer County provides responsive, efficient and effective public services that promote the health, safety, well-being and prosperity of our citizens while protecting our environmental resources and preserving the rich heritage of our region.