

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 133 FERC ¶ 62,205
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County,
Washington

Project No. 2145 – 105 and 108

ORDER APPROVING ANNUAL OPERATIONS COMPLIANCE
MONITORING PLAN, ARTICLE 402

(Issued December 03, 2010)

1. On February 16, 2010 and supplemented on May 13, 2010, Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County, Washington (licensee) filed its 2010 Annual Operations Compliance Monitoring Plan pursuant to Article 402 of the February 19, 2009 Order on Offer of Settlement and Issuing New License¹ for the Rocky Reach Project. The project is located on the Columbia River in Douglas and Chelan Counties, Washington.

BACKGROUND AND LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

2. Article 402 requires the licensee to file, for Commission approval, an Operations Plan within six months of license issuance and annually by February 15 each year thereafter. The licensee's original plan was approved by the December 8, 2009 Order Modifying and Approving Operations Plan. The licensee's subject filing includes their 2010 Annual Operations Compliance Monitoring Plan and Fish Spill Plan. The licensee is required to prepare the plan after consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ), Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation, and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

LICENSEE'S PLAN

3. The licensee's plan includes modifications of their original plan as follows: (a) dates to reflect current year operations and studies; and (b) addition of an inspection and maintenance section for the Dryden and Tumwater fishways and traps. The licensee states that the operations of the project related to upstream and downstream fish passage are guided by the terms and conditions of their Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The plan provides detailed measures regarding operations and procedures necessary to safely

¹ 126 FERC ¶ 61,138 (2009)

pass fish through the project facilities to meet the standards agreed upon in the HCP. Specially, the licensee's plan identifies projected 2010 spill levels and associated fisheries studies for the Rocky Reach Project as well as the licensee's Rock Island Project (FERC No. 943), which is also covered under the licensee's HCP.

Rocky Reach Dam

4. During the summer outmigration of subyearling Chinook salmon, the licensee plans to spill 9% of daily average river flow for a duration covering 95% of the outmigration. The juvenile fish bypass facility (JBF) would be operated seven days per week during the outmigration period to obtain the necessary index samples for run timing analysis, and to collect fish for survival and passage route studies. The licensee plans to operate the JBF at Rocky Reach exclusively with no spill to conduct a project survival study for yearling Chinook salmon. The licensee also plans to conduct a study to compare survival differences in day time and night time releases of acoustic tagged yearling Chinook salmon through the reservoir and dam.

Rock Island Dam

5. During the summer outmigration of subyearling Chinook salmon, the licensee plans to spill 20% of the daily average river flow over 95% of the summer outmigration. The bypass trap would be operated seven days per week during the outmigration period to provide daily juvenile index counts. The licensee plans to conduct a third HCP project survival study for yearling Chinook salmon, and a second year of study with steelhead smolts under a 10% spill operation.

6. The licensee plans to shape spill volumes on a daily basis according to the observed diel passage of smolts at each project. The different spill percentages, or spill blocks, would be calculated by time such that the summation of water volume from all spill blocks within the day would equal the volume of water that would have been spilled under a constant, unshaped spill level. This spill strategy would attempt to optimize spill water volume to maximize effectiveness for passing smolts while remaining consistent with spill shaping from the 2003-2009 periods. The licensee states that their spill coordinator would contact the HCP Coordinating Committee at least once per week when fish passage numbers indicate that specific triggers for starting or stopping spill are likely to occur in the immediate future. This coordination would also include notification of any unforeseen issues that pertain to the spill program as the season progresses.

Dryden and Tumwater Fishways and Traps

7. The licensee plans to change site visits of the Dryden and Tumwater fishways and traps on the Wenatchee River from daily visits to 2 to 3 times per week depending on

operation. The licensee would inspect the fish ladders, fishway entrance gates, fish trap screens, attraction water supply intake screens, pump intakes, trashracks, and staff gauges during the site visits. Initial maintenance would occur prior to the commencement of spring fish trapping operations while shut-down maintenance would be conducted following the conclusion of trapping operations.

AGENCY COMMENTS

8. The licensee states that their draft plan was provided to the Rocky Reach Fish Forum, which includes the entities the licensee is required to consult with under Article 402, on January 12, 2010. By letter dated January 14, 2010, the WDOE provided comments on the licensee's plan which were incorporated in the licensee's filed plan. The NMFS provided correspondence which indicated they had no comments or suggested revisions to the licensee's plan.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

9. The licensee's Annual Operations Compliance Monitoring Plan should continue to provide the necessary operations procedures and protocols necessary to safely pass fish through the project facilities to meet the standards agreed upon in the HCP. Additionally, the plan should continue to ensure that water quality standards are being met as it relates to total dissolved gas abatement from spill operations while providing effective fish passage through the project facilities. Therefore, the licensee's plan should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The Annual Operations Compliance Monitoring Plan pursuant to Article 402 of the February 19, 2009 Order on Offer of Settlement and Issuing New License, filed February 16, 2010 and supplemented on May 13, 2010, is approved.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Any party may file a request for rehearing of this order within 30 days from the date of its issuance, as provided in section 313(a) of the FPA, 16 U.S.C. § 8251 (2006), and the Commission's regulations at 18 C.F.R. § 385.713 (2010). The filing of a request for rehearing does not operate as a stay of the effective date of this order, or of any other date specified in this order. The

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licensee's failure to file a request for rehearing shall constitute acceptance of this order.

Steven Hocking
Chief, Biological Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance

Document Content(s)

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