

**Okanogan Borderlands Historical Society**

1210 Ironwood Street

Oroville, WA 98844

RECEIVED  
700 DEC -1 P 3:26  
FEDERAL ENERGY  
REGULATORY COMMISSION

November 18, 2008

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Ms. Bose:

The Okanogan Borderlands Historical Society is pleased to have the opportunity to offer comments, support of study requests and motion to intervene in response to the notice of final license application and soliciting of study request and notice of application accepted for filing and soliciting motions to intervene and protest for the Enloe Final License Application (FERC #12569) dated October 1, 2008 and October 29, 2008 respectively.

**Okanogan Borderlands Historical Society**

The Okanogan Borderlands Historical Society has a mission to: To encourage the **preservation** of North Okanogan Valley history; operate the North County Historical Museums and to **collect and preserve** artifacts and library materials which establish and illustrate the **history** of North Okanogan Valley. The society currently has 102 members, a five-member board and several on-going committees. The vision of the organization is to make history a **focal point** of North Okanogan Valley **pride** including the great and **diverse heritage** of the area. A recent publication of OBHS is ***A Bit of History: Enloe Dam*** examines the personal side of Enloe Dam in the history of our area.

**Motion to Intervene**

The OBHS has considerable interest in preserving the history of Enloe Dam, the mining sites along the Similkameen River and the national trail being developed by the Pacific Northwest Trail Association on the abandoned railroad base that exists on the south side of the Similkameen River. OBHS has a direct and substantial interest in the outcome of this proceeding and our intervention in this proceeding is in the public interest as required by 18 C.F.R.S 385.214(b)(iii). We hereby request intervener status in the Enloe Dam Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No 12569.

### **General Comments**

We support the proposed interpretation and river mapping efforts and that the District work with BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service, GCWTC Steering committee and other site and shoreline managers to identify enhancements to water trail opportunities.

We recommend a draft Recreation Management Plan be developed as soon as possible with appropriate input from local stakeholders and land managers. The Recreation management Plan should address the need for continued monitoring of recreation use and needs and should be updated on a regular basis. We understand that the PUD would like to complete the draft plan in 2009.

OBHS also recommends the proposed Shakers Bend Hydro Project (FERC #12804) under preliminary permit be considered in conjunction with the licensing of the Enloe Dam project since together these two projects will have cumulative impacts on the Similkameen River in terms of water levels, boating experience, picnic/camping sites, fishing, spawning, quality of water issues with the hundreds of abandoned mines and tailings, and the hiking and horseback trails developing on the south side of the Similkameen River by the Pacific Northwest Trail Association.

### **Study Requests**

In regard to further studies, OBHS is in support of the Aesthetic Flow Evaluation Study Request and the Recreation Needs Analysis Study Request recommended by the NPS. We also support BLM's study request to conduct an additional year of surveys, as outlined in comments on the Draft License Application. The comments below substantiate our support for the NPS and BLM study requests.

### **Specific Comments**

- Development of mining history events, history tours led through the OBHS, water trail events and maps through the Greater Columbia Water Trail and the signage and recreational trail development from Oroville to Nighthawk will increase the use of the Similkameen River corridor by both residents and visitors.
- The GCWT organization has begun adding interpretive signs on the Similkameen and Okanogan Rivers as well as sponsored paddling events from Oroville to Tonasket over the past three years and has had participants from two states as well as British Columbia.
- The Okanogan County Tourism Council has creative interpretive signs along the Oroville-Nighthawk road to explain mining, water use and history of the area.

- When determining location of project site improvements please consider how all users can share recreation facilities, such as parking, trail heads, campgrounds, and picnic spots, info/interpretive displays. Proper placement will minimize the cost of facility construction, improvement and maintenance while minimizing the impact on the surrounding environment. Adding additional day-use parking the current site plan may be an important consideration in addressing increased use to the Enloe Dam recreation site.
- The history of the Similkameen area stretches back at least 13,000 years with the Native Americans and First Nations peoples, the fur trading through the Astor, NorthWest and Hudson Bay fur traders, the Caribou Cattle trail, the first gold strike in what is now Washington State to the 20<sup>th</sup> century development. All of this should be represented in the consideration of use, interpretive displays, site improvements, etc.
- The natural character of the Similkameen River, its twists and turns, waterfalls and current flow over the old spillway are visually appealing features for everyone who visits the river to float, paddle, swim, fish, take photos, bird watch, or discover history. What changes will the proposed project have on the amount of water flowing over the dam and to the waterfall below the dam during a "typical" flow year? An Aesthetic Flow Evaluation Study would answer this question.
- The natural setting at the dam site allows people to get off the road and enjoy the quiet of nature, including the sounds of rushing water, animals and birds. What effect will the proposed new powerhouse and dam facilities have on the sound level at the site? OBHS supports the proposed enhancements to the recreation site; including day use parking, picnic sites and camping spaces. How will the audible sounds generated by the new dam affect these recreation opportunities and the desire for people to spend time nearby?

### **Public Access Points and Barrier-Free Travel**

**Access above the Dam:** The proposed Enloe Dam project will extend the pool from the current Shankers Bend site to the current Miner's Flat site. This will change the recreational opportunity/experience of this part of the river. Some river users currently disembark at Shankers Bend, at the beginning of the slack water. With the change in pool elevation, some boaters will likely want to disembark at Miner's Flat. Improvements to Miner's Flat would need to be made accommodate the increase in use caused by the change in pool elevation. Improvements could also be considered at this site helping to accommodate a potential increase in use by flat-water paddlers. Leave-no-trace sanitation principles could be provided on signs or brochures. Consideration should be given to a composting toilet or other minimal waste facility and/or the use of solar power as needed.

**Access at the Dam:** OBHS supports development of an improved ramp and parking for the boats at the Enloe Dam site. The embarking and disembarking areas should be clearly marked and indicated on signs so the boats exit the river at the appropriate location. OBHS recommends that the abandoned road on the north side of the river (Section B) be converted to a trail to allow for additional use and activities along the river by campers and picnickers. The current trees would help with shade during the hot summer months while additional native trees and plants have an opportunity to be planted.

**The South Side:** OBHS recommends continued work with the Pacific Northwest Trail Association on the Oroville-Nighthawk trail and accesses that may be needed from the trail to river, and leave-no-trace sanitation principles need there as well. Consideration should be given to a composting toilet or other minimal waste facility and/or the use of solar power as needed.

**Access Below the Dam:** The embarking and disembarking areas should be clearly marked and indicated on signs so the boats exit the river at the appropriate location. Currently a series of user-made trails along steep terrain are used. OBHS recommends that the PUD define and improve one foot trail route from the disembark area and parking area to the put-in site below the dam making access easier and more defined. Improvements to the below-dam access site and portage trail should be considered during construction of the upgrade and new road to the new powerhouse, taking into account appropriate surface materials and grade for hand carrying and possibly wheeling paddle craft.

### **Promote Recreation and Cultural and Environmental Education.**

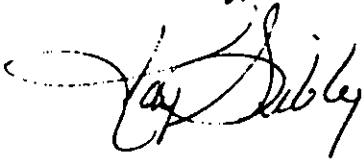
**Signage:** OBHS would like to work with Okanogan PUD in the creation of historical interpretive signage throughout the recreational and historical areas on the Similkameen River. Marking or mapping where historical events of interest can be seen or explained is important, (i.e. Hudson Bay Fur trading routes along the Similkameen, where mining began, or where Rapid City was located) as well as interpretive signs on native plants, geology and wildlife.

**Recreation Experience:** The "Conservancy Environment" Shoreline designation and associated proposed primitive facilities are appropriate for maintaining the existing shoreline character of the Similkameen River. Appropriate grades and surfacing should be considered for access roads and shoreline trails.

OBHS supports the NPS recommendations study the potential for providing a river crossing at the dam site which would link parking, restroom, camping and picnicking facilities with the Pacific Northwest Trail on the former railroad bed. As also suggested, maintaining the old powerhouse for at least five years would allow for possible partnership opportunities for restoration, use or interpretation of this unique structure. OBHS currently partners with the following organizations: Upper-Columbia Museums, Oroville Chamber of Commerce, members of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Okanogan County Historical Society, Resources Coalition (miners), North Valley Artist Association Friends of the Oroville Library.

**Thank you for the opportunity to comment and request studies on the Final License application. We ask that you accept the motion of intervention. The Okanogan Borderlands Historical Society looks forward to working with the Okanogan PUD, FERC and stakeholders as the licensing process progresses. If you have any questions about our recommendations please e-mail to the address below.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay Sibley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "S".

**Kay Sibley - [ksibley@nvinet.com](mailto:ksibley@nvinet.com)  
President of OBHS**

**Cc: Susan Rosebrough, NPS Hydropower Coordinator  
Diane Priebe, BLM  
Ted Murray, Okanogan County  
Patrick M. Verhey, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Donald Clarke, Okanogan County PUD  
Dan Boettger, Okanogan County PUD  
Thomas Young, Washington State Department of Ecology  
Elizabeth Ellis, Washington State Department of Natural Resources  
Nancy Lopez, Washington State Department of Natural Resources**