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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



Central Washington Field Office
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 4, 2008

USFWS Reference: 13260-2008-FA-0006
USFWS Cross Reference: 2007-B-0005; 05-0344
Hydrologic Unit Code: 17-02-00-07-04
Re: Draft License Application Comments
Enloe Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. P12569

Dan Boettger
PUD No. 1 of Okanogan County
1331 Second Avenue North
P.O. Box 912
Okanogan, WA 98840

REGULATORY SERVICES
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Dear Mr. Boettger:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed Public Utility District No. 1 of Okanogan County's (Applicant) Draft License Application (DLA) for the proposed relicensing of the Enloe Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. P12569-000). Parties have been requested to submit their comments on the subject DLA to the Applicant between November 7, 2007 and February 4, 2008.

The Applicant proposes to renew its efforts to obtain a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) license to restore its Enloe Hydroelectric Project (Project). The Project entails the restoration of the hydroelectric power plant located on the Similkameen River approximately three miles northwest of Oroville.

The following comments on the subject DLA are provided for inclusion in the Service's response to the Applicant pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended; the Endangered Species Act, as amended; the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as amended; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); as amended; and the Federal Power Act (FPA), as amended.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Service has been an active participant in the Enloe Dam relicensing proceeding and, as such, has provided comments to the Applicant through various avenues for the purposes of developing a new license for the Project. These comments have focused primarily on the

development of baseline relicensing studies that were ultimately specified in the Project's Initial Consultation Document. Other comments were related to crafting appropriate protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PME) measures designed to minimize the Project's footprint on aquatic and terrestrial resources. Recently, our staff met with the Applicant and its consulting agency, Entrix, on April 26, 2007, and more recently on January 16, 2008 to examine the efficacy of the subject DLA. This discussion included a summary of the project description, information on operations and resource utilization, construction schedule, project history, cost and financing, and detailed environmental report. After review of the DLA, the Service is encouraged to see the Applicant has incorporated many of our suggestions related to this document. However, the DLA lacks an appropriate level of detail regarding the scope of project effects, implementation of the PME measures, as well as associated effectiveness monitoring measures.

For example, the DLA relies heavily on the implementation of a proposed Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) to determine changes in implementation of proposed PMEs and assess the effectiveness of the proposed PME measures. While the Service does advocate the use of the adaptive management concept, we note that it would appear to be more productive to include thresholds and timelines related to changes in PME implementation over the course of the proposed Project's new license term.

In a related matter, a notice of a preliminary permit for the proposed Shanker's Bend Hydroelectric Project (Shanker's Bend Dam)(FERC No. 12804-000), located at river mile 7.3 upstream of the Project, has been brought to the attention of the Commission and is being considered by the Applicant. Since the Project is currently undergoing relicensing and the proposed Shanker's Bend Dam would be located immediately upstream of the Project the Service recommends that the Applicant develop and implement baseline aquatic and terrestrial studies as part of its proposed AMP to determine how the proposed Shanker's Bend Dam would affect the Project from a resource impact standpoint (i.e., inundation of sites contaminated with heavy metals). At this time the DLA does not include this analysis. This action would result in a more efficient formulation of appropriate PME measures that are consistent with these two proceedings, in the event a license application is filed for the proposed Shanker's Bend Dam.

The Service offers the following specific resource comments for the record related to the proposed relicensing of the subject Project.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Relicensing of the Project could impact habitats occupied by federally-listed, proposed and candidate species. These potential impacts need to be considered in the planning, environmental review, and implementation of this Project. In addition, some of the activities associated with the implementation of the Project may involve ground-disturbing activities that could impact federally-listed species. A waiver of requirements for federally-listed species affected by the Project would be inappropriate based on the information available to us at this time. The Commission has an obligation to evaluate impacts to all federally-listed

species in all phases of their permitting process pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended.

The presence of federally-listed, endangered, or threatened species in the project area should be investigated and documented. The Applicant can obtain a list of federally-listed and proposed species from the Service. For your convenience, updated countywide species and habitat listings are now available on our website at <http://www.fws.gov/easternwashington/county%20species%20lists.htm>. To view the listings in your area of concern, select "county species lists" within the ESA programs page, and then select the county of interest. A request to update this list should be submitted to my office when more information about the Project, its exact location, and likely sphere of impact are identified.

The Applicant should be made aware that species lists used for project planning should not be older than 90 days. If endangered or threatened species are determined to be present, then the Commission, as well as the Service, should be notified. The Applicant should then request designation as the Commission's non-Federal representative for purposes of ESA consultation. If an endangered or threatened species may be affected, the Commission must initiate consultation with the Service to determine if the proposed actions would jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species or destroy or modify critical habitat. Federal agency responsibilities for complying with the Endangered Species Act are available at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/consultations/index.html>. The Applicant should refrain from disturbing the project area (e.g., road construction, drilling) until consultations are completed.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- 1.) Section E.2.5 Existing Water Quality (Water Temperature, page E.2-6): The discussion contained in this section appears to lack an analysis of water temperature effects resulting from the proposed powerhouse to be located on the left-bank of the Similkameen River. The Service suggests adding this analysis into this section.
- 2.) Section E.3.2.2 Impacts; Downstream Impacts (Instream Flows, page E.3-30): This section would benefit from a discussion regarding how the proposed implementation of the crest gates would be operated to minimize downstream flow fluctuation impacts resulting from project load following and periodic powerhouse outages. Currently, the Applicant's proposed operational plan does not provide specific detail for minimizing these fluctuation impacts. Project load following has the potential to ramp river levels up and down in short time periods. These actions can directly impact fish by stranding juveniles and dewatering redds (Anglin et al. 2005). These actions may also dewater macro-invertebrate habitat and populations upon which fish depend (Gislason 1985). The Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have developed ramping criteria that restrict hydroelectric project flow changes to no more than two inches per hour and in some cases, require flat flows (Hunter 1992 and DOI 1992). The Applicant should develop the final license application within these criteria.

- 3.) Section E.3.2.3 Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Measures (Operational Impacts at the Project Powerplant – Entrainment of Fish at the Project Intake, E.3-35): This section does not contain a PME measure designed to salvage fish in the vicinity of the Kaplan turbines, during unscheduled outages and/or scheduled maintenance activities. The Service recommends tailoring a proposed fish salvage measure to maximize the survival of fish entrained into the Project's turbines.
- 4.) Section E.3.2.3 Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Measures (Operational Impacts Upstream of the Dam – Loss of Fish to Reservoir Population, page E.3-36): In order to gain an understanding of the magnitude of the entrainment impact at the Project, the Applicant specifies it will be necessary to examine fish entrainment seasonally. The Applicant proposes to conduct quarterly sampling over a one year period. The Service recommends incorporating flexibility into the timeframe in which to assess the impact of entrainment at the Project, to account for inherent variability in flow hydrology and species abundance in the project area over time. We suggest assessing entrainment effects at numerous points over the course of the Project's subsequent license term.
- 5.) Section E.3.2.3 Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Measures (Downstream Impacts – Bypass Reach Impacts, pages E.3-39 and E.3-40): The Applicant specifies, as a project impact, that the proposed bypass reach (the area that lies between the foot of Enloe Dam and the pool below Similkameen Falls where the powerhouse outflow rejoins the river) would experience reduced flow and could be dewatered during low flows. The Service recommends that the Applicant, as a proposed PME measure, develop and implement studies over the course of the proposed Project's license term that would assess the impact of project operations on aquatic resources during low flow periods (i.e., water quality impacts).
- 6.) Section E.3.2.3 Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Measures (Adaptive Management Plan) (AMP)(page E.3-42): The AMP proposes to examine trends and make decisions regarding the adaptation of PME measures designed to protect aquatic resources. Development of the AMP is expected to be \$60,000. Implementation of the plan on an annual basis is expected to be \$10,000 a year. However, details linked to the systematic implementation of the AMP are not included in this section for the proposed aquatic PME measures. The Service recommends inserting appropriate timelines and criteria for establishing success in determining when and how the proposed PME measures are adapted within the AMP. The Service also suggests closely coordinating all relevant study reports with federal, state, and tribal parties.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

We appreciate the opportunity to assist the Applicant with improving the DLA for the proposed relicensing of the hydroelectric facilities located at the Enloe Dam site. The Applicant should understand that the Service is interested in seeing these comments utilized in the creation of an environmentally acceptable project. After all pertinent comments are compiled for the proposed hydroelectric project, the Applicant should contact the Service to

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discuss these comments in more detail. Consultation and technical assistance requests, questions, comments, documents, and required progress reports related to the proposed project should be directed to Stephen Lewis at the Service's Central Washington Field Office; by mail to the address listed on the front page by telephone at (509) 665-3508, extension 14; or via e-mail: Stephen_Lewis@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Jessica L. Gonzales
Division Manager

cc:

Susan Martin, Upper Columbia Fish and Wildlife Office, USFWS, Spokane, WA
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Estyn Mead, Region 1 Headquarters, USFWS, Portland, OR
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Carmen Andonageau, WDFW, Ephrata, WA
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Rosemary Mazaika, BLM, Portland, OR
Bob Rose, Yakama Nation, Toppenish, WA
Kimberly D. Bose, FERC, Washington, D.C.

LITERATURE CITED

Anglin, D.R. et al. 2005. Effects of hydropower operations on spawning habitat, rearing habitat and stranding/entrapment mortality of fall Chinook salmon in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River. Final draft report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Columbia River Fisheries Program Office. Vancouver, Washington.

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Gislason, J.C. 1985. Aquatic insect abundance in a regulated stream under fluctuating and stable diel flow patterns. North American Journal of Fisheries Management. 5:39-46.

Hunter, M.A. 1992. Hydropower flow fluctuations and salmonids: A review of the biological effects, mechanical causes and options for mitigation. Technical Report No. 119. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Olympia, Washington.