

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Portland, OR 97204

MAY - 9 2007

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2016-151 -- Washington
Cowlitz River Hydroelectric Project
City of Tacoma

Patrick D. McCarty
Generation Manager
Tacoma Power
3628 South 35th Street
Tacoma, Washington 98409-3192

Subject: 2006 Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan Annual Project Evaluation and Status Report, Settlement Agreement Article 6

Dear Mr. McCarty:

This acknowledges receipt of your 2006 Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan Annual Project Evaluation and Status Report, filed March 26, 2007, under license Article 401 and Settlement Agreement Article 6 for the Cowlitz River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2016). Your filing was required by ordering paragraph (L) of the Order Modifying and Approving Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan, issued April 6, 2006.

The ordering paragraph (L) requires you to file annually with the Commission by April 1, beginning in 2007, your annual Project Evaluation and Status Report under your Adaptive Management Plan, included in your Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan (FHMP). Further, it requires you to file a draft report with the Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC) for a 30 day review and comment period prior to filing the report with the Commission. Finally, you are required to include any comments from the FTC and your response to any such comments.

You report that the recycling of hatchery-origin early winter-run steelhead into the lower Cowlitz River was terminated beginning in December 2006. Regarding coho salmon, you state that an attempt was made to change the existing adult handling protocol of returning hatchery-origin coho salmon on the Cowlitz River, as described in the FHMP. However, after discussions around changing the protocol, a decision was made to discontinue those changes and maintain past practices. As a result, approximately 51,000 adult coho salmon were released above Mayfield Dam in the Cowlitz River system during the 2006/2007 season.


For 2007, you state that you will continue to review and recommend actions for the adult salmonids described in the FHMP in consultation with the FTC. Regarding late winter-run steelhead, you propose no changes to the existing adult handling protocol due to not meeting the triggers identified in the FHMP. For summer-run steelhead, you anticipate that the recycling of hatchery-origin summer steelhead will be terminated in 2007. For spring Chinook salmon, fall Chinook salmon and sea-run cutthroat trout, you propose no changes to the existing adult handling protocol for 2007. Regarding coho salmon, you state that the adult handling protocol in 2007 would depend on agreement within the FTC on the intent of the FHMP.

You state that in 2007, the FTC formed a genetics subcommittee to look at specific recommendations and studies called for in the FHMP. For the remainder of 2007, you plan to advertise for proposals to conduct a steelhead genetics impact study upon natural-origin late winter-run steelhead in the lower Cowlitz River. Additionally for 2007, you plan to continue working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding evaluations of its fisheries mitigations on the Cowlitz River and re-align the Annual Cowlitz Evaluation Report to include the results with the filing of the subject annual report.

Your filing adequately fulfills the requirements of the order identified herein.

Thank you for your filing. If you have any questions, please contact me at (503) 552-2716.

Sincerely,



Erich G. Gaedeke
Fishery Biologist
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance