

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 111 FERC ¶62,336
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

City of Tacoma

Project No. 2016-104

ORDER MODIFYING AND APPROVING FISH MONITORING PLAN ADDENDUM

(Issued June 28 2005)

On March 18, 2005, the City of Tacoma (licensee) filed an addendum to its Fish Monitoring Plan pursuant to the Commission's *Order Modifying and Approving Fish Monitoring Plan Pursuant to Article 15*.¹ The project, consisting of the Mayfield and Mossyrock developments, is located on the Cowlitz River, in Lewis County, Washington.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS AND BACKGROUND

License Article 15² requires the licensee, within one year of license issuance, to develop and submit a monitoring plan to evaluate the effects of the instream flow requirements, including pulsing or channel maintenance flow, upon fish in the Cowlitz River. The plan is required to be developed in consultation with the Fisheries Technical Committee³ (FTC) provided for in the August 2000 Settlement Agreement, or if the Settlement Agreement has become void, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE).

On July 9, 2004, the Commission issued *Order Amending New License* for the Cowlitz Project in response to a biological opinion filed by NOAA Fisheries. According to article 402 of the amended license, the fish monitoring plan is also required to include measures to thoroughly investigate the effects of project operations on anadromous fish redd abandonment and dewatering, and entrapment and stranding of juvenile and adult fish.

On July 19, 2004, the licensee filed its Fish Monitoring Plan pursuant to article 15 of the license. On December 2, 2004, the Commission approved the plan by *Order Modifying and Approving Fish Monitoring Plan Pursuant to Article 15* (order), and

¹ 109 FERC ¶ 62,153 (2004).

² See 98 FERC ¶ 61,274. Issued March 13, 2002.

³ Consists of one representative each from the City of Tacoma, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Ecology, the Yakama Nation, and one representative from the conservation groups (American Rivers and Trout Unlimited).

required the licensee to add provisions consistent with the *Order Amending New License*, to investigate the effects of project operations on anadromous fish redd abandonment and dewatering, and entrapment and stranding of juvenile and adult fish.

LICENSEE'S PLAN

Pursuant to the Commission's order, the licensee's addendum includes a reporting schedule to file the interim monitoring report with the WDFW, WDOE, NOAA Fisheries, FWS, the Yakama Nation, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. The agencies and tribes would be allowed at least 30 days to comment. The licensee states that if any changes are needed in the instream flow schedule, or the weekly fish transport flows, the recommendations would be discussed in the interim report, or implemented sooner, as determined to be needed by the FTC. The licensee proposes to file the interim report and final report, with the licensee's responses to agency comments, with the Commission by December 31, 2009, and December 31, 2014, respectively.

The licensee proposes in their addendum to survey for redd abandonment while surveying for redd dewatering and adult distribution of natural spawning Chinook populations, two to three times per year. Surveys would be conducted prior to and following flow reduction events. The licensee states that data collected during the redd survey would include redd counts, live and dead adult counts, selected redd pit depth, tail spill area, and overall redd length and width. Selected redds in the river margin, within the survey sites, would be measured and examined for exposure and dewatering.⁴ Redd surveys would occur annually through early December.

The licensee states that any significant numbers of juvenile salmon that may be stranded by lower Cowlitz River flow reductions are present only in the springtime. The licensee further states that springtime flow reductions from Mayfield dam are limited to nighttime hours to minimize this risk and to offer a balance between protection for the fish resources and limitations on hydroelectric operations. The licensee proposes that site-specific and incident-specific Cowlitz River juvenile fish stranding surveys would be conducted and coordinated with the WDFW.

AGENCY COMMENTS

On March 4, 2004, the licensee and the FTC met via teleconference to discuss spring and summer minimum flows. During this conference call, and in a follow-up

⁴ As stated in the licensee's addendum an exposed redd is one that has been exposed to the point that the pit is dry. A dewatered redd is one that has been exposed for 8 daylight hours consecutively or 12 darkness hours consecutively, prior to November 15, or 8 hours consecutively anytime after November 15.

conference call with the FTC on March 11, 2005, the FTC requested fry stranding surveys on the Cowlitz River to assess the impact of flow reductions upon emergent salmonid fry. The licensee states that, per these discussions, the fry stranding surveys on a site-specific and incident specific basis has been included in the addendum to the Fish Monitoring Plan.⁵ Additionally, copies of the cover letter and the addendum submittal to the Commission were sent to the FTC on March 17, 2005. The licensee states that no additional comments on the addendum were received from the FTC since the March submittal to the Commission.

DISCUSSION

As an addendum to their Fish Monitoring Plan, the licensee is proposing to survey for redd abandonment two or three times per year, prior to and following flow reduction events. Selected redds in the river margins at the survey sites would be measured and examined for exposure and dewatering. Additionally, since significant numbers of juvenile salmon may be stranded by lower Cowlitz River flow reductions in the springtime, site-specific and incident-specific juvenile fish stranding surveys would be conducted and coordinated with the WDFW.

The licensee's addendum fulfills the requirement set forth in the Commission's December 2, 2004 order, and therefore, should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The City of Tacoma's Fish Monitoring Plan Addendum, pursuant to the Commission's *Order Modifying and Approving Fish Monitoring Plan Pursuant to Article 15*, for the Cowlitz River Project, is approved.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order, pursuant to 18 CFR § 385.713.

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⁵ See the licensee's letter, filed June 17, 2005, regarding consultation with the FTC.