

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 108 FERC ¶ 62,079
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

City of Tacoma

Project No. 2016-066

ORDER APPROVING GRAVEL AUGMENTATION PLAN PURSUANT TO
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT LICENSE ARTICLE 10

(Issued July 26, 2004)

On March 17, 2004, the City of Tacoma (licensee) filed a Gravel Augmentation Plan, pursuant to article 10 contained in Appendix A of the Order Approving Settlement and Issuing New License for the Cowlitz River Project, issued on March 13, 2002.¹ The Project is located on the Cowlitz River, in Lewis County, Washington.

Article 10 requires the licensee to file, for Commission approval, a plan to augment spawning gravel below the Barrier Dam to enhance salmonid spawning habitat. The gravel augmentation plan shall include plans to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of gravel augmentation and a plan for the discontinuation of gravel augmentation if Barrier Dam is breached. The gravel augmentation plan shall be prepared in consultation with the Fisheries Technical Committee provided for in the August 2000 Settlement Agreement, or if the Settlement Agreement has become void, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Ecology and the Tribes for review and comment.

PROPOSED PLAN

The licensee will assess current bed armoring conditions from the Barrier Dam to River Mile 40. A baseline survey and report that will update the findings from the relicensing study will be prepared. A target reach and monitoring locations will be identified. The licensee will use native cobble and gravels from immediately upstream of Barrier Dam to reduce bed armoring in the reach below the dam. The licensee proposes an annual dredging amount of 500 cubic yards. The material will be placed in a pier extending out into the flow. These piers will be slowly eroded at higher flows and transported downstream.

¹ 98 FERC ¶ 61,274

Project No. 2016-066

2

If Barrier Dam is planned to be breached, the licensee will submit a study plan in advance of the breaching to monitor the post-breach adequacy of gravel supplies and mitigate for any identified gravel shortfalls in the affected reach.

To monitor the site, substrate samples will be collected at identified gravel sampling sites during the baseline study and then at two year intervals within the target reach for a period of ten years. The degree of bed armoring will be calculated as the difference in mean grain size between the layers. A baseline report will include conclusions regarding the target reach. Follow-up reports will be made at years 5 and 10 and will include determinations on the effectiveness of the initial program of placing 500 cubic yards of gravels in creating the desired benefits or if the program should be discontinued or expanded. All reports will include consultation with the required resource agencies prior to filing with the Commission.

The baseline survey, report, and first year gravel placement will occur in August of year one following the Commission's approval of the plan, and upon acquiring all necessary permits. An interim report to the Commission will be filed by December 31 of year five of the program and a final report with conclusions will be filed with the Commission in year ten.

AGENCY CONSULTATION

A draft of the Gravel Augmentation Plan was sent to the Fisheries Technical Committee and Tribes on January 21, 2004. A display discussing the proposed plan was made available to the public at an Open House on February 5, 2004. No comments were received on the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The licensee does not state whether the baseline report will be filed with the Commission. The licensee should file the baseline report with the Commission by December 31, 2004. The five-year interim and ten-year reports, and any proposed changes to the Gravel Augmentation Plan, should be filed for Commission approval. All of the reports should include documentation of agency and tribal consultation.

The licensee is reminded that article 417 of the Order Amending New License², issued July 9, 2004, requires the licensee to develop best management plans in consultation with NOAA Fisheries. These best management plans require Commission approval, prior to implementing the Gravel Augmentation Plan.

² 108 FERC ¶ 61,031

Project No. 2016-066

3

The filed Gravel Augmentation Plan should help enhance salmon spawning habitat. The filed plan, satisfies the requirements of article 10 contained in Appendix A of the Order Approving Settlement and Issuing New License for the Cowlitz River Project; this plan should be approved, as modified.

The Director orders:

(A) The Gravel Augmentation Plan, filed March 17, 2004, pursuant to article 10 contained in Appendix A of the Order Approving Settlement and Issuing New License, issued, on March 13, 2002, for the Cowlitz River Project, as modified by paragraph (B), is approved.

(B) The baseline study report shall be filed with the Commission by December 31, 2004. The five-year interim report and the ten-year comprehensive report shall be filed with the Commission by December 31 of year five and year ten of the study, respectively. The reports shall include for approval, any recommendations for changes to the Gravel Augmentation Plan. The reports shall be sent to the Fisheries Technical Committee provided for in the August 2000 Settlement Agreement, or if the Settlement Agreement has become void, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Ecology and the Tribes for review and comment. The licensee shall include with the report documentation of agency consultation, copies of comments and recommendations, and specific descriptions of how the agencies' and Tribes' comments are accommodated by the report. If the licensee does not adopt a recommendation, the filing shall include the licensee's reasons, based on site specific information.

(C) 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 C.F.R. § 385.713.

George H. Taylor
Chief, Biological Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance