
Attachments: PCDOCS1-#99059-v6-Study_Plan_Meeting_-_Meeting_Summary_6-14-07 easton.DOC

From: Robert Easton [mailto:Robert.Easton@ferc.gov]

Sent: Monday, July 02, 2007 6:56 AM

To: Shane Bickford

Subject: RE: Study_Plan_Meeting_-_Meeting_Summary_6-14-07.pdf

Shane,

Sorry to do this, but I made a few more changes. I revised the one sentence to indicate who made the statement and I deleted the other sentence that was just editing instructions.

Thanks,

Bob



Study Plan Meeting

Meeting Summary

Wells Hydroelectric Project Relicensing
Douglas County PUD Auditorium
1151 Valley Mall Parkway
East Wenatchee, Washington

June 14, 2007
9:00 am –12:00 pm

ATTENDEES:

Please see attached Sign-In Sheet for attendees.

Shane Bickford, Douglas PUD, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave an overview of the Proposed Study Plan (PSP) meeting goals and objectives and the materials handed out prior to the meeting (agenda, baseline study list, resource chronology and power point presentation). All of the studies contained within the PSP were based on FERC's seven study criteria, which is located within the pages of the PSP document, in the CFR, on FERC's website and on Douglas PUD's website.

In 2005, Douglas PUD began the Resource Work Group (RWG) meetings. The goals of the RWG meetings were to engage the stakeholders and to learn about FERC's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), identify and evaluate issues against FERC's Study Criteria, develop the study plans, and ultimately file the study plans in the Pre-Application Document (PAD). Douglas PUD wanted to get information out early to assist in the decision making process. Shane reviewed the list of Baseline Studies and FERC's seven study request criteria.

The 12 issues identified by the RWGs, that met FERC's seven study criteria, were collaboratively developed by the RWGs into "Agreed Upon" Study Plans and were included into the PAD and filed with FERC on December 1, 2006. An updated version of the 12 study plans were included in the PSP that was filed with FERC on May 16, 2007.

Scott Kreiter, Douglas PUD, discussed the objectives of the Cultural, Recreation and Land Use, and Terrestrial study plans contained within the PSP. The list of the study plans for these resource areas are as follows:

- Cultural – Cultural Resources Investigation
- Recreation and Land Use – Public Access Study, Recreational Needs Analysis
- Terrestrial – Nuisance Wildlife Control Study, Transmission Line Wildlife and Botanical Study

Bao Le, Douglas PUD, discussed the objectives of the Aquatic study plans contained within the PSP. The list of the study plans for this resource area is as follows:

- Aquatic – Juvenile Lamprey Study, Lamprey Spawning Assessment, Adult Lamprey Passage Study, Total Dissolved Gas Investigation, Water Temperature Study, DO, pH and Turbidity Study, Okanogan Toxins Study

Shane Bickford gave a summary of the stakeholder's study requests filed with FERC by the April 2nd deadline. He also reviewed the criteria that Douglas PUD used to identify a study request and reviewed the criteria used to categorize study requests as either formal or informal study requests.

Eleven comment/study request letters were filed with FERC by the April 2nd deadline for study requests. Douglas PUD categorized each study request as either a formal or informal study request. Douglas PUD counted only one formal study request. The other ten study requests were considered informal due to their lack of information. All of the 11 study requests (formal and informal) were categorized further as being: 1) Appropriate for Study, 2) Appropriate for Study with Alternative Methodology, or 3) Not Appropriate for Study. None of the 11 study requests were grouped into the first category, four (4) were grouped into the second category and seven (7) were grouped into the third category.

Summary of Stakeholder Study Requests

Recreation and Socioeconomic Issues – Study Requests deemed Appropriate with Alternative Study Methodology

Cities of Brewster & Pateros – Visitor Information Center

Cities of Brewster & Pateros – Need for Public Use Facilities and Access

Cities of Brewster & Pateros – Boat Storage

Scott Kreiter provided Douglas PUD's view of the Visitor Information Center, Boat Storage and Public Use study requests. Douglas PUD viewed all three of these requests as informal study requests as they did not attempt to address FERC's seven study criteria. Scott indicated that rather than studying whether a new visitor information center, boat storage or any new public use facilities would increase visitor use of the project area that it would be more appropriate to first study whether there is an identified need for various recreational improvements and then, if a need has been identified and that need is closely related to project purposes, Douglas PUD will work with stakeholders to determine how best to meet those needs.

George Brady, City of Pateros, informed the meeting participants that the Visitor Center at Wells Dam was closed in 2001. He did not view this study request as a request for a new facility but as a reminder that Douglas PUD needs to either open or replace the existing center. David Turner and Bob Easton, FERC, asked how Douglas PUD would assess the number of people using the visitor center given that it is now closed and did the PUD have any available data on visitor use? Scott Kreiter indicated that the PUD had conducted a Visitor Use Assessment in 2005-2006 and that the data from that study would be used during the development of the Needs Assessment. Shane Bickford added that the Wells Dam Visitor Center has a visitor log that includes the number of visits observed both before and after September 2001. Jim Eychaner, IAC, mentioned that Washington State has available information and that data may be helpful during the development of the Needs Assessment.

Betty Wagoner – Access to Wells Reservoir

Scott Kreiter indicated that this issue was also categorized as an informal study requests as it did not attempt to address FERC’s seven study criteria. Douglas PUD does not believe a study is needed for the requested information as this issue will be addressed in the Shoreline Management Plan. This management plan will balance the needs for fish and wildlife habitat protection versus the desire by local stakeholders to have private docks located on Douglas PUD property within the Wells Project boundary.

City of Pateros – Impacts of Wells Project on Local Communities

Scott Kreiter indicated that this was the only study request that attempted to address FERC’s seven study criteria. He also indicated that Douglas PUD was not proposing to conduct this study because the information would not be of use during the development of license requirements and because the study was focused on original project impacts that were already mitigated during the term of the first license. He also indicated that there are a lot of factors that impact the economy and that socio-economic studies can be very subjective. The issues raised are not appropriate for study but may be better suited to a one-on-one discussion between Douglas PUD and the City of Pateros. George Brady stated that he thinks that Wells Dam has had a negative impact on all three cities and in particular on Pateros during project construction. George indicated that the entire downtown business corridor was displaced by the Project and that these impacts have not been properly mitigated.

Bob Easton, FERC, pointed out that FERC has historically not required licensees to compensate adjacent communities for original project impacts during relicensing. He asked George Brady what he would do with the information collected from the proposed socio-economics study. He encouraged Pateros to look for the nexus to ongoing project operations. David Turner, FERC, said that this meeting and the upcoming filing deadline provide an opportunity for the City of Pateros to present additional information to bolster their study request. As written, the current socio-economics study request is not expected to be recommended given FERC’s prior precedence. David and Bob indicated that based on what they have seen in other proceedings, the Commission does not generally require improvements to a city’s infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer, in a relicensing case. Usually these improvements are the responsibility of the city.

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City of Brewster – Sewer Treatment Plant Expansion

Scott Kreiter indicated that Douglas PUD categorized this study request as an informal study request as it did not attempt to address FERC’s seven study criteria. Scott also indicated that this is not a project related issue and has no nexus to project operations. Lee Webster, City of Brewster, indicated that this was not a study request but rather a placeholder for future discussions related to expansion of the sewer treatment plant. Lee Webster said that the city is undergoing its third phase of updating the sewer. The next phase will have to last for the next 15-20 years and will be cost prohibitive for the city. There is no room for expansion at the existing site.

City of Pateros – Maintenance and Operation of Recreation Facilities

Scott Kreiter indicated that Douglas PUD categorized this study request as an informal study request as it did not attempt to address FERC’s seven study criteria. Scott also indicated that costs for Operation & Maintenance could not accurately be developed until the Needs Assessment has developed an accurate picture of future needs and proposed facilities.

Terrestrial Wildlife and Botanical Issues – Study Requests Not Appropriate for Study

Bureau of Indian Affairs – Pre-Project Habitat Evaluation

Scott Kreiter indicated that Douglas PUD categorized this study request as an informal study request as it did not attempt to address FERC’s seven study criteria. Scott noted that BIA recently toured the Wells Project and the BIA representatives indicated that they were comfortable with the wetland and riparian mitigation measures currently in place and expected to be in place during the next license term. However, BIA indicated that they still may file comments in the future should other issues arise.

Transmission Line Surveys

David Turner, FERC, pointed out that avian electrocution and collision with project transmission line was identified as an issue at scoping based on our understanding of the issue statement. The transmission study proposes to look at habitat types and for evidence of dead birds, but does not explain how a risk assessment would be conducted. David Turner recommended that Douglas and the resource work group consider and develop a risk assessment protocol that clearly describes how the assessment of project impacts will be conducted. David Turner pointed to the example of a risk assessment protocol used by PacifiCorp that is described in AVIAN PROTECTION PLAN (APP) GUIDELINES issued by the Edison Electric Institute and Fish and Wildlife Service.

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Shane Bickford, Douglas PUD, indicated that the study plans contained within the PSP were developed through active negotiations and that the intent was to agree on the goals and objectives for each study and that each of the documents was rigorously reviewed and collaboratively developed by the RWGs. The methods sections are as specific as each RWG choose to make them and varies from being very general for the cultural resource study plan to very specific in the adult lamprey spawning assessment and adult lamprey telemetry study plans.

As a general matter, David Turner, FERC, wanted to stress a couple of points with regard to studies. Specific methods should be identified or spelled out in each study plan to the greatest extent possible. For example, make sure the timeframes for searching for noxious weeds or protected plants within the transmission line corridor are clearly defined. We are trying to avoid criticisms of study methods later in the process that may lead to recommendations for further study.

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Douglas PUD agreed to update the 230 kV transmission line study to increase the level of specificity related to methods and survey techniques and to update the Recreation Needs Assessment to include several of the issues discussed during today’s meeting.

Aquatic and Water Quality Issues – Study Requests deemed Appropriate for Study with Alternative Study Methodology

WDFW – Toxins Study

Bao Le, Douglas PUD, informed the group that Douglas PUD met with WDFW on May 26, 2007 to discuss their proposed alterations to the existing toxins study plan. After clarifying the study design, it was agreed that there was no need to expand the scope of the existing (PSP proposed) toxins study to include the sampling sites on the mainstem Columbia River. Bob Heinith, Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, asked if the toxins study would be sampling any anadromous fish species. Bao Le, Douglas PUD, indicated that the study will sample toxins in the tissue of three species of resident fish. The fish selected for sampling are of recreational interest, live within or adjacent to the Wells Project their entire life and are the same species sampled by WDOE during past surveys.

Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW, asked whether there has been a toxin study conducted on the mainstem Columbia River. Bao indicated that he was not aware of any sampling and that there was no indication that there has been a toxins problem along the mainstem Columbia River, within the Wells Reservoir.

Lee Webster, City of Brewster, wanted to know why large mouth bass were not included in the toxins study. Shane Bickford, Douglas PUD, indicated that the intent of the study was to follow-up on recommendations made within the WDOE's Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP). The DIP recommended that future monitoring be conducted to track the levels of toxins found in fish and sediment over time to determine whether toxin levels are being diluted by new, cleaner material entering the river or whether the prevalence of DDT and PCBs are increasing. Therefore the toxin study plan is based around sampling the same fish that were sampled during prior studies conducted by WDOE. Bob Heinith, CRITFC, asked about whether the study would also be looking at the percentage of toxins in the sediment of the Okanogan River. Shane Bickford, Douglas PUD, indicated that several past studies have collected and analyzed sediments sampling for toxins and that the study proposed by Douglas PUD, in the PSP, will also include sediment sampling using the same or similar sampling protocol. Bao Le indicated that indeed the study will look at sediment cores and that sampling sites were identified based upon their tie to human health concerns (recreation sites). The results of the study will be used to educate and inform recreational user of the Okanogan River, within Project Boundary.

Aquatic and Water Quality Issues – Study Requests Not Appropriate for Study

WDFW – Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Bao Le described Douglas PUD's rationale for not proposing to conduct WDFW's AIS study request. Douglas PUD categorized this study request as an informal study request as it did not attempt to address FERC's seven study criteria. Bao Le, indicated that Douglas PUD did not consider this study request appropriate for study because the request information is already being collecting through coordinated activities with Portland State and WDFW Nuisance Species program. Current efforts include annual quagga mussel and zebra mussel monitoring and the completion of a base studies on aquatic weeds, including milfoil, and exotic macroinvertebrates. Therefore

These issues were discussed with WDFW and they agreed that because the information was already being collected that there was no additional need to conduct a separate relicensing study on Aquatic Invasive Species.

WDFW – Pikeminnow Removal Program on Resident Fish

Bao Le discussed that Douglas PUD is already doing a number of things to address this issue on a yearly basis and have discussed this issue with WDFW. It was decided that no additional RWG meetings were needed to discuss this issue as Douglas PUD had previously met with WDFW, on May 26th, and that at that meeting WDFW agreed that there was no need to conduct this study during the ILP study period.

This concluded the discussion of the stakeholder study requests.

Shane Bickford asked for additional comments related to the studies discussed during today's meeting.

There was a discussion on the Shoreline Management Plan and how this management plan will address a variety of issues that are common to all of the resource areas. Lamprey predation was discussed at length. Bao Le said no one knows how to quantify population abundance for juvenile Pacific lamprey. Sampling technology is still being developed and little is known about the behavior of juvenile lamprey in the substrate. George Brady was concerned about the effects of low water on juvenile lamprey. Bao Le mentioned that 98% of the time, Wells Dam operates within 2 feet of the normal elevation (781). It is difficult to quantify the impact of operations on juvenile lamprey given that lamprey collection techniques are still rather crude and unable to accurately count the number of lamprey in a given area of reservoir strata.

Susan Rosebrough, [National Park Service](#), and [Lee Webster, Brewster](#), asked whether issues related to the Recreational Use Assessment had been resolved. In particular Susan and Lee wanted to know if prior questions related to the conduct of the Visitor Use Assessments had been addressed. Specifically, questions related to counts of people participating during festivals, "after-hours" counting and collection of data from minority user groups that did not speak English. Scott Kreiter, Douglas PUD, mentioned that he would follow up with [Lee and Susan](#) to address [their](#) questions about how Douglas PUD had addressed prior questions related to the Visitor Use Assessment.

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Shane Bickford went over the ILP timeline and talked about when the next round of comments are due. Douglas PUD will get together with folks who have raised issues today in an effort to understand and hopefully resolve their issues. Shane Bickford asked if there were any other issues to be covered during today's meeting.

Steve Lewis, FWS, raised questions about scientific validity for certain studies and that there may be a need for 2 years of studies for specific issues. Shane Bickford indicated that the second year of ILP studies is intended to answer questions from the first year, if there are any. Bao agreed that if the data are insufficient, then a second year will need to be done. David Turner and Robert Easton, FERC, indicated that the regulation was developed to address the need for a second year of study. The regulations indicate that a second year of study shall be based upon the failure to achieve the goals identified in the first year study plan. A second year of study might also be required in the instance that the field season, for the first year study, was not representative of average conditions (e.g. high water or dry year). Scenarios were discussed including what would happen if sample size targets for a study were not met or what would

happen if the study year was unusually dry or wet. FERC staff reviewed their criteria for determining whether there is a need for a second year.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.