

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
Division of Hydropower Administration and Compliance  
Washington D.C. 20426

Office of Energy Projects

Project No. 2149-159—Washington  
Wells Hydroelectric Project  
Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County

**July 9, 2013**

Mr. Bill Dobbins, General Manager  
Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County  
1151 Valley Mall Parkway  
East Wenatchee, WA 98802-4497

**Subject: 2012 Aquatic Settlement Agreement Annual Report**

Dear Mr. Dobbins:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your first set of Settlement Agreement<sup>1</sup> reports filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on May 31, 2013. Article 406 of the license<sup>2</sup> for the Wells Hydroelectric Project requires you to submit six monitoring reports on an annual basis by May 31. The plans are required by the Settlement Agreement, which is incorporated into the project license by ordering paragraphs (F), (G), and (H). These plans include White Sturgeon, Bull Trout, Pacific Lamprey, Resident Fish, Aquatic Nuisance Species, and Water Quality Management. The annual reports are intended to document the activities and results of all studies as well as any additional measures completed pursuant to the Settlement Agreement each year.

Your report highlights a number of activities conducted during 2012. Regarding the White Sturgeon Management Plan, you have developed plans to start collecting broodstock, fertilized eggs, and larval fish in June and July of 2013. To increase suitability for white sturgeon rearing, you indicated that you will complete construction updates to the Wells Hatchery before the sampling occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Aquatic Settlement Agreement was filed with the Commission on May 27, 2010 pursuant to Rule 602 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 CFR 385.602 Federal Power Act 16 USC § 791(a) – 825(r).

<sup>2</sup> Order Issuing New License. 141 FERC ¶ 62,104 (issued November 9, 2012).

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You provided details pertaining to the 2017 Bull Trout Passage Evaluation Study, as required by the Aquatic Settlement Working Group (ASWG).<sup>3</sup> During 2012, only one sub-adult bull trout was collected in the fishways during winter maintenance activities. Genetic samples were taken from bull trout collected at the Twisp Weir but have not yet been analyzed.

You report that, in coordination with the University of Washington's School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, you researched the potential effects of fishway entrance water velocity on salmonids. This data was used to estimate the optimum head differential for Pacific lamprey migration. You also indicated that new PIT-tag detection systems were installed for enhanced detection of adult lamprey. In October 2012, the ASWG approved the Wells Dam Adult Lamprey Passage and Enumeration Study Plan, which is planned for 2013.

Your report also contained updated survey results for invasive crayfish, mussels, northern pike, and aquatic macrophytes. You did not capture enough crayfish to draw any significant conclusions about invasive/native assemblages, but you developed a database for improved crayfish monitoring. No indications of zebra or Quagga mussels were observed. The invasive macrophyte, Eurasian milfoil, was found to be subdominant in 15 percent of your aquatic plant survey samples. Pesticides were applied to the Eurasian milfoil in three swim areas.

Total dissolved gases were monitored frequently during peak use of the fish bypass, and migrating salmonids were sampled and examined for signs of gas bubble trauma. Your reports states that 1.25 percent of all fish showed signs of gas bubble trauma and that Coho salmon were most susceptible. During hatchery broodstock activities, none of the over 800 adult salmon showed signs of gas bubble trauma despite total dissolved gasses exceeding 125 percent.

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<sup>3</sup> The Aquatic Settlement Working Group consists of at least one representative from each of the following agencies and organizations: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Indian Nation, and the licensee. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has elected to waive regular participation, but it receives all documents and reserves the right to participate as desired. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs participates intermittently as an observer, but it receives all documents and reserves the right to participated as desired.

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You also included an extensive record of your consultation with other members of the ASWG. The ASWG met a number of times throughout the year and collaborated within the group via phone and electronic communication. Though abundant, the comments regarding Settlement Agreement activities and the monitoring reports focused on content and clarity of the reports. You incorporated these comments into the final Settlement Agreement report appropriately.

Review of your report indicates that it satisfies the filing requirements of the aforementioned order. Please be advised that, while Commission staff will continue to review these filings, staff will no longer issue acknowledgement letters for future filings under this license requirement, unless further Commission action is needed. When your future filings for this requirement are posted on the Commission's e-library system, you may consider that as acknowledgment of the Commission's receipt of your submittal.

Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to your next report due May 31, 2014. If you have any questions concerning this letter please contact me at (202) 502-8038 or [alicia.burtner@ferc.gov](mailto:alicia.burtner@ferc.gov).

Sincerely,

Alicia Burtner  
Fish Biologist  
Division of Hydropower Administration  
and Compliance

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