

Initial Study Report Meeting Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project FERC Project No. 308

Day 2 - January 16, 2013





Welcome

Purpose of Meeting:

- to review the study methods and results to date,
- to discuss PacifiCorp's proposed modifications, if any, to the study plan in light of the progress of the studies and data collected.

Introductions

Process Schedule

Wallowa Falls Relicensing - Near Term Schedule

Party	Milestone	Date
FERC	Director's Study Plan Determination	January 4, 2012
PacifiCorp	Conduct Studies	Spring-Fall 2012
All stakeholders	Study Progress Meeting	October 23, 2012
PacifiCorp	Study Progress Report	November 30, 2012
PacifiCorp	File Initial Study Report (ISR)	January 3, 2013
All stakeholders	Initial Study Report Meeting	By January 17, 2013
PacifiCorp	File ISR Meeting Summary	By February 2, 2013
All Stakeholders	Disputes/Requests to Amend Study Plan Due to FERC	March 3, 2013
All Stakeholders	Responses to Requests Due to FERC	April 3, 2013
FERC	Director's Determination	May 3, 2013
PacifiCorp	Second Study Season <small>(as needed)</small>	Spring Summer 2013
PacifiCorp	Final Technical Report <small>(assumes 1 study season)</small>	June 2013
PacifiCorp	File Preliminary Licensing Proposal	October 1, 2013

Party	Milestone	Date
All stakeholders	Preliminary Licensing Proposal Comments Due	December 30, 2013
PacifiCorp	File Updated Study Report (USR)	January 3, 2014
All stakeholders	Updated Study Report Meeting	By January 17, 2013
PacifiCorp	File USR Meeting Summary	February 2, 2014
PacifiCorp	File Final License Application	February 28, 2014
PacifiCorp	Issue Public Notice of App. Filing	March 14, 2014
Party	Post Filing Milestone	Date
FERC	Issue Public Tendering Notice	March 14, 2014
FERC	Director's Determination on Any Additional Study Requests	March 30, 2014
FERC	Issue Ready for EA Notice	April 29, 2014
Agencies	Terms, Condit's, Recomm's Due	June 28, 2014
FERC	Issue License Order	March 25, 2015

Land Use, Aesthetics and Recreation Resources

Mark Greenig
Planner
CH₂M Hill



Land Use (Slide LI)

Objectives:

- Document existing land uses in the Study Area along with identifying applicable land use and management plans.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of changes to Project facilities and operations related to relicensing with land uses in the Study Area and their consistency with applicable land use and management plans.



Land Use (Slide L2)

Methods:

- Identified and summarized applicable components of the current WWNF Forest Plan, Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan, and Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan and associated ordinances.
- Conducted a generalized inventory of existing land uses.
- Identified potential conflicts with the land uses and plans identified above.



Land Use (Slide L3)

Study Area:

- Composed of lands within and adjacent to the proposed FERC Project boundary.
- Existing FERC Project boundary excluded portions of the forebay access road and tailrace channels.
- Proposed FERC Project boundary would include all of the forebay access road and portions of tailrace channels not currently in FERC Project boundary.

Field Work Conducted to Date:

- All field work is complete.



Land Use (Slide L4)

Study Status:

- Have data needed. Maps developed have been reviewed by Wallowa County for accuracy. Need to add some WWNF non-GIS data to maps and have WWNF review for accuracy.
- Existing land uses and relevant parts of Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan, WWNF Forest Plan, and Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan have been identified and described in Draft Study.



Land Use (Slide L5)

Variance to Study Plan:

- No variances from the study plan have occurred to date.

Potential Additional Work:

- Final results and recommendations will be presented in the Final Land Use Technical Report, which is anticipated to be completed by June, 2013.



Land Use (Slide L6)

Findings: *Organization of Presentation:*

- Land ownership.
- Land use.
- Identification of applicable federal and local land use and resource management plans and consistency of Project facilities and operations with those plans.



Land Use (Slide L7)

Land Ownership:

- The northern 1/3 of FERC Project boundary located on lands owned by PacifiCorp. Lands adjacent to the FERC Project boundary include non-Project PacifiCorp lands and private lands.
- The southern 2/3 of the FERC Project boundary is located on National Forest System (NFS) land.
- PacifiCorp has leased 12 acres to OPRD for the Little Alps Day Use Area and Wallowa State Park Maintenance facility since 1954.



Land Use (Slide L8)

Land Use:

- Lands adjacent to northern 1/3 of FERC Project boundary are primarily used for recreation but also include transportation and power transmission.
- NFS lands adjacent to Project are used for conservation and recreation (the Eagle Cap Wilderness is 0.25 mile from the Project boundary). The portion of the Project on NFS land has been used for hydro-electric generation since 1924 and is permitted as a special use by WWNF.



Land Use (Slide L9)

Applicable Federal and Local Plans:

- Two entities, the U.S. Forest Service and Wallowa County, manage lands and resources in the Study Area and have developed management plans.
- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
 - Lands managed under 1990 Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).
 - FERC Project boundary is located in a management area designated as Backcountry.



Land Use (Slide LI0)

Applicable Federal and Local Plans (continued)

- Areas designated as Backcountry are managed to emphasize dispersed recreation and remain relatively natural and undeveloped.
- Special-use permit issued to PacifiCorp by WWNF in 1993 and is valid until December 3, 2016.



Land Use (Slide L11)

Applicable Federal and Local Plans (continued)

- The Eagle Cap Wilderness is managed under the Forest Plan as well as the Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan.
 - The Eagle Cap Wilderness is located approximately 0.25 miles south of the FERC Project boundary – the primary relationship between the E.C. Wilderness and the Project is related to managing the experience of recreationists passing by the Project on their way to the wilderness area.



Land Use (Slide LI2)

Consistency with Forest Plan:

- The issuance of a special use permit for the Project by the WWNF indicates a history of approval of the Project by the WWNF, subject to conditions in the FERC licenses that have been granted to the Project in the past.
- Management directives for Backcountry emphasize opportunities for dispersed recreation activities and having the landscape remain relatively natural and undeveloped.



Land Use (Slide LI3)

Consistency with Forest Plan (continued)

- PacifiCorp has, and will, assist the WWNF in meeting the directive of providing opportunities for dispersed recreation in the WWNF by:
 - Allowing recreational access from the Wallowa Lake area through PacifiCorp lands into the WWNF and Eagle Cap Wilderness so that the public can participate in dispersed recreation activities.
 - Allowing the Wallowa Lake Trailhead on PacifiCorp land and use by the public of the Project's forebay access road.



Land Use (Slide LI4)

Consistency with Forest Plan (continued)

- PacifiCorp will improve the visual setting of the portion of the Project on NFS lands so that the directive of having the landscape remain relatively natural and undeveloped will be more closely realized.
- The measures will reduce the visual presence of Project recreationists passing by on trails.
- These potential mitigation measures are described in the Aesthetics and Visual Resource Draft Study Plan and will be described later in this presentation.



Land Use (Slide LI5)

Wallowa County:

- Project is located within Wallowa County and managed under the 2003 Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan.
- The Project is located in parts of three land use plan designation zones:
 - Resort Commercial Recreation
 - Resort Park-Restricted
 - Timber Commercial



Land Use (Slide LI 6)

Wallowa County (continued)

- Power generation and transmission at facilities are allowed as conditional uses in all three zones – the Project is consistent with the county comprehensive plan.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A1)

Objectives:

- Document the existing aesthetic and visual character of the assessment area, Project facilities, and operations (noise and flows in bypass reach).
- Evaluate how/if changes to Project facilities and operations related to relicensing would impact aesthetic and visual character.
- Determine if changes to Project facilities and operations related to relicensing would be consistent with applicable land management planning goals for aesthetic and visual resources.
- Identify opportunities for mitigation measures.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A2)

Methods:

- Documented in text and with photographs the aesthetic and visual characteristics of the Study Area.
- Identified existing aesthetic and visual management goals and requirements.
- Reviewed potential conflicts with existing aesthetic and visual management goals contained in the WWNF Forest Plan and Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan and associated ordinances.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A3)

Study Area:

- For visual resources the Study Area extends 0.5 mile from the Project boundary.
- For noise, considered to be an aesthetic resource, the Study Area is an approximate 3-mile radius around the Project powerhouse.

Field Work Conducted to Date:

- All field work completed.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A4)

Study Status:

- Visual resources documentation completed. Existing conditions and applicable planning goals and requirements identified.
- Photo documentation of Project facilities and Project operations (flow comparisons in bypass reach) completed.

Variance to Study Plan:

- No variances from the study plan have occurred to date.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A5)

Potential Additional Work:

- If applicable standards used to gauge the degree to which noise associated with the powerhouse exceeds suggested or required standards are found, powerhouse noise will be examined to determine if the noise meets or exceeds such standards.
- Final results and recommendations will be presented in the Final Technical Report which is anticipated to be completed in June 2013.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A6)

Findings: *Organization of Presentation*

- Review the documentation of existing aesthetics and visual resource conditions in the assessment area.
- Evaluate how/if changes to Project facilities and operations related to relicensing would impact aesthetics and visual resources.
- Identify applicable federal and local land use and resource management plans and describe consistency of Project facilities and operations with policies in those plans related to aesthetics and visual resources.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A7)

Aesthetics and Visual Resource Conditions of Assessment Area:

- Described Project facilities, where seen from, and if facilities currently meet visual/aesthetic objectives of applicable plans for lands near the facilities (see Table 4.2-1).
- Included photographs of Project facilities in Appendix A and photographs of two release flows being considered as minimum flows into the bypass reach in Appendix B.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A8)

Impacts to Aesthetic and Visual Character from Changes to Project Facilities and Operations Associated with Relicensing:

- Due to terrain and heavy vegetation, the visibility of most Project facilities is limited, so changes to them will have localized impacts to aesthetic and visual character.
- Mitigation measures suggested below will help Project facilities better fit in with their surroundings.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A9)

Impacts to Aesthetic and Visual Character from Changes to Project Facilities and Operations Associated with Relicensing (continued)

- The minimum flow released into the bypass reach (currently 0.5 cfs) will be increased as part of relicensing which will improve the aesthetic condition of the bypass reach, particularly during low flow conditions.
- The increased flow will be most noticeable on PacifiCorp land where the bypass reach can be seen from the forebay access road.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A10)

Impacts to Aesthetic and Visual Character from Changes to Project Facilities and Operations Associated with Relicensing (continued)

- Photographs of the bypass reach at two different flows being considered as minimum flows (5 cfs and 8 cfs) from four locations were taken and displayed in Appendix B.
 - There was relatively little difference between the two flows in terms of aesthetic characteristics
 - Both flows would be substantial improvement over the existing 0.5 cfs minimum flow.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A11)

Impacts to Aesthetic and Visual Character from Changes to Project Facilities and Operations Associated with Relicensing (continued)

- All of the portion of the Project in the WWNF is surrounded by areas that were assigned a Visual Quality Objective (VQO) of Retention (which is the second most restrictive VQO) in the Forest Plan.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A12)

Impacts to Aesthetic and Visual Character from Changes to Project Facilities and Operations Associated with Relicensing (continued)

- Although the Project has been permitted as a special use and is therefore consistent with the management intentions of the WWNF, USFS policy requires that attempts to be made to reduce the visual impacts of projects on NFS lands. Mitigation measures were developed to address this concern.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A13)

Impacts to Aesthetic and Visual Character from Changes to Project Facilities and Operations Associated with Relicensing (continued)

- The Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan does mention some items related to scenery and visual resources, but none that apply to the Project.
- No applicable county, state, NFS (although the powerhouse is not on NFS lands), or other standards used to gauge degree to which noise associated with the powerhouse exceeds suggested or required standards have been found. If standards are discovered before submittal of Final Technical Report, noise associated with the powerhouse will be examined to determine if the noise meets or exceeds such standards.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A14)

Potential Mitigation Measures to Consider for Project Facilities:

- Plant vegetation between the East Fork Trail and the shoreline near the forebay to screen views of the forebay, dam, spillway, catwalk, dam laydown area, and storage area from people using the trail.
- Modify the intake structure to make it more attractive and similar in character with storage shed (cabin) in the laydown area.
- Treat (stain) the timber support members of the upper trestle that are light in color a darker color so that all support timbers are the same color.



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A15)

Potential Mitigation Measures to Consider for Project Facilities (continued)

- Powerhouse – partially screen area and make more attractive with landscaping along the portion of area abutting the Joseph-Wallowa Lake Highway turnaround area.
- Modify or replace chain-link fence on side abutting the Joseph-Wallowa Lake Highway turnaround area with a more attractive fencing material or, at a minimum, black-coated vinyl chain-link fence (if this option is chosen, replace all chain-link fence with black-coated vinyl fencing).



Aesthetics and Visual Resources

(Slide A16)

Potential Mitigation Measures to Consider for Project Facilities (continued)

- Add interpretive signage near facility that will explain the history and function of the Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project, Pacific Park, the local trail system, and other features.



Recreation (Slide R1)

Objectives:

- Characterize existing recreation opportunities and use levels within the study area.
- Identify both existing and future recreation needs related to the Project over the term of the new license.

Methods:

- Recreation Supply Analysis: inventoried recreation facilities and use areas in the Study Area and their condition.
- Recreation Use and Demand Analysis: identified existing recreational demand in the Study Area and estimated future demand for various activities of interest – need some additional data from WWNF and OPRD.



Recreation (Slide R2)

Methods (continued)

- Recreation Needs Analysis: will synthesize, compile and analyze the results of all of the above in the Final Technical Report. This analysis will identify existing and future recreation needs over the potential term of the new license (30 to 50 years).

Study Area:

- Approximate one mile radius around the FERC Project boundary.

Field Work Conducted to Date:

- All field work is complete and no field work is planned for 2013.



Recreation (Slide R3)

Study Status:

- Recreation Supply Analysis – essentially complete, but do need to discuss ADA needs and opportunities in the Study Area with ODPR and WWNF.
- Recreation Use and Demand Analysis
 - Have vehicle traffic counts from OPRD – need visitation data for Wallowa Lake State Park and Little Alps day use area (if available from OPRD).
 - Need Wallowa Lake Trailhead data from WWNF (if available from WWNF).
 - Have three years of Pacific Park campground use data.



Recreation (Slide R4)

Study Status (continued)

Recreation Use and Demand Analysis (continued)

- Have winter trail count use on Project forebay road and summer/fall count of social trail between Pacific Park campground and the ridge area between Pacific Park and West Fork Wallowa River gorge.
- Need input from WWNF and OPRD to help identify future (out to 30-50 years) demand of Wallowa Lake State Park and activities/interests/needs related to using or accessing Eagle Cap Wilderness.



Recreation (Slide R5)

Study Status (continued)

- Recreation Needs Analysis
 - Need to synthesize, compile, and analyze results of above analyses into one synthesis study report to help identify existing and future recreation needs.

Variance to Study Plan

- No variances from the study plan have occurred to date.

Potential Additional Work

- Final results and recommendations will be presented in the Final Recreation Resources Technical Report, which is anticipated to be completed by June, 2013.



Recreation (Slide R6)

Findings: Conclusions, Recommendations and Discussion – *Organization of Presentation*

- Recreation Use and Demand Conclusions
- Recreation Supply Conclusions
 - PacifiCorp Lands
 - Little Alps Day Use Area
 - WWNF



Recreation (Slide R7)

Findings: Conclusions, Recommendations and Discussion – *Organization of Presentation* **(continued)**

- Recreation Supply Recommendations
 - PacifiCorp Lands
 - Little Alps Day Use Area
 - WWNF



Recreation (Slide R8)

Recreation Use and Demand Conclusions:

- Project helps meet demand for types of outdoor activities identified in SCORP that are popular in Wallowa County and likely will continue to be popular in the future (see Table 4.2-1 of Recreation Resources Study Progress Report).
- During peak recreational use months of July and August, demand for some activities such as camping (particularly at Wallowa Lake State Park) exceeds the supply.



Recreation (Slide R9)

Recreation Use and Demand Conclusions (continued)

- There are opportunities for the Project to more effectively help meet these demands.



Recreation (Slide R10)

Recreation Use and Demand Conclusions (continued)

- Ability of Project to directly help support existing and future recreation needs should focus on types of activities that are supported on PacifiCorp Project lands (or trails passing through them). These include various types of camping as well as popular activities identified in SCORP that occur via trails (e.g., hiking, big game hunting, fishing, nature observation, nature photography).



Recreation (Slide R 11)

Recreation Use and Demand Conclusions (continued)

- Developing trails and controlling the creation of user-created trails on PacifiCorp land will be a valuable contribution to the trail system in the Study Area.
- Opportunities are available for Project to help meet needs of other types of popular activities identified in SCORP by upgrading area near powerhouse (make more attractive, add interpretive material, maps and better signage) and potentially teaming with OPRD to upgrade Little Alps Day Use Area (which will support popular and growing activities such as picnicking, relaxing, and back-country use).



Recreation (Slide R12)

Recreation Supply Conclusions – PacifiCorp Lands:

- PacifiCorp Park Campground is popular during July and August, provides a more rustic camping experience than other campgrounds in the Study Area, and helps meet a demand for less developed camping.
- Better site definition of campsites at Pacific Park Campground may be warranted as well as providing better ADA accessibility to facilities (particularly at one or both of the vault toilets).



Recreation (Slide R13)

Recreation Supply Conclusions – PacifiCorp Lands (continued)

- Good opportunities to work with OPRD on connecting campground with Little Alps Day Use Area.
- Better communication with OPRD could allow Pacific Park Campground to help meet Study Area camping demands.
- User-created trails west of campground need to be controlled (some eliminated and some hardened) and linked (via signage) to WWNF trails.



Recreation (Slide R14)

Recreation Supply Conclusions – PacifiCorp Lands (continued)

- Winter recreationist crossing of Project catwalk over the dam to access the East Fork Trail after using the forebay access road to reach the forebay area should be addressed.



Recreation (Slide R15)

Recreation Supply Conclusions – Little Alps Day Use Area

- Little Alps Day Use Area is underused and does not have many facilities desired by area recreationists other than the restroom.
- Little Alps Day Use Area is mostly used by people parking along the Joseph-Wallowa Lake Highway and accessing the WWNF or the Eagle Cap Wilderness before or after their trips.



Recreation (Slide R16)

Recreation Supply Conclusions – Little Alps Day Use Area (continued)

- OPRD is concerned about the future of the Little Alps Day Use Area if in the future PacifiCorp does not renew its lease with OPRD.



Recreation (Slide R17)

Recreation Supply Conclusions – WWNF

- Eagle Cap Wilderness is a popular attraction that brings people to the Study Area to recreate.
- WWNF would like to know how many people entering the Eagle Cap Wilderness do so from user-created trails that originate at Pacific Park Campground or on nearby PacifiCorp land.
- Use data from the WWNF would be very useful, but much historic WWNF recreational use data was lost in the fire that destroyed the Eagle Cap Ranger Station in 2010.



Recreation (Slide R18)

Recreation Supply Recommendations – PacifiCorp Lands

- Make minor improvements to Pacific Park Campground related to better site definition for parking vehicles, campsites privacy, ADA ramps to vault toilets, etc.
- Consider joint management of the campground and Little Alps Day Use Area (perhaps a campground host) with OPRD. Consider ADA improvements that would be of value to recreationists using either/both facilities.



Recreation (Slide R19)

Recreation Supply Recommendations – PacifiCorp Lands (continued)

- Harden and improve one or more of the user-created trails that provide access from the campground to the top of the adjacent ridge and to the WWNF.



Recreation (Slide R20)

Recreation Supply Recommendations – PacifiCorp Lands (continued)

- Install new signage and maps at and near the campground to direct people to new improved trails that were user-created and encourage them to use developed trails.
- Eliminate and/or discourage the use of user-created trails by replanting vegetation, adding rocks or logs to block access, etc.
- Construct a more formal lookout area on top of the ridge that provides view of Wallowa Lake and the West Fork Wallowa River gorge.



Recreation (Slide R21)

Recreation Supply Recommendations – PacifiCorp Lands (continued)

- Install new signs near the Wallowa Lake Trailhead (work with WWNF) to better identify trail options on PacifiCorp lands in the Study Area for recreationists to consider (for example, encourage them to visit the waterfall near the lower penstock trestle).
- Provide a registration box or kiosk in the Pacific Park Campground at the beginning of a refurbished trail to the ridge so that people using the trail who intend to enter the Eagle Cap Wilderness can register (this location would also be convenient for WWNF staff to collect registration forms because it would be located near the Wallowa Lake Trailhead).



Recreation (Slide R22)

Recreation Supply Recommendations - OPRD

- Add electricity to the Little Alps Day Use Area restroom.
- Work with PacifiCorp and the WWNF to develop a one-night, group camping area (similar to those at Wallowa Lake State Park) at Little Alps Day Use Area for people to use to “bivouac” the night before entering the Eagle Cap Wilderness or the night after returning from their trip.
- Work with PacifiCorp to hire and support a seasonal campground host at Pacific Park Campground to help control the campground, the proposed bivouac group site, the rest of the Little Alps Day Use Area and communicate campground availability with OPRD staff at Wallowa Lake State Park.



Recreation (Slide R23)

Recreation Supply Recommendations - WWNF

- Work with PacifiCorp and the OPRD on items mentioned above.
- Work with PacifiCorp on implementing potential visual mitigation measures described in the Aesthetics and Visual Resource Draft Study Plan to improve the recreation experience of recreationists passing the dam and forebay area on the East Fork Trail.



Next Steps

- Parking lot items from today
- Additional comments or questions on material discussed?
- Identify unresolved issues and path for follow-up
- Adjourn