

Electronically filed October 26, 2020

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

**Subject: Bigfork Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 2652
2020 Whitewater Releases**

Dear Secretary Bose:

The Bigfork Hydroelectric Project (Bigfork project) is a 4.15-mega-watt hydroelectric facility located on the Swan River in Flathead County, Montana. PacifiCorp received a new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) operating license for the project on July 25, 2003. License article 403 required, in part, that PacifiCorp file a flow monitoring plan (Plan). The Plan requires measures to monitor reservoir elevations and flows in order to document compliance with the run-of-river mode of operation required by article 401, the minimum flow required by article 402, whitewater flows, and for other flow monitoring purposes. The Plan, submitted to FERC in January 2004, is the result of consultation between PacifiCorp and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (MFWP), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), United States Geological Survey (USGS), and American Whitewater Association (AWA).

On February 4, 2009, the FERC issued an order approving the whitewater flow release schedule proposed by PacifiCorp in a report filed with the FERC on January 23, 2007. Whitewater releases are provided every Wednesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. during the months of July and August, provided that flows, as measured at the Swan River U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) gauge, are 800 cubic feet per second (cfs) or greater at 8:00 a.m. on the day of the scheduled release.

Ordering paragraph (B) directs PacifiCorp to file a report with the FERC, prior to December 31 each year, which documents the days when whitewater flows were released to enhance whitewater boating, the flow amount provided on each release day, the Swan River USGS gauge readings that were taken at 8:00 a.m. on each scheduled flow release day, and how notification of whitewater flow release cancellation was provided to whitewater boaters on scheduled days when flow, at 8:00 a.m., was less than 800 cfs.

On September 14, 2020 PacifiCorp provided a copy of the whitewater flow releases to the stakeholders for their 30-day review and comment period (**Attachment A**). Comments received from the stakeholders is provided in **Attachment B**.

Table 1 shows that the required whitewater releases were made in 2020 according to the Commission’s order.

Table 1. Swan River Flow and Dates of 2020 Whitewater Flow Releases. Flow values are in cfs.

Swan River White Water Release 2020

Date	Release Y or N	USGS Flow @ 08:00	Wicket gate position @		Water used for generation @16:00	Water in bypass reach @16:00	Shutdown Time	Restart Time
			G1	G2				
July 1	N	3780	G1	100	660	>1500		
			G2	100				
			G3	100				
July 8	N	2530	G1	100	660	>1500		
			G2	100				
			G3	100				
July 15	Y	1880	G1	100	370	>1500	12:00	21:00
			G2	0				
			G3	80				
July 22	Y	1480	G1	0	0	>1400	12:00	21:00
			G2	0				
			G3	0				
July 29	Y	1170	G1	0	0	>1100	12:00	21:00
			G2	0				
			G3	0				
Aug. 5	Y	957	G1	0	0	>900	12:30	21:00
			G2	0				
			G3	0				
Aug. 12	Y	804	G1	0	0	>800	12:00	21:00
			G2	0				
			G3	0				
Aug. 19	N	631	G1	0				
			G2	0				
			G3	0				
Aug. 26	N	607	G1	0				
			G2	0				
			G3	0				

During the time period of July 1st and July 8th PacifiCorp did not release additional water. The greater than 1500 cfs requirement for the bypass reach was satisfied by the natural flow. On July 1st the Swan River flow was 3780 cfs, and on July 8th the flow was 2530 cfs. These high flows maintained greater than 1500 cfs in the bypass reach with full generation and no additional release of water was required.

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary – FERC-DC
Bigfork, 2020 Whitewater Releases, P-2652
October 26, 2020
Page 3

Each year the boating community is advised to visit the USGS Swan River Gauge website (http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?site_no=12370000) on scheduled release days to verify whether flows are 800 cfs or greater at 8:00 a.m. A flow less than 800 cfs indicates a release cancellation. A notice containing the gauge website information runs weekly in the local newspaper during the whitewater release season.

PacifiCorp intends to continue with this obligation as a mandatory condition of the Bigfork FERC license and implement accordingly in 2021.

If you need further information, please contact Jessica Kimmick at (503) 813-6945.

Sincerely,

Mark Sturtevant
Mark Sturtevant (Oct 22, 2020 12:35 PDT)

Mark A. Sturtevant
Vice President, Renewable Resources

MAS:JK:km

Encl:	Letter – Public
	Attachment A: Notice of 30-day review to Agencies – Public
	Attachment B: Agency Comment(s) - Public

eFile:	Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary Via eLibrary at www.ferc.gov	eMail:	Kevin Aceituno, USFWS
eMail:	Ben Conard, USFWS	eMail:	Aroscott Whiteman, USGS
eMail:	Mr. Leo Rosenthal, MFWP	eMail:	Thomas O’Keefe, American Whitewater

Signature: Todd Olson
Todd Olson (Oct 22, 2020 11:37 PDT)

Email: todd.olson@pacificorp.com