

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426
June 23, 2011

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 308-005—Oregon
Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project
PacifiCorp Energy

Russ Howison
Licensing Project Manager
PacifiCorp Energy
825 N.E. Multnomah, Suite 1500
Portland, OR 97232

Reference: Request for Additional Information

Dear Mr. Howison:

Commission staff, after reviewing the Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project Pre-Application Document, and participating in the May 24, 2011, scoping meetings, has determined that we have no study requests at this time, but additional information is needed to analyze your proposed project. Please provide the additional information in the attached Schedule A when you file your proposed study plan (due August 7, 2011).

If you have any questions, please contact Matt Cutlip at (503) 552-2762 or matt.cutlip@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hill, Chief
Northwest Branch
Division of Hydropower Licensing

Enclosures: Schedule A

cc: Mailing list
Public Files

Schedule A
Additional Information

Operational Emergency Events

The East Fork Wallowa River bypassed reach and the powerhouse tailrace support aquatic resources that may be affected by sudden fluctuations in flow releases as a result of project operational emergencies. In section 2.4.6 of your Pre-Application Document (PAD), you describe several significant operational emergency events that occurred during the current license term. In your description of the June 6, 1995, operational event, you note that controls were installed after the event to automatically shutdown the turbine and close the penstock intake gate if the generating unit trips offline. You also state that in response to the September 26, 1999, operational event, the penstock intake gate controls were further refined to ensure that the penstock intake gate automatically closes when there is a loss of penstock pressure. Based on your descriptions of these events, it appears as though flow reductions or dewatering of the powerhouse tailrace could occur at any time that the penstock is depressurized and/or the turbine trips offline because the intake gate controlling the penstock flow would be automatically closed and, therefore, water would be re-routed away from the penstock intake and over the spillway at the dam into the East Fork bypassed reach. However, at the May 24, 2011, scoping meetings, PacifiCorp staff indicated that in some circumstances an existing flow bypass system on the turbine may allow water to continue to flow to the powerhouse tailrace during operational emergency events.

In order for us to determine whether there is sufficient existing information to describe project operations and corresponding effects on aquatic resources, we will need a clear description of project operations during operational emergency events. Therefore, please provide the following information:

- (1) a description of the existing operational controls, if any, that provide for turbine flow bypass/continuation to the powerhouse tailrace when the turbine generating unit trips offline and/or there is a loss of penstock pressure;
- (2) a description of the frequency of occurrence of any additional operational emergency events (e.g., power outages, lightning strikes, etc.) that occurred during the current license term that caused the turbine generating unit to trip offline; and

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(3) a description of the frequency, magnitude, and duration of any flow reduction or dewatering events in the powerhouse tailrace that occurred as a result of operational emergency events during the current license term.

Penstock Characteristics

In section 2.3 of your PAD, you state that the project includes a 5,688-foot-long steel penstock that varies in diameter from 16 to 18 inches. In section 2.4.6 you describe several operational emergency events that occurred as a result of a penstock failure during the current license term. As part of our environmental analysis of relicensing the project, we will need to evaluate the circumstances around which a penstock failure might occur (e.g., tree falling on penstock) and the corresponding environmental effects on geologic and aquatic resources. To conduct the required analysis of the potential for a penstock failure, we need more information about the characteristics of the penstock. Therefore, please provide the lengths and locations of above-ground and below-ground sections of penstock.