

# **Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project**

**FERC Project No. P-308**

**Proposed Study Plans - Recreation**

**August 2011**

*Prepared by:*

PacifiCorp Energy

Hydro Resources

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*For Public Review*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

PacifiCorp Energy (PacifiCorp) plans to file an application for new license for the Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project (Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project No. P-308, on the East Fork Wallowa River, West Fork Wallowa River and Royal Purple Creek in Wallowa County, Oregon. The current license will expire on February 28, 2016. The Project has a generation capacity of 1,100 kilowatts and is located on private land owned by PacifiCorp and federal lands managed by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

PacifiCorp filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) and the associated Pre-Application Document (PAD) to commence the FERC Integrated Relicensing Process of the Project on February 22, 2011. As part of the FERC Integrated Relicensing Process, prospective license applicants are required to submit relevant resource study plans (18 CFR 5.11). This includes a study of recreation opportunities and use within the Project boundary.

PacifiCorp proposes to conduct a Recreation Resource Study to meet FERC licensing requirements and address study requests from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The study will include the following 3 components: 1) an inventory of existing recreation facilities and opportunities in the Project vicinity, 2) a recreation use and demand study and 3) a recreation needs assessment.

## 2.0 STUDY DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Per 18 CFR §5.11(d)(1), this section describes the goal and objectives of the study and the information to be obtained. FERC guidelines identify the requirement to assess recreation needs as part of a license application. The goal of this study is to compile existing data and develop additional information to support a new FERC license application for continued future operation of the Project.

The study has two principal objectives:

- Characterize existing recreation opportunities and use levels in the Project vicinity. Existing recreation facilities and opportunities (recreation resource supply) in the Project vicinity will be identified and mapped. Use of recreation facilities in the Project Study Area (recreation resource demand) including Pacific Park, the U.S. Forest Service trailhead and trails, Little Alps State Park, and Wallowa Lake State Park will be summarized based on use data if available or estimates.
- Identify both existing and future recreation needs related to the Project over the term of the new license. Existing needs will be identified based on current use data and agency consultation. An estimate of future demand for recreation opportunities at the Project will be made.

### 3.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOALS

Per 18 CFR §5.11(d)(2), this section describes resource management goals of the two agencies (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and USFS) with jurisdiction over recreation resources in the Project vicinity.

#### 3.1 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

FERC compares hydroelectric Project recreation plans with relevant comprehensive plans, which includes the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The current SCORP was published in February 2008 by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and is effective through 2012. The SCORP identifies a number of important demographic and social changes facing outdoor recreation providers in the coming years including a rapidly aging Oregon population, fewer Oregon youth learning outdoor skills, an increasingly diverse Oregon population and Oregon's physical activity crisis (OPRD, 2008). The SCORP then describes these issues in detail and key planning recommendations are made on a programmatic basis rather than regionally. Results and key findings identified in the SCORP that have relevance to the Project are listed below:

- Walking and/or hiking is the top outdoor recreation activity across all age groups and ethnic groups both in terms of participation rate and intensity.
- Camping in tents was the preferred youth program activity across all youth age categories.
- Tent camping in a park setting will also expose children to a variety of other preferred youth outdoor activities such as biking, swimming, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, and unstructured general play.

The SCORP planning effort also included a county-level analysis to identify priority Projects for the distribution of Local Government Grant Program funds for both close-to-home areas (located within an urban growth boundary (UGB) or unincorporated community boundary and dispersed areas (located outside of these boundaries). A support document for the SCORP titled Local Government Grant Program Rating Criteria Point Summary (OPRD, No date) describes the larger process used to distribute funds through the state administered Local Government Grant Program, and summarizes the results of the county level needs assessment (Pers. Comm. Terry Bergerson, OPRD, October 2010). A total of 220 public recreation providers across the state of Oregon completed an online survey by rating the importance of county-level funding need for a variety of recreation Projects in their jurisdiction in the coming five years. Data was collected and analyzed to identify need in each of Oregon's 36 counties.

Dispersed area needs for Wallowa County in order of importance include dispersed walk-in tent camp sites, non-motorized trails, and non-motorized boat launches. The county-level data was also combined to identify statewide need. Statewide dispersed area needs in order of importance include non-motorized trails, group campgrounds and facilities, nature study/wildlife viewing sites, overnight camping facilities and interpretive displays.

### 3.2 Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Plan and Forest Service Manual

The current Wallowa Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) became final in 1990. A revised plan is currently being developed under the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision which covers the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests collectively. The revised plan is scheduled to be released for public review and comment in 2011 with a final decision expected in 2012.

Chapter 4, Forest Management Direction, of the current Forest Plan (USFS, 1990) identifies the following recreation management goal or direction. “In coordination with and awareness of recreational opportunities on other lands, provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities in an attractive setting, and make those opportunities available to all segments of society.”

Additionally, standards and guidelines supporting this goal for the variety of recreation opportunities offered on the forest are also described in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan. However, site specific goals for the Project Study Area are not identified.

Additionally, in an official Study Request filed with FERC on June 23, 2011 (USFS, 2011) the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest identified the following recreational trail management policy relevant to the Project:

#### **2350.3 - Policy**

- Manage trail, river, and similar recreation opportunities and their recreational access and support facilities under the principles enumerated in Forest Service Manual 2303.
- Emphasize recreation opportunities and supporting facilities that are consistent with applicable Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes.
- Coordinate management of trail, river, and similar recreation opportunities with management of neighboring recreational sites and facilities, including campgrounds, picnic areas, ski areas, resorts, and, as appropriate, recreational facilities off National Forest System (NFS) lands.

### 4.0 EXISTING INFORMATION

Per 18 CFR §5.11(d)(3), this section describes existing recreation use data and other relevant information pertinent to the Project, and the need for additional information.

Recreational uses of lands within the Project vicinity include camping, hiking, horseback riding, day-use/picnicking and fishing. PacifiCorp manages Pacific Park, an 8 unit campground along the Project tailrace on lands owned by the company. Operation of the Park is not a requirement of the current FERC license. Just prior to the 2011 recreation season, the number of campsites at Pacific Park was reduced from 10 units to 8 to address user conflicts and crowding.

The Project forebay access road does provide public access to National Forest and company lands, and receives some hiking and equestrian use. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest noted in their comment letter on the Pre-Application Document, that winter recreation use occurs in the Project Area including use of the forebay access road by backcountry skiers and snowshoers (USFS, 2011). Additionally, there are two primitive wood benches, one adjacent to

the storage cabin and one adjacent to where the East Fork Wallowa River enters the forebay. A faint user-defined trail leads from the East Fork Trail near the dam abutment to this area. This area is within the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and is managed by the USFS.

There are several user-defined trails that originate from Pacific Park. These climb the hillside to the south of the Park and join into the junction of the chief Joseph Trail and the West Fork Wallowa Trail and appear to be heavily used by visitors as a way to easily get to and from the Park. Actual use of these trails is unknown and it is likely that these are uncounted Forest visitors, because they do not fill out wilderness permits when entering the Forest from this location (USFS, 2011).

The Form-80 recreation use report for Pacific Park filed with FERC in 2009 reported recreation use in 2008 of 541 total user days and a peak weekend average of 60 user days. The campground is used under a reservation system and is managed and maintained by PacifiCorp. Facility capacity is estimated at 75 percent. PacifiCorp collects annual use information through the reservation system and this information will be used in the Recreation Use Study.

Existing data from the USFS for use of the trailhead adjacent to Pacific Park will also be used in the study. The trailhead provides public access to the USFS managed East Fork Trail (USFS Trail #1904), West Fork Trail, (USFS Trail #1820) and the Chief Joseph Trail (USFS Trail #1803). This data is for summer use that originates from the trailhead via mandatory, self-issuing permits that trail users acquire prior to their hike (USFS, 2011). In 2010 a total of 1701 permits were issued for this trailhead. USFS has calculated an average party size of 2.7 people and estimates an 85% compliance rate for a total estimated use of approximately 5291 individual trail users in 2010. This figure includes hikers and stock use. The actual amount of winter use of the forebay access road is unknown, but anecdotal evidence suggests that there is some use nearly every weekend day and on several weekdays during the winter months (USFS, 2011).

Additionally, any use data for Wallowa Lake State Park and the Little Alps State Park day use area will also be included if available from OPRD.

The primary data needs are identified below:

- Current recreation use data for Pacific Park (2012 recreation season) and user characteristics and preference data for Pacific Park.
- Current use (by unrecorded National Forest visitors) of user-defined trails leading from Pacific Park to the USFS managed West Fork and Chief Joseph Trails.
- Current winter use of the forebay access road by winter recreationists.

## 5.0 NEXUS TO PROJECT

Per 18 CFR §5.11(d)(4), this section describes any nexus between Project operations and effects on recreation opportunities.

The Project has potential direct and indirect effects on recreation resources within and adjacent to the Project boundary and in the affected reach of the river downstream of the dam. These effects include providing public access to natural open space areas within and surrounding the

Project for a variety of recreation activities and access to and use of the river, forebay and tailrace for recreation purposes. PacifiCorp has developed and operates Pacific Park, an 8 unit campground along the Project tailrace. User-defined trails from Pacific Park to the National Forest trail system to the south allow unrecorded use of National Forest lands. Additionally, trail and dispersed day and overnight uses occur in and adjacent to the Project boundary.

Study results will help inform PacifiCorp, USFS and other stakeholders by synthesizing the information collected during relicensing and defining existing and future recreation needs that can reasonably be addressed by the Project and that may be considered for implementation during a new license term.

## 6.0 STUDY AREA

The primary Study Area consists of lands and waters within and adjacent to the proposed Project boundary including Pacific Park, the user defined trails around Pacific Park leading to West Fork Trail, and the forebay access road. The study will also consider the availability of developed recreation opportunities within approximately a one mile radius of the Project boundary including the USFS- Trailhead, Little Alps State Park, and Wallowa Lake State Park.

## 7.0 METHODS

Per 18 CFR §5.11(b)(1) and §5.11(d)(5), this section provides a description of the proposed study methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques, or objectively quantified information, and a schedule including appropriate field season(s) and the duration.

The study methods involve the following three subtasks described below:

- Recreation Supply Analysis that will inventory recreation facilities and use areas in the Project area and their condition;
- Recreation Use and Demand Analysis that will identify existing recreational demand in the Project area and estimate future demand for various activities of interest;
- Recreation Needs Analysis that will synthesize, compile and analyze the results of all of the above analyses into one synthesis study report. This analysis will identify existing and future recreation needs over the potential term of the new license (30 to 50 years).

The study will look at Project-specific recreation supply and capacity, demand, and current and future needs in the context of the local supply and projected demand to determine if the existing Project recreation facilities are fulfilling their intended purpose. The results of this analysis will be directly used in the development of recreation resource enhancement measures that will be proposed in the license application.

### 7.1 Recreation Supply Analysis

In this subtask, existing recreation inventory information will be reviewed, compiled and updated as needed. This analysis will describe the inventory (i.e. number of campsites, parking capacity, etc.) and condition status of existing Project recreation facilities, including compliance with current and proposed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines, as



amended. Pacific Park facilities will be observed in the field to determine their current condition. Maintenance practices at Pacific Park will be identified and evaluated. Points of public access and trails in the Project area will be identified. Existing maps and features will be updated as necessary. To provide additional local context, inventory information for the USFS-Trailhead, Little Alps State Park, and Wallowa Lake State Park will be summarized based on information obtained from the USFS and OPRD.

This subtask will also inventory Project lands for sites that are used for dispersed recreational activities. The presence of user-defined trails and fire-rings, compacted or eroded soil, trampled vegetation, and litter/sanitary problems on Project lands will be used to help identify the occurrence of dispersed recreational use. These features will be mapped and described.

## 7.2 Recreation Use and Demand Analysis

This subtask will identify the visitor demand for recreation activities that are pertinent to the Project and how this demand will be anticipated to change in the future over the term of the new license. Information will be obtained from various sources, such as the SCORP and USFS, to help determine predicted changes in anticipated demand for outdoor recreation activities associated with the Project. This information will be combined with updated national and regional demand forecasts from other recent publications.

Recreation use data for Pacific Park will be derived from the reservation system. To provide additional local context, use of the USFS- Trailhead, Little Alps State Park, and Wallowa Lake State Park will be summarized based on use data if available or estimates. Recreation use will be estimated in recreation visits, recreation visitor days (RVD's), and site occupancy rate as appropriate. A recreation visit is defined as a visit by one person to a recreation area for any portion of a single day. A RVD is defined as 12 hours of use by any combination of users to a recreation area. Site occupancy rate will be reported as a percentage of total sites occupied at a facility for a particular period of time.

A recreation visitor survey will be conducted at Pacific Park through the use of a questionnaire to assess the attitudes, preferences and characteristics of the primary user group. The survey will be distributed to all Pacific Park users via email (email addresses for Park users are acquired through the reservation process). Pacific Park users will be asked to fill out the questionnaire after their visit and return it to PacifiCorp via email. The following topics will be addressed on the survey form:

- Socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, etc)
- Visitor activities (general and primary)
- Trip characteristics (group size, length of trip and other sites visited, etc)
- Crowding and capacity issues
- Opinion of adequacy/condition of facilities
- Location of primary residence (zip code)
- Possible affects of sound discharged from the Project generator on camp users (For Aesthetics Study)

The visitor survey will be patterned after surveys routinely administered by researchers for similar hydroelectric projects. Additional questions may be added or modified to address Project-specific needs and issues. However, the number of questions asked will need to be limited so that the questionnaire does not become too long therefore reducing the response rate.

Use (by unrecorded National Forest visitors) of user-defined trails leading from Pacific Park to the USFS managed West Fork and Chief Joseph Trails will be estimated from Memorial Day through Labor Day (late May-early September). A beam traffic counter will be placed near the intersection of the user defined trail and the USFS trail system. The beam counter will be calibrated for pedestrian recording and the beam set to minimize triggering by wildlife and moving vegetation. Data will be downloaded monthly and the counter reset. The monthly total of counter hits will be divided by two to eliminate double counting due to users coming and going.

Additionally, a USFS wilderness permit box would be placed in the same general location as the beam traffic counter. The box would be stocked with permit envelopes by PacifiCorp and permits would be collected by the USFS. The specific location of the counter and permit box will be determined in consultation with USFS staff. Data collected from the beam traffic counter will be compared with the number of wilderness permits received to estimate the total number of visitors to National Forest lands via these trails. Use will be reported by month for the period of May through September.

Winter use of the forebay access road just beyond its intersection with the USFS East Fork Wallowa Trail will be estimated. A beam traffic counter will be placed at a discreet location on the forebay access road just above the lower junction with the USFS East Fork Wallowa Trail. The beam counter will be calibrated for pedestrian recording and the beam set to minimize triggering by wildlife and moving vegetation. Data will be downloaded monthly and the counter reset. The monthly total of counter hits will be divided by two to eliminate double counting due to users coming and going. Winter use of the forebay access road will be reported by month for the period of December through March.

### 7.3 Recreation Needs Analysis

This subtask will provide a synthesis of the previous study results and analysis of Project-related recreation needs and opportunities over the term of the new license. In this analysis, existing recreation needs will be identified and future needs will be projected for increments of time (e.g., 10-year periods) over a 50-year timeframe. Recreation needs will be assessed for existing and potential future developed recreation facilities in the Project area. Recreation needs identified in the Project area will be coordinated with other resource specialists to help identify and minimize potential resource conflicts. Specific components of this analysis will include:

- An analysis of recreation needs at the Project over time (i.e., estimate of the number of total camp sites, parking spaces, access points, trails, etc. needed in the future based on demand); and
- An identification of developed and dispersed recreation needs at the Project, both existing and future (in 10-year increments). These needs will be put in the context of local opportunities available and what can reasonably be addressed by the Project.

## 8.0 PROGRESS REPORTING

Per 18 CFR §5.11(b)(3), this section describes provisions for periodic progress reports, including the manner and extent to which information will be shared; and the time allotted for technical review of the analysis and results.

A study progress meeting will be held in October of 2012. A study progress report (draft Technical Report) will be made available for 30 day stakeholder review and comment in November, 2012. Stakeholder comments will be addressed in the initial study report. The initial study report will be made available for review in mid January, 2013; followed by an initial study report meeting in late January, 2013.

## 9.0 FINAL PRODUCT

A final Technical Report will be made available for stakeholder review in June, 2013. The final Technical Report will include descriptive text, maps, and data tables and will describe study objectives, methods, and the final results. This report will discuss any Project effects on existing recreation opportunities and estimate future project-related recreation demand for the term of the new license (50 years).

## 10.0 SCHEDULE

Per 18 CFR §5.11(b)(2), the schedule for conducting the study is provided in Table 10.0-1 below.

**Table 10.0-1 Recreation Study Schedule**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Winter Trail Use Component	December 2011-March 2012
Recreation Supply Analysis	February-May 2012
Recreation Demand Analysis	May-September 2012
Recreation Needs Analysis	September-December 2012
Study Progress Meeting	October 2012
Study Progress Report	November 2012
Initial study report filed with FERC	January 2013
Initial study report meeting	January 2013
Meeting summary filed with FERC	February 2013
Final Technical Report Filed with FERC	June 2013*

\* Assumes one season of data collection.

## 11.0 LEVEL OF EFFORT AND COST

Per 18 CFR §5.11(d)(6), the anticipated level of effort and cost are provided in Table 11.0-1 below. Study costs are estimates based on a labor rate of \$95 per hour and \$200 per diem.

**Table 11.0-1 Anticipated level of effort and costs for Recreation Study**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Labor</b>	<b>Per-Diem</b>	<b>Materials and Equipment</b>	<b>Total</b>
Recreation Supply Analysis	\$14,200	\$1,200	\$0	\$15,400
Recreation Use and Demand Analysis	\$16,000	\$2,400	\$2,500	\$20,900
Recreation Needs Analysis	\$14,200	\$0	\$0	\$14,200
Final Study Report	\$3,800	\$0	\$0	\$3,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48,200</b>	<b>\$3,600</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$54,300</b>

## 12.0 REFERENCES

OPRD. 2008. Outdoor Recreation in Oregon: The Changing Face of the Future, the 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Salem, OR.

OPRD. No date. Government Grant Program Rating Criteria Point Summary. Salem, OR.

USFS. 1990. Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Department of Agriculture, Baker City, Oregon. April 1990.

USFS. 2011. Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 308-005 Comments on Pre-Application Document, Comments on Scoping Document No. 1, and Study Requests. On the web: <http://www.pacificorp.com/wallowafalls>.