

OCCUM PROJECT

LIHI APPLICATION

ATTACHMENT E

OCCUM THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES



A County Report of Connecticut's Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern

New London County

Amphibians

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	Blue-spotted salamander	E/SC
<i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i>	Eastern spadefoot	E

Birds

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Ammodramus caudacutus</i>	Saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrow	SC
<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	Henslow's sparrow	SC*
<i>Ammodramus maritimus</i>	Seaside sparrow	T
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper sparrow	E
<i>Anas discors</i>	Blue-winged teal	T
<i>Ardea alba</i>	Great egret	T
<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Short-eared owl	T
<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	Upland sandpiper	E
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American bittern	E
<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>	Whip-poor-will	SC
<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping plover	T
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern harrier	E
<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	Sedge wren	E
<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	Bobolink	SC
<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Little blue heron	SC
<i>Egretta thula</i>	Snowy egret	T
<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	Alder flycatcher	SC
<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	Horned lark	E
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine falcon	T

New London County**Birds**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common moorhen	E
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common loon	SC
<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	American oystercatcher	T
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle	T
<i>Icteria virens</i>	Yellow-breasted chat	E
<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	Least bittern	T
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>	Black rail	E
<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	Red-headed woodpecker	E
<i>Parula americana</i>	Northern parula	SC
<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Savannah sparrow	SC
<i>Passerculus sandwichensis ssp. princeps</i>	Ipswich sparrow	SC
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Glossy ibis	SC
<i>Progne subis</i>	Purple martin	T
<i>Rallus elegans</i>	King rail	E
<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Roseate tern	E
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common tern	SC
<i>Sternula antillarum</i>	Least tern	T
<i>Sturnella magna</i>	Eastern meadowlark	SC
<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	Brown thrasher	SC
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn owl	E

Fish

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>	Shortnose sturgeon	E
<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus</i>	Atlantic sturgeon	T
<i>Alosa aestivalis</i>	Blueback herring	SC
<i>Enneacanthus obesus</i>	Banded sunfish	SC
<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Bridle shiner	SC

New London County

Invertebrates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Abagrotis nefascia benjamini</i>	Coastal heathland cutworm	T
<i>Alasmidonta varicosa</i>	Brook floater	E
<i>Apamea burgessi</i>	Apamea moth	SC
<i>Apamea inordinata</i>	Apamea moth	SC
<i>Apamea lintneri</i>	Apamea moth	SC
<i>Argyrostromis anilis</i>	Short-lined Chocolate	SC
<i>Bombus affinis</i>	Affable bumblebee	SC
<i>Brachinus patruelis</i>	Bombardier beetle	SC
<i>Callophrys henrici</i>	Henry's elfin	SC
<i>Callophrys hesseli</i>	Hessel's hairstreak	E
<i>Callophrys irus</i>	Frosted elfin	T
<i>Calopteryx dimidiata</i>	Sparkling jewelwing	T
<i>Catocala pretiosa pretiosa</i>	Precious underwing moth	SC*
<i>Chaetagnaea cerata</i>	Noctuid moth	SC
<i>Cicindela formosa generosa</i>	Pine barrens tiger beetle	SC
<i>Cicindela hirticollis</i>	Tiger beetle	SC
<i>Cicindela marginata</i>	Tiger beetle	SC
<i>Cicindela tranquebarica</i>	Dark bellied tiger beetle	SC
<i>Citheronia regalis</i>	Regal moth	SC*
<i>Cordulegaster erronea</i>	Tiger spiketail	T
<i>Drasteria graphica atlantica</i>	False heather underwing	T
<i>Eacles imperialis imperialis</i>	Imperial moth	SC*
<i>Enallagma doubledayi</i>	Atlantic bluet	T
<i>Enallagma minusculum</i>	Little bluet	SC
<i>Enallagma pictum</i>	Scarlet bluet	SC
<i>Epeoloides pilosula</i>	Macropis cuckoo	E
<i>Erynnis brizo</i>	Sleepy duskywing	T
<i>Erynnis horatius</i>	Horace's duskywing	SC

New London County

Invertebrates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Erynnis persius persius</i>	Persius duskywing	E
<i>Eubbranchipus holmanii</i>	Fairy shrimp	E
<i>Exyra fax</i>	Pitcher plant moth	SC
<i>Faronta rubripennis</i>	Pink streak	T
<i>Fossaria rustica</i>	Lymnaeid snail	SC
<i>Gomphus adelphus</i>	Mustached clubtail	T
<i>Gomphus fraternus</i>	Midland clubtail	T
<i>Gomphus ventricosus</i>	Skillet clubtail	SC
<i>Grammia phyllira</i>	Phyllira tiger moth	E
<i>Hybomitra frosti</i>	Horse fly	T
<i>Hybomitra trepida</i>	Horse fly	SC
<i>Hybomitra typhus</i>	Horse fly	SC
<i>Ladona deplanata</i>	Blue corporal dragonfly	SC
<i>Lepipolys perscripta</i>	Noctuid moth	SC
<i>Leptodea ochracea</i>	Tidewater mucket	SC
<i>Ligumia nasuta</i>	Eastern pond mussel	SC
<i>Lycaena epixanthe</i>	Bog copper	SC
<i>Macropis ciliata</i>	Fringed loosestrife oil-bee	SC
<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	Eastern pearl shell	SC
<i>Merycomyia whitneyi</i>	Tabanid fly	SC
<i>Oncocnemis riparia</i>	Dune oncocnemis	SC
<i>Papaipema appassionata</i>	Pitcher plant borer	E
<i>Papaipema duovata</i>	Seaside goldenrod stem borer	SC
<i>Procambarus acutus</i>	Whiteriver crayfish	SC
<i>Progomphus obscurus</i>	Common sanddragon	T
<i>Psectraglaea carnosa</i>	Pink sallow	T
<i>Sargus fasciatus</i>	Soldier fly	SC

New London County

Invertebrates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Schinia spinosae</i>	Noctuid moth	SC
<i>Sphodros niger</i>	Purse web spider	SC
<i>Stagnicola catascopium</i>	Lymnaeid snail	SC
<i>Tabanus fulvicallus</i>	Horse fly	SC
<i>Williamsonia lintneri</i>	Banded bog skimmer	E
<i>Zale obliqua</i>	Noctuid moth	SC

Mammals

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>	Silver-haired bat	SC
<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	Red bat	SC
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	Hoary bat	SC
<i>Synaptomys cooperi</i>	Southern bog lemming	SC

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Acalypha virginica</i>	Virginia copperleaf	SC
<i>Agalinis acuta</i>	Sandplain gerardia	E
<i>Ageratina aromatica</i>	Small white snakeroot	E
<i>Alopecurus aequalis</i>	Orange foxtail	T
<i>Angelica lucida</i>	Sea-coast angelica	E
<i>Aplectrum hyemale</i>	Puttyroot	SC*
<i>Arethusa bulbosa</i>	Arethusa	SC*
<i>Aristida longespica</i>	Needlegrass	SC
<i>Aristida purpurascens</i>	Arrowfeather	SC
<i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i>	Virginia snakeroot	SC
<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>	Purple milkweed	SC
<i>Asclepias variegata</i>	White milkweed	SC*
<i>Asplenium montanum</i>	Mountain spleenwort	SC

New London County

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Atriplex glabriuscula</i>	Orache	SC
<i>Bidens beckii</i>	Water-marigold	T
<i>Bidens eatonii</i>	Eaton's beggars-tick	T
<i>Bolboschoenus maritimus ssp. paludosus</i>	Bayonet grass	SC
<i>Bolboschoenus novae-angliae</i>	Salt marsh bulrush	SC
<i>Calystegia spithamea</i>	Low bindweed	SC*
<i>Carex alata</i>	Broadwing sedge	E
<i>Carex bushii</i>	Sedge	SC
<i>Carex buxbaumii</i>	Brown bog sedge	E
<i>Carex crawfordii</i>	Crawford sedge	SC*
<i>Carex cumulata</i>	Clustered sedge	T
<i>Carex davisii</i>	Davis' sedge	T
<i>Carex oligosperma</i>	Few-seeded sedge	SC*
<i>Carex polymorpha</i>	Variable sedge	E
<i>Carex sterilis</i>	Dioecious sedge	SC
<i>Carex tuckermanii</i>	Tuckerman's sedge	SC
<i>Carex typhina</i>	Sedge	SC
<i>Castilleja coccinea</i>	Indian paintbrush	T
<i>Chenopodium rubrum</i>	Coast blite	SC*
<i>Cirsium horridulum</i>	Yellow thistle	E
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Long-bracted green orchid	E
<i>Corallorhiza trifida</i>	Early coral root	SC
<i>Crassula aquatica</i>	Pygmyweed	E
<i>Cuphea viscosissima</i>	Blue waxweed	SC*
<i>Cuscuta coryli</i>	Hazel dodder	SC*
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	Yellow lady's-slipper	SC
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	Tufted hairgrass	SC
<i>Desmodium glabellum</i>	Dillenius' tick-trefoil	SC

New London County

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Desmodium humifusum</i>	Trailing tick-trefoil	E
<i>Desmodium sessilifolium</i>	Sessile-leaf tick-trefoil	SC*
<i>Dichanthelium ovale</i> var. <i>addisonii</i>	Panic grass	SC
<i>Dichanthelium scabriusculum</i>	Panic grass	E
<i>Draba reptans</i>	Whitlow-grass	SC
<i>Eleocharis equisetoides</i>	Horse-tail spike-rush	E
<i>Eleocharis microcarpa</i> var. <i>filiculmis</i>	Spike-rush	SC*
<i>Eleocharis quadrangulata</i> var. <i>crassior</i>	Spike-rush	E
<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	Marsh horsetail	SC*
<i>Eriocaulon parkeri</i>	Parker's pipewort	E
<i>Eupatorium album</i>	White thoroughwort	E
<i>Eurybia radula</i>	Rough aster	E
<i>Eurybia spectabilis</i>	Showy aster	T
<i>Eurybia x herveyi</i>	Hervey's aster	SC
<i>Gamochaeta purpurea</i>	Purple cudweed	SC*
<i>Gaultheria hispidula</i>	Creeping snowberry	SC
<i>Helianthemum propinquum</i>	Low frostweed	T
<i>Honckenya peploides</i>	Seabeach sandwort	SC
<i>Hottonia inflata</i>	Featherfoil	SC
<i>Houstonia longifolia</i>	Longleaf bluet	T
<i>Hudsonia ericoides</i>	Golden-heather	E
<i>Hudsonia tomentosa</i>	False beach-heather	T
<i>Hydrocotyle umbellata</i>	Water pennywort	E
<i>Hydrocotyle verticillata</i>	Whorled pennywort	E
<i>Hypericum adpressum</i>	Creeping St. John's-wort	SC*
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry	T
<i>Isotria medeoloides</i>	Small whorled pogonia	E

New London County

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Juncus debilis</i>	Weak rush	SC*
<i>Lachnanthes caroliana</i>	Carolina redroot	E
<i>Leptochloa fusca ssp. fascicularis</i>	Saltpond Grass	E
<i>Lespedeza repens</i>	Creeping bush-clover	SC
<i>Liatis scariosa var. novae-angliae</i>	Blazing-star	SC
<i>Ligusticum scoticum</i>	Scotch lovage	E
<i>Lilaeopsis chinensis</i>	Lilaeopsis	SC
<i>Limosella australis</i>	Mudwort	SC
<i>Linnaea borealis ssp. americana</i>	Twinflower	E
<i>Linum intercursum</i>	Sandplain flax	SC*
<i>Liparis liliifolia</i>	Lily-leaved twayblade	E
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Sweet gum	SC
<i>Ludwigia sphaerocarpa</i>	Globe-fruited false-loosestrife	E
<i>Lycopus amplexans</i>	Clasping-leaved water-horehound	SC
<i>Lygodium palmatum</i>	Climbing fern	SC
<i>Malaxis unifolia</i>	Green adder's-mouth	E
<i>Moneses uniflora</i>	One-flower wintergreen	E
<i>Myriophyllum pinnatum</i>	Cutleaf water-milfoil	E
<i>Nuphar microphylla</i>	Small yellow pond lily	SC
<i>Oclemena nemoralis</i>	Bog aster	E
<i>Oclemena x blakei</i>	Blake's aster	E
<i>Ophioglossum pusillum</i>	Adder's-tongue	T
<i>Opuntia humifusa</i>	Eastern prickly pear	SC
<i>Orontium aquaticum</i>	Golden club	SC
<i>Orthilia secunda</i>	One-sided pyrola	SC*
<i>Oxalis violacea</i>	Violet wood-sorrel	SC
<i>Panax quinquefolius</i>	American ginseng	SC
<i>Panicum amarum</i>	Panic grass	T

New London County

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Panicum rigidulum</i> var. <i>elongatum</i>	Tall flat panic-grass	SC*
<i>Paspalum laeve</i>	Field paspalum	E
<i>Paspalum setaceum</i>	Bead grass	SC*
<i>Pedicularis lanceolata</i>	Swamp lousewort	T
<i>Phaseolus polystachios</i> var. <i>polystachios</i>	Wild kidney bean	SC*
<i>Piptatherum pungens</i>	Slender mountain ricegrass	E
<i>Pityopsis falcata</i>	Sickle-leaved golden aster	E
<i>Plantago virginica</i>	Hoary plantain	SC
<i>Platanthera ciliaris</i>	Yellow-fringed orchid	T
<i>Platanthera flava</i> var. <i>herbiola</i>	Pale green orchid	SC
<i>Platanthera hookeri</i>	Hooker's orchid	SC*
<i>Platanthera orbiculata</i>	Large round-leaf orchid	SC*
<i>Podostemum ceratophyllum</i>	Threadfoot	SC
<i>Polygala cruciata</i>	Field milkwort	E
<i>Polygala nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's milkwort	E
<i>Populus heterophylla</i>	Swamp cottonwood	T
<i>Potamogeton confervoides</i>	Pondweed	E
<i>Potamogeton pusillus</i> ssp. <i>gemmae</i>	Capillary pondweed	T
<i>Potamogeton vaseyi</i>	Vasey's pondweed	T
<i>Prunus alleghaniensis</i>	Alleghany plum	SC*
<i>Puccinellia tenella</i> ssp. <i>alaskana</i>	Goose grass	SC*
<i>Ranunculus ambigens</i>	Water-plantain spearwort	E
<i>Ranunculus cymbalaria</i>	Seaside crowfoot	E
<i>Ranunculus pensylvanicus</i>	Bristly buttercup	SC*
<i>Rhynchospora macrostachya</i>	Beaked rush	T
<i>Rotala ramosior</i>	Toothcup	T
<i>Rubus cuneifolius</i>	Sand bramble	SC

New London County

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Rumex maritimus</i>	Sea-side dock	SC*
<i>Sabatia stellaris</i>	Marsh pink	E
<i>Sagittaria subulata</i>	Arrowleaf	SC
<i>Salix exigua</i>	Sandbar willow	T
<i>Salix petiolaris</i>	Slender willow	SC
<i>Saururus cernuus</i>	Lizard's tail	E
<i>Scheuchzeria palustris ssp. americana</i>	Pod grass	E
<i>Schoenoplectus torreyi</i>	Torrey bulrush	T
<i>Schwalbea americana</i>	Chaffseed	SC*
<i>Scleria pauciflora var. caroliniana</i>	Few-flowered nutrush	E
<i>Scleria triglomerata</i>	Nutrush	E
<i>Scutellaria integrifolia</i>	Hyssop skullcap	E
<i>Senna hebecarpa</i>	Wild senna	SC
<i>Silene stellata</i>	Starry champion	T
<i>Solidago latissimifolia</i>	Elliott's goldenrod	SC
<i>Solidago rugosa var. sphagnophila</i>	Early wrinkle-leaved goldenrod	SC*
<i>Spergularia canadensis</i>	Canada sand-spurry	T
<i>Sporobolus clandestinus</i>	Rough dropseed	E
<i>Sporobolus neglectus</i>	Small dropseed	E
<i>Stachys hyssopifolia</i>	Hyssop-leaf hedge-nettle	E
<i>Stachys tenuifolia</i>	Smooth hedge-nettle	SC
<i>Symphyotrichum prenanthoides</i>	Crooked-stem aster	SC*
<i>Triphora trianthophora</i>	Nodding pogonia	E
<i>Utricularia resupinata</i>	Bladderwort	E
<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered bellwort	E
<i>Valerianella radiata</i>	Beaked corn-salad	SC*
<i>Verbena simplex</i>	Narrow-leaved vervain	SC*
<i>Viburnum nudum</i>	Possum haw	SC*

New London County

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Vitis x novae-angliae</i>	New England grape	SC
<i>Xyris montana</i>	Northern yellow-eyed grass	T
<i>Xyris smalliana</i>	Small's yellow-eyed	E
<i>Zizia aptera</i>	Golden Alexanders	E

Reptiles

Scientific Name	Common Name	Protection Status
<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Loggerhead	T
<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Atlantic green turtle	T
<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	Timber rattlesnake	E
<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Leatherback	E
<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood turtle	SC
<i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>	Eastern hognose snake	SC
<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	Atlantic ridley	E
<i>Liochlorophis vernalis</i>	Smooth green snake	SC
<i>Terrapene carolina carolina</i>	Eastern box turtle	SC
<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	Eastern ribbon snake	SC

E = Endangered, T = Threatened, SC = Special Concern, * Believed Extirpated

*State of Connecticut
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Bureau of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division
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FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Office of Hydropower Licensing
Division of Licensing and Compliance
Washington, DC

OCCUM HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT
FERC NO. 11574--CONNECTICUT
August 1999

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) issued the Occum Hydroelectric Project Draft Environmental Assessment (draft EA) for comment on February 24, 1999. In response, we received three comment letters. The comment letters and staff responses to the comment letters are contained in Appendix A.

I. APPLICATION

On February 23, 1996, the city of Norwich, Department of Public Utilities (Norwich or applicant) filed an application with the Commission for an original minor license under Part I of the Federal Power Act (FPA) to operate the 800-kilowatt (kW) Occum Hydroelectric Project. The Occum Project is located on the Shetucket River in the city of Norwich and the town of Sprague in New London County, Connecticut (figure 1). No new construction or installed capacity is proposed. The project does not occupy any federally owned lands.

II. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

A. Purpose of Action

The Commission must decide whether to license Norwich's proposed project, and what, if any, conditions should be placed on any license issued. In this final environmental assessment (final EA), we assess the environmental and economic effects of: (1) operating the project as proposed by Norwich; (2) operating the project as proposed by Norwich with additional staff-recommended measures; and (3) no-action.

another 3.0 acres of two palustrine emergent wetlands. The forested wetlands are deciduous floodplain forests that formed due to naturally occurring high spring river levels. During a site visit on July 24, 1998, Norwich verified that there are no wetland areas within the downstream reach of the project.

Wildlife

Wildlife expected to occur in the project vicinity include species common to central Connecticut. Mammals include white-tailed deer, red and gray squirrel, opossum, beaver, raccoon, porcupine, and skunk. Common passerine bird species likely to occur in the area include warblers, finches, robins, and swallows. A variety of waterfowl and wading birds, such as Canada geese, mallards, black ducks, great blue heron, and egrets, may be attracted to the impoundment area. The project site also is likely to provide suitable habitat for a variety of reptiles and amphibians, such as snapping turtle, eastern painted turtle, northern water snake, green frog, and bullfrog.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The CDEP Natural Resources Center conducted a search of its Natural Diversity Data Base maps and files for the project area. According to the CDEP, there are no terrestrial threatened or endangered species known to occur in the area (letter from Dawn M. McKay, Biologist, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, to Tina Jones, Licensing Coordinator, Kleinschmidt Associates, dated September 11, 1995).

Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, indicates that no federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species under the jurisdiction of Interior are known to occur within the project area, except for occasional transient bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) or peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) (letter from Andrew L. Raddant, Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, to David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, dated June 24 1998).

b. Environmental impacts:

Vegetation

Norwich's proposed operation would not have an impact on upland vegetation in the project area. The operational changes that Norwich proposes (minimum bypass flow of 22 to 32 cfs during periods of non-generation, and release of 100 cfs downstream when

tailwater elevation falls below 48.3 feet) would not alter existing upland vegetation. The future construction of fish passage facilities and a canoe portage may involve some incidental removal of vegetative cover during construction.

Our Analysis

We concur with Norwich's findings that continued operation of the project, along with the proposed operational changes, would not have a significant impact on upland vegetation in the project area.

Wetlands

Norwich proposes to continue operating the project in a cycling mode, such that the impoundment level is not drawn down more than 2 feet below the dam crest or the top of the flashboards. Additionally, Norwich proposes to implement a minimum bypass flow of 22 to 32 cfs during periods of non-generation to promote water circulation, and to release 100 cfs or inflow, whichever is less, downstream of the project when tailwater elevation falls below 48.3 feet (due to drawdown at the downstream Taftville Project) to prevent fish stranding and to protect aquatic habitat downstream. These activities may result in minimal changes to the current impoundment fluctuation levels in the Occum impoundment. Better coordination with the upstream and downstream hydroelectric facilities, as Norwich proposes, should help reduce the periods during which the project is in drawdown mode and thus limit any adverse impacts on upstream wetlands.

Our Analysis

Most wetlands in the project vicinity are forested floodplain wetlands that formed from naturally occurring high spring river levels and thus are minimally affected by project operation. The potential for desiccation of emergent wetlands around the impoundment area due to drawdown activity would not increase, because impoundment drawdown limitations would remain the same as for current operations. We concur with Interior (letter from Andrew L. Raddant, Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, to David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, dated June 24, 1998) that a final plan for monitoring and recording the impoundment level should be developed to ensure compliance with the drawdown limit of 2 feet set by the WQC. The enhancement of downstream aquatic habitats resulting from improved water flow

may also result in the incidental creation of shoreline emergent wetland habitats in the downstream reach.

Except for possible downstream enhancements, we concur with Norwich that continued operation of the project, along with the proposed operational changes, would not have a significant impact on wetlands in the project vicinity.

Wildlife

Current project operation does not appear to affect resident wildlife or wildlife habitats. Norwich is presently negotiating with the owners of the downstream Taftville Project to better coordinate operations and thus improve riparian habitat availability in the section of river that lies between the two facilities.

Our Analysis

We concur with Norwich that continued operation of the project, along with the proposed operational changes, would not have a significant impact on wildlife resources in the project area. We also agree that some incidental enhancements to wildlife habitat may occur as a result of future flow improvements and operational coordination with surrounding hydroelectric stations. In addition, the future restoration of anadromous fish runs (as discussed in section V.C.3) would benefit piscivorous birds and mammals by increasing the available prey base.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Interior notes that two federally endangered bird species, the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, may occur as occasional transients through the project area. Interior stated that the preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation with Interior under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required (letter from Andrew L. Raddant, Regional Environmental Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, to David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, dated June 24, 1998). Breeding habitat for these species is not present in the project vicinity.

Our Analysis

Continued operation of the Occum Project, along with proposed operational changes, would have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species.