



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT REVIEW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



1986 DEC 13

ER 86/1327

DEC 12 1986

Honorable Kenneth F. Plumb, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
825 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

Dear Mr. Plumb:

We have reviewed the Application for License, Woods Falls Hydropower Project, FERC No. 2763, Jefferson County, New York. The following comments and recommendations are provided for your consideration.

Fish and Wildlife Resources

The Lower Black River supports a resident warmwater fishery, with smallmouth bass, walleye, and northern pike as important gamefish. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation annually stocks chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead trout in the Black River. Atlantic salmon, extirpated from the region in the mid-1800's, will likely be reintroduced to the Black River in the future.

The Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) major concern is the passage of anadromous fish. At present, salmonids are being passed over the first dam on the river at Dexter by a temporary fish ladder. The status of fish passage facilities upstream from the most downstream dam):

<u>Name</u>	<u>FERC No.</u>	<u>Status</u>
Dexter	2695	Exempted. Temporary fish ladder is operational. Permanent passage facility required.
Brownville	4939	Awaiting Commission action on license. FWS prescribed fish passage.
Glen Park	4796	Licensed. Fish passage required. Passage facility in planning stage.

The applicant, Power Mining, Inc., has agreed to provide fish passage at the Woods Falls Project, after fish have been successfully passed at downstream plants.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Except for occasional transient individuals, no federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species under our jurisdiction are known to exist in the project impact area.

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Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) is required with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

Dam Safety

The location is in an area of high seismic risk. Its zone 3 designation indicates the possibility of major damage in the event of an earthquake. The problem of seismic hazard was not addressed in the document. Earthquake resistance should be considered in the design and construction of the dam and powerhouse.

Transformers

The report and application should indicate the types of coolants or fluids to be used in the power transformers, circuit breakers, and switches. If fluids other than water are to be used, mitigation of groundwater or surface water effects of leaks and spills from the equipment or from related storage, handling, and processing facilities, such as containment basins, should be discussed.

Recommendations

We recommend that the following special articles be included in any license the Commission issues for this project:

1. The Licensee shall, for the conservation and development of existing fish and wildlife resources, operate the project in a run-of-the-river mode, such that the instantaneous downstream flow from the project, including spillage, releases, and/or leakage, is equal to the inflow to the project impoundment.
2. The Licensee shall, at its own expense, design and make operative structures and procedures to enable anadromous fishes to migrate upstream and downstream past the project works, if so notified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and approved by the Commission.
3. The Licensee shall ensure that the design, location, installation, maintenance, repair and operation of structures and screens, necessary for the upstream and downstream migration of fishes past the project, conform to the specifications of and are satisfactory to the Fish and Wildlife Service.
4. The Licensee shall install and make operative the aforementioned structures and procedures within two years of approval by the Commission.
5. The Licensee shall permit personnel of the Fish and Wildlife Service or its representatives to inspect all of the aforementioned fishways and project records pertaining to the construction, operation and maintenance thereof, for the purpose of determining compliance with the aforementioned prescriptions and their effectiveness in protecting, restoring and enhancing fish populations, provided such inspections do not pose a significant threat of injury or damage to personnel or property at the project.
6. The Licensee shall investigate and document in a report the effectiveness of the aforementioned structures and procedures in providing for the safe and efficient passage of

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anadromous fishes. Licensees shall provide said report to the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commission within two years of installation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application.

Sincerely,


Bruce Blanchard, Director
Environmental Project Review

cc: Mr. Fred E. Springer
Mr. David R. Bristol