



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Pacific Regional Office
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS\R1\AES

MAY - 9 2018

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

Dear Ms. Bose:

This letter concerns the Enloe Dam Hydroelectric Project (FERC License No. 12569).

Background

On February 26, 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) filed Comments, Recommendations, Terms and Conditions, and Prescriptions under section 10(j) of the Federal Power Act (FPA) for a proposed new license for the Enloe Dam Hydroelectric Project (Project). The project is located on the Similkameen River, near the city of Oroville, in Okanogan County, Washington. While the Service did not prescribe fishways at that time, we reserved our authority to prescribe fish passage under Section 18 of the FPA, and that reservation of authority was included in the license.

In September 2005, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) designated Okanogan Public Utility District (the PUD), which owns the Project, as the non-federal representative for the purpose of informal consultation with the Service under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

On May 20, 2011, FERC issued a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the issuance of a new Project license, which served as their biological assessment (BA) for the purposes of section 7 consultation. In their DEA, FERC determined the issuance of the license would have “no effect” on the threatened bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*).

On June 10, 2011, the PUD provided the Service a draft BA, prepared prior to the issuance of the DEA, containing additional information to augment the record for the ESA consultation. The draft BA, which FERC did not adopt, included a determination that the issuance of the license “may effect” but was “not likely to adversely affect” the bull trout.

On July 9, 2013, FERC issued a new license for the Project.

New Information

Based on the Service’s recent review of the FERC record for the Project, there is new video evidence of what appear to be Chinook salmon jumping at the base of Enloe Dam, demonstrating that salmon can ascend the falls located approximately 300 feet downstream of the dam. The

Service assumes that if Chinook salmon can ascend to the base of Enloe Dam, other anadromous fish such as ESA-listed steelhead, as well as bull trout, are also likely to do so.

Based on this evidence, on August 3, 2017, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requested that FERC reinitiate ESA section 7 consultation on the effects of its license action on the ESA-listed Upper Columbia River steelhead. On January 31, 2018, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife supported this request.

The Project occurs in the Mid-Columbia River Recovery Unit for the bull trout, and the species is known to occur in the Okanogan River Basin below the Project. While there are reports of bull trout in the U.S. portion of the Okanogan River Basin, their distribution within the Basin is unknown. In addition, the Pacific lamprey is also known to have the ability to ascend the falls below Enloe Dam, and there is anecdotal information of lamprey in the Project area. We consider the Pacific lamprey to be a culturally significant Species of Concern. Based on this information, Enloe Dam has potentially impeded lamprey and bull trout access to many miles of potential habitat above the dam.

Exploratory discussions regarding removal of Enloe Dam have occurred periodically over the last few years. The Lower Similkameen Indian Band and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Nation support dam removal. However, they do not support the construction of fish passage facilities. The Service will continue to provide technical expertise where appropriate regarding fish passage and/or dam removal.

Given the new video information discussed above, the potential presence of bull trout and Pacific lamprey habitat above the Project, the known presence of the bull trout and anecdotal information on lamprey presence below the Project, and the determination of the draft BA that the Project “may effect” bull trout, we recommend FERC request consultation with the Service under section 7 of the ESA on the effects of the new license on the bull trout.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. S.", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Assistant Regional Director
Ecological Services

cc:
NMFS, E. Ilerisburg (D. Bambrick)
WDFW, Ephrata (J. Brown)
WDFW, Ephrata (P. Verhey)