

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington, D. C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2114-267--Washington
Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project
Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant
County

June 1, 2015

Ross Hendrick
Compliance Manager, Natural Resources Division
Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County
P.O. Box 878
Ephrata, Washington 98823

Subject: 2014 bull trout monitoring and evaluation report

Dear Mr. Hendrick:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your 2014 Bull Trout Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Annual Report, filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on January 30, 2015, for the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2114).

Ordering Paragraph (B) of the Commission's Order Modifying and Approving Updated Bull Trout Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Article 401 (a)(10), in part, requires you to file annual reports with the Commission by February 1 from 2015 through 2019.¹ Your annual reports are required to inform the Commission of monitoring results from the implementation of your plan for the previous year and are to include the results of your monitoring of bull trout presence at the project and hydrologic and water quality data related to project operations and acclimation activities. Your reports are also required to document the number of bull trout observed or incidentally taken at the project.

Your report describes the emergency response that occurred as a result of a fracture in the Wanapum Dam spillway monolith number 4, and the resulting adjustments

¹ 149 FERC ¶ 62,050 (issued October 23, 2014).

made to fish passage at the project. You report that the fishways at Priest Rapids development remained operable, but the fishways at Wanapum Dam were inoperable due to the necessary lowering of the reservoir to address the fracture. You report that you implemented an interim fish passage operations plan with resource agency and Commission approval.² However, due to the emergency response, the fish count stations at the Wanapum fish ladder were inoperable, thus prevented annual fish count observations at this development. You also report that no bull trout observations occurred during any fish related activities at Wanapum Dam during 2014.

You report that three bull trout were observed passing through the Priest Rapids fish ladder count stations that were operated between April 15 and November 15, 2014 and that no PIT tagged bull trout were detected at the Priest Rapids Dam. However, you report that 13 bull trout were collected in the White River and 4 were collected in Nason Creek during the 2014 screw trap operations that are conducted as a part of the spring Chinook hatchery supplementation program. Your report includes dates, length, and lifestage data for bull trout that were collected during these activities. You also report that during electrofishing activities conducted in Nason Creek to collect and tag juvenile spring Chinook, 18 bull trout were collected, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Yakama Nation staff conducting the surveys inserted PIT tags in 16 of them. Your report includes a summary of these fish, including date, length, lifestage and assigned tag numbers. Finally, your report includes hydrologic and water quality monitoring data you collected in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a part of the approved monitoring and evaluation plan.

Your 2014 Bull Trout Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Annual Report fulfills your requirement to file an annual report with the Commission under the Order Modifying and Approving Updated Bull Trout Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Article 401 (a)(10).

Please be advised that, while Commission staff will continue to review these annual report filings, staff will no longer issue acknowledgement letters for future reports under this requirement, unless further Commission action is needed. When your future filings for this requirement are posted on the Commission's eLibrary system, you may consider that as acknowledgment of the Commission's receipt of your submittal.

² Details regarding the monolith fracture response, interim fish passage implementation, resource agency consultation and Commission approval from February 27, 2014 through March 19, 2015, can be accessed through the Commission's eLibrary system at www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/elibrary.asp .

Thank you for your report. You are reminded that your next report is due by February 1, 2016 and that an updated bull trout monitoring and evaluation plan is due by April 17, 2019, pursuant to the Commission's October 23, 2014 order. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact me at (202) 502-6289, or by email at robert.ballantine@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert Ballantine
Aquatic Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance