

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

901 MARKET STREET, 3RD FLOOR
SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94103**RECEIVED**

OCT 13 1987

POWER SYSTEMS DIVISION

October 9, 1987

In reply refer to:
Project No. 2079Steve Jones, Power Systems Manager
Placer County Water Agency
P.O. Box 667
Foresthill, CA 95631

Dear Mr. Jones:

There are several items I would like to bring to your attention concerning the Middle Fork American River Project, FERC Project No. 2079, that result from our recent environmental and public use inspection.

Recreation Planning

The project recreation plan describes additional recreation facilities to be constructed by 1980, 1990, and 2000. The 1980 facilities have not been built. However, a review of U.S. Forest Service-collected use statistics and interviews with a French Meadows campground host, Tahoe National Forest staff, and El Dorado National Forest staff confirms the fact that additional facilities are not needed at this time. The project recreation plan also shows some existing facilities along with areas identified as future recreation sites that are not within the project boundary.

These conditions make revision of the recreation plan appropriate. The revised plan should be developed in consultation with resource agencies according to 18 CFR §4.51(f)(5) and submitted for Commission approval. The revised plan should:

- ° delete the schedule for future phases of development from the plan based on current and projected demand. However, identification of areas reserved for future development should be retained. Define the degree of use or other mechanism what will trigger the development of future sites
- ° based on identified needs and consultation, define the best use of the McGuire Day Use Area at French Meadows Reservoir--either its rehabilitation, its conversion, or its removal so as to restore the site to a natural state--and provide a schedule for accomplishing this work

- exclude areas and facilities which are not on project lands from the project recreation plan, specifically:

- Ahart Family Camp
- Dolly Family Camp future site
- Upper French Meadows Group Camp future site
- Gates Group Camp future site
- McGuire Family Camp future site
- Lagoon Lake Trail Camp future site
- Big Meadows Family Camp
- Middle Meadow Group Camp
- Middle Meadow Picnicground future site
- Lower Meadow Family Camp future site

- address the need for additional parking capacity at the group campgrounds at French Meadows

- include a description of how use will be managed at the Ralston Afterbay picnic area to avoid long-term camping and associated proprietary problems at this facility

The revised recreation plan should be submitted no later than April 30, 1988 to Kenneth F. Plumb, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 825 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426 with a copy to this office. The Exhibit K project boundary maps should also be revised to include the Hell Hole Vista Site, and the future Duncan Creek Family Campground site and submitted for approval.

Recreation Publication and Posting

The amendment of the license to include the Hell Hole Powerhouse makes the Middle Fork American River Project subject to Part 8 of the Commission's Regulations. Accordingly, you should arrange to have the license conditions relating to recreation published in a local newspaper once each week for four weeks in compliance with 18 CFR §8.1. Please submit to this office an affidavit of publication no later than May 27, 1988.

You should also arrange to have signs satisfying 18 CFR §8.2 installed at French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs, preferably located at:

- the access road at French Meadows Dam OR at the entrance to the French Meadows Campground and Boat Ramp
- at Hell Hole Station OR at Hell Hole Boat Launching Ramp

Please submit the text, design, and information layout of these signs as well as a map showing their proposed locations to this office for approval prior to fabrication. If you determine the signs would best serve the public if they were located on National Forest land outside the project boundary, you should obtain prior U.S. Forest Service approval.

Public Safety

Although a safety boom is in place guarding the intake to the Duncan Tunnel, it needs to be extended to preclude access to the overflow spillway at Duncan Creek Reservoir.

Signs warning of sudden water fluctuations are in place at some locations at Ralston Afterbay. Please install similar warnings signs (1) at the new boat launching ramp at Ralston Afterbay and (2) at the Oxbow Powerhouse tailrace where rafts are launched. We understand that it is common for high winds to come up quite suddenly in the afternoon on Hell Hole Reservoir. If this is so, you should install an advisory sign at the launching ramp informing boaters of this danger.

I would appreciate receiving photographs of each of the above described signs after their installation.

Maintenance

The McGuire Picnic Area has many large partially upturned stumps among the picnic tables, an old beach changing structure in disrepair and a parking area overgrown with weeds. Parking areas at the boat launching ramps at French Meadows Reservoir also have a considerable amount of weeds growing through the pavement.

At Ralston Afterbay, shabby travel trailers and miscellaneous pieces of equipment occupy the picnic area. The two-unit vault toilet structure at this location is also poorly maintained.

Please remove the loose gravel on the McGuire boat launching ramp at French Meadows Reservoir.

I am concerned about the adequacy of containment of the pit toilets at the boat-in campground of Poppy Trail Camp on French Meadows Reservoir. Please confirm that the horizontal set-backs of the toilets from the high-water line of the reservoir and any other water course, such as the wash next to the western toilets at Poppy Trail Camp, meet applicable sanitation standards. If they do not please describe what actions you will take to correct the situation.

Streamflow Requirements

This letter confirms Ms. Lattin's request for hourly stage data at the Lewis Gauge (Middle Fork of American River below Oxbow Powerhouse and confluence with North Fork of Middle Fork American River) with which to verify compliance with the last proviso of License Article 37. A field review of two day's data at the recording gauge revealed a change of stage exceeding the one-foot-per-hour maximum allowed by Article 37 on both days. Please inform me of what actions PCWA will take to achieve compliance with this license requirement.

I also request PCWA inform this office any time streamflow releases drop below required minimums.

I understand a magnetic flow meter has been installed at Ralston Interbay Dam. This should improve your ability to meet minimum flow requirements at this site. However, I continue to be concerned with how you will verify that you are making minimum flow releases during periods when there are no flows being passed through the meter. This could occur when you are spilling. Please address this issue and submit a plan to me describing of how you will assure a continuous record of minimum flow releases under all operating scenarios.

I wish to express my appreciation to you and your staff for the assistance rendered to Ms. Lattin during the inspection. If you have any questions in regard to the above matters, please call Gerald G. Leach, Chief, Hydropower Support Branch, at 415-974-7177.

All items should be submitted by November 30, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

Sincerely,



FOR
G. L. Emmerling, P.E.
Regional Director

Forest Supervisor
El Dorado National Forest
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667

cc: Forest Supervisor
Tahoe National Forest
Attn: Mr. Bill Baker
Highway 49 and Coyote Street
Nevada City, CA 95959