



Federal
Energy
Regulatory
Commission

Office of Energy
Projects

November 2006

FERC/FEIS – 0190F

Final Environmental Impact Statement Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project Washington (FERC Project No. 2114)



Wanapum
Dam



Priest
Rapids
Dam

888 First Street, Washington, DC 20426

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

To the Agency or Individual Addressed:

Reference: Final Environmental Impact Statement

Attached is the final environmental impact statement (final EIS) for the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project No. 2114-116, located on the Columbia River in Grant, Yakima, Kittitas, Douglas, Benton, and Chelan Counties, Washington.

This final EIS documents the views of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, affected Indian tribes, the public, the license applicant, and Commission staff. It contains staff evaluations on the applicant's proposal and the alternatives for relicensing the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project.

Before the Commission makes a licensing decision, it will take into account all concerns relevant to the public interest. The final EIS will be part of the record from which the Commission will make its decision. The final EIS was sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and made available to the public on or about.

Copies of the final EIS are available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Branch, Room 2A, located at 888 First Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20426. An electronic copy of the final EIS may be viewed on FERC's website at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "eLibrary" link. Please call 866-208-3676 or TTY (202) 208-1659 for assistance.

Attachment: Final Environmental Impact Statement

COVER SHEET

- a. Title: Relicensing the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project in Washington, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) Project No. 2114-116
- b. Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement
- c. Lead Agency: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- d. Abstract: Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County Washington (Grant PUD) filed an application for a new license for the existing 1,768.8-megawatt (MW) Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (project) located on the Columbia River in Grant, Yakima, Kittitas, Douglas, Benton, and Chelan Counties, Washington. The nearest city is Ellensburg, located approximately 30 miles east. The project occupies about 3,104 acres of federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Energy, Department of the Army, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The project is operated under the terms of the 1997 Mid-Columbia Hourly Coordination Agreement (Hourly Coordination Agreement), to which Grant PUD is a signatory along with several other northwest utilities and federal agencies operating hydroelectric projects on the Columbia River. The Hourly Coordination Agreement facilitates maintaining the mid-Columbia reservoirs at or near their full levels. All power requests and non-power requirements are coordinated, and flows are released to maximize generation, keeping the reservoirs as full as possible while minimizing spill losses.

Six species of anadromous fish occur within the project area, including Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook salmon, Upper Columbia River summer/fall-run Chinook salmon, Upper Columbia River steelhead, coho salmon, sockeye salmon, and Pacific lamprey. Grant PUD and the agencies proposed to implement a variety of measures with the goal of achieving no net impact on the salmon and steelhead species through a combination of fish passage improvements, hatchery supplementation, and habitat enhancements.

Key issues associated with relicensing this project are: addressing total dissolved gas concentrations; implementing the proposed measures for salmon and steelhead; improving conditions for other fish species, including bull trout, white sturgeon, Pacific lamprey,

and resident fish; protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat; enhancing local recreational opportunities; and protecting cultural resources.

The staff's recommendation is to relicense the project as proposed, with additional measures recommended by agencies and the staff to protect and enhance environmental resources.

- e. Contact: Kim A. Nguyen
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Office of Energy Projects
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20426
(202) 502-6105

- f. Transmittal: This final environmental impact statement prepared by the Commission's staff on the hydroelectric license application filed by Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County Washington for the existing Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (No. 2114-116) is being made available to the public on or about November 24, 2006, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969¹

¹ National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, amended (Pub. L. 91-190. 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended by Pub. L. 94-52, July 3, 1975, Pub. L. 94-83, August 9, 1975, and Pub. L. 97-258, §4(b), September 13, 1982).

FOREWORD

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission), pursuant to the Federal Power Act (FPA)² and the U.S. Department of Energy Organization Act³ is authorized to issue licenses for up to 50 years for the construction and operation of non-federal hydroelectric developments subject to its jurisdiction, on the necessary conditions:

That the project adopted...shall be such as in the judgment of the Commission will be best adapted to a comprehensive plan for improving or developing a waterway or waterways for the use or benefit of interstate or foreign commerce, for the improvement and utilization of water-power development, for the adequate protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), and for other beneficial public uses, including irrigation, flood control, water supply, and recreational and other purposes referred to in section 4(e)...⁴

The Commission may require such other conditions not inconsistent with the FPA as may be found necessary to provide for the various public interests to be served by the project.⁵

² 16 U.S.C. §791(a)-825r, as amended by the Electric Consumers Protection Act of 1986, Public Law 99-495 (1986) and the Energy Policy Act of 1992, Public Law 102-486 (1992).

³ Public Law 95-91, 91 Stat. 556 (1977).

⁴ 16 U.S.C. §803(a).

⁵ 16 U.S.C. §803(g).