

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426
March 08, 2007

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2594-007
Lake Creek Hydroelectric Project
Northern Lights, Inc.

Mark Contor
Northern Lights Inc.
P.O. Box 269, 421 Chevy Street
Sagle, ID 83860

Subject: Study Plan Determination for the Lake Creek Hydroelectric Project

Dear Mr. Contor:

Pursuant to 18 CFR § 5.13(c), this letter contains our study plan determination for the Lake Creek Hydroelectric Project filed February 1, 2007.

Background

The Commission held Scoping Meetings and a project site visit on August 9, 2006. After the scoping meetings the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Montana FWP) requested that Northern Lights Inc. (Northern Lights) include three studies in the Proposed Study Plan (PSP) related to fisheries and habitat. Northern Lights developed and distributed draft plans to the agencies and tribes for review, and filed the Proposed Study Plan with FERC on October 13, 2006

Northern Lights held a study plan meeting on November 1, 2006, to informally resolve any disagreements between the PSP and stakeholders' study requests.¹ Attendees at the meeting included staff from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission), Northern Lights, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Montana FWP, and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (Montana DEQ).

¹ The following entities submitted study requests: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Montana FWP.

P-2594-007

Northern Lights received letters of comment on the revised draft PSP from Commission staff and the USFWS on January 10, 2007. Commission staff stated that it had no comments on the revised draft PSP. The USFWS requested an estimate of the number of fish entrained by the project, and identification of possible mitigation opportunities for entrained fish. The USFWS did not comment further on the revised draft PSP. Montana DEQ filed comments with the Commission on January 16, 2007, which outlined its support for the revised draft PSP.

On February 1, 2007, Northern Lights filed its revised PSP for gathering information on the following resources: stream flows, water quality, fisheries, wildlife, wetlands, bull trout protection, and cultural resources. The revised PSP consists of 13 studies. A Study Plan Summary and Schedule is attached as Appendix A.

Study Plan Determination

The revised study plan and comments on the proposed study plan have been reviewed. All study issues appear to have been resolved. Therefore, Northern Lights' revised study plan filed February 1, 2007 is approved.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Sean Murphy at (202)502-6145.

Sincerely,

J. Mark Robinson
Director
Office of Energy Projects

Enclosed: Appendix A, Study Plan Summary and Schedule

cc: Mailing List
Public Files

P-2594-007

APPENDIX A**Table 1:** Revised Proposed Study Plans for the Lake Creek Project

Study Plan Name	Study Period (detail-date)	
General Comment: Northern Lights will provide draft reports to interested parties for a 30 day comment period, and file and distribute an Initial Study Report to interested parties within one year of study plan approval.		
GEOLOGY AND SOILS		
Reservoir Sediment Contamination	survey of Lake Creek reservoir sediments	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
WATER RESOURCES		
Reservoir Water Quality	water quality measurements	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
Bypassed Reach Water Quality	water quality monitoring	2006 and 2007
	final report	2008
	water temperature monitoring	2006 and 2007
	final report	2008
BYPASSED REACH FLOWS		
Bypassed Reach Instream Flow	streamflow measurements	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
Lake Creek Instream Flow and Habitat Assessment	habitat survey of bypassed reach	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
Instream flow in bypass reach provided by dam leakage	data collection	2006 and 2007
	final report	2008
FISH AND AQUATIC RESOURCES		
Potential spawning habitat for bull trout and kokanee in the bypassed reach.	data collection	completed 2006
	draft report	early 2007

P-2594-007

Fish Species composition and habitat availability (including potential sculpin habitat) in the bypassed reach	data collection	2006 and 2007
	final report	2008
Lake Creek Instream Flow and Habitat Assessment	data collection and flow analysis	2007
	final report	2008
Potential entrainment and/or impingement of fish, especially bull trout, and downstream passage	data collection	2006 and 2007
	final report	2008
WILDLIFE RESOURCES		
Herpetology Survey	surveys	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
Wildlife surveys	surveys	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
BOTANICAL RESOURCES		
Rare Plant Survey	pre-field review and surveys	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
Wetland vegetation survey	initial data review and assessment fieldwork	completed 2006
	final report	early 2007
CULTURAL RESOURCES		
Cultural Resources	survey and research	2005-2006
	final report	completed 2006