

Final Meeting Minutes

Gibson Dam Hydroelectric Project

FERC No. 12478

Study Planning Meeting,

September 1, 2005

Prepared by:

Gibson Dam Hydroelectric Company (GDHC) LLC

The meeting convened at about 10:00 AM at the Montana Association of Counties Conference room in Helena, MT. In attendance were in Helena were:

Glenn Phillips, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MDFWP)

Vicki Sullivan, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Steve Potts, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Josef Warhank, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Michael Suplee, Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

Bob Bukontis, MDEQ

Quentin Kujala, MDFWP

Tom Huntley, Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative (CMEPC)

Leonard Sivumaki, Sun River Electric Cooperative (SREC)

Ron Hecker, US Forest Service (USFS)

Mark Lindberg, SREC

Mark Wilson, USFS

Thom Fischer, Whitewater Engineering

Bob Hardin, Greenfields Irrigation District (GID)

Scott Odegard, SREC

Jeff Baumberger, Reclamation

Steve Davies, Reclamation

George Liknes, MDFWP

Dick Rosenberg, Whitewater Engineering/GDHC

Via teleconference: Gerrish Willis and Justin Jimenez, USFS

Dick Rosenberg announced that Mike Prewitt, GDHC's licensing consultant, could not attend the meeting for health reasons. Dick suggested that the meeting proceed according to the agenda topics, starting with Resource Specific Studies.

Water Quality

Dick said that a preliminary draft water quality study plan was sent to MDEQ for review and that GDHC was waiting for a response on the draft before submitting the plan to the full participant group.

Mike Suplee asked about the discharge points from the dam relative to various turbine installation alternatives.

Thom Fischer said that the two existing 6 ft. diameter power penstocks outlets half way up the dam could be used for generation until the reservoir went below their elevation. After the reservoir was drafted below the power penstock level, a tap of one of the two jet flow pipes at the base of the dam would provide flow for generation primarily during the winter period.

Thom described a three-turbine configuration to allow generation at all reservoir levels. He said that total discharge from the dam would consist of flow from the jet flow pipes, the existing power penstocks (when reservoir elevation permitted), and spill.

A question was asked about where and when gas supersaturation might occur. Mike said that gas supersaturation most likely would occur at the bottom of the spillway, but that it was also possible as a result of turbine operation.

Glenn Phillips asked about the reservoir fill and refill process. Bob Hardin explained the fill and refill process in some detail.

Vicki Sullivan said her name was not on the licensing mailing list and described the need for wetlands determinations.

Steve Potts asked whether the existing flow regime at Gibson Dam would be changed. Bob Hardin and Steve Davies affirmed that it would not be changed.

Gerrish Wills & Justin Jimenez asked about the measurement of water temperature near the dam face. Thom suggested that temperature measurement be made in close vicinity to the jet flow pipe inlet and the power penstock outlets half way up the dam.

Cultural Resources

Josef Warhank said that the State Historical Preservation Office would work in coordination with Reclamation and USFS and that the three agencies had discussed the Project. Joseph was not sure which agency would be lead. Both Reclamation and the

USFS indicated that in order to determine and identify areas of potential impact, a Project Plan must be developed and submitted to the agencies.

Fisheries

Steve Leathe said that his agency had performed a wetted perimeter-based instream flow assessment several years ago. He added that use of the Instream Flow Incremental Methodology (IFIM) was possible, in order to refine the earlier wetter perimeter study results. He said that it might be better to spend money on mitigation or enhancement proposals than to perform extensive instream flow studies. He said that there are potential fish enhancement areas downstream of the Diversion Dam.

Thom outlined the Federal subsidy included in the new 2005 energy bill on hydropower development at existing dams. Thom stated the bulk of the subsidy (if appropriations remain available) would benefit GID and the people in the area.

He asked about developing a settlement agreement for fish and instream flow. No objections were raised to the possibility of developing an operations agreement of some sorts. However, Reclamation and the Greenfields Irrigation District emphasized that the authorized project purposes for the Sun River Project is Irrigation only. Development of this project could not change authorized project benefits.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will provide fish mortality information from other Montana reservoirs to use as a basis for a potential settlement negotiation.

Wildlife

Vicki Sullivan said that GDHC should determine the transmission route as soon as possible.

Ron Hecker described the sensitive species list and said that Lynx habitat must be addressed relative to project construction and operation. He added the same request in terms of threatened and endangered species.

Mark Wilson said that the powerline must conform to federal standards for protection of raptors and migratory birds. He said that he had copies of the guidelines.

Someone mentioned the need to identify “Sensitive Management Indicator Species”?

USFS indicated that they will need to look at using the latest Sensitive Plant Species.

Aesthetics and Recreation

Ron Hecker said that the Sun River Canyon is the most heavily used access to the Rocky Mountain Front and that there is an aesthetic issue regarding project effects on the view

shed. He also said that there is a concern about traffic disruption due to Project construction in the Sun River Canyon.

Justin Jimenez said that the USFS needs specific Project plans for the powerhouse and the transmission line.

Steve Davies said Reclamation would need to review and approve detailed specifications for all project features in the vicinity of the dam (powerhouse, roads, etc.). Regarding aesthetic issues Reclamation will need to approve ~~specify~~ architectural treatment and features for the proposed structures (e.g., building colors, etc.).

Josef Warhank stated that SHPO would review conceptual drawings. He said that the SHPO has a landscape architect on staff to review aesthetic issues.

Regarding recreation related issues there was discussion on the potential impacts the construction would have to recreation users. This would be dependent upon the timing of the construction. The Developer had not yet determined the construction periods.

Justin Jimenez mentioned the design effort with Fall River Electric on their powerhouse. Justin asked about the size and location of the step-up substation. Dick said that the substation would be outside the USFS boundary and would be small, within a 70 by 50 ft. area.

Geology and Soils

Steve Davies said that Reclamation needed locations for future soil exploration in order to complete the required NEPA process. This would be separate from any future development, so if these are determined to be necessary by the developer, this should be submitted now. Steve also requested a Project task schedule so that Reclamation could assign manpower.

Water Use

Glenn Phillips asked if the Project would be used for peaking. Thom said that the Project would not be used for peaking and could only generate using water released by Reclamation & GID.

Justin Jimenez asked if the minimum flow was 200 cubic feet per second (cfs). Bob Hardin said that 200 cfs was a goal during normal hydrologic conditions. Bob added that during drought periods, efforts were made to release no less than 50 cfs.

Land use

Ron Hecker said the USFS must protect its investment in the roadway in Sun River Canyon. Dick said he would like to meet with USFS engineers to determine specifications for trenching, compaction, surfacing etc.

Steve Davies mentioned the dam site and boundary for proposed structures, and that it will be GDHC's responsibility to identify project boundaries. This is critical to the development of future agreements and contracts. In addition Steve mentioned the MOU between Reclamation and USFS as an example of an agreement that will need to be either modified to specify items such as boundaries, ownership of facilities, maintenance responsibilities, etc., or replaced with a new agreement or agreements.

Alternative Licensing Process

Dick briefly described the three FERC licensing processes (traditional, alternative and integrated) licensing processes, and asked for response to GDHC's request to FERC and reviewing agencies to utilize the Alternative Licensing Process (ALP).

Gerrish Willis asked why the new Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) was not chosen. Dick said that there was limited experience in using the ILP and that we had already begun along an ALP time-line during Initial Consultation in April, 2005. He said, since July of this year, ILP is the default process, but that prior to that, ALP was the normal way of doing business.

There were no objections to use of the ALP process.

Glenn Phillips asked for a copy of the Grisdale Hill License and associated articles. Dick said that GDHC could provide a copy.

The meeting adjourned at about 12:30 PM.