

87 FERC ¶ 62,108

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

River Falls Municipal Utilities

Project No. 10489-011
Wisconsin

ORDER AMENDING PROJECT OPERATION PLAN
APR 27 1999

On January 8 and supplemented on March 10, 1999, River Falls Municipal Utilities (licensee) filed a request to amend the Order Modifying and Approving Operation Protocol for the River Falls Project. 1/ The project is located on the Kinnickinnic River in Pierce County, Wisconsin.

BACKGROUND

In order to ensure compliance with the run-of-river requirement in article 401 of its license, 2/ the licensee was required to develop, in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), an operating protocol that would minimize downstream water level fluctuations at the River Falls Project. The licensee's plan included ramping procedures to be implemented each time the project's turbines are removed from service and put back on-line during trashrack cleaning operations and other maintenance activities. The licensee's plan was approved in the above cited Order.

The approved plan required that the operating protocol be implemented for a one-year trial period through October 1, 1998. The plan also required the licensee to meet with the WDNR quarterly to evaluate the performance of the operating protocol and, following the one-year testing period, draft a report describing the results of the tests and presenting any recommendations.

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The licensee stated that the objective of the operation plan was to ensure that the units operate with minimal effect on downstream water levels. To achieve that, the licensee stated a tailwater level indicator was installed that provided data for the operators to monitor in order to observe any changes in downstream river elevations resulting from operational changes at

1/ 81 FERC ¶ 62,087 (1997).

2/ Order Issuing License, 44 FERC ¶ 62,298 (1988).

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the project. The licensee stated that operational data on trash rack cleaning activities was provided to the WDNR and meetings were held to evaluate the data. The licensee stated that it was determined that gate settings should be maintained for a minimum of 15 minutes before reducing, or increasing, generation in order to minimize downstream water level fluctuations.

The licensee revised the approved operating protocol to include the 15 minute component into the ramping procedures and provided a draft copy to the WDNR for its review and comment. The licensee also provided copies to representatives from Trout Unlimited and Kinnickinnic River Land Trust.

RESOURCE AGENCY COMMENTS

By letter dated December 11, 1998, the WDNR indicated that it reviewed the licensee's proposed modifications. The WDNR requested clarification concerning two points in the licensee's revised plan. The WDNR stated that after ramping down, the unit is turned off at a five kilowatt output. The WDNR wanted to know, however, at what output the unit is brought back on line. Secondly, the WDNR asked, once on line, would the project ramp up at five kilowatt increments.

By letter dated December 30, 1998, the licensee indicated that the operators do have the ability to set the gate and achieve a five kilowatt output when coming on line initially. Previously, the licensee stated, a 4-7 kilowatt range was reasonable. The licensee's revised plan also stated that once on line, ramping up, or increasing generation, would occur at five kilowatt increments.

In a letter dated March 2, 1999, the licensee indicated that no comments were received from Trout Unlimited and Kinnickinnic River Land Trust regarding the proposed modifications to the approved operating plan.

DISCUSSION

The approved operating protocol did not contain a specific time element for maintaining a gate setting before another adjustment in generation was made. It stated that generation would be reduced (or increased depending on whether the operator was ramping down the units or ramping up) until the water level stabilized at the desired level. The approved testing period was established, in part, to determine an appropriate period of time for generation to be maintained before any other changes in generation are made.

Based on the test data and in consultation with the WDNR, the licensee requested to amend the approved plan to include a timing component for the ramping procedures. The licensee

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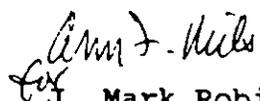
proposed to maintain a gate position for a minimum of 15 minutes before making any subsequent adjustments in generation when implementing upramping or downramping procedures.

The licensee adequately implemented and completed the required testing of the operation plan. The proposed modifications provide for timely operational changes during trash rack cleaning and maintenance activities. The licensee incorporated the WDNR's comments into their request to amend the operating plan. The data indicated that the proposed modification to the ramping rate procedures should minimize downstream river fluctuations and ensure compliance with article 401. Therefore, the licensee's January 8 and March 10, 1999 filings, proposing that the approved operating plan be amended as discussed above, should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) River Falls Municipal Utilities' proposal, filed January 8 and supplemented on March 10, 1999, to amend the Order Modifying and Approving Operation Protocol for the River Falls Project located on the Kinnickinnic River in Pierce County, Wisconsin is approved.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order, pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 385.713.


J. Mark Robinson
Director
Division of Licensing & Compliance