

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Condit Hydroelectric Project, located on the White Salmon River in Klickitat and Skamania Counties, Washington (Figure 1), was constructed in 1912 and 1913 and has produced electricity since that time. PacifiCorp is proposing to remove the Condit Hydroelectric Project following the October 1, 2010 cessation of electricity generation under its license extension with FERC. Ecology conducted a SEPA environmental review comparing the effects of continued operation of the dam (the no-action alternative) with the removal of the dam (proposed action), which culminated with a Final SEPA SEIS published in March 2007. After the Final SEPA SEIS was published, additional sediment sampling reported mercury levels in Northwestern Lake sediment that exceed regulatory screening criteria. This brought into question the conclusions of the Final SEPA SEIS concerning contaminants in the sediment and effects of releasing them. This Supplement to the Final SEPA SEIS (Draft Second Supplemental EIS or Draft Second SEIS) was produced to resolve these questions.

In addition, the proposed location for disposal of the concrete from the dam has been changed. Disposal is now proposed to occur in the area where the wood-stave flowline will be removed, which is nearer the White Salmon River.

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND SUMMARY

On December 27, 1991, PacifiCorp submitted an application for a new license to continue operating the Condit Hydroelectric Project. That began a long process that led to the decision to remove the Condit Dam and surrender the license. The highlights of the process from 1991 to 2009 are summarized in the chart below.

Date	Event
December 27, 1991	PacifiCorp applied to FERC for a new license to continue operating the Condit Hydroelectric Project
October 1996	FERC issued a Final NEPA EIS that analyzed five alternatives. In the 1996 Final NEPA EIS, FERC staff recommended PacifiCorp’s licensing proposal with modifications that included fish passage facilities and several other changes to benefit fish.
October 29, 1999	PacifiCorp applied to extend the current license term to October 1, 2006, and to incorporate the terms and conditions of a Settlement Agreement that provided for removal of the dam.
June 2002	FERC issued a Final Supplemental Final NEPA EIS that assessed the effects of surrendering the dam operating license, including dam removal.
November 16, 2004 to February 8, 2005	The parties to the Settlement Agreement all signed a Memorandum of Agreement modifying the Settlement Agreement and changing the date for dam removal from 2006 to 2008, subject to permits.
February 2005	PacifiCorp filed to amend the FERC decommissioning application to be consistent with the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement.
March 2007	Ecology issued a Final SEPA SEIS.
March 2007	Mercury was reported in additional sediment samples, triggering concerns about water quality and the bioaccumulation and toxicity

Date	Event
	potential of deposited sediments.
July 2007 to January 2009	PacifiCorp consultants performed additional sampling, characterization, and assessment of mercury levels, forms, origin, concentrations, and bioaccumulation potential.
May 2008 to May 2009	PacifiCorp updated various removal and management plans.

2.3 NEED FOR STATE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Ecology is both the Lead Agency for SEPA and the regulatory decision maker for some of the permits that require SEPA documentation to support permit decisions. Pursuant to WAC 197-11-620, Ecology prepared a SEPA SEIS focusing on issues that were not covered adequately in either of the NEPA documents (the 1996 Final EIS or the 2002 Final Supplemental Final EIS), both by FERC.

The SEPA SEIS built on previous environmental documents. The 1996 FERC Final EIS on relicensing Condit Dam described and analyzed the effects of a no-action alternative, which would continue operation of the Condit Hydroelectric Project under the terms and conditions of the existing license. That analysis of the no-action alternative and other pertinent information was adopted as part of the SEPA SEIS.

Since the Final SEPA SEIS, PacifiCorp has produced additional documents and updated others that are pertinent to this additional Supplement to the Final SEPA SEIS. The following additional documents have been produced and were used to complete this Draft Second SEIS (the complete documents can be found in the CD inside the back cover of this document):

- Various plans:
 - Project Removal Design Report (PacifiCorp Energy 2009a)
 - Revegetation and Wetlands Management Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2009b)
 - Aquatic Resources Protection Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2008c)
 - Sediment Assessment, Stabilization, and Management Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2008a)
 - Dust Control Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2008d)
 - Woody Debris Management Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2008e)
 - Erosion Control Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2008b)
 - Recreation Facility Removal and Improvements Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2009d)
 - Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCC Plan) (PacifiCorp Energy 2008f)
 - Public Safety and Traffic Control Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2009c)
 - Quality Control and Inspection Program (PacifiCorp Energy 2008g)
 - Environmental Monitoring Plan (PacifiCorp Energy 2009e)
- Sediment Sampling and Analysis Report (Kleinfelder 2007a)
- Supplemental Evaluation of Mercury in Sediments Report (Kleinfelder 2007b)

- Updated Evaluation of Mercury Bioaccumulation, Underwood In Lieu Fishing Access Site, Northwestern Lake (Kleinfelder 2008a)
- Estimated Mercury Concentrations and Turbidity Resulting from Removal of Condit Dam (GEC 2009)

2.4 SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT SECOND SEIS

This Draft Second SEIS focuses on the issues that have arisen since the Final SEPA SEIS publication in March 2007. The issues identified by Ecology that require additional assessment as part of the SEPA process are listed below.

Water Resources

- Impacts to water quality in the White Salmon River from potentially toxic amounts of mercury in released sediment.
- Impacts to ground or surface water quality from leachate resulting from disposal of concrete and other construction debris.

Aquatic Resources

- Impacts to salmonids if increased turbidity and/or pH results from the new proposed concrete disposal site near the White Salmon River.
- Impacts to salmonids from potentially toxic amounts of mercury when the sediment is released into the water with dam breaching.
- Impacts to aquatic resources from increases in mercury concentrations in sediment deposited in the White Salmon and Columbia Rivers.

Transportation

- Impacts to traffic from hauling sediment to new concrete disposal site.

Land Use/Critical Areas

- Concrete disposal within 200 feet of White Salmon River, a Shoreline of the State.