

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON D.C. 20426
January 10, 2008

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 739-018 – Virginia
Claytor Project
Appalachian Power Company

Ms. Teresa Rogers
Appalachian Power Company
40 Franklin Road
Roanoke, VA 24011

Reference: Commission Staff Comments on Initial Study Report Meeting Summary

Dear Ms. Rogers:

Commission staff have reviewed the Initial Study Report Meeting Summary for the Claytor Hydroelectric Project, filed December 14, 2007. In addition to our verbal comments presented at the initial study report meetings held November 28 and 29, 2007, we have the following comments:

Cultural Resources

The approved study plan committed Appalachian Power Company (Appalachian Power) to submitting the Phase I Survey Report in October 2007 and to begin developing a Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) for the project in November 2007. We acknowledge that these items are behind schedule due to the delay of the study component that requires a drawdown, but we recommend you begin to develop an HPMP, in consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Council on Indians, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, as soon as possible. The Phase I Survey Report should include an updated schedule with the goal of including an HPMP with the preliminary licensing proposal.

Instream Flow Needs and Reservoir Elevation

The Initial Study Report meeting summary indicates that habitat suitability criteria (HSC) were reviewed for target species to be evaluated in the Instream Flow Needs and Reservoir Elevation Study and that no HSC criteria were identified for crayfish and hellbender. The meeting summary states that a work group will be scheduled to review the HSC.

The approved study plan indicates that any effects of project operations on hellbender and crayfish will be addressed through the Instream Flow Needs and Reservoir Elevation Study. We recommend that the work group consider the merits of developing HSC curves for crayfish and hellbender based on published literature or expert testimony concerning habitat needs and flow-related effects on life history requirements of these species, or agree on surrogate species with available HSC curves, as suggested in the approved study plan. In addition, consistent with the findings in the study plan determination letter issued on November 17, 2006, if data on habitat requirements of crayfish and hellbender are found lacking in the literature, the work group should consider the need for field collection of the necessary data during the second study season.

Recreation

As noted in the study report, there were two discrepancies from the study plan that occurred during the recreation use and needs assessment: (1) traffic counters at Dublin Public Ramp and Harry DeHaven County Park did not function from June 2 through September 2, and (2) only about half of the required spot counts and interviews were completed at Claytor Lake access points in April and May. We assume the traffic counter problem was due to mechanical failure, but there is no explanation regarding the lack of spot counts and interviews. The data that were obtained may be sufficient, but we agree that the work group should meet, to discuss whether additional data collection is needed. In addition, since the study plan called for 14 weekday and 6 weekend spot counts, the recreation report should clarify when the completed spot counts in April and May were conducted. Finally, in describing the angler use study, the meeting summary indicates that there may be some significant night fishing activity as well as evening-start tournament activity that is not accounted for in the creel survey. We recommend that the work group discuss whether additional data collection (i.e. nighttime creel surveys) is needed to account for this specific user group.

Study Plan Schedule

Several milestones on your Claytor Relicensing Study Plan Schedule, filed October 17, 2006, have been delayed. We recommend you revise this schedule to

include dates for the filing of final reports for each study, as well as a schedule for the development of any related management plans that will be included in the license application. Since the work group for shoreline management issues will meet after completion of reports from other studies (habitat, wetlands, recreation, erosion, etc.), a schedule for the development of a Shoreline Management Plan is particularly important.

Any questions on these comments should be directed to John Smith at (202) 502-8972 or john.smith@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Vince Yearick, Chief
Hydro East Branch 1

cc: Mailing List
Public Files