

March 22, 2010

Ms. Robyn Thorson, Regional Director
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Region
911 NE 11th Ave
Portland, OR 97232

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE AREA UNDER
EVALUATION FOR THE COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION LICENSE
RENEWAL APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Ms. Thorson:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by Energy Northwest for the renewal of the operating license for Columbia Generating Station (CGS). CGS is located on the Columbia River, 12 miles northwest of Richland, WA. As part of the review of the license renewal application, the NRC is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The SEIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended.

Energy Northwest stated that it has no plans to alter current operations over the license renewal period and that CGS, operating under a renewed license, would use existing plant facilities and transmission lines and would not require additional construction or disturbance of new areas. Any maintenance activities would be limited to previously disturbed areas. The CGS site is in the southeastern area of the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) Hanford Site, a 586 square mile reservation established in 1943 by the federal government for the production of defense nuclear materials. The CGS site comprises 1,089 acres that are leased by Energy Northwest from the USDOE. The lease describes the site in two parcels – a nearly square section containing the plant power block and associated structures and an elongated area running to the river east of the plant.

CGS employs a closed-cycle cooling system that removes heat from its condenser and rejects it to the atmosphere by evaporation using six mechanical draft cooling towers. Water is circulated from the cooling towers through the condenser and back to the circulating water pumphouse at a rate of about 550,000 gpm. Makeup water to replenish water losses due to evaporation, drift, and blowdown is supplied from the makeup water pumphouse located at Columbia River approximately three miles east of the plant. The three 800-hp makeup water pumps are each designed to pump 12,500 gallons per minute (gpm), although normally two pumps are used to supply makeup water to the plant.

The intake system for the makeup water pumps includes two offshore perforated pipe inlets mounted above the riverbed and approximately parallel to the river flow. The intake system is designed for a withdrawal capacity of 25,000 gpm.

Actual makeup water withdrawal during operating periods averages about 17,000 gpm. This is about 0.1% of the minimum river flow in the vicinity of CGS or 0.03% of the average annual flow.

As part of the SEIS, the applicable transmission line corridors will be reviewed. Energy produced at CGS is delivered to the Bonneville Power Authority at the H.J. Ashe Substation located 0.5 mile north of the station. The CGS main generator output is transmitted to Ashe Substation via the step-up main transformer bank and a 2,900-ft long 500-kV tie line. The plant start-up transformer is connected to the Ashe Substation via a 230-kV line. The 230-kV and 500-kV overhead lines run approximately parallel in a 280-ft wide corridor. The lines between CGS and Ashe Substation comprise the transmission intertie that is within the scope of license renewal. The third line supporting CGS is a 115-kV power source that serves as a backup power source for safe shutdown under accident conditions. This line has a right-of-way width of 90 feet and runs between the CGS switchyard and a tap off the 115-kV line that runs from the Benton Switchyard to USDOE Fast Flux Test Facility. This tap is located about 1.8 miles southeast of the plant. (Please see the site area map, Enclosure 3.)

To support the SEIS preparation process and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the NRC requests a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of CGS and its associated transmission line right-of-way. In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

The NRC staff plans to hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on April 6, 2010 at the Richland Public Library in Richland, WA. You and your staff are invited to attend the public meetings. The first session will convene at 12:30 p.m. and will continue until 3:30 p.m., as necessary. The second session will convene at 5:00 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the meeting, and will continue until 8:00 p.m., as necessary.

The week of June 7th, we plan to conduct a site audit. You and your staff are invited to attend both the site audit and the public meetings. Your office will also receive a copy of the draft SEIS along with a request for comments. The anticipated publication date for the draft SEIS is December 2010.

The CGS license renewal application is available at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/columbia.html>

R. Thorson

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If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff review of this license renewal application, please contact Mr. Daniel Doyle, Project Manager, at (301) 415-3748 or daniel.doyle@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Bo Pham, Chief
Projects Branch 1
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-397

Enclosures:

1. Area Map, 50-mile radius
2. Area Map, 6-mile radius
3. Site Area Map

cc w/encls.: See next page

R. Thorson

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OFFICE	PM:RPB1:DLR	PM:RPB1:DLR	LA:RPOB:DLR
NAME	JSusco	DDoyle	SFiguroa
DATE	03/11/10	03/19/10	03/18/10
OFFICE	OGC	BC:RPB1:DLR	
NAME	LSubin (NLO)	BPham	
DATE	03/22/10	03/22/10	

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Columbia Generating Station

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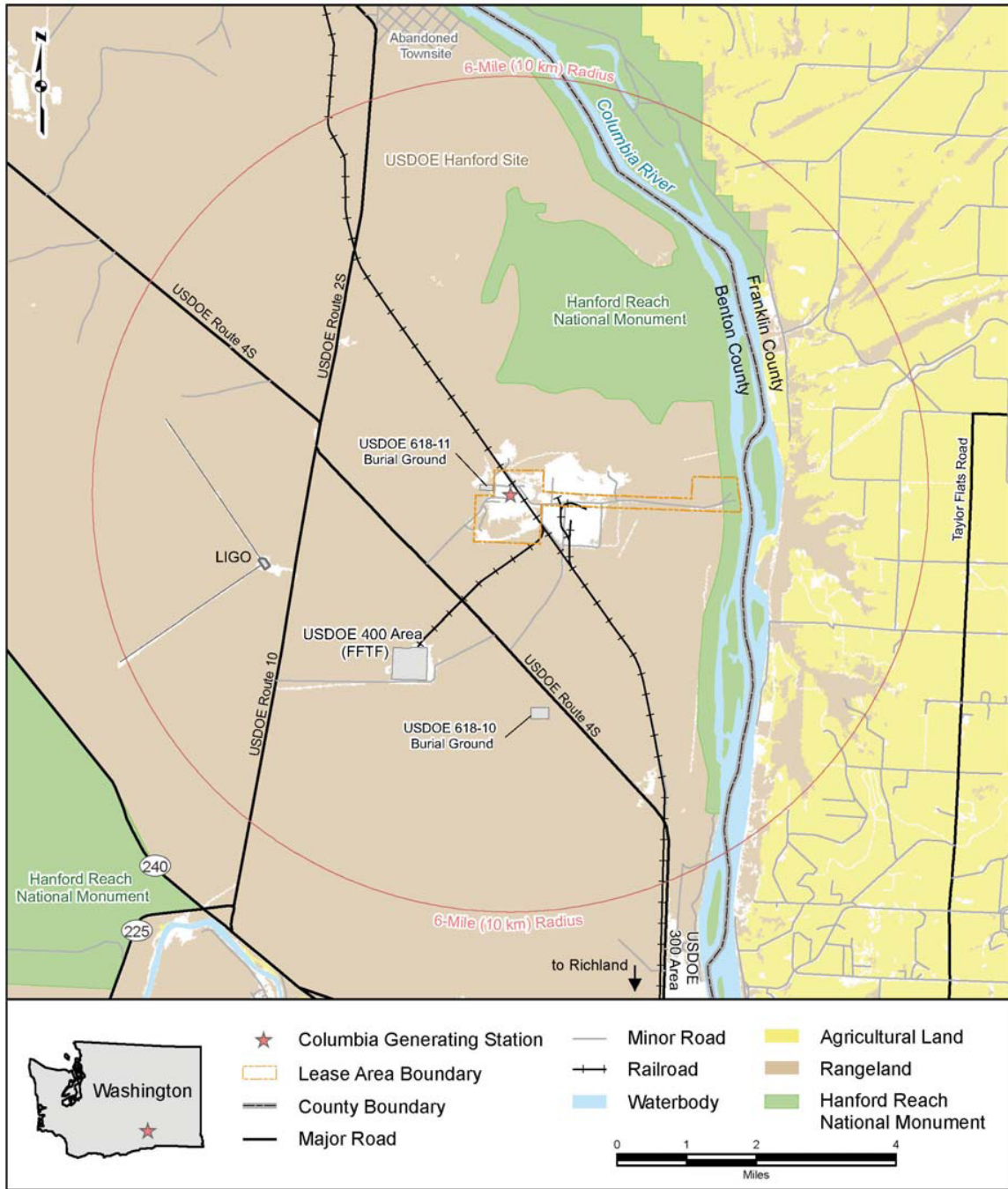
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Area Map, 50-Mile Radius



Area Map, 6-Mile Radius



Site Area Map

