

**Craver, Patti**

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**From:** Grange, Briana  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 22, 2012 1:33 PM  
**To:** Cooper, Paula  
**Cc:** Logan, Dennis  
**Subject:** Columbia updates for final SEIS -- protected species  
**Attachments:** Columbia final SEIS edits for protected species.docx

Paula,

I attached the edits for the final SEIS for the protected species sections. I didn't see anything in Chapter 2 that will need updating, so the changes should only be in Section 4.7. I also CCed Dennis since he is the lead oversight for the review. He might have some additional details to add, so check with him, but this should give you a good start.

Briana

**Columbia Generating Station**  
**Updates to Section 4.7 for Final SEIS**

**Section 4.7, Pg. 4-8**, beginning on line 5:

The impact to threatened or endangered species is a Category 2 issue. It requires consultation with the appropriate agencies to determine whether threatened or endangered species are present and whether they would be adversely affected by continued operation of CGS during the license renewal term. Section 2.2.7 describes the characteristics of threatened or endangered species and critical habitats near CGS. The staff ~~concluded is in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)~~ informal consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in October 2011. Informal section 7 consultation with and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is still ongoing to evaluate the potential impacts on Federally-listed aquatic species and critical habitats near CGS under the NMFS's jurisdiction.

**Section 4.7.1, Pg. 4-10**, insert the following as a new between paragraphs on lines 2 and 3:

thermal and chemical effluent of the blowdown discharge were not measurably affected by exposure to the heated water and blowdown chemicals (WPPSS, 1986).

With the draft SEIS, the NRC prepared an integrated biological assessment and EFH Assessment, which appear in Appendix D-1 to this SEIS. On August 23, 2011, the NRC submitted a copy of the draft SEIS and integrated assessment to the USFWS and NMFS with a request for informal section 7 consultation (with both the USFWS and NMFS) and EFH Consultation (with NMFS) (NRC 2011a; 2011b).

Informal Section 7 Consultation with the USFWS

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During phone discussions with the USFWS concerning the potential effects of the proposed license renewal on the bull trout, the USFWS and NRC agreed that the proposed license renewal would not be likely to adversely affect the species. The NRC revised its biological assessment conclusion via e-mail on September 28, 2011 (NRC 2011c) from "no effect" to "not likely to adversely affect" the bull trout. The USFWS concurred on this determination in a letter dated October 5, 2011 (USFWS 2011), at which point informal section 7 consultation between the USFWS and NRC concluded.

Based on the occurrence of the life stages of bull trout in the Hanford Reach; the design and operation of the the CGS intake and discharge structure; and the FWS's determination that the proposed license renewal is unlikely to adversely affect the species, the NRC staff conclude that the proposed license renewal would have SMALL impacts on the bull trout.

Informal Section 7 Consultation with the NMFS

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The NRC staff is still in informal section 7 consultation with the NMFS regarding the potential effects of the proposed license renewal on the upper Columbia River spring Chinook salmon and upper Columbia River steelhead. By letter dated October 24, 2011 (NMFS 2011), the NMFS informed the NRC that they did not concur on the NRC's biological assessment. The NMFS also directed the NRC to initiate formal section 7 consultation. The NRC replied to the NMFS on December 20, 2011 (NRC 2011d). In its response, the NRC staff explained that section 7 consultation is the appropriate means of fulfilling NRC's obligation under the ESA for the proposed CGS license renewal because the NRC does not have any information indicating that CGS is adversely affecting any Federally listed species. The NRC and NMFS held a teleconference on January 31, 2011. The NMFS agreed that continuing informal consultation was the appropriate path forward. The NMFS discussed additional information that it would need from the NRC to make a determination of effects, and on February 10, 2011, the NMFS submitted these requests via e-mail (NMFS 2012).

At this time, informal section 7 consultation between the NRC and NMFS regarding the is ongoing. Though the NRC has not concluded consultation at this time, for purposes of NEPA, the NRC has used the best available information to make conclusions regarding the upper Columbia River spring Chinook salmon and upper Columbia River steelhead. Based on the analysis in the NRC's biological assessment (Appendix D-1), neither species were collected during entrainment and impingement studies and thermal drift studies indicated not measureable impact on the either species. Therefore, the NRC staff concludes that the impacts of the proposed license renewal on the upper Columbia River spring Chinook and upper Columbia River steelhead would be SMALL.

#### Essential Fish Habitat Consultation

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The NRC requested initiation of abbreviated EFH Consultation under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act, as amended (MSA), with the NMFS on August 23, 2011 (NRC 2011b). The NMFS has not responded with EFH Conservation Recommendations to date. Because the NMFS did not provide the NRC with EFH Conservation Recommendations within the 30-day timeframe established at 50 CFR 600.920(h)(4) and has not indicated via letter, e-mail, or phone that it intends to provide the NRC with EFH Conservation Recommendations, the NRC considers its obligations under the MSA fulfilled and this consultation to be closed. The NRC concludes that the impacts of the proposed CGS license renewal on EFH would be SMALL.

#### Overall Special Status Species and Habitats Conclusion

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The NRC Based on the occurrence of the life stages of bull trout, upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook salmon and upper Columbia River steelhead in the Hanford Reach and the design and operation of the CGS intake and discharge structure, the staff concludes that the impacts of an additional 20 years of operation of CGS on aquatic special status species and habitats that are Federally listed as threatened or endangered species would be SMALL as defined by the NRC for the purposes of NEPA, rather than the Endangered Species Act. The staff has prepared an integrated biological assessment and EFH assessment, which are supplied as Appendix D-1 to this SEIS.

**Additional References to add to final SEIS:**

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Letter from K. S. Berg, Manager, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, to D. Wrona, Branch Chief, NRC. Subject: Section 7 consultation for Columbia Generating Station. October 5, 2011. ADAMS No. ML11291A157.

[NMFS] National Marine Fisheries Service. 2011. Letter from W. W. Stelle, Regional Administrator, to D. Wrona, Branch Chief, NRC. Subject: Non-concurrence on NRC's proposed license renewal for Energy Northwest's Columbia Generating Station, Consultation No. F/NWR/2011/05286. October 24, 2011. ADAMS No. ML11307A393.

[NMFS] National Marine Fisheries Service. 2012. E-mail from R. Domingue, NMFS, to D. Doyle, Project Manager, NRC. Subject: Columbia Generating Station Additional Information Request. February 10, 2012. ADAMS No. ML12044A329.

[NRC] U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. 2011a. Letter from D. Wrona, Branch Chief, to R. Thorson, Pacific Regional Director, USFWS. Subject: Biological assessment for informal consultation related to license renewal of Columbia Generating Station. August 23, 2011. ADAMS No. ML11161A002.

[NRC] U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. 2011b. Letter from D. Wrona, Branch Chief, to R. Domingue, NMFS. Subject: Biological assessment for informal consultation and request to initiate abbreviated EFH Consultation for license renewal of Columbia Generating Station. August 23, 2011. ADAMS No. ML11165A030.

[NRC] U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. 2011c. E-mail from D. Logan, Aquatic Ecologist, to Like Gauthier, USFWS. Subject: Revised biological assessment conclusion for bull trout in Columbia Generating Station section 7 consultation with FWS, NRC Docket 050-00397. September 28, 2011. ADAMS No. ML11272A066.

[NRC] U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. 2011d. Letter from D. Wrona, Branch Chief, to W. W. Stelle, Regional Administrator, NMFS. Subject: Response to letter of non-concurrence on biological assessment for proposed license renewal of Columbia Generating Station. December 20, 2011. ADAMS No. ML11335A127.