

regulations, 18 CFR part 380 (Order No. 486, 52 FR 47897), the Office of Energy Projects has reviewed the application for license for the Center Creek Hydroelectric Project located on Center Creek, in Iron County, Utah, and has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project. The project occupies 21.43 acres of United States lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The draft EA contains Commission staff's analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the project and concludes that licensing the project, with appropriate environmental protective measures, would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

A copy of the draft EA is available for review at the Commission in the Public Reference Room or may be viewed on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the eLibrary (FERRIS) link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document. For assistance contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll-free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, (202) 502-8659.

Any comments on this draft EA should be filed within 30 days from the date of this notice and should be addressed to: Magalie R. Salas, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426. Please affix Project No. 1273-009 to all comments. Comments may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. The Commission strongly encourages electronic filings. See 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's web site <http://www.ferc.gov> under the "e-Filing" link.

For further information, contact Gaylord Hoisington at (202) 502-6032 or gaylord.hoisington@ferc.gov.

Linda Mitry,
Acting Secretary.

Draft Environmental Assessment for Hydropower License, Center Creek Hydroelectric Project, Utah

[FERC Project No. 1273-009]

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission,
Office of Energy Projects, Division of
Hydropower—Environment and
Engineering, 888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426, August 2003

Table of Contents

Section

Summary

I. Application

- II. Purpose of Action and Need for Power
 - A. Purpose of Action
 - B. Need for Power
 - A. Parowan's Proposal
 - 1. Project Facilities and Operation
 - 2. Proposed Environmental Measures
 - B. Staff's Preferred Alternative
 - C. No-Action Alternative
 - D. Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Detailed Study
- IV. Consultation and Compliance
 - A. Agency Consultation
 - B. Interventions
 - C. Scoping
 - D. Water Quality Certification
- V. Environmental Analysis
 - A. General Description of the Center Creek Basin
 - B. Cumulative Effects
 - C. Proposed Action and Action Alternatives
 - 1. Aquatic Resources
 - 2. Terrestrial Resources
 - 3. Threatened and Endangered Species
 - 4. Cultural Resources
- VI. Developmental Analysis
- VII. Comprehensive Development and Recommended Alternative
- VIII. Recommendations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- IX. Consistency with Comprehensive Plans
- X. Finding of No Significant Impact
- XI. Literature Cited
- XII. List of Preparers

List of Figures

Figure

- 1. Project location for the Center Creek Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 1273-009
- 2. Project facilities for the Center Creek Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 1273-009
- 3. Natural and regulated inflow at the project diversion dam

List of Tables

Table

- 1. Recent retail power load for Parowan City
- 2. Parameters for economic analysis of the Center Creek Project

Summary

On November 15, 2002, Parowan City filed an application for a subsequent license for the existing 600-kilowatt, Center Creek Hydroelectric Project located at the confluence of Center Creek (aka Parowan Creek) and Bowery Creek (a tributary to Parowan Creek) near the City of Parowan, in Iron County, Utah. The project occupies 21.43 acres of land managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. The project generates about 2,300 megawatt-hours (MWh) annually.

The issues addressed in this draft environmental assessment are the potential effects of the continued operation and maintenance of the proposed project on: (1) Aquatic resources; (2) terrestrial resources, (3) threatened and endangered species; and

(4) cultural resources. There are no major issues with this project.

Parowan City's proposal to relicense the project includes the environmental measure to monitor and remove any noxious and undesirable plants after any ground-disturbing activities. Parowan City does not propose any changes to the project's facilities or operations.

In this draft environmental assessment (EA), Commission staff analyze the effects of Parowan City's proposed project, with one additional staff recommended environmental measure (to develop a cultural resources management plan if any new or undocumented archeological or historic sites are discovered during project operation or maintenance) and the no-action alternative.

We estimate the proposed project would generate an average of 2,300 MWh annually at an annual cost of \$18,000 and an annual net power benefit of \$56,000. The cost of the staff's measure is minimal and would not affect project economics.

Based on our independent analysis, we conclude that issuing a subsequent license for the project, with the environmental measure that we recommend, would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Environmental Assessment Office of Energy Projects Center Creek Hydroelectric Project [FERC No. 1273-009-Utah]

I. Application

On November 15, 2002, Parowan City (Parowan) filed an application for a subsequent license for the existing 600-kilowatt (kW) Center Creek Hydroelectric Project (project), located at the confluence of Center Creek (aka Parowan Creek) and Bowery Creek (a tributary to Parowan Creek) near the City of Parowan, in Iron County, Utah (figure 1). The project occupies 21.43 acres of land managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

II. Purpose of Action and Need for Power

A. Purpose of Action

The Federal Power Act (FPA) provides the Commission with the exclusive authority to license non-federal water power projects on navigable waterways and federal lands.

For the project, the Commission must decide (1) whether to issue a license to Parowan, and if so, (2) what, if any, conditions should be placed on that license to protect or enhance existing