COAST FORK
WILLAMETTE
Watershed Council

28 S. Sixth St., A Cottage Grove, OR 97424
(541) 767-9717

Community Meeting Notes
Sep 27, 2007

This meeting was a tour of Dorena Dam and a question period after the tour. The following is the results of that question period.

Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First St. N.E.
Washington, DC 20426

RE: Dorena Lake Dam Project No. 11945-001

Dear Magalie R. Salas,

The following comments in regards to the above proposed project were recorded at the September public meeting of our organization. As we strive to provide a forum for local natural resource issues, we hosted Erik Steimle of Ecosystems Research Institute (Symbiotics' environmental consultant) in addressing local natural resource concerns.

Prior to the meeting, our council had identified several key issues of concern to our organization: the potential mobilization of mercury-laden sediment during construction, choosing the best fish mitigation path (with native species and temperature impairment being the highest council priorities) and the comfort of local citizens with the project. In order to further explore the latter, we chose to host this meeting.

The meeting was a vibrant consideration of many issues. Please accept this comment from the watershed council, as well as from this list of meeting attendees (all of whom signed i~~n another~~ 15-20 participated who did not sign in).

Donna Long	Cottage Grove, OR
Paul Reed, ELSWCD	Eugene, OR
John Steele	Dorena, OR
Larry Weaver	Creswell, OR
Cindy Weeldreyer	Cottage Grove, OR
Brian Forge	Cottage Grove, OR
Paul Boehner	Cottage Grove, OR
Donna Riddle	Eugene, OR

Jim Mough	Eugene, OR
David Hale	Cottage Grove, OR
Bryan & Peggy von Bargen	Dorena, OR
Ethan & Parna Hale	Cottage Grove, OR
Jan Ogsbury	Cottage Grove, OR
Alice Doyle	Cottage Grove, OR
Donna Hudson	Dorena, OR
Ken Homolka, ODFW	Salem, OR
Diana Bus, BLM	Eugene, OR
Dustin Bengtson, USACE	Cottage Grove, OR
Deb Schmidt, USFS	Cottage Grove, OR
Avis Newell, ODEQ	Portland, OR
Thomas Munroe	Cottage Grove, OR
Dean & Agnes Snauer	Cottage Grove, OR
Leonard & Sandi Dunivin	Dorena, OR
Joe Snook	Cottage Grove, OR
Eric Cullander	Creswell, OR
Pat Patterson	Cottage Grove, OR
Will Parrish	Dorena, OR
Allen Martin	Dorena, OR
Pamela Reber, comment author	Cottage Grove, OR

The following comments were recorded during our September 27, 2006 meeting about the proposed Dorena hydroelectric project:

- Mercury issues
    - Will a flush of mercury-laden sediment occur during and after construction? Most attendees seemed to assume that this was a risk they are facing.
    - Problems arise when levels drop below the minimum conservation pool.
    - If construction is scheduled for winter, it will be difficult to determine a risk-free work window. A rigorous review by the DEQ 401 certification process needs to occur.
    - A baseline of sediment mobilization is needed for high flows in order to determine what will constitute a high level of mobilization for construction. Peak flows are unusual, and it is unlikely that data gathering occurred during these times (January 2006, e.g.)
    - Mercury studies in fish were done poorly. Very few samples were taken, all in very small specimens of stocked fish. The issue of mercury in this reservoir lies in the biological magnification that occurs in and is evident in the large mouth bass, which sometimes occur up to 25 lbs or more(which was cited by person making the comment as having been caught by their student).
    - If the new penstock is installed, it will surely act with some suction, thus provoking some fine sediment (and mercury), to be pulled off the bottom and flushed downstream.
    - A core sample of the sediment needs to be taken, and levels assessed, if that hasn't happened already.
    - Historic Corps management issues (draw downs and fish kill were reported) and local memory of these help frame the context in which people view this project at Dorena.
- Fish Issues
    - Discussion and concern about screening the native and sport fishery, especially around mortality issues.

    - The biggest impairment to the Row River is its temperature impairment. This should be addressed in the design of the water intake and penstock.
    - A fish ladder should be considered.
    - Will there be a new scour pool by the new outlet? The concern was that there would be a change in the gravel structure just below the dam, which is known Spring chinook spawning ground. Neighbors find salmon carcasses just below the dam.
    - Why would FERC propose a financial savings for Symbiotics by suggesting no screen is needed for fish? Why would fish screening be the only mitigation paid for? The cost of the 1/4" screen is too high, as on-site fish mortality (native and game species) is not the biggest ecological impairment to this system.
- Wildlife issues
    - The proposed staging area (on the island) is currently functioning as rearing habitat for juvenile Bald eagles. This use will definitely be a negative impact and disturbance to this population.
    - Western pond turtles may nest on the south facing slope that the proposed facility will sit on. It is unclear if adequate nest surveys have been completed.
    - A known population of Western rattlesnakes exists in the exact area where the facility is proposed. If they are not moved prior to construction, they could easily be impacted.
- Engineering/Economics
    - Earthquake concerns about putting a new 9' diameter hole through an aged structure ~~-~~ will the dam not need to be updated?
    - How deep will the proposed penstock be? How will it be screened? Other similar projects have penetrated the bedrock next to the dam, rather than the dam itself, why is that not being done here? During the Carmen dam relicensing, the reason EWEB vetoed a fish ladder was because of the risk of altering the dam structure.
    - Where will the powerlines run?
    - This project doesn't look economically feasible on paper, so the risks and impacts to the local area could be for naught. Wouldn't the Corps have retrofitted this facility if it was economically feasible?
    - Additional seismic concern~~s -~~ many residents live downstream, and the only real threat of natural disaster in this area is that of the dams failing during an earthquake event.

Thank you for consideration of these concerns of residents who are most local to the project.

Sincerely,

Pamela Reber

Coordinator
Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council