

150 FERC ¶ 62,044  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Wisconsin Public Service Company

Project No. 1999-054

ORDER AMENDING PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE MONITORING PLAN

(Issued January 20, 2015)

1. On December 11, 2014, Wisconsin Public Service Company (licensee) filed its 2014 Noxious Plant Monitoring Report and Six-Year Summary (report) for the Wausau Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 1999. The report, which is required by ordering paragraph (B) of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (Commission) October 23, 2009 Order Amending Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan,<sup>1</sup> indicates that purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) control measures have not yet provided clear results. As such, the licensee proposes extending the implementation of its Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan<sup>2</sup> for an additional three years. The project is located on Wisconsin River in Marathon County, Wisconsin.

BACKGROUND AND REQUIREMENTS

2. Article 408 of the project license<sup>3</sup> requires the licensee to implement a plan, in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), to monitor purple loosestrife within the project area. Under the 1997 plan, the licensee determined that biological control would be necessary to control purple loosestrife populations. As such, the licensee's proposition to release *Galerucella* beetles and monitor impacts for six years was amended to the plan in 2009.

3. From 2009 through 2014, the licensee released *Galerucella* beetles and monitored impacts to purple loosestrife colonies throughout the project area. In its December 11, 2014 filing, the licensee indicates that it has not observed a clear decrease

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<sup>1</sup> 125 FERC ¶ 62,080.

<sup>2</sup> Order Approving Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan. 80 FERC ¶ 62,029 (issued July 14, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Order Issuing New License. 76 FERC ¶ 61,056 (issued July 18, 1996).

in the number of purple loosestrife colonies or a clear increase in the number of colonies with *Galerucella* beetle feeding present.

#### LICENSE'S REQUEST

4. In its filing, the licensee provides data from 2009 through 2014 indicating fluctuating purple loosestrife populations and instances of beetle feeding on the colonies. In order to better assess the impacts of *Galerucella* beetle releases on purple loosestrife, the licensee proposes implementing its plan, as amended in 2009, for an additional three years.

#### *Consultation*

5. The license provided a draft report to the WDNR and FWS on October 29, 2014. On October 29, 2014, the WDNR indicated that it concurs with the continued purple loosestrife control measures. No other comments pertaining to the additional monitoring were provided.

#### CONCLUSION

6. Data collected during implementation of the licensee's amended Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan does not clearly show that *Galerucella* beetles are adequately established throughout the project area and able to control purple loosestrife populations. Accordingly, the licensee proposes implementing its plan, to continue releasing beetles and monitoring their effects, for an additional three years, 2015 through 2017. Further implementation of the Plan should help control the existing population of purple loosestrife and clarify whether the biological control method adequately controls the invasive species.

7. Under the amended plan, the licensee would file purple loosestrife reports with the Commission by December 15 annually, after consultation with the WDNR and the FWS. In order to allow the agencies sufficient time to review the report, the licensee should provide its monitoring results to the WDNR and FWS by October 31 annually for a minimum of 30 days for review and comment prior to filing a final report with the Commission. When filing the final report with the Commission, the licensee should include copies of comments and recommendations from the resource agencies, and specific descriptions of how the comments are accommodated by the filing. If the licensee does not adopt a recommendation, the filing should include the licensee's reasons based on project-specific information. After three years of data collection, the licensee should file a summary of the data and its recommendation, after consulting with the resource agencies, on the schedule for conducting and reporting future purple loosestrife surveys with the Commission.

8. The licensee's proposed amendment to its Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan represents an appropriate approach to controlling purple loosestrife within the project area, and should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) Wisconsin Public Service Corporation's (licensee) Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan amendment request, filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on December 11, 2014, as modified by ordering paragraph (B) below, is approved.

(B) The licensee must file annual *Galerucella* beetle control and purple loosestrife monitoring results with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by October 31 annually, 2015 through 2017. The licensee must file the annual results, including agency comments, with the Commission by December 15 of the corresponding year, after allowing the resource agencies 30 days to comment on each report. After three years of data have been collected (2015 – 2017), the licensee must file a summary of the data and its recommendation, after consultation with the resource agencies, on the schedule for conducting and reporting future purple loosestrife surveys with the Commission.

(C) This order constitutes final agency action. Any party may file a request for rehearing of this order within 30 days from the date of its issuance, as provided in section 313(a) of the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. § 825l (2012), and the Commission's regulations at 18 CFR § 385.713 (2014). The filing of a request for hearing does not operate as a stay of the effective date of this order, or of any other date specified in this order. The exemptee's failure to file a request for rehearing shall constitute acceptance of this order.

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Document Content(s)

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