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FEDERAL ENERGY
REGULATORY COMMISSION



ORIGINAL

Northern States Power Company

100 North Barstow Street
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008
Telephone (715) 839-2621

July 30, 1997

Lois Cashell, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20426

RE: Big Falls and Thornapple Hydro Projects, - Project Nos. 2390 and 2475
Filing of Compliance Plans Pursuant to License Articles 408 and 410

Dear Madam Secretary:

Enclosed for filing are an original and eight copies each of the Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan and the Bald Eagle Management Plan that were developed pursuant to Articles 408 and 410 of the Big Falls Project's license. Also enclosed is the Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan pursuant to Article 410 of the Thornapple Project's license. Comments were sought from the local resource agencies on a draft version of these plans as documented by the attached correspondence. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources was the only agency that responded and they were in agreement with each of the draft plans.

Should there be any questions about this filing, please direct them to me or Mr. Rob Olson of my staff. Our telephone numbers are 715/839-2692 and 715/839-1353, respectively.

Very truly yours,

Lloyd Everhart, Administrator
Hydro Licensing

c: J. Scheirer, WDNR
J. Smith, USFWS
R. Lesniak, FERC-CRO

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AUG 4 1997

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE MONITORING PLAN

ARTICLE 408

BIG FALLS HYDRO PROJECT LICENSE (FERC PROJECT NO. 2390)

**PLAN TO COMPLY WITH ARTICLE 408 OF THE
BIG FALLS HYDRO PROJECT LICENSE (FERC PROJECT NO. 2390)
PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE MONITORING PLAN**

The Director's Order:

Article 408: The licensee shall, in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), develop a plan to monitor purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) in project waters. The plan shall include, but is not limited to: (1) the method of monitoring, (2) the frequency of monitoring, and (3) documentation of transmission of monitoring data to the WDNR and FWS, (4) procedures for obtaining technical assistance and input from the WDNR, and (5) specific information on how the licensee would cooperate with the agencies to control/eliminate purple loosestrife.

1.0 Monitoring Method

The shoreline of the Big Falls Flowage will be surveyed by boat during late July/early August of each year to determine the distribution and abundance of purple loosestrife. Loosestrife stands will be rated as present, abundant, or non-existent. Present would indicate a few plants scattered over an area. Abundant would indicate a dense growth of numerous plants over an area. Non-existent would indicate that there were no plants present.

Purple loosestrife locations will be mapped on the Big Falls Flowage bathymetric map. The mapping will allow for comparisons to be made between different years to determine short-term and long-term trends in plant populations. Calculations will be made which will determine the spread of the noxious weed on an annual basis. A planimeter will be used to determine shoreline lengths occupied by purple loosestrife. The equation for determining percent coverage (abundant, present, non-existent) of the flowage shoreline is as follows:

$$\% \text{ coverage of shoreline: } \frac{(\text{length (ft) of loosestrife infestations})}{(\text{total length of flowage perimeter})} \times (100)$$

2.0 Monitoring Schedule

The Big Falls Flowage and downstream shoreline will be surveyed annually when the purple loosestrife plants are flowering. This is the best time of the year to survey for purple loosestrife because the bright purple flowers are easy to identify against the shoreline. The flowering season also enables the surveyor to identify pioneering plants that otherwise might be missed during other seasons.

The WDNR will be notified at least two weeks in advance of the annual purple loosestrife survey so that they may participate.

3.0 Monitoring Results

After completion of the late-summer survey, the Licensee will forward the map of purple loosestrife locations and the percent coverage calculations to the WDNR and the USFWS for review. This will be done by the end of September of each year until the resource agencies deem it unnecessary to continue surveying.

4.0 Control Methods

Purple loosestrife is a very prolific plant and its geographic range has spread significantly around the State of Wisconsin and the United States in a very short time. Control measures are generally labor intensive and expensive. Some effective methods that have been utilized are hand pulling/digging and herbicidal treatment. Control measures should be implemented before the onset of seed production to prevent spreading the seeds.

Biological control has been an evolving field in the Midwest because of the difficulty in controlling the spread of purple loosestrife. The WDNR is currently evaluating a species of beetle and weevil with feeding habits specific to the purple loosestrife plant at several sites around the state.

The Licensee will cooperate with the resource agencies in an attempt to control purple loosestrife stands if they are detected on the Big Falls Flowage. Options for control may include providing funding or actual treatment of purple loosestrife colonies by the Licensee. The WDNR will be the lead agency so that consistent and effective control methods can be implemented on a statewide basis. It is anticipated that the WDNR can provide technical assistance for control if purple loosestrife plants are found on the Big Falls Flowage.

5.0 Agency Comments

Correspondence with the resource agencies is included in Attachment A of this submittal. The WDNR is in agreement on monitoring plans for purple loosestrife on the Big Falls Flowage.

ATTACHMENT A
AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE



Northern States Power Company

100 North Barstow Street
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008
Telephone (800) 895-4999

July 3, 1997

Mr. Jeff Scheirer
Wisconsin DNR Area Headquarters
875 South 4th Avenue
P.O. Box 220
Park Falls, WI 54552

Ms. Janet Smith
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1015 Challenger Court
Green Bay, WI 54301

Re: Draft Compliance/Remediation Plans For The Big Falls and Thornapple Hydroelectric Projects - FERC Project No.s 2390 and 2475

Dear Jeff and Janet:

Enclosed are seven draft compliance/ remediation plans that Northern States Power Company (NSP) has developed pursuant to the new federal licenses for the Big Falls and Thornapple Hydroelectric Projects. These plans are provided for your agencies' review and comment pursuant to the FERC license orders for the two projects. The plans and the license articles that they address are as follows:

- Big Falls - Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Article 404);
- Big Falls - Purple Loosetrife Monitoring Plan (Article 408);
- Big Falls - Bald Eagle Management Plan (Article 410);
- Big Falls - Recreation Plan (Article 412);
- Thornapple - Tailwater Ramping Rate Plan (Article 404);
- Thornapple - Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Article 406); and
- Thornapple - Purple Loosetrife Monitoring Plan (Article 410).

NSP requests that you review the draft plans and file your comments with me within 30 days of receipt of this letter. If I do not hear from you within 30 days, I will assume that you are satisfied with the plans and have opted not to comment.

Northern States Power Company

J. Scheirer and J. Smith

July 3, 1997

Page 2

If you have any questions about the attached draft plans, please feel free to call me at 715/839-2692.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lloyd Everhart".

Lloyd Everhart, Administrator
Hydro Licensing

Enclosures: Seven Compliance Plans

c: Hayward File
Corporate File

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State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tommy G. Thompson, Governor
George E. Meyer, Secretary
William H. Smith, District Director

Park Falls Area Headquarters
875 S. 4th Ave., PO Box 220
Park Falls, WI 54552
TELEPHONE 715-762-3204
FAX 715-762-4348

July 28, 1997

Mr. Lloyd Everhart
Northern States Power Company
100 North Barstow Street
P. O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-008

Dear Mr. Everhart:

The Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plans which Northern States Power Company developed for the Big Falls and Thornapple hydro projects are satisfactory. No substantial changes to the draft plan should be necessary to comply with Articles 408 and 410 of the new licenses granted for FERC Project Nos. 2390 and 2475.

Contrary to the statements in the Commission's license orders, purple loosestrife does presently occur at the Big Falls and Thornapple hydro projects. The Department recognizes and appreciates NSP's voluntary efforts to treat stands of purple loosestrife on the shorelines of these projects. The abatement measures should help control the spread of purple loosestrife and protect native wetland vegetation on project waters. Herbicide treatment of small colonies is especially effective on waters such as the Big Falls project reservoir where there is no significant upstream source of purple loosestrife seeds. Even though the Department has not yet initiated a program to attempt loosestrife control in these waters, NSP's voluntary actions are consistent with the licensee's responsibilities to provide reasonable cooperation in control efforts. We applaud NSP for its proactive efforts and ask the licensee to continue spot treatments of purple loosestrife colonies in conjunction with annual monitoring surveys.

Our local resource managers also support NSP's nomination of the Thornapple Hydro Project as a candidate site for inclusion in the Department's developmental program to find a biological control of purple loosestrife. Several beetle and weevil species show promise as biological control agents in situations where there are sufficient loosestrife plants to establish and sustain sizeable populations of these insects. The abundance of purple loosestrife at the Thornapple Project should provide favorable conditions for foraging insects which could eventually control the spread of this noxious plant in the lower Flambeau River system.

These comments should conclude post-licensing consultations on purple loosestrife management at the Big Falls and Thornapple projects. We do ask that you notify us before you conduct the annual surveys on these waters so our resource management staff can participate in monitoring and control activities if they are available. If you have any questions with regard to our comments, or if there are any outstanding points which need further discussion, we urge you to contact us again before you file the plan with the Commission. You can reach me at (715) 762-4684, ext. 131.

Sincerely,

Jeff Scheirer
Northern Region FERC Project Manager

*Quality Natural Resources Management
Through Excellent Customer Service*



BALD EAGLE MANAGEMENT PLAN

ARTICLE 410

BIG FALLS HYDRO PROJECT LICENSE (FERC PROJECT NO. 2390)

**PLAN TO COMPLY WITH ARTICLE 410 OF THE
BIG FALLS HYDRO PROJECT LICENSE (FERC PROJECT NO. 2390)
BALD EAGLE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Director's Order:

Article 410: The licensee shall, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), prepare and file for Commission approval, a final bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) management plan. The plan shall include, but not be limited to: (1) a description of project specific bald eagle protection and enhancement measures; (2) the cost of the proposed enhancement and protection measures (implementation and maintenance); (3) provisions for funding the proposed measures; and (4) an implementation schedule.

1.0 Introduction

An active eagle nest currently exists on licensee-owned lands on the Big Falls Flowage, directly upstream from the Big Falls Dam. The nest site is located in a large white pine in the NE1/4, NW1/4 of Section 35, T36N., R5W of Rusk County. Two other nests are located outside the project boundary, but in the immediate vicinity. The first is located 1.5 miles north of the project boundary on the Flambeau River, and the second one is located two miles southwest of the project boundary on the Dairyland Flowage. Due to the presence of the nest site and activity, the WDNR and FWS recommended in their comments on the draft license application that the licensee develop a management plan to protect the current nest site and other potential nest sites.

The licensee originally filed an informal bald eagle management plan in the Big Falls license application (pages E-127 to E-130). The management plan discussed forestry practices, establishment of buffer zones and land use. The following sections include information that was originally presented in the license application as well as additional information that was asked for by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in their license order.

2.0 Bald Eagle Management

Currently, the applicant owns 3.5 miles of the total 10.4 mile shoreline (34%). The remaining 6.9 miles is owned by the state (5.0 miles) and private landowners (1.9 miles). The following information contains management practices that will be employed on licensee-owned project lands. Management on private lands and state-owned lands will be up to the specific landowner or land manager.

Management practices to be followed on Big Falls Project lands are from "Management of Wintering Bald Eagles" by Karen Steenhof of the FWS and from the "Bald Eagle Management Guidelines" developed by the Portland Regional Office of the FWS. The major concerns identified in these guidelines regarding proper eagle management are the forestry techniques practiced along shorelines of rivers and lakes as well as the human activity within close proximity to the nest site.

2.1 Forestry Practices. Trees that are within 30 meters of a riverbank or lakeshore that have diameters exceeding 30 cm will not be removed, as these trees may be preferred by eagles for perching. A discussion of a buffer zone for licensee-owned lands is included within the "Shoreline Buffer Zone Management Plan", as required by Article 411 of the Big Falls license. Snags, which allow eagles to see considerable distances, are also preferred perches and will remain standing. The availability of diurnal perches does not limit bald eagles; however, distribution of bald eagles may be directly influenced by the location of preferred perches.

Applicant's past and current forestry practices on Project lands have been to leave the land in a natural state, allowing natural forest succession to determine the quantity and quality of trees present. Many of the trees present near flowage waters are reaching maturity, with a mix of immature trees below to replace them. Large white pines, which are prime nesting and perching trees, are plentifully scattered around the perimeter of the flowage. Applicant's plans for the future are to continue the current practices of allowing natural succession to dictate the location and quantity of eagle nesting and perch trees on licensee-owned lands.

2.2 Buffer Zones. According to USFWS Guidelines, two zones have been identified as vital to the nesting success of bald eagles. The primary buffer zone, which is located within a 330-foot radius of the nest, should not be entered at any time during the critical period. The critical period is defined as the time from the arrival of the adult birds to three weeks after the fledgling of any young, which is generally March 1 through July 31 in the Midwest. The eagles are most vulnerable to disturbance during the first 12 weeks of the critical period.

A secondary buffer zone should also be established to further protect eagles from human disturbance. It should lie outside the primary zone and extend to a minimum of 660 feet from the nest. The secondary buffer zone should extend 1/4-mile from the nest if human activity is visible to the nest-site.

Human activities which should be avoided in both the primary and secondary buffer zones during the critical period include: Development of new commercial and industrial sites, the building of new homes, the building of new roads and

trails allowing access to nest, the use of chemicals toxic to eagles (DDT, other persistent organochlorine pesticides, PCB, mercury, and lead), logging, mining, low level aircraft operations, use of firearms, camping and picnicking.

The licensee has been maintaining the primary buffer zone on the existing nest site since original inception of the plan in 1991. A current easement from the Applicant exists near the active eagle nest site on the flowage which is within the secondary buffer zone. The easement was granted to a local landowner who secured access to the flowage in 1957. To licensee's knowledge, the eagle nest was established well after the property was leased to the current tenant. A small foot path was developed down to the flowage from his home across the road. A small area on the flowage shoreline has been developed to accommodate a small motorboat. The developed area cannot be seen from the eagle nest due to a peninsula that extends out into the flowage. Activity in this area has not affected the nesting of eagles in the past and should not impact them in the future. The easement to the landowner will be terminated upon the sale of his land, or upon his death.

2.3 Land Use. Land use activity at the Big Falls Hydroproject has been centered around the dam itself, and has not been focused on the flowage. The lack of shoreline roads and development in the vicinity of the flowage has kept shoreline disturbances to a minimum. The largest disturbance to eagles on the flowage are the fishermen and canoeists who frequent the flowage during the open water season. The impacts of recreation on eagles appear to be minimal and has not seemed to effect the current active nest site on the flowage.

3.0 Monitoring of Bald Eagle Nest Site Activity

Monitoring of bald eagle nest locations will be performed annually in late-July or early-August at the time that the shoreline is surveyed for purple loosestrife infestations. Surveying during this time of year will avoid the critical time when bald eagles are using the nest site on a full-time basis. The licensee will attempt to determine if a particular nest site was used during that year. Results of the monitoring, including any new nest sites, will be passed on to the WDNR and FWS for their records.

At the time of the annual monitoring, company biologists will survey the hydro operators to determine the amount of use of the flowage and tailwaters by bald eagles during that particular year. This information should be very valuable because the Big Falls project is manned 8 hours per day on the weekdays and daily observations of bald eagle use can be mentally recorded. This information may provide clues to nesting, perching or fishing locations for that particular year.

4.0 Costs of the Proposed Enhancement and Protection Measures

There are no anticipated costs to the licensee for implementing the bald eagle management guidelines outlined previously. Monitoring for nest locations and bald eagle activity will be performed annually at the time of the purple loosestrife monitoring so no additional costs will be incurred. As a result, no provisions have been established to pay for any proposed monitoring, enhancement or protection measures.

5.0 Implementation Schedule

Provisions from the original bald eagle management plan in the final license application were implemented in 1991, immediately after development of the plan. The licensee will continue to follow the plan that is currently in-place until a final formal plan is approved by the FERC.

6.0 Agency Correspondence

Correspondence with the resource agencies is included in Attachment A of this submittal. The WDNR is in agreement on future management practices for bald eagles on the Big Falls Flowage.

ATTACHMENT A
AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE



Northern States Power Company

100 North Barstow Street
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008
Telephone (800) 895-4999

July 3, 1997

Mr. Jeff Scheirer
Wisconsin DNR Area Headquarters
875 South 4th Avenue
P.O. Box 220
Park Falls, WI 54552

Ms. Janet Smith
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1015 Challenger Court
Green Bay, WI 54301

Re: Draft Compliance/Remediation Plans For The Big Falls and Thornapple Hydroelectric Projects - FERC Project No.s 2390 and 2475

Dear Jeff and Janet:

Enclosed are seven draft compliance/ remediation plans that Northern States Power Company (NSP) has developed pursuant to the new federal licenses for the Big Falls and Thornapple Hydroelectric Projects. These plans are provided for your agencies' review and comment pursuant to the FERC license orders for the two projects. The plans and the license articles that they address are as follows:

- Big Falls - Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Article 404);
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- Thornapple - Tailwater Ramping Rate Plan (Article 404);
- Thornapple - Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Article 406); and
- Thornapple - Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan (Article 410).

NSP requests that you review the draft plans and file your comments with me within 30 days of receipt of this letter. If I do not hear from you within 30 days, I will assume that you are satisfied with the plans and have opted not to comment.

Northern States Power Company

J. Scheirer and J. Smith

July 3, 1997

Page 2

If you have any questions about the attached draft plans, please feel free to call me at 715/839-2692.

Very truly yours,

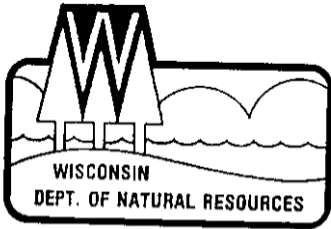
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lloyd Everhart".

Lloyd Everhart, Administrator
Hydro Licensing

Enclosures: Seven Compliance Plans

c: Hayward File
Corporate File

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State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tommy G. Thompson, Governor
George E. Meyer, Secretary
William H. Smith, District Director

Park Falls Area Headquarters
875 S. 4th Ave., PO Box 220
Park Falls, WI 54552
TELEPHONE 715-762-3204
FAX 715-762-4348

July 23, 1997

Mr. Lloyd Everhart
Northern States Power Company
100 North Barstow Street
P. O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-008

Dear Mr. Everhart:

Earlier this month, Northern States Power Company requested post-licensing consultation on the Bald Eagle Management Plan required by Article 410 of the new license for the Big Falls Hydro Project (FERC No. 2390). Our wildlife management staff agree with the strategies outlined in the draft plan. The proposed protective measures incorporate the same standards that the Department uses on public lands. We will defer any specific recommendation for changes or additions to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which holds management responsibility for eagles under the Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,

Jeff Scheirer
Northern Region FERC Project Manager

cc: Jim Fossum, USFWS - Green Bay, WI

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE MONITORING PLAN

ARTICLE 410

THORNAPPLE HYDRO PROJECT LICENSE (FERC PROJECT NO. 2475)

**PLAN TO COMPLY WITH ARTICLE 410 OF THE
THORNAPPLE HYDRO PROJECT LICENSE (FERC PROJECT NO. 2475)
PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE MONITORING PLAN**

The Director's Order:

Article 410: The licensee shall, in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), develop a plan to monitor purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) in project waters. The plan shall include, but is not limited to: (1) the method of monitoring, (2) the frequency of monitoring, and (3) documentation of transmission of monitoring data to the WDNR and FWS, (4) procedures for obtaining technical assistance and input from the WDNR, and (5) specific information on how the licensee would cooperate with the agencies to control/eliminate purple loosestrife.

1.0 Monitoring Method

The shoreline of the Thornapple Flowage will be surveyed by boat during late July/early August of each year to determine the distribution and abundance of purple loosestrife. Loosestrife stands will be rated as present, abundant, or non-existent. Present would indicate a few plants scattered over an area. Abundant would indicate a dense growth of numerous plants over an area. Non-existent would indicate that there were no plants present.

Purple loosestrife locations will be mapped on the Thornapple Flowage bathymetric map. The mapping will allow for comparisons to be made between different years to determine short-term and long-term trends in plant populations. Calculations will be made which will determine the spread of the noxious weed on an annual basis. A planimeter will be used to determine shoreline lengths occupied by purple loosestrife. The equation for determining percent coverage (abundant, present, non-existent) of the flowage shoreline is as follows:

$$\% \text{ coverage of shoreline: } \frac{(\text{length (ft) of loosestrife infestation})}{(\text{total length of flowage perimeter})} \times (100)$$

2.0 Monitoring Schedule

The Thornapple Flowage and downstream shoreline will be surveyed annually when the purple loosestrife plants are flowering. This is the best time of the year to survey for purple loosestrife because the bright purple flowers are easy to identify against the shoreline. The flowering season also enables the surveyor to identify pioneering plants that otherwise might be missed during other seasons.

The WDNR will be notified at least two weeks in advance of the annual purple loosestrife survey so that they may participate.

3.0 Monitoring Results

After completion of the late-summer survey, the Licensee will forward the map of purple loosestrife locations and the percent coverage calculations to the WDNR and the USFWS for review. This will be done by the end of September of each year until the resource agencies deem it unnecessary to continue surveying.

4.0 Control Methods

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Biological control has been an evolving field in the Midwest because of the difficulty in controlling the spread of purple loosestrife. The WDNR is currently evaluating a species of beetle and weevil with feeding habits specific to the purple loosestrife plant at several sites around the state.

The Licensee will cooperate with the resource agencies in an attempt to control purple loosestrife stands if they are detected on the Thornapple Flowage. Options for control may include providing funding or actual treatment of purple loosestrife colonies by the Licensee. The WDNR will be the lead agency so that consistent and effective control methods can be implemented on a statewide basis. It is anticipated that the WDNR can provide technical assistance for control if purple loosestrife plants are found on the Thornapple Flowage.

5.0 Agency Comments

Correspondence with the resource agencies is included in Attachment A of this submittal. The WDNR is in agreement on monitoring plans for purple loosestrife on the Thornapple Flowage.

ATTACHMENT A
AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE



Northern States Power Company

100 North Barstow Street
P.O. Box 8
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008
Telephone (800) 895-4999

July 3, 1997

Mr. Jeff Scheirer
Wisconsin DNR Area Headquarters
875 South 4th Avenue
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Ms. Janet Smith
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July 3, 1997
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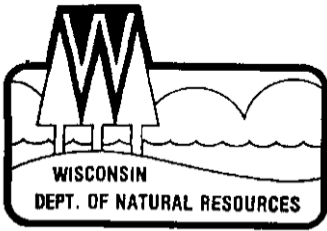


Lloyd Everhart, Administrator
Hydro Licensing

Enclosures: Seven Compliance Plans

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State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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July 28, 1997

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Eau Claire, WI 54702-008

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These comments should conclude post-licensing consultations on purple loosestrife management at the Big Falls and Thornapple projects. We do ask that you notify us before you conduct the annual surveys on these waters so our resource management staff can participate in monitoring and control activities if they are available. If you have any questions with regard to our comments, or if there are any outstanding points which need further discussion, we urge you to contact us again before you file the plan with the Commission. You can reach me at (715) 762-4684, ext. 131.

Sincerely,

Jeff Scheirer
Northern Region FERC Project Manager

Quality Natural Resources Management
Through Excellent Customer Service



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