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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Wisconsin Electric Power Co. )  
)

Project Nos. 2394-013  
and 2357-010

ORDER AMENDING AND APPROVING PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE AND  
EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL MONITORING PLAN

DEC 11 1997

On October 31, 1997, the Wisconsin Electric Power Company (licensee) filed an exotic wetland species monitoring plan, pursuant to article 410 of the licenses for the Chalk Hill and White Rapids Hydroelectric Project. The Chalk Hill and White Rapids Projects are located on the Menominee River in Menominee County, Michigan and Marinette County, Wisconsin. Article 410 requires the licensee to file a plan to protect project wetlands from purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) and Eurasian water milfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum).

The licensee will monitor all waters and wetlands within the project boundary for both projects. As part of the monitoring plan for the White Rapids project, the Menominee River immediately downstream of the Chalk Hill Project will also be surveyed. The shoreline of the projects will be surveyed by boat. Monitoring will be conducted annually, typically from July 25 through August 7 unless weather conditions require otherwise. The location of any purple loosestrife or Eurasian water milfoil stands will be mapped and the size of the population noted. For each purple loosestrife stand, stand area, percent cover, stem density, and plant density will be determined. For Eurasian milfoil stands, stand perimeter, mat density, and overall mat thickness will be determined. Locations of stands will be permanently mapped using a Global Positioning System (GPS).

Monitoring results will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) within 30 days of the survey date. The licensee will submit a letter to the Commission documenting that the reports have been provided to the agencies.

If possible, at the time of detection, the licensee will physically remove all purple loosestrife plants. The licensee will work to control or eliminate purple loosestrife or Eurasian water milfoil at the project upon the request of the FWS, WDNR, or MDNR at any time during the period of the license.

The licensee will also post public information regarding purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil on bulletin boards at the licensee's recreation areas. If purple loosestrife or

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Eurasian water milfoil are discovered at the project, the licensee will place brochures describing the control and spread of these species at recreation areas on the Chalk Hill and White Rapids Projects.

#### Agency Comments

Comments were received from the WDNR and the MDNR in letters dated October 20 and 27, 1997, respectively. The WDNR recommended that a routine aquatic macrophyte survey be conducted every 3 years. The WDNR recommended that transects be established and that each transect be sampled with a rake from 3 different depths in August or September.

The MDNR recommended overall percent cover and stem densities of purple loosestrife be estimated using a meter square frame. For Eurasian water milfoil, the MDNR recommended the perimeter be delineated with floating markers to measure the perimeter and mat density. Overall mat thickness should be estimated using multiple locations within each mat. All other comments were incorporated into the plan.

#### Discussion

In response to the WDNR's comment regarding sampling techniques for Eurasian water milfoil, the licensee stated that the methodology recommended in this plan was approved April 30, 1996 for the Brule Project. <sup>1/</sup> The licensee noted that the recommended sample transects would only examine less than 0.2 acre of both projects, (Chalk Hill impoundment is approximately 800 acres, White River impoundment is approximately 400 acres) while their proposed methods would result in the entire impoundment being surveyed annually instead of every 3 years.

In response to MDNR's comments, the licensee stated that stand area, percent cover, stem density, and plant density will be measured for each purple loosestrife stand, and stand perimeter, mat density, and overall mat thickness will be measured for each stand of Eurasian water milfoil. The licensee also stated that the methodologies recommended by the MDNR were too specific and may not be adaptable to each stand encountered. The licensee recommended the sampling procedures remain flexible because what is appropriate for one stand may not be appropriate for another.

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<sup>1/</sup> Order Modifying and Approving Purple Loosestrife and Eurasian Water Milfoil Monitoring Plan, 75 FERC ¶ 62,064.

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We agree with the licensee that stringent sampling techniques are not necessary at this time. Since all areas of the impoundments will be inspected, not just randomly selected quadrats, the licensee's proposed sampling methods will adequately quantify any infestations of purple loosestrife or Eurasian water milfoil at these sites.

#### Recommendations and Conclusions

According to the plan, the licensee will file documentation of providing the results of the monitoring plan to the agencies within 30 days of completion of the monitoring. It is only necessary that the documentation be filed with the Commission for the first two years. This documentation for a two year period will allow us to confirm that the monitoring plan is being properly implemented. The licensee should continue to provide the annual monitoring results to the agencies as described in the plan.

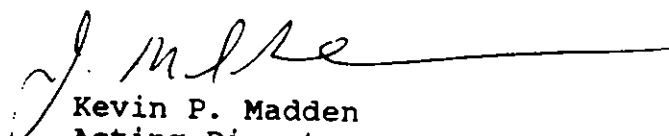
The licensee's annual monitoring plan for exotic wetland species satisfies the requirements of article 410 for the Chalk Hill and White Rapids Projects. Implementation of the plan described herein will adequately monitor the distribution and abundance of purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil; this plan should be approved as amended.

#### The Director orders:

(A) The annual monitoring plan for purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil, filed on October 31, 1997, pursuant to article 410 of the licenses for the Chalk Hill and White Rapids Projects, as modified by paragraph (B), is approved.

(B) The licensee shall notify the Commission that the annual monitoring results for purple loosestrife and Eurasian water milfoil were filed with the agencies by November 30, 1998 and 1999.

(C) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order, pursuant to 18 CFR § 385.713.

  
Kevin P. Madden  
Acting Director  
Office of Hydropower Licensing