

88 FERC ¶ 62,002

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Consolidated Papers, Inc.)

Project No. 2536-021

ORDER APPROVING WATER QUALITY MONITORING PLAN

JUL - 1 1999

On December 3, 1997, Consolidated Papers, Inc., licensee for the Little Quinnesec Project (FERC No. 2536), filed its Water Quality Monitoring Plan. The plan was required by article 406 of the project license. ^{1/} The project is located on the Menominee River, in Dickinson County, Michigan, and Marinette County, Wisconsin.

BACKGROUND

A new license for the Little Quinnesec Project was issued on May 7, 1997. Article 406 of that license required the licensee to file a plan, for Commission approval, to monitor dissolved oxygen concentration (DO), water temperature, and pH of the Menominee River at the Project. The purpose of the monitoring is to ensure that releases from the project maintain state standards for water temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO) concentration, and pH in the Menominee River immediately downstream of the project, whenever river flows are greater than the 95 percent exceedence flow, or when natural conditions prohibit attainment of the standards. The plan was to be developed after consultation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

THE PROPOSED PLAN

The licensee proposes to establish a monitoring station at the Little Quinnesec Project tailrace, upstream of the Consolidated Papers, Inc. - Niagara Division, wastewater treatment discharge point. Continuous monitoring equipment would record water temperature, DO concentration, and pH at hourly intervals.

^{1/} 79 FERC ¶ 62,095 (1997)

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Monitoring would be conducted from May through September for two years. If, after two years, data suggests that water quality problems do not exist, the licensee, in consultation with the agencies, would pursue modification or elimination of this article from the license.

If the continuous monitoring indicated a low DO event, the licensee would conduct an in-situ vertical measurement (i.e., profile) of water temperature and DO concentration in a deep part of the project reservoir, to determine whether project operation was contributing to the low DO event. The licensee proposes to notify the agencies of the occurrence of any such event within two business days. The licensee would include in this notification the results of any profile sampling or other information that might indicate the cause of the event.

The licensee proposes to store the continuous monitoring data in electronic format at its corporate office. The licensee would provide the resource agencies with data summary sheets via email by July 30 and October 30 of each year.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The licensee consulted with the agencies in the development of its proposal on October 22, 1997. All but two of the agency recommendations were adopted by the licensee in its proposed plan. The licensee did not agree to MDNR's request that it conduct continuous monitoring for DO at the upstream Big Quinnesec Falls Project (FERC No. 1980). The licensee stated that it did not feel this was appropriate since it did not own the Big Quinnesec Project and can not control their operations. Also, the licensee did not agree to conduct once-per week in-situ vertical profiles of water temperature and DO concentration in the project reservoir. Instead, the licensee proposed to conduct such profiles only when the continuous monitoring below the Little Quinnesec Dam indicated that a low DO event was occurring.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The licensee's plan outlines a program that is adequate for monitoring whether releases from the Little Quinnesec Project maintain state standards for water temperature, DO, and pH in the Menominee River below the project, in accordance with the requirements of article 406. Sampling is proposed for the summer months, during which high ambient temperatures and low streamflows may lead to high water temperatures and low DO concentrations.

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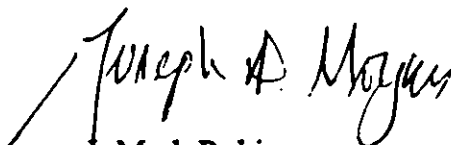
The licensee did not adopt all of the agencies' recommendations concerning the proposed monitoring plan. However, the recommendations it did not adopt go beyond what is necessary to monitor the project's compliance with state water quality standards.

Based on our review of the licensee's water quality monitoring plan and the associated record in this proceeding, I find the plan adequate to monitor the project's compliance with state water quality standards. Consequently, the plan should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The licensee's Water Quality Monitoring Plan filed with the Commission on December 3, 1997, is approved.

(B) 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.



Joseph A. Robinson
Director

Division of Licensing and Compliance