

80 FERC ¶ 62,287

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Northern States Power Company)

Project No. 2390-009

ORDER APPROVING PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE MONITORING PLAN

SEP 16 1997

On August 4, 1997 the Northern States Power Company (NSPC), Licensee for the Big Falls Project filed a Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan, pursuant to license Article 408 for the Big Falls Project issued February 2, 1997. 1/ The Big Falls Project is located on the Flambeau River in Rusk County, Wisconsin.

BACKGROUND

Article 408 requires the Licensee to develop a plan, to monitor the distribution and abundance of purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) on Big Falls Project lands and waters in order to protect wetlands. The Plan shall include at a minimum: (1) the method and frequency of monitoring, (2) documentation of transmission of monitoring data to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), (3) procedures for obtaining technical assistance and input from the WDNR, and (4) specific information on how the Licensee would cooperate with the agencies to control/eliminate purple loosestrife. According to Article 408, if at any time during the period of license, the agencies deem it necessary to control/eliminate this plant, the Licensee shall cooperate in this matter.

PROPOSED PLAN

NSPC's Plan proposes to survey the shoreline of the Big Falls Flowage by boat during late July/early August when the plants are in bloom each year to determine the distribution and abundance of purple loosestrife. Stands will be rated as present, abundant, or non-existent. Purple loosestrife locations will be mapped on the Big Falls Flowage bathymetric map. The mapping will allow for comparisons between different years to determine short-term and long-term trends in plant populations. Calculations will be made to determine the spread of purple loosestrife on an annual basis, by shoreline lengths occupied by purple loosestrife, and percent of coverage within the Big Falls Flowage. After completion of the summer surveys, in September, the Licensee will forward this information to the WDNR and FWS for review.

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1/ 78 FERC ¶ 62,087.

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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 (i.e: pulling/digging, herbicides, or biological control) of purple loosestrife colonies by the Licensee.

AGENCY COMMENTS

By letter dated July 28, 1997, WDNR stated that contrary to the Commission's license order dated February 1997, purple loosestrife does presently occur at the Big Falls Project. WDNR commended NSPC's voluntary and proactive measure in providing spot treatment to purple loosestrife colonies in conjunction with annual monitoring. WDNR recommended that spot treatment be continued to avoid the spread of this species into wetlands. WDNR requested and NSPC agreed to notify WDNR at least two weeks in advance of the annual purple loosestrife surveys so that WDNR may participate. The FWS provided no comments on the Plan.

DISCUSSION

In summary, the Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan satisfies the requirements of license Article 408. Implementation of this Plan, should adequately monitor the purple loosestrife populations on Big Falls Project lands and waters. Therefore, this Plan should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The Purple loosestrife Monitoring Plan filed by the Northern States Power Company on August 4, 1997, pursuant to license Article 408 for the Big Falls Project, is approved.

(B) The Licensee shall monitor purple loosestrife in project lands and waters annually, starting August 1998, and file the annual monitoring results with the Commission by November 5 every year.

(C) The Commission reserves the right to require changes to the Purple Loosestrife Monitoring Plan.

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


Kevin P. Madden
Acting Director
Office of Hydropower Licensing