

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Northern States Power Company)

Project No. 2475-018

ORDER APPROVING WATER QUALITY MONITORING PLAN

SEP 22 1997

On August 8, 1997, Northern States Power Company filed a water quality monitoring plan for the Thornapple Project, as required by article 406 of the project license. ^{1/} The Thornapple Project is located on the Flambeau River in Rusk County, Wisconsin.

BACKGROUND

During relicensing, the resource agencies recommended that information on water quality be collected to determine what possible impact the Thornapple Project was having on the Thornapple flowage and the Flambeau River downstream. Article 406 requires the licensee file a plan to monitor (1) water clarity; (2) phosphorus; (3) chlorophyll A; (4) water temperature; and (5) dissolved oxygen in the Thornapple impoundment monthly from June 1 through August 31 through the term of the license.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING PLAN

The licensee's proposed monitoring plan includes sampling at ice-out, mid-July, and mid-August in the deepest part of the flowage immediately upstream of the Thornapple Dam. The protocol includes taking samples one foot below the surface for chlorophyll A, one foot from the surface and two feet from the bottom for total phosphorus, and surface to bottom profiles at 2-foot intervals for water temperature and dissolved oxygen. Maximum secchi disk depth will be used to determine water clarity. Water quality samples will be preserved on-site and sent to a State of Wisconsin certified laboratory for analysis.

Water quality sampling will begin immediately after ice-out in 1998. The results of the water quality analysis will be forwarded to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for their review and comment by December 31 of each year.

AGENCY COMMENT

By letter dated July 3, 1997, the licensee transmitted copies of the plan to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the WDNR for their comment and review. The FWS stated in its

^{1/} 78 FERC ¶ 62,086 (1997).

9709240349-3

FERC - DOCKETED

SEP 22 1997

July 29, 1997 response that they would defer to the WDNR for review of the plan. In a letter dated July 31, 1997, the WDNR stated that the plan meets the water quality monitoring requirements of the license. They recommended that the June sampling event originally proposed be substituted by a sampling event within a few days of ice-out. The final plan submitted to the Commission was changed in response to this recommendation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

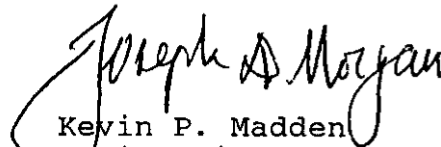
Implementation of the licensee's water quality monitoring plan will allow for the timely detection of possible changes to water quality resulting from the operation of the Thornapple Project and allow remedial measures to be implemented if needed. Therefore, the licensee's water quality monitoring plan should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The licensee's water quality monitoring plan, filed on August 8, 1997 pursuant to article 406, is approved.

(B) The licensee shall file by December 31, 1998, an annual report on the results of the water quality monitoring with the FWS and WDNR. The report shall be filed annually by January 30 with the Commission, along with any comments received from the agencies. The Commission reserves the authority to make any changes to project operations to preserve water quality.

(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 C.F.R. § 385.713.



Kevin P. Madden
Acting Director
Office of Hydropower Licensing