

Not implemented

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION AMENDMENT
(P.L. 92-400)

In the matter of: Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Post Office Box 8
East Montpelier, Vermont 05657
Application to Amend the Water Quality
Certification for the North Branch #3
Hydroelectric Project

The Water Quality Division of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department) has reviewed an application dated August 30, 1988, from Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc. (the applicant) to amend their project's Water Quality Certification issued March 30, 1983. The Department makes the following findings:

1. The applicant proposes to raise the operating level of Wrightsville Reservoir during the winter months 2.0 feet to 635.0' to 637.0' NGVD. This would increase the project's storage capacity and operating head during the months of November through March, thereby enhancing project generation.
2. The application was for the permanent raising of the spillway crest using concrete; however, the Department has asked that a stoplog structure be installed instead. The applicant has agreed (personal communication, Jeffrey Cueto with Allan Heath, September 14, 1988). Removable stoplogs provide more flood control flexibility.
3. During the period May 15 through September 30, the project presently generates maintaining a normal

reservoir stage between 633.0' and 635.0' with a maximum daily fluctuation of 8 inches. The operating mode during this period will continue.

4. Beginning October 1, the applicant proposes to start raising the impoundment level so that an elevation of 637.0' is achieved by November 1. The impoundment would be maintained between 637.0' and 635.0' through March 15, again with a maximum daily fluctuation of 8 inches.
5. On or about March 15, the impoundment would be lowered from the winter operating level to 633.0' with a maximum fluctuation of 8 inches per day and the summer operating regime reestablished.
6. The Department finds that a shallow-water zone becomes established along the reservoir shoreline during the growing season. This zone provides important feeding habitat for waterfowl species such as blue wing teal which use the reservoir as a stop-over point from early September through about mid-October as they migrate south. Raising the reservoir to the 637.0' stage during the migration period would increase the water depths in this zone, severely limiting its value as feeding habitat for waterfowl. Therefore, the Department will condition this certification amendment to require that reservoir levels not be raised above 635.0' until after October 15 when the zone is becoming less important for waterfowl.

7. Spring spawning of largemouth bass, which are to be introduced, is not expected to be impacted. Largemouth spawn around mid-May to late June. The summer operating range should be reestablished by that time, unless spring runoff storage continues beyond the applicant's control.

Martins Brook would continue to be accessible to brown trout from the reservoir for fall spawning.

8. The primary purpose of the reservoir is flood storage. The impact of this proposal on winter flood abatement functions has been found to be insignificant. The stoplogs would be removed in the spring as soon as the reservoir level drops below elevation 635.0'.

9. Under certain conditions of high inflow, the level of the reservoir is beyond the control of the applicant. The resulting elevations of the reservoir will exceed the normal range during these periods of flood storage.

Conditions

The Department amends the project's Water Quality Certification by adding condition M:

- M. 1. The applicant shall not raise the reservoir above elevation 635.0' until after October 15. From October 16 through March 15, the reservoir shall be maintained at a minimum elevation of 635.0' and a maximum of 637.0'. Daily fluctuation shall not exceed 8 inches.
2. Beginning March 16, the applicant shall lower the reservoir stage to below elevation 635.0' for the reestablishment of the summer operating range. Daily fluctuation shall not exceed 8 inches.

Dated at Waterbury, Vermont, this 25th day of October, 1988.



Patrick A. Parenteau
Commissioner
Department of Environmental
Conservation

PAP:AMD/eh