

Ecosystems Research Institute, Inc.



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October 13, 2005

Mary S. Graine, P.E., W.R.E.
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer St. N.E., Suite A
Salem, OR 97301-2430

Ms. Graine,

Symbiotics LLC is seeking an exception to the "Coast Fork Willamette River Subbasin Plan" (OAR 690-502-0070) for the operation of a hydroelectric project on Dorena Dam. Symbiotics has requested Ecosystems Research Institute (ERI), their environmental contractor, to initiate the formal exception process with you and your staff on their behalf. The following paragraphs summarize the proposed project, the need for Symbiotics to seek an exception to the basin plan, and why Symbiotics feels that their proposed project does not conflict with Coast Fork Willamette River Subbasin Plan's resource management objectives.

Symbiotics has proposed a hydroelectric project on Dorena Dam that would divert water from Dorena Reservoir, utilize 85 feet of hydraulic head, and generate on average 8.3 megawatts of power annually. The project will operate in a "run-of-river" manner using water released from Dorena Reservoir by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and will not alter the USACE's management of Dorena Reservoir or their releases from the dam for the purpose of power generation. Additional information about the proposed project can be found on Symbiotics' website at: www.symbioticsenergy.com.

8.3 MW capacity

*generate
17.5 GW*

During the state of Oregon's preliminary permitting process for a new hydroelectric project, the OWRD stated that Symbiotics needed to seek an exception to the "Coast Fork Willamette River Subbasin Plan" (OAR 690-502-0070) if the proposed hydroelectric project was to operate during all 12 months of a given year. The water basin plan that applies to Dorena Dam and the Row River watershed allows water use for domestic, livestock, irrigation, municipal, industrial, agricultural, commercial, power, mining, fisheries, wildlife, recreation, pollution abatement, wetland enhancement, and public in-stream uses from December 1 through April 30, and only for domestic and commercial use (less than 0.01 cfs) May 1 through November 30.

Under the guidelines in Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 536.295 the OWRD can consider an exception to a basin management plan if the associated non-classified water use meets one of the following criteria:

- Will be of short duration during each year;
- Will be for a continuous period of no longer than five years;
- Is largely non-consumptive in nature and not likely to be regulated for other water rights;
- Is necessary to ensure public health, welfare and safety;
- Is necessary to avoid extreme hardship;

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- Will provide a public benefit such as riparian or watershed improvement; or
- Is of an unusual nature not likely to recur in the basin, and unlikely to have been within the uses considered by the commission in classifying the uses presently allowed in the applicable basin program.

In addition, the project must be compatible with the policies established in OAR 690-502-0040 for the protection and management of ground and surface water, reservoir operation, water conservation, and land use programs within the basin.

Symbiotics LLC is seeking an exception to the "Coast Fork Willamette River Subbasin Plan" (OAR 690-502-0070) under ORS 536.2959 provision C, in that their proposed hydroelectric project is non-consumptive in nature and will not likely be regulated for other water rights. The project will operate in a "run-of-river" manner utilizing water released from Dorena Reservoir by the USACE and will not alter the USACE's management of Dorena Reservoir or their releases from the dam for the purpose of power generation. It is Symbiotics' opinion that the operation of the project is compatible with the policies established in OAR 690-502-0040, because power generation will be dictated by the USACE's regulatory guidelines for Dorena Reservoir and the lower Row River. The USACE's guidelines for the management of Dorena Reservoir and the lower Row River are compatible with the policies established in OAR 690-502-0040.


Please send all of your comments and recommendations to:

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If you have any questions feel free to contact me via phone or e-mail at:

PHONE: (435) 752-2580
E-mail: steimle@ecosysres.com

Sincerely,



Erik Steimle

