

Lewis River Hydroelectric Projects Relicensing

Merwin Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 935)
Yale Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2071)
Swift No. 1 Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2111)
Swift No. 2 Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2213)

**USDA Forest Service
Gifford Pinchot National Forest**

Existing Information Analysis

10. Telephone Service Replacement

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Updated July 2002

I. Existing Situation

The Forest Service has an administrative site, the Pine Creek Work Center, located near the head of Swift Reservoir, 18 miles east of Cougar on Forest Road 90. The site serves as a visitor contact station and work center for Forest Service crews providing visitor services, maintenance of recreation facilities, and fire protection. The Center has both warehouses and housing for work crews. Communications to the site are poorly provided by Forest Service radio-telephone; a system that has been plagued by malfunctions and interruptions since the first system was installed after the construction of Swift Dam. Prior to dam construction, a grounded telephone system existed to the Work Center site and was connected to commercial telephone service at the Lewis River Guard Station. Cellular phone coverage in the area is poor or unavailable.

II. Information Analysis

Under the terms of the existing license (16 P.F.C. 1117:1956 FPC LEXIS 801, October 29, 1956), article 36, Pacific Power and Light was required to “develop a plan and enter into agreements with the U.S. Forest Service covering specific measures for (a) alleviation of damage to and assuring adequate protection and utilization of national forest resources, and (b) relocation and replacement of facilities needed for national forest administration insofar as they are affected by the proposed project.”

Below is an excerpt from the above cited agreement signed by PP&L on September 23, 1956.

“2. Telephone Lines. The COMPANY agrees to replace the FOREST SERVICE telephone line between Pine Creek Guard Station and Lewis River Guard Station unless an alternate termini is mutually agreed

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upon, converting to the satisfaction of the FOREST SERVICE a sufficient amount of said line to a metallic circuit in order to avoid electrical induction and hazard caused by the COMPANY. The COMPANY agrees to obtain and furnish acceptable easements for telephone line rights-of-way over locations satisfactory to the FOREST SERVICE. The replacement line will be constructed to standards and location acceptable to the FOREST SERVICE."

We have located two memos that indicate the phone line was replaced to Forest Service satisfaction.

A PP&L memo to the files dated March 24, 1960 by Albert Bauer states:

The Forest Service appeared to be satisfied with the replacement of communications facilities that existed at the time of the start of construction for the Swift Project with the exception of a few spans on the highline adjacent to the bypass road.

A memo by District Ranger, James Hendrix, to the Forest Supervisor dated August 9, 1966 says:

Except for the status of the rights-of-way mentioned in my memo of July 20, and paragraph 3 of Section E, I could find no conditions in the agreement that have not been met.

Retired Forest Service employee, John Plesha was responsible for phone line maintenance out of Pine Creek in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In a telephone conversation he informed John Roland that he remembered repairing the phone line constructed to replace the phone line inundated by Swift Reservoir. Mr. Plesha agreed to show us evidence of the replacement phone line uphill of the Forest Road 90. On May 10, 2002, Jim Nieland and John Roland, accompanied Mr. Plesha to a site west of Pine Creek at the intersection of road 90-270 where Jim spotted two insulators hanging from trees adjacent the 90 Road.

Mr. Plesha related that the line was a "grounded phone system" utilizing a single wire stretched through insulators, attached to trees. Prior to the start of dam construction, Lewis River Guard station was located below Swift Dam, approximately where the power canal bridge now stands. At the guard station was a Forest Service switchboard that provided manual routing of calls to a telephone system. The guard station was dismantled during power canal construction

According to Mr. Plesha, during the time of dam construction PP&L had a switchboard at the Swift Dam construction site. The phone line from the Pine Creek Station connected to the switchboard, where a PP&L operator would connect calls to outside lines. At the completion of dam construction, the switchboard was discontinued by PP&L. Forest Service lost the ability to interface with commercial telephone service. The line fell into disuse, and was eventually either removed or destroyed by logging on private lands along Forest Road 90.

Mr. Plesha said he remembers a radio system was installed at Pine Creek in response to the closure of the switchboard facility at Swift Dam around 1962. Mr. Plesha related that in about 1962, Ed Randle, radio technician for the Forest Service, installed a radio transmitter/receiver at both the at Pine Creek Station, and at Swift Dam which acted as a radio-telephone link to a phone line at the dam. This system, with minor changes, provides the only telephone

communication with the ranger station to this day. The system is prone to frequent outages and interruptions of service.

III. Preliminary Forest Service Objectives

Forest Service seeks restoration of telephone service at Pine Creek at least equal to that which existed prior to construction of Swift Dam. The system should also accommodate use by recreationists in the Lewis River basin, and emergency services including Forest Service and county law enforcement, county fire districts, emergency services, and emergency 911. Such a phone system could be a key component of a flood warning system.