



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Wallowa-Whitman
National Forest

1550 Dewey Ave.
P.O. Box 907
Baker City, OR 97814

File Code: 2770

Date: December 16, 2003

Ms. Magalie R. Salas
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

**Re: USDA FOREST SERVICE, NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETINGS AND SOLICITING
SCOPING COMMENTS**

Hells Canyon Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. P-1971-079

Idaho Power Company

Dear Ms. Salas:

Enclosed for filing with the Commission is the USDA Forest Service response to the NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETINGS AND SOLICITING SCOPING COMMENTS for the Hells Canyon Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 1971-079. This response is submitted pursuant to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Notice issued on October 22, 2003.

Included in this submittal are the following documents:

Enclosure I – USDA Forest Service Response to Scoping Document #1, Hells Canyon Hydroelectric Project, FERC # 1971-079.

Enclosure II – Response to Scoping Document 3.0 Request for Information.

Enclosure I constitutes the USDA Forest Service comments on FERC's Scoping Document 1 (SD1). SD1 identifies many of the resource issues affected by the Hell Canyon Hydroelectric Project. The USDA Forest Service is providing additional information and clarification to many of FERC's listed issue statements, and identifies additional resource issues to be analyzed before the agency will be able to determine if continuing operation of the project is consistent with the management direction established in the Forest's Land and Resource Management Plans. Also in this response, the USDA Forest Service is taking the opportunity to provide detailed comments regarding IPC's proposed PM&E measures.



Enclosure II contains the USDA Forest Service's response to the Commission's request for information that will assist it in conducting an accurate and thorough analysis of the site specific and cumulative effects of licensing the Hells Canyon Project.

The USDA Forest Service looks forward to participating with FERC, the Applicant, and other stakeholders to resolve issues and concerns in the relicensing of the Hells Canyon Project. If you have any questions regarding the response to this Notice, or require additional information, please contact Lynn Roehm, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Hydropower Coordinator, at (541) 523-1316 or lroehm@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

/s/Mark J. Madrid
MARK J. MADRID
Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest

/s/Karyn L. Wood
KARYN L. WOOD
Forest Supervisor
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Enclosures

cc: Service List
Payette NF
R6-RF
R4-RF
IPC

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION)
FOR A MAJOR NEW LICENSE FOR)
THE HELLS CANYON)
HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT)
_____)

Project No. 1971-079

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that I have this day served the foregoing USDA Forest Service response to NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETINGS AND SOLICITING SCOPING COMMENTS upon each person designated on the official service list compiled by the Secretary in this proceeding, an exact copy thereof.

Dated at Baker City, Oregon this 16th day of December, 2003.

/s/Lynn W. Roehm

LYNN W. ROEHM
USDA Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman Hydropower Coordinator