



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Nebraska Field Office
203 West Second Street
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

July 3, 2000

Mr. Jay Maher
Environmental Resources Manager
Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District
P.O. Box 740
Holdrege, NE 68949-0740

Re: Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (Central) Project No. 1417
Article 421 - Land and Shoreline Management Plan

Dear Mr. Maher:

We have reviewed your draft Land and Shoreline Management Plan and would like to see the following comments addressed in the plan. We were pleased to see that the plan includes many provisions to protect fish and wildlife resources within your FERC project boundaries.

General Recommendations

1. The numbering of pages and inconsistent format (i.e. references to steps, bulleted comments, and unlabeled comments) should be reviewed.
2. A full map depicting all properties within the FERC boundaries would be helpful when referencing individual project locations.

Planning and Consultation Process (Section 2)

1. **Agency and Local Government Review** (Section 2; Step 5; page 16) - For clarification, the date on the Land and Shoreline Management Plan distribution was June 1, 2000. Our office received the document on June 3, 2000.

Implementation Strategies - Endangered Species Protection (Section 5.E)

1. **Interior Least Terns and Piping Plovers (Section 5.E.2.a; pages 35 to 37)**
Item E.2.a.; pg. 35 - "...anticipating that these measures would be similar to programs existing at the time of the license issuance..." The "existing program measures" referred to should be defined, *or*, a reference to where the information is described (e.g., yearly report provided to the USFWS for issuance of a permit to conduct endangered species work).

Item E.2.a.ii; pg. 36 - Specify when the monitoring information will be provided to the Service, or, reference the existing procedure (i.e., permitting process) and indicate that this is the reporting procedure that will be used.

Item E.2.a.iii; Second paragraph; pg. 36 - At the 11-8-99 meeting, we recall you indicated you were going to designate SPZ's as "non motorized vehicle areas" and "day use areas" during the tern and plover nesting season (May-Aug.). In the plan, you indicate that these designations will be implemented on an "as needed" basis. Have you changed your original plans? We would prefer that those designations be implemented for the SPZ's, on a permanent basis, during the nesting season. This would eliminate the need to implement these restrictions sporadically on an "as needed" basis.

Item E.2.a.iv., pg. 37 - Please provide a better explanation of the protective measures that will be taken before the nesting season. For example, will the "up to three" locations be within the designated SPZ's, outside the SPZ, or can they occur anywhere within project boundaries?

Review; pg. 37 - Add to the end of the last sentence "and in accordance with Endangered Species Permit PRT-704930."

2. Bald Eagle Roosting and Perching Areas (Section 5.E.2.b; pages 37 to 38)

The issue of tree recruitment should be addressed for eagle perches. A contingency plan should be available for the replacement of perching trees lost in a catastrophic event. The permission to remove trees above 4 inches is of concern because younger age classes may not be available in the future.

Plan Amendments and Updates (Section 7)

1. Changes in the Use of Adjoining Lands (Section 7.A.1; pages 103 to 104) - We would like to see a 1/4 mile zone around eagle SPZ where changes in land use requires agency notification.

2. Request for Changes to Land-Use Classification or for Modification of the Plan (Section 7.A.2; pages 104 to 107) - Species Protection Zones and Wildlife Management Areas are both land cover types in which any changes or modifications in Land-Use Classification that may effect listed species should have agency concurrence.

3. 3-Year Endangered Species Reevaluation (Section 7.B.2; pages 109 to 110) - In Step 5, add at the end of the sentence, "and provide a copy to the agencies for their concurrence that none of the proposed changes would result in adverse impacts to listed species." The following should be added to the last sentence in Step 7, "with copies of the revision provided to the agencies."

Any questions regarding these comments can be forwarded to Sharon Whitmore or Jeff Runge at (308) 382-6468, extensions 19 and 22, respectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Whitmore".

Sharon Whitmore
Acting Nebraska Field Supervisor

cc: FERC; Chicago, Ill (Attn: Patricia Grant)
USFWS; Denver, CO (Attn: Bob McCue)
NGPC; Lincoln, NE (Attn: Jim Carney)
USCOE; Kearney, NE (Attn: Barb Friskopp)



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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July 5, 2000

J.L. Maher
Central Nebraska PP&ID
415 Lincoln Street
P.O. Box 740
Holdrege, NE 68949

Dear Mr. Maher:

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) has reviewed the draft of Central's Land and Shoreline Management Plan. This plan was developed to satisfy the requirements for Central's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission License Article 421. Comments and questions regarding the plan are listed below.

Threatened and Endangered Species:

Section 5, Page 36, iii, Protective Measures at Known Nesting Sites: The plan mentions if it appears a nest will be inundated, the nest will be moved to a higher elevation. What will Central do when there is no place to move a nest (i.e. the level is up to the vegetated area)?

Section 5, Page 38, ii, Monitoring: We recommend that Central also survey and monitor night roosts being used by bald eagles that forage on project lands to determine if new or different Species Protection Zones (SPZs) need to be established. We also recommend that Central survey and monitor for nesting eagles for potential SPZ establishment.

Access/Management:

Permits for Water Access and Single Residence Permits for Special Water Access are proposed by Central for property owners with contiguous parcels of land. If access is being considered across land owned by Central and leased to NGPC, will NGPC be consulted during the application review process? Also, it is noted Central may impose annual or one-time lease fees based upon the size, type and how the access is exercised. How will this be addressed in Central's lease agreement with NGPC for the same property?

The issue of potential trespass by owners of contiguous property does not appear to be adequately addressed. How will unauthorized access, i.e., roads, trails, cut boundary fences, landscaping of Central's property, removal of trees from Central's property (to improve vistas), etc., be

addressed? Central's property will, presumably, be leased by NGPC, yet NGPC does not have sufficient staff to monitor the large stretches of shoreline potentially involved. Clearing of vegetation from shoreline areas below housing developments removes needed fish structure in the lake and needs to be controlled. Will Central be the agency to take the lead in closing/removing unauthorized accesses and prosecuting violators, if necessary?

Other Concerns:

Urbanization on Central's property is a major concern for the NGPC. As we have seen in the past and expect to see in the future, residential and commercial development is growing at an alarming rate. Habitat loss will occur from future development, effect future management practices (ie., prescribed burns), increase wildlife depredation and disease issues, and could set the stage for unwanted fishing and hunting regulations. Providing buffer areas, educational literature, and presentations to the public regarding this issue would help with several concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan. If you have any questions, feel free to call me 402-471-5422.

Sincerely,



Frank J. Albrecht
Environmental Analyst Supervisor

cc: Jim Carney, NGPC
John Dinan, NGPC
Chad Switzer, NGPC
Steve Anschutz, USFWS