

9 September 1977

MEMO FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit River Basin - Status of Additional Storage Studies by  
Seattle City Light and Puget Power

1. On 7 September 1977, I called Seattle City Light to obtain information on the current status of their studies in the Skagit River Basin. On 8 September 1977, Ms. Rebecca Wiess, Senior Environmental Analyst, (625-3469), called me back to discuss their Skagit River studies. She is in charge of the major environmental study which Seattle City Light has currently underway, regarding the possible construction of a dam near Copper Creek, on the Skagit River.
2. Their Copper Creek study is being performed by CH2M Hill. It began in June 1977, and should be completed in December 1978. The last two months have been spent in a literature search to determine all the previously published data concerning the Copper Creek site, and should be available soon. She said that there were several alternative sites which have been outlined in a preliminary engineering report by International Engineering. The downstream site is located just downstream from the mouth of Copper Creek on the Skagit River. Another site under consideration is several miles up the river. A third site, which was under consideration in the prior study has been eliminated, due to poor foundation conditions. The dam site at Copper Creek would involve a rock filled dam about 180 feet from the river bottom to the crest of the dam and about 1900 feet long. The reservoir elevations under consideration range from 480 to 495 feet above sea level. The FPC project number for this dam is 2795. The present City Light schedule calls for completion of the environmental study in 1978 and a recommendation early in 1979 to the Seattle City Council whether or not to proceed with the project. If the decision is made to proceed, City Light will start preparation of the Federal Power Commission license application in 1979. Hopefully late in 1983 the FPC should approve construction. Construction would then begin in the spring of 1984.
3. I inquired about the present status of the High Ross Project. She said that the FPC issued a license on 5 July 1977, and that there was a thirty day period for interveners to object to the issuance of the license. The Indian tribes have requested intervention along with the Department of the Interior, who also requested that the complete record be reopened. The FPC took the petitions under review and on 5 September, indefinitely extended the period of the review. She did not know when a decision from the FPC would be forthcoming. She said that Seattle City Light was proceeding on preliminary work, assuming a favorable ruling would be received. Currently, the access road from the North Cascades Highway to the top of Ross Dam is scheduled for construction in the spring of 1978. Construction on the dam itself is currently scheduled for October of 1978.

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4. I also asked whether there were any other studies which had been done by Seattle City Light or were contemplated by Seattle City Light for additional storage capability in the Skagit River Basin. She said there were two other possible additions to the storage capability. These were Newhalum Creek and Thunder Creek. Both of these were covered in a recent re-evaluation study done for the city by International Engineering. She said that she would try to find a copy of this report and sent it to me. The Thunder Creek project involves diversion of water in Thunder Creek through an eight mile tunnel to Diablo Reservoir. She said the economic feasibility of such a project is becoming increasingly attractive.

5. On 8 September 1977, I called Mr. Bill Finegan (454-6363), of Puget Sound Power and Light Company (Puget Power), to ask whether they had any current plans for additional storage in the Skagit River Basin, or any plans for additional capacity at their hydroelectric plants on the Baker River. Mr. Finegan said that they had no plans for construction of additional storage in the area and no specific plans for added capacity at either upper or lower Baker dams. However, he said when the surge tank at Lower Baker was rebuilt, it was sized sufficiently large to permit addition of another generating unit at Lower Baker. At this time, they have no current plans for construction of this additional generating capacity, but this could occur sometime in the future. He said that he had been talking with Mr. Dwain Hogan earlier this week, concerning the Upper Baker Project. I told Mr. Finegan that I probably would not be involved in any further work on the Upper Baker project since no further planning was required and the work involves preparing the details of the transfer agreement between Puget Power, the Corps of Engineers, and the Bonneville Power Administration. Consequently, the Seattle District contact will probably be Mr. Norman MacDonald, Chief of the Water Control Section. I told Mr. Finegan that Mr. Frank Urabeck left for a job with the Alaska Power Administration and if he had questions concerning the Cedar, Green, or Snoqualmie basins, he should contact Mr. Bob Daniel. If he has questions elsewhere in western Washington, he should contact me.

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