

WILDLIFE RESOURCES STUDY PLAN

Takatz Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 13234)

City and Borough of Sitka Electric Department

May, 2010

BACKGROUND

In February, 2008, the City and Borough of Sitka (“City”) received a Preliminary Permit (“Permit”) for the Takatz Lake hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 13234, “Project”) from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Washington D.C. The Project would be located approximately 18 miles NW of Sitka, Alaska, on Baranof Island and would affect Takatz Lake and Takatz Creek, and Baranof Lake and River. The Project is described in detail in City, 2009.

Generally, the Project would consist of one or two dams on Takatz Lake, a power conduit consisting of a mostly unlined tunnel and steel penstock leading to a powerhouse located at tidewater on Takatz Bay. Installed capacity of the Project would be approximately 27 megawatts (MW).

The Project transmission line would extend from the powerhouse underwater in Takatz Bay, Chatham Straight and Warm Springs Bay to overhead or buried segments which would continue westward past Baranof Lake and Baranof River. The transmission line would then enter a tunnel through the Baranof Mountains. From the western tunnel portal, the transmission line would continue down the Medvejie River valley past Medvejie Lake and on to its interconnection with the existing transmission line from the City’s Green Lake Project (FERC No. 2818).

The current operational proposal is to draw water from Takatz Lake in such a way as to minimize un-natural lake level fluctuations, with final drawdown prescriptions determined based on further economic and environmental considerations.

During Initial Consultation and Scoping, Project Stakeholders including Alaska state and federal resource agencies indicated concern for Project effects on wildlife resources within the project area and close proximity. This draft study plan intends to respond to study requests made during the Initial Consultation and Scoping Processes and is the first step in developing a final study plan approved by all consulting parties.

OBJECTIVES

This study plan is designed to address baseline and impact-evaluation data needs which will allow the City and Stakeholders to evaluate Project-related impacts. Objectives of the proposed 2010 studies are to provide information suitable to: 1) Establish baseline wildlife resources data in areas potentially-affected by the Project; and 2) Evaluate the effects of Project construction and operation of the Project in those areas.

CONSULTATION

The Draft Wildlife Study Plan was distributed in March, 2010, for review and comment. On April 17, 2010, the City received comment from Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G, Attachment 1). We believe we have addressed all comments in that letter seeking more detail on “specific studies, study areas, data collection methods, and schedules”.

STUDY SCOPE

GENERAL

The scope of wildlife studies will be influenced by final design and locations of Project features, including the proposed transmission line route. The proposed transmission routing as described in earlier licensing documents (City, 2008; FERC, 2009) depicted a submarine transmission route from the powerhouse proceeding underwater along Chatham Strait and then through the community of Baranof Warm Springs. This routing is referred to as the “Marine Alternative (Figure 1). The line then proceeded underwater through Baranof Lake and on overhead lines up the Baranof River valley, across the Baranof Mountains and down the Medvejie River valley to its connection with the City’s existing transmission facilities.

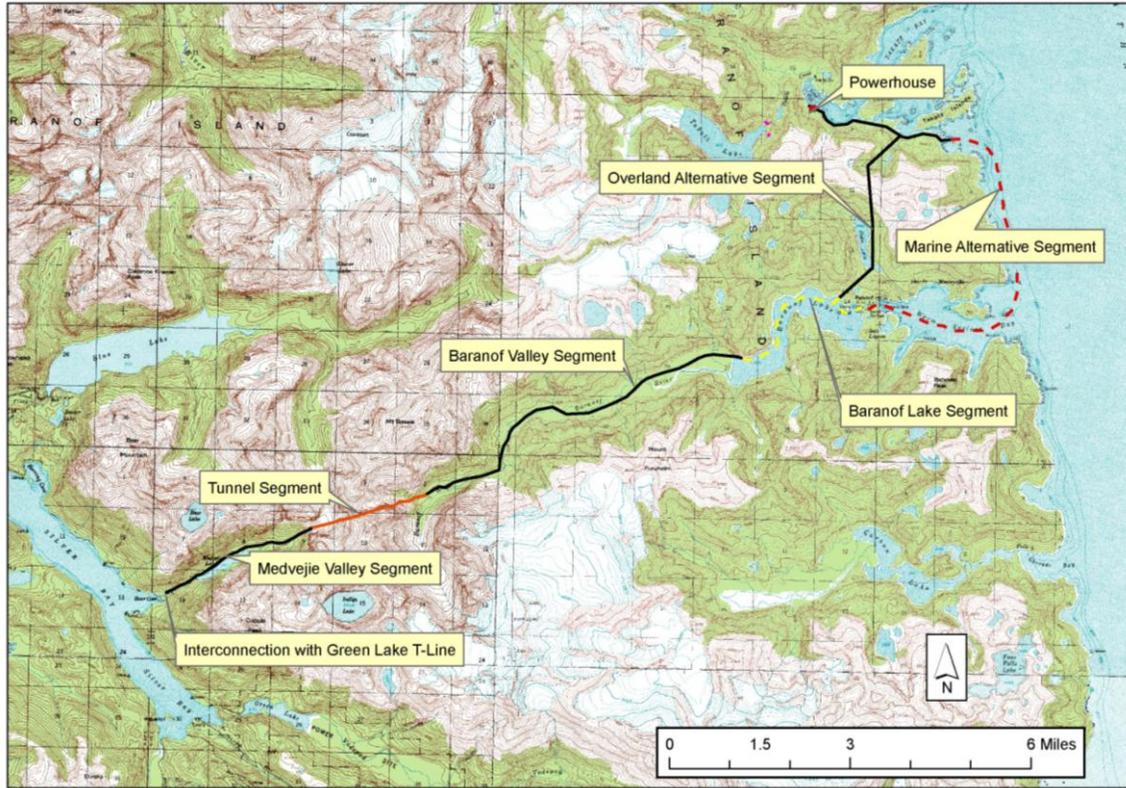


Figure 1. Takatz Lake Project Transmission Alternatives and Terminology. Note: Overland Alternative is City’s Preferred Alternative

NEW TRANSMISSION ROUTING

Based on comments received during SD1 review and after Scoping meetings, the City has developed a new transmission alternative which avoids potential effects on marine resources and on the community of Baranof Warm Springs. This routing, referred to as the “Overland Transmission Alternative”, or simply “Overland Alternative” is shown in Figure 2.

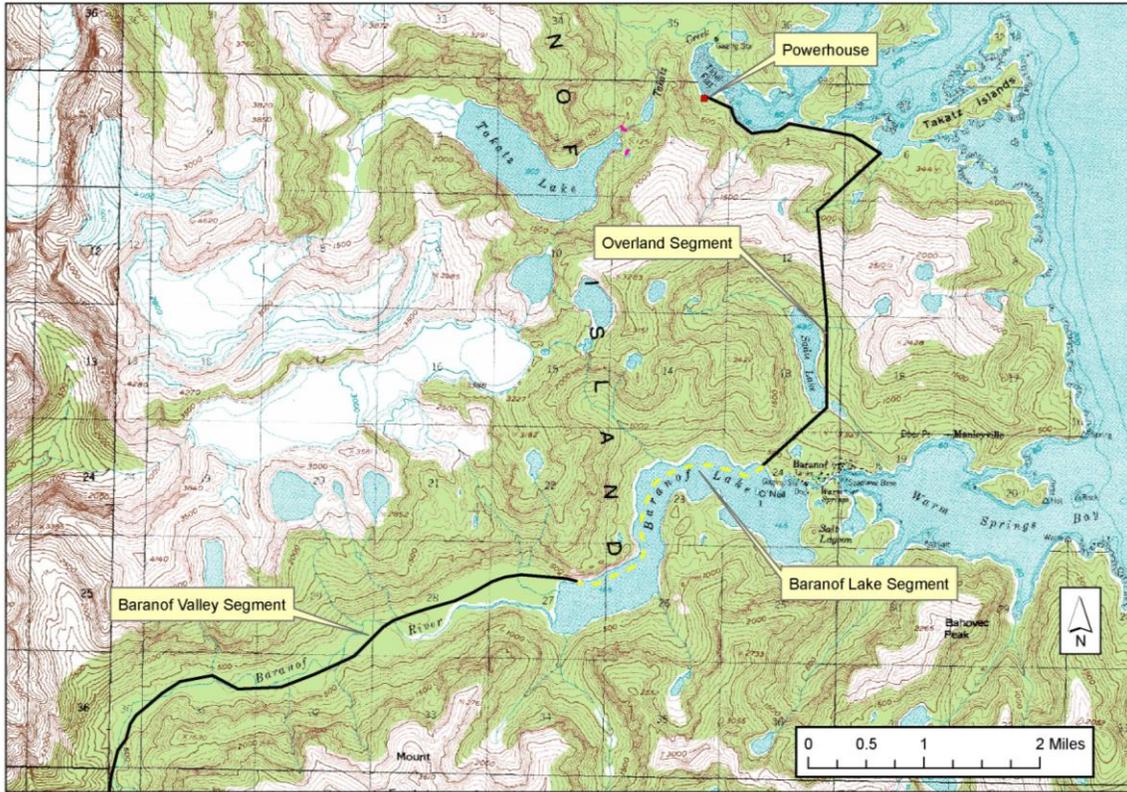


Figure 2. Detail of Overland Transmission Alternative

Note that the Overland Alternative does not change the routing of the transmission segments beyond the point at which the line emerges from upper Baranof Lake.

At this time, the Overland Alternative is the City’s preferred transmission alternative because it responds to concerns for impacts on both the community of Baranof Warm Springs and those on marine resources in Chatham Strait. Further, the Marine Alternative would necessitate extensive and difficult marine engineering feasibility analyses.

STUDY COMPONENTS

The City will conduct wildlife resources studies under two different study components: 1) wildlife baseline surveys and 2) mountain goat tagging studies, as described in the following sections:

Baseline Surveys

The wildlife baseline surveys will be conducted to determine distribution, relative abundance and habitat use of wildlife species within the study area. These surveys will be used to define the existing wildlife resources baseline and to assist in evaluation of impacts in the various study reports and licensing documents. The baseline study scope will include the following elements:

- 1) A detailed literature survey to gather existing data and information on all wildlife resources in the area;
- 2) Field surveys to note presence, relative abundance, life history and habitat descriptions and use of wildlife species (including mammals, birds and amphibians) in the project area;
- 3) Habitat assessment resulting from field surveys, above, aerial surveys, and existing vegetation mapping.

Goat Tagging Studies

In addition to these baseline surveys, the City also proposes to conduct, in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, a mountain goat tagging study to better determine potential cumulative effects of the Takatz Lake Project when assessed in association with proposed changes in the City's Blue Lake hydroelectric project. Details of these studies will be developed in a separate study planning process conducted among members of a specialty work group including participants from the City, ADF&G, USFS and other Stakeholders.

In the following sections, all descriptions are relative to the Baseline Surveys discussed above.

STUDY AREA

Note that the proposed Study Area for wildlife studies includes the Overland Transmission Alternative route and that methods for surveying this route are included in those described for all other areas.

Generally, wildlife studies will be conducted at various levels of intensity within the Takatz Lake, Baranof Lake and Medveja Lake basins and in areas along the proposed transmission line route. Because many target wildlife species either migrate seasonally or move within established territories which extend from one lake basin to another, exact study boundaries will need to include resources from areas outside the currently proposed Takatz Lake Project boundary. A preliminary study area for the various study components will be established based on comments on this draft study plan and discussions at a proposed study planning meeting. The final study boundary may extend well beyond the proposed Project Boundary.

WILDLIFE STUDY CONTRACTOR

Wildlife studies described in this and any approved final study plans will be conducted by a wildlife contractor retained by the City.

MAJOR BASELINE STUDY ELEMENTS

Wildlife studies will consist of three major components, a literature and information search, field surveys, and mountain goat study as described below.

LITERATURE SEARCH

The City will conduct a literature review to help develop a complete list of wildlife species known or thought to use the Project area. The study will assemble existing wildlife information for the project area including, but not limited to:

- US Forest Service (USFS) Tongass National Forest survey and planning reports, noting any sensitive species, species of special concern, or indicator species;
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) periodic wildlife surveys, harvest records for big game, wildfowl, trapping and other activities, and records of subsistence uses and takes in the overall area;
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for information on federally-listed threatened, endangered or candidate species;
- Alaska Natural Heritage Program (AKNHP) listings for important and sensitive species; and
- Academic libraries of the University of Alaska and its affiliates in southeast Alaska, as well as the Environment and Natural Resources Institute, Anchorage.

Finally, wildlife researchers will establish communication with Cultural Resources researchers to assure inclusion of tribal knowledge of distribution, importance and use of wildlife species in the affected area.

FIELD SURVEYS

Field surveys will be conducted in various areas to determine distribution, relative abundance and life history of wildlife species.

Foot surveys

Generally, foot surveys will involve ground observations by a wildlife specialist knowledgeable in identifying wildlife species, sign, life history activity, and habitat. The researcher(s) will survey established routes on foot, noting, among other factors:

- Sightings of large and small mammals, amphibians and birds;
- Sign, including such items as tracks, scat, rubs, carcasses and dens for mammals and droppings, owl pellets, nests and other items for birds;
- Habitat types and their associations with fauna either sighted or noted through sign.

Actual foot survey routes will be largely determined after researchers have done a ground reconnaissance within the study area. Foot surveys will include, to varying degrees, all areas potentially affected by construction or long-term operation in the lake and intake, powerhouse and transmission line areas. Access and topography are expected to limit survey areas, particularly in the upper Baranof and Medvejie basins due to steep terrain and avalanche hazard.

Prior to foot surveys, researchers will prepare a survey area map and record observations on the map and in terms of GPS coordinates, to the extent possible. The result of these early efforts will be maps on which proposed foot survey boundaries within which foot surveys will be delineated. These maps will serve as base maps for all wildlife and perhaps other resource studies. Consulting resource agencies will be asked for review and comment on the proposed survey area(s).

Because of snow cover and safety concerns during much of the year, foot survey frequency will depend on access and safety concerns. At higher elevations, foot surveys will be conducted most frequently during the snow-free periods, but effort will be made to access areas during late winter and spring to assess overwintering activities, particularly for mountain goats. When access is less limited, foot surveys will be conducted no less than once every two weeks, with weekly surveys as a goal.

Boat Surveys

Some wildlife observation may be facilitated by using boats on Takatz, Baranof and Medvejie Lakes and along the marine shoreline in the Takatz Bay, Chatham Strait and Warm Springs Bay areas potentially affected by project generating and transmission line features. Boats will be used in these areas either for access to Takatz Lake and/or Baranof Lake foot survey areas, or to directly observe wildlife on or near shorelines and visible mountainsides. Boat survey areas will include transmission routes and all potential tidewater dock or equipment staging areas.

Camera Surveys

“Trail” or stationary infrared motion sensing cameras will be placed at locations selected near or within proposed construction areas to supplement other field surveys.

Aerial Surveys

Aerial surveys from either a helicopter or fixed wing craft may occur as needed to view greater geographic areas otherwise inaccessible by foot or boat. Of particular interest for aerial surveys will be goat distribution during all seasons and bear denning, to note spring emergence from dens. Raptor nests will also be surveyed. Due to weather and cost constraints, aerial surveys may be limited. Target time periods to best utilize flight time will be discussed among consulting agencies. The City may wish to coordinate aerial surveys with either ADF&G or USFS to share personnel and expense.

During all surveys researchers will note:

- Date/time/location;
- Weather conditions;
- Species or sign;
- Sex and life stage;
- Movement, behavior or other activity patterns;
- Evidence of life-history activity, such as denning, kidding, nesting, feeding, rearing, etc.

All survey observations will be documented, to the extent possible, using Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, and will be noted on Project study area base maps.

These surveys will also be the primary source of information on existence of threatened or endangered (T&E) species. Any initial reports of T&E species will prompt discussions with USFWS and/or NMFS to determine if additional study effort is needed to adequately confirm sightings.

HABITAT and VEGETATION EVALUATION

Using a combination of aerial and ground photos, topographic and existing resource maps as a primary data source, researchers will survey and document habitat features including vegetation community composition, estimates of relative percent cover of dominant species (e.g. willow, alder, cottonwood, sedges, forbs, grasses) and seral stage. Aerial imagery will be ground-truthed in accessible areas. Significant habitat features such as slopes, springs, rock outcrops, caves, mineral licks, wetlands, snags, dens and related will be catalogued.

Note that these vegetation surveys will be separate from detailed botanical resources studies which will be conducted by a botanical resources specialist. Vegetation surveys done by the wildlife specialist will be closely coordinated with botanical resource specialist.

SPECIES-SPECIFIC or OTHER DIRECTED SURVEYS

Depending on results of the literature review and initial reconnaissance surveys, researchers may conduct the following surveys:

1. Deer Pellet Transect Surveys;
2. Deer Winter Range Assessment;
3. Brown Bears;
4. Beaver Surveys;
5. Small Mammal Surveys;
6. Marbled Murrelet Audio-Visual Surveys;
7. Amphibians;
8. Diurnal Raptors;

- 9. Owl Broadcast Surveys; and
- 10. Songbird Breeding Surveys.

More detailed plans for these studies are discussed below and may be modified if needed based on further resource agency consultation.

Deer Pellet Transect Surveys

To assess winter range use by deer, standard ADF&G pellet transect methods will be used (Kirchhoff and Pitcher 1988). This will consist of performing 20 meter transects run perpendicular from the shoreline and continued to 200 meters beyond inundation zone or T-line, counting pellet groups along transects and averaging the total. The data allows for general trend data and relative deer abundance on a coarse scale only.

Deer Winter Range Assessment

Deer winter range will be assessed using standard procedures by ADF&G and USFS in Southeast Alaska (Kirchhoff and Hanley 1992). This method assigns a numerical score to forest stands based on the abundance of high-quality forage and where snowpack is low. Equipment required for the assessment includes compass, clinometer, altimeter, cruising gauge, data forms, field maps, aerial photos, and forest plant association key.

Each sample site will be assigned a site ID number. Latitude and longitude, volume class, and plant association will be recorded. The actual assessment includes two main sections, forage and snow conditions, with each section having numerical scores of various parameters (Table 1). Forage parameters include shrubs cover and height, forbs, overstory canopy percent, and high value species. Snow condition parameters include elevation, distance from coast, snow interception, snow melt (slope multiplied by aspect) and shading. Subtotals are then calculated for each section along with a total score for the site.

Table 1. Deer Winter Range Assessment Parameters

Forage	Snow Condition
Shrubs cover and height	Elevation
Forbs	Distance from coast
Overstory canopy %	Snow interception
High value species	Snow melt (slope x aspect)
	Shading

Brown Bears

Observations of brown bears and their sign will be recorded as part of foot surveys, boat surveys and other fieldwork. This information will be mapped using GPS and GIS and overlaid with project features.

Beaver Surveys

During foot, boat and other surveys, beaver sign and activity will be mapped for general “presence/not detected” baseline data. Relative abundance data will be obtained through additional, more focused surveys of these areas (RIC 1998) recording dams and lodges using GPS and GIS and overlaid with project features. In the fall, focus will shift to mapping food caches. Aerial surveys will be included when possible with available planes or helicopter.

Small Mammal Surveys

Small mammals will be collected using snap traps (Victor and Museum Special), live traps (Sherman), and pit-fall traps. Traps will be set in a variety of habitats and locations to maximize the variety of species caught and baited with peanut butter and oats mixture. Trap sites will be recorded with GPS and set for one to two nights and checked daily.

Data collected will include: trap number, date and time set and checked, latitude and longitude, trap type, habitat, microhabitat, elevation, weather, species and sex of specimen. Live animals will be dispatched and all animals will be placed in separate Ziploc bags and labeled with the above data. Specimens will be frozen and then shipped to the University of Alaska Museum of the North, Mammals Collection, in Fairbanks for species identification confirmation, other pertinent information, and deposition into their museum collection.

Marbled Murrelet Audio-Visual Surveys

Marbled murrelet audio-visual stations will be established and the ADF&G standard technique will be used. This consists of arriving at the station at least one hour before dawn and listening/watching for 30 minutes for murrelets passing through area (ADF&G).

Amphibians

Observations of amphibians (adults, tadpoles, and egg masses) will be recorded as part of foot surveys, boat surveys and other fieldwork. This information, particularly important breeding areas, will be mapped using GPS and GIS and overlaid with project features.

Diurnal Raptors

Goshawk Broadcast Surveys

Broadcast acoustical surveys will be used to survey for goshawks (Barton 1992) and will be performed in conjunction with other field surveys. The survey consists of a broadcast call, point sampling technique which includes the following:

1. Aerial photos and habitat GIS layers will be used to select high quality goshawk habitat.
2. Transects will be established 250 m apart with sample stations every 200 m, alternating the stations by 100 m on adjacent transects in order to increase coverage. (The exception to this is the transect along the lake shore; this consists of one transect paralleling the shoreline 50 m out with stations every 200 meters and then the next transect 100 m inland.)
3. Calling equipment consists of mp3 player connected to a NiteLite 15 watt speaker and amplifier, producing 80-110 dB output, 1 meter from speaker.
4. Adult alarm calls will be used during the nestling period, late May to early July and other times during the year. Juvenile begging (wail) calls will be used during the fledgling dependency period, early July to mid-August.
5. Calling will be conducted from ½ hour before sunrise up to ½ hour after sunset.
6. On the arrival at each calling station, at least one minute will be allowed for listening for any calls. Broadcasting begins at 60 degrees from the transect line for 30 seconds, then listening and watching for 30 seconds. This will be repeated 5 more times, rotating 120 degrees between each broadcast, resulting in a total of 6 calls over 6 minutes.
7. Surveying during times of heavy rain or winds exceeding 15 mph will be avoided.
8. Data recorded will include station number, location description, latitude and longitude, date, time, habitat, responses to call, direction and distance of responses, visual sightings, age and sex of birds, behavior, and other birds in area.

Other Diurnal Raptors

Observations of other raptors such as Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons will be recorded during boat, foot surveys and other field work. Aerial surveys, when possible, will also be used to locate nests.

Owl Broadcast Surveys

The method for surveying owls will be a modified protocol for “presence/not detected” sampling which is based on methods from Southeast Alaska Owl Network (Kissling and Lewis 2005) and Inventory Methods for Raptors (RIC 2001). Because of the broad list of potential owls in the project area, priority will be placed on owls most likely to be present. Owls with abundance ratings of occasional or rare will have a priority of one and will be included in all call survey stations. Those with abundance ratings of uncommon, very rare or accidental will have a priority of two and will be included in every other station (Table 2).

Table 2. Owl Species, Expected Abundance and Survey Priority

Owl species (by size)	Abundance	Priority
Northern Pygmy Owl	Occasional	1
Northern Saw-whet owl	Rare	1
Western Screech Owl	Rare	1
Boreal Owl	Accidental/Very Rare	2
Short-eared Owl	Uncommon	2
Long-eared Owl	Accidental	2
Northern Hawk Owl	Very Rare	2
Barred Owl	Occasional	1
Great Horned Owl	Rare	1
Snowy Owl	Very Rare	2
Great Grey Owl	Accidental	2

Owl survey stations will be located in areas with: a) low ambient noise, b) low traffic levels, and c) at least 25% forest within 500 m of the station. Distance between stations will be approximately 800 meters.

Surveys will be conducted half an hour after sunset until midnight. Data collection includes: location, habitat, time, temperature, cloud cover, precipitation, snow cover, moon phase, wind conditions, and noise level.

Broadcast calls will be played for owl species based on the table above. Calling equipment will consist of mp3 player connected to a NiteLite 15 watt speaker and amplifier, producing 100-110 dB output, one meter from speaker.

The order of calling will always be from the smallest to largest owl, since some species of larger owls are known to prey on smaller owls and their calls may influence response by smaller owls. For each species, the broadcast series will consist of three calls (20 seconds each) followed by a 30 second listening period. The first recording will be broadcast at 60° from the transect line (i.e. direction of travel on road, trail, etc.), the second at 180° from the transect line, and the third at 300° from the transect line. After each series of calls, the observer will listen and watch for five minutes.

Data collected for each owl response will include detection number, species and time; estimated distance to nearest 50 m, and direction. The procedure will be repeated for each owl species at each station.

Songbird Breeding Surveys

The survey method to be used for forest songbirds is based on the standard Breeding Bird Survey by USGS, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Sauer et al. 2005). Specific methods used by the Sitka National Historical Park will be employed, which include the following steps:

1. Establish transects through representative habitats in the study area with count stations approximately every ½ mile.
2. Conduct surveys from 8 June until 30 June and begin ½ hour before sunrise and continue until 0900. Record location, point number, vegetation type, date, time, temperature, wind speed and direction, and sky condition.
3. Record weather conditions prior to and at the end of each survey.
4. Once the point center is located, listen and record all birds seen or heard for 10 minutes. Additionally, the 10 minute survey period will be broken into 3 minute, 5 minute, and 10 minute periods.

STUDY TIMEFRAME

Wildlife field studies will begin in April 2010 or as soon as the relevant study plans are approved by the agencies and permits are obtained. Studies herein will continue as planned up to the submittal of a FERC license application for the hydropower project anticipated to be February 2011. Wildlife surveys will be done at various times depending on the technique, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Schedule for Takatz Lake Project Wildlife Surveys for 2010.

Field Technique	2010 Time Period
General foot surveys	Spring through winter
Deer pellet transect	Spring, summer
Deer winter range assessment	Summer, fall
Beaver surveys	Spring, summer, fall
Small mammal trapping	Summer
Marbled murrelet audio-visual survey	Summer
Goshawk broadcast survey	Spring, summer
Owl broadcast survey	Spring, summer
Songbird breeding bird survey	Spring, summer
Boat surveys	Spring through winter
Aerial surveys	Spring through winter

Foot Surveys. Foot surveys will begin in the lowland areas starting April 2010 and ascend to the highland areas as snow pack recedes and access becomes feasible late spring or early summer. Foot surveys will be on a monthly basis until prohibited by winter snow accumulation.

Boat Surveys. Boat surveys of the marine shorelines will begin in April and within the freshwater lakes as soon as they are ice free, generally beginning late June or July 2010. Boat surveys will be on a monthly basis except for twice monthly during July, August and September and thereafter monthly until license application.

Aerial Surveys. Aerial surveys may be conducted in any season, regardless of snow cover, when weather permits. Given the challenging terrain and difficult access into most project areas, in addition to the often late snowpack, aerial surveys may afford the best data during periods when other methods cannot be used.

Camera Surveys. Cameras may be installed concurrent with foot surveys and potentially relocated from time to time depending on results. Cameras will be used throughout the survey period whenever accessible.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

To assure early determinations of whether endangered species occur in the Project area, researchers will consult during the early phases of wildlife and vegetation studies with USFS, USFWS and NMFS. As noted above, the initial and ongoing reviews of existing information will note all references to endangered species. Currently listed Federal T&E and Candidate species, as well as USFS Sensitive Listed Species and Other Species of Concern, are listed in Table 4, and may occur in the project area.

Table 4. Threatened, Endangered, Candidate and Other Species of Concern

Species Category	Species List
Federal Endangered Species	Humpback Whale (<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>)
Federal Threatened Species	Steller sea lion (<i>Eumetopias jubata</i>)
Federal Candidate Species	Kittlitz’s Murrelet (<i>Brachyramphus brevirostris</i>)
USFS Sensitive Listed Species	Queen Charlotte Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis laingi</i>) Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>) Peale’s Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>) Trumpeter Swan (<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>)
USFS Other Species of Concern	Marbled Murrelet (<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>)

In consultation with appropriate agencies, the City will formally request comment on these or any other T&E or Candidate species in the Project area. Survey reports will have sections on T&E species sightings, if any.

The objective of the endangered species activities will be to have completed all endangered species reviews and surveys prior to submission of the Draft License Application for agency and public review. The City will, after agreement with USFS and USFWS, distribute for review a Biological Evaluation (BE) prior to license application.

REPORTING

Progress reports documenting the 2010 wildlife and habitat studies will be distributed monthly. A final report will be issued no later than January 31st, 2011.

The reports will generally contain the following sections:

Methods. The author(s) will describe observation methods, including sites, dates, observations recorded (wildlife numbers and species, weather, etc, as described above) identification keys used and other items.

Results. Authors will describe the results of the foot, boat, camera and aerial surveys and other recorded data. Study Area base maps will be used to the extent possible to identify wildlife locations from the surveys, noting habitat utilization and life history activities

A separate Results section will be devoted to T&E and sensitive species. In coordination with ADF&G, USFS and USFWS, researchers will compile and add to a list of potentially-affected sensitive species in addition to T&E species noted by USFWS. If any sensitive species are sighted, the significance of the observation will be reported and further documented to the above wildlife agencies via separate written report.

Discussion. This section will be brief and limited to general discussions of species present, timing and habitat utilization, as they relate to other areas in Southeast Alaska, and to any previous data collected in Project area. More intensive interpretation of these data in terms of species importance, impacts and mitigation measures will be done as part of development of the relicensing NEPA documents.

Recommendations. This section will focus on evaluation of previous studies and ways in which they might be improved. In successive months this section will be used to evaluate effectiveness of changes and the extent to which proposals have been achieved.

Impact and Mitigation Evaluations. As possible, reports will address potential project effects on wildlife and habitat. As appropriate, reports may address proposed changes in project operation, or effects of mitigation proposals which arise during the licensing process.

MEETINGS

An initial wildlife workgroup meeting will be held as soon as possible prior to the beginning of 2010 field work. If possible, the meeting time will coincide with that of a similar meeting proposed for the Aquatic Resources Study Plan. The objective of the meeting will be to discuss 1) the study area for 2010 field surveys; 2) the study approach, including detailed observation and collection methods and schedules for various species in various locations. After the meeting, the City will provide draft meeting minutes for review, and, following finalization of the minutes and incorporation of revisions to the draft study plan, issue a final wildlife study plan.

LITERATURE CITED

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ATTACHMENT 1

Comments from Alaska Department of Fish and Game on Takatz Lake Project Draft Wildlife Study Plan.

From: Johnson, Shawn L (DFG) [mailto:shawn.johnson@alaska.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2010 1:19 PM
To: chrisb@cityofsitka.com
Cc: Ferguson, Jim M (DFG); Mooney, Philip W (DFG); Carole Goularte; Melissa Dinsmore; Susan Walker; Richard Enriquez; White, Kevin S (DFG); Klein, Joseph P (DFG)
Subject: RE: Transmittal of Draft Wildlife Study Plan, Takatz Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 13234-001)

Good Afternoon Christopher,

Following are ADF&G's comments on the Draft Wildlife Resources Study Plan for the Takatz Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 13234). This plan adequately identifies the various studies needed to establish baseline wildlife resource information in areas potentially affected by the Project and to evaluate the effects of Project construction and operation on these resources. The plan, however, lacks details on specific studies, study areas, data collection methods, and schedules.

We understand that these details will be developed and a final wildlife study plan will be issued based on literature review, initial reconnaissance surveys, and further resource agency consultation. Please work with Phil Mooney on this endeavor. Similarly, please continue to work with Phil and Kevin White (ADF&G Douglas office) on the cooperative goat tagging studies.

We also understand that the final scope of wildlife studies will be influenced by final design and locations of Project features, including the proposed transmission line route. Please keep us advised on design and location of Project features as they are developed and finalized. In particular, let us know as soon as possible whether a road will be constructed along the transmission line, as this will influence wildlife study needs.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you to get the 2010 field season underway.

Thank you,

Shawn Johnson, SEAK Instream Flow Coordinator

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Sport Fish / RTS

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