8.2 Public Comments on Options

This document contains the public comments received from the public consultation on the options and preliminary preferred options in December, 2003. The comments have been presented as received. The Planning Team then evaluated these comments, with a background and present status provided, also indicating the potential benefits or conflicts and the action taken by the planning team. These comments are used to aid in making the final selection of options.

8.2.1 Net Creek Dam – MNR

No public comments received on options.

8.2.2 North Milne Lake Dam – MNR

No public comments received on options.

8.2.3 Rabbit Lake Dame - OPGI

8.2.5.1 "Concern for fisheries during low flow period in spring below dam when the stop logs are replaced to fill the reservoir."

Background: Normal operating range for the Rabbit Lake Reservoir is 286.00 to 291.88. 75% of the time the drawdown elevation is above 287 masl which is reached generally by March 20th. Following drawdown the dam is closed off (stop logs replaced) to allow the spring freshet to refill the lake. The stop logs are not cindered, which allows for leakage and provides some minimum flow. Inflows from four creek systems also enter the river below Rabbit Chute in addition to the spring run off from the surrounding topography. There is no minimum flow constraint in place other than the agreement not to cinder the dam.

Present Status: The MNR and OPGI* are not aware of any recorded walleye spawning sites on this section of the upper Matabitchuan River. The outlet from Cooper Lake and the section of the Matabitchuan River entering Fourbass Lake are the known walleye spawning sites for this river reach section. However, the public scoping input has reported a potential impact for walleye spawning habitat in this location. As a result, there is a need for field investigation of this concern, based on the limited baseline information available for this seasonal period to assess this concern. (The Rabbit Lake Dam is located in remote location.)

*Note that spawning habitat for walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass and lake trout was mapped by OPG in 1994 on Fourbass Lake during a Class EA for the upgrade and rehabilitation of the main dam and Matabitchuan generating station intake (Threader 1995) (Issue 4.1.1)

References:

Threader, R.W. 1995. Main dam and intake structure upgrade and rehabilitation at the Matabitchuan Generating Station: Environmental Report. Report No. FT1-07720-0001, Ontario Hydro Hydroelectric BU, Environmental and Materials Mngt. Dept., Toronto.

Potential Benefits/Conflicts: Potential benefits of maintaining adequate flows during this period would be the maintaining and/or enhancement of the aquatic ecosystem and protection for spawning habitat (dependent on site verification.)

Potential conflicts are: cost of increased dam operations, loss of power production by potentially impacting the drawdown levels (need to ensure reservoir meets required levels for lake spawning sites), potential impact to recreation, navigation, and economics of upstream. As there has been no assessment taken of what would constitute an adequate minimum flow volume, or what the current site status/impact assessment is, there is no determination which can be made as to the degree of conflict or benefit at this time.

Action Taken: A MNR project proposal to conduct a preliminary site investigation in regards to this concern to record preliminary observations and assess level of minimum flow achieved through dam leakage. Assess potential for fisheries spawning habitat. Determine if there are valued ecosystem components present that are at risk.

8.2.4 Matabitchuan GS - OPGI

No public comments received on options.