

**Local Stakeholder Group Meeting regarding Hydroelectric
Licensing & Kinnickinnic River Planning Strategy**

River Falls Hydroelectric Project | P-10489

March 3, 2015

Participants: Michael Page, Friends of the Kinni
Dave Fodroczi, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust
Gary Horvath, Trout Unlimited
Jim Fossum, River Alliance of Wisconsin
Randy Thoreson, U.S. National Park Service
Scot Simpson, City of River Falls
Ray French, City of River Falls

Discussion of Communication Issues

Scot began the meeting with a discussion of the confusion on stakeholder positions that developed after the Council meeting on January 13. He questioned their support for the resolutions but not the draft timeline, when the resolution supports the timeline/planning process.

Michael clarified support for the resolutions but not the draft timeline was expressed to Ray prior to the Council meeting. They supported the resolutions in that they call for greater attention and planning of the River corridor compared to just going down the path of relicensing. They do not support a process that extends the license more than 5 years, and needed more time to review the timeline prior to committing support. He and others thought they could support the resolutions as a positive step, but not the draft timeline in that form.

Gary added that the timeline and process needs to address the study requests. They cannot endorse a plan that ignores all of the study requests from the relicensing process. Discussion continued on what was meant in the draft timeline by “preliminary studies” and that the groups need to see how the studies will be incorporated into the planning process.

All parties acknowledged the miscommunication.

Discussion of FERC Processes & Kinni Corridor Planning

Randy emphasized that the City needs to be following the FERC processes. He also acknowledged feeling slighted that the City had not made progress on the Form-80 requirement following a meeting and conference call nearly a year ago on the issue. Ray clarified that the intent was to conduct the Form-80 recreation survey at the same time as the relicensing recreation study. Ray agreed to follow up with Randy and Mark Ivy from FERC on the status.

Dave continued that there has been a lack of “formal” discussion as part of the relicensing process. He expected the City would have formally communicated with stakeholders following the submission of study requests.

Dave added that they thought it was important they supported the resolutions because the door was left open for possible dam removal and river restoration. Now that they have had time to consider the resolutions, they have questions. He also recognizes the difference between the

resource agencies and local stakeholder groups in the FERC licensing process, and appreciates being at the table with the City.

Scot acknowledged that the City didn't do a good enough job stating that they had paused relicensing to take a step back to review what they were doing. He said he is results-oriented and focuses on getting the best result for the City.

Randy asked whether it makes sense for the City to request FERC change the City back to the integrated licensing process (ILP). He said the City has been following more of the integrated approach, so switching back to ILP would clean up the process, so to speak. Discussion continued regarding processes and identified that the City would likely use the ILP if it were to pursue a license, following a possible extension.

Jim asked clarifying questions on the draft timeline and how the City got to where it is. He said the River Alliance would prefer a 5 year extension over 7 ½ year extension.

Discussion continued on the use of studies as the Kinnickinnic River Corridor gets underway. Scot said he and Ray had already met with faculty from UW-River Falls on how they might assist or lead in completing studies, and how the Corridor planning fits in the newly established Kinnickinnic Watershed Consortium. Randy said there is a need for more circling back so that all of the stakeholders know the steps each are taking.

Gary said he is concerned that studies may occur that are intended to satisfy the requirements of the study requests without the input of the requesting stakeholder. Ray assured the group that no studies will be completed for licensing without stakeholder input. Gary added that in the absence of communication, the information vacuum gets filled on its own.

Next Steps to Promote Collaboration & Takeaways

In order keep all of the stakeholders informed, discussion led to whether a monthly meeting would be helpful. The following action steps were identified:

1. Organize monthly check-in meetings with stakeholders, moving to every other month over the summer.
2. Stakeholders will offer comments on the draft timeline in the next couple of weeks.
3. At the next meeting, aiming for early April, the group will review the draft license amendment application and revised process.
 - a. City staff will also circle back with the resource agencies.
 - b. Jim reminded the group of the public notice requirements of the licensing process.
 - c. The participants acknowledged that Tuesday mornings are not good, and that all stakeholders, including UWRF faculty and resource agencies, should be invited.

Scot also acknowledged the following takeaways from this conversation, with agreement from those present:

1. The Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan is an acceptable path to take.
2. A five-year extension may be workable for the stakeholders.
3. The Traditional Licensing Process is not adequate for our needs.
4. We are committed to staying engaged together.