

**Stakeholder Meeting regarding Hydroelectric Licensing &
Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Strategy**

River Falls Hydroelectric Project | P-10489

April 9, 2015

Attendees: Jim Fossum, River Alliance of Wisconsin
Randy Thoreson, U.S. National Park Service
Diane Odeen, City Council/Utility Advisory Board
Francis Ogden, Resident
Patricia La Rue, Resident/Park & Recreation Advisory Board
Gary Horvath, Trout Unlimited
Dan Wilcox, Trout Unlimited
Michael Page, Friends of the Kinni
Peter Dahm, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust
Dave Fodroczi, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust
Jarrod Blades, UWRF
Jill Coleman Wasik, UWRF
David Babcock, Resident
Denny Canef, Wi River Alliance (phone)
Cheryl Latsch, WiDNR (phone)
Dan Helsel, WiDNR (phone)
Scot Simpson, City of River Falls
Ray French, City of River Falls

Introductions

The meeting began with introductions of all attendees, in person and by phone.

Update of draft Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan

Ray discussed an update to the draft Kinnickinnic River Corridor planning process. In response to the concerns from stakeholders, the license extension to be requested was reduced from seven and a half years to five years. The City is also committing to work with stakeholders to identify the highest priority studies to begin in 2015 that will best inform the Corridor Planning Process.

The Corridor Plan timeline was expanded to describe the process of Corridor Planning and the deadline of fall, 2017 for the community decision on whether to continue with hydroelectric generation at one or both of the facilities. The “Future FERC Licensing” process was also expanded to show how the community decision restarts the relicensing or surrender processes. Also in response to stakeholder concerns, the surrender process was clarified to state that as the Corridor Plan is adopted, actions may begin as funds are available for the surrender of the license and removal of the dam(s). Those actions would be dependent upon FERC surrender requirements and guided by the implementation plans.

Scot opened the conversation by asking for comments and questions. Jarod asked if there was a concern about scaling the focus on the hydros to the whole Corridor in the planning process. Discussion continued on whether a decision on the hydros in the planning process is necessary

for the development of a plan. Peter added that the community needs to make an informed decision on whether to keep the hydros before a plan can be adopted.

Jim discussed the need for economic and other studies on dam removal to make the decision. There should also be an effort to make sure those studies are valid for multiple purposes because they will be expensive. Randy continued with there being a need for dedicated studies to inform the corridor planning.

Cheryl added that this is an excellent vision on how to proceed. She is concerned about FERC's acknowledgement of this process and whether there will be any compliance issues as we move forward. Gary continued that we are currently in the relicensing process and that stakeholders have not received a formal response on their study requests. Denny brought the conversation back that there needs to be a decision on the dams before a true corridor plan can be developed.

Michael asked whether extension is a viable option. Ray indicated that in conversations with FERC staff that a license extension is possible, even if it is generally uncommon. Michael discussed what questions we need to answer before making a decision on the dams. Dan H emphasized that we need to know in what context the information will be reported: relicensing or surrender.

Dave F discussed the need to develop a study strategy that gets us to 2017 and can support either relicensing or surrender following a decision on the dams.

Patricia talked about the need for consistent communication because there is already misinformation in the community. There needs to be concerted effort at educating the community on the issues.

Discussion of Next Steps for 2015 Studies

Discussion continued on what information is needed to reach a decision and the resources available in the short and long-terms. Jarrod emphasized the need to rely on existing expertise within the watershed. There was consensus that a group should be convened to discuss the 2015 studies and to determine what information is needed to make a decision. There was also consensus that these meetings should continue.

Cheryl indicated that there should be a standard agenda and meeting times with adequate notice.

Other Updates

Jarrold updated the group on the activities of the Kinnickinnic Watershed Consortium. They will be conducting focus groups that will inform a household survey. The subjects will be perceptions of the River and what people value.

Jill updated the group on student research in the project area. Subjects include invasive plant species, water quality (nutrient flux), and hydrologic residence time in the reservoirs.