

# River Falls Hydroelectric Project (P-10489)

## 2015 Recreation Use Survey

### Summary of Findings

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#### **I. Introduction**

On July 11, 2014, Mr. David Olson conducted the dam safety inspections of the Junction Falls and Powell Falls developments of the River Falls Hydroelectric Project (P-10489). The City of River Falls is currently granted a license to operate these facilities by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which expires on August 31, 2018. As of this date, the City is currently in the traditional licensing process for the project.

During the dam safety inspections, it was noted that the Kinnickinnic River is becoming utilized more frequently by recreational users. This observation triggered an evaluation of the project's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) exemption and Potential Hazard Classification. As requested, the City updated its notification list to include the area kayak outfitters. Updated survey information pertaining to the project's dam break analysis was also provided.

As requested, the City also conducted a recreational use survey through the spring and summer months of 2015. One of the goals was to provide additional data to assist in the evaluation of the EAP exemption and potential hazard classification. The following discussion is a summary of those findings. Additional information was gathered that is not discussed here. All of these findings are being compiled into a more comprehensive recreational use survey report for relicensing purposes and will be published separately at a later date.

#### **II. Study Area**

The River Falls Hydroelectric Project official project area as noted in the original license documents is limited. In order to guide the relicensing process and related studies, a draft hydroelectric project boundary was created. It is attached to this report and identifies the recreation amenities within the area.

The River Falls Hydroelectric Project consists of two dams, Junction Falls and Powell Falls, and their impoundments, Lake George and Lake Louise, respectively. The Powell Falls Dam is located approximated ½ mile downstream from the Junction Falls Dam. Adjacent to Lake Louise on the east is a regional park, Glen Park, and on the west is the City's Waste Water Treatment Plant. The City owns the dams and facilities, and a majority of the property within the draft project boundary.

There are three primary areas of recreational use that were studied and can be referenced on the attached boundary map. The first is to the west of Lake George and is the Kinnickinnic River Trail. It includes a paved path, picnic tables, boat launch, and fishing pier. The second

major area are the paved and dirt paths upstream of Lake Louise in the Lower Glen Park area. Finally, the third major recreation area is the trail to Powell Falls Dam and lower Kinnickinnic River. It provides access to dirt paths, fishing locations, and a place for kayaks/canoes to launch. This third area is the area of study highlighted in this summary of findings.

### **III. Methods**

Data was collected throughout May – September of 2015 that counted the numbers of visitors to the hydroelectric project area and their activities. This was achieved by two means: (1) daily time-of-day observations by the Hydroelectric Facilities Operator on his daily rounds of the two facilities and (2) continuous observations of the trail to the lower dam over six representative days for twelve hours each day. The time-of-day records include only the number of visitors observed on or in the vicinity of the trail. The continuous observations of the trail to the lower dam note the number of visitors observed and their activities.

The following are the six days of continuous observations of the trail to the lower dam:

- Friday, August 28
- Saturday, August 29
- Monday, August 31
- Tuesday, September 8
- Thursday, September 10
- Sunday, September 13

For each of these days, the total people to use the trail, their activities, and the number of watercraft put out on the lower Kinnickinnic River were collected. These representative days were selected to gather data on different days of the week, near a holiday weekend, and included varied weather patterns.

### **IV. Results**

Table 1 on page 3 shows the data collected from the continuous observations that occurred in August, 2015.

Table 2 on page 4 shows the data collected from the continuous observations that occurred in September, 2015.

The table shows the number of people observed directly on the trail to the lower dam and their intent to walk/run/hike, bicycle, fish, or use a watercraft on the Lower Kinnickinnic River. In a vast majority of cases, the watercraft of in use was a kayak. Occasionally canoes were observed, and in one case, two paddleboards. The notes column indicates any time a group larger than 4 individuals or 4 watercraft were observed to be entering the Lower Kinnickinnic River at once.

Table 1. Observation Results from August, 2015 Continuous Observation Days

Date	Time	Temp	Weather	Total People	Walking/Hiking/Running	Bicycling	Fishing/Other Related	Water Access People	Water Access Watercraft	Notes
Friday, August 28, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	59-76°	Partly Cloudy and Overcast	5	1	1	3			
Friday, August 28, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			15	5			10	10	
Friday, August 28, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			15	2			13	12	1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Friday, August 28, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			10	5			5	3	
Friday, August 28, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			19	6	1		12	10	1 group of 10 people and 8 watercraft
Friday, August 28, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			28	28					
<b>Friday, August 28, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>92</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	
Saturday, August 29, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	56-74°	Sunny	5	1		4			1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Saturday, August 29, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			15	7			8	8	
Saturday, August 29, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			71	24			47	44	1 group of 8; 2 groups of 6 people and watercraft
Saturday, August 29, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			35	18	1		16	15	1 group of 8 people and watercraft
Saturday, August 29, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			11	1	1	5	4	4	
Saturday, August 29, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			17	14		1	2	2	
<b>Saturday, August 29, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>154</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>73</b>	
Monday, August 31, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	63-86°	Partly Cloudy and Overcast	9	7		2			
Monday, August 31, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			8	3			5	5	
Monday, August 31, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			19	15		2	2	2	
Monday, August 31, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			13	6	1		6	6	1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Monday, August 31, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			10	9		1			
Monday, August 31, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			5	2	2	1			
<b>Monday, August 31, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>64</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	

Table 2. Observation Results from September, 2015 Continuous Observation Days

Date	Time	Temp	Weather	Total People	Walking/Hiking/Running	Bicycling	Fishing/Other Related	Water Access People	Water Access Watercraft	Notes
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	60-78°	Partly Cloudy, Overcast, Light Rain	1	1					
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			3	2		1			
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			17	7			10	10	1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			8	4		2	2	2	
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			12	6		2	4	4	
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			11	10		1			
<b>Tuesday, September 8, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>52</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
Thursday, September 10, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	54-71°	Sunny, Partly Cloudy, Overcast, Light Rain	0						
Thursday, September 10, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			2	2					
Thursday, September 10, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			1	1					
Thursday, September 10, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			6	6					
Thursday, September 10, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			9	7			2	2	
Thursday, September 10, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			11	7		1	3	3	
<b>Thursday, September 10, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>			
Sunday, September 13, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	52-75°	Partly Cloudy	7	3		3	1	1	
Sunday, September 13, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			48	17			31	31	1 group of 20 people and watercraft
Sunday, September 13, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			33	9			24	23	1 group of 7 people and watercraft
Sunday, September 13, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			29	15			14	14	1 group of 8 people and watercraft
Sunday, September 13, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			38	32		4	2	2	
Sunday, September 13, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			26	16	2	5	3	3	
<b>Sunday, September 13, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>181</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>74</b>	

A. Walking/Running/Hiking/Bicycling: The results indicate that on a given weekday during the summer months, between 30-70 people will visit the trail to the lower dam. On a typical weekend day, over 150 people can be seen visiting on the trail. On a weekend day, half of those people will be recreating on the paths.

B. Fishing: By frequency, the lower Kinnickinnic River is a more popular fishing destination in the late afternoon and evening hours. A typical day will find one to five visitors to the project area for fishing in the evening hours.

C. Water Access: The results show that on a typical good-weather weekend day, approximately 75 people will attempt to access the lower Kinnickinnic River by watercraft, and most often by kayak. Individual group sizes vary from 1 to 8 participants and watercraft, although there was one instance each of groups of 10 and 20. It is noted that the average trip time for someone entering the river below the Lower Dam is about 3 hours. The average week day sees more variation in number of users, from just a handful to 40.

## **V. Conclusions**

The lower Kinnickinnic River trail and water access is a popular destination for recreation users in the region. While anecdotal reports of lower River watercraft number in the hundreds, the data collected reflect more manageable use at less than one hundred watercraft in a weekend day. The observed use included those of individual users with personal watercraft and those of the three kayak outfitters. The three kayak outfitters have a reported total capacity of around 85 watercrafts in a day. Ultimately, the numbers of watercraft users has grown in recent years and there are recognized conflicts with the types of recreational uses on the lower Kinnickinnic River.

Date	Time	Temp	Weather	Total People	Walking/Hiking/Running	Bicycling	Rollerblading	Skateboarding	Feeding Ducks	Fishing/Other Related	Water Access People	Water Access Watercraft	Walked Dogs	Notes
Friday, August 21, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	61°	Partly Cloudy	37	28	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	
Friday, August 28, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	63°	Overcast	28	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Thursday, September 10, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	57°	Overcast	17	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	
Friday, September 18, 2015	9:00am-11:00am	56°	Partly Cloudy	22	20	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Wednesday, September 16, 2015	9:00am-11:00am	67°	Sunny	28	23	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Wednesday, September 9, 2015	9:00am-11:00am	61°	Partly Cloudy	23	21	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Monday, August 31, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm	71°	Partly Cloudy	39	28	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	Class of 18
Saturday, September 5, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm	75°	Partly Cloudy	30	17	7	0	0	6	0	0	0	5	
Wednesday, September 23, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm	67°	Sunny	44	30	4	1	0	9	0	0	0	14	
Friday, September 4, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm	81°	Partly Cloudy	27	12	3	0	1	0	0	11	7	2	Family of 3 adults, 3 kids, 2 kayaks in LG; 5 kayakers took out at boat launch in LG
Thursday, September 24, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm	64°	Light Rain	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
Tuesday, September 15, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm	79°	Partly Cloudy	30	25	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	
Monday, September 14, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm	71°	Sunny	29	18	5	0	1	5	0	0	0	2	
Tuesday, September 15, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm	82°	Sunny	41	36	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Wednesday, September 2, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm	70°	Partly Cloudy	29	22	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	
Monday, September 21, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm	78°	Sunny	59	43	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Sunday, September 13, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm	72°	Partly Cloudy	65	52	9	1	0	3	0	0	0	11	
Tuesday, September 22, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm	69°	Overcast	33	28	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	8	
<b>AVERAGES</b>				<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	

Date	Time	Temp	Weather	Total People	Walking/Hiking/Running	Bicycling	Rollerblading	Skateboarding	Feeding Ducks	Fishing/Other Related	Swimming	Water Access People	Water Access Watercraft	Walked Dogs	Notes
Thursday, August 20, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm	69°	Sunny	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Thursday, August 27, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm	72°	Partly Cloudy	19	17	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	
Friday, August 28, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	62°	Overcast	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Also 2 Inter-Fluve staff
Saturday, August 29, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm	72°	Sunny	22	20	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Monday, August 31, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	65°	Overcast	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Wednesday, September 02, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm	70°	Overcast	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1 person looking for water access, went to lower dam next; also 3 Inter-Fluve staff
Friday, September 04, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm	78°	Sunny	19	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12 - international group; 7 - local
Sunday, September 06, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm	77°	Rain	16	7	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	
Tuesday, September 08, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	64°	Light Rain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Wednesday, September 09, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm	62°	Partly Cloudy	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
Thursday, September 10, 2015	9:00am-11:00am	58°	Partly Cloudy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Monday, September 14, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm	79°	Sunny	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Tuesday, September 15, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm	81°	Partly Cloudy	35	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Tuesday, September 15, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm	82°	Sunny	36	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Thursday, September 24, 2015	9:00am-11:00am	63°	Overcast	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Thursday, September 24, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm	73°	Light Rain	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Friday, September 25, 2015	9:00am-11:00am	62°	Partly Cloudy	6	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	
Friday, September 25, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm	68°	Sunny	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>AVERAGES</b>				<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	

Date	Time	Temp	Weather	Total People	Walking/Hiking/Running	Bicycling	Fishing/Other Related	Water Access People	Water Access Watercraft	Notes
Friday, August 28, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	59-76°	Partly Cloudy and Overcast	5	1	1	3			
Friday, August 28, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			15	5			10	10	
Friday, August 28, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			15	2			13	12	1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Friday, August 28, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			10	5			5	3	
Friday, August 28, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			19	6	1		12	10	1 group of 10 people and 8 watercraft
Friday, August 28, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			28	28					
<b>Friday, August 28, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>92</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	
Saturday, August 29, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	56-74°	Sunny	5	1		4			1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Saturday, August 29, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			15	7			8	8	
Saturday, August 29, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			71	24			47	44	1 group of 8; 2 groups of 6 people and watercraft
Saturday, August 29, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			35	18	1		16	15	1 group of 8 people and watercraft
Saturday, August 29, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			11	1	1	5	4	4	
Saturday, August 29, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			17	14		1	2	2	
<b>Saturday, August 29, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>154</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>73</b>	
Monday, August 31, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	63-86°	Partly Cloudy and Overcast	9	7		2			
Monday, August 31, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			8	3			5	5	
Monday, August 31, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			19	15		2	2	2	
Monday, August 31, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			13	6	1		6	6	1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Monday, August 31, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			10	9		1			
Monday, August 31, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			5	2	2	1			
<b>Monday, August 31, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>64</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	
Date	Time	Temp	Weather	Total People	Walking/Hiking/Running	Bicycling	Fishing/Other Related	Water Access People	Water Access Watercraft	Notes
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	60-78°	Partly Cloudy, Overcast, Light Rain	1	1					
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			3	2		1			
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			17	7			10	10	1 group of 6 people and watercraft
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			8	4		2	2	2	
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			12	6		2	4	4	
Tuesday, September 8, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			11	10		1			
<b>Tuesday, September 8, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>52</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	
Thursday, September 10, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	54-71°	Sunny, Partly Cloudy, Overcast, Light Rain	0						
Thursday, September 10, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			2	2					
Thursday, September 10, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			1	1					
Thursday, September 10, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			6	6					
Thursday, September 10, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			9	7			2	2	
Thursday, September 10, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			11	7		1	3	3	
<b>Thursday, September 10, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
Sunday, September 13, 2015	7:00am-9:00am	52-75°	Partly Cloudy	7	3		3	1	1	
Sunday, September 13, 2015	9:00am-11:00am			48	17			31	31	1 group of 20 people and watercraft
Sunday, September 13, 2015	11:00am-1:00pm			33	9			24	23	1 group of 7 people and watercraft
Sunday, September 13, 2015	1:00pm-3:00pm			29	15			14	14	1 group of 8 people and watercraft
Sunday, September 13, 2015	3:00pm-5:00pm			38	32		4	2	2	
Sunday, September 13, 2015	5:00pm-7:00pm			26	16	2	5	3	3	
<b>Sunday, September 13, 2015</b>	<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>			<b>181</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>74</b>	