Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Scoping Meetings for the
River Falls Hydroelectric Project
(P-10489)
November 15 & 16, 2018
Housekeeping Items

• Sign-up sheets

• Court Reporter (independent party)
  - *Transcripts*
    - Will be available and made part of public record.
  - *Speakers*
    - Please state name and affiliation, spell out name and acronyms.
    - Everyone who wishes to speak will have an opportunity to do so.
    - Please speak clearly and one at a time.
Agenda

1. About FERC?
2. Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) overview
3. Purposes of scoping
4. Request for information and studies
5. Project Description - City of River Falls
6. Resource issues identified in scoping document (SD1)
7. Important dates
8. How to stay informed
9. Final comments/questions
About FERC

• Independent federal agency that regulates the interstate transmission of natural gas, oil, and electricity.

• FERC is supported by a staff of about 1,500 employees.
FERC

- Small Agency (1,500)
- Office of Energy Projects (304)
- Division of Hydropower Licensing
Hydropower Jurisdiction

- Authority comes from the Federal Power Act
- Commission authorization is required for non-federal hydropower projects that:
  - are located on navigable waters
  - are located on public lands of the United States
  - use surplus water from a federal dam
  - effect interstate or foreign commerce
The Integrated Licensing Process (ILP)

• Default licensing process

• Founded on three fundamental principles:
  1) Early identification and resolution of studies
  2) Integrate agency and tribal permitting process needs, including NEPA, the applicant’s pre-filing consultation, and federal and state permitting needs (e.g., section 401 CWA, ESA)
  3) Established timeframes to complete process steps
Integrated Licensing Process

Prefiling

- Initial Proposal & Information Document
- Scoping Meetings & Public Comment
- Study Plan Development
- Conduct Studies & Prepare Application

Postfiling

- Application: Proposal, Effects & Mitigation Measures
- FERC Review & Public Comment
- FERC Environmental Document & Public Comment
- FERC Authorization (License Order)

1 year

2-3 years

1.5 years

Data Collection, Studies and Agency/Public/Tribal Input

Data Analysis, Mitigation, and Decision
Prefiling

- Brings together all existing, relevant, and reasonably available information
- Provides basis for identifying issues, data gaps, and study needs
- Forms the foundation of future documents
- Sets the schedule for the ILP
• Scoping is the first step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
  • Solicit public input and comments on the scoping document (SD1). Did we get it right?
  • Identify the issues associated with the proposed project.
  • Discuss existing conditions or any potential effects of the project on resources.
  • Cumulative effects, adequate geographic scope, and proposed alternatives
Study Plan Development

1 year

- Initial Proposal & Information Document
- Scoping Meetings & Public Comment
- Study Plan Development
- Conduct Studies & Prepare Application

2-3 years

Comments on the PAD and study requests must be submitted to FERC by May 26, 2017

- Study requests provide a framework for collecting pertinent information on the resources potentially affected by the continued operation of the project.
- They ultimately provide the information we need to complete our environmental analysis and recommendations.
Conduct Studies & Prepare Application

Prefiling

Initial Proposal & Information Document

Scoping Meetings & Public Comment

Study Plan Development

Conduct Studies & Prepare Application

1 year

2-3 years
Request for Information and Studies

• Information that may help define the geographic and temporal scope of the analysis and identify substantial environmental issues.

• Any data that would help to describe the existing environment and effects of the project and other developmental activities on environmental and socioeconomic resources.
Request for Information and Studies (cont.)

- Identification of any federal, state, or local resource plans and any future project proposals in the affected resource area.

- Documentation showing why any resources or identified issues should be excluded from further study or consideration.

- Study requests that would help provide a framework for collecting pertinent information on the resources potentially affected by the project.
Project Description
City of River Falls Municipal Utilities
Project Description

Two hydroelectric developments on Kinnickinnic River, City of River Falls, Pierce County, WI

- Junction Falls
- Powell Falls

Owner/operator:
- City of River Falls Municipal Utilities
Junction Falls Development

- Run-of-river
- Concrete gravity dam, 140 ft long, 32 ft high
- Lake George (Impoundment): 15.5 acres
- Dependable capacity: 153 kW
Junction Falls Development
Junction Falls Development
Junction Falls Development
Junction Falls Development
Powell Falls Development

- Run-of-river
- Concrete gravity dam, 110 ft long, 16.5 ft high
- Lake Louise (Impoundment): 15.4 acres
- Dependable capacity: 76 kW
Powell Falls Development
Powell Falls Development
Powell Falls Development
Powell Falls Development
FERC Process Background

• Received a 30-year FERC license in 1988

• Initiated relicensing process in 2013

• Requested and received a 5 year FERC license extension (FERC license expiration August 31, 2023)

• NOI & PAD filed August 30, 2018
FERC Relicensing Process – Notice of Intent (NOI)

- Relicensing using Integrated Licensing Process (ILP)

- Proposed Action
  - Relicense the Junction Falls development
  - Decommission the Powell Falls development with dam removal
FERC Relicensing Process – Pre-Application Document (PAD)

• Content:
  – Project facilities and operation
  – Existing environment and resource impacts
  – List of issues and studies proposed to fill information gaps
  – Process plan and schedule
  – Consultation summary
Studies Proposed by Licensee

• **Wetlands**: Assessment of area to be affected by the removal of the Powell Fall dam.

• **Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (RTE)**: Survey of Project lands for RTE species that may be affected by the removal of the Powell Falls dam.
Studies Proposed by Licensee

- **Recreation Resources:** Recreation site and use survey at the Junction Falls and Powell Falls developments.

- **Cultural Resources:** Delineate the location and extent of the Foster Cemetery.
Resource Issues Identified for Scoping

- Aquatic Resources
- Terrestrial Resources
- Threatened and Endangered Species Resources
- Recreation and Land Use Resources
- Cultural Resources
Geologic and Soils Resources

- Effects of continued project operation on sediment transport within and downstream of the project.
Aquatic Resources

- Effects of continued project operation on water quality within and downstream of the project.

- Effects of continued project operation on aquatic species and habitat in the impoundment and downstream of the project.
Terrestrial Resources

- Effects of continued project operation on riparian, littoral, and wetland habitat and associated wildlife.
Threatened and Endangered Species

- Effects of continued project operation and maintenance on the following federally listed threatened and endangered species: (1) northern long-eared bat; (2) prairie bush-clover; and (3) the Higgins eye, snuffbox, and spectaclecase mussels.
Recreation and Land Use

- Effects of the continued operation and maintenance on public access and recreational opportunities at the project.

- Adequacy of existing and proposed public access and recreational facilities at the project to meet current and future recreational demand.
Cultural Resources

- Effects of continued project operation on properties that are included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
Developmental Resources

- Effects of the proposed environmental measures costs on project’s economics.
Powell Falls
Geologic and Soils Resources

- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on shoreline and streambank erosion in the project.
- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on sediment and contaminant mobilization within and downstream of the project area.
Aquatic Resources

- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on water quality within the project area and downstream of the development.

- Effects of removing Powell Falls dam on aquatic species and habitat in the impoundment and downstream of the development.
Terrestrial Resources

- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on local plant communities.
- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on adjacent wetlands and associated wildlife.
Threatened and Endangered Species

- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on the following federally listed threatened and endangered species: (1) northern long-eared bat; (2) prairie bush-clover; and (3) the Higgins eye, snuffbox, and spectaclecase mussels.
Recreation and Land Use

- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on public access to existing recreational opportunities at the project.
Cultural Resources

- Effects of removing the Powell Falls dam on properties that are included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
Developmental Resources

- Effects the Powell Falls dam removal cost on project’s economics.
Study Plan Development

• Request for information or studies that will help determine how a project may affect environmental and socioeconomic resources:
  • Determining geographic and temporal scope
  • Understanding the existing environment
  • Resources issues that should be excluded from further study

7 Criteria for Study Requests (SD1 Appendix A)
• Describe goals and objectives of the proposed study
• Explain relevant resource management goals
• Explain relevant public interest considerations
• Describe existing information and need for more info
• Explain nexus to project operations and effects and how study results would inform license requirements
• Describe study methodology and how it’s consistent with accepted practice
• Describe consideration of level of effort and cost of study and why alternative study is needed
Request for Information and Studies

• Comments on SD1 and study requests are due on 12/28/2018

• Clearly identify the following on the first page:

  River Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 10489

• Can be filed electronically via the internet or by mail

• Address all communications to:

  Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
  Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
  888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A
  Washington, DC 20426
Important ILP Dates

PAD/SD1 Comments Due: 12/28/2018
File Proposed Study Plan: 02/11/2019
Study Plan Meeting: 03/13/2019
Study Plan Comments Due: 05/12/2019
File Revised Study Plan: 06/11/2019
Study Plan Determination: 07/11/2019

• See Appendix B of SD1 for the full process plan and schedule (handouts available)
How to Stay Informed

• Get added to the mailing list

• E-library at www.ferc.gov (please use project docket no. P-10489)

• E-subscription at www.ferc.gov

• Contact me:
  Shana Wiseman
  Email: shana.wiseman@ferc.gov
  Phone: 202-502-8736
Questions?

CONTACT

Shana Wiseman
202-502-8736
Shana.wiseman@ferc.gov