



**VIA EFILING**

July 7, 2021

Honorable Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE  
Washington DC 20426

Re: ILP Relicensing Initial Study Report Meeting Summary  
J. Brodie Smith (P-2287) and Gorham (P-2288)

Dear Secretary Bose:

CRP NH Smith, LLC and CRP NH Gorham, LLC, subsidiaries of Central Rivers Power NH, LLC (CRP), are in the process of relicensing the J. Brodie Smith (P-2287) and Gorham (P-2288) hydroelectric projects. The Projects are located on the Androscoggin River, Coos County, New Hampshire in the city of Berlin and the town of Gorham. The current licenses for the Projects expire July 31, 2024.

CRP is pursuing a new license for the Projects using the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC or Commission) Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) pursuant to 18 C.F.R. Part 5 of the Commission's regulations. In accordance with the Commission's May 29, 2020 Study Plan Determination, CRP filed the Initial Study Report (ISR) on June 7, 2021. CRP held a combined ISR meeting on June 22, 2021 with Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC (GLHA). Due to travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, CRP and GLHA conducted the ISR meeting through a virtual meeting platform (Microsoft Teams/conference call).

Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 5.15(c)(3), CRP is filing an ISR meeting summary with the Commission within 15 days of the ISR meeting (Attachment A). In accordance with the FERC Process Plan, stakeholders may file any comments on the ISR and/or the ISR meeting summary, requests for modifications to the Commission approved studies, and additional study requests on or before August 6, 2021.

As summarized in a March 25, 2021 letter, CRP continues to follow their original plan of postponing the recreation study to be conducted in 2022. A summary of the discussion regarding delay of the study is contained in the attached meeting summary.

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
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Please do not hesitate to contact me at (978) 935-6039 or [kwebb@centralriverspower.com](mailto:kwebb@centralriverspower.com) if you have any questions concerning this submittal.

Sincerely,



Kevin M. Webb  
Licensing Manager

Attachment: ISR Meeting Summary for the GLHA NH Projects and CRP Projects

cc: Distribution List  
Ryan Hansen, FERC  
Curt Mooney, CRP  
Luke Anderson, Brookfield  
Andy Qua, Kleinschmidt  
Laura Cowan, Kleinschmidt

**Attachment A**

**ISR Meeting Summary**

**Meeting/Conference Call Summary**  
**Upper Androscoggin Initial Study Report (ISR) Combined Meeting**  
**June 22, 2021**

<b>GLHA Projects</b>	<b>CRP Projects</b>
Sawmill (FERC No. P-2422) Riverside (FERC No. P-2423) Cross Power (FERC No. P-2326) Cascade (FERC No. P-2327) Gorham (FERC No. P-2311) Shelburne (FERC No. P-2300)	J. Brodie Smith (FERC No. P-2287) Gorham (FERC No. 2288)

Attendees:	
Ryan Hansen, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)	Curtis Mooney, Central Rivers Power (CRP)
Jeremy Feinberg, FERC	Kevin Webb, CRP
Ingrid Brofman, FERC	Richard Malloy, CRP
Suzanne Novak, FERC	Luke Anderson, Great Lakes Hydro America
Julia Kolberg, FERC	Laura Cowan, Kleinschmidt
Harold Peterson, Bureau of Indian Affairs	Andy Qua, Kleinschmidt
Carol Henderson, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department	Kayla Hopkins, Kleinschmidt
Gregg Comstock, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services	Jesse Wechsler, Kleinschmidt
Kevin Mendik, National Park Service	Brandon Kulik, Kleinschmidt
Amy Lamb, New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau	Paige Thompson, Kleinschmidt
David Trubey, New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources	Rachel Russo, Kleinschmidt

In accordance with 18 C.F.R § 5.15(c), Great Lakes Hydro America (GLHA) and Central Rivers Power (CRP) filed their Initial Study Reports (ISR) on June 6, 2021. The ISR and supporting documents provide the results and status of the field studies conducted pursuant to the Commission's SPD, including:

- Water Quality Study
- Bypass Reach Minimum Flow Confirmation Study
- Mussel Survey
- Fish Entrainment Modeling
- Botanical Reconnaissance Level Survey
- Historical Architectural Survey

Due to safety concerns and anticipated anomalous recreation use due to COVID-19, the Licensees elected to delay conduct of the Recreation Use and Facility Assessment Study until 2022.

GLHA and CRP held the combined ISR meeting on June 22, 2021, within 15 days of the filing of the ISRs. GLHA and CRP conducted the ISR meeting through a virtual meeting platform (MS Teams/conference call). Following is a summary of key topics and discussions during the ISR meeting.

### **Project Activities**

Following introductions of participants on the call, Mr. Andy Qua (Kleinschmidt) reviewed meeting logistics, agenda, and purpose, project background, and regulatory background, including ILP milestones.

As part of the regulatory background, Mr. Qua explained that Licensees requested to delay the recreation use and facility assessment study until 2022 due to COVID-19 safety, as well as anticipated anomalous recreation use due to COVID-19. Mr. Gregg Comstock (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES)) asked if this meant the study would be conducted in 2021 or 2022. Mr. Qua stated that the study would be conducted in 2022, acknowledging that this would result in the submission of the recreation use and facility assessment study report outside the typical ILP reporting schedule.

It was brought to GLHA and CRP's attention by Mr. Kevin Mendik (National Park Service) that Mr. Noah Pollock of Northern Canoe Trail was not on the meeting invite. Ms. Kayla Hopkins of Kleinschmidt forwarded the invite during the call, which was received and responded to by Mr. Pollock.

## **Water Quality Study**

Dr. Rachel Russo (Kleinschmidt) presented a summary of the study purpose, methodology, and results for the Water Quality Study. Mr. Comstock asked if the study reports include all calibration data and acceptance criteria and asked if any of the data was corrected. Dr. Russo responded that the initial study reports did not include all this information, however the information will be presented to DES in spreadsheet form including all raw and final data. Dr. Russo also noted that some data was corrected. DES noted that they will want all of the data correction information as well. In addition, DES requested that the data be entered into the Environmental Monitoring Database. Dr. Russo replied that the data will be entered into the database.

Mr. Comstock asked if the depth of water at each location and the depth of data loggers were collected. Dr. Russo responded that this information was collected and provided in a table in the initial study reports.

Mr. Comstock also asked how the river flows during the study compare to the historical flows and noted that DES would be looking for 7Q10 flows. Mr. Brandon Kulik (Kleinschmidt) responded that the flows at USGS gage #01054000 in Gorham, NH, are maintained at approximately 1,550 cfs by upstream storage reservoirs and that the 7Q10 is approximately 1,515 cfs. Mr. Kulik stated the flows during part of the 2020 study period were less than these values; Dr. Russo confirmed this.

Ms. Carol Henderson (New Hampshire Fish and Game Department) noted that the water quality reports state there were data gaps based on logger error/vandalism/sedimentation and asked how much of the data was lost due to these issues. Dr. Russo responded that there were two sites that lost data for a week due to vandalism, a couple other sites had missing data due to logger damage following the high flows at the start of the study, and there were a few instances where a week of data was lost due to logger errors. Dr. Russo also noted that there were other short time periods with missing data, but that overall, most sites had complete data sets.

Mr. Comstock requested that any deviations from the study plan be submitted. Note: Variances from the FERC-approved study plan are contained in Section 4.1 of the respective Licensees' water quality reports.

## **Bypass Reach Minimum Flow Confirmation Study**

Mr. Kulik presented a summary of the study purpose, methodology, and results for the Bypass Reach Minimum Flow Confirmation Study. Mr. Kulik presented information for

each of the projects that have a bypass reach, starting at Sawmill, moving downstream, and ending with Shelburne. Data summarizing the mesohabitats and hydraulic conditions under existing minimum flow conditions were presented and discussed, along with drone video footage of each reach.

Mr. Comstock asked how it was determined what the flow was during the drone flights. Mr. Kulik explained that it was arranged with Brookfield (GLHA) and CRP that they would provide the existing required minimum flows while the field work was being completed. Mr. Comstock questioned the quantity of additional flow, such as leakage, that was coming from the Riverside and Sawmill projects; Mr. Kulik stated that although it varies, additional leakage from various locations at each project, including flashboards, gatehouses, and pipes, supplements the minimum flows.

During the drone video review at Riverside, Mr. Comstock commented on the leakage at the boards and asked where the minimum flow is actually coming from. Mr. Kulik responded that the location of where the minimum flow is provided for each project is in the reports, but for Riverside it is over the dam spillway crest. Leakage at Riverside is through flashboards and the gatehouse.

During the drone footage review of Riverside, Ms. Henderson asked about leakage from the concrete base of the gatehouse. Mr. Kulik could not comment on the amount of additional flow that is being passed into the bypass reach. Mr. Comstock asked if there is a way to determine the flow through the turbine to get a baseline low flow that includes the leakage. Mr. Kulik responded that this is something that could potentially be calculated at a later time, however that was not part of the scope of the current study.

Mr. Comstock asked how accurately the old transects reflect current conditions. Mr. Kulik stated that in his opinion the transects reflect current conditions well. The dominant substrate is bedrock and boulder, and thus the geometry of the study area should not have changed too much since the 1980's, which would mean the slope and width and mesohabitat pattern should still be the same.

During the J. Brodie Smith drone footage review, Mr. Comstock asked if there was video of spill right at the dam. Mr. Kulik and Mr. Jesse Wechsler (Kleinschmidt) responded that there is footage, however, due to overhead transmission lines and traffic not much video was taken, but there should be pictures of the area and flows at the time of the study. Mr. Kulik showed one video that provided a brief glimpse of the spillway.

Mr. Comstock stated that DES would provide additional comments during the comment period.

## **Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Mussel Survey**

Mr. Wechsler presented a summary of the study purpose, methodology, and results for the Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Mussel Survey. Ms. Henderson made general comments that this survey was a good way of assessing the habitat in the project areas, and that it appeared that Biodiversity LLC was surprised by three of the four species found. Ms. Henderson noted that the effects of project operations on all mussel species are of concern and the NHDFG would want to know the effects of operations of the projects, and how the Licensees were going to minimize effects to the species. Ms. Henderson suggested that gradual drawdowns may be appropriate. Mr. Wechsler reiterated that the intent of the study was to gather baseline information, and that no RTE species were observed. Ms. Henderson stated that the NHDFG would review the report again and provide written comments.

## **Desktop Fish Entrainment Study**

Mr. Wechsler summarized the study purpose, methodology, and results of the Desktop Fish Entrainment Study. Ms. Henderson stated that the NHDFG did not have any comments at this time and that the study appeared to be adequate and provided the information needed, but after further review, would provide written comments. Ms. Henderson asked that if the pictures in the presentation were not in the report, to please provide them.

Mr. Comstock asked whether the approach velocity calculations considered the width of the trash rack bars. Mr. Wechsler noted that approach velocities were based on gross rack area, as recommended by the USFWS.

## **Botanical Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Laura Cowan (Kleinschmidt) presented a summary of the study purpose, methodology, and results for the Botanical Reconnaissance Level Survey. Mr. Jeremy Feinberg (FERC) requested that the information presented be summarized by project area. Mr. Feinberg also requested that the NHB reports for each project be filed into the record as well as an explanation as to why the CRP project NHB reports were not complete. Ms. Cowan and Mr. Qua agreed that they would work with FERC to get copies of the NHB reports in the record. In addition, Mr. Qua stated that the J. Brodie Smith report was requested, and no species were identified. Mr. Feinberg mentioned that in the consultation history, the pink



shinleaf was identified, but it was not specifically identified in the study and would like a statement as to why it was not included<sup>1</sup>.

Amy Lamb, New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau, asked for a copy of the studies as she believes she was not included on the distribution. A download link to the reports was subsequently provided to Ms. Lamb.

## **Historical Architectural Survey**

Ms. Laura Cowan (Kleinschmidt) presented a summary of the study purpose, methodology, and results for the Historical Architectural Survey. Mr. David Trubey (New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural (NHDNC)) stated that the Department received the inventory forms and each of the forms were sent to reviewers.

Ms. Suzanne Novak (FERC) reminded the Licensees to make sure to include all NHDNC consultation when filing the Draft License Applications and Final License Applications. Ms. Novak stated that she did not see mention of a Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) for the Riverside facility and understands that there is no change in operation; however, GLHA should consider in the final analysis whether Riverside would need a HPMP or not to address long term maintenance of the facility.

Ms. Cowan asked about the process of the HPMP, asking if the plan is something that can be worked on in the next year, by filing with the FLA or if the NHDNC and FERC would prefer to have a programmatic agreement first.

Ms. Novak explained that generally after the studies and consultation, that would be the point where a HPMP would be developed. If it looks like it there needs to be a PA, that typically is not developed until FERC prepares the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Mr. Trubey stated that it would be a good idea for GLHA to speak with Ms. Nadine Miller (New Hampshire Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer) directly regarding an update after the inventory forms have been reviewed.

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<sup>1</sup> In consultation with NH Heritage Bureau, pink shinleaf was identified as a species previously documented in the vicinity of CRP's Gorham Project but associated with the Peabody River, which is outside of the project boundary and which NH Heritage concluded (by email dated January 29, 2019) the Project is unlikely to impact because the species records are not associated with the Androscoggin River.

## Recreation Use and Facility Assessment Study

Mr. Ryan Hansen and Ms. Ingrid Brofman (FERC) asked about potentially starting the Recreation study in July 2021 and continuing through September 2021 and then again in May 2022 to complete the study in July 2022. Mr. Luke Anderson (GLHA) explained that there was careful consideration before deciding to postpone the study in 2021 on how COVID may affect safety of field staff interacting with the public and influencing recreation use at facilities in the project area. GLHA [and CRP] is not confident about collecting recreation use information from a representative sample of users this year. Mr. Anderson stated that if the study were conducted this year and it was not representative, then GLHA would not be able to properly inform decisions and would be in a position to have to explain the results for the next license period (i.e., 30-40 years)... Mr. Anderson also noted that there is also concern about staff safety around interacting with the public and anticipation that the public may be hesitant to engage with strangers to be surveyed given current vaccination rates<sup>2</sup>.

GLHA has anecdotally observed that some of their facilities are experiencing high usage, that seems to be more local (resident) users, rather than travelers, are using the facilities. Other facilities are experiencing lower than typical usage levels. Mr. Hansen asked if GLHA is speculating that there will be larger numbers at recreation sites because people are trying to get outside more. Mr. Anderson stated that usage may not be as typical, with more local resident usage rather than more typical usage by travelers from other regions/states. Ms. Cowan also noted that Appalachian trail usage in 2020 was significantly impacted and is likely to be affected this year as well<sup>3</sup>.

Mr. Hansen asked if it would be logistically possible to get staff out in the field starting July 2021. Ms. Cowan explained that this would be a big undertaking, the assessments themselves would take lots of hours and staff. This would be challenging to turn around in July based on arranging for enough staff to cover the effort. Mr. Hansen reminded the participants that the FLA is due July 31, 2022, and if all recreation assessments were conducted next year (2022), that would take the study through September, which then would leave October-November for the reporting and comment period. This ultimately would delay the Ready for Environmental Assessment and shift the overall post filing schedule off the ILP schedule. Mr. Hansen and Ms. Brofman stated that completing the study as close to the filing of the FLA is important to the FERC process and timeline,

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<sup>2</sup> As of June 28, 2021, 55.6% of New Hampshire's population is vaccinated.

<sup>3</sup> The National Park Service closed all overnight shelters on land administered by the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Park Office (55 total) and these facilities remain closed. The ATC 2,000-Miler Recognition Program had been on hold, but resumed on May 11, which would typically be a late start date for north-bound hikers.

however, they understand the concerns the Licensees have and regional COVID perspectives that may be significantly different than in Washington DC. Mr. Anderson (GLHA) and Mr. Kevin Webb (CRP) both committed to reviewing FERCs request further.

### **Next Steps**

Mr. Qua reviewed the next steps of the relicensing process. GLHA and CRP will file an ISR meeting summary on or before July 7, 2021. All Stakeholders are to file comments on ISR and the ISR meeting summary, along with any requests for modifications to FERC approved studies and any requested additional studies within 30 days (by August 6, 2021). FERC will issue the Director's Determination on disagreements/amendments to studies within 30 days of stakeholder comments. The Draft License Application or Preliminary Licensing Proposal is due by March 3, 2022.