

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426
May 11, 2023

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2333-094 – Maine
Rumford Falls Hydroelectric Project
Rumford Falls Hydro LLC

VIA FERC Service

Mr. Luke Anderson
Brookfield Renewable
150 Main Street
Lewiston, ME 04240

Reference: Request for Additional Information

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We have reviewed the Recreation Study Report and Angler Creel Survey Report for the Rumford Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 2333 filed on March 30, 2023, and have determined that additional information (enclosed as Schedule A) is necessary to continue to process your application. Please provide the information requested in Schedule A within 30 days from the date of this letter.

If the requested information causes any part of your license application filed on September 29, 2022, to be inaccurate, that part must also be revised and re-filed by the due date. Also, please be aware that further requests for additional information may be sent to you at any time before final action on your license application.

The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file the requested information using the Commission's eFiling system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/Login.aspx>. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, (866) 208-3676 (toll free), or (202) 502-8659 (TTY). In lieu of electronic filing, you may submit a paper copy. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, D.C. 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, MD 20852. The first page of any filing should include docket number P-2333-094.

Please contact Ryan Hansen at (202) 502-8074 or ryan.hansen@ferc.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David Turner, Chief
Northwest Branch
Division of Hydropower Licensing

Enclosure: Schedule A

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Recreation Study Report - General

1. There are no figures/maps included in the Recreation Study Report or the license application, that clearly depict the 15 recreation facilities surveyed in the study and land ownership. Figures 1 and 2 in the Recreation Study Report and Figures 5.10-1 and 5.10-2 in the license application are crowded and at a scale that makes it difficult to identify the individual recreation facilities and their features. Please provide separate figures, labeling amenities/recreation features and location markers such as street names, of the following recreation facilities: 1) the ATV Trail facility, clearly showing land ownership of the parking lot and trail segments; 2) the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (Maine DACF) Mexico Boat Launch in the town of Mexico; 3) the Chisholm Park, Trail, and Overlook; 4) J. Eugene Boivin Park; 5) the West Viewing Area; 6) Rumford Falls Trail, including the two access ends of the trail and land ownership; and, 7) the Logan Brook Access.

2. The Recreation Study Report does not include information on how many users visited the individual recreation sites on which days of the week. This data would provide information on when sites were most popular during which months of the recreation season and during weekends versus weekdays. Please summarize how many users visited each recreation site by month and weekday/weekend. This information should be available from the spot count forms but it is difficult for us to decipher due to legibility.

3. The Recreation Study Report does not describe the most popular recreation activities conducted at each site. The report only describes the most popular recreation activities observed for the Rumford Information Center/J. Eugene Boivin Park and the Maine DACF Boat Launch. Please provide information on the most popular recreation activities conducted/observed for each site in the survey (excluding Wheeler Island), using information from both the in-person and online survey data.

River Access and Portage

4. Our October 31, 2022, additional information request asked for more information on access points from which the data was collected for the FERC Form 80 and the location of the portage. In your March 5, 2023, response you state that “RFH has not been able to locate additional records to further clarify access points”, but that RFH would “include any pertinent information to address FERC’s request in the pending recreation report.” The Recreation Report still does not describe the portage around the Upper and Middle dams; please include a map showing where/how boaters currently egress the Androscoggin River before the boat barrier, the portage around the dam, and where they re-enter the river. Please describe the length of the portage.

Carlton Street Bridge Carry-in Launch

5. Section 4.1.4 of the license application lists existing environmental measures, which includes, “maintaining the existing FERC-approved recreation facility at the project (i.e., carry-in canoe facility at the Carlton Bridge),” and “provide for public uses and access to project lands and waters.” You do not explicitly state in the license application or the supplemental Recreation Study Report if you propose to continue to implement these measures in a new license. Please confirm that you plan to continue these recreation-related environmental measures, and if so, please estimate how much it costs annually to maintain the carry-in canoe facility at the Carlton Bridge.

Mexico Boat Launch

6. Table 3 of Section 5.1.3 of the Recreation Study Report states that the Mexico boat launch has 3 delineated standard size parking spaces for boat trailers and 19 delineated standard size vehicle parking spaces. The Stakeholder Site Visit Summary Notes presented in Attachment 8 states that potential improvements to the Mexico boat launch include, “improved signage from Route 2 identifying the site and additional parking along the road(?)” To help us understand visitor concerns, please include a photo and a map or other description of the location of the current access signage from Route 2 identifying the Mexico boat launch and, if possible, based on your meeting notes, why stakeholders felt the Mexico boat launch might need additional parking.

West Viewing Area

7. You propose to re-open the West Viewing Area with several improvements, including installing/constructing fencing, a parking area, an educational kiosk, walking access along the Upper Station powerhouse driveway, picnic tables, a bench, making repairs to existing features such as the concrete deck and railing, relocating lights, and removing existing chain link fencing and gates. We need additional information on the proposed improvements to assess their benefits and costs. You estimate that all these improvements would have a capital cost of \$175,000. To better understand the basis of your cost estimates, please provide itemized costs of each of the proposed improvements at the West Viewing Area and any assumptions made in developing your costs (e.g, size of the parking area and substrate).

8. You propose to provide a “dedicated walking access along the existing Upper Station powerhouse driveway, which can be accessed from J. Eugene Boivin Park via the public sidewalk on Route 2.” We understand that you intend to further develop these details after licensing, but to evaluate the need and benefits of the access improvements please describe the proposed walking access, including where the access will start and

end, the anticipated location of the path, the purpose/need of the walking access, and the anticipated materials to be used for the walking access (dirt, pavement, etc).

9. You propose to install an 8-foot-high black aluminum fence, like the fence at J. Eugene Boivin Park. To better picture the material and appearance of the proposed fencing, please provide a photo of the existing fence at J. Eugene Boivin Park. You state that fencing will be installed from an “area just adjacent to the West Viewing Area along the top of the steep river embankment for public safety.” Will this fencing block any viewpoints from the open grass viewing area or the parking lot, or have any impacts to the viewshed? What is the safety concern in this area and why is this fence being installed? Is there currently any structure, such as a rock wall, that exists to block the public from the embankment?

10. You propose a dedicated public gravel parking area for four vehicles and access from the parking area to the viewing area. You state that the fourth parking space, closest to the viewing area, will be a dedicated American Disabilities Act (ADA) parking space. Will the access from the parking space to the viewing area also be accessible for persons with disabilities?

11. Section 5.18 (b)(5)(ii)(C) of the Commission’s regulations requires that an applicant include its reasons, based on project-specific information, for not adopting a preliminary environmental measure proposed by a resource agency, Indian tribe, or member of the public. Attachment 7 of the Recreation Study Report includes stakeholder correspondence from a focus group member that recommends trail access be established from the Rumford Falls Information Center or J. Eugene Boivin Park to the West Viewing Area. The focus group member recommends this trail be established as a safer and more enjoyable opportunity than accessing the West Viewing Area via the public sidewalk on Route 2 that Rumford Falls Hydro proposes. Please provide your reasoning for not adopting this preliminary environmental measure. Are there other options for providing the requested access and how much would they cost?

12. You propose to provide public access at the West Viewing Area from April 15th to October 31st annually from dawn until dusk. You propose to “provide flood lighting of the falls at the upper station at river flows greater than 6,000 cfs between 8 pm – 12 am year-round.” You also propose to relocate the existing lights that currently illuminate the falls and mount them to the inside of the existing concrete railing for public safety and aesthetic purposes. Are these separate lighting features, or the same? If separate, where exactly will the flood lighting be located at the upper station? Will the lighting being mounted to the inside of the existing concrete railing still illuminate the falls? What are the public safety concerns and aesthetic purposes associated with relocating these lights? Will there be any lights provided at the West Viewing Area to provide light for the facility itself, and if so, what hours will those lights be in operation? Are there concerns

(safety, operational, etc.) that would affect your ability to keep the West Viewing Area open year-round and during nighttime hours?

Rumford Falls Trail

13. You propose to, “obtain an easement for the license term for the relatively short segment of land along the middle segment of the alternate trail, which is owned by ND Paper, prior to the expiration of the current access agreement (the current agreement may be extended by mutual agreement and expires in November of 2026).” Attachment 6 of the Recreation Study Report includes a figure of the Rumford Falls Trail with an inset map that shows that the majority of the Alternate Trail, including the Overlook location, is outside of the project boundary. Based on the information in the record, we cannot determine the location and extent of the “short segment of land” owned by ND Paper, or who owns the land along the remaining portions of the alternate trail. Please provide a map showing ownership and describe the land ownership along the Alternate Trail.

14. You also propose several improvements to the Rumford Falls Trail, including installing/constructing a bench, an educational kiosk, signage at both entrances with trail maps, a swing gate or removable bollard to prohibit unauthorized vehicles and to allow pedestrian access, wood crib steps to the steep portions of the alternate trail; improving trail bed material; enhancing and maintaining the alternate trail segment; maintaining segments of the existing Rumford Falls Trail, and providing access year-round with snow removal. We need additional information on the proposed improvements to assess their benefits and costs. You estimate that all these improvements would have a capital cost of \$65,000. To better understand the basis of your cost estimates, please provide itemized costs for each of the proposed improvements along the Rumford Falls Trail. Please include any assumptions made in developing your costs.