



For Release: May 16, 2022

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Minnesota Power actively monitoring and managing high-flow conditions at Island Lake Reservoir

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power, operating in compliance with its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license, is doing its utmost to mitigate flooding downstream of Island Lake Reservoir and has utilized the reservoir's storage capacity. Minnesota Power is in close contact with local authorities and the National Weather Service, and has activated its emergency action plans for high-water events at Island Lake and Fish Lake reservoirs.

A very late spring thaw in Northeastern Minnesota coupled with recent heavy rain in the area has led to rising stream and river levels. As a result, the outflow from Island Lake Reservoir into the Cloquet River has been increased during the past several days to maintain the safety and integrity of the dam and other control structures.

As a result of these higher outflows, the National Weather Service has issued a flood warning for the area below Island Lake Reservoir, including Hunter and Bowman lakes, through 12:15 p.m. Wednesday. Some homes in that area are experiencing flooding. The large size of the Island Lake Reservoir drainage basin means it takes time to move water through the system, and is the reason for the prolonged duration of this event.

"We are working hard to move water safely and effectively through our hydro system to protect personal and public property," said Minnesota Power Chief Operating Officer Josh Skelton. "Our crews have been actively inspecting, monitoring and operating our hydro facilities to minimize impacts from localized flooding and maintain the safety of our hydro system, and we continue to coordinate with stakeholders on response and planning."

The high flows into Island Lake Reservoir peaked May 16 and are expected to recede. Rain forecast for later this week could prolong the current high outflow and possibly increase the outflow depending on the amount of precipitation.

The only time the water level in Island Lake Reservoir has been higher than it is today was in 1950. Since the 2012 flood, Minnesota Power has invested in its hydro system to harden it and make it more resilient and reliable during high-water events. Additionally, real-time water level and flow data is available at <https://www.mnpower.com/Environment/WaterTable>.

The late spring thaw and recent rains also have caused high flows throughout our hydropower system, including at Birch Lake, Garden Lake and Winton. These areas have remaining water storage capacity, with water levels and flows remaining high. Additional precipitation will further impact these areas.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 145,000 customers, 15 municipalities

and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

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