



Via Electronic Filing

November 22, 2020

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

Subject: Grand Rapids Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2362)
Prairie River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2361)
Updated Study Report Meeting Summary

Dear Secretary Bose:

ALLETE, Inc., doing business as Minnesota Power (MP or Applicant), is the Licensee, owner, and operator of the Grand Rapids Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2362) and the Prairie River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2361), collectively, the “Projects.” The Grand Rapids Project is a 2.1 megawatt (MW), run-of-river (ROR) facility located on the Mississippi River in the City of Grand Rapids in Itasca County, Minnesota. The Prairie River Project is a 1.1 MW, ROR facility located on the Prairie River, near the City of Grand Rapids in Arbo Township, Itasca County, Minnesota.

The existing Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licenses for the Projects expire on December 31, 2023. Accordingly, MP is pursuing a new license for the Grand Rapids Project and a subsequent license for the Prairie River Project pursuant to FERC’s Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), as described at 18 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 5. Although these are separate processes, due to the proximity of the Projects to each other, MP is conducting the processes concurrently with combined documents, meetings, and overall relicensing schedules.

Pursuant to 18 CFR §5.15(f), MP filed the Updated Study Report (USR) with FERC on November 4, 2021. MP held an USR Meeting via Webex from 12 PM to 1 PM (eastern time) on Tuesday, November 16, 2021. FERC’s regulations at 18 CFR §5.15(f) require MP to file this summary of the USR Meeting within 15 days of the USR Meeting.

MP is filing this USR Meeting Summary in accordance with 18 CFR §5.15(f) of FERC’s regulations. Attached to this USR Meeting Summary is a copy of the meeting PowerPoint.



Our relicensing team looks forward to working with FERC's staff, resource agencies, Indian Tribes, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and members of the public in developing license applications for these renewable energy facilities. If there are any questions regarding the USR Meeting Summary or the overall relicensing process for the Projects, please do not hesitate to contact me at (218) 725-2101 or at nrosemore@mnpower.com.

Sincerely,

Nora Rosemore
Manager – Renewable Business Operations
Minnesota Power

Enclosed: Meeting Summary

Cc: Distribution List

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and Prairie River Project (FERC No. 2361)**

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Meeting Summary

Date: Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Project: Grand Rapids and Prairie River Project

Subject: Updated Study Report Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Nora Rosemore – Minnesota Power (MP)

Greg Prom – MP

Jodi Piekarski – MP

Devin Malkin – HDR, Inc. (HDR)

Kelly MacVane – HDR

Katie Kemmitt – Stantec

Laura Washington – Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission (FERC)

Shana Wiseman – FERC

Danielle Elefritz – FERC

Nancy Stewart – Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources (DNR)

Bill Wilde – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
(MPCA)

Terry Kemper – Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Below is a meeting summary of Minnesota Power's Updated Study Report (USR) Meeting. The meeting PowerPoint is attached as Attachment A.

1. Welcome and Introductions

MP (N. Rosemore) welcomed everyone and lead introductions. Meeting attendees are listed above.

2. Overview of Projects

MP (N. Rosemore) provided an overview of the Projects.

3. Recreation Resources Study Summaries

MP (G. Prom) provided an overview of the Grand Rapids Project Recreation Resources Study and Prairie River Recreation Resources Study.

4. Next Steps

MP (N. Rosemore) provided an overview of upcoming Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) milestones.

FERC (S. Wiseman) explained it is possible to have an overlap with the USR and Final License Application (FLA) filing under the ILP. FERC (S. Wiseman) encouraged MP to file the FLA in December instead of early in November given staff shortages at FERC.

5. Questions and Comments

MPCA (B. Wilde) questioned how the Grand Rapids Project and Prairie River Project had an estimated 3% use given there were more people observed at the Prairie River Project. MP (G. Prom) explained the process used to calculate the estimate and how it varied based on portage length.

Attachment A

Updated Study Report Meeting PowerPoint Presentation



FERC No. 2362 - Grand Rapids Project

FERC No. 2361 - Prairie River Project

Updated Study Report Meeting

November 16, 2021



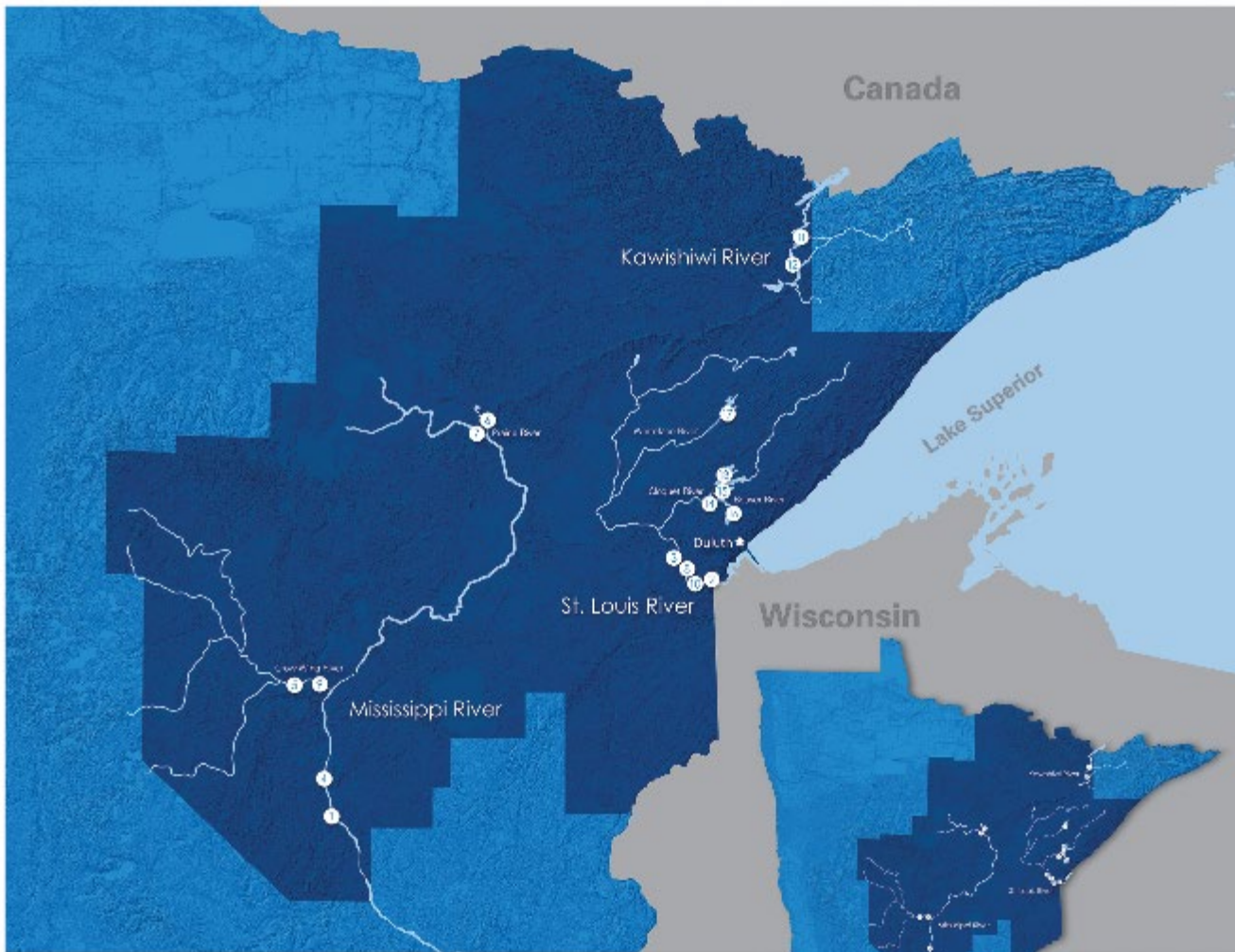
MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview of Projects
3. Recreation Resources Study Summaries
4. Next Steps
5. Questions and Comments



OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS





Minnesota Power's Hydroelectric Facilities

Hydroelectric Generation Facilities

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 Blanchard | 7 Grand Rapids |
| 2 Fond du Lac | 8 Scanlon |
| 3 Knife Falls | 9 Sylvan |
| 4 Little Falls | 10 Thomson |
| 5 Pillager | 11 Winton |
| 6 Prairie River | |

Hydroelectric Reservoir Dams

- | |
|-----------------|
| 12 Birch Lake |
| 13 Boulder Lake |
| 14 Fish Lake |
| 15 Island Lake |
| 16 Rice Lake |
| 17 Whiteface |



Minnesota Power's Hydro System

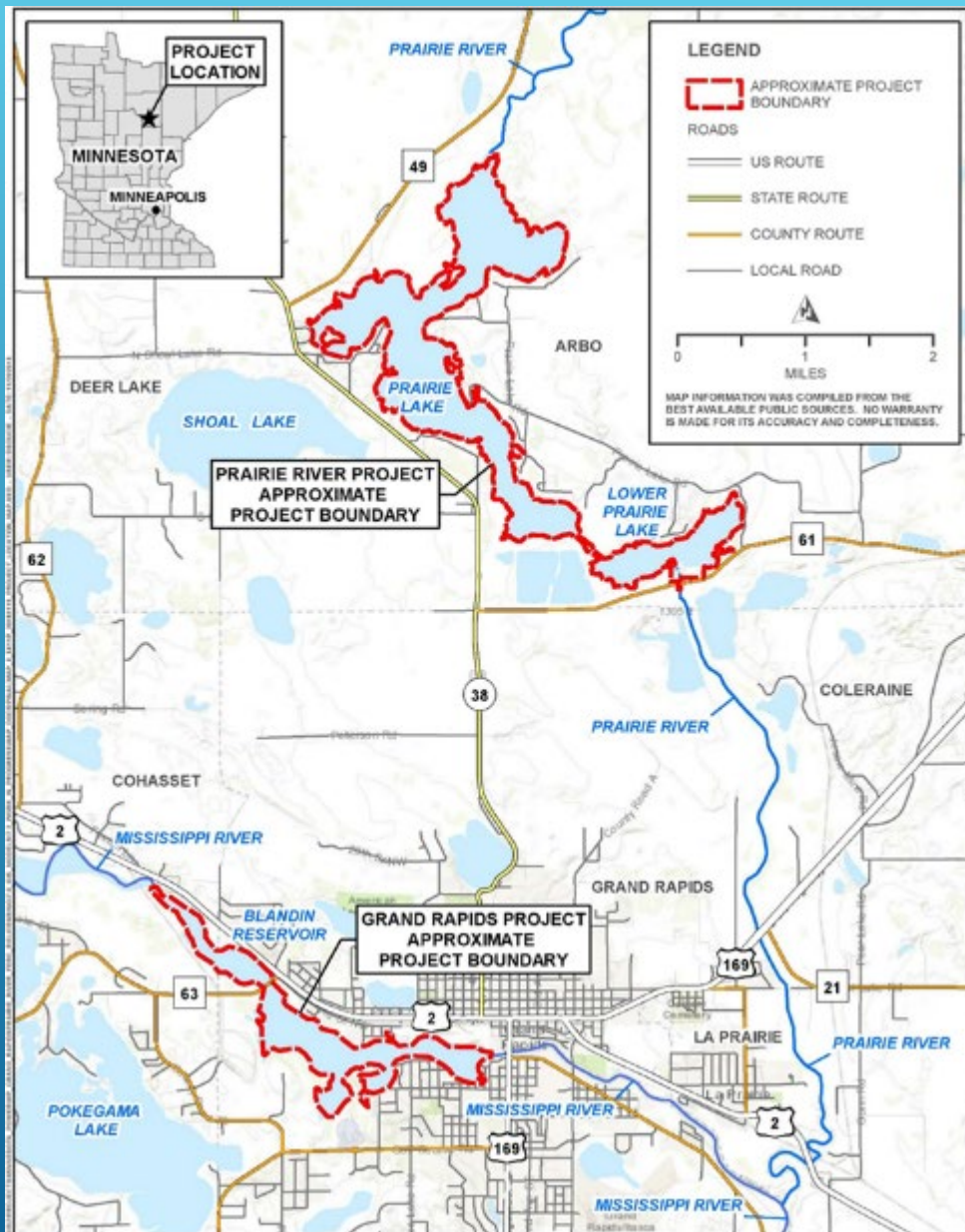
- 7 FERC Projects
- 11 Hydro Generating Stations
- 6 Headwater Reservoirs

FERC No. 2362 - Grand Rapids Project

FERC No. 2361 - Prairie River Project

- Current licenses expire December 31, 2023
- NOIs & joint PAD filed December 13, 2018
- Using Integrated Licensing Process (ILP)





PRAIRIE RIVER PROJECT

- Prairie River - River Mile 6.3
- Itasca County, Arbo Township
- 1.1 MW Run-of-river
- Reservoir = 1,305 acres
 - Upper and Lower connected through a gorge

GRAND RAPIDS PROJECT

- Mississippi River - River Mile 1,182
- Itasca County, City of Grand Rapids
- 2.1 MW Run-of-river
- Reservoir = 465 acres

GRAND RAPIDS PROJECT

Originally constructed in 1901

Concrete dam - 21 feet high

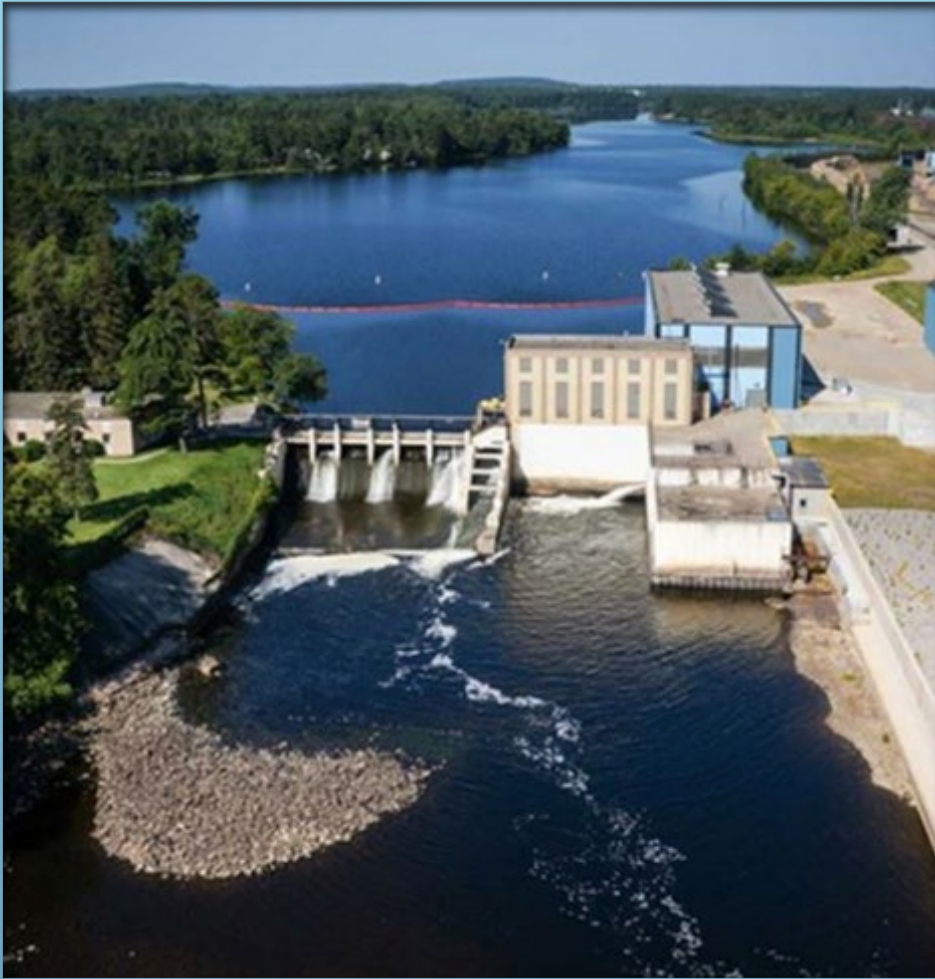
Supplements power supply for Blandin Paper Mill

Two generating units – 2.1 MW capacity

Average annual generation = 6,000 MWh



GRAND RAPIDS PROJECT



Run-of-river

- Target Elevation 1268.2 feet
- Operating Band ± 0.1 feet

Discharge Capabilities

- Generating Units – 600 cfs and 1000 cfs
- Spillway Gates – 5,000 cfs

Inflow controlled by USACE Pokegama Dam

PRAIRIE RIVER PROJECT

Originally constructed in 1902

Concrete dam - 17 feet high

450-foot-long, 10-foot-diameter penstock

Two generating units – 1.1 MW capacity

Average annual generation = 3,000 MWh



PRAIRIE RIVER PROJECT

Run-of-river

- Target Elevation 1289.4 feet
- Operating Band
 - ± 0.1 feet, normal conditions
 - ± 0.5 feet, high-flow conditions

Discharge Capabilities

- Generating Units – 168 cfs and 302 cfs
- Spillway Gates – 3,688 cfs

Minimum flow requirement in bypass reach in April, May, & June

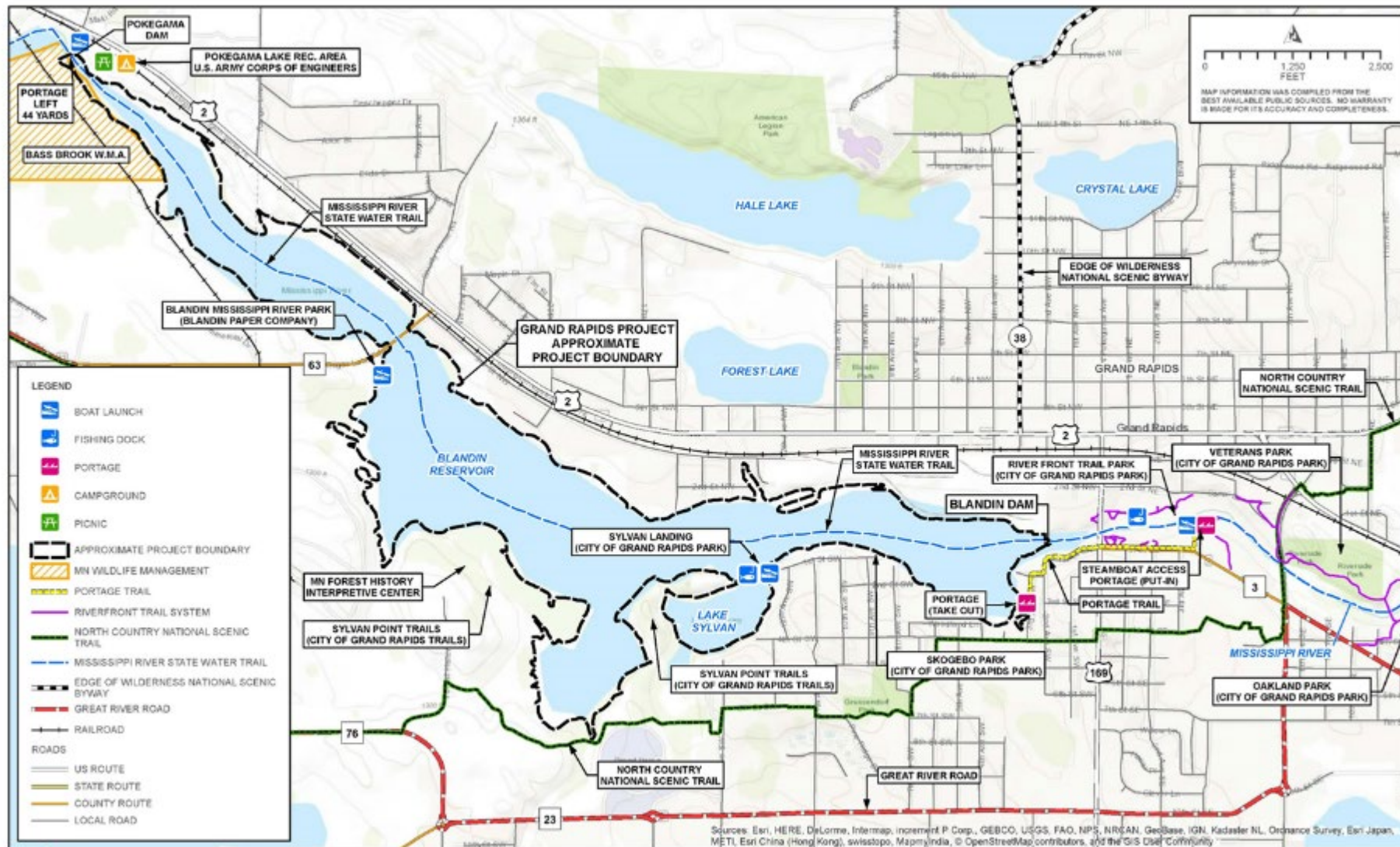
Powerhouse rebuilt after fire in 2008



RECREATION RESOURCES STUDY SUMMARIES



GRAND RAPIDS PROJECT



RECREATION
GRAND RAPIDS PROJECT
FERC NO. 2362

NOVEMBER 2018



GRAND RAPIDS RECREATION RESOURCES STUDY

Goals and Objectives

The Recreation Resources Study will collect information regarding current recreation use levels and the condition of the existing Project recreation facilities. The goals and objectives of this study are to:

- Gather information on the condition of the MP-managed, FERC-approved recreation facility and identify any need for improvement; and
- Characterize current recreational use and future demand for the MP-managed FERC-approved recreation facility within the Project Boundary

No variances from study plan.



GRAND RAPIDS RECREATION RESOURCES STUDY

Task 1: Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment

- FERC-approved canoe self-portage trail – good condition

Task 2: Recreation Use Observation

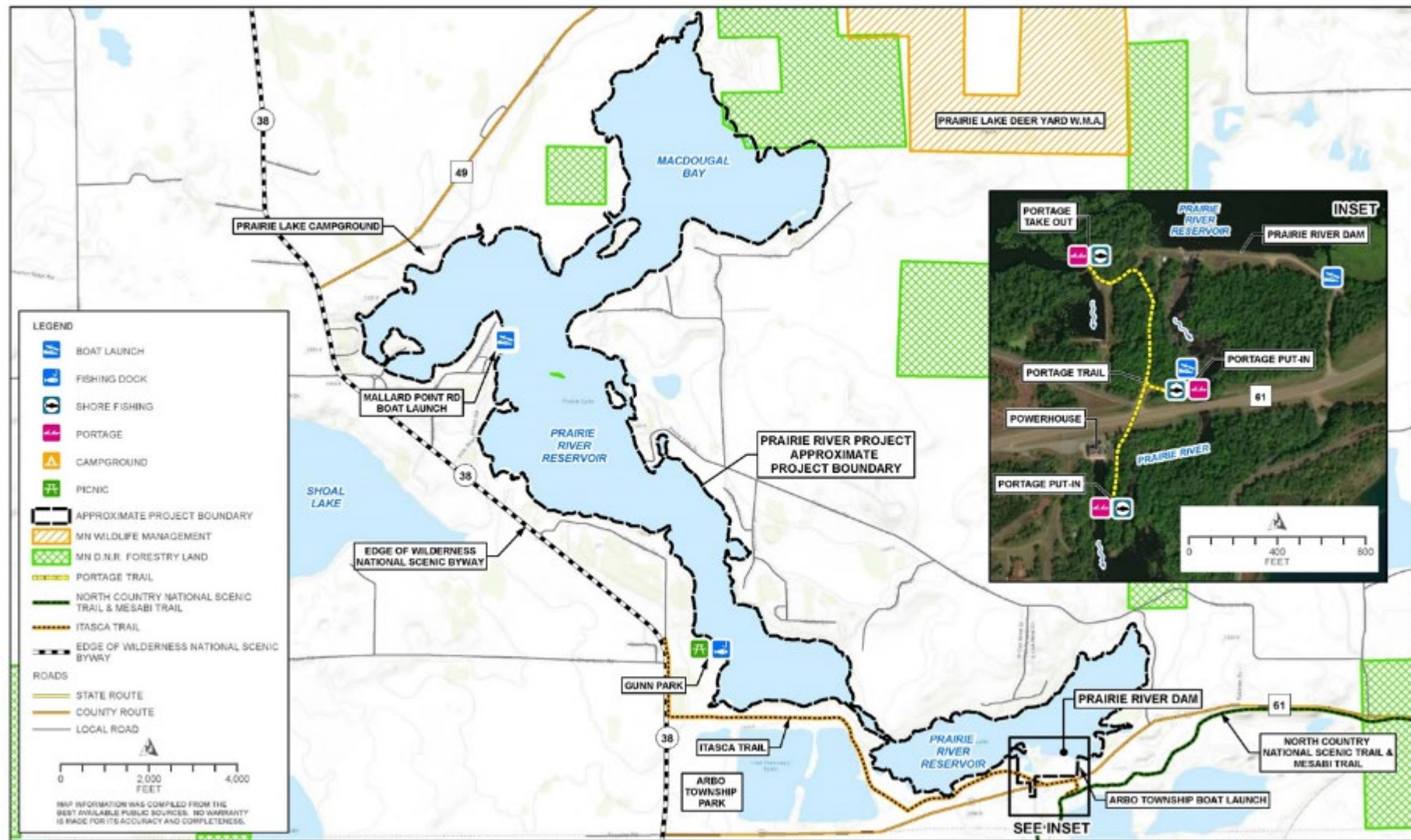
- Over 40 hours of observation
- Group of 3 people observed using self-portage trail in May
- Utilization calculated to be approximately 3%

Task 3: Recreation Survey

- One survey administered
 - Positive opinion of opportunities available
 - Only suggestion was additional signage before portage takeout

May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weekend days, one during Memorial Day Weekend• Two randomly selected weekdays
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weekend days• Two randomly selected weekdays
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weekend days, one following the 4th of July• Two randomly selected weekdays
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weekend days• Two randomly selected weekdays
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weekend days, one during Labor Day Weekend• Two randomly selected weekdays

PRAIRIE RIVER PROJECT



RECREATION
PRAIRIE RIVER PROJECT
FERC NO. 2361



PRAIRIE RIVER RECREATION RESOURCES STUDY

Goals and Objectives

The Recreation Resources Study will collect information regarding current recreation use levels and the condition of the existing Project recreation facilities. The goals and objectives of this study are to:

- Gather information on the condition of the MP-managed, FERC-approved recreation facility and identify any need for improvement; and
- Characterize current recreational use and future demand for the MP-managed FERC-approved recreation facility within the Project Boundary

No variances from study plan.



PRAIRIE RIVER RECREATION RESOURCES STUDY

Task 1: Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment

- FERC-approved canoe self-portage trail – good condition
- FERC-approved shoreline fishing areas – good condition

Task 2: Recreation Use Observation

- Over 40 hours of observation
- 106 people observed (majority on Saturday and Sunday)
- Activities observed: fishing, walking/hiking, photography, biking
- Utilization calculated to be approximately 3% on portage trail for non-portage activities
- Utilization calculated to be approximately 10% for shoreline fishing areas

Task 3: Recreation Survey

- 35 surveys administered
- Majority of site users (91%) at Project to fish and/or walk or hike
- Positive opinion of opportunities available
- Suggestions: add trails for hiking, additional fishing areas, benches, trash cans

May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weekend days, one during Memorial Day Weekend• Two randomly selected weekdays
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NEXT STEPS



UPCOMING ILP MILESTONES

Milestone	Responsible Party	Date
File Updated Study Report Meeting Summary (18 CFR §5.15(f))	MP	November 22, 2021
File Any Disputes/Requests to Amend Study Plan ((18 CFR §5.15(f))	Stakeholders	December 22, 2021
Responses to Disputes/Amendment Requests Due ((18 CFR §5.15(f))	Stakeholders	January 21, 2022
Director Issues Determination on Disputes/Amendments ((18 CFR §5.15(f))	FERC	February 20, 2022
File Final License Application ((18 CFR §5.17)	MP	December 31, 2021

Note: non-bold items are unnecessary if there are no formal study disputes.



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CRITERIA FOR MODIFICATION OF APPROVED STUDY

Must address (§5.15(d)):

- (1) Approved studies were not conducted as provided for in the approved study plan; or
- (2) The study was conducted under anomalous environmental conditions or that environmental conditions have changed in a material way.

CRITERIA FOR NEW STUDY

Must address (§5.15(e)):

- (1) Any material changes in the law or regulations applicable to the request;
- (2) Why the goals and objectives of any approved study could not be met with the approved study methodology;
- (3) Why the request was not made earlier;
- (4) Significant changes in the project proposal or that significant new information material to the study objectives has become available;
- (5) Why the new study request satisfies the study criteria in §5.9(b)[7 criteria under the ILP].