

National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

Policy and Guidelines for
Recreational Technical Assistance in
Hydropower Licensing

January 1, 1993

POLICY

It is the policy of the National Park Service to recognize the full potential that hydroelectric projects subject to original licensing and relicensing under the Federal Power Act may offer for:

1. Meeting present and future public outdoor recreation demands, and
2. the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environmental setting of these projects.

This policy is to be implemented by providing appropriate recreation planning assistance to applicants and licensees, the concerned agencies of federal, state and local governments, and the private sector in accordance with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission guidelines. The objectives stated in clauses 1 and 2 are also to be accomplished by providing to the Secretary of the Interior factual information, analyses and findings relating to recreation for incorporation in the Department's comments and recommendations to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

GUIDELINES

Program Scope

The National Park Service will:

- **Extent**: Consider the full range of land and water recreation opportunities and factors associated with hydropower projects. These opportunities and factors may include, but are not limited to, land use, access, shorelands conservation, flow, facilities, aesthetics, reservoir levels and safety.
- **Opportunities**: Consider and evaluate all forms of recreational activities associated, or potentially associated, with a hydroelectric site. The National Park Service will avoid discrimination of one activity over another and, instead, evaluate differing uses from a broad perspective and consider the relative merits of each use.
- **Environmental Quality**: Ensure that recreation programs are consistent with the preservation of environmental integrity. The National Park Service will coordinate with federal and state resource agencies to ensure that National Park Service recommendations are consistent with fish and wildlife needs to the extent possible.
- **Long-term Impact/Benefit**: Assist in planning for recreation impacts and needs that could arise throughout the term of the license.

- Comprehensive Perspectives: Evaluate recreational needs, opportunities and impacts from a basin-wide or region-wide perspective as appropriate to the projects and resources considered.

The National Park Service will:

- Coordination of Planning: Encourage joint comprehensive planning with: (1) Other public and private river conservation, recreation and energy interests, and (2) all appropriate land management and resource agencies. The National Park Service will avoid duplication of the efforts of other planning agencies.
- Communication: Provide a channel for recreation and conservation interests to participate in the licensing process with the applicants. The National Park Service will provide a channel for the applicants to identify and involve those interests.
- Conflict Resolution: Provide a facilitation and conflict resolution role among the involved parties and provide a forum to actively seek input from, and facilitate dialog between, all interested parties.
- Balance: Ensure that the importance and significance of the resources and opportunities will be fully considered in balancing such factors as competing recreation needs, power production, cultural needs, economics and all other pertinent considerations.
- Timeliness: Become involved as early as possible in the licensing process to promote advance planning in an equitable manner.

Program Selection

Because of finite resources, the National Park Service technical assistance program can only become involved with a limited number of projects. In selecting these projects, the National Park Service will:

- Resource Significance: Give priority to those projects located in areas with high natural, cultural and/or recreational resource values.
- Potential for Positive Impact: Give priority to projects where there is significant opportunity to create or improve recreation opportunities.
- Variety of Recreational Opportunities: Provide assistance on a diverse mix of recreation experiences, settings and geographical locations in the program portfolio.

- Concentration of Projects: Provide special consideration to rivers, or river basins, with multiple projects, especially where a holistic approach will serve to advance public recreation opportunities more than a site-by-site approach.
- Assistance Requests: Respond and provide technical assistance as resources allow to requests from public and private energy, conservation and recreation interests. The National Park Service will ensure that those interests that have little or no access to professional sources of planning assistance and analysis have equal consideration and opportunity to participate in the process.

Information

The National Park Service will:

- Equitable Information: Use and request the generation of information appropriate to the size of the project, the project impacts, the recreation potential of the project, and its relationship to other projects.
- Relevant Information: Encourage and participate in the generation of objective data necessary to evaluate recreation needs and opportunities, such as flow studies, recreation needs assessments, and carrying capacity studies.
- Scope of Information: Where possible, use and request the generation of information that considers cumulative and basin-wide impacts and follows the intentions of broad-scale planning.
- Information Dissemination: Maintain a source of case studies and similar data generated by the technical assistance program and make this information available to public and private entities.

Results

The National Park Service will:

- Mitigation: Seek opportunities to increase the cumulative benefit to recreation and conservation through alternative ideas such as clustering of mitigation from several projects in one area, coordination of recreation flow releases along a river or throughout a region, providing access and portage from a river-wide perspective, or encouraging cooperative efforts by multiple applicants with projects on the same river where physically, socially and economically feasible. The National Park Service will coordinate

these proposals with appropriate land management and resource agencies to ensure consistency and environmental integrity.

- Cooperative Comprehensive Planning: Encourage an applicant with several projects to develop a comprehensive recreation plan for all projects or for multiple applicants in the same basin to prepare a joint comprehensive plan where physically, socially and economically feasible.

The "Final Policy and Guidelines for Recreational Technical Assistance in Hydropower Licensing" were published in the [Federal Register \(57 FR 61915\) on December 29, 1992](#). In addition to the final policy and guidelines, a summary of the comments received on the draft version was included in this document.