

- community -

Final comment period for hydropower facilities on CT River

GREENFIELD – The Connecticut River Conservancy has been engaged in advocating for the health of the Connecticut River and the communities in the watershed since 1952.

As part of its mission, CRC has been a consistent participant in the relicensing of the Turner's Falls dam and Northfield Mountain pumped storage facilities for almost 12 years, working for a better deal for the river and its communities. These hydroelectric facilities use a public trust resource – the river - to produce power.

In exchange for this privilege, and to mitigate for impacts of the dams on recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, migratory and endangered species, water quality, and other resources, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requires that hydropower operators provide direct benefits to the public and be protective of the ecological health of the river.

These requirements are laid forth in an operating license and the license serves as a public contract that CRC revisits periodically to examine the facility's impact on this public trust resource.

On Feb. 22, FERC issued a notice indicating that the final license appli-

cations have been accepted as complete and ready for environmental analysis. This notice simultaneously initiated a 60-day period to submit comments and interventions for the projects.

The comment period will close on April 22. A comment communicates local concerns, recommendations, and desires to FERC as they make the decisions on what to include in the new license that will last for the next 30-50 years.

People are encouraged to submit a comment to FERC if you have concerns about how these dams impact the river, the surrounding communities, or your ability to interact with the river.

Public comments can be submitted by anyone or any entity that has an interest in or relationship to the river. This includes individual community members, town committees or commissions, Regional Planning Commission, recreation clubs, etc.

In addition to supporting the public's opportunity to comment, and submitting our own comments, Connecticut River Conservancy will also be filing a motion to intervene. This allows CRC to become a legal party to appeal this federal agency action if needed.

Nina Gordon-Kirsch, CRC's River Steward in Massachusetts, said in a press release, "These facilities have a major impact on the River and affect recreators, fish, water quality, and the ecology of the river basin. FERC will issue a new operation license to the facilities that will not be updated for another 40 years. This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to make positive change for the River and all beings who are in relationship with it. Don't miss this opportunity to help shape the River for future generations!"

Hydropower relicensing information, as well as a FERC Comment Guide, can be found by visiting www.ctriver.org/our-work/hydropower/.

The Connecticut River Conservancy will also hold a series of virtual office hours about how to comment on the hydropower relicensing process for the two facilities in Massachusetts as well as three facilities in VT/NH that are simultaneously going through this federal process.

During these office hours, CRC's Director of Policy and Advocacy/Vermont River Steward (Kathy Urffer), and River Stewards in Massachusetts (Nina Gordon-Kirsch) and New Hampshire (Kate Buckman) will be

available to answer any questions and help with your comments.

The following will be covered: Issues at stake for fish passage, recreation, erosion, and accountability; instruction on how to submit comments or get involved; questions addressed in Q&A.

The office hours can be customized based on who attends and what you most want to address. You can also submit a question to the speakers upon registration.

The office hours will occur on: Thursday, March 14 at 5:30 p.m.; Monday, March 18 at 11 a.m.; Wednesday, March 27 at 8:30 a.m.; Wednesday, April 3 at 7 p.m.; Thursday, April 11 at noon; and Tuesday, April 16 at noon.

Register by visiting www.ctriver.org/event/hydropower-office-hours/.

About CRC

Since 1952, Connecticut River Conservancy has been a voice for the Connecticut River watershed, from source to sea. It collaborates with partners across four states to protect and advocate for rivers, and educate and engage communities.

CRC brings people together to prevent pollution, improve habitat, and promote enjoyment of the rivers and streams. Learn more at ctriver.org.

- public notices -

LEGAL NOTICE: TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, 18-25, as amended by Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2009, The Wetlands Protection Act, the West

Brookfield Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **WEDNESDAY March 13, 2024 at 6:00 pm** in the first floor meeting room, West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street.

6:10 – Public Hearing:
• RDA – 7 Rodman Street – Gerald Nichols – Retaining

wall reconstruction
• NOI Continuation – Rte. 9 Reconstruction and Rehabilitation
03/08/2024

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that

in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L Chapter 40A, Section 9, and Section 11 Back Lot Permit, of the West Brookfield Zoning Bylaws, the Planning Board will open a public hearing on **Monday March 18 2024 at 7:00 pm** in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 2 East Main Street, for the following application:

Justin Paquette of 103 Rice Corner Rd, Brookfield seeks Special Permit approval to create a Backlot, approximately 6.5 acres at 141 and 143 Shea Road, West Brookfield.

Interested parties may review the plan at the office of the Town Clerk in the Town Hall, 2 East Main

Street, West Brookfield. A copy is posted on the display board outside of the Town Hall.

The Board invites all interested parties to attend the public hearing.

Rebekah Cornell
Chairwoman
03/01, 03/08/24

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