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February 25, 2010

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

Re: Silver Lake Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 11478
Recreation Facility Interpretive Signs

Dear Secretary Bose:

Attached for submittal are the interpretive signs for the recreational facilities at the Silver Lake Hydroelectric Project (Project No. 11478). Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) initially submitted their Recreation Facility Design Plans for the Project with FERC on August 26, 2009 after consulting with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (VANR) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The plans included designs for recreation enhancements at the project, developed to comply with conditions contained in the FERC license issued to CVPS on February 26, 2009.

The interpretive signs were developed in consultation with VANR and USFS. In addition, local recreation groups such as the Moosalamoo Association and Catamount Trail Association were given an opportunity to provide comments on the signs. A draft of the sign content was provided to the aforementioned groups on January 15, 2010. Comments were received by the VANR and USFS and the signs were revised accordingly. The correspondence records are attached to this letter.

Please append this filing to the Recreation Facility Design Plans submitted on August 26, 2009. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. George", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jason George
Environmental Scientist

C: B. Fitzgerald, VANR
G. Smith, USFS
M. Scarzello, CVPS
B. Eliason, CVPS
T. Krinsky, TK Landscape Architects

Correspondence



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January 15, 2010

Brian T. Fitzgerald
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Department of Environmental Conservation
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-0511

Re: Silver Lake Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 11478
Interpretive Signage for Recreation Facilities

Dear Mr. Fitzgerald:

Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) submitted Recreation Facility Design Plans for the Silver Lake Hydroelectric Project (Project No. 11478) with FERC on August 26, 2009 after consulting with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (VANR) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The plans included designs for recreation enhancements at the project, developed to comply with conditions contained in the new FERC license issued to CVPS on February 26, 2009.

The FERC license and Vermont Water Quality Certification require that CVPS develop the recreation enhancements, including interpretive signage, at the Project in consultation with VANR and the USFS. In developing the designs, the USFS suggested that the Moosalamoo Association be consulted when developing the recreation signage. Drafts of the interpretive signs proposed for the Silver Lake Project are being provided to you for review and comment prior to finalization. It is CVPS's intent that these signs be consistent with others supporting recreation in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area. CVPS is aware that cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are popular winter activities around Sugar Hill Reservoir. CVPS can incorporate trail maps or other directional signage at their facilities separately from the interpretive signs.

I am also providing Section 2.3 of the Recreation Facility Design Plans submitted to FERC on August 26, 2009, which describes the physical location of the signs. If you could provide your comments on the draft signs to me within 30 days, or before February 15, 2010, it would be greatly appreciated. If you any have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (603) 428-4960 or email at jgeorge@gomezandsullivan.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. George", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jason George
Environmental Scientist

C: T. Clark, Moosalamoo Association
G. Smith, District Ranger USFS
A. Diller, Catamount Trail Association
M. Scarzello, CVPS
B. Eliason, CVPS

Enclosures

2.2 Falls of Lana

The site visits with the USFS provided direction on the appropriate improvements to enhance the Falls of Lana overlook. It was agreed that the improvements will consist of: 1) improving the drainage on Forest Road 27 and along the informal trail adjacent to the penstock down to the existing overlook, 2) replacing the existing safety cables at the overlook, 3) removing vegetation currently obscuring the view of the falls, and 4) installing an interpretive sign on the penstock.

It was originally envisioned that CVPS would improve the existing trail leading to the viewing area at the Falls of Lana. However, the USFS does not want to improve the trail to the Falls of Lana overlook because the foot trail to the falls overlook is not a Forest Service system trail and as such, the USFS does not want to encourage use from that junction. Although the trail will not be improved, CVPS is proposing to repair the minor erosion pockets that are present between the road and the overlook by adding coarse crushed gravel to eroded areas and to divert water away from the path by adding a swale near the penstock. Minor erosion improvements would also be made at the improved overlook site. The trail will be improved such that it doesn't resemble a formal path leading people down a non-existent trail.

Likewise, a culvert was initially planned to improve drainage along Forest Road 27 at the penstock crossing location. Culverts have proven to be too maintenance intensive on other Forest Service roads and have been removed. Instead of a culvert, CVPS proposes to construct two rolling grade dips, which are designed to use a reversal in grade to force water off the trail without the need for any other structure (as shown in SP5, Appendix B).

CVPS will prune vegetation at the viewing location and coordinate the removal of two trees at the overlook. Article 405 of the license requires CVPS to avoid tree removal during April 1 through October 31 in consideration of the potential for roosting Indiana bats (federally listed endangered species). CVPS proposes to cut down two large trees during the non-hibernating season and to leave the felled trees on the ground for natural decomposition. The downed trees will be limbed and the brush placed into piles. The trunks will be cut up into smaller sections to remain on the forest floor. Smaller vegetation (e.g., shrubs and saplings) growing around the existing overlook point in the area of the safety fence will be initially removed by CVPS to improve the viewing location.

CVPS will install a more secure fencing system at the Falls of Lana overlook (as shown in SP5, Appendix B). The fence will be installed back away from the edge of the cliff by at least 5 feet for increased safety while still allowing for a view of the Falls of Lana. An interpretive sign will also be placed on the penstock.

2.3 Signage Plan

Interpretive signs are important in providing information about the significance and history of the hydroelectric project to visitors, and directing visitors to project recreational features. As part of the recreation enhancements at the Project, CVPS is developing both directional and interpretive signage for installation as follows:

- Directional and interpretive signage at Sugar Hill Reservoir
- Silver Lake interpretive sign
- Interpretive signage at Sucker Brook Diversion Dam
- Interpretive sign on penstock

In the drawing set located in Appendix B, the proposed locations of directional and interpretive signage are depicted. The content of the interpretive signage is still under development. Drafts of the interpretive signage content will be submitted to USFS and VANR for review and comment prior to finalization. In addition, a courtesy copy of the interpretive signs will be provided to the Moosalamoo Association for review of consistency with their signs across the region. Moosalamoo Association is a non-profit organization involved in cooperative activities for natural resource conservation, recreation experience enhancement, and educational and interpretative services for visitors to the 22,000-acre Moosalamoo area of the Green Mountain National Forest.

Directional signage at Sugar Hill Reservoir will include a sign in the circular turnaround area directing cars in a counter-clockwise direction as well as to identify designated parking areas (as shown in SP4 and SP6, Appendix B). Existing informational signs related to site use restrictions on the reservoir will be re-installed.

At the Sucker Brook diversion dam, an interpretive sign will be installed to describe the function of the diversion dam and related structures in the overall context of the Project. Similarly, an interpretive sign will be created for placement at the penstock, near the crossing of Forest Road 27. However, at the request of the USFS, the sign shall not direct people down the Falls of Lana overlook path.

CVPS consulted with the USFS regarding the location and content of an interpretive sign at Silver Lake. It was agreed that the existing kiosk at the Silver Lake day use area (Plate 3, Appendix A) would be used as the location for an interpretive sign to supplement the existing signs placed there by the USFS. The size of the sign (24" x 36") will be consistent with the existing USFS signs at Silver Lake.

2.4 Consideration of Disabled Needs

Additional improvements were added to the original enhancements (as described in Section 1.1 of this plan) at Sugar Hill Reservoir to consider the needs of disabled people. At Sugar Hill Reservoir a parking area has been added adjacent to the boat launch which will provide access to a trail leading to a fishing area. This trail will maintain a grade suitable for wheelchair access. There will also be an ADA compliant fishing access site as depicted in drawing SP3 in Appendix B.

The topography at the Falls of Lana, however, has afforded little opportunity for access via wheelchair.

2.5 Erosion Control

Associated erosion control measures for the development of recreational facilities are incorporated into the appropriate design drawings in Appendix B. The boat launch and road improvements at Sugar Hill Reservoir were designed to manage stormwater runoff by providing stone fill and hay bale check dams along the swales adjacent to the access road leading to the water's edge. End walls and energy dissipaters are proposed for use with the culverts which helps channel water through the pipe and alleviates associated erosion.

It is CVPS's preference that the construction of the boat launch surface at Sugar Hill Reservoir be performed while the reservoir is drawn down below 1,758 feet. This may not be feasible given the FERC license stipulates that water levels at Sugar Hill Reservoir can only be lowered below 1,757.5 during January 1 and April 30. If the proposed boat ramp improvements occur when the water level is above 1,758, then the construction contractors will be required to install a geotextile filter curtain around the construction area in order to contain the turbidity associated with the boat ramp construction.

Jason George

From: Fitzgerald, Brian [Brian.Fitzgerald@state.vt.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 4:05 PM
To: Jason George
Subject: Silver Lake Interpretive Signage

Jason,

I've taken a look at the draft interpretive signs for the Silver Lake Project. Generally, I think they're fine and I have only a few comments.

* There are a couple of terms used that we understand well but the general public may not. I'm specifically referring to "acre-feet" and "penstock." For the former, you might use gallons, which I see done all the time in news stories about dams and reservoirs. For the latter, perhaps saying something like "pipe, or penstock" the first time the term appears on the sign might be helpful to the reader. This would be especially true at Sugar Hill, where there is no penstock in sight, but could be true at other sites as well.

* On the Silver Lake sign, it would be good to indicate where the hotel was located relative to the sign.

* On the Sucker Brook and Sugar Hill Signs, it might be worth changing "Dispose of trash properly" to "Carry out all trash" to be clear about the expectation. Further, as a minor style point, change "Dogs must be leashed" to "Leash dogs at all times" so it's consistent with the statement about trash disposal.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

BT

Brian T. Fitzgerald
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Division
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802.793.0454 (cell)

brian.fitzgerald@state.vt.us<<mailto:brian.fitzgerald@state.vt.us>>

<http://www.vtwaterquality.org><<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/fed/dss.htm>>

Conservation is a cause that has no end. There is no point at which we will say our work is finished.

- Rachel Carson

P Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail



Date: February 11, 2010

Jason George, Environmental Scientist
Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, P.C.
P.O. Box 2179
Henniker, NH 03242

RE: Silver Lake Hydroelectric Project – FERC No. 1478
Interpretive Signage for Recreation Facilities

Dear Mr. George:

On behalf of Central Vermont Public Service Corporation, by letter dated January 15, 2010, you filed draft interpretive sign plans with the Forest Service for the Silver Lake Hydroelectric Project. Herein the Forest Service provides its comments.

All Four Signs:

All four signs were reviewed by Forest Service recreation, heritage, public affairs and landscape architect staff. No factual errors were found in the interpretive text; however, a few concerns and suggestions were expressed:

- The amount of text on each sign is extensive. We suggest reducing the number of words to appeal to the "less is more" attitude likely found in public members hiking past the signage.
- When the signs are true to size, it is unclear if the size of the font will be sufficiently large. We suggest that the wording is reworked so that there are some main points that are in a larger font (18 point or larger for people with visual impairments) and then if a person wants to read more and spend the time they can read the "fine print" in smaller text. This is not only an issue with size of letters, but simply keeping a person's interest and getting the message out.
- The information is excellent but very technical. Suggest simplifying the text.
- Given the locations of the signs, within the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area and the Green Mountain National Forest, the Forest Service would like to see a Forest Service logo (shield) included on each sign.
- Because each sign is in some geographic isolation, most readers will not have a good sense of the spatial connection referred to on the signs. One suggestion would be to have a small schematic line drawing in the margin or at the header which linked: (1) Sugar Hill Reservoir and Sucker Brook, (2) the diversion dam, (3) penstock to Silver Lake, the sluice way and the lake, (4) Silver Lake dam, (5) penstock, (6) surge tank, and (7) the power station. This (or something like it) would give folks a "connect the dot" sense of where they were when they were reading the sign. It could be a very simple drawing, with numbers or labels on it (a conceptual scribble is attached).
- In the heading, the acronym "FERC" should be spelled out.
- Please consider defining "penstock."

Silver Lake Sign:

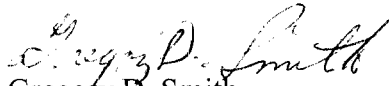
- In the first paragraph, note that the dam raised the water level of the existing lake. While it is technically accurate to refer to Silver Lake as a "reservoir" from a power-generation perspective, the connotation of the word is that it was entirely created by people.



- In the 2nd paragraph, suggest recognition of the prehistory and Native American presence by including a sentence such as "Silver Lake has been an attractive destination for centuries as evidenced by the presence of Native American artifacts." Then jump into the 1880s hotel...
- In the 4th paragraph it should note that "All of the lands surrounding Silver Lake - and most of the Project – are located within the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area and are owned and managed by the Green Mountain National Forest in partnership with the Moosalamoo Association and CVPS".

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Gregory D. Smith
District Ranger