

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Western Massachusetts Electric) Project No. 2334-013
Company)

ORDER APPROVING RECREATIONAL USE EROSION AND
SEDIMENT CONTROL PLAN

August 3, 1998

On April 6, 1998, Western Massachusetts Electric Company (licensee) filed a Recreational Use Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (plan) for the Gardners Falls Project, FERC No. 2334. The plan was required by article 407 of the project license issued on April 4, 1997. The Gardners Falls Project is located on the Deerfield River in Franklin County, Massachusetts.

Article 407 requires the licensee to file a plan to include provisions for: (1) designing and implementing appropriate erosion and sediment control measures and measures for revegetation of land-clearances and ground-disturbances associated with improvement and construction of any new recreational facilities not covered by the relicensing action; and (2) regularly-scheduled monitoring and maintenance for all recreational use areas at the project for the purpose of identifying and implementing appropriate and timely measures to control and remedy erosion, sediment, and reservoir and river bank problems which may develop over time as a result of recreational use. The article also requires that the plan be based on the recommendations of the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The licensee states there is no specific future recreational development anticipated which was not identified during relicensing. The licensee proposes to consult with the resource agencies designated in article 407 when any new recreational development is proposed. If it is determined that control measures are required, the licensee will consult with the agencies to ensure that ground disturbance is minimized and that any necessary measures to prevent soil erosion and/or sediment

transport are properly designed and implemented. All agency recommendations will be incorporated into the final design. No ground disturbance activities will take place until agency concurrence has been obtained.

The licensee proposes to inspect project recreational facilities each year prior to the start of the recreation season

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(April 15). Periodic monitoring will take place monthly during the recreation season to determine whether soil erosion or sediment transport has occurred or is ongoing. If soil erosion and sediment transport has occurred, the area will be restored to its original condition as soon as possible. If soil erosion and/or sediment transport are ongoing, the appropriate measures will be implemented to prevent any further erosion or sediment transport. The area will be restored to its original condition and appropriate measures will be implemented to prevent any future impacts.

The licensee consulted with the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The NRCS was the only agency who commented on the plan. The NRCS noted the need to consult with the local conservation commissions, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The NRCS also stated that a detailed erosion and sediment control plan should be included as part of the project design.

The plan filed on April 6, 1998, is consistent with article 407 and all agency comments were incorporated. Implementing the plan should minimize erosion related to recreation use at the project. The plan should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) The Recreational Use Erosion and Sediment Control Plan filed on April 6, 1998, for the Gardners Falls Project, is approved and made part of the license.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order, pursuant to 18 C.F.R. 385.713.

Carol L. Sampson
Director
Office of Hydropower Licensing