

## **Orono Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2710)**

### **Project Description**

Black Bear Hydro Partners, LLC's Orono Hydroelectric Project is a run-of-river hydroelectric generating facility located on the Stillwater Branch of the Penobscot River in Orono, Maine with a gross nameplate generating capacity of 6.52 MW. The Orono Project commenced initial commercial operations in 1949, but stopped operating in 1996 due to catastrophic failure of the facility's penstock which caused the project to be shut down. After the Federal Energy Commission issued a new license for the Orono Project on December 8, 2005, the Orono Project was refurbished and thereafter began commercial operation of the first two units on January 11, 2009, and the other two units on March 3, 2009. The Licensee applied for an amendment to increase capacity at the Orono Project via the construction of an additional powerhouse (Powerhouse B).

The Project consists of an existing 1,178-foot-long by 15-foot-high dam including a 320-foot-long spillway topped with 3-foot-high flashboards, creating an impoundment with a normal full pond elevation of 73 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum. The Project has two powerhouses. Powerhouse A is supplied by one 866-foot-long, 20-foot-wide, 12-foot-high concrete penstock and has four generating units a total installed capacity of 2,780 kW and a maximum hydraulic capacity of 1,740 cfs. Powerhouse B is supplied by a 292-foot-long, 25-foot-wide, 12-foot-high concrete penstock and has three generating units with a total installed capacity of 3,738 kW and a maximum hydraulic capacity of 2,082 cfs. The Project also has three 325-foot-long, 2.4-kilovolt and one 600-foot-long, 12.5-kilovolt transmission lines; and appurtenant facilities. The Orono Powerhouse B commenced initial commercial operation December, 2013.

The Orono Project generates clean, renewable electricity while providing recreational opportunities (portage trail and nature trails), fish passage measures, consistent water levels that enhance habitats for waterfowl, etc., and substantial support of the local community through stable property tax payments, reliable voltage support of the electrical distribution system, etc.

On June 25, 2004, the Lower Penobscot River Basin Comprehensive Settlement Accord ("Lower Penobscot Agreement") was signed.<sup>1</sup> The Agreement represented an unprecedented collaboration to restore 11 species of sea-run fish while rebalancing hydropower generated on the river.<sup>2</sup> An integral part

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<sup>1</sup> Parties to the Lower Penobscot Agreement include Black Bear Hydro Partners, LLC's predecessor PPL Maine, LLC; the Penobscot Indian Nation (Penobscot); U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior); Maine State Planning Office, Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Maine Department of Marine Resources ("Maine Agencies"); American Rivers, Inc., Atlantic Salmon Federation, Maine Audubon Society, Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Trout Unlimited; and the Penobscot River Restoration Trust ("Trust").

<sup>2</sup> When complete, the project will help restore native fisheries by markedly improving access to nearly 1000 miles of significant habitat for Atlantic salmon, American shad, and several other species of sea-run fish that once supported diverse economic opportunities as well as the biological health of the Penobscot River.

of the energy balance associated with the Agreement included relicensing and recommencement of operations at the Orono Hydroelectric Project. In June 2004 an application was filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) for a new license to construct the improvements described herein, and operate the Orono Project. FERC issued the new license for the Orono Project on December 8, 2005 (113 FERC 62,181).

Pursuant to the Lower Penobscot Agreement, BBHP added 3.75MW via Powerhouse B to the existing Orono Project dam. The FERC License was amended September 14, 2012 to reflect the change in capacity and extend the term of the license accordingly.

The Orono Project license was transferred to Black Bear Hydro Partners, LLC by FERC order dated September 17, 2009 (128 FERC ¶62,212).