Rumford Falls Project - LIHI Mid-Term Review
Conducted by Stephen Byrne
August 24, 2026

I. Introduction

The current LIHI Certificate for the Rumford Falls Hydroelectric Project (LIHI #38, FERC No. P-2333) was issued effective December 10, 2018 and expires on December 9, 2028. The Project was first certified by LIHI in 2009 and recertified in 2013 and 2018. The 2018 recertification did not include any conditions.

The Project was relicensed by FERC on January 22, 2026, with an expiration date of December 31, 2066.[1] In accordance with Section 5.3.4 of the 2nd Edition LIHI Handbook, Revision 2.06,[2] issuance of a new license constitutes a "material change" and triggers a mid-term LIHI Certification review. A new Certificate term can be granted if the Project continues to satisfy the LIHI criterion, even if the current term has not yet expired.

II. Facilities and Operations

The Project was initially constructed between 1918 and 1955 to harness the power of Rumford Falls to produce paper products. The Project is a 44.5-MW run-of-river project located on the Androscoggin River between river miles 90.9 and 90.7 in the town of Rumford, in Oxford County, Maine (Figures 1 and 2). The Project consists of two development; the Upper Station Development and the Lower Station Development.

The Upper Station consists of: a concrete gravity dam that is 464 feet long by 37 feet high with an ogee type spillway section topped with 2.5-foot-high, pin-supported, wooden flashboards. The forebay is about 2,300 feet long by 150 feet wide. The gatehouse has eight headgates, (two headgates for each of the four penstocks), trashracks, and other equipment. The four underground steel-plate penstocks are each about 110 feet long, three of which are 12 feet in diameter, and one 13 feet in diameter. The masonry powerhouse is integral to the dam, occupying two adjoining sections of the dam: The Old Station is equipped with one horizontal Francis turbine/generating unit and the New Station is equipped with three vertical Francis turbine/generating units. Total installed capacity is 29.3 MW. The dam impounds a 419-acre reservoir and creates a bypass reach approximately 600 feet long.

The Lower Station consists of: a rock-filled, wooden-cribbed, and concrete-capped Middle Dam that is 328.6 feet long by 20 feet high with a gravity spillway section topped with 1.0-foot-high pin-supported wooden flashboards. The dam creates a 21-acre reservoir and a bypass reach approximately 3,500 feet long. The Middle Canal concrete headgate structure, located adjacent to the dam, is about 120 feet long, with 10 steel headgates. A waste weir section perpendicular to the headgate structure is about 120 feet long, topped with 10-inch-high flashboards. The Middle Canal is roughly 2,400 feet long, with width ranging from 75 to 175 feet, and depth from 8 to 11 feet. The gatehouse contains two headgates, trashracks, and other equipment. Two

[1] January 22, 2026 FERC License Order
[2] LIHI Handbook, 2nd edition rev. 2.06

12-foot-diameter, steel-plate penstocks each extend about 815 feet to two cylindrical surge tanks, each about 36 feet in diameter by 50.5 feet high. The penstocks continue 77 feet to the powerhouse. The masonry powerhouse is equipped with two identical vertical Francis turbine/generating units with a combined capacity of 15.2 MW.

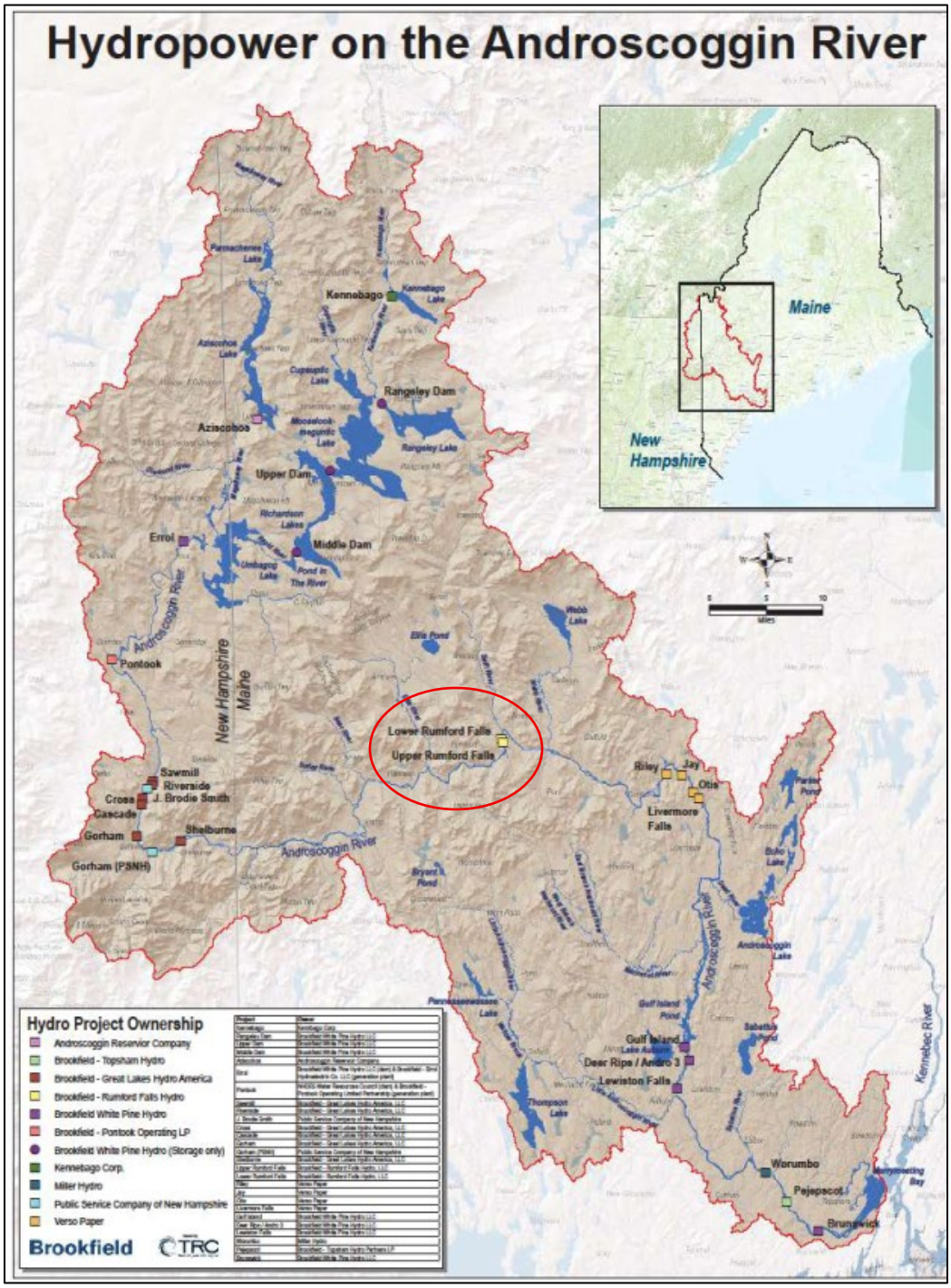

Figure 1 – Androscoggin River Watershed

Figure 2 – Project Location

III. Scope of the Mid-Term Review

This review evaluated the Project's continued compliance with the current LIHI criteria and standards in light of the new FERC license, related permit and regulatory requirements, and other commitments that may affect the LIHI criteria.

Public notice of the draft mid-term review application was made on June 10, 2026, to LIHI email subscribers in Maine and agencies and stakeholders provided by the Certificate holder. The 60-day public comment period closed on August 9, 2026, and no comments were received.

This evaluation included a comparison of the prior and new FERC licenses; and a review of documents found on the FERC eLibrary including the 2024 FERC Environmental Assessment (EA)[3], agency and stakeholder relicensing comments, and annual LIHI compliance statements submitted during the current LIHI term. Links are provided to key documents via footnotes herein and in Appendix A which provides a crosswalk table that compares the prior and new license requirements discussed in Section V below. Key documents are also posted in the Files section at the bottom of the Project's LIHI webpage.

The new license increases the minimum flow from Middle Dam into the Middle Dam bypassed reach (Zone 4) from 21 cfs to 200 cfs year-round with a provision to provide whitewater boating and aesthetic flows into Zone 4 if sufficient inflow into Middle Dam impoundment is available.

IV. Zones of Effect

In its Mid Term Review Application, the Certificate holder selected five Zones of Effect (ZoE) for the Project. Zone 1 is the Upper Dam Impoundment from RM 93.7 to RM 87.4, Zone 2 is the Upper Dam Bypassed Reach from RM 87.4 to RM 87.1, Zone 3 is the Middle Dam Impoundment from RM 87.4 to RM 87.2, Zone 4 is the Middle Dam Bypassed Reach from RM 87.2 to RM 86.6, and Zone 5 is the Unregulated Downstream River Reach – RM 86.6 to RM 86.3. During the 2019 LIHI recertification the LIHI Reviewer selected standards based on the project facilities and operations and management that were in place prior to the recent FERC relicensing. Based on new requirements included in the January 22, 2026 license order, Rumford Falls Hydro (RFH) chose different standards than those included in the 2019 LIHI recertification. Table 1 shows the standards selected by the Certificate holder for each LIHI criterion for the five ZoEs. However, the reviewer disagrees with the selections for one criterion and changes to the selected standards are noted in **red** in Table 1 and discussed in Section V.

[3] FERC August 2024 Rumford Falls EA

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Table 1 – Selected Standards

		CRITERION							
		A	***B***	***C***	***D***	***E***	***F***	***G***	***H***
Zone No., Zone Name, and Standard Selected (including PLUS if selected)	**River Mile at upper and lower extent of Zone**	**Flow Regimes**	**Water Quality**	**Upstream Fish Passage**	**Downstream Fish Passage**	**Shorelines and Watershed**	**Threatened and Endangered Species**	**Cultural and Historic Resources**	**Recreational, Public, and Traditional Cultural Access**
ZoE 1. Upper Dam Impoundment	RM 93.7 to RM 87.4	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
ZoE 2. Upper Dam Bypassed Reach	RM 87.4 to RM 87.1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
ZoE 3. Middle Dam Impoundment	RM 87.4 to RM 87.2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	~~3~~ , **2**
ZoE 4. Middle Dam Bypassed Reach	RM 87.2 to RM 86.6	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
ZoE 5. Unregulated Downstream River Reach	RM 86.6 to RM 86.3	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	~~3~~ , **2**

V. Detailed Criteria Review

A. Flow Regimes

Goal: *The flow regimes in riverine reaches that are affected by the facility support habitat and other conditions suitable for healthy fish and wildlife resources.*

Assessment of Criterion: The Applicant appropriately selected Standard A-2, Resource Agency and Tribal Government Recommendations for Zones 2 and 4 and Standard A-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for Zones 1, 3, and 5.

Discussion: Under the new license, the Project continues to operate in a run-of-river mode and water level maintenance has not changed since the previous license. The licensee maintains the Upper Dam impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 601.24 ft USGS, and the Middle Dam impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 502.74 ft USGS. At the Upper Dam, the Upper Station's headpond elevation is maintained through a combination of automated adjustments of the Project's Upper Station turbines as well as the Obermeyer spillway and flashboard system. Under normal river flows, the Upper Dam impoundment elevation is measured by an electronic differential pressure transmitter located in the forebay that monitors river height and inflow. The signals are transmitted simultaneously to the National System Control Center (NSCC) in Queensbury, New York. The NSCC regulates the wicket gate opening to the operating unit(s) to control the amount of water passing through the turbines and maintain the Upper Dam impoundment elevation no more than the maximum pond level of 601.24 feet USGS during normal operations, just below the crest of the flashboards. Units can also be operated locally, as needed, for operations or maintenance activities. The Obermeyer spillway system at the Upper Dam can be operated remotely or locally and is set to automatically deflate as a safety precaution if the Upper Dam impoundment elevation reaches two feet or more above the top of the gate or in the event of a station trip. Turbines in the Lower Station have the same capabilities, and along with the Lower Station's canal headgates and flashboards at the Middle Dam, maintain the impoundment elevations in the Middle Dam impoundment. The Upper and Lower Stations are monitored and controlled remotely via the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system 24 hours per day, seven days a week. This review finds that Standard A-1 is appropriate for Zones 1, 3, and 5.

Consistent with condition 2 of the August 16, 2024, Water Quality Certificate (WQC) issued on August 16, 2024 by Maine Department of Environment Protection (Maine DEP), RFH releases a year-round minimum flow of 1 cfs or leakage from the Upper Dam into Upper Dam bypassed reach (Zone 2). While higher minimum flows were recommended by Trout Unlimited during the 2023-2024 FERC relicensing period, the aquatic habitat conditions in Zone 2 are generally poor and increasing minimum flows would not substantially improve habitat conditions for fish

because of the high gradient, rapid velocities, turbulence, shallow depths, and limited refuge areas within the bedrock substrate.

During the recent FERC relicensing period, RFH proposed a seasonal minimum flow regime for Zone 4 of 95 cfs from May 1 to October 31 and 54 cfs from November 1 to April 30 and Trout Unlimited recommended a flow regime of 250 to 500 cfs. Subsequent to FERC's final EA, in which FERC staff recommended RFH's proposed seasonal flow regime because it balanced the benefits of increased minimum flows to aquatic resources against the cost of lost generation, Maine DEP filed its WQC which requires RFH to release a year-round minimum flow of 200 cfs from the Middle Dam into the Middle Dam bypassed reach (Zone 4) per Condition 2. As indicated in FERC's January 2026 License Order and based on RFH's hydraulic habitat modeling results summarized in the final EA, increasing the minimum flow in the Middle Dam bypassed reach to 200 cfs year-round as required by WQC Condition 2 would increase the amount of aquatic habitat for stocked trout, smallmouth bass, and benthic macroinvertebrates from about 15% of the habitat to about 85% but would reduce generation by 4,990 MWh per year. This review finds that Standard A-2 is appropriate for Zones 2 and 4. Because impoundments generally can apply Standard A-1 and neither the WQC nor the FERC license restrict impoundment refill flow allocation between spill and refill, Standard A-1 is appropriate for Zones 1 and 3 and is appropriate for Zone 5 as well.

Article 401 of the new license allows for planned deviations up to 3 weeks at a time with concurrence from the Maine DEP, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (collectively, resource agencies). Reports must be filed with FERC within 14 days of the onset of the deviation. Unplanned deviations longer than 3 hours or having an environmental impact require FERC reporting within 14 days and deviations less than 3 hours with no environmental impact require an annual report to FERC by March 1 each year. The license also requires RFH to file an annual statement if there are no deviations.

Article 402 of the new license requires the licensee to file an operational compliance monitoring plan that specifies the methods used to monitor and document the required impoundment water levels, run-of-river operation, minimum flow releases, and whitewater and aesthetic flow releases. RFH filed its operation compliance monitoring plan with FERC on May 20, 2026 and FERC approved the plan on June 2, 2026. While there have been some unplanned deviations since the January 2026 license was issued, FERC has determined that they would not be considered violations of Article 401 of the license.

Based on the mid-term review, the Project does not adversely impact river flows and continues to satisfy the flow regimes criterion.

B. Water Quality

Goal: *Water quality is protected in waterbodies directly affected by the facility, including downstream reaches, bypassed reaches, and impoundments above dams and diversions*.

Assessment of Criterion: The applicant appropriately selected Standard B-2, Resource Agency and Tribal Government Recommendations for all Zones.

Discussion: The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) classifies the Androscoggin River in the vicinity of the Project as Class C Water, which must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water supply after treatment; fishing; agriculture; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, Section 403; navigation; and as a habitat for fish and other aquatic life. For Class C waters, discharges must not cause the ambient temperature of any freshwater body to be raised more than 5 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), and in no event, should any discharge cause the temperature of a freshwater body to exceed 85°F and instantaneous dissolved oxygen (DO) must be at least 5 mg/L or 60 percent saturation, whichever is higher, and must meet a 30-day average 6.5 mg/L.

Since the previous 2019 LIHI certification, RFH conducted a water quality study from June 2020 to October 2020 to support relicensing of the Project. RFH sampled water quality constituents in the impoundments, in the Middle Dam bypassed reach, and in the Middle Dam canal adjacent to the intake at the lower powerhouse. No water quality data was collected in the upper bypassed reach due to safety considerations. Water temperatures followed natural seasonal patterns with no thermal stratification in either impoundment. DO levels consistently exceeded water quality standards (i.e., ≥5.0 milligrams per liter [mg/L] instantaneous, ≥6.5 mg/L 30-day average, and ≥60 percent saturation). Continuous monitoring confirmed high DO levels during peak summer temperatures. Additionally, rock bag samples for benthic macroinvertebrates in Zone 4 attained Class A aquatic life standards and exceeded applicable Class C designation. Run-of-River operations and required minimum flows minimize the potential for Project operation to affect water quality. Additionally, adhering to condition 3 of Maine DEP's WQC, which requires whitewater and aesthetic flow releases into Zone 4 and Zone 2 respectively, of 1,200 to 1,500 cfs when sufficient inflow is available, allows the Project to meet the designated uses listed above.

Based on the mid-term review, the Project does not adversely impact water quality and continues to satisfy the water quality criterion.

C. Upstream Fish Passage

Goal: *The facility allows for the safe, timely, and effective upstream passage of migratory fish to ensure that migratory species can successfully complete their life cycles and maintain healthy populations in areas affected by the facility.*

Assessment of Criterion: As in the prior recertification application, the Applicant selected Standard C-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for all zones. This review finds that this standard is still appropriate under the new license.

Discussion: The project dam is located about 80 miles upstream from the mouth of the Androscoggin River at Merrymeeting Bay and is the 8th FERC-licensed Project on the river upstream from Merrymeeting Bay. There are over 200 dams throughout the Androscoggin River basin. Upstream passage is provided at the 3 most downstream Projects (Brunswick Project (FERC No. 2284), Pejepscot Project (FERC No. 4784), and Worumbo Project (FERC No. 3428, LIHI #10)) but not at the next 4 projects between the Rumford Falls Project and the Worumbo Project.

FERC's 2024 Environmental Assessment for the relicensing of the Project notes that in the Androscoggin River, the historical freshwater upstream limit of Atlantic salmon is Rumford Falls; however no Atlantic salmon have been seen upstream of Lewiston Falls (over 40 miles downstream of Rumford) since 1815. RFH's LIHI application notes that Lewiston Falls is also a natural barrier to upstream fish migrations.

Interior's reservation of authority to prescribe fish passage facilities pursuant to Section 18 was included as a requirement of the new FERC license under Article 403. If Interior decides to require fish passage over the 40 year duration of the new FERC license, the agency will also have the authority to prescribe any flow releases it deems necessary to support safe, timely, and effective upstream passage.

Based on the mid-term review, the Project does not adversely impact upstream fish passage and continues to satisfy this criterion.

D. Downstream Fish Passage and Protection

Goal: *The facility allows for the safe, timely, and effective downstream passage of migratory fish. For riverine (resident) fish, including resident potamodromous fish, the facility minimizes loss of fish from reservoirs and upstream river reaches affected by facility operations. Migratory species can successfully complete their life cycles and maintain healthy populations in the areas affected by the facility.*

Assessment of Criterion: As in the prior recertification application, the Applicant selected

Standard D-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for all zones. This review finds that this standard is still appropriate under the new license.

Discussion: As discussed above, the Project is the eighth FERC-licensed Project on the Androscoggin River upstream from the mouth with Merrymeeting Bay and likely the 2nd natural barrier to upstream fish migration after the Lewiston Falls about 50 miles downstream. There are 10 FERC projects upstream of the Rumford Falls Project and none have formal downstream fish passage facilities. The previous LIHI recertification notes that there are no migratory species present at the facility and no information in the record indicates the facility was responsible for the extirpation of migratory species. During the recent FERC relicensing, Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife (Maine DIFW) filed comments on RFH's final license application on February 17, 2023,[4] in which the department noted that based on their records, American eels have been reported from several ponds and lakes upstream of the Project; contrary to what RFH states in their final license application. The dataset included in Maine DIFW's comment letter indicates eels were reported from Joe's Pond in 2001, which is located adjacent to and hydrologically connected to, Zone 1 via a perennial stream that crosses under US. Highway 2. The required run-of-river operations and year-round minimum flow of 1 cfs or leakage into the upper bypassed reach (Zone 2) would support wetted habitat for any migrating eels. Resident species include smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, fallfish, rainbow trout and brown trout, none of which are indigenous to Maine (RFH, Final License Application, p. E-72). Maine DIFW annually stocks rainbow and brown trout along with brook trout in the Project area.

As with upstream passage discussed above, Interior's reservation of authority to prescribe fish passage facilities pursuant to Section 18 was included as a requirement of the new FERC license under Article 403. If Interior decides to require downstream fish passage over the 40-year duration of the new FERC license, the agency will also have the authority to prescribe any facility and flow releases it deems necessary to support safe, timely, and effective downstream passage.

Pertinent Project features that affect the impingement and entrainment potential (i.e., trashrack dimensions, intake velocities, and turbine characteristics) have not changed since the previous LIHI recertification or over the course of the FERC relicensing. While there is likely to be some entrainment, FERC in its FEA determined that it would be insignificant. No resource agency or Tribal Nation requested entrainment studies nor commented on entrainment during the relicensing proceedings.

Based on the mid-term review and my review of other information, the Project has little to no impact on downstream fish passage and protection and therefore continues to satisfy this criterion.

[4] February 17, 2023 Comments of Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

E. Shorelines and Watershed

Goal: *The facility has demonstrated that sufficient action has been taken to protect, mitigate or enhance the condition of soils, vegetation, and ecosystem functions on shoreline and watershed lands associated with the facility.*

Assessment of Criterion: As in the prior recertification application, the Applicant selected Standard E-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for all zones. This review finds that this standard is still appropriate under the new license.

Discussion: The project boundary includes approximately 81.7 acres of land, 419 acres of water at Zone 1, and 21 acres of water at Zone 3. According to the FERC EA,[5] The Project is located in a forested basin lined with mixed evergreen and deciduous trees. The basin is largely undeveloped except for the floodplain where the town of Rumford is located. Lands within the Project boundary are limited predominately to the riparian habitats along the river and developed areas associated with the town of Rumford. Approximately 465 acres of wetlands are present within the Project boundary. These lands can support a variety of wildlife common to Maine, including deer and waterfowl; however, there are no critical habitats or lands of ecological significance within the Project boundary

in Zone 1 there is a shoreline buffer that ranges from 10 feet to 800 feet in width and extends 1 mile upstream from the Upper Dam. As noted above in Criteria A – Flow Regimes, under the new license, the Project continues to operate in a run-of-river mode and water level maintenance has not changed since the previous license. The licensee maintains the Upper Dam impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 601.24 ft USGS and the Middle Dam impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 502.74 ft USGS. Additionally, there are no significant changes in shoreline requirements under the new license.

No shoreline management plan or similar plan is included as a requirement of the new FERC license or the Maine DEP water quality certificate.

Based on the mid-term review, the Project's continued run-of-river mode and impoundment level maintenance practices minimize the potential for routine project operations to contribute to shoreline erosion, negatively impact wetlands adjacent to the reservoirs or other potential resources in these habitats. Therefore, the Project continues to satisfy the shorelines and watershed protection criterion.

[5] Section 3.3.2.1. Terrestrial Resources of FERC August 2024 Rumford Falls EA.

F. Threatened and Endangered Species

Goal: *The facility does not negatively impact federal or state listed species or tribal trust species.*

Assessment of Criterion Passage: In the prior recertification application, the Applicant selected Standard F-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for all zones. In the current mid-term review application, the Applicant selected standard F-2, Finding of No Negative Effect for all zones.

Discussion: In its 2024 EA for the Project's relicensing, FERC staff accessed FWS' IPaC system to query a list of threatened and endangered species that may occur within the project boundary. Atlantic salmon (federally endangered), northern long-eared bat (federally endangered), tri-colored bat (proposed endangered), and the monarch butterfly (proposed threatened) were listed as having the potential to occur within the project boundary. FERC concluded in the EA that the Project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect Atlantic salmon because no salmon have been documented upstream of Lewiston Falls, which is about 50 miles downstream, since 1815. NMFS concurred with FERC's conclusion in a letter filed with FERC on July 14, 2025.

Monarch butterflies are not known to overwinter near the Project and common milkweed which is used by the species for egg development is not present in the project area. While Northern long-eared- and tri-colored bats are not known to use habitat within the Project area, upland forests near the Project could provide suitable habitat for summer roosting and foraging.[6] Article 404 of the new FERC license therefore prohibits any tree removal or trimming in the Project boundary from April 15 through October 31 unless necessary for public or Project safety. If emergency tree removal or trimming is necessary during this period, the licensee must notify FWS as soon as practical after conducting the tree trimming or removal. With such a restriction in place, FERC staff concluded that relicensing the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the northern long-eared bat, and would not jeopardize the continued existence of the tri-colored bat. By letter filed with the Commission on September 18, 2024, FWS concurred with staff's determination.

Eight state-listed bat species (including northern long-eared- and tri-colored bats) were identified by Maine DIFW as having the potential to occur in the Project area. The same tree cutting restrictions required by Article 404 of the new license would also be protective for the remaining 6 state-listed bat species identified by Maine DIFW. The creeper mussel is a species of special concern in Maine and also identified by Maine DIFW as having the potential to occur in the Project area. Run-of-river operations and increased minimum flows would be conducive to supporting any creeper mussels that may be present in the Project area.

[6] Appendix D, at D-3 to D-4 of FERC August 2024 Rumford Falls EA

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry informed RFH that no rare plant species are within the Project boundary and therefore operations do not affect rare plant species in the state of Maine.

Based on the mid-term review, the Project continues to satisfy the threatened and endangered species protection criterion.

G. Cultural and Historic Resources

Goal: *The facility does not adversely impact cultural or historic resources associated with the facility's lands and waters, including archeological sites, historic era sites, traditional cultural landscapes, traditional cultural properties, and other tribal trust resources.*

Assessment of Criterion: As in the prior recertification application, the Applicant selected Standard G-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for Zone 2 through 5 and Standard G-2, Approved Plan for Zone 1. This review finds that the Applicant selected the appropriate standards.

Discussion: Previous archaeological studies identified eight sites along the upper impoundment (Zone 1) that are National Register-eligible and potentially susceptible to erosion. Over the last decade, RFH has monitored these sites to determine whether erosion was affecting the sites. A lack of documented erosion allowed a shift from an annual to a biennial cycle for monitoring. RFH completed a Historic Architectural Survey of the agreed-upon area of potential effects (APE) in October 2020. The survey identified 17 historic resources within the Project's APE that have either been determined to be individually eligible or are recommended as eligible (individually or as contributing resources of a district). As part of its relicensing proposal, RFH proposed to continue its biennial monitoring in Zone 1. FERC staff recommended including this monitoring as a requirement of any subsequent license.

According to a letter dated November 10, 2021, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission concluded that relicensing the Project would have no adverse effect upon historic properties – contingent on the development of a historic properties management plan (HPMP) for the Project. Article 409 of the new FERC license requires RFH to implement the Final Programmatic Agreement for the Project and develop an HPMP within one year of license issuance. In a December 11, 2023 letter to FERC, the Mi'kmaq Nation noted that while they were unaware of any specific sites or culturally significant features at the Project, the general area constitutes traditional areas that were historically utilized by members of the Mi'kmaq Nation and the other Wabanaki Tribes. The FERC license requires that the HPMP include provisions to consult with the Mi'kmaq Nation if Native American artifacts or human remains are discovered.

After the issuance of the final EA, RFH filed a biennial cultural resources report on December 3, 2024, indicating significant erosion occurred over the last two years that impacted one of the archaeological sites (i.e., Town of Rumford site 49.20), and that mitigation measures beyond continued monitoring may now be warranted. Following consultation with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, RFH prepared a Phase 1 plan to determine if significant site deposits were impacted by recent flooding events. Article 408 of the new FERC license requires RFH to complete the work at site 49.20 and file the final report with FERC by April 30, 2027.

Based on the mid-term review, the Project continues to satisfy the cultural and historic resources criterion with the condition recommended in Section VI to ensure the HPMP is completed and timely filed.

H. Recreational, Public, and Traditional Cultural Access

Goal: *The facility accommodates recreation activities on lands and waters controlled by the facility and provides recreational, public, and traditional cultural access to its associated lands and waters without fee or charge.*

Assessment of Criterion Passage: In the prior recertification application, the Applicant selected Standard H-1, Not Applicable/De Minimis Effect for Zone 2 and Standard H-3, Assured Accessibility and Use for all other zones. In the current mid-term review application, the Applicant selected Standard H-3 for Zones 3 and 5 and Standard H-2, Resource Agency and Tribal Government Recommendations for all other zones. However, because recreational opportunities are available in all zones and required by Articles 406 and 407 of the FERC License and Condition 3 of the Maine DEP WQC, this review finds that Standard H-2, Resource Agency and Tribal Government Recommendations is appropriate for all zones.

Discussion: Recreation at the Rumford Falls Project includes hiking/walking, riding an ATV (all-terrain vehicle), fishing, boating, and scenic viewing. Recreation opportunities in Zone 1 include primarily boating and fishing. One provision of the Recreation Management Plan required by Article 406 of the new FERC license, filed on July 20, 2026 and awaiting approval by FERC, is for the Upper Dam impoundment boat access and portage site. In their August 2024 EA, FERC concluded that by developing an access location near the Upper Dam boat barrier, the portage route distance would be significantly reduced from the current formal option at the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry boat launch in Rumford, while also enhancing public safety and the user experience. Zone 1 also includes the beginning portion of the Rumford Trail that begins at the South Rumford Road bridge and ends at the Route 108 bridge in the Middle Canal portion of Zone 3. While offering hiking opportunities and an overlook of the upper falls, the trail also serves as a portage route.

Recreational opportunities in Zone 2 include the aesthetic flows required by Maine DEP's WQC condition 3(c) and views of the flows from the overlook mentioned above. Maine DEP's WQC

condition 3(c) requires that if sufficient inflow is available, RFH must provide aesthetic flow releases into the Upper Dam bypass reach with a target flow ranging from 1,200 to 1,500 cfs for ten days (total), June through August, from 10 am to 4 pm. Article 407 of the FERC license also requires these aesthetic flows along with a requirement for lighting the falls from the Upper Station between evening civil twilight (i.e., sunset) and 12 a.m. when flows exceed 6,000 cubic feet per second. RFH submitted its Whitewater Boating and Aesthetic Flow Plan on July 1, 2026 and is waiting for FERC's approval.

Recreational opportunities in Zone 3 include the West Viewing Area located at the Upper Station powerhouse and provides views of the falls, Middle Dam impoundment, downtown Rumford, and Black Mountain. In their August 2024 EA, FERC concluded that the proposed enhancements in this area would improve recreation, but also required a schedule to complete these enhancements, and at the request of the Town of Rumford, a provision to install a grade-separated concrete sidewalk along the existing Upper Station powerhouse driveway that connects to the Town sidewalk, instead of the proposed painted walking zone. These enhancements are included in the Recreation Management Plan required by Article 406.

Recreational opportunities in Zone 4 include whitewater boating and access. Maine DEP's WQC condition 3(b) requires that if sufficient inflow is available, RFH must provide whitewater boating flow releases into the Middle Dam bypass reach with a target flow ranging from 1,200 to 1,500 cfs for ten days (total), June through August, 10 am to 3 pm. During the previous FERC license term, there was only informal and unsafe access to the Middle Dam bypassed reach. Per the Recreation Management Plan required by Article 406, RFH now maintain two safe, formal access points to the bypassed reach at the Rumford Public Library and the Rumford Town Hall.

Recreational opportunities in Zone 5 include boating and fishing. Access to Zone 5 is available either from upstream in Zone 4 via the Rumford Public Library and the Rumford Town Hall, or from the Carlton Bridge boat launch located on the Swift River just upstream of its confluence with the Androscoggin River in Zone 5. Given the consistent low use of the Carlton Bridge boat launch and the availability and popularity of the nearby Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry launch, FERC staff did not recommend improvements in its August 2024 EA, but did conclude that the continued maintenance of the boat launch would maintain public access to project waters. The continued operation and maintenance of this site by RFH is a component of the Recreation Management Plan and required by Article 406.

Based on the mid-term review and publicly available information, the Project continues to satisfy the Recreational, Public, and Traditional Cultural Access criterion with the condition recommended in Section VI to ensure that the RMP is implemented once approved by FERC.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendation

This review determined that the Project continues to satisfy the LIHI criteria, and a new 10-year Certificate term can be granted with the following conditions to ensure that post-licensing requirements are met timely.

Condition 1: The Facility Owner shall submit the final Historic Properties Management Plan to LIHI once it has been approved by FERC. In annual compliance submittals to LIHI, the Facility Owner shall report on any consultation that occurred during the year related to ground-disturbing or other activities subject to the HPMP. In addition, the Facility Owner shall provide LIHI with a summary of the results of the Phase I archaeological investigation including SHPO comments in the first compliance submittal after survey completion.

Condition 2: The Facility Owner shall submit the Recreation Management Plan (RMP) and Whitewater and Aesthetic Flow Plan to LIHI once they have been approved by FERC. In annual compliance submittals to LIHI, the Facility Owner shall report on the status of recreation enhancements until all are completed and shall provide a summary of all dates and flow volumes and durations during the prior year when whitewater and/or aesthetic flows were provided.

Appendix A – License and WQC Requirements Crosswalk

Resource Area	Topic	Previous License Requirement	FERC License Requirement	401 WQC Requirement	Change from Existing License
Aquatics	General Operation	Run-of-river operations Maintain the Middle Dam Impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 502.74 ft USGS, and maintain the Upper Dam Impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 601.24 ft USGS.	Run-of-river operations Maintain the Middle Dam Impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 502.74 ft USGS, and maintain the Upper Dam Impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 601.24 ft USGS.	Run-of-river operations Maintain the Middle Dam Impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 502.74 ft USGS, and maintain the Upper Dam Impoundment water levels within 1 foot of full pond elevation, 601.24 ft USGS.	No Change
	Minimum Flows	Provide a year-round minimum flow of 1 cfs or leakage from the Upper Dam into the Upper Dam bypass reach and 21 cfs from the Middle Dam into the Middle Dam bypass reach.	Provide a year-round minimum flow of 1 cfs or leakage from the Upper Dam into the Upper Dam bypass reach and 21 cfs from the Middle Dam into the Middle Dam bypass reach.	Provide a year-round minimum flow of 1 cfs or leakage from the Upper Dam into the Upper Dam bypass reach and 200 cfs from the Middle Dam into the Middle Dam bypass reach.	Increase of minimum flow from the Middle Dam into the Middle Dam bypass reach from 21 cfs to 200 cfs year-round per WQC requirements.
	Operations Compliance	Develop a plan to report Project operations.	Develop an Operation Compliance Monitoring Plan.	None	Develop an Operation Compliance Monitoring Plan.

Resource Area	Topic	Previous License Requirement	FERC License Requirement	401 WQC Requirement	Change from Existing License
Water Quality	Water Quality Plan	Meet conditions of WQC	Meet conditions of WQC	Comply with all Standard Conditions for Class C waters	None
Terrestrial	Wildlife Habitat & Wetlands	None	Remove the 82 acres of land along the western and eastern shore of the Upper Dam Impoundment that extends above the normal maximum water surface elevation of the impoundment and the 0.3-acre parcel of land located between the Middle Canal and Route 108 from the Project Boundary.	None	Remove land not directly associated with Project operations or recreation sites from the Project Boundary.
Threatened and Endangered Species	Listed Bat Species	None	To protect the northern long-eared bat and tricolored bat, the license requires Rumford Falls Hydro LLC to avoid, among other things, removing, destroying, or trimming any trees on Project land from April 15 through October 31 unless trees represent a	None	To protect the northern long-eared bat and tricolored bat, avoid removing, destroying, or trimming any trees on Project land from April 15 through October 31 unless trees represent a safety hazard.

Resource Area	Topic	Previous License Requirement	FERC License Requirement	401 WQC Requirement	Change from Existing License
			safety hazard.		
Recreation	Public Access	Prepare and implement the canoe access facility plan	Refer to WQC condition 3 – Recreation Access and Use	Provide formal and informal access to the Project waters upstream and downstream of the Project dam for the purpose of recreation in and on the water, for fishing, and for navigation to the extent possible. If sufficient flow is available, provide whitewater boating flow releases into the Middle Dam bypass reach with a target flow ranging from 1,200 to 1,500 cfs for 10 days (total), June through August, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., to be determined based on consultation with the Town of Rumford and American Whitewater. If sufficient flow is available, provide	Addition of whitewater boating and aesthetic flow releases.

Resource Area	Topic	Previous License Requirement	FERC License Requirement	401 WQC Requirement	Change from Existing License
				aesthetic flow releases into the Upper Dam bypass reach with a target flow ranging from 1,200 to 1,500 cfs for 10 days (total), June through August, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., to be determined based on consultation with the Town of Rumford.	
Recreation	Recreation Management Plan	None	Develop a Recreation Management Plan Develop a Whitewater Boating and Aesthetic Flow Plan	None	Develop a Recreation Management Plan Develop a Whitewater Boating and Aesthetic Flow Plan
	Recreation Enhancements	Develop two additional canoe access facilities at Carlton Bridge and Rumford Point.	1) Install a grade-separated sidewalk along the Upper Station powerhouse driveway; 2) Include a plan and schedule for improving river access at the Rumford Public Library and Rumford Town Hall; 3) Include a plan and schedule to develop	None	Update sidewalk at the Upper Station powerhouse, create a plan for improved river access, create a plan/schedule to develop a new Upper Dam Impoundment access, include a plan/schedule for routine recreation site maintenance.

Resource Area	Topic	Previous License Requirement	FERC License Requirement	401 WQC Requirement	Change from Existing License
			a new Upper Dam Impoundment access and portage near the boat barrier and the Rumford Falls Trail; 4) Include a plan and schedule for ongoing maintenance of Project recreation facilities (e.g., weekly trash removal, mowing, and snow removal).		
Cultural	HPMP	Implement the Programmatic Agreement	Implement the Programmatic Agreement and develop an HPMP	None	New Programmatic Agreement and develop an HPMP