

Harry A Kendrick, Wilder, VT.  
Wilder Dam - P-1892

I have lived in my current house on Passumpsic Avenue since 1978, and I am an abutter to the Wilder Dam property. Here are my thoughts and concerns about the relicensing of the Wilder Dam.

Access to parking, fish ladder and more: in recent years the access to the property is being limited with the closing of the parking lot nearest to the dam. Many people would sit there in their cars to view the dam, birds, people fishing, etc. and many times they were just reading a book and enjoying the scenery. This area also used to have a fish ladder that has been closed for many years. It would be great to see that reopened. Furthermore, for several years there used to be a visitors center here with educational exhibits and activities about hydro power. It would be nice if this returned.

The Wilder Dam Road which leads to the dam is now closed every evening at 5pm. This also prohibits access to an upper parking area for people wanting to use the Killowatt Parks. It was my understanding that the recreation areas were supposed to be open from dawn to dusk, but this section is no longer accessible after 5pm except by pedestrians. I feel all areas should be open and accessible to everyone from dawn to dusk.

Financial Support for Recreation Areas: several years ago the town of Hartford took over the oversight of the Killowatt Parks and developed a master plan for improvements. They continue to take care of the parks, but financially the town has not been able to make the improvements. It would be great if the Great River Hydro helped financially with the upkeep and contributed to the capital improvements. These recreation areas are a great resource, but it needs to be made more accessible to all people despite disabilities and that means that improvements must be made.

Historic Highlights Recognition: the dam's property has a significant history that is being lost to the younger generation. It would be great to see some historical markers with pictures and narratives to inform people about the history. It begins with the indigenous people using the river for transportation and fishing. The lower falls has the Wilder Dam, while the middle falls was the location of a huge paper mill first run by the Wilder brothers and then International Paper. The town of Wilder was a planned development to provide housing for the paper mill employees and then for the men building the dam. The upper falls was the location of a bridge from Olcott Falls (now Wilder) to West Lebanon. Charles Wilder left money to build the bridge if the town was renamed itself Wilder. Currently there is no mention about any of this on the dam's property. Great River Hydro should provide some financial support for this.

Pedestrian Bridge: the paper mill used to have a pedestrian bridge from Wilder to West Lebanon so there was access to both sides of the river for some of the work activities and so the employees living in West Lebanon could walk to work. Today it would be wonderful to have a combination pedestrian and bike bridge in the Killowatt Park South area to allow access to recreational activities on both sides of the river. Perhaps the Killowatt Parks could eventually be connected to the rail trail in New Hampshire which extends from Lebanon to Concord, NH.

Brush Control and Tree Removal: in recent years the control of brush and removal of trees under the high-tension wires has been very poorly done. The brush has been sprayed at times with no notice to residents that this was taking place. The trees have been cut down and left in place to rot. This is very unsightly in the middle area of the parks which used to have the appearance of a forest. Today, the appearance is not one that supports the aesthetics of the north and south parks. They could do a better job with this.

Summary - this is what I would like to see:

- Parks open Dawn to Dusk
- Access to all parking lots during the open times
- Opening of the fish ladder
- Visitors Center to highlight and educate people about hydro and other forms of power.
- Great River Hydro providing the Town with financial support for the maintenance and capital improvements of the recreational facilities.
- Great River Hydro providing financial support for Historical Markers.
- Pedestrian / Bike Bridge from Wilder to West Lebanon
- Better and safer brush control and tree removal

The Wilder Dam and its parks are a wonderful recreational resource for this area. I would like to see Great River Hydro open up access and financially

support the efforts of the Town of Hartford to maintain and improve the parks while making them accessible to all citizens.

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