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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Energy Projects

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TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc.

Wilder	Project No. 1892-026	-
Bellows Falls	Project No. 1855-045	
Vernon	Project No. 1904-073	

New Hampshire/Vermont

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BELLOWS FALLS - Evening Meeting

Bellows Falls Middle School

15 School Street

Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

The evening scoping meeting, pursuant to notice, convened at 7:15 p.m., before a Staff Panel:

KEN HOGAN, Project Coordinator, FERC
MARY GREEN, Geology and soils, FERC
RALPH NELSON, Geology and soils, FERC
MARY McCANN, Endangered species and macroinvertebrates, FERC
BRETT BATTAGLIA, Terrestrial resources, FERC
ADAM BEECO, Recreation, land use and aesthetics, FERC
ANGIE SCANGAS, Water resources, FERC
ROBERT QUIGGLE, Archaeological and cultural resources, FERC.

With: JOHN RAGONESE, FERC License Manager, US Northeast Hydro Region, TransCanada
Accompanied by EDWIN NASON and EARL BRISSETTE

C O M M E N T E R S

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. HOGAN: Welcome everybody. My name is Ken Hogan, I'm with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I'd like to see a show of hands of who have heard of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission before.

(Show of hands.)

Everybody. Okay, Mary, you're off the hook.

Mary typically gives a little spiel about the Commission, tells you who we are.

Tonight we're here to talk about the Bellows Falls project, a project going through hydropower relicensing at the Commission; and the purpose of the scoping meetings is to seek local community input on issues or concerns or compliments with TransCanada's hydroelectric project here in Bellows Falls.

This process is very important to the Commission because we don't like to make decisions in a vacuum. We're coming from Washington, D.C.; we want to hear your concerns because you live with the project day-in and day-out, every day of the year; and it's really important for us to have an understanding of what the issues are that we need to be looking at in our environmental document that we prepare, to make a recommendation to the Commission.

So I have -- I'm going to go through and actually do introductions; but I've forgotten this twice now, with my

team; so I'll start here.

MS. GREEN: Mary Green with FERC, geology and soils.

MR. BEECO: Adam Beeco with FERC. recreation, land use and aesthetics.

MR. SEARS: Mike Sears with FERC, fisheries and aquatic resources.

MS. McCANN: Mary McCann with FERC. Endangered species and aquatic, macroinvertebrates and mussels.

MR. BATTAGLIA: Brett Battaglia, also with FERC. Terrestrial resources.

MR. QUIGGLE: Rob Quiggle with FERC. Archaeological and cultural resources.

MR. HOGAN: And we have Angie Scangas out back; she's a hydraulic engineer. Is that right, Angie?

MS. SCANGAS: Yes.

MR. HOGAN: She does the water modeling reviews for us.

MR. NELSON: Ralph Nelson, soils and geology.

MS. BLADEN: I'm Elizabeth Bladen, I'm the FERC attorney for the project, all three of the TransCanada projects.

MR. HOGAN: Elizabeth isn't feeling very well tonight, so.

MR. HOGAN: I'd like to see a show of hands of

folks who are familiar with the FERC licensing process. Just so I can get an idea of how much stuff I should go into.

(Show of hands.)

MR. HOGAN: Okay, a fair number of you but not enough of you. So I'm going to go through to go through at least the first year of the licensing process.

On this handout, the flow chart is the Commission's Integrated Licensing Process for hydroelectric project relicensing. We are currently in Box 4. The box numbers are in the lower right hand corner of the box in kind of a reddish brown color. That's when we hold our Commission scoping meetings, what we're doing tonight.

After tonight we'll have an opportunity for written comments to be filed by March 31st. This is your opportunity to comment on the Commission's Scoping Document 1, which is another handout. Adam, can you hold that up?

That one. Thank you, Mary.

So comments on the Commission's Scoping Document 1 are due March 1st; also comments on the Applicant's pre application document, which is the document that explains their proposal and describes the projects that you probably all seen if you're here today. Comments on that document are due March 1st, and study requests are due on March 1st.

Study requests I'll get to in a little bit,

regarding the specific criteria that the studies must follow; and in this packet here I have those criterion; I'll do a little bit of a discussion about that in a minute.

Once the comments and study requests are filed, the Applicant will then prepare a proposed study plan. That study plan is all the studies that the Applicant is intending to implement to address the issues that they've heard about tonight and throughout these public meetings that we're holding.

Following the issuance of that proposed study plan, there's a 90-day period of time that is used to work with the applicant to modify that study plan into a revised study plan. During that 90-day period of time there is a requirement for at least one public meeting to voice your concerns or issues; and at the end of the 90 days the Applicant will provide a revised study plan that hopefully better identifies or meets stakeholder needs or concerns for information gathering efforts.

Is everybody following me so far?

I need a show of hands. Yes? Nods?

Okay, good.

Once the Applicant files their revised study plan, and I'm now at -- I'm sorry. During that 90-day period, at the end of the 90-day period there's a comment period on the proposed study plan where you can make

official comments, file with FERC, identifying concerns you have with the proposed study plan, then the Applicant will make a further revised study plan.

The revised study plan is then also open to an opportunity for comment; so if during the 90 days you feel that you had an agreement with the Applicant on certain studies or methodologies to implement the study and it didn't come through in the revised study plan, it's your opportunity to let FERC know "Hey, I thought it was going to go this way and it didn't, so we just want to let you know we're not happy with this aspect or that aspect of the revised study plan. And the Commission will then use that information in making a study plan determination.

Now that determination is an order to the Applicant to implement their revised study plan as is or as modified by that determination, and we use the study requests and all the information that's gathered throughout the study plan development phase of the ILP to inform the Commission's decision on that study plan determination.

This is a very open and transparent process; and I don't want to go to far, because once that determination goes out, the Applicant will then take that study plan and implement it, and usually it's a one, two or sometimes even more years of study; usually it's one to two years. So that takes us way down the road here, and I don't think you want

to sit here and listen to me go through the next three years of process. Do you? Or do you.

AUDIENCE: No.

MR. HOGAN: All right. So I'm going to quickly go over some information about how to get information from FERC. We have a public brochure here; I think there's probably enough that everyone is able to grab one today; we were running low.

On page 12 of this brochure, there's a section called Get Information. And we have a couple of electronic services at FERC; one is called eLibrary. That is an electronic library of every issuance or filing made with the Commission, and you can search based on the project number, the specific docket, and look at the entire record of everything that's been filed with the Commission or issued by the Commission and not only see what it was but also actually read the document. Would it be a PDF, a Word document, or an image, a photocopied image that is actually downloadable and available to you.

Another resource to you is what we call eSubscription. If you sign up for eSubscription, what you'll receive is an e-mail every time the Commission makes an issuance or an entity files a document with FERC; and embedded in that e-mail will be a link to that document; and again, you'll be able to click on the link and it will take

you straight to the document and you'll be able to review it for yourself. So we do maintain a very transparent process and we encourage you to use these systems if you want to be kept engaged.

Now I said I'd get back to the study criteria, and I will do that. The next few pages are the schedule for the current Integrated Licensing Process; this is where we actually have the dates included; it's not just a flow chart with numbers of days and activities. But on the last page, I have the study plan criteria.

These are seven criteria that if you're going to be filing a study request with the Commission, you really should address. I can't stress that enough. This is the Commission's litmus test as to whether or not the study is warranted or not warranted. We follow these criteria to a T and we take them seriously.

Criterias 2 and 3 are mutually exclusive, depending on whether you're a member of the public or a resource agency, so there's really only six criteria that must be addressed. I don't want to go through all of them tonight, but I just want to make sure you're aware of them.

We have another document, the Guide. This is a new document produced by FERC; it's Guidance on Applying the Study Criteria. I highly recommend, if you're going to be providing study requests that you take a look at this

document. This hasn't been available to most ILP stakeholders or participants; this is new as of March of last year. It gives examples, it gives explanations of what FERC is looking for, and when you address the criteria, like I said, it does give examples of a criterion and mock study requests and things of that nature. So this is a really useful tool if you want to make convincing study requests to FERC. This is what we're looking for.

For the rest of the meeting what I'd like to do is, we're going to go through our resource areas, things that we've identified in Scoping Document 1 as potential issues that the project may have, or potential effects the project may have. When we do that, we're going to turn to John Ragonese with TransCanada to identify any studies that they have conducted, associated with the respective resource area, and then we're going to seek comments from the public on that individual resource area, and then we'll move to the next resource area.

Sound like a plan?

Okay. I'm getting good nods; I like that. Feedback.

Geology and soils.

Geology and Soils

MR. NELSON: I'm going to be referring to Section 4.2.1 of the scoping document. This is on page 24. That

starts the list of issues and resources that we've identified.

In geology and soils, under that bulletin: The effect of project's operation and maintenance on riverbank erosion, including the potential effects on protected species, cultural resources or the structural integrity of adjacent facilities.

MR. RAGONESE: Good evening. So what I'd like to do is address all of our, TransCanada's activities on the basis of what we might have included in our pre application document and what we might have done for pre scoping studies, and then any other planned studies that may be in the works that are associated with any of these resource areas.

So in the topic of geology and soils, we didn't really have any specific studies that we specified and proposed in our pre application document; rather than do that, we felt we would wait until scoping occurred, and study requests came in. And likewise, we didn't have any project mitigation enhancement proposals as well. But on the other hand, we did do a number of different, or initiate a number of different studies, and many in part are associated with geology and soil resources.

The first one mentioned is a shoreline survey. We took a study season, and with several boat crews

identified a number of different resources including active erosion; and these would be generally stretches of erosion that were about 25 feet or greater along the shorelines of our reservoirs, in this case Bellows Falls, and most of these -- all of these resources are mapped in a GIS platform. And we have this study summary, and in terms of its report, and we will have some sort of GIS-based published map file that will be available on our web site, which is: www.TransCanada-Relicensing.com.

On that website there will be a number of studies that will be posted over time; but let's look under the overview tab under the public information library, and that's where you'll see published studies, as we continue the process.

So we also conducted what's known as a Phase 1A archaeological study, primarily associated with areas where the project may or may not be affecting, or if there's some potential erosion going on on the project; shoreline areas, any impacts that might be associated with the historic or cultural resources. And that's a pretty standard study that needs to occur in order to get a license. The result of that study goes to the State Historic Preservation Office, and we review the results together and formulate whether or not additional survey or investigation of certain locations might have to occur; and then lastly whether or not any

recovery efforts need to be occurring at one of those particular sites.

That study is in its final stages; it has not gone to the SHPO yet, but it will. We also conducted a rare, threatened and endangered species survey of the Bellows Falls reservoir and downstream, affected reaches to the Vernon project; and in this case we got potential candidates from both states, and about a thousand feet of either boundary of the reservoirs; and then we whittle those down to those species or potential locations that might be affected by project operations; and then we went out and did a field survey, looking for those locations. Some of them are hard to find, some of them were not found, but we also found many new ones as well.

So that survey is just about ready to be released to the agencies; and I also want to point to an erosion-based study that was conducted as part of the relicensing from before, at Bellows Falls and that's in 1979, U.S. Army Corps or Simmons' Connecticut River Basin Erosion Study.

And that's it.

MR. HOGAN: Does anybody have any comments regarding geology and soils or erosion conditions?

Geology and Soils or Erosion Concerns

MR. HOGAN: We are recording the meeting with a court reporter; so please wait for the mic, given the size

of the room; and before you start to speak, provide your name and affiliation.

MR. McCLAMMER: My name is Jim McClammer, I'm a resident of Charlestown, New Hampshire; I'm also a commissioner on the Joint Rivers Commission. And I have a question about the Phase 1A archaeological study, in terms of the extent. Basically it had to be determined which areas you're going to look at. Did you look anyplace where there was a reservoir, where the dam has impounded water? Or was it basically where the SHPO had suggested there might some sensitive resources? Or was there a combination?

MR. RAGONESE: It's a combination; we did both.

MR. McCLAMMER: Any idea when that study will come out? Because actually, I'm also an environmental consultant, and frequently when we do projects on the Connecticut River required by a SHPO, basically, to do a Phase 1A. I've got a project now which is adjacent to one of your impoundments; if you've already done 1A, we don't need to do it again. And so that's why I'm asking.

MR. RAGONESE: It will probably be released to the SHPO in a matter of weeks.

MR. McCLAMMER: Within a matter of weeks. That would be --

MR. RAGONESE: It won't probably be available to the public, because of the locations will be identified in

that report. But you will be able to at least request, as a consultant, once you have some sort of copy or whatever they require for confidentiality -- whatever they require to release that information, you would need to acquire that from the SHPOs.

MR. McCLAMMER: So it sounds like, your specific cites to 1A were really narrowly circumscribed. It wasn't 20 miles of bank where there's potential resources.

MR. RAGONESE: We looked at all the -- basically all of the shoreline areas that are affected by project operations.

MR. McCLAMMER: And that can be anyplace there's a -- water, and so that can be --

MR. RAGONESE: I think downstream of the dam.

MR. McCLAMMER: Pardon?

MR. RAGONESE: Up and downstream of the dam.

MR. McCLAMMER: So where could the reservoirs extend? Obstensibly, you look for --

MR. RAGONESE: Where the reservoir extended upstream.

MR. McCLAMMER: Yup.

MR. RAGONESE: And where flows are affected by project operations downstream.

MR. McCLAMMER: Which is a good piece of the riverbank. Thank you.

MR. RAGONESE: Basically from Vernon Dam to North--

MR. McCLAMMER: In that direction. I'm thinking about specific -- well, it doesn't matter.

MR. RAGONESE: Did that answer your question?

MR. McCLAMMER: It gives me a better understanding. So you've done an awful lot of archaeological work.

MR. RAGONESE: Yes.

MR. HOGAN: Mic.

MR. BRUNO: My name is John Bruno, and I live about five miles upstream of the Bellows Falls Dam on the Connecticut River. And in reviewing the scoping study, the document, the first document, I notice that in Vernon and in Turners Falls that, I think in Vernon you were going to be studying erosion and in the Turners Falls you were actually going to be studying erosion and doing remediation.

My observation in living on the river for the last seven years is that there's an extensive amount of erosion going on in the impoundment area of the Bellows Falls Dam. And I'm wondering why, number one, that there's not, the erosion is not going to be studied and remediation was not included in the scoping study that I received and reviewed. In my opinion, there should be studies of erosion and there should be remediation included as it is in the

Turners Falls project for the Bellows Falls Dam; and I think that should be a condition of the renewal of the permit. Thank you.

I also have a memo. I don't know if anybody's collecting these.

MR. HOGAN: A prepared statement? Yes, we'll take that.

MR. BRUNO: Thank you.

(Document follows:)

MR. HOGAN: If you have any prepared statements that you would like to be made part of the record, we're happy to append them to tonight's meeting transcripts.

MS. LAMBERT: I'm Jan Lambert from Charlestown. I've been a resident there for 35 or more years, and I've been quite involved with various projects on the river, including 2001, 2002 I was very involved getting community involvement in NRCS, and whoever the company name was then; and Sullivan County Conservation District. We all worked together on a buffer zone.

I guess my question right now is, as this gentleman back here mentioned remediation. I mean, what are you seeking right now? I mean, are you seeking about a study or comments on things that have actually been done?

MR. HOGAN: What we're seeking is stakeholder comments and information from the folks in the local area about issues or concerns that they may have with the project, any recommendations you may have for the project, and also any compliments that you may have; if TransCanada is doing something well, we want to hear about that.

MS. LAMBERT: So is this the right time to do it?

MR. HOGAN: Absolutely.

MS. LAMBERT: Okay, so --

MR. HOGAN: And I'm actually going to also address the gentleman's question at the same time, if I may.

The scoping document that you reviewed and you identified; there were some studies being proposed and/or remediation. That represents what the applicant is proposing. Right now what FERC is seeking is any study requests or comments or issues that are concerns.

The studies that are necessary have not yet been determined, and that's why we're here. We're trying to find out what studies need to be determined, what are appropriate; and that's what we're going to be requiring TransCanada to do.

Once we have the information that's generated from those studies, we will seek recommendations on what types of remediations are appropriate, and then the Commission will do an environmental analysis to evaluate any proposed or recommended remediation efforts or enhancements that are being sought. We will determine the benefits of those and the cost and how implementing those types of measures will affect the project and what type of environmental benefits will be seen from doing those.

And then in the end, and we're talking multiple years out, we'll make a recommendation from our environmental document as to what's appropriate for a license if the Commission were to issue a new license to the project, under what conditions that license would be issued. And that's where the remediation or enhancements would be

incorporated or required; and that's for the Commission to make a decision on.

MR. BRUNO: I understood that. My comment was in response to the proposed scoping study as it was outlined in that, and it appeared to me in that outline that nothing was going to be done for the Bellows Falls aspect, impoundment area as it relates to erosion or remediation.

So I was interested in getting that included for the Bellows Falls project.

MR. HOGAN: Okay. Thank you.

Good. Jan?

MS. LAMBERT: Okay, so right now we're just addressing erosion. I'm going to be even more interested in wildlife. So you just want comments?

MR. HOGAN: We're going to get there.

MS. LAMBERT: Yes, when we get there. But it had a lot to do with erosion, too; and I took some before and after pictures. I just want to make sure that you all are aware that we did a natural resources inventory in Charlestown in 2009; and many of the lands that were outlined as being of special conservation concern belong to the hydroelectric power company. And a lot of that had to do with erosion, and we were able to note because of the project that had been done in 2001 to 2002, by the time 2009 came I was able to go back to the areas and take some after-

pictures. So I have a set of before and after pictures here.

And ironically, it was the simplest things that achieved the greatest good. There was a herd of cattle grazing in a brook up there. The owner was advised to fence the cattle out of the brook, and within seven years there was this amazing transformation from a very eroded gully -- muddy, bare-- and it transformed into a wonderfully alive wetland, backwater area, full of life.

But there are still things that need to be done there. I would be glad to talk in detail, and we could meet, our Conservation Commission could meet with a representative and come up with details. But it looks like you have a number of people on your committee there that have all these specializations; but indeed we, as you said before, we are the one who live there.

I have one complaint about what happened when we had this wonderful community project. There was a five year contract that the NRCS signed with the -- I don't think it was TransCanada, then. What was it? I forget. It went through several different names. Was it PG&E?

MR. RAGONESE: It's hard to forget.

MS. LAMBERT: I was close enough to the process so I knew there was a five year contract, and as a community coordinator, it kind of fell on my shoulders. Once the big

party was over and everybody went home; we had this wonderful set of gatherings where everybody worked together and planted 5,000 trees and it was a very involved project. I was involved with ordering the trees, and we had all kinds of people came in and volunteers and everything, but then everybody went home and I understand there was a five year period where there was supposed to be monitoring going on; and I kept calling people and they said "Well, if you want to go down there and look at it, you can." But one person is supposed to check out how 5,000 trees are doing?

So I was a little disappointed that there wasn't any follow up; but ironically, a great number of the 5,00 trees but a lot of native vegetation came up. And my personal opinion from all my observations is that if they had just taken the 150 feet and set it aside it would have ended up being about the same situation, which is great.

So I guess my point is that you don't have to talk about a lot of funding and a lot of money; sometimes the simplest maneuvers can really help; nature will take care of the rest. So, thank you.

MR. HOGAN: Jan, you mention the study that you held up. Is that something that you have a copy of that you'd like to have filed with the Commission?

MS. LAMBERT: Actually, I was. This is my own hard copy, but I actually contacted Rachel Rupple of the

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Planning Commission today, and she e-mailed me a link to it, so I will be able to forward that on. She e-mailed me all the information how to comment to FERC. So we can send you the entire document if you like.

MR. HOGAN: Yes, if you have it available electronically and you want to eFile it, that would be --

MS. LAMBERT: Yes. Well, it's electronically available on line. She provided me with a link.

MR. HOGAN: Okay.

MS. LAMBERT: We'll get it to you.

MR. HOGAN: Great. Thank you.

My contact information is on page 5 of the first set of pages 5 in the scoping document. So there's the transmittal letter that's included in the scoping document and then we go into the scoping document. So the first page 5 in the scoping document has my contact information, phone number, e-mail and so forth. So if anybody's looking for that, it's available there.

AUDIENCE: So it should be sent to you?

MR. HOGAN: My preference is for it to be electronically filed, but if you're not able to do that, you can e-mail it to me.

MR. FAIRCHILD: My name is Michael Fairchild, Brattleboro, Vermont. I happen to be involved in an activity that puts me on the Connecticut River physically

probably more than 100 days ever year; it's been going on for 20 years.

And when you speak about the issue of erosion, and I could describe the river foot-by-foot for 50 miles or more. If you're looking for probably an example of some of the most serious erosion one could find on the Connecticut River, and it's definitely in the impoundment area of the Bellows Falls Dam. There's a lot of prime agricultural land on both sides. I've just watched it just slide away, year after year. So that's a concern I certainly have. Thank you.

MR. HOGAN: Mic.

MR. KENNEDY: Good evening. My name is Tom Kennedy; I'm with Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, and I'm also a commissioner on the Joint River Commission.

I'm wondering, and this is more I guess generalized, but it has to do with erosion and many other things; is whether there's going to be studies done on what I'll call climate change and our changing weather patterns. The severity of our rain events we've seen in the last number of years with Irene and Sandy and others that have occurred, I think are really starting to change sort of the hydraulics and the like. And I'm just wondering whether that's going to be taken into consideration as far as

impoundments, or that there has to be significant releases of waters from the dams and the like.

MR. HOGAN: Well, we definitely like to address all issues that are raised at public meetings, and if you feel that there's a study that's appropriate that should be considered, I'd ask you to file a study request so that we can review that, and following the study criteria.

SPEAKER: Generally speaking, hydraulic studies use historical data, and we seem to be entering into a new realm where the climate is changing, so I think we may be underestimating some events, given this climate.

MR. HOGAN: Thank you.

MS. BEALS: Hi, I'm Alma Beals of Ascutney Mountain Audubon. And a couple of our members did an erosion survey, and they had some suggestions of what could be helped. It's like, in this survey there's like eight different spots along the site of Herrick's Cove toward New Hampshire and along toward the Point.

And I'm not qualified to talk on it, but I would like to have this report filed tonight.

(Report follows:)

SPEAKER: Anyone else?

MR. HOGAN: David Deen.

MR. DEEN: David Deen, River Steward, Connecticut River Watershed Council.

I understand the concern for erosion in terms of land and whatever, but there's also an impact of excessive sediment loading in the river on the aquatic habitat, and that that should be quantified or at least evaluated in terms of what's been said before about the changing nature of our weather.

MR. HOGAN: Thank you.

Any other comments regarding geology and soils or erosion concerns?

No? Okay. Moving on to water resources.

Water Resources - Water Quantity and Quality

MS. SCANGAS: Hi, I'm Angie Scangas with FERC. The resource issues identified in the scoping document-- and this is the section following Ralph's section on page 24. The identified resource issues were the effects of current and proposed project operations on water quantity and quality, and in particular dissolved oxygen and temperature.

MR. RAGONESE: In terms of water resources, we didn't -- in the PAD, one of the primary elements concerning water resources was the discussion and information about our optimization, our river model. That is an opportunity to

evaluate alternatives through an optimization model. So we have a pretty large, sophisticated model that we intend to use to evaluate impacts and changes and alternatives that are proposed by stakeholders on what we're essentially doing now.

So there's a baseline case or baseline situation, and then all alternatives that get proposed would be sort of weighed against the baseline; and you might find what are the changes in generations, what are the changes; are there water resource constrictions, are there economic impacts, are there opportunities?

So there will be a lot of that modeling of different essentially operational changes for elements to help improve the particular resource -- that would be potentially achieved through operations; we would be running all of those through the river model.

Just to answer a question from earlier, there are number of elements that go into the model; we'll have a natural hourly inflow that will go into, as one of the inputs into the model; they will be historic examples. We're not going to take the most, the driest and record and we're not going to be taking the wettest on record, but we're going to be taking different percentiles. But it's a good question that was asked about the future. There could be an opportunity to tweak the inflow data series to somehow

mimic what climatologists believe will be some of the exacerbated events that might occur. There's an opportunity to do that, we're not doing that at this moment, but there's an opportunity to essentially research what those inputs might be and how they might be affected with our model.

We'll have hourly energy prices, so TransCanada operates in the New England Power Pool, which has a competitive marketplace. The hourly energy prices change daily and hourly, and so we'll have an energy series that we're going to be, essentially being able to evaluate to some extent how the model may dispatch our units, but also to some extent some of the economic impacts.

So that's about it on the energy model. In terms of our PM&E measures, at this stage of the game in our PAD, in our pre application document, we didn't really propose any changes than what we're doing there now. So we're proposing to continue our operations the same way we have been, which include all the operational constraints that are going on now, whether they be minimum flows or reservoir operation restrictions; high water procedures, minimum flows, et cetera.

We did conduct some pre-scoping studies, and these are studies that we consulted with the agencies; have to come up with a study design. But primarily, this is around developing baseline water quality information, and

that water quality information will be relative to both the impoundment and the discharges below Bellows. So we had continuous monitoring going on above and below the dam as well as impoundment, water profiles in addition to temperature and DO, we were monitoring some of the nutrient elements such as nitrogen; and there were a number of others. But these were basically specified to us by either the New Hampshire DES or Vermont Department of Water, Environment and Conservation.

The based on water quality assessment report will be available again shortly; it will be on the website again under our public information library.

MS. DROUIN: My name is Donna Drouin, I'm from Walpole and I am a member of the Connecticut River Joint Commission also; I'm a commissioner.

Just a follow up question for this gentleman, which impacts on the next section, I believe, aquatic resources. I notice that you are including cumulative effects from the operation of the Vermont Yankee plant; I'm speaking specifically to temperature. I think the current reg, quality down in that area is 85 degrees maximum for the summertime, and we look forward to the aquatic issue section here.

I wonder, isn't that quite high to maintain some of those species we'd like to see in that part of the river?

MR. HOGAN: Is that a question you're looking for an answer for tonight?

MS. DROUIN: I'll just throw it out there.

MR. RAGONESE: I don't have an answer for you.

MS. DROUIN: (off mic) You know what I'm saying; 85 seems very high for some time, max, for some of the species that we --

MR. RAGONESE: Just for clarity, that's an MPDS -- that's a permit requirement for Yankee, discharge.

MS. DROUIN: Well, I noticed the parenthetical information here said "including cumulative effects from the operation of Vermont Yankee."

MR. RAGONESE: Again, I --

MR. HOGAN: Let me. That's indicating that our analysis in our environmental document that we plan to prepare after we have all the study data, we will be looking at cumulative effects, and we did identify Vermont Yankee and its discharge to the reservoir and temperature as being a potentially cumulative effect of resource area and you're confirming that we are right, so that will stay.

MS. DROUIN: Good. Thank you.

MR. HOGAN: Any other questions or comments about water resources, quality or quantity?

Okay. Aquatic resources.

Fishery or Aquatic Resources

MR. SEARS: Hi, again, I'm Mike Sears with FERC.

Aquatic resource issues we identified are effects of project operations and maintenance, including fluctuations in water levels and flow releases on aquatic habitat and resources in the project vicinity. For example, resident and migratory fish populations, fish spawning, rearing, feeding and overwintering habitats, mussels and macroinvertebrate populations and habitat.

Effects of project facilities and operations, including reservoir fluctuations and generation releases on fish migration through and within project fishways, reservoirs, and the downstream riverine corridor.

And also the effects of entrainment on fish populations.

MR. RAGONESE: In terms of aquatic resources, we didn't have any specific studies that we proposed in our pre application document; again, awaiting study requests and issues to be brought to our attention through this process as well.

In terms of PM&E or mitigation measures proposed, the only items we identified in the pre application document relative to that is that we expect to continue to be operating our fish passage, both upstream and downstream at Bellows Falls going forward. We did conduct some pre-scoping studies that are associated with aquatic resources.

In particular, we conducted a fairly thorough dwarf wedgemussel survey, which is a federally endangered species; we looked at both the impoundment and downstream affected reaches of the Bellows Falls project, and then in terms of plan studies, again we're awaiting results of the study requests, going forward.

MR. SIMS: I'm Norman Sims from the Appalachian Mountain Club. I just want to ask John Ragonese a question.

As a casual meeting this afternoon, along the highway that runs into New Hampshire down below the power station, we met a guy who pointed out that there were two bald eagles in the trees, and we could look at those. And during the course of conversation he mentioned that at one point the power company dried up the river in the spring and the walleye spawning grounds immediately below the station was dried up and destroyed for that year.

I just wonder if that is hearsay, a myth? John, do you have any recollection of complaints about that?

MR. RAGONESE: (off mic) First of all, I have no information that would corroborate -- so I don't know. Was that this year? I don't know.

We don't dry the river up; we've had minimum flows since the Seventies. I can't comment on some --.

AUDIENCE: I got the impression from the

gentleman who was speaking with us that it had been an ongoing problem for a while. We spoke to him for nearly half an hour, and he was extremely knowledgeable about the river; was fishing it regularly knew -- a tremendous amount of knowledge which he tried to impart to us in a very short period of time, knowing that we were coming to this meeting.

Now this isn't really our issue; we're just passing it on to you. It seemed to be an issue of substantial concern. We're only here to help.

MR. RAGONESE: And I thank you, but I don't really know what he's talking about. We have a minimum flow, and report all minimum flow violations to FERC. I can't think of one at Bellows; if it did, it would probably be because of an equipment failure or some kind of a un-- it certainly isn't anything that is routine, much less anything I can recollect.

MR. HOGAN: Mic.

MS. DROUIN: Donna Drouin once again. I wonder, just on raw recollection, could he have been referring to the backwater up off, on the east side of Route 5 on the north side of Rockingham -- excuse me, north side of Bellows Falls Village? I recall that backwater area went dry, and there is an eagle patridge (ph) just above that location.

Could it possible it was a nest?

AUDIENCE: It was below the power station.

MR. SIMS: Well, that brings up a couple of things about flow and drawdown. Altering reservoirs in this reach of river, the drawdowns haven't been reviewed for some 30 years; and I for years have heard concerns voiced by anglers in the area that in fact in the spring, reds are dewatered. And so a survey of spawning habitat within the reservoir might be helpful.

Fish passage, which John touched on, none of the PADs have anything in there for responding to the need of American eels to get back upriver, and resident fish, now that we're not, supposedly not concerned about salmon any longer.

And then flows, you conducted a survey of dwarf wedgemussel, but are there other mussels and other aquatic species that need more wetted areas downstream of the dams? And it's the same issue that the minimum flows haven't been looked at in 30 years. Now I know you comply; I've spent enough time on the river to know that, and then establishing best seasonal migration flows for diadromous and resident fish up and downstream would be worth again taking a look at on the flows that haven't been evaluated in 30 years.

MR. RAGONESE: Let me just make one quick clarification.

MR. HOGAN: Please.

MR. RAGONESE: John Ragonese. Regarding the eel

survey, the dwarf wedgemussel is important. It was primarily focusing on the federal Endangered Species, but there were state-listed species that we also we're looking for, and just species of concern. So there's other mussel information in there; it's really a freshwater mussel survey. It's primarily driven by the invasive species aspect. There is more information.

Good point.

SPEAKER: And also that second bullet for SD1 I think was general, the attempt was to be general, to kind of cover those spawning issues and habitat for fish below the dam and in the reservoir.

MR. HOGAN: Well, we do appreciate adding some specificity for us.

Other comments about fisheries or aquatic resource issues or concerns? Compliments? Fish passage? No.

Moving on to terrestrial resources.

Terrestrial Resources

MR. BATTAGLIA: Brett Battaglia with FERC. I'm on Section 4.2.4, page 25, Terrestrial Resources. Initial issues identified thus far include effects of project fluctuations in water levels and flow releases from the projects on riparian wetland and the littoral vegetation community types, and the spread of invasive species as a

result of project operations along the shoreline of the projects.

Effects of project operation and maintenance activities; for example, road and facility maintenance and project-related recreation on wildlife habitat and wildlife.

Effects of project operation and maintenance on riverbank integrity and shoreline erosion along the project reservoirs and stream reaches and its potential effects on riparian vegetation.

The effects of the frequency, timing, amplitude and duration of reservoir fluctuations on waterfowl and on riparian and wetland habitats.

The effects of project operation and maintenance and project-related recreation on bald eagles and their habitat.

MR. RAGONESE: Regarding terrestrial resources, in the pre application document we did not identify proposed specific studies at that time, when we developed a PAD or pre application document, nor did we identify proposed mitigation enhancement measures.

As I mentioned before, we had done a shoreline survey, a shoreline survey in addition to identifying areas of erosion; also identified wetlands, confirmed wetland inventory maps, identified riparian vegetation types, including identification of invasive species.

And as I mentioned earlier, we performed the rare, threatened and endangered species -- this is primarily plants; and in doing so, we identified to some degree the habitat and the vegetation types where those species occurred, as well as identified whether or not there was project operational impacts to the species location themselves.

MR. HOGAN: Any questions.

MR. McCLAMMER: Thank you. Again, my name is Jim McClammer, I'm a resident of Charlestown, a commissioner on the Joint River Commission, and also a natural scientist in New Hampshire. And I was at a meeting, an annual convention on Friday down in Carver (ph). The subject of that meeting, the all day session was flood plains environments, and a lot of the folks were on the Connecticut River here.

I'm also a wetlands scientist, and I'm cognizant of the fact that the mapping, the level of detail is important these days in terms of showing where the resources are on a map, a site plan.

My first question is, have the flood plain communities been mapped and to what scale have they been mapped in the reach of the river that's affected by the Bellows Falls Dam?

MR. RAGONESE: The question is, have we mapped them?

MR. McCLAMMER: Yes, and at what scale.

MR. RAGONESE: The flood plains have not been mapped in our shoreline survey. My understanding is there are some flood plain identification work that was done by folks like the Nature Conservancy in Vermont; I don't know about New Hampshire. There are some other resources besides this that I'm sure have identified flood plain --

MR. McCLAMMER: To be clear, I'm interested in sort of flood plain communities. Specifically, in this reach of the river up in, the Little Sugar River, that area, we have --

MR. RAGONESE: We have not.

MR. McCLAMMER: -- probably the most expanse of rather rare community is dominated by sycamore trees. I think it's important to map these things, show them on a plan; and not only do we want to show the flood plain communities, but probably where the flood plains are, whether it be 100 year or 500 year.

MR. RAGONESE: Yes. It does bring up a point, that when we get some of our rare, threatened and endangered species, we do have -- especially in the Bellows Falls project, we do have land that we own that extends outside of the immediate effects of project operations, be it reservoir or flow. And those haven't been surveyed yet; we intend to survey those other areas; but haven't done as part of the

scope of this one that we have just completed.

So to some extent they are going to encompass some of those flood plain backwaters and back areas as well that are not necessarily hydraulically connected. Most of the setbacks are, but there are some terrestrial areas that have not been surveyed that will be --.

MR. McCLAMMER: I guess the baseline surveys are important for these communities, and probably we should go up the reaches, these tributaries on the Connecticut River, further than probably may have been done in the past, because we do anticipate this increase in frequency and intensity of severe storms, we're likely to get flooding up these tributaries to the extent that we haven't seen in the past, and these are where some of the rarer communities are; and also where a lot of these invasive species such as Japanese bamboo occurs. This reach of the river, you go up and down, you see the Japanese bamboo in all the tributaries.

But the next question is really having to do with the wetlands that you've said you have mapped, or are you just relying on the NWI map of wetlands along this area? Have you actually gone out physically and done to some detail, mapped the wetlands that are within the flood plains and adjacent to the Connecticut River?

MR. RAGONESE: We did not rely just on the

National Wetland Inventory survey. What we did, we tried to corroborate the location of those on their maps with what we found in the field; and in addition, map some additional wetland community types that were observed primarily along the operating shoreline. We did not look at tributaries, we did not go into some of the terrestrial essentially backlands that might have some hydrologic connectivity to the river, but not an immediate, direct hydrological connectivity such as a culvert or a bridge or something like that.

So there could be additional wetlands that have not been mapped, but the ones that are easily adjacent, that are affected by our project operations we did try to capture in this baseline survey.

MR. McCLAMMER: I guess again, and I ask, where that's resource, where's the map that we can look at to see if indeed there may have been major areas that have been neglected?

MR. RAGONESE: The report is on line, but it primarily focuses on some of this erosion -- summary. The rest of the information are basically GIS layers; we're trying to figure out how to best be able to disseminate that. And our plan is to post on our website a published map file which will basically be a viewer of GIS information. And other than that, there is not a server

around that will allow you to post this GIS information, because of all are primarily photographs. But most of the other layers we're going to try to get on.

So if you're interested and you can't get it, I'll be more than happy to figure out how we can get you the information.

MR. HOGAN: Jim, I've got a question for you.

MR. McCLAMMER: Sure.

MR. HOGAN: You've raised a couple of points that I'd like clarification on. You've mentioned sycamore and Japanese bamboo. Can you enlighten us on what the issues associated with Japanese bamboo and sycamore are?

MR. McCLAMMER: Well, sycamore, the Latin name is Platanus occidentalis basically; the flood plain species, and the northernmost extense of that species actually occurs around Charlestown, just slightly further north. So basically it's the northernmost extension of that community. And it's within the flood plain area, and in fact the mouth of the Little Sugar River, for example, is where we have some of that community; and that's one of these areas that have been inundated by the impoundment of the water at the reservoir.

When it comes to nuisance species or invasives, one of our biggest problems along the Connecticut River, this reaches is the Japanese bamboo --

AUDIENCE: Or knotweed.

MR. McCLAMMER: -- or knotweed, Polygonum cuspidatum if you want a Latin name for it. But it's Japanese knotweed; there's a lot of different common names for it. But if you walked around here anyplace, you'd come across, and it's very hard to get rid of once you have it.

The other thing is, and actually I've been involved in a number of studies on invasives and what encourages their colonization of areas, and these are done down in Massachusetts, for example, where there are water withdrawals on large ecosystems and what impact it has.

What we have found is that basically lowering the water table for a little while basically provides an opportunity for other invasives such as purple loosestrife to take foothold. And once they get in, even when you raise the water level back up, we can't exterminate the stuff once it gets in.

So the fluctuation of water has a lot of impact on allowing invasives to come in; and now compete with natural species. And so these are of some concern. Ideally, I'm a map person, I always like to see where these things are on the resource and then find out what impact at the water levels that you're going to be fluctuating, whether you're inundating it or whether you're like lowering it for a period of time, and how long these withdrawals or

inundations occur are very important to the flood plain communities.

I know the Nature Conservancy is doing some of this work down in Massachusetts and they're doing some up at the headwaters. But for this reach of the river, I don't know of any actual research that is going on, so it's a void that's in the knowledge base, I believe.

MR. HOGAN: So in summary, to make sure I capture this correctly and understand it --

MR. McCLAMMER: I would say that it would be nice--

MR. HOGAN: No, let me repeat what I heard so that I make sure that I understood it correctly. We have some unique species of sycamore at the northern end of the range that we ought to see if they're -- what habitats they are occupying and try to protect them as appropriate. We also know of multiple invasive species that we ought to be trying to document, investigate their presence of and communities of in evaluating the potential project effects on those communities, or establishment of additional invasive species.

Is that in a nutshell?

MR. McCLAMMER: I think that's two of the key points; one being the flood plain communities dominated by unusual species; number two being invasive; and number three

really is those wetland communities that are actually just jurisdictional wetlands. As you know -- well, you may not know -- they're waters of the U.S. And we're playing with the idea now of trying to figure how to put standards on these for anti-degradation, so indeed water fluctuations on any wetland community has the potential of having it destroyed or somehow or other impacted or -- the composition of the species change, which would probably be ultimately where we're going to be going in terms of how do we, what are the water quality standards we're going to be applying to these terrestrial-wetland communities for lack of a better word, but ones that are dominated by trees or shrubs or emergent species.

And indeed, without good mapping of these communities, we don't know what effect that you'll have on the communities by water patrols. And indeed, when we ever get it sorted out as exactly what the standards are going to be for these sorts of communities. I expect it will be happening soon, because I was also sitting on a water quality standards advisory committee for New Hampshire, I was also in the state legislature for a while and chair of that committee, so I've gotten involved in the water quality standards; I know it's mandated that indeed we have to come up with these standards for wetlands.

So when they're there, you basically -- where you

get your water quality certification have to make sure that you're not going to have a negative effect, this anti-degradation on these wetland communities.

MR. HOGAN: Thank you.

MR. McCLAMMER: Thank you.

Jan?

MS. LAMBERT: Yes. We're still on terrestrial resources, is that right?

MR. HOGAN: Yes.

MS. LAMBERT: I'm having a very difficult time sorting these very -- anybody who knows anything about ecology knows it's all about, everything's connected. So I guess I just want to go back and revisit Great Meadows, which is the area I was talking about earlier, that we had a -- we actually had this buffer zone project in two areas; it was a Lower Meadows and then Great Meadows came the next year.

Great Meadows is a very significant area; it's 356 acres, it's probably one of your largest single pieces of property along the river, and it encompasses -- it's a complicated area because it encompasses wetland, cornfields, hay fields, a large brook, a sheer riverbank where there's always been severe erosion.

Some of the things I want to ask and bring up, one point I want to make about, from canoeing on the river

for many, many years is that those eroded steep banks are not necessarily a wasteland; they're home to large colonies of bank swallows and kingfishers, so we have to remember to balance that with our concerns about erosion.

And the other kind of question I have is about, if you're getting into your impacts -- I know this is kind of getting into the next session about species, but there's a number of species that I've documented down in that area that are not officially threatened or endangered federally, but they're on file with the State of New Hampshire; they were very glad to get my reports. One of them had to do with the Northern Leopard Frog, and that's very, very rare in this area, and I've been asked to try to keep track of it. I did document it, and Jim mentioned about the flood plain forest; that's where these frogs live.

So even though it's not a federally endangered species, it is of concern to the State of New Hampshire. So I was wondering whether you were in contact with the State of New Hampshire as far as what their wildlife concerns might be over on this side. They have a saying, 'Let's keep common species common. Let's not wait until they're almost extinct before we take some actions, when we could be doing things to species that are having troubles. They're not federally-threatened or endangered yet.

MR. HOGAN: Actually, we have been in contact

with the state and I believe TransCanada has also, State of New Hampshire, as well as Vermont and Massachusetts. We had a public meeting earlier today, this morning at 9 a.m. that New Hampshire DES and New Hampshire Fish & Game were both present as well as the Fish & Wildlife Service. Leopard frog didn't come up, Northern Leopard Frog didn't come up. So thank you. And John, you had something you wanted to add?

MR. RAGONESE: Yes. That's a good distinction I want to make. When I speak to our surveys of where threatened and endangered species, these are not necessarily federal; they're state species from both New Hampshire and Vermont. And we have not -- we've done the plant aspects; we have not done animals, bugs, birds --

MS. LAMBERT: I guess what I'm saying is I have some information I could share with you. You know, I've been trying to get somebody to pay attention to this for the last ten years.

MR. HOGAN: You just found a venue.

MR. RAGONESE: I think that --

MS. LAMBERT: Yes, okay.

But like I said, everything kind of overlaps. I mean, for instance you're talking about management of wetlands right now. I see some wetland situations, but I don't see any reference in here; you referred to project-

related recreation on your second statement here on wildlife habitat and wildlife. You don't seem to be mentioning anything about the agricultural impact. I don't really see anything in your whole listing about the fact that the vast majority of your lands are being actively farmed. And I'm just wondering, when is the appropriate time to be discussing those impacts?

MR. HOGAN: Right now. We're here to find out what we missed.

MS. LAMBERT: Okay. Well, to get back -- I mean, this is the area that I know well, this Great Meadows.

MR. HOGAN: Can I ask you a clarification?

MS. LAMBERT: Yes.

MR. HOGAN: Geographically, where is Great Meadows located?

MS. LAMBERT: It's directly south of the town of Charlestown; it's quite visible because our water treatment plant -- I mean, our sewage treatment plant is right at the northern end of it.

MR. HOGAN: As in the Bellows Falls impoundment?

MS. LAMBERT: Absolutely, yes. And this is over a mile of shoreline that had a buffer zone.

What I wanted to bring up previously was, the good thing about this buffer zone project, and I wanted to encourage you to look into establishing similar buffer zones

along similar cornfields. And again we have photos showing how the cornfield was cultivated almost to the very edge of the riverbank. I couldn't believe these farmers were actually driving their tractors with this undercut, sandy bank; but they were doing it, and now there's a buffer zone there.

But we do have concerns, and I'm not quite sure if this is something for FERC or if this is just something for TransCanada to handle, about the way we had a buffer zone arrangement now; it's being infringed on by the agricultural practices going on.

MR. HOGAN: Who is the arrangement with? TransCanada, or is it a requirement of a license, FERC license?

MR. RAGONESE: It is FERC. We don't have an agricultural requirement or a lease requirement or anything like that. I would say that we are reviewing a lot of our agricultural, private partnerships on our land. And in going forward, I can tell you that one of the requirements, going forward, of all agricultural use partners will be to maintain a buffer of native vegetation or natural vegetation, and not be able to cultivate -- we're thinking of at least a minimum -- say 50 feet, 100 feet is what we're looking for for a buffer along --

MS. LAMBERT: Keep in mind that we started out

with 150 feet, and we're probably down to 100 feet now. Because we started out with 150, and I think we may be down to 100 in some places now just because it takes decades to have anything take root enough to slow down the constant erosion.

MR. RAGONESE: We are required -- I mean, I think we're trying to find the right metric; I mean our recommendations that come out of those states; I think the state's recommendation is 50, we've read. So I'm not sure what we will end up with, but we are going to require something in all of our partnerships.

Now obviously there's a lot of private agricultural use along the reservoir as well which we have no control over.

MS. LAMBERT: I'm speaking of the lands that you basically lease for a dollar --

MR. RAGONESE: Correct.

MS. LAMBERT: -- to farmers who have been doing it since about 1969, I believe. I think it's time to revisit that and take a hard look at these lands and find out which lands should be farmed and which should be converted to wildlife habitat. Because they're trying to farm wetlands right now; I mean, it needs to be looked at.

So I'm not sure who needs to be looking at it, but.

MR. HOGAN: We will be.

MS. LAMBERT: Yeah, okay.

Is this an appropriate place to talk about land use on the following page? It sounds like -- yes.

MR. HOGAN: You are right, there's a lot of interrelated issues, so.

MS. LAMBERT: Okay. Well, I don't want to hog this thing, so.

MR. HOGAN: Any other comments on terrestrial resources?

We've got a question from Staff.

MR. BATTAGLIA: I have a question for Mr. Ragonese really quick, just a verification, sir?

MR. RAGONESE: Sure.

MR. BATTAGLIA: The shoreline inventory that is currently on TransCanada-Relicensing.com, I can find the shoreline inventory that will also allow Jim to see the currently mapped wetlands --?

MR. RAGONESE: No, the map is not on. We're trying to identify the best -- I mean, it's basically a lot of GIS information.

MR. BATTAGLIA: I totally understand. I just wanted to --

MR. RAGONESE: A lot of the information are in photographs. We're trying to sort the photographs off so

that it won't take down everybody's server, and so we tried to download this. And then try to figure out what the best format would be. We're focusing on developing a published map file so the public will be able to at least access a free software, to be able to view the mapping information without necessarily being a GIS expert. That's what we're trying to do. It isn't on the website yet; the summary report is on the website.

MR. BATTAGLIA: Thank you.

I have one question to a verification for Rachel.

The Northern Leopard Frog siting or documentation, you confer, Miss, was in this Great Meadows area?

MS. LAMBERT: That's right.

MR. BATTAGLIA: And was that information submitted to the New Hampshire Fish & Game?

MS. LAMBERT: Yes.

MR. BATTAGLIA: Okay, thank you.

MS. LAMBERT: This is their reptile-amphibian reporting program they have open to the public.

MR. BATTAGLIA: Yes. Thank you.

MR. HOGAN: John?

MR. BRUNO: John Bruno. Having been involved in a number of shore-land protection permits for the State of New Hampshire, are you required to go through the same

process to get a shore-land permit that an individual would be if you were to look for a permit to do work within the 250-foot buffer of the reference line in the river?

MR. RAGONESE: You're asking, is TransCanada required? Yes, absolutely.

MR. BRUNO: So you'll be required to go through the same amount of detail along the 250 foot buffer of the Connecticut River that I would be required to if I wanted to cut some trees along my property or to do something within my property? You're going to be required to go through the same amount of detail that I am; is that correct?

MR. RAGONESE: If -- I mean, I'm not exactly sure. If we are proposing an action, an undertaking of some sort, we are required to follow the same laws as you, unless FERC wants to preempt that.

Otherwise, we're - the same state laws and any federal laws are applicable to us as they are any other entity.

MR. BRUNO: If I may make a comment, it seems like you're having sort of logistic issues with showing like wetland polygons on your database. If you're mapping wetlands and you've got field data, that's refining --

MR. HOGAN: Can I get you guys to talk about this after the meeting?

MR. RAGONESE: Yes.

MR. BRUNO: Pardon?

MR. HOGAN: Can we discuss it off line?

MR. BRUNO: Oh, okay.

MR. HOGAN: Okay. Thank you.

Other terrestrial-related comments?

Okay. Threatened and endangered species. Mary?

Threatened and Endangered Species

MS. McCANN: Mary McCann.

So this is that Section 4.2.5 in the scoping document, and I've kind of summarized the three bullets into one.

Effects of project operation or maintenance activities including reservoir and downstream flow fluctuations on aquatic, wildlife and plant species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

MR. HOGAN: I know we've talked about a few of the threatened and endangered species already. Does anybody have specific comments regarding threatened and endangered species or their habitats and the project effects/

None? Okay.

Moving on to recreation. Adam?

Recreation, Land Use and Aesthetic Resources

MR. BEECO: So now we'll be covering recreation, land use and aesthetic resources. So I'll read through the

bullet points.

Adequacy of existing recreation and public use facilities in meeting existing and future regional public use and river access needs. Effects of project operations on quality and availability of flow-dependent and water level dependent recreation opportunities including boating; adequacy of structural integrity, physical capacity and/or management methods to support recreation use at existing facilities. The adequacy of existing shoreline management policies and programs to control non-project use of project lands. Adequacy of shoreline buffers to achieve project purposes in compliance with local and state requirements. And at this time we have not identified any aesthetic resource issues.

MR. RAGONESE: I just want to mention that part of the shoreline survey work we did, we did try to identify recreational resources, both public and private. A lot of that survey was done just beyond, or portions of that survey were done beyond the general recreation season of -- by fall we might have missed; people pulled up docks and things like that; but those are all in on the same GIS database.

MR. HOGAN: Any comments on the recreation or recreational opportunities, recreation facilities made available? Jan.

MS. LAMBERT: I'd like to, nobody's spoken about

Herrick's Cove yet, I guess, which is one of your prime recreational areas. I've been visiting that for several years. Those of us who are into birding know that it's a very important bird area, and many people go there to look for birds and other wildlife.

There seems to be a bit of a conflict between people who want to go and run their dogs and picnic and do sports; and I think it's a little bit overbalanced in favor of that kind of activity, whereas it is an important bird area and I think there, especially down towards the at this point, it might be nice to see more natural areas established over the years with native vegetation that might attract and help feed these many species of birds, many of which are rare birds that come to the area, especially during migration.

Also, it would be nice to see more, maybe a little better facilities for small boats rather than just catering more just to the larger boats. The put-in facilities tend to be kind of very eroded, and I guess it could be kept up better so that they're not always muddy and unkempt-looking.

MR. HOGAN: Just for clarification, when you say small boats, are you referring to --

MS. LAMBERT: Canoes and kayaks.

MR. BEECO: Are you still speaking about

Herrick's Cove specifically, or --?

MS. LAMBERT: Yes, because that's the only place I know of where the public is welcome to come in and put in boats. I can't speak to any other areas.

(Off mic discussion with audience member.)

MS. LAMBERT: Lower Landing in Charlestown is a boat landing? Oh. Well, I don't know about that one.

MR. DEMPSON: I'm Arie Dempson (ph) of the Bellows Falls Rotary Club.

MR. HOGAN: I'd actually like to ask one more question.

You mentioned better maintenance of existing facilities. Were existing facilities sufficient in their number? Or was that not part of the comment?

MS. LAMBERT: I'm sorry, I had a momentary memory lapse there. Yes, we have -- in Charlestown we have the boat landing. Yes, that's right, right in the southern part of town, right next to the wastewater treatment plant.

By the way, the Conservation Commission maintains a nature trail down the bank there, so we are -- we're showing that we can combine wildlife habitat with recreation, but it's a quiet kind of recreation; there's a lot of people out there that want to go someplace where it's quiet and not have to worry about people leaving picnic trash all over the place.

I think there needs to be more done to control litter. I'm talking about Herrick's Cove also; the lower landing recreational area in Charlestown. A lot of people go down there to run their dogs. I like dogs but I don't think stepping in what they leave. I think it could be more active. I think it's getting to be more socially accepted not that you have receptacles for people to put dog waste in. Might be something. Getting into details here, but it can make a difference in the recreational quality of an area. Big difference.

MR. DEMPSON: Thank you. The Rotary Club conducts one of its major fund-raising activities at Herrick's Cove late in September, and it involves the paddle battle where we put in small boats, kayaks and canoes. And we would certainly appreciate it if there were a better put-in constructed up there at the northern end of Herrick's Cove. Obviously it would be there year round, and it would provide a really wonderful resource for people who just want to get out on the river and enjoy it.

The other thing, if we've got a sort of a wish list here, a number of organizations have meetings at Herrick's Cove in addition to the Rotary Club, and also the Mount Ascutney Audubon. And the construction of an open air pavilion, simple structure on a flat slab, whole barn construction, could be used by a number of organizations and

a lot of people; and it would just augment the recreational potential of what's really a wonderful area.

MR. HOGAN: Can we get you to repeat your name, please?

MR. ANDERSON: Eric Anderson.

MR. HOGAN: Thank you, Eric.

I recognize that -- I cut you off earlier, and that was my fault. So thank you.

MR. SIMS: I'm Norman Sims from the Appalachian Mountain Club, which is headquartered in Boston and has about 90,000 members in New England. It's the largest conservation and recreation organization in the Northeast.

I want to follow up on a couple of things that have been said, and I want to repeat some things I said at this morning's meeting, because there didn't seem to be anybody there from Bellows Falls.

Concerning the canoe launch sites, I think all up and down the river, most of the boat launch sites are made for motorboats, trailer vehicles, and they're not particularly useful for canoes and kayaks; and I hope that in some recreation study we can look at different kinds of facilities that can be provided for canoes and kayaks. I happen to own a wooden canvas canoe, and they don't work well on those concrete ramps.

I want to suggest a couple other studies that I

mentioned this morning, and pardon me for repeating this. But I felt that people in this room might have more interest in it than the ones this morning.

First of all, for Adam, we have identified an aesthetic problem, which is in the dryway of the Bellows Falls reach; it's a three-quarter mile dewatered section, has no minimum flow in it, and it's the natural riverbed. It's in clear view of a number of roads, and I think that's an aesthetic problem.

Concerning that same reach, and many of you are familiar with that, it's from immediately below the dam, goes around a corner underneath a railroad bridge, past the Vilas Bridge which is now closed, and continues another quarter mile or so to the, to rejoin the river that's watered.

The Appalachian Mountain Club would like to have a study done of using that reach as a whitewater park with controlled releases from the dam to provide whitewater recreation. We think this would be of enormous economic benefit to the community, and we suggest that a professional company that designs whitewater parks should be hired to evaluate that opportunity.

We have a couple other interests, as well. We think that offsite mitigation should be provided because of the loss of Bellows Falls, basically. There is a new

National Blueway System in this country; the Connecticut River and its watershed was declared the first National Blueway River. It includes all the tributaries and the watershed, and there may be an opportunity to provide whitewater recreation and some of those tributaries; recreation which is lost because of the continuing existence of the dam.

There's been a number of things said about particular facilities in the Bellows Falls project lands and elsewhere. The AMC has an interest in a study of all of the facilities on the river; the quantity, quality and adequacy of all of the boat facilities associated with the river, including facilities for canoeing and kayaking, portage routes, campsites, parking and road access, seasons of operation, maintenance and sanitary facilities; and this study should look at the next 30 years and the projected use of those facilities.

The Connecticut River Paddlers Trail folks are very interested in this; I'm particularly concerned about the portage at Bellows Falls. Of all the portages on the dams that are currently up for relicensing, it's the second worst. The worst is at Turners Falls where there is no portage. The Bellows Falls portage is one and a half miles, and for probably a mile of that it follows that high speed highway in New Hampshire along the river. What route

number is that?

AUDIENCE: Twelve.

MR. SIMS: Twelve? It's a 50 mile an hour speed limit. Tom and I stood out there for close to an hour today while the school buses and the trucks went by. I would not want to have had a boat with me at that time; it seems very dangerous. inherently dangerous to me. And something needs to be done with that. I don't know what it is, but perhaps that could be studied as part of this process.

There are many opportunities to do multiple day canoe trips, including overnight camping on the Connecticut. A recreation study should examine the opportunities to do that and what gets in the way. I think the portages get in the way, the lack of campgrounds get in the way, and this comes from talking to people who've tried to do through paddling on the river; and we think that that's something that FERC should study and that TransCanada should study as part of this relicensing.

MR. HOGAN: Tom?

MR. CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. I'm Tom Christopher, I represent New England FLOW and American Whitewater, and I ask your indulgence for those who have heard me speak this morning.

I have to concur with my colleague, Norm Sims. The Bellows Falls project is a .7 mile diversion that

reduces instream flows completely except for some leakage. Any natural boatable flows under the flood spillage are inaccessible, they're high, they're flashy, they're unpredictable, and they're really only available during periods of season high spillage due to flooding.

Near the bottom of the reach, there's a Moorehead (ph) that was installed to prevent salmon from moving up into that bypass reach, that makes paddling extremely hazardous. We'd like to see that particular structure removed. The site would be a very good location to develop a whitewater park, and even in moderate flows, the run could be used by canoeists and kayakers for surfing and acrobatic tricks, so on and so forth.

As a bit of an aside, some of you will recall, we had an additional colleague with us this morning who had made some comments, Bob Nasdorf, who also worked for American Whitewater, but had never seen this bypass reach. And when we brought him down there this afternoon for a tour, he was absolutely ecstatic about the potential that could be achieved in building a whitewater park.

One of the difficulties at this particular site is public access. Directly below Bellows Falls there's currently no formal public access or parking for boaters or canoeists. And in order to put in to the whitewater rapids that exist now or that would be constructed as part of a

whitewater park, boaters would have to descend a very steep slope, and it's studded with large boulders from -- adjacent to a very heavily trafficked roadway.

We did some additional exploring today and we identified at least one other access area downstream that certainly could serve as a starting point for organizing boaters and their gear, and even though that would be the finishing point, it would be a simple issue of shuttling these people back and forth up to the beginning of a whitewater park if it could be constructed.

The diversion around the dam has significant negative recreational impacts and related socioeconomic impacts. By building a whitewater park within the project lands of this bypass reach, there is an enormous amount of potential to create a new tourism product for this region. And after driving through Bellows Falls, it's a lovely community, but like many communities throughout the Northeast, anytime that you can bring in additional revenue, all the businesses that are in that community are going to benefit.

Part of this economic analysis, we would like to see, as I expressed this morning, the use of a contingent valuation study, and as I also indicated to you this morning, there are a number of very successful projects all around the United States. I'll just list a few.

Charles City, Iowa; Iowa City, Iowa, South Bend, Indiana, Springfield, Ohio, Yorkville, Illinois, Petoskey, Michigan. And on and on and on. So we think that the development of a whitewater park in this particular bypass reach would provide enormous recreational potential; it certainly would provide a great deal of diversity for this area, and certainly would also provide an economic stimulus for the community of Bellows Falls and the surrounding communities. Thank you.

MS. DROUIN: Donna Drouin again, Walpole.

I'd like to speak to 428 through 4210, and along with some of the same messages as the gentlemen from the recreational community have discussed.

The area of the river that they've talked about is one of the saddest, most forgotten reaches of the river that exist. And what's ironic about that, it is one of the most culturally and historically rich section of the river; and we can go back to the beginning of human habitation there. A long, hundreds if not thousands of years before European settlement in this part of the world. Native American tribes, in succession, lived there and called this The Great Falls of the Beautiful River. And you can see as they've described what we've done to this beautiful section.

Unfortunately, TransCanada's facility there sits in a very sad-looking location as far as the human

landscape, and the stretch of the river if not sad could even be described as shabby. There's a lot of potential here any way we look, and then of course you can't even get to the TransCanada facility directly anymore, because the economic situation in the country and the state is that we've got a historic but also shabby and dilapidated bridge that crosses the river at the place where the first bridge crossed the river in its whole 400-plus mile length back in the 1700s, Mr. Hale's bridge. Which made him a national architect for the design of that bridge.

So the sky is the limit on what could be done in the reach of the Bellows Falls Dam. And if TransCanada can help the Northeast, the River, New Hampshire, to start correcting that, whether it's an aesthetic, socioeconomic or cultural resource question, it's all right there. Thank you.

MR. FOX: Gary Fox, a Bellows Falls resident and a member of the Rockingham Conservation Commission.

I'd like to add to the request for a recreational study. At the Conservation Commission, we've heard testimony on trail systems and have also worked with Westminster Conservation Commission on trail connectivity.

Right now along the riverfront just south of the power plant, there's a Bellows Falls historic water park and trail system that's being developed in conjunction with the

EPA, pretty much all along the river to the north and south. There's trail systems that are lacking in connectivity, there's a -- a byways itinerary that's being developed, and along with that there's trails all along the Connecticut River byway that have been identified in various studies, but that have not been -- that need some further work in terms of connecting them from region to region.

Some of it is -- some of it is around Herrick's Cove and north, and I guess connecting those trails -- part of the whole recreational system with the camping and the water use would fit well with the trail system. And in terms of the aesthetics, the other side of that reach, what's created that reach, the canal is kind of a sore spot aesthetically in terms of a view from the downtown or from the island. One side of it has a really nice cast iron fence that was developed I think in conjunction with you folks with a downtown development organization; the other side is chain link fence, and the cement walls all along it are kind of old, crumbling. The bridges over it have crumbling cement and pieces of bridge substructure hanging down over the canal.

So I guess in short, all of those aspects would fit well in a recreational study that you gentlemen have brought up, and the Walpole lady as well.

MR. HOLMES: Richard Holmes, Charlestown

Conservation Commission.

First of all, I'd like to commend TransCanada for having, posting their wildlife festival one weekend in May that they've done for several years. This has taken place in Herrick's Cove, and it's always a great event.

Under land use, several years ago, Ken Alton, who at that time was the TransCanada public relations person, came to talk to us in regard to, we were interested in conservation easements on the land in the Great Meadows and the Lower Meadows. And at that time he said, "When it comes time for relicensing, bring this up." So I don't know if that's something that we would do directly or whether that can be made part of the license, or how that would work.

MR. HOGAN: Are there specific recommendations for conservation easements that you would like to see? Or just in general more conservation easements?

MR. HOLMES: Well, in particular, those two areas; the Great Meadows area and the Lower Meadows; basically the farm land that's involved in those two areas. They're in the natural resource inventory; you'll see them as areas that were defined as hot spots where we should be interested in conservation of the land. And both of these areas are, I believe they're called -- but they are presently prime farm land.

MS. BEALS: Alma Beals, Ascutney Mountain

Audubon. And I'd like to follow up on what he just said about the Herrick's Cove wildlife festival. That was started by the Ascutney Mountain Audubon 14 years ago, and we've always had full cooperation from TransCanada or the other predecessors. And we're now bringing in like 2500 people to that; it's on the first Sunday of May every year. And 2500 is a pretty good number for a town our size.

And the other thing I'd like to mention is, there's been a lot of birding that goes on at Herrick's Cove, and for us birders, we'd like to see an observation platform down on the Point, possibly with a boardwalk to get us down in there. It's just a real neat place.

What's happened, in going down to the Point, a lot of people have just gone right over through the vegetation and ruined a lot of the vegetation and caused erosion problems there. So if we could have something like a board walk there, it would save a lot of the erosion there.

MR. HOGAN: Yes, sir.

MR. FOX: Gary Fox. One of the things that was brought up in a community meeting around the canal was that, in terms of combining with recreational use and economic development, was the potential of infrequent but flow adjustments on the canal that would allow a recreational opportunity like they do in Providence, I guess. There's

some nights during the summer, on the canal they have some bonfires, and it's a major economic driver there for a festivity, and I bring it up because it was brought up at a community meeting, input for economic development here.

MR. HOGAN: Can you explain to me, what do you mean by bonfires on the canal?

MR. FOX: I can't exactly. I guess there's a -- they have floating displays on the canals in Providence that draw a lot of people into the community on weekend summer nights. I guess that's the short and long of it.

MR. HOGAN: Thank you.

Other comments on recreation, land use, or aesthetics?

MR. DEEN: I would like to echo some of the things that have been said that TransCanada does maintain some -- Herrick's Cove, which is an astounding resource for the area, and they are working with Bellows Falls organizations to open up a hiking trail down towards the Saxtons River onto some easement land that's down there known as the Basin Farm.

But this is an unusual situation from here upriver to Charlestown in terms of the number of access points for non-water-related recreational activities. When you get above there, and the reservoir stretches some 26 miles, I have been told, there aren't those hiking, biking,

birding opportunities; and I don't know if TransCanada has any fee simple land or it's all just flowage rights; but if they are going to do a recreation plan offering some of the just excellent opportunities around here, further up into the reservoir area I think should be part of that plan.

MR. HOGAN: Thank you, David.

Any other comments regarding recreation and land use or aesthetics?

Okay.

Socioeconomic Resources

MR. HOGAN: Moving on, we've discussed socioeconomic resources as far as potential recreational opportunities in the area that may influence the local economy. Are there other socioeconomic type considerations that folks would like to see taken into account in FERC's NEPA document, or environmental analysis?

MS. LAMBERT: I don't know if this -- this really hasn't been mentioned tonight, but birdwatching is I believe the fastest-growing recreational activity in this country. I believe the statistics are 49 million people in this country watch birds for recreation. And I'd like to see more done to encourage bird watching.

We mentioned important bird area at Herrick's Cove. Actually, this report that we have in our resources inventory, and probably Alma Beals has it as well, but about

the important bird area that stretches all the way from the Massachusetts line up to about Charlestown, Springfield area. It's all considered an important bird area. And I just think that really needs to be emphasized in your management plan, to really balance out motorized recreation versus the needs of the wild birds and other animals that need some quiet time.

And since we're talking about recreation, just recognizing that there's people that -- maybe they're not getting on the river, but they're definitely wanting to look at the river and what's the wildlife that's there.

MR. HOGAN: Quick clarification. You say motorized, are you referring to boating, motorized boating versus any other type of recreation?

MS. LAMBERT: Well, it always makes me nervous whenever we start talking about recreational trails, because I don't know if they're specifying exactly what would be using these trails; whether it would include ATVs or whether it would just be foot traffic.

MR. HOGAN: Okay, thank you.

MS. LAMBERT: That's something you always needed to define right off.

MR. HOGAN: Other comments on socioeconomics?

Okay.

Cultural Resources

MR. HOGAN: Cultural resources, we're interested in potential project effects on historic properties or cultural resources in the Bellows Falls project area. Anyone have any comments or concerns that they'd like to have identified and clearly articulated for FERC's analysis on cultural resources?

All right, hearing none.

Developmental Resources

MR. HOGAN: The last resource area on page 26 of our Scoping Document 1 is developmental resources. This is the resource area where the Commission evaluates potential enhancements or mitigation measures associated with the project that it may be recommending versus the value and cost of the power; and that's an analysis that we do. We don't have too much public input into that until we actually do that analysis.

I didn't want to just ignore it and you guys see it and, "Why didn't Ken Hogan talk about developmental resources?" It's an analysis that the Commission will do, basically do the balancing of power resources versus environmental resources, is the job we're charged with doing.

Does anybody have any questions about the Commission's licensing process or next steps for proceeding?

Everyone just wants to go home?

MS. LAMBERT: Is there a -- I see you've been taking a lot of notes. Is it required that we follow up everything we've said tonight with a written statement to the same effect? Or as sort of a complement to it?

MR. HOGAN: A written statement would be a complement to it. I do recommend that if you are requesting studies you do provide a written study request that does address study criteria. But as far as comments go, your comments are part of the record; they're going to be considered whether they're made at this meeting or in writing. If you decide you want to add to your comments, please do so in writing; but they carry the same weight.

MS. LAMBERT: Okay.

MR. HOGAN: Any other questions regarding our process or the next steps in the proceeding?

Okay. Don't forget: March 1st.

Thank you, everybody. I appreciate your time. We really appreciate the input, and hopefully we'll have a better document for it.

(Whereupon, at 9:09 p.m., the scoping meeting concluded.)

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