

ORIGINAL

The River Residents Association

Dedicated to preserving a life worth living on a river worth loving
Montague ~ Gill ~ Northfield
Box 405 Montague MA 01351
707 548 4817
bleenanew@gmail.com

16 February 2013

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20426

RE: Turners Falls Project No. 1889-081
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485-063

Dear Commission,

I am a member of The River Residents Association. We are comprised of people who own camps, cottages, and homes along the river. There are 24 "licensed" sites on project lands, and, there are also private land owners, and members of private clubs that recreate on the Connecticut River within the Turners Falls/Northfield MA section of the river.

We are concerned for the future of this beautiful natural resource, as well as our existence along the rivers banks. We take exception to it being called the "lower reservoir" of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage project.

As many of us live on the river, we see things changing, sometimes on a daily basis.

Our major concern is the negative effects we see occurring from extreme erratic water level fluctuations.

The following are observations by people who live and recreate along the river. Many of us have spent decades here.

Observations included but not limited to -

- shifts in the shoreline and river bed
- erosion along the shores
- loss of recreation areas that allowed boat access, now have no shoreline, only steep banks to climb
- lack of adequate tenting facilities
- silt and sediment buildup
- sand bars that come and go
- algae growth in Barton Cove

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- damage to personal property at “low tides” – torque damage to docks, boats stranded rocks/stuck in mud
- wetland/cattail/marsh habitat changing/vanishing
- land mass loss to islands
- sand bank habitat and swallows gone
- beaches appear and disappear within hours
- backwaters/shallows/coves depths diminishing
- less heron, osprey and kingfisher sightings
- less dragonflies seen
- changes in fishing bounty
- Fish egg nests exposed at “low tides” drying out and dying
- Waterfowl breeding grounds unexpectedly become submerged and eggs rot or offspring drown

We believe everyone here wants to work together to ask the right questions and find effective solutions. We feel we, the river residents, are an integral part of this process.

Is there a way to create moderation, or eliminate altogether, dramatic water level fluctuations? Can it be, should it be, regulated differently? For the record, the Association strongly favors research into a “closed loop” system. It would be a true man-made reservoir that would no longer involve the river for the generation of electricity.

We have prepared a visual exhibit. We hope it will enlighten, and underscore some of the concerning observations we have stated.

We endeavor to continue to assist and promote an ongoing cooperative relationship with all parties interest in mind. We are dedicated to a life worth living on a river worth loving. We thank you for your time and respectfully submit this inquiry and photographs to the Commission.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Conway
47 Riverview Drive
Gill, Mass 01354

cell: 413-824-2132

The River Residents Association
Montague ~ Gill ~ Northfield
Massachusetts

*a year-round resident
on The Conn. River*

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