

SECTION 2

PROCESS PLAN AND SCHEDULE

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“Process plan and schedule. The pre-application document must include a plan and schedule for all pre-application activity that incorporates the time frames for pre-filing consultation, information gathering, and studies set forth in this part. The plan and schedule must include a proposed location and date for the scoping meeting and site visit required by §5.8(b)(3)(viii).” 18 CFR §5.6(d)(1)

2.1 INTEGRATED LICENSING PROCESS

FERC’s ILP for hydroelectric projects is intended to streamline the licensing process. The ILP is a predictable and collaborative process used to identify resource issues, to develop a study plan to evaluate these issues, to conduct appropriate studies, and to develop protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PM&E) measures. To achieve these objectives, the ILP defines specific procedures and time frames for pre-application and post-application activities.

To effectively manage the ILP for the Project and to achieve milestones within the prescribed time frames, the District has developed a communication protocol and schedule for relicensing the Project, as described in the following subsections.

2.2 PARTICIPATION IN THE ILP

Throughout the ILP for the Project, a variety of stakeholders will be identified who have an interest in the Project. These stakeholders include Federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, local governments, non-governmental organizations, property owners adjacent to the Project and along the Loup River bypass reach, irrigators, electric customers, and members of the general public. Stakeholders are considered to belong to one of two groups:

- Interested Parties – Individuals and organizations with a general interest in the relicensing process who may occasionally attend Project meetings or receive Project information but do not actively participate in the relicensing proceeding.
- Relicensing Participants – Resource agencies, organizations, and individuals who actively participate in the relicensing proceeding, who may have statutory authority regarding certain aspects of the Project, or who may be participating in workgroups. Intervening parties on FERC’s service list will also be considered Relicensing Participants, and any Interested Party may choose to be a Relicensing Participant.

In addition, Federally recognized Native American tribes who have an interest in the Project or the area in which the Project exists will be Relicensing Participants. Consultation with tribes will be handled by FERC as a government-to-government relationship.

Throughout the ILP, workgroups may be established to discuss and resolve specific issues. Workgroup members may include Interested Parties and/or Relicensing Participants. The following workgroups have been established: Water Rights and Recreation/Land Use/Aesthetics. Additional workgroups may be formed as issues are identified. Workgroup tasks may include outlining workgroup goals in relation to the relicensing proceeding, identifying issues, and determining information needed to resolve issues. The District will coordinate and facilitate workgroup meetings, summarize meeting discussion, and note decisions made by the workgroup.

Anyone who wants to receive Project updates and meeting notices should submit a request online at <http://www.loup.com/relicense> or on the toll-free relicensing hotline at 1-866-869-2087 to be added to the Interested Parties mailing list (see Section 2.3.2, Mailing Lists, for more information).

2.3 COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

This Communication Protocol outlines how Project information will be communicated to Interested Parties, Relicensing Participants, and workgroups and how those parties can provide information and feedback regarding the relicensing proceeding. In addition, this Communication Protocol identifies how communications and consultation will be documented during the relicensing proceeding.

2.3.1 Website

To make as much information as possible available to the public, the District has established a relicensing website through the District's website at <http://www.loup.com/relicense>. Information on the relicensing website will be updated regularly throughout the relicensing process.

The relicensing website will contain documents pertaining to the relicensing proceeding, including meeting summaries, reports, and Project documents submitted to FERC. Hard copies of all material on the website will also be available for public review at the District office in Columbus:

Loup Power District
2404 15th Street
Columbus, NE 68602
Tel: 402-564-3171

Certain documents, including portions of the license application, may be considered privileged or CEII, as defined in Section 1, Introduction, and are restricted from public viewing (both on the relicensing website and in person) for security or privacy concerns in accordance with FERC regulations. Privileged information or CEII may be requested directly from FERC by filing a formal FOIA or CEII request. Instructions for filing a request are available on FERC's website at <http://www.ferc.gov/legal/ceii-foia.asp>.

2.3.2 Mailing Lists

Separate mailing lists will be maintained for each group of stakeholders (Interested Parties and Relicensing Participants) as a means to communicate Project information and progress updates for the relicensing proceeding. Interested Parties will receive periodic correspondence that will include notification of relicensing meetings and the availability of relicensing documents filed with FERC. Relicensing Participants will receive more correspondence that will include materials specific to workgroups and activities in which they are actively participating.

2.3.3 Meetings

Several meetings will be held throughout the relicensing proceeding. FERC will conduct tribal consultation, a site visit, and scoping meetings. In addition, the District will conduct public, agency, and workgroup meetings, as needed. These meetings are described below.

Tribal Consultation, Site Visit, and Scoping Meetings

FERC will hold an Initial Tribal Consultation Meeting with each Native American tribe likely to be affected by the relicensing proceeding, if the tribes agree to such a meeting, within 30 days of filing the NOI.

In addition, FERC will hold a site visit and two scoping meetings within 90 days of filing the NOI. The site visit will consist of a tour of the Project facilities conducted by District staff; therefore, an RSVP will be required to ensure that enough District staff to conduct the tour, as well as enough vehicles, are available. The first scoping meeting will focus on comments from Federal, state, and local agencies and Relicensing Participants. The second scoping meeting will focus on comments from the general public and Interested Parties.

Public, Agency, and Workgroup Meetings

The District will hold public meetings to provide information to the community and Interested Parties and to gather comments at milestone stages of the relicensing proceeding. These meetings will primarily focus on updating the general public on

the status of the Project relicensing. Public meetings will be held in an open house format to allow for one-on-one questions and answers. Meeting notes summarizing discussion topics will be posted on the relicensing website at <http://www.loup.com/relicense> or mailed by request to meeting attendees.

Agency meetings will be conducted as informal sessions centered on open discussion of issues. These meetings may include discussion of study needs, methodologies, results, or other information by the District and resource agencies.

Workgroup meetings also will be conducted as informal sessions centered on open discussion of issues. These meetings may include discussion of study needs, methodologies, results, or other information by the District, resource agencies, or individuals. The public and Interested Parties are welcome to observe workgroup meetings and may request to become a member of a workgroup at any time.

Meeting Notices and Notes

For public meetings conducted by the District, written notification via email or U.S. mail will be provided to all Interested Parties and Relicensing Participants. Notices will also be published in the *Columbus Telegram*, *Genoa Leader-Times*, *Nance County Journal*, and *Humphrey Democrat* and posted on the relicensing website at <http://www.loup.com/relicense> at least 14 days prior to the meeting date.

Notice of agency and workgroup meetings will be posted on the relicensing website, and an email notice with a preliminary agenda as well as any meeting materials that must be reviewed prior to the meeting will be distributed at least 1 week prior to scheduled meetings. Participants may request changes to the agenda upon receipt of the preliminary agenda or at the scheduled meeting.

The District will prepare and distribute draft meeting notes within 1 week of each agency and workgroup meeting. Attendees will have 1 week to provide comments on the meeting notes. Final meeting notes will be emailed to agencies and workgroups and posted on the relicensing website for public review.

2.3.4 Distribution of Relicensing Material

The District will, whenever possible, distribute all documents electronically, primarily via the relicensing website at <http://www.loup.com/relicense>. Some documents may also be distributed in hard copy either for convenience or upon request. The guidelines that will be used to distribute information related to the relicensing proceeding are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Document Distribution Procedures

Documentation	Method	Distribution
Public Meeting Notices	Website, email, newspapers, toll-free relicensing hotline, District employee newsletter, U.S. mail by request	Interested Parties and Relicensing Participants
Agency and Workgroup Meeting Notices and Agendas/Notes	Website, email, U.S. mail by request	Relicensing Participants
Major Documents (includes PAD, FERC Scoping Documents, Preliminary License Application, etc.)	Website, District offices	Email notice of availability to Interested Parties and Relicensing Participants, U.S. mail by request
Study Plans/Reports	Website, District offices	Email notice of availability to Relicensing Participants, U.S. mail by request
Related Background Studies	Website, District offices	Email notice of availability to Relicensing Participants, U.S. mail by request

The District will also file relicensing documents and pertinent correspondence with FERC.

2.3.5 Information Requests

The public may request printed copies of any document used in the relicensing proceeding. The request should be made in writing or on the toll-free relicensing hotline at 1-866-869-2087. Written requests can be submitted on the relicensing website at <http://www.loup.com/relicense>, by email at relicense@loup.com, or addressed to:

Neal Suess, President/CEO
 Attn: Relicensing
 Loup Power District
 PO Box 988
 2404 15th Street
 Columbus, NE 68602

Extensive requests for copies may be subject to a printing fee.

2.3.6 Providing Comments to the District

Written comments related to the Project may be submitted electronically or through the U.S. mail. An electronic comment form is available on the relicensing website at <http://www.loup.com/relicense>. Comments may also be emailed as attachments in Microsoft Word or portable document format (PDF) to relicense@loup.com. The mailing address is:

Neal Suess, President/CEO
Attn: Relicensing
Loup Power District
PO Box 988
2404 15th Street
Columbus, NE 68602

2.3.7 FERC Communications

Written comments on the relicensing proceeding may be submitted directly to FERC and will be made part of the public record. Electronic comments may be submitted according to the instructions found on FERC's website at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp>, or an original and eight printed copies can be mailed to:

The Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Written comments submitted electronically and via U.S. mail must clearly display the following information on the front page:

**Loup River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1256) – Application
for New License**

Documents issued and filed with FERC are also available on FERC's website at <http://www.ferc.gov/> under *Documents & Filings > eLibrary > Docket Search* by entering Docket No. P-1256. A subdocket number may be assigned after the PAD is filed.

2.4 STUDY REQUESTS

During development of this PAD, the District collected and summarized available information regarding the Project, the environment in which it exists, and potential issues and concerns of Interested Parties and Relicensing Participants. The PAD includes a list of these issues as well as a preliminary list of studies requested to further investigate those issues (see Section 6.1, Resource Issues, and Section 6.2, Potential Studies). However, there may be additional issues or concerns that surface

during FERC’s scoping process. In those cases, Interested Parties and Relicensing Participants may request additional studies using the criteria established through the ILP. Specific study requests should be submitted to the District and must include the following information, as specified by 18 CFR §5.9(b):

1. Describe the goals and objectives of each study proposal and the information to be obtained.
2. If applicable, explain the relevant resource management goals of the agencies or Native American tribes with jurisdiction over the resources to be studied.
3. If the requestor is not a resource agency, explain any relevant public interest considerations in regard to the proposed study.
4. Describe existing information concerning the subject of the study proposal and the need for additional information.
5. Explain any nexus between Project operations and effects (direct, indirect, and/or cumulative) on the resource to be studied and how the results of the proposed study would be used to develop the license requirements.
6. Explain how any proposed study methodology (including any preferred data collection and analysis techniques, or objectively quantified information, and a schedule including appropriate field season[s] and the duration) is consistent with generally accepted practice in the scientific community or, as appropriate, considers relevant tribal values and knowledge.
7. Describe considerations of level of effort and cost, as applicable, and why any proposed alternative studies would not be sufficient to meet the stated information needs.

Study requests should also include information on available cost-share funds or in-kind services that the requestor may contribute toward the study.

Completed study requests should be submitted electronically as attachments in Microsoft Word or PDF to relicense@loup.com, or a hard copy may be sent to:

Neal Suess, President/CEO
Attn: Relicensing
Loup Power District
PO Box 988
2404 15th Street
Columbus, NE 68602

2.5 SCHEDULE

The schedule for the Project relicensing, detailed on the following pages, includes all pre-application activities, incorporating the time frames for pre-filing consultation, information gathering, and studies set forth under the ILP. A diagram of the overall relicensing schedule is shown in Figure 2-1.