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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Office of Hydropower Licensing

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Otter Tail Power Company Project No. 10853-021
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OTTER TAIL RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

Bigwood Event Center
925 Western Avenue
Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56537
Wednesday, August 31, 2016

The scoping meeting, pursuant to notice, convened at
approximately 9:00 a.m., before a Staff Panel:

- PATRICK ELY, Project Coordinator, FERC
- CHELSEA HUDOCK, FERC
- SHANA MURRAY, FERC

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. ELY: We're getting ready to start here so if
3 everybody could take a seat.

4 All right. Hello, and welcome to the second
5 scoping meeting for the Otter Tail River Hydro project.
6 Okay, I see more people coming in. I'll wait a second.

7 Again, welcome to the scoping meeting for the
8 Otter Tail River Hydro project. My name is Patrick Ely and
9 I mentioned this last night, but I just want to say how
10 refreshing it is to be in a state where people actually know
11 how to pronounce my last name. I get a lot of Elies or
12 Elly's but the best one is where there's a line and someone
13 writes it and it just says 'Fly.'

14 I am a fisheries biologist with FERC. I've been
15 at FERC for about four years coming up. A little bit of
16 background on my previous work. I did my Masters dealing
17 with anadromous fish passage. Specifically it was the
18 passage of Alabama shad at Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam, which
19 is in Florida, Florida towards the Alabama border. After
20 that I did telemetry work dealing with imperiled sucker
21 species, Rollo's red horse, Naconi River, also in Georgia
22 below Sinclair Dam, if you're familiar. That was actually
23 the first time I got to get the taste of people learning how
24 to pronounce my last name, because we dealt with ATS
25 telemetry receivers and they're based out of Minnesota.

1 I'm here with two other colleagues. I'll let
2 them introduce themselves.

3 MS. HUDOCK: Good morning. My name is Chelsea
4 Hudock. I'm an outdoor recreation specialist with FERC but
5 for this project I am doing cultural resources. My
6 background is actually kind of meshed recreation resources
7 and cultural resources. I work formally for the Park
8 Service. Before FERC, with the Park Service, I did
9 education and interpretation but my thesis research was with
10 angler perceptions in cultural and recreational use of the
11 beach and working with management surrounding those resource
12 issues.

13 MS. MURRAY: Good morning. My name is Shana
14 Murray. I am also an outdoor recreation planner. I have
15 been with FERC about 10 plus years. That goes fast. My
16 background is also recreation. You know, honestly, I went
17 to college thinking I was going to be like Leslie Knope from
18 Parks and Recreation and a city planner, and somehow I
19 stumbled on to FERC, and 10 plus years later and several
20 projects and a small hydro group later, here I am. So, yes,
21 it's been fun.

22 MR. ELY: Thanks Shana. We have representatives
23 from Otter Tail Power. If you guys could introduce
24 yourselves and kind of state your role in this process.

25 MR. OLSON: I'm Mike Olson with Otter Tail. I'm

1 Principal Engineer of Energy Supply and I'm acting as the
2 project manager in the re-licensing project.

3 MR. SWANSON: I'm Bill Swanson. Manager of
4 Supply Engineering.

5 MR. BRING: Good morning, I'm Mark Bring, I'm
6 Associate General Counsel with the Otter Tail Power Company
7 and I primarily work with the generation division and then
8 also serve as Director of Legislative Affairs.

9 MR. FULLBERG: I'm Darren Fullberg, I'm the
10 Operating Supervisor of Hoot Lake thermal plant and that
11 includes the Lake.

12 MR. OLSON: I'm Jeff Olson with Otter Tail Power.
13 I'm the Manager of the Hoot Lake Plant, and we also oversee
14 operations of hydros at the Hoot Lake Plant.

15 MR. SPANGLER: My name is Ron Spangler and I'm
16 the Manager of Customer Care and Relations at Otter Tail
17 Power Company.

18 MR. STURGEON: I'm Jim Sturgeon, VP of Energy
19 Supply at Otter Tail Power Company.

20 MS. CASEY: I'm Sarah Casey, I work with public
21 relations and I'm the specialist on this project.

22 MS. LITHFORD: I'm Megan Lithford, and I'm an
23 environmental compliance specialist for the project.

24 MR. ELY: Randy?

25 MR. DORMAN: I'm Randy Dorman, I'm with

1 Kleinschmidt Associates which is a consulting firm. We're
2 helping Otter Tail Power navigate through this re-licensing
3 process. I'm a senior re-licensing consultant.

4 MR. ELY: All right. Thanks guys.

5 All right first, some housekeeping items. Sign
6 up sheets. There at the front. Basically we kind of want
7 to get a tally on who was here. If you wanted to speak, you
8 sign that sheet and that means at the end you'll be called
9 on first, but after that, everyone will have the opportunity
10 to speak, so if you didn't sign that, you're still good. If
11 you're not already on the mailing list, put your address on
12 there and we can add that too so you can get all the
13 documents that get issued.

14 We have a court reporter here, his name is Dan
15 Hawkins. He is an independent party, meaning he does not
16 work for FERC or the power company. And he is going to
17 basically transcribe this. So the words we say will be put
18 on paper and after the meeting, I don't know how much time,
19 but you will have access to that so you can just read
20 everything everybody said. So, I ask that speakers at the
21 end when you do speak please state your name clearly, your
22 affiliation and spell that out if it's kind of strange or
23 hard to pronounce for the transcript.

24 Everyone who wishes to speak will have the chance
25 and please speak clearly and one at a time. I don't think

1 that will be a problem with this group.

2 All right, a little overview of what we're going
3 to do. Just going to give you a quick background about
4 FERC. Talk about the licensing process. The purpose of why
5 we're here is scoping. The next step, part of scoping is
6 the request for information and studies. Otter Tail's going
7 to give a presentation. And then we're going to dive into
8 the meat of it, which is the resource issues that we
9 identify in the scoping document.

10 After that, we'll mention some important dates.
11 I think we have sheets available that gave you the date and
12 time line. It's also part of the scoping document. We did
13 have an errata to that. I'll explain that later but if you
14 have that piece of paper that is the correct time line we're
15 using. How to stay informed, and then we'll get into our
16 comments and questions.

17 Quick about FERC. We're an independent federal
18 agency that regulates interstate transmission of natural
19 gas, oil, and electricity. We're a relatively small group
20 as we have a staff of about 1,500 people, and that's all of
21 us. Part of us, we're in the Office of Energy Projects,
22 which is 340 employees, that includes hydropower and gas
23 pipelines. Obviously we're focused on hydropower here. So,
24 we are in the Division of Licensing. And then there's also
25 the Division of Admin and Compliance. So, once we license a

1 project they're the ones to make sure that the project runs
2 as the license order says it should. And then of course we
3 have the Division of Dam Safety and Inspections.

4 Our authority comes from the Federal Power Act,
5 which also makes us the balancing act where we weigh power
6 versus environmental issues. So, cost/benefits here.
7 Licenses are issued for a term of 30 to 50 years. And why
8 we're here is because Otter Tail's original license is up
9 for re-license.

10 Six branches -- we'll do this real fast -- we are
11 in the Midwest branch, of course, and we have 12 employees
12 including our boss. We consist of differing resource
13 specialists. We have fisheries and aquatics, we have
14 recreation, land use, cultural, terrestrial, wildlife
15 biology, and we also have engineers. We are put on teams
16 for each project.

17 To get into the licensing process, we are doing
18 the integrated licensing process, which is our default
19 process. There are two other licensing processes, but I'm
20 not going to get into that here because we are doing the
21 integrated one which we call the ILP. We use a lot of
22 acronyms and abbreviations and stuff, so it's like second
23 language to us so if there's something I'm saying and you
24 don't know what I'm talking about please just say, hey, I
25 don't know what that means.

1 So, the ILP has three principles: Early
2 identification. Resolution of studies. Integrate agency
3 and tribal permitting process needs. Including NEPA, which
4 is the National Environmental Policy Act. The applicant's
5 pre-filed consultation. Federal and state permitting needs,
6 such as the section 4.1 Clean Water Act and the Endangered
7 Species Act. And the ILP also established the time frames to
8 complete processing steps, which is that piece of paper that
9 has all the dates on it.

10 All right, so, here's the ILP, just look at that,
11 memorize it, I'll give you a second. There will be a test
12 at the end.

13 So just breaking it up, it's a pre-filing, post-
14 filing; we are now in the pre-filing phase. The thing
15 behind the pre-filing phase is consulting with interested
16 parties on issues and studies to gather information to
17 conduct the studies and then to prepare the license
18 application. And then once the license application's filed,
19 you seek comments from all the interested parties. Like
20 recommendations, stuff like that.

21 Then we prepare an EA or EIS which is
22 Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.
23 Then we seek comments on that. At the end of it, we weigh
24 all the information that we got, and we make a decision on
25 whether to license the project.

1 The initial steps: Otter Tail filed its pre-
2 application document which is called the initial proposal
3 information document, and that was in June, 2016. The
4 purpose of the pre-application document was to bring
5 everybody together and then bring all existing relevant and
6 reasonably available information that provides a basis for
7 identifying issues, data gaps, and study needs, forms the
8 foundation of the future documents, the environmental
9 assessment -- and more specifically, their license
10 application. And then sets the schedule and all the dates.

11 So the next step is scoping meetings and public
12 comment, which is happening right now; and the purpose of
13 why we're all here is to solicit input and comments on the
14 scoping document and just to point out, if you haven't seen
15 the scoping document, we're kind of, we're going to give an
16 overview of what it said. This is just kind of a set up to
17 it, but we're going to get into the resource issues later,
18 so we'll give you the meat of it.

19 So, the scoping document, this is an overview of
20 the scoping document. The second purpose, identify the
21 issues the proposed project and discuss existing conditions
22 and potential information needs.

23 So why are we here exactly? What are the
24 resource issues, the ones we're going to lay out later and
25 the ones that are in the document. Did we get it right in

1 the scoping document or are we missing something? Is there
2 any information you guys can provide on potentially effected
3 resources that we don't have and you think would help us?

4 Are there issues within the scoping document that
5 you don't think we even need to consider? We also want to
6 know about any cumulative effects or alternatives that
7 should be analyzed whether or not our geographic scope is
8 adequate.

9 After that's all done, then we get into the study
10 plan development. And so the request for information and
11 studies. Information that may help geographic and time
12 scope analysis and identify substantial environmental
13 issues. Any data that would help us to describe the
14 existing environment and the effects of the project and
15 other developmental activities on environmental and
16 socioeconomic resources.

17 Identification of any federal state or local
18 resource plans. Any future project proposal in the affected
19 resource area. Documentation showing why any resources or
20 identified issues should be excluded from futher study and
21 consideration. Study request that would help provide frame
22 work for collecting pertinent information on the resources
23 potentially effected by continued operation of the project.

24 So, study request criteria -- and this is also
25 laid out in the scoping document. Describe the goals and

1 objectives of your study proposal. Explain relevant
2 resource management goals. Explain relevant public interest
3 considerations. Describe the existing information and why
4 you need additional information.

5 Explain the connection between project operation
6 effects and how the study results would inform the
7 development of license requirements. Describe methodology
8 and how it's consistent with accepted practice. Describe
9 consideration level effort and estimated costs, and why the
10 study is needed. Comments on the scoping document
11 and your study requests are due October 1st. So that's the
12 first important date. Mark it down. All of this other
13 information about identifying first page Otter Tail project,
14 the project number is important. If you can file
15 electronically, we prefer that. All of this information is
16 in the scoping document which we can get you if you don't
17 have it. You don't have to worry about all the sudden
18 writing all of this information down.

19 Once all of that is done, the studies are
20 established and then they are conducted while preparing the
21 license application; that's a process can take about two to
22 three years.

23 And I'll hand this over to Mike from Otter Tail.

24 MR. OLSON: Good morning. I'm Mike Olson O L S O
25 N with Otter Tail Power. FERC has asked us to give a quick

1 presentation to give you an overview of the hydro projects
2 that we operate on the Otter Tail River.

3 So, we've already given introductions but there's
4 a lot more people involved in Otter Tail with this project
5 that's supporting it, and I'm going to name a few of the key
6 people that you guys might be interacting with. Again, I'm
7 Mike Olson, the Project Manager for Otter Tail on the hydro
8 relicensing. We've got Bill Swanson who is the Manager of
9 Supply Engineering. He's going to be presenting behind me.
10 Mark Bring is the Associate General Counsel. We've got
11 Sarah Casey from public relations. She's going to be
12 helping us with communications. So, she'll be helping with
13 the communication process with the agencies and individuals
14 that are interested in the process.

15 Kleinschmidt has been retained by Otter Tails as
16 the consulting engineering firm, and their lead person is
17 Randy Dorman. The agenda for our presentation is we're
18 going to talk a little bit about Otter Tail Power, giving
19 you an idea who we are, what we do. And we're going to
20 follow up with a project overview; give you some high level
21 details of the individual hydro projects on the Otter Tail
22 River. Then we're going to follow up and talk a little bit
23 about our website and how we're communicating with key
24 stakeholders.

25 MR. SWANSON: William Swanson. S W A N S O N.

1 Manager of Supply Engineering for Otter Tail Power Company.
2 I just had a few comments this morning. A little bit about
3 Otter Tail Power Company: Otter Tail is a very
4 geographically diverse company. What that means is we have
5 a wide area of service territory; over 70,000 square miles
6 with 131,000 customers. Our service territory goes all the
7 way up to Parshall, North Dakota which is really the far
8 western region of our service territory -- down to south of
9 Lake Preston, South Dakota. So it's quite widespread and we
10 represent customers in all three states: Minnesota, North
11 Dakota, and South Dakota.

12 Our generation portfolio is about 800 megawatts
13 and we've added about 245 megawatts of wind over really
14 about the last ten years. Outside of that we have the
15 Coyote Station which we are part owner of in central North
16 Dakota. We have the Big Stone plant down near Big Stone
17 City or Millbanks, South Dakota. And of course, the Hoot
18 Lake station here in Fergus falls.

19 We also have three combustion turbines at sites.
20 One in Jamestown, North Dakota. One near Soleway or
21 Bemidji, Minnesota, and then down by Lake Preston. In
22 addition to that we have six hydro units. One is up in the
23 Mississippi River up near Bemidji, and that's not part of
24 this license; we're talking about the five hydros that exist
25 on the Otter Tail River here around Fergus Falls.

1 They said last night if we would have made this
2 graph back in the 1920s it would have looked vastly
3 different than it does today. It would have been 100
4 percent hydro. So, the foundation of Otter Tail Power
5 Company was really the beginning of these hydros and when
6 they were created. Since then there certainly has been a
7 lot of change. Certainly we've added a lot of coal
8 resources in the last century. And then since that time
9 we've added a lot more wind, which has reduced some of our
10 coal generation as well as become part of the MISO market.
11 So, that's what you're seeing reflected there.

12 Additionally, with the planned retirement of the
13 Hoot Lake Plant, likely the coal generation will decrease
14 and there will be more replaced with coal or generation from
15 MISO. You can see that the hydro units that we have are
16 really a small part of the generation portfolio for Otter
17 Tail Power Company.

18 And as we looked at the re-licensing of these
19 hydros, to us it's really about balance. And I know that
20 there's a lot of people concerned about the environment and
21 certainly with the river going through the Fergus Falls area
22 there's certainly a lot of interest in that. We know we
23 have to balance that.

24 We also know that there's a lot of area interest
25 about what the river is. It goes right through town.

1 Certainly there's a lot of stories and people have a lot of
2 memories about the river. So, there's a lot of community
3 interest and involvement.

4 And particularly we need to make sure that we
5 balance the economics. Whatever the licensing plan calls
6 for for these hydros has to make sense not only for the
7 people that live around Otter Tail river's community, it has
8 to make sense for the same people who live out in Parshall,
9 North Dakota or Lake Preston, South Dakota. So the
10 economics and how these projects get licensed is really very
11 important to us as we move ahead.

12 So, our proposal and the pre-application
13 document, or the PAD, represents no change to the hydros as
14 they exist today. Basically operating them, no change
15 physically, operating them basically identically to the way
16 they are operated today. As long as there's no changes to
17 the re-licensing effort, that would be the plan and that's
18 what we submitted in the pre-application document.

19 MR. FULLBERG: All right. I'm going to spend a
20 little time walking you through the projects; it's going to
21 be pretty high level. There's more detailed information
22 that's available in the pre-application document that we
23 filed in June. The furthest hydro upstream is Taplin Gorge,
24 common name Freiberg. That's followed by the Hoot Lake,
25 which includes Diversion Dam. Then downtown Fergus Falls

1 we've got Wright, common name Central, followed by Pisgah.

2 And our furthest hydro downstream is Dayton Hollow.

3 We have five existing developments. All of these
4 developments have existing power stations, which means we
5 have a turbine generator set at each of these facilities
6 that produces power; and all five of these hydros are
7 operated run-of-river. Previous to the licensing in '91 we
8 were able to operate them peak operation which means you
9 could raise the reservoir elevations or lower them to meet
10 our power demands; but as of 91' at the last re-licensing
11 that got changed to run-of-river.

12 So, the furthest hydro upstream is Taplin Gorge.
13 That has a generator nameplate capacity of 560 kilowatts.
14 It's been online since 1925 and has a reservoir elevation of
15 1,299 feet mean sea level. The next hydro is Hoot Lake, and
16 that has a generator name plate capacity of 670 kilowatts.
17 That's been online since 1914 and has a reservoir elevation
18 of 1,256 feet.

19 I'm going to spend a little bit more time on Hoot
20 Lake. It has some unique features that I want to point out.
21 One being how Diversion Dam ties into that. The bypass
22 reach, the non-project nature-like fishway that's been
23 installed at Diversion Dam and also will speak a little bit
24 about the thermal plant that's located at the same location
25 as the hydro.

1 So, if you look at the Google Map here. If you
2 look at Diversion Dam, we divert water through a tunnel into
3 Hoot Lake. And there's a channel that runs through Hoot
4 Lake into Wright Lake. At about this point on Wright Lake,
5 we have an intake structure where we pull water in and
6 that's what feeds our Hoot Lake hydro. It also provides
7 cooling water for our thermal plant, and the City of Fergus
8 Falls uses that as their municipal water source for their
9 treatment plant; so Wright Lake is a very important resource
10 not only for Otter Tail but for the City of Fergus Falls.

11 Going back up to Diversion here. We've got a
12 bypass reach so the natural river; I'm going to step away
13 from the mic and kind of outline the natural river and how
14 it winds around and meets back up at the discharge at the
15 Hoot Lake hydro.

16 You can see it's quite windy around here. It's
17 about an 8 to 9 mile stretch. It meets up at the discharge
18 of Hoot Lake hydro. In the last re-licensing in 1991 we
19 worked with agencies to put the minimum flow requirements
20 along that bypass reach, and that was done for the
21 protection and enhancement of aquatic species as well as
22 maintenance and recreation for boating resources. There was
23 also a non-project nature-like fishway that the DNR
24 installed at Diversion with Otter Tail's support on that.
25 We believe that was a good project.

1 The last thing I want to talk about with Hoot
2 Lake is the power plant which is located right next to the
3 hydro, and we just want to make sure that everybody's aware
4 that that's not a part of the re-licensing process. It does
5 share the intake. That's the only thing they have in
6 common. They share the intake from Wright Lake, but as far
7 as the re-licensing process is concerned, the power plant is
8 not part of that.

9 The next hydro is located in downtown Fergus
10 Falls. It has a generator nameplate capacity of 400
11 kilowatts. It's been online since 1922 and has an elevation
12 of 1,181 feet.

13 That's followed by Pisgah. It has a generator
14 nameplate of 650 kilowatts. It's been online since 1918 and
15 has a reservoir elevation of 1,156 feet.

16 Our hydro that's furthest downstream has two
17 units, and they combine for 970 kilowatts. That's been
18 online since 1909 and has a reservoir elevation of 1,107
19 feet.

20 The last thing I want to talk about is the Otter
21 Tail Power website. That's located at www.otpco.com/hydro .
22 You can go there and look at any of the handouts or displays
23 that we've shown at other presentations like the open house.
24 Other ways to stay updated with the project. And there's
25 also information about the hydro stations similar to what

1 you have seen in this presentation. And then we've got
2 information on the re-licensing process, and we also have
3 updated timelines and where we're at in the process of the
4 project. What's happened, what's coming, and what's going
5 to be in front of us.

6 So, that's the end of our presentation. Thank
7 you.

8 MR. ELY: Thanks, guys. Now we're going to move
9 on to the resource issues.

10 One thing I forgot to mention about my background
11 that I want to kind of throw in there. When I was doing my
12 project down in Florida with the fish passage, I did do some
13 work, a little bit, for Fish and Wildlife Service doing some
14 telemetry or helping put transmitters into Gulf sturgeon --
15 strike that.

16 Anyhow, moving on. An Overview of the resource
17 issues that we have identified. These issues are based off,
18 what we've identified is based off of what was put into the
19 pre-application document, everything that's on the public
20 record right now.

21 So, aquatic resources. So, based off the
22 existing information we have, these two things are what
23 we've identified. One, the effects of impingement and
24 turbine entrainment of fish populations in the Otter Tail
25 River and the effects of minimum flow releases on the

1 quality of aquatic habitat and the bypass reach of the
2 Freiberg development.

3 Terrestrial resources. This one is relatively
4 generic but it's the effects of continued project operation
5 and maintenance activities on riparian, littoral wetland
6 habitat and associated wildlife.

7 Threatened and endangered species. Effects of
8 continued project operation and maintenance on our federally
9 listed gray wolf and Northern Long-Eared Bat.

10 Recreation and land use. The adequacy of the
11 existing facilities and public access to the project to meet
12 current and future recreational demands and effects of
13 continued operation and maintenance on land use within the
14 project area.

15 Cultural resources. The effects of continued
16 operation on properties that are included or eligible for
17 inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

18 And then developmental resources. This is pretty
19 much we have this on every one. The effects of any proposed
20 or recommended environmental measures on a project's
21 economics.

22 Important dates, again, these are in the sheets.
23 Right now the most important one is filing your comments on
24 the pre-application document and scoping document by October
25 1st. Then the proposed study plans. Those need to be in by

1 November 15th. And then from there it's a month later and
2 we get in to the meetings and comments. Most important
3 right now.

4 And for the dates placed in appendix B in the
5 scoping document. Now, the first scoping document we issued
6 had some minor date problems. Yes, it was just a couple
7 dates, like the year, got mixed up but I think the first
8 date is still correct. Maybe not. Okay, so, when we issued
9 the scoping document we later issued another errata that
10 basically is the sheet you have now that has all the correct
11 dates. So, make sure you're looking at that one and that's
12 the one we have here today.

13 How to stay informed. Get added to the mailing
14 list. The instructions are in the scoping document and
15 again, if you need access to the scoping document, we can
16 tell you how to do that. Sign up on our eLibrary which is
17 on our website, www.ferc.gov . Basically plug in the
18 project number and you do a search and then everything on
19 the project should come up. Starting with the latest going
20 back in time. And then if you eSubscribe that means any
21 time there's an issuance or a comment for this project, you
22 would get an email sent to you with a link to download that
23 document.

24 You can also contact myself, here's my
25 information. I also have business cards that I can hand out

1 too. I'm the main go-to person for this project.

2 All right, so now we're going to move on to our
3 comments and questions. If you could start with the people
4 who signed up on the sheet who wanted to speak. And then
5 we'll go from there. Group discussion.

6 MS. HUDOCK: Just to jump in here very quickly,
7 Patrick had mentioned the schedule for the re-licensing
8 process. I did not put them in back, I've got them right
9 here so I'll put them in back so as people leave they can
10 feel free to take one with you on your way out.

11 But, Randy Thorsen from the National Park
12 Service, we've got you up next for speaking.

13 MR. THORSEN: Hi, I'm Randy Thorsen from the
14 National Park Service. Some of you know me. People up
15 there. I represent rivers and trails and also hydro. You
16 know Joan Hart out of Washington D.C. There's about six or
17 eight of us around the country, and that's why you saw me in
18 California. So, I just, you know, I didn't know I was --
19 that's why I'm here. This isn't a federal takeover, I'm not
20 trying to make this a federal takeover; not trying to make
21 this a national park; but through our National Park Service,
22 through the Hydro act and et cetera, we are one of the
23 resource agencies, stakeholder resource agencies that
24 comments, reviews FERC re-licenses.

25 So, the things you'll see me look at, Otter Tail,

1 thanks again for a real nice tour, it is three main things.
2 Recreation, land use, and aesthetics. I've been around the
3 block for many years so I'm familiar with the resources.
4 I'm very involved and educated in other resource issues.
5 I'm a big believer that everything ties together.

6 So, the only request I have other than to say is
7 just communication. Just keep us all informed and thanks
8 for offering the ability to contact you, and Otter Tail's
9 been really great on that and I look forward to the process.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. HUDOCK: Thank you.

12 MR. ELY: And, Otter Tail guys, your website,
13 you're also going to be, so, these filings that we have, are
14 you going to be putting them on, or at least linking them?
15 You mentioned that yesterday.

16 MR. OLSON: That's something we're going to look
17 into. I think we're going to have to change our website and
18 we're going to add some things to it.

19 MR. ELY: Okay. That's in the works. All right.

20 MS. LARSON: The intent is on there. I haven't
21 had the chance to read it all yet but there are a couple
22 things already on there.

23 MR. ELY: So, that's a secondary source..

24 MS. HUDOCK: So, can we ask your name?

25 MS. LARSON: Lori Larson.

1 MS. HUDOCK: Thank you.

2 MR. ELY: So, that would be the secondary source,
3 but the main source would be through us and our website and
4 subscribing. Also, if you fill out your name and your
5 address -- I think a lot of you agency guys are already on
6 the list, but then you would receive paper copies of our
7 issuances. You wouldn't necessarily receive all the
8 comments that are made, but everything that comes out from
9 us you would get mailed to you.

10 MS. MURRAY: Next up I have Shawn Donais.

11 MR. DONAIS: My name is Shawn Donais, I work for
12 the Department of Natural Resources. The hat I wear in that
13 organization is Parks and Trails. So, for us in this area
14 we deal mostly with the recreational use of the river.

15 As we look at this overall process, part of it is
16 the waters on the Otter Tail River, or any of the waters in
17 the State of Minnesota belong to the public. So there's
18 this use of public waters, so just like everybody else in
19 the process, we're trying to balance those two, and my
20 comments are more coming from my local area office and our
21 work within the Otter Tail River state water trail, one of
22 our designated water trails here. And there are also going
23 to be formal comments coming in from the Department of
24 Natural Resources in the process, too.

25 But part of what I see along in the process is

1 because we are so involved with the public whether it's
2 public water accesses, the reservoirs that are created in a
3 county with over a thousand fishable lakes, or it's talking
4 with the individual from Iowa two weeks ago, that talked
5 about he's a small mouth bass fisherman and he travels the
6 nation, and this is the best experience in the nation that
7 he's had.

8 Those kind of figured into all the things that we
9 think about balancing use of the river. We really wonder
10 how, when I think of the past history, you know, almost 100
11 years of Otter Tail power, probably truly credited with the
12 creation of the town and all those things, but how much has
13 changed in that time. And how the river gets used now
14 compared to then. The fraction, the one percent of
15 power generation. The fact that we have thirty years going
16 into the future of looking at that recreational use. A
17 challenge for us locally here and I think perhaps without
18 speaking for others, that have asked Derrick and I, who
19 works for -- because we're out there in the public so much,
20 question all these processes.

21 How does any of the groups, the city or somebody
22 else help answer those questions on what is the value one of
23 the top, statewide, national small mouth bass fisheries?
24 What are the economic values to the city of Fergus Falls if
25 we can assert a recreational component that doesn't exist in

1 paddling through town for 600 miles. How do we get those
2 things?

3 Because there's not resources that we have
4 locally to pull those documents together. We don't have a
5 profit manager. We're not gaining any economic value from
6 the river right now. And I'm not trying to pit one against
7 the other that the intentions of the corporation of Otter
8 Tail Power has. And so balancing all that, these are all
9 the questions honestly get answered to us by the public.

10 Okay, how do you balance those things for people
11 that live on the reservoirs? That local interest compared
12 to all the recreational ones on there. And we're challenged
13 in understanding the process to the point of how does that
14 come out in the ability? Because it seems like it's being
15 asked of, we have to feed you this information but, I don't
16 see us having the ability to feed that information and
17 answer those questions, so.

18 I know it's time for you guys to respond to
19 questions. Part of gathering that information together, but
20 I hope we see some of that in the future. Because it has
21 been talked about, the tremendous economic driver, and
22 somebody said the other day of the economic driver that was
23 the river to Fergus Falls at one time and wouldn't it be
24 great if the river could be that economic driver again? And
25 these days that economic driver of rivers is the

1 recreational aspect that they bring, both in fishery quality
2 going through and to paddle, to kayak, those kinds of
3 things.

4 The last part, I just wanted to talk about was
5 the rise in river activity; I think, you know, 30 to 50
6 years for a license? If I'm blessed to be here in 30 years
7 I hope that's great, I don't know my odds are so great to
8 make it 50 years, so you go back in time both ways is how my
9 perspective of looking at it is. That's a long time, I
10 think of all the things that have changed in that
11 recreational space and you guys certainly have more
12 experience than I in looking at that bigger picture, too;
13 but just even locally, on a little snippet locally that I'd
14 noticed. When I first moved up to Fergus Falls three years
15 ago, there were two businesses in town that sold kayaks.
16 There are six now.

17 I mean, a trend in the State of Minnesota that as
18 for the national boating association, but they kind of are
19 skewed more towards motor boating. But for Minnesota it had
20 different numbers, 76 motorized and there were 26 percent of
21 boat sales in Minnesota were other. And the only other that
22 was missing off that list was non-motorized canoes, kayaks,
23 and paddleboards. And we talk about the surge of use.
24 We're seeing vendors in town and everything else. To me
25 it's a good indicator of what that economic driver could

1 really be.

2 I'm just kind of curious as to how this process
3 helps us to really see it and not miss that opportunity as
4 we go into the future. What that economic driver can be for
5 the City of Fergus Falls, for Otter Tail County, and frankly
6 for this region to be able to include that recreational
7 piece in it. Then beyond it is the little things, too.
8 It's improving the facilities. It's making them more usable
9 for a lot of users. Those kinds of things we are also
10 looking at.

11 We've always had a great local relationship with
12 local Otter Tail Power, but just like we're the agency and
13 we have our local abilities, we can't always gather the
14 whole entire strength of the state and the bonding dollars
15 to do things I imagine too, it's probably true on the Otter
16 Tail Power side of it.

17 Local connections can do things, but we're
18 wondering what the responsibility of the corporate Otter
19 Tail Power is to step up and really be hands on and maybe
20 help us more with some of these projects. Sort of paying
21 back some of what they're taking away from all the public
22 use.

23 That's kind of the approach we have on it. We
24 have a ton of questions that we're not really sure how we
25 answer them at this point in the process. I'm just kind of

1 interested in how that process helps us get there. Or if
2 somehow we have to find resources internally and the city
3 has to find resources internally, and the county to answer
4 those questions some other way to be able to provide that
5 input.

6 MR. ELY: Feel free to interject here, Shana, but
7 it sounds like, kind of, if you could formulate what you,
8 you're talking about you need resources to figure this
9 information out. To me that sounds like a study request,
10 and if you could formulate what you said into an official
11 request for a study, then that would be a mechanism which
12 Otter Tail would be assumingly justified, all that good
13 stuff, that would a mechanism -- for Otter Tail would then
14 be required to conduct a study to formulate that.

15 MR. DONAIS: That helps, because I assume those
16 properties and groups in this room in this room from the
17 city or county, but I know that they're looking for
18 resources to kind of help do some of that now and it would
19 probably help them with this process.

20 MS. MURRAY: So, I am going to jump in because
21 Patrick's exactly right and that's exactly what I thought.
22 The next step in this process is figuring out what needs to
23 be studied or looked at to have a full understanding of
24 what's going on. I do want to say, though, when we look at
25 study requests there has to be a nexus to the project. It

1 has to have a connection to the project.

2 Possibly you think there may be an affect of the
3 project on resources such as recreation. It has to connect
4 back, because where we don't require studies is if it's a
5 study, you know, several miles upstream or downstream.
6 There could possibly be white water ten miles downstream.
7 There could be. That's an interesting question, but that
8 really doesn't have a nexus to the project. That's the big
9 part of requesting a study is really connecting it. How is
10 the project intertwined with this? And why is it needed in
11 this process.

12 So, I always like to highlight that because I
13 don't, you know, sometimes we get study requests, you know,
14 we think you should study white water here. And that's it
15 for the request and then people don't understand, why wasn't
16 this even looked at. There's no justification. There was
17 no thought of how Otter Tail might do that study.

18 And then another big thing we look at is cost.
19 We could study a lot on Otter Tail into the millions of
20 dollars, but we do consider what is reasonable in gathering
21 data. So, you know, later we can talk about that a little
22 more, but going back to Patrick's initial thought, it does
23 sound like a study request. It's something you've just got
24 to make sure is well thought out.

25 MR. ELY: Randy?

1 MR. THORSEN: Randy Thorsen, National Park
2 Service. Shawn, we can talk about that. I'm involved in a
3 lot of the study requests. I guess my question to you; I
4 guess I've done many study requests so I know there's a
5 nexus.

6 Here's my question: Can two agencies or
7 stakeholders join together for one study request? Because
8 he's talking about some of the same stuff I'm interested in.

9 MS. MURRAY: I really like that. Yes.

10 MR. THORSEN: Because he's talking about some of
11 the same stuff so why duplicate? So, I guess..

12 MS. MURRAY: Exactly.

13 MR. THORSEN: I'm offering.

14 MS. MURRAY: Now we really, people can do it
15 separately. We've seen it where four agencies and NGOs,
16 which are non-government organizations, we just call them
17 NGOs. Another acronym. Group together and file one study
18 request together as a group. We personally love that.
19 Rather than looking at five requests for the same study.
20 It, selfishly, that cuts down our work. But, no, we
21 encourage that. If you guys are on the same page that want
22 a similar study and done the same way, there's nothing to
23 say you can't file together.

24 MR. THORSEN: Who submits that? What's the next
25 step? What's the next step?

1 MS. MURRAY: It could be either, it doesn't
2 matter who it is. It can be Park Service, it could be DNR,
3 as long, your letter can say, together, we the DNR and Park
4 Service -- and then you both sign it; and so when we address
5 that study we would say, both DNR and Park Service have
6 filed a study request for recreation. We don't give you a
7 new name or anything.

8 MR. LUTHER: Scott Luther: I am with Minnesota
9 DNR.

10 MR. ANDLUND: Yes. We screen the Otter Tail
11 program. And that's A N D L A M D. And I'm old enough to
12 have gone through this once before. But we've learned a lot
13 since that first licensure. And one of the things that
14 we've studied specifically in this basin but also statewide,
15 was the need for fish passage through the dam system.

16 The Otter Tail power dams are all complete
17 barriers to migration. We have a lot of species, the most
18 prominent of which is the lake sturgeon, that was extricated
19 from the Red River Basin due to fragmentation. We as an
20 agency will have formal comments but these are just
21 discussion items at this point.

22 The other consideration is that the habitat into
23 Fergus Falls is historically high gradient habitat. For
24 some of these dams that have reservoirs filled with
25 sediment, decommissioning should certainly be a

1 consideration for this reach. These are habitats that once
2 existed that were critical to the lake sturgeon, walleye,
3 and a host of other native species.

4 We do have a habitat just upstream, uptown
5 through that 12 mile loop that that's diverted from. And
6 unfortunately it's fragmented for most of the rest of the
7 system. So, that is something we've worked and I'm very
8 proud of the work that we've done with Otter Tail Power, as
9 a joint venture. And something that's applied around the
10 country since.

11 Another concern that needs to be evaluated
12 further is dam failure potential. And I get drawn into dam
13 failures around the state because it's usually a need for
14 mediation at that point. Most of these failures are not to
15 dams that had identified deficiencies. And this town has
16 suffered dam failure in the past and the effects of that
17 still exist. Especially Central Dam and Pisgah Dam are
18 rapidly filling with sediment. Central Dam is virtually
19 full, and Pisgah is noticeably filling since the last
20 licensure.

21 And finally, a cultural history element that I
22 think we often focus on structures and parts of those
23 structures. Early on Alexander Henry came through Fergus
24 Falls paddling up the Otter Tail River, and identified the
25 unique falls and rapids for which Fergus Falls gets its

1 name. So, I offer that cultural history should extend
2 beyond the short time that European settlement has been
3 here.

4 With that, I'll conclude.

5 MS. MURRAY: Thank you. That looks like that is
6 it for the list.

7 MR. ELY: Open it up for anyone else who would
8 like to make a comment or has a question.

9 MR. ANDLUND: One other thing I forgot to
10 mention was back in the late '80s, '90s, we did in-stream
11 flow studies on the river. And those are things that should
12 be revisited. We both assessed flows associated with canoe
13 passage. And since that time the use of recreational
14 boating has increased. And that's something that should be
15 evaluated in that context.

16 MR. ELY: Anyone else?

17 MR. FULLHART: Howard Fullhart. F U L L H A R T.
18 With DNR also. This was common to use a group, more as I am
19 also a landowner or resident on, living on Dayton Power
20 Reservoir down there. Just like what happened last night
21 with the meeting there in regards to being, because
22 ultimately, I know with the DNR and Otter Tail Power we want
23 to be open and up front with our, with people that live
24 here, our stakeholders that live here.

25 And last night, after going through that meeting

1 a little bit, too. The one question I came out from that
2 meeting was, who was hosting the meeting? I mean, I didn't
3 have a full understanding or grasp on who was actually, I
4 mean I kind of knew it was, you guys, FERC that was kind of
5 putting on the meeting.

6 I also understood some of the frustration that
7 the group had last night in regards to a public notice. I
8 mean, I knew it was coming and I kept looking in the paper,
9 and everything else because we did get a notice from you
10 guys. I went back to check and see where, who it actually
11 came from this morning and it did come from you guys. So
12 there was only basically one notice in the paper which was
13 on a weekend paper. Many people don't get the paper so that
14 was partially a frustrating aspect if I was a private
15 landowner. Which I am a private landowner, which I am a
16 private landowner.

17 So, basically getting the input out was not, I
18 would have liked to have seen it better. So, in the future
19 too, if that's something where I do know that Otter Tail
20 Power had a list of names, and agencies and everything else.
21 We talked, too, a little bit this morning that there were a
22 lot of agencies that we had provided to it and they had
23 never received any formal invitation or notice, I should say
24 to this.

25 So, it was partially frustrating in that aspect

1 too as to how did the word get out. The other part was,
2 last night it would have been nice to clarify to individuals
3 that had had some frustrations, again too is, address your
4 frustrations in the form of a question or comment more to
5 get that mob mentality away from clapping and cheering for
6 someone that just makes a comment that is not a, potentially
7 is not a factual comment.

8 Or a situation where, because it was like, Shawn
9 asked you guys some questions and it was okay. And it's
10 easier to address to us because we're a government agencies
11 or work with government agencies and it's easier just to
12 talk with it. Because we know we're not going to get the
13 mob mentality here.

14 But to, but basically to address them that way
15 too is, I understand you have a concern, how do you want us
16 to, ask it to us so we can document it in a question form.
17 If we need to form a study for your concern. Just to calm
18 those individuals down so you don't get, because when they
19 walk away, their questions don't get answered, their
20 concerns don't get answered. My concern is another
21 individual or a neighbor, maybe has a different feeling or
22 doesn't; but because those non-factual statements that were
23 made were not addressed. And I know it's hard, you can't
24 address them.

25 People walk away from that saying, maybe that guy

1 was right, you know, in regards to using Otter Tail Power.
2 Example, Otter Tail Power Dams for flood control. They're
3 hydro dams, not flood control. Another individual with that
4 Appleton Dam. The city of Appleton loves that project. You
5 know, that individual speaking up about how it was a mess.
6 It is, but the fishing is better. It was actually a city
7 project before we stepped in actually to help them out then
8 too.

9 So, those weren't factual informations and again,
10 maybe state that, that individuals are more than, we're here
11 taking comments but just because someone says something it's
12 not factual information. So, I just wanted to, I'm new at
13 this process too, I don't, like, some of you have been here
14 more than others, but just for future meetings and
15 everything else, just to hopefully go that direction a
16 little bit more. Yes. So.

17 MR. ELY: You go.

18 MS. MURRAY: So, I'm going to address that. Yes.
19 For those who were here last night, it was a tough meeting
20 and my time at FERC for being ten plus years, not all
21 meetings go like that but a lot of them do. It's hard to
22 hear especially when a town is possibly divided on an issue.

23 You've got landowners in this case very mad at a
24 rumor of decommissioning. I'm not sure where they heard
25 that but they came in hot. They were mad. I mean, lo and

1 behold, decommissioning has been discussed this morning, so
2 I understand where they're coming from. As far as FERC, I
3 don't know where I want to go with this. It is our job to
4 listen even when someone is irate. Even if what they heard
5 may be false.

6 I don't know anything about the Appleton Dam. I
7 don't know the local information as far as what's true and
8 not true about these other projects because that's not
9 before us. So, some of the things that people say in these
10 meetings you can either disagree with, you may -- they may
11 be false. We're not the ones to point out, hey, that's
12 false, or you have to put your comments in the form of a
13 question. It's our job to listen even when they're very
14 upset and they just need to vent.

15 And I can understand that can be very
16 frustrating. I can understand the feeling of other people
17 who disagree with their position, feeling possible fear of
18 speaking in disagreement. We try to, tried to deflate the
19 situation last night. I think a little of that happens and
20 I think the one thing that we allow is, again, to let people
21 vent and get it out and then to try and have a discussion.

22 At this point in the process, we can't have much
23 of a discussion because we're still in the information
24 gathering phase. You're right, we're seeing that through
25 the newspaper notice, the agencies got the notice through

1 our eLibrary, they got hard copies, and we put it in the
2 Federal Register. We hit those three spots but we're
3 finding out -- FERC, Otter Tail's finding out that wasn't
4 enough. So, going forward, certainly, we all are going to
5 do better in trying to get information out about these
6 dates. About these meetings.

7 But I understand where you're coming from. We're
8 not trying to create a mob mentality or let that take over
9 the meetings. But throughout the process, I am going to
10 tell you, I'm just going to pick out this decommissioning
11 issue. It's going to be a hot issue and people are very
12 upset about it. And it's going to be some uncomfortable
13 meetings because not everybody is happy with that idea. And
14 on the other side, people really think that's a better way
15 to go. It's a bit of uncomfortable-ness that it's just,
16 we're going to have to work through. Because if we have a
17 public meeting toward the end or if we don't, the same thing
18 is going to happen.

19 MR. FULLHART: We understand that, too. We know
20 that the initial meeting is always going to be your most
21 contentious meeting because that's the first time stuff is
22 finally getting out there and we understand that, too.

23 And there is, I mean, there are stakeholders out
24 there and individuals out there that, this is what their
25 perception is and this is what they want -- and we also

1 understand that, I just was addressing that if there's a way
2 that you can step back and look at 'how do we redirect
3 soliciting comments' or something like that. Even if you
4 have, like I said, form it in, I know you have to comment
5 but we also need to, if we can make it into a study or
6 whatever, I know you have to comment so we would like you to
7 form it into a question. Also, basically so then it kind of
8 slows things down a little bit, too. It doesn't let it
9 steamroll towards you.

10 MS. MURRAY: Right, but a part of this scoping
11 meeting, they don't necessarily have to have a study or a
12 question. I mean, it's to take comments and even if it's,
13 I'm hopping mad that I heard this, that's what we're here
14 for.

15 MR. FULLHART: The other thing is that no one
16 actually had that, any of the documentation to actually
17 review so, a lot of them were going on --

18 MS. MURRAY: No, you're right. You're right. A
19 lot of them came in with no prior information and just
20 hearing things around town; and I don't, you're right, that
21 did not help. That did not help at all.

22 MR. THORSEN: A very similar example of this
23 happened the last go-around, when we proposed passage
24 through the steam plant, bullhead dam. There was a group
25 that thought we were introducing carp to the upper

1 watershed, and they were very mad about it. Turns out carp
2 had been upstream for at least forty years.

3 And what ended up moderating and getting the
4 facts out was a meeting that we had with Otter Tail Power.
5 It was a game and fish club meeting that was very well-
6 attended. I spoke at that meeting and we provided the facts
7 on where the carp were already distributed. And conveyed
8 the understanding that this is a critical element to the
9 native species. Virtually every species in the river.

10 And the attitude at that meeting changed
11 abruptly. In the end we ended up having a first fish
12 passage project on the Otter Tail River as a result. So, I
13 don't know how that works into this process. If FERC ever
14 gets involved in just providing the facts and disseminating
15 facts to the public, they don't react to false information.
16 Or if that's strictly on us, then perhaps Otter Tail Power
17 could.

18 MR. THORSEN: What I know is sometimes when we
19 have issues, when we have an open house meeting where
20 everybody's just there, with the table, it allows you to
21 come in and so when they come on up to me and talk to Shawn,
22 the recreation DNR guy, and they ask me a question about
23 power generation, I honestly say, "I am not the expert in
24 that, you can walk over to Otter Tail Power's table and ask
25 them" and vice versa. Because I think a lot of people walk

1 into it, and we only know the one or two things that we
2 know, and that loads our perception of it.

3 And a member of the public, in trying to
4 understand it and also living along the river, I'm going,
5 like, okay, I'm discovering things from every conversation
6 that I'm having that is shaping my information. How does
7 the process expect me to submit comments on what I don't
8 know? So, it's how do we get that information to the
9 public. So they know more. They may still walk away with
10 the exact number 1 on their list. And that's great. But at
11 least there's those other pieces --.

12 MR. LUTHER: Yes, the other element to this is
13 that it's important through the meeting record the
14 misunderstanding isn't conveyed, isn't brought into the
15 record as a factual element. It's asked to be tempered as a
16 concern but especially in terms of social effects on the
17 community, if it's an opinion expressed early in the process
18 without an understanding even of what is being proposed, it
19 becomes problematic when that's carried into the record.

20 I have been involved in dam removals all over the
21 country. And it's inevitable that that first meeting there
22 will be a lot of upset people, because they don't have an
23 understanding of what could exist or how it would affect
24 them. Writing down those opinions is very important in
25 making them understand that it's done, so I fully agree that

1 that is a critical step. But the other part of that is
2 addressing the concerns and making sure that the facts are
3 properly disseminated in the process.

4 MR. ELY: Back row.

5 MS. MURRAY: Lori Larson?

6 MS. LARSON: I live on the Otter Tail River and
7 last night was the first time that I had received notice
8 that there was a meeting happening. And it was in the
9 mailbox, put by somebody probably concerned not, and it was
10 handwritten on, with the time for it. And of course, I had
11 a meeting at six o'clock last night which I could have
12 switched, and I probably would have rather than taking my
13 time away from work today to come.

14 And I really wasn't even sure if I should be
15 coming because it was like, I don't know what this is, so I
16 didn't know there was an open house in the spring. I didn't
17 know, I mean, I live, you have my address. Even if you don't
18 have my name, so I am not certain why, you know, I haven't
19 known about this. Then I realized that it was also in the
20 newspaper, but I have a stack of newspapers that actually
21 I'm going through so I'm sure it's in there. But I haven't
22 read it yet. So, this, and I know I'm on the list now, but
23 I'm also talking about the previous, so, who else isn't on
24 there?

25 MR. ELY: I just want to make a quick point here.

1 I hear what you're saying and I agree. Basically, the
2 Federal Power Act has a set list of things that we have to
3 do here. A process to get this information out. It hasn't
4 been updated. So, I'd say, Yes, the best thing from now on
5 is to just help each other out, because we're required to
6 just do this, this, and that and like put it in the
7 newspaper which, see, is a bit old school. But, from now
8 on, yes, I mean, we're not anticipating any further future
9 meetings but say, if you guys would just help each other
10 out, that would be probably the best at this moment.

11 MS. MURRAY: I mean, the other thing is, we hear
12 what you're saying because Patrick's right. We put it in
13 the newspaper, a notice went out, it went on the Register,
14 but it's still missed people, even doing all those things.
15 What we're doing is, people don't really read newspapers
16 anymore so that's very old school. I know Otter Tail has
17 wide open ears to this and they are changing the way they
18 communicate and hearing that people didn't hear about this
19 meeting. We want to get people on our mailing list. We
20 have our business cards. We have our information.

21 So, if you hear something, you know, email us.
22 Please get on our mailing list. We hear that you didn't get
23 these notices and we want to change that going forward. The
24 great thing is, we are at the very beginning of the process.
25 That you can still get the pre-application document. You

1 could get the notice for this meeting but now that you're at
2 the meeting it's not really, you don't really need the
3 notice anymore.

4 Everything going forward, we're aware. We are
5 going to do our best those of you who want to be involved
6 are involved. Whether you want to participate or not, at
7 least you know you have the opportunity for involvement at
8 these places. And I think, as Otter Tail said, they have a
9 website, but they're even changing what they put on their
10 website. They're adding more things to it so we're doing
11 our best to fix this. But we do understand why this is
12 upsetting. Yes?

13 MS. RINGUIST: Lynette Ringuist, L Y N E T T E
14 R I N G U I S T. I also, I live on the river, and I had
15 texted a bunch of people yesterday in our neighborhood
16 because many people didn't know about it. Excuse me. The
17 same situation of Lori.

18 So, I guess saying that, your know, your
19 communication, like we just got done talking about, you
20 know, has been lacking. So, Yes, there's a lot of
21 uninformed and upset people because of that, I agree. But
22 maybe you guys could do a study on how to improve
23 communications and how to fix that before this project is
24 over. Maybe that is something you guys could actually work
25 on? Because having landowners that it's going to effect

1 their property if the dam is taken out, and they know
2 nothing about it? It is really upsetting to people. So, I
3 agree with the fact that, you know, we got to communicate
4 better and those people need to have an opportunity to
5 speak.

6 MR. ELY: And, I'd just like to say, so like,
7 last night wasn't the only opportunity; it's wide open to
8 write out your thoughts and then file it through our
9 eLibrary. So then it would be on the record and we would
10 read every single one of them. Last night's just open
11 speaking isn't the only time you can speak. If you can
12 formulate thoughts and put it -- put it in writing. Then we
13 have to take that into consideration.

14 MS. MURRAY: And the comments made today,
15 everything is being transcribed, and this is also in the
16 record. These are also being accounted for. So, it's
17 either your oral comments today or it is written comments
18 following up, as Patrick said. And this all goes into the
19 record and these are all taken into consideration.

20 Randy?

21 MR. THORSEN: Yes, so, I'd like.

22 I'd just like to say I've been around the block a
23 lot, too, and this is one of the pluses of the ILP. The
24 traditional license process. The reason ILP process came up
25 to be, and I was part of the national group that looked at

1 that was to front-end load it rather than wait until after
2 the fact.

3 So, there's hope in the process, I believe --
4 we're at the beginning, but take these comments into
5 consideration and work with the system and do a better job
6 of getting the notices up. That was the purpose of the ILP
7 was to not wait until later to get the information. I guess
8 last night was.

9 So, I think that if anything they're being aired
10 early enough that the process reflects that.

11 MR. ELY: Uh hmm.

12 MS. MURRAY: Yes.

13 MR. MURRAY: My name is Scott Murray. M U R R A
14 Y.

15 MS. MURRAY: Yes.

16 MR. MURRAY: I live at Wright Lake. Earlier in
17 the spring I heard, well, first of all, there's two issues
18 here. One it's a logical issue and the other one is
19 emotional. You all are logical, you have a process that you
20 have to do. The emotional side is the people that were here
21 last night. And I'm kind of glad I wasn't here last night,
22 because it sounded like it was a little bit out of hand, but
23 --

24 MR. ELY: It really wasn't out of hand...

25 MS. MURRAY: It was more emotional. It was

1 emotional last night. Just a little bit.

2 MR. MURRAY: It was emotional because as far as
3 the communication, I saw it in the paper. I read the
4 journal about once a month. And I just happened to see it
5 on Sunday. So, how do we fix that problem of communication?

6 Well, the most important people in this room, who
7 have the most at stake, is what? The citizens, but Otter
8 Tail Power. Is there a way for Otter Tail Power Company to
9 look through your database because we all get a bill. And
10 say "Look, we're going to have these meetings and just, not
11 email us, just put it in the bill," part of the bill, not.
12 I understand that most people get their power bill and are
13 like, oh my God, this is too much. But, and I know that you
14 guys are from the government, and you're here to help. You
15 hear that a lot.

16 But if we didn't have all this stuff I never
17 knew, I didn't even think about canoeing. I live on the
18 water. I don't even think about it. Until you brought up
19 it's a good point. In the spring, or maybe it was during
20 the summer. We got up here, I had heard that they're going
21 to close the power plant just downriver from us and they're
22 going to stock the water coming through Wright Lake. And
23 it's going to go the other way and I told my wife, I said,
24 We're selling this place tomorrow. Because it will be a
25 swamp. Because there won't be anything here. And then we

1 find out more things about it.

2 My whole point of this is, look, we have a
3 problem. This is going to happen, you're going to get your
4 license. I would imagine unless there's some calamity.
5 But, I don't even think many of us knew that there was a
6 licensing project that you needed a license. Well, we now
7 know that.

8 So, how do we get better communication to
9 emotional people with logical issues? Maybe one of the ways
10 is, hey, we're going to have a meeting. So, how many people
11 do you think would show up? Most of you in here are
12 government people, right? No? Citizen? I mean, we're all
13 live here. But my job is, I do something else, but my point
14 is logical or emotional.

15 This is a very informative meeting. One, I'm not
16 going to sell.

17 (Laughter)

18 Well, unless there's somebody in
19 here who wants it. But it was very informative. I
20 understand what's going to happen. I have a much better
21 understanding of all this. Now, to be honest, who's ever
22 going to get online and read this stuff?

23 MS. MURRAY: I mean, we will. We do.

24 MR. MURRAY: So, the whole point of this is
25 logical, emotional. You have what you do. You knew when

1 you were coming. I think it's a better issue that Otter
2 Tail because, of just the people that live in these areas
3 just might give a solution to it. I don't know. There's no
4 better place to live in the United States than right here.

5 Where do y'all live?

6 MS. MURRAY: Chicago.

7 MS. HUDOCK: D.C.

8 MR. ELY: Washington. Well, around D.C.

9 MR. MURRAY: Yes, traffic's great, isn't it?

10 (Laughter)

11 AUDIENCE: But obviously, the lack of
12 communication is huge and it does make people upset. When
13 they hearsay, you know, this and this and this did happen,
14 and this is happening in your neighborhood, and our
15 neighborhood. You are going to get a little bit upset,
16 because it affects their land. You know, so, I guess
17 finding a solution to that is pretty important.

18 MR. MURRAY: What did Tip O'Neill say? All
19 politics is local? Right?

20 MS. MURRAY: Well, that's the hard part, right
21 now it is hearsay. We don't have a formal proposal. We
22 have a pre-proposal before us. And as we discussed last
23 night, a five year, no. A two and a half year conversation,
24 and on the back end of the two and a half -- FERC is taking
25 all of the proposal, the recommendations, and comments, and

1 deciding what's best.

2 So, this is the beginning of a conversation. We
3 are doing our best to dispel hearsay, but for the next two
4 and a half years you're going to hear a lot of things
5 flying; decommissioning, not decommissioning,
6 decommissioning, you know, one development, not,
7 decommissioning all developments. Fish passage, not fish
8 passage. Opening up the water for whitewater.

9 All of these things are going to be flying around
10 with the hope that we get together in these meetings and
11 these discussions and data gathering to figure out when it
12 comes to an application what Otter Tail finally wants to
13 propose before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as
14 their proposal. Once they have their final proposal, the
15 agencies and anyone else, stakeholders, can make
16 recommendations as well. And FERC will ultimately have to
17 take all of that into account.

18 But it is, you are going to hear a lot of stuff
19 in the next two and a half years. Me personally, aside from
20 FERC, or there's bias because I'm FERC, pick up the phone.
21 I mean, we have business cards. Otter Tail, I hope you have
22 online, on speed dial, pick up the phone and directly ask
23 rather, you know, it's easy to talk to neighbors and they
24 are arguing this stuff, but call one of us, at least to, to
25 get -- we're supposed to be neutral, we're in the middle

1 here, to at least get a neutral party's take on what exactly
2 is going on. Now, I mean, that's a prime example of last
3 night.

4 Decommissioning wasn't mentioned, obviously
5 people read the transcript today, it was mentioned. It was
6 suggested. So, you can't even say that's a rumor anymore,
7 because that was suggested this morning. But, that means
8 we've got another two years to talk about that and whether
9 that's appropriate for this project or not.

10 MR. ELY: Just to say that, this is the very
11 beginning of the process. So, and I understand your
12 frustration for communication. But you're not really
13 behind. Three months in out of a five year process. So,
14 yes. You're good in terms of timeline. You have, you're
15 not -- yes, there's lots of opportunities from now on.

16 MS. MURRAY: Please make sure, we'll set those in
17 the back, to take the schedule before you leave. Because
18 that has all of the dates. It will say when we take
19 stakeholder comments but again, from last night, we take
20 them anytime.

21 So, Patrick mentioned the October 1st, date, if
22 you still have comments, you have to have a study request by
23 October 1st but if you have comments after October 1st, you
24 can file those with us anytime. And it's all a part of the
25 record. It's not like we don't consider those because they

1 came October 1st. The caveat though is the study request.
2 We will not consider study requests that come up after
3 October 1st, so if you have that in mind, you have to do
4 that by October 1st.

5 MR. LUTHER: Just one other comment regarding how
6 to get information regarding announcements and things.
7 While these projects are local, the effects are not. And
8 they both goes upstream and downstream in terms of things
9 like fish passage. So, the affected people that, I live on
10 the river and some of the early information was focused on
11 was reservoir owners and that kind of thing, but it's really
12 everybody that's affected by flow regulation, by things like
13 fish passage, and recreational use. So it goes beyond just
14 Fergus Falls in terms of affected parties.

15 MS. MURRAY: Well, in our scoping document we do,
16 we have a proposed geographic and temporal scope, so if you
17 don't agree with that scope you can file comments of what
18 you think the scope should be. Or a cumulative effect of
19 the projects you can also, we list those; but if you feel
20 that it's, it goes further, you can also file those comments
21 with FERC and then --

22 MR. LUTHER: Most people upstream will have a
23 watershed --

24 MS. MURRAY: Yes.

25 MR. LUTHER: Everybody upstream is affected in

1 terms of mussel and fish diversities.

2 MS. MURRAY: Yes, because we have to establish
3 that early on. So, that's why we take comments on it and
4 then say, this is what we consider the geographic and
5 temporal scope. And as of now, the cumulative effects.

6 MR. LUTHER: The one other comment in terms of
7 all these rumor mills that come out, is that there are a lot
8 of things that are getting discussed and considered, and no
9 decisions -- decisions are quite a ways out in terms of
10 what's done.

11 MS. MURRAY: Correct.

12 MR. LUTHER: I think it's important to get all
13 possibilities out there and get everybody interested and
14 involved, part of the process.

15 MS. MURRAY: No, we agree and touched on that
16 last night, that there will be a lot put on the table in the
17 next couple of years of the possibilities; because this is
18 not a black and white, this is a huge spectrum of scenarios,
19 so. It's just making people aware of those discussions that
20 are happening, and clearly we're hearing of how to, that we
21 need to involve people more so than we've done up to date.
22 That message is loud and clear.

23 MR. DONAIS: I think helping the public
24 understand when these things come along that it is about
25 them. The two opposite ends of the spectrum that you bring

1 forward, and it doesn't mean that one or the other has any
2 more balance at any one point, but if you get, I feel I
3 would not be doing my job if I did not bring those two
4 opposites on the spectrum into the discussion because it's
5 the weighing of those two that we eventually get to that
6 middle point that is overall hopefully the best decision for
7 the majority.

8 If you don't do that, and often when people hear
9 that and they come to it, well they're only thinking this,
10 or they're only thinking that, and it's not, we're not on
11 either side of the argument, but we feel like it's our
12 responsibility to bring forth both external ends. Do
13 absolutely nothing, decommission of the dam. Do absolutely
14 nothing, build the world's largest waterslide.

15 I don't know what the other side was beyond that
16 but it's just kind of that piece, and I know how the public
17 reacts to it. It's challenging in that way..

18 The other piece I wondered is the list of
19 meetings; the names of those meetings don't mean much to me;
20 like I've heard, okay, we have to have comments in by
21 October 1st, and now I just heard that we have to have
22 requests for studies in by October 1st and maybe that if I
23 went and read all the documents I, I just couldn't digest it
24 all, I picked that up. But if there was some way that
25 beyond the sheet that says that we -- is there another piece

1 on the website that tells me what that meeting really means?

2 MS. MURRAY: On the sheet it also says study
3 requests, October 1st. Yes. I mean it just says study
4 requests due. I don't have the sheet, sorry. Yes. I want
5 to see the sheet but -- I hear what you're saying.

6 MR. DONAIS: I don't know all the lingo. To me,
7 I don't even know what you mean by study request. I have an
8 impersonation of you, you want us to tell you things that
9 you should probably study more of.

10 MS. MURRAY: Right. Right. It's as Randy was
11 talking about --

12 MR. DORMAN: It's a formal process that's written
13 out in the PAD.

14 MS. MURRAY: So it's like five, four or five
15 down, it's the PAD, that's the pre-application document. We
16 use a lot of acronyms. The PAD, the scoping document.

17 So comments on the PAD and scoping document and
18 study requests due. If you don't know how to file a study
19 request, or you don't know the criteria or understand what
20 we're looking for, take Patrick's business card, take my
21 business card. Write down Chelsea's number, call us. I
22 cannot say that enough. We will walk you through it.

23 We won't write the study request for you, we
24 won't say, Yes, that sounds like something we would approve
25 or not approve, but we will walk you through how to create a

1 study request if that's what you want to do.

2 Now, Randy, very generously, Randy has done a lot
3 so, I would use Randy as a link as well. A good resource.
4 But we're not here to say, file a study request, but we're
5 not going to tell you how to do it or what we want because
6 we want you to fail and we want to not approve it. We want
7 to help you if you are seeking information. That doesn't
8 necessarily mean it's going to get approved but we will walk
9 you through anything you need. If you're having trouble
10 eSubscribing, call us. We will walk you through. We will
11 get you help. That's it. I personally think we are your
12 best resources.

13 MR. DORMAN: We're not understanding. When this
14 first came up we were like, there was some because they
15 don't know the process that were like, eh, it's a five year
16 process.

17 MS. MURRAY: But, it, five years goes fast.

18 Randy Dorman: Exactly but that's difficult for
19 us, of understanding what this really is. And then having
20 anybody in our renovations slowing down enough to do all the
21 other things they now have to do to start paying attention
22 to things that help the process and timeline.

23 MS. MURRAY: Or even a question on the due date.
24 I think this first one falls on a Saturday. Which means, we
25 usually get, do we, does that mean we have to file it by

1 Friday? What does that mean? And it means, we will take
2 study requests and comments up until 5 p.m. Eastern time on
3 Monday. Any time a date like this falls on a weekend, we
4 will accept those filings through Monday at 5 p.m. Eastern
5 time. So, does that give you an extra hour? Five o'clock
6 would be four o'clock here. So, four o'clock your time.
7 But it's questions like those just honestly, call us,
8 please. Yes?

9 MS. RINGUIST: Just one more question, so, just
10 trying to understand exactly how this process works; after
11 you get to the end of the two or three years and you have
12 all these studies and you look over all of the data, do you
13 ultimately make the decision as to what happens? And are
14 there variables that you say have to happen, like of this
15 fish passage. Like would you say, yes, well keep this dam
16 but you have to have a fish passage, or something like that,
17 I mean, how does the end product actually move forward?

18 MR. ELY: So, the process after the pre-filing,
19 which we were going over here. This year and then the two
20 to three years. After that they file their official
21 application and that kicks off the next part where we would
22 then get official recommendations from resource agencies who
23 would say if they want to decommission would need to put
24 that, justify it, and then we would take that information
25 and then we'd put out an environmental assessment; and so

1 that gives our opinion of it but it's not the final word.

2 Then after, the people can file comments on that
3 and I don't know if we do draft environmental assessment,
4 get comments and then do another environmental assessment,
5 which people still can file comments on; and after that,
6 after we have all that information, then we would have the
7 license order which would be, this is how they're going to
8 operate, this is what they have to do, and then that's set
9 in stone, right at the very end. There's steps before that
10 where we lay out our opinion and so people can counteract it
11 or agree with it. and then in the end we make the ultimate
12 decision.

13 MS. MURRAY: So, when they're going to add to
14 that, in their application they will propose how they want
15 to operate, and what environmental mitigation measures
16 they're proposing to do. Which could include, Otter Tail
17 could suggest fish passage, proposed fish passage, and
18 decommissioning a couple projects or they can say, we want
19 to operate as we always have done. Agencies can come in and
20 say, we recommend, FERC, you require fish passage in our
21 environment.

22 As Patrick was saying, in our environmental
23 document we take all of that and we will make a
24 recommendation. Here's how we think you should operate, and
25 yes you should include fish passage here, no we don't agree

1 with it here. It's as he said, a recommendation. Again, we
2 get more comments in the license order, that is the final,
3 as Patrick said, final: Otter Tail you have to do this --
4 and we are very specific on how you operate, what
5 environmental measures do you have to include. Whether it
6 be fish passage or not. Whether you improve the portages or
7 not.

8 It's not a discussion piece anymore, you have to
9 do this. And that document, whether decommissioning would
10 be involved, we would state that in the order. FERC,
11 ultimately, we are making the recommendations in the final
12 decision on what's going to happen as far as operation,
13 maintenance, decommissioning or not decommissioning of
14 projects.

15 MS. RINGUIST: So, are there any agencies in this
16 room that are going to propose for landowners, as far as how
17 it would affect their property? If it was decommissioned,
18 or is that something that all landowners would have to ask
19 for?

20 MS. MURRAY: In our document, let's say if
21 someone is proposing decommissioning of a couple projects, a
22 couple developments. We, as FERC, in our assessment, we
23 have to analyze what the effects of decommissioning would
24 be. That is effects on the environment, effects on power
25 generation, effects on water quality, effects on

1 landowners, the economics of it.

2 That is what an environmental assessment is.
3 It's looking at the effects of the project proposal on these
4 recommendations. So that's, I mean, you can ask for it but
5 if someone's proposing something, you can say: I want you
6 to analyze the effect of that, but just in an informal
7 conversation here, we have to look at that anyway, that is
8 our job. We're not doing our job if we don't analyze the
9 effects of all these proposals.

10 That analysis is how we make our decisions.
11 That's what we base our decisions on. And that's why we go
12 through so many steps of getting public comment, because
13 when we issue that first draft on environmental assessment,
14 a lot of times people will come back and say: Well, I don't
15 exactly agree with your analysis. Or "I think there would
16 be more effects than what you, what the document said." You
17 know, and then we do another version, a final version.
18 There are a lot of steps. Does that make sense?

19 MR. ELY: And if you see something that is going
20 to affect you, it's wide open for you to come in with
21 information and like specific information, as far as
22 property values, for example, that would help us weigh the
23 options. So that also gives you the opportunity to come in
24 and give your side of the story.

25 MR. THORSEN: Within the FERC's website do you

1 have, just fact sheets that are easily accessible? I know
2 how these things go, it's a lot of paper generation and a
3 lot of materials for the landowner; it's a lot to wade
4 through to find what you're after. So, is there a way of
5 boiling that down into kind of a simple dissemination of
6 information on different issues?

7 MS. MURRAY: You mean, like, the process and what
8 we just explained, or --

9 MR. THORSEN: Different elements of people can
10 easily navigate to the existing facts and -- that are being
11 considered, in the process.

12 MS. MURRAY: Well, I mean, that's --

13 MR. THORSEN: If the issue was raised for the
14 dam. What the pros and cons and the current issues of --

15 MS. MURRAY: We wouldn't do the pros and cons or
16 the analysis of that until the final NEPA document. So, if
17 you went to the Commission now, there's no page that's like,
18 here's the pros and cons of decommissioning. That doesn't
19 exist.

20 MR. ELY: Yes that comes out in our environmental
21 assessment.

22 MS. MURRAY: It is project-specific so until it's
23 formally proposed before us, you're not going to see an
24 analysis from FERC on what we think are the effects and the
25 pros and cons of decommissioning. And no, it's not formally

1 before us. This is again, again, an open pre-filing
2 conversation.

3 However, if you're a landowner or anyone else in
4 this room, if you go on to FERC, you can either eSubscribe
5 or go to our eLibrary, you can look at the pre-application
6 document. That is the document that tells you, Otter Tail,
7 what's existing and what Otter Tail preliminarily proposes
8 to do for the next 30 to 50 year license. That document is
9 key right now in these conversations. My opinion. That's a
10 good place to start. If you want to know what's going on,
11 read the PAD.

12 MR. THORSEN: I realize those data, that
13 information doesn't exist now, but through the process as
14 the studies are done, the information will become available.

15 MS. MURRAY: It's the environmental assessment.
16 It's the EA, you will not see that before the EA.

17 MR. THORSEN: So, people really don't have access
18 to the facts of different decisions and elements....

19 MS. MURRAY: They do, it's the environmental
20 assessment. So, everything up until that point, we can't
21 make conclusions before we have a formal proposal before us
22 and formal recommendations. So, yes, it is in one document,
23 but it's towards the end of the process. And anything
24 before that would be, yes, making conclusions which we are
25 not allowed to nor equipped to do. Because we don't have

1 all the information.

2 MR. THORSEN: I'm not saying conclusions, I'm
3 just saying, the facts of both existing conditions and
4 changes that would exist in any particular decision. It
5 wouldn't be a conclusion about the decision it would be --

6 MS. MURRAY: But it would be an analysis of a
7 proposal.

8 MR. ELY: It's hard to, I mean I can be perceived
9 when one person writes it one way and have a feeling on
10 which way they want to go, I mean, it's tough to just lay
11 out pro cons, on when, someone's pro-con list could be
12 totally different from somebody else.

13 When we do our environmental assessment on it we
14 say: Okay, we have all of the available information now for
15 us to basically write out the pros and cons of what we think
16 is going to happen. But before that, we can't just kind of
17 put up --

18 MR. THORSEN: Bunch of opinions; just basic water
19 level information. There's underlying substrates -- we just
20 went through this for a former hydro dam in Minnesota Falls,
21 and there was an analysis of the profile of the reservoir,
22 how the water levels and change.

23 MS. MURRAY: Right, but that analytical piece of
24 our environmental assessment. And the only time that
25 happens is at the environmental assessment. I mean, I hear

1 what you're saying but the bottom line is that's not going
2 to happen before the environmental assessment.

3 MS. HUDOCK: But prior to that, in the license
4 application, the draft license application, we are also when
5 we'll be getting the study results from all the studies that
6 are implemented as a result of the study plan determination.
7 So, the result of those will be objectively included within
8 the license applications.

9 So, those are the pieces available that the
10 public will be able to see prior to our analysis. So, those
11 are the things that we will be taking into consideration in
12 the analysis; but just those items, the study results
13 themselves will be available for people to see prior to the
14 issuance of our analysis.

15 MS. MURRAY: Right. But not FERC's analysis.

16 MS. HUDOCK: But not, exactly.

17 MR. ELY: Randy wants to interject here.

18 MR. DORMAN: Randy Dorman, Kleinschmidt and
19 Associates. I do just want to point out to folks who are
20 maybe new to this process, the pre-application document is
21 our attempt to try and provide what is known about all of
22 these resources to date. So, it's a pretty good place to
23 start in terms of what we've found in terms of research,
24 where we're starting as far as known information about all
25 of these resources.

1 The PAD also has a discussion about the process
2 and how to participate in the process. And there are a
3 couple documents cited in there that happen to be published
4 by the Commission, including there's one that's like a
5 citizens guide to participating in a hydropower process
6 which is a very good way to orient yourself. It is a
7 complicated and sometimes arcane process, and so this does a
8 great job of trying to break it down and help people follow
9 along.

10 And in addition, I do want to plug again Otter
11 Tail's website that we have, that I think we're going to try
12 to add a little more background information to help people
13 follow along; but right now it has links to these major
14 documents as well as dates for upcoming meetings. So,
15 hopefully, between all of those resources that will help
16 people and of course, I think we're here to answer
17 questions.

18 MR. ELY: Anybody else? Okay. Meeting
19 adjourned.

20 MS. MURRAY: Thank you for coming.

21 (Whereupon, at 11:51 a.m., the scoping meeting
22 concluded.)

23

24

25

1 CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

2

3 This is to certify that the attached proceeding

4 before the FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION in the

5 Matter of:

6 Name of Proceeding:

7 OTTER TAIL RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

8

9

10

11

12

13

14 Docket No.: 10853-021

15 Place: Fergus Falls, Minnesota

16 Date: August 31, 2016

17 were held as herein appears, and that this is the original

18 transcript thereof for the file of the Federal Energy

19 Regulatory Commission, and is a full correct transcription

20 of the proceedings.

21

22

23 Daniel Hawkins

24 Official Reporter

25