



# Recreation Management Plan

**Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2512**

*Fayette County, West Virginia*  
November 2018

Prepared for:  
Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC  
**Brookfield**

Prepared by:  
HDR  


### Contents

- 1 Introduction ..... 1
  - 1.1 Project Background ..... 1
  - 1.2 Recreation Management Plan Requirements ..... 1
- 2 Existing Recreation Facilities Summary ..... 3
- 3 Proposed Recreational Enhancements ..... 4
  - 3.1 Project Recreation Facilities ..... 4
  - 3.2 Non-Project Recreation Facilities ..... 5
- 4 Provisions for Operation and Maintenance ..... 6
- 5 Recreational Feature Inventory ..... 6
- 6 Periodic Recreation Management Plan Meetings and Plan Updates ..... 6
- 7 Consultation ..... 7
- 8 References ..... 7

### Appendices

- Appendix A - Overview Map of Existing and Proposed Recreation Facilities
- Appendix B - Cotton Hill Day-Use Area Proposed Enhancements Conceptual Drawings
- Appendix C - Proposed Midland Trail New River Access Site Aerial and Conceptual Drawing
- Appendix D - Consultation

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC (Hawks Nest Hydro), a subsidiary of Brookfield Renewable (Brookfield), owns and operates the Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (Hawks Nest or Project) (FERC No. 2512) in Fayette County, West Virginia. Hawks Nest is located along the New River and has a generating capacity of 102 megawatts. The Project is composed of a 243-acre impoundment, a concrete-gravity dam and spillway; a gated intake; water conveyance structures, including an approximately 3-mile-long underground tunnel that conveys water from the reservoir to a penstock system at the powerhouse, a surge basin and surge tank, manifold, and five penstocks; a 5.5-mile-long bypass reach; a powerhouse that contains four turbine-generator units; two approximately 5.5-mile-long, 69-kilovolt transmission lines; a tailrace channel; and appurtenances.

On December 22, 2017, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) issued a new license for the continued operation and maintenance of the Project pursuant to the Commission's delegated authority under the Federal Power Act. Article 408 of the new license requires Hawks Nest Hydro to file a Recreation Management Plan (Management Plan) for FERC approval, following consultation with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Section (WVDNR-WRS), West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), WVA Manufacturing, LLC, American Whitewater (AW), and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters. The Management Plan must be consistent with WVDEP's 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) conditions 11 (requiring an updated Recreation Management Plan), 3 (maintenance of the stage gauge at Cotton Hill), 4 (providing flow information in the bypass reach via a website), 5 (through-access and portage), 6 (improved boating access at Cotton Hill), 7 (facility improvements at Cotton Hill), 8 (maintenance of the existing tailrace fishing access area), 9 (take-out location), and 10 (annual funding to WVDNR-WRS). License Article 408 further requires the Management Plan to also include the following:

1. Provisions for ongoing operation and maintenance of the sites.
2. An inventory of amenities at the sites, and maps showing existing facilities and any proposed enhancements.
3. Provision for consultation with WVDNR-WRS, WVDEP, WVA Manufacturing, LLC, AW, and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters every six years, consistent with Form 80 timing.

## 1.2 Recreation Management Plan Requirements

This Management Plan identifies required actions to support the maintenance and enhancement of public recreation resources within the Project area. The Management Plan addresses the following WVDEP 401 WQC conditions for the Project:

3. *The licensee shall continue to maintain a stage gauge in the vicinity of the Cotton Hill Bridge (preferably operated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)) and have the information available via the internet real-time. The stage/flow relationship (up to 3,000 cfs) must be spot-checked against actual USGS readings once annually, and updated if conditions warrant.*
4. *The licensee must develop and maintain a central public website for information relevant to flows in the bypass reach, including links to available gauges, applicable conversions or calculations to*

*derive real-time flow information, and relevant forward-looking operational information (including that which may be available from upstream dams).*

5. *In lieu of public vehicular access from the Cotton Hill Bridge to the Hawks Nest Dam, and within 18 months of new license issuance, the licensee shall open to biking and hiking traffic the existing trail/right of way beginning approximately 1,000 feet downstream of the mouth of Mill Creek, near Hawks Nest State Park and continuing downstream to the Hawks Nest Dam. The licensee must design and construct safe passage for biking/hiking, during daylight hours, past the intake gate/dam area to allow for connection of the road/trail from the Cotton Hill Bridge upstream to the mouth of Mill Creek. Upstream of the dam's boat barrier, the trail must have an accommodation for carryable boat portage. The newly opened trail portion will be approximately 0.6-mile long and maintained by Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC. With good cause, and with 30-day advance notification to WVDNR-WRS, Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC may close the trail to the public temporarily if needed for facility construction/maintenance. The trail may also be closed for short duration without advanced notification for operation and maintenance activities, large equipment access, emergency, or unforeseen safety conditions and will be reopened immediately after such condition has passed. Plans must be submitted to and approved by WVDNR-WRS prior to construction.*
6. *Provide one-time funding of \$50,000, by June 2<sup>nd</sup> following new license issuance, for improvements or enhancements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area (on lands owned by WVDNR-WRS or Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC) with specific improvements to be identified in consultation with WVDNR-WRS. Provided however, the improvements must include accommodations for improved boating access. This boating access shall serve in lieu of the proffered shuttle access to the dam during scheduled whitewater release.*
7. *Within 18 months of new license issuance, and consistent with the new license, identify, design, construct and maintain improvements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area parking area (on lands owned by Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC). This area is managed by WVDNR-WRS, therefore, improvements would need to be identified in consultation with WVDNR-WRS and are generally expected to include a seasonal toilet/changing facility, new picnic facilities, and improvements to parking and signage.*
8. *The licensee shall maintain angler access to the existing Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access Area and continue to allow angler access to the bypass reach, with bypass reach maintained by WVDNR-WRS as set forth in Condition 10 below.*
9. *In lieu of a take-out location at the powerhouse tailrace area the licensee shall work in conjunction with WVDNR-WRS to acquire and develop, or long term lease, a take-out location on the New River in the Gauley Bridge area within approximately 18 months of new license issuance (recognizing the goal is to have access available prior to the first scheduled whitewater releases and that actual transaction durations may be shorter or longer). Funding for the purchase/lease and development shall be provided by Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC. The amount paid shall be subject to an appraisal and be consistent with costs for other access site purchases/leases made by WVDNR-WRS. WVDNR-WRS will maintain the site with funding set forth in Condition 10 below.*
10. *By June 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year following new license issuance, provide annual funding in the amount of \$25,000, to WVDNR-WRS for maintenance of and enhancement to recreation facilities on project-associated lands that have been deeded to, or leased by, WVDNR-WRS. This value will be adjusted for inflation annually based on the Bureau of Labor's Consumer Price Index.*

## 2 Existing Recreation Facilities Summary

As currently licensed, there are two formal recreation facilities associated with the Hawks Nest Project: the Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access and the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area. Recreation within the Project area has also been developed in coordination with the WVDNR-WRS, primarily in the form of Hawks Nest State Park (HNSP) and the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area.

### *Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access (Project Facility)*

The Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access is a day-use facility located on river right (looking downstream), adjacent to the Hawks Nest powerhouse. The facility includes a paved parking area for approximately 17 vehicles, steps down to the New River for angler access, and a fenced walkway to a tailrace catwalk fishing platform. The facility was constructed by the prior licensee, and Hawks Nest Hydro is responsible for maintenance and operation of this Project recreation facility. The location of the Hawks Nest Tailrace Site is depicted on the overview map provided in Appendix A.

### *Cotton Hill Site (Project and Non-Project Facilities)*

The larger Cotton Hill Site generally refers to a large area, including lands owned by the licensee as well as land was deeded to WVDNR by the prior licensee, that provides public recreational access to the upper Hawks Nest bypass reach (i.e., in the vicinity of the Cotton Hill Bridge / State Route 16) and area below Hawks Nest Dam. The Cotton Hill Site provides opportunities for hiking, wildlife observation, and fishing access, and the multi-use pedestrian trails also serve as the put-in locations for boater access to the bypass reach.

The larger Cotton Hill site includes the approximately 10-acre area deeded to WVDNR that is designated by WVDNR as the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area. In addition to wildlife habitat, the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area is designated for hunting and trapping. This area also includes informal parking and turnaround areas and informal trails, including trails in the vicinity of Cotton Hill Bridge that commonly serve as informal kayak launch sites and provide angler access to the bypass reach.

The larger Cotton Hill Site also includes the land upstream of Cotton Hill Bridge up to Hawks Nest Dam, between the planned Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail and the river bank, including a series of informal trails that provide access to the bypass reach. The most upstream trail consists of a series of switchbacks from the trail head to a point approximately 0.1 miles downstream of the dam.

### *Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area (Project Facility)*

The Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area is a day-use facility that is located on lands owned by the licensee at the northeast terminus of the Cotton Hill Bridge (State Route 16) as it crosses over the New River. This Project recreation facility currently offers gravel parking for approximately ten to twelve vehicles. The parking area was constructed by the prior licensee and is maintained by the WVDNR-WRS, along with other amenities in the larger Cotton Hill Site area (see Section 2.2). The location of the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area is depicted on the overview map provided in Appendix A.

### *Hawks Nest State Park (Non-Project Facilities)*

In 1966, the original licensee of the Hawks Nest Project leased 200 acres of land upstream of the Hawks Nest Dam and adjacent to HNSP to the State of West Virginia for the use and benefit of the WVDNR-WRS. This land became part of the 838-acre HNSP, which is operated and maintained by the WVDNR-WRS (FERC 1987). The lease remains in effect as long as the Hawks Nest Project is operating under a valid license issued by FERC.

The park borders the New River Gorge National River, and offers a scenic, panoramic view of the gorge. HNRP is located on the Midland Trail Scenic Highway about one hour east of Charleston. Hawks Nest Dam is located 0.5 miles west/southwest of HNRP, while the Hawks Nest powerhouse is located 3.5 miles southeast of the park.

HNRP is one of six state parks located in the New River Basin. HNRP offers numerous recreational opportunities, including an aerial tramway running from Hawks Nest Lodge to a marina located at the bottom of the New River Gorge. Visitors can experience the New River via a jet boat tour offered May through October annually. The park's River Complex provides a picnic area, gift shop, access to the Hawks Nest Rail Trail and a nature center with interactive displays. Hiking is a primary activity available at HNRP, which boasts a variety of trails. Other recreational facilities at the park include an overlook vista, picnic shelters, souvenir shops, and a playground area. Accommodations are available at the park's 31-room lodge, which includes a conference center and a full-service restaurant (WVSP 2014).

## 3 Proposed Recreational Enhancements

The licensee will continue to provide public access to the existing Project recreation facilities at the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area and Hawks Nest Tailrace Site, and will also provide the following enhancements as required by the new license and the 401 WQC for the Hawks Nest Project. Appendix A provides a map showing the general location of the existing and proposed recreational facilities for the Hawks Nest Project.

### 3.1 Project Recreation Facilities

#### *Recreation Flow Releases and Bypass Reach Flow Information*

WVDEP's 401 WQC conditions 4 (providing flow information in the bypass reach via a website), 12 (recreation flow release scheduling), and 13 (number of and schedule for planned recreation releases) specifically pertain to recreation flow releases required at the Hawks Nest Project. Details of Hawks Nest Hydro's plan to implement these requirements over the license term are addressed in the Recreation Flow Release Plan, which was submitted to stakeholders and FERC under separate cover.

#### *Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail*

WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 5 requires Hawks Nest Hydro to (1) open to biking and hiking traffic the existing trail/right of way beginning approximately 1,000 feet downstream of the mouth of Mill Creek, near Hawks Nest State Park and continuing downstream to Hawks Nest Dam; (2) design and construct safe passage for biking/hiking, during daylight hours, past the intake gate/dam area to allow for connection of the gated/Project Hawks Nest Dam access road from the Cotton Hill Bridge upstream to the mouth of Mill Creek, and (3) accommodate carryable boat portage upstream of the Hawks Nest Dam boat barrier.

The entire route of what will now be referred to as the Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail is depicted on the conceptual drawing included in Appendix B. The trail shown in red is currently existing/established and will be maintained by Hawks Nest Hydro. Hawks Nest Hydro plans to install fencing and signage along the trail for public safety purposes, particularly in the vicinity of the dam and intake. A primitive portage take-out will be constructed by Hawks Nest Hydro as depicted on the conceptual figure in Appendix B. Based on a site visit conducted with WVDEP and WVDNR-WRS in June 2018, Hawks Nest Hydro anticipates that, as constructed, the portage egress from the river upstream of the boat barrier will consist of a directional sign and timber/crushed stone steps up the shoreline to connect to the established trail. Hawks Nest Hydro proposes to file details of the final, constructed portage and associated signage as an addendum to the Management Plan, along with the feature inventory described in Section 5.

The Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail will be open to pedestrian and non-motorized vehicles year-round, from dawn until dusk, except there are no provisions for snow removal upstream of the intake structure. With a 30-day advanced notification to WVDNR-WRS, Hawks Nest Hydro may close the trail to the public temporarily if needed for facility construction and maintenance. The trail may also be closed for a short duration without advanced notification for operation and maintenance activities, large equipment access, emergency, or unforeseen safety conditions and will be reopened immediately after such condition has passed. In the event of a planned trail closure, notification will be posted to the public website to be developed by Hawks Nest Hydro pursuant to the Recreation Flow Release Plan for the Project.

### *Enhancements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area*

WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 7 requires Hawks Nest Hydro to identify, design, construct and maintain improvements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area parking area in consultation with WVDNR-WRS, with such improvements expected to include a seasonal toilet/changing facility, new picnic facilities, and improvements to parking and signage.

Hawks Nest Hydro proposes the following enhancements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area (1) addition of a portable toilet and changing facility, (2) addition of new picnic facilities (including 2 picnic tables), (3) installation of additional signage, and (4) expansion of the available area for parking. The parking expansion will be made possible by relocating the gate along the Hawks Nest Dam access road (a.k.a., Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail) to a point approximately 200 feet closer to the dam. The Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area, as proposed, will provide a total of 22 parking spaces and will include two turn around areas. Appendix B of this Management Plan provides conceptual drawings of the proposed recreational enhancements for the Cotton Hill Site. Hawks Nest Hydro proposes to file details of the final, constructed picnic facilities, improved parking and associated signage as an addendum to the Management Plan, along with the feature inventory described in Section 5.

The Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area will be open year-round, from dawn until dusk, except that the toilet facility may only be provided on a seasonal (approximately April 1 through November 30) basis.

## 3.2 Non-Project Recreation Facilities

### *Enhancements to the Cotton Hill Site (Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area)*

As required by WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 6, Hawks Nest Hydro is providing one-time funding to WVDNR-WRS in the amount of \$50,000 for improvements or enhancements to the Cotton Hill Site. Specific improvements will be identified by WVDNR-WRS. Per condition 6 of the WQC, improvements must include accommodations for improved boating access during scheduled recreation flow releases.

Hawks Nest Hydro understands that WVDNR-WRS is presently evaluating potential locations and trail improvements or other amenities to improve boater access to the bypass reach for the scheduled recreation flow releases. These improvements are outside of the scope of this Management Plan. Hawks Nest Hydro notes that if such improvements are not constructed prior to the planned start of the recreation flow releases in June 2019, the existing trails and parking areas in the vicinity of Cotton Hill Bridge will provide interim access.

### *Midland Trail New River Access*

WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 9 requires Hawks Nest Hydro to work in conjunction with WVDNR-WRS to acquire and develop a take-out location on the New River in the Gauley Bridge area. Once constructed, this non-Project recreation facility will be maintained by WVDNR-WRS using annual funding provided by Hawks Nest Hydro per condition 10 of the WQC.

Hawks Nest Hydro and WVDNR-WRS, in consultation with WVDEP, have identified a suitable and practicable location for constructing a take-out area approximately 0.2 miles upstream from the New River Campground. The proposed Midland Trail New River Access site is proposed to consist of seven parallel parking spots, seven angled boat and trailer parking spots, and a bus turn around at each end of the parking lot. The facility will remain a non-project recreational facility. For informational purposes, a conceptual drawing of the proposed facility along with an aerial showing the approximate location along the New River are included in Appendix C of this Management Plan. The natural conditions of the existing flat shoreline and rock shelf at the site are suitable for kayak or raft take-out.

With additional funding provided by Hawks Nest Hydro, WVDNR-WRS is currently in the process of acquiring the land necessary to develop this non-Project recreation facility, based on a verbal acceptance by the landowner of the purchase offer. Pending and assuming a successful final real estate transaction, Hawks Nest Hydro and WVDNR-WRS anticipate construction of the Midland Trail New River Access by the end of May 2019.

## 4 Provisions for Operation and Maintenance

Under condition 10 of the 401 WQC, the licensee provides \$25,000 annually (adjusted for inflation annually, based on the Bureau of Labor's Consumer Price Index) to WVDNR-WRS for maintenance of and enhancements to recreation facilities on Project-associated lands that have been deeded to, or leased by WVDNR-WRS. WVDNR-WRS is, therefore, responsible for all facility maintenance for the approximately 10-acre area deeded to WVDNR by the prior licensee, which is now designated by WVDNR as the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area, and the proposed Midland Trail New River Access. As noted above, Hawks Nest Hydro is responsible for operation and maintenance of the Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail, the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area parking area, lands and informal facilities within the larger Cotton Hill Site that are not deeded to WVDNR-WRS, and the Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access.

## 5 Recreational Feature Inventory

License Article 407 requires this Management Plan to include an inventory of amenities at the Project recreation sites. Due to near-term proposed enhancements to the Cotton Hill Day-Use Area, as described above, Hawks Nest Hydro will submit the required inventory, including all Project recreation-oriented signs, with final plans or as-built drawings of the Project recreation facilities as an addendum to this Management Plan, following FERC's approval.

## 6 Periodic Recreation Management Plan Meetings and Plan Updates

As required by license Article 408, Hawks Nest Hydro will convene periodic (i.e., 6-year) meetings regarding this Management Plan and recreational facilities at the Hawks Nest Project. The schedule for these meetings is as follows: 2021, 2027, 2033, 2039, 2045, 2051, 2057, and 2063. Because this schedule overlaps with the periodic post-recreation flow release meetings to be conducted under the license Article 407 Recreation Flow Release Plan, and the meetings would be open to the same group of stakeholders, Hawks Nest Hydro expects to conduct a single meeting (with follow-up communications and communications in between meeting years, as appropriate to address specific issues) to address the

requirements of license Articles 407 (post-recreation flow release meetings) and 408 (Recreation Management Plan meetings).

Consistent with the procedure established by the Recreation Flow Release Plan, Hawks Nest Hydro will coordinate with the parties who were consulted in development of this Plan (WVDNR, WVDEP, WVA Manufacturing, LLC, AW, West Virginia Professional River Outfitters, and the National Park Service (NPS) New River Gorge National River), and/or who are actively participating in annual recreation flow release meetings or post-recreation flow release meetings at such future time, after the last summer recreation flow release or August 31<sup>st</sup>, as applicable, to identify a mutually suitable time for the post-recreation flow release meeting. This meeting may be conducted in-person proximate to the Hawks Nest Project or via conference call. Hawks Nest Hydro notes that because several of the recreation areas and facilities proximate to the Project are managed by WVDNR, WVDNR's active participation in these meetings will be critical.

In addition to the standing agenda items identified in the Recreation Flow Release Plan, Hawks Nest Hydro proposes that the meetings also include the following agenda item, relevant to license Article 408:

- Recreational issues, needs, and opportunities

Reporting to FERC on the conduct of or outcomes from this meeting will be addressed through the report prepared by the licensee pursuant to license Article 407. If any changes to this Management Plan are proposed by Hawks Nest Hydro as a result of these meetings or other Project developments, a revised Management Plan will be submitted to the Commission for approval.

## 7 Consultation

As required by license Article 408, on October 11, 2018 Hawks Nest Hydro distributed a draft version of this plan to the WVDNR, WVDEP, WVA Manufacturing, LLC, American Whitewater, and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters. Consistent with the provisions of Article 408, Hawks Nest Hydro requested comments on the draft plan within 30 days of receipt of transmittal. Hawks Nest Hydro received a response from WVA Manufacturing, LLC on October 12, 2018 indicating they had no issues with the Recreation Management Plan. The WVDNR provided comments on November 26, 2018. On November 13, 2018, Hawks Nest Hydro sent the NPS a copy of the Recreation Management Plan, who in turn provided comments on the draft Plan on November 29, 2018.

A summary of comments received, and Hawks Nest Hydro's response to comments, including description of where and how comments have been addressed in this final Plan, is provided along with consultation documentation in Appendix D.

## 8 References

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). 1987. Elkem Metals Company. Order Issuing New License (Major Project – Existing Dam).

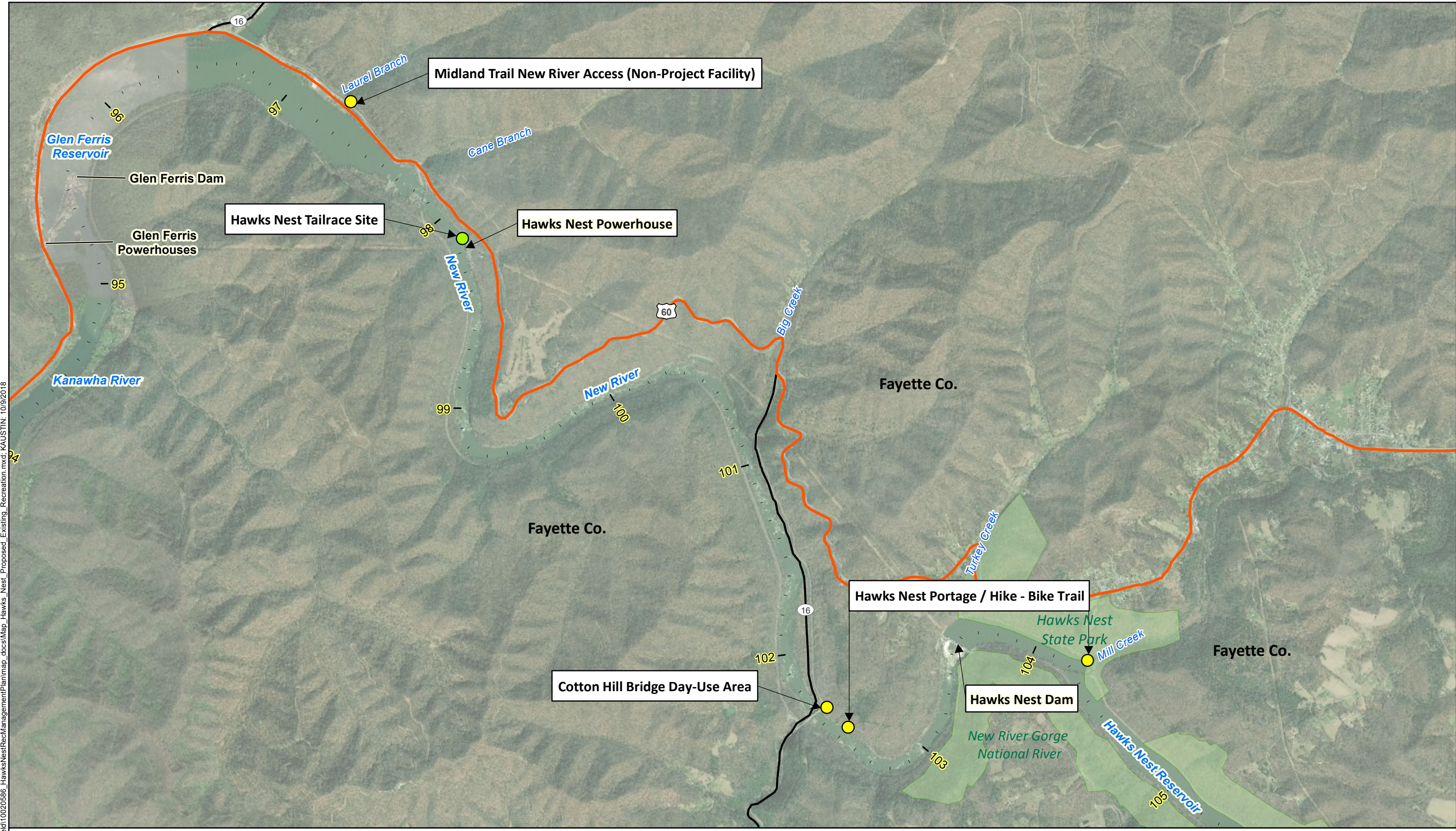
FERC. 2017. Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC. Order Issuing New License.

West Virginia State Parks. 2014. Hawks Nest State Park. Online [URL] <http://www.hawksnestsp.com/>. Accessed December 2014.

## Appendix A

# Overview Map of Existing and Proposed Recreation Facilities

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**Brookfield**  
Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC  
a subsidiary of  
Brookfield Renewable



- Existing Recreation Facility
- Proposed Recreation Facility
- Park (Boundaries are approximate)
- US Highway
- State Road

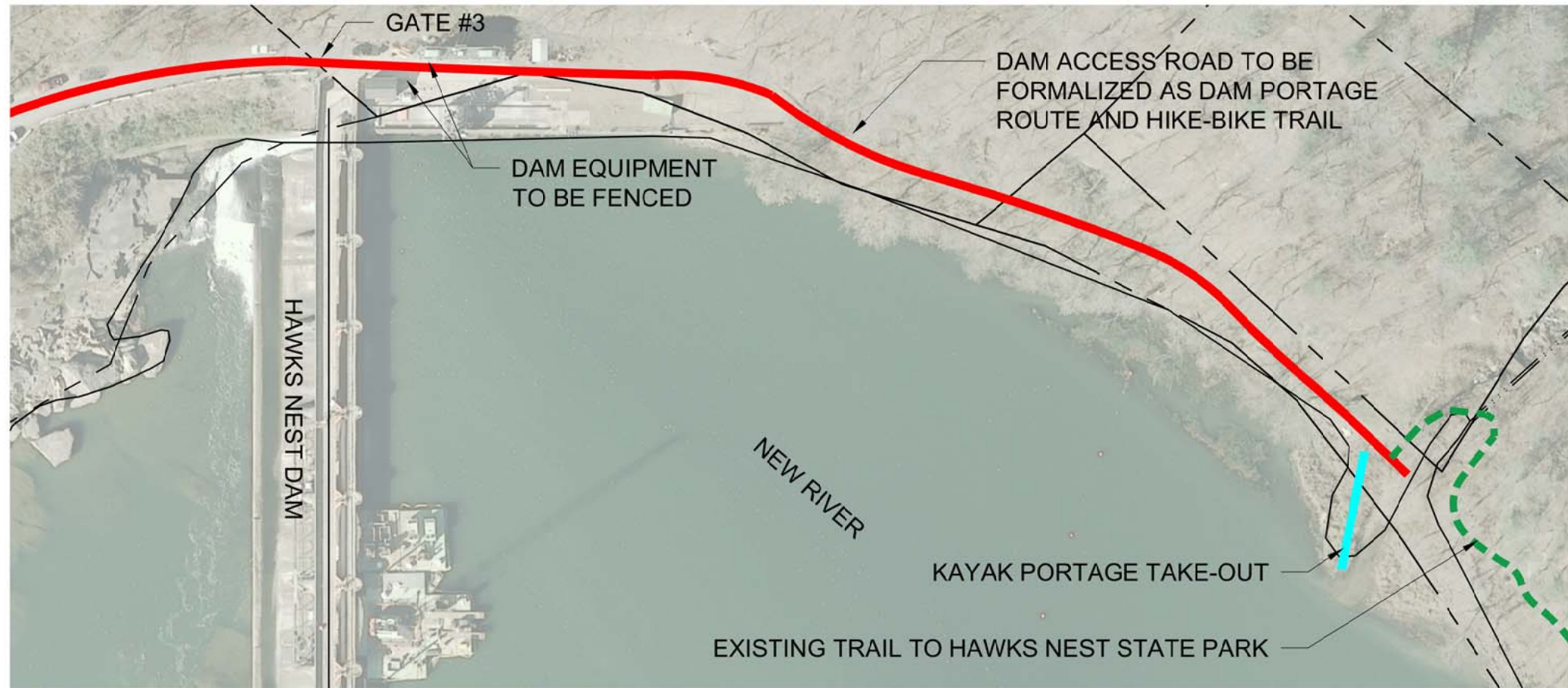
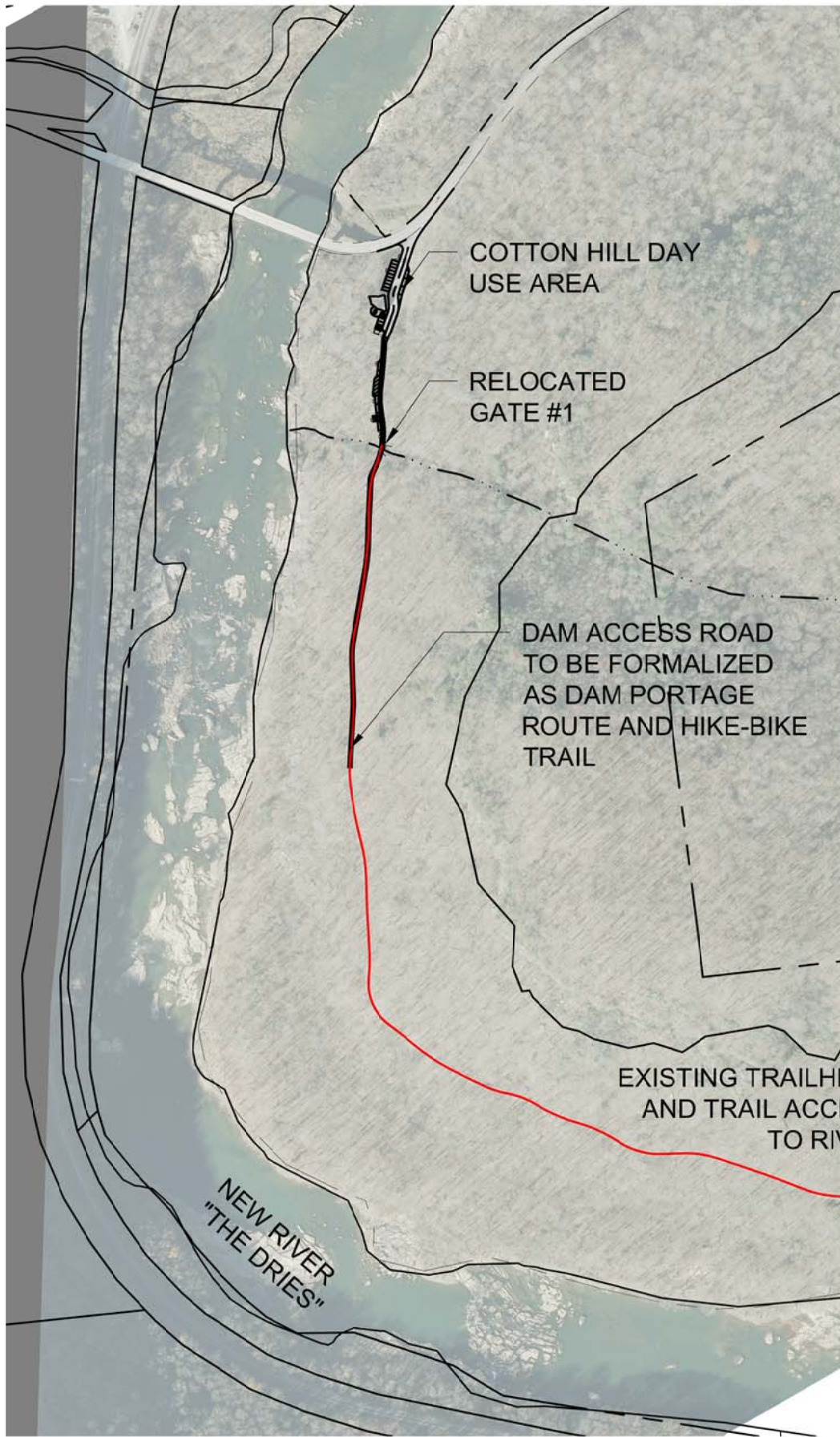


**Hawks Nest Project**  
**FERC Project No. 2512**  
**Existing and Proposed**  
**Recreation Facilities**

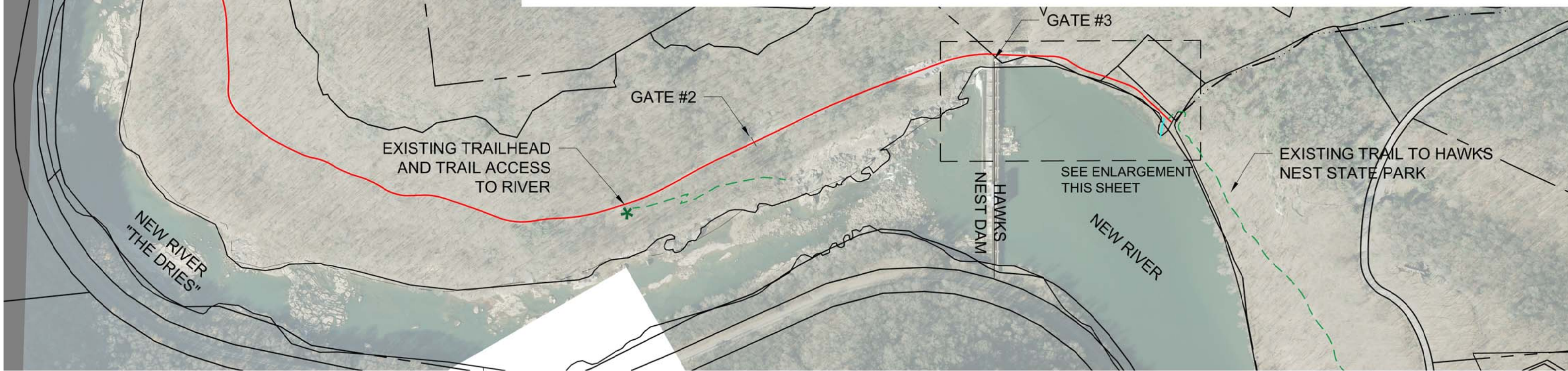
## Appendix B

# Cotton Hill Day-Use Area Proposed Enhancements Conceptual Drawings

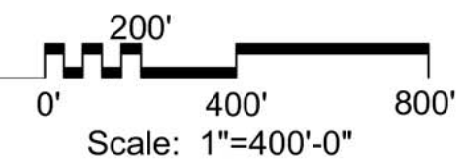




HAWKS NEST DAM PORTAGE ENLARGEMENT



HAWKS NEST PROJECT

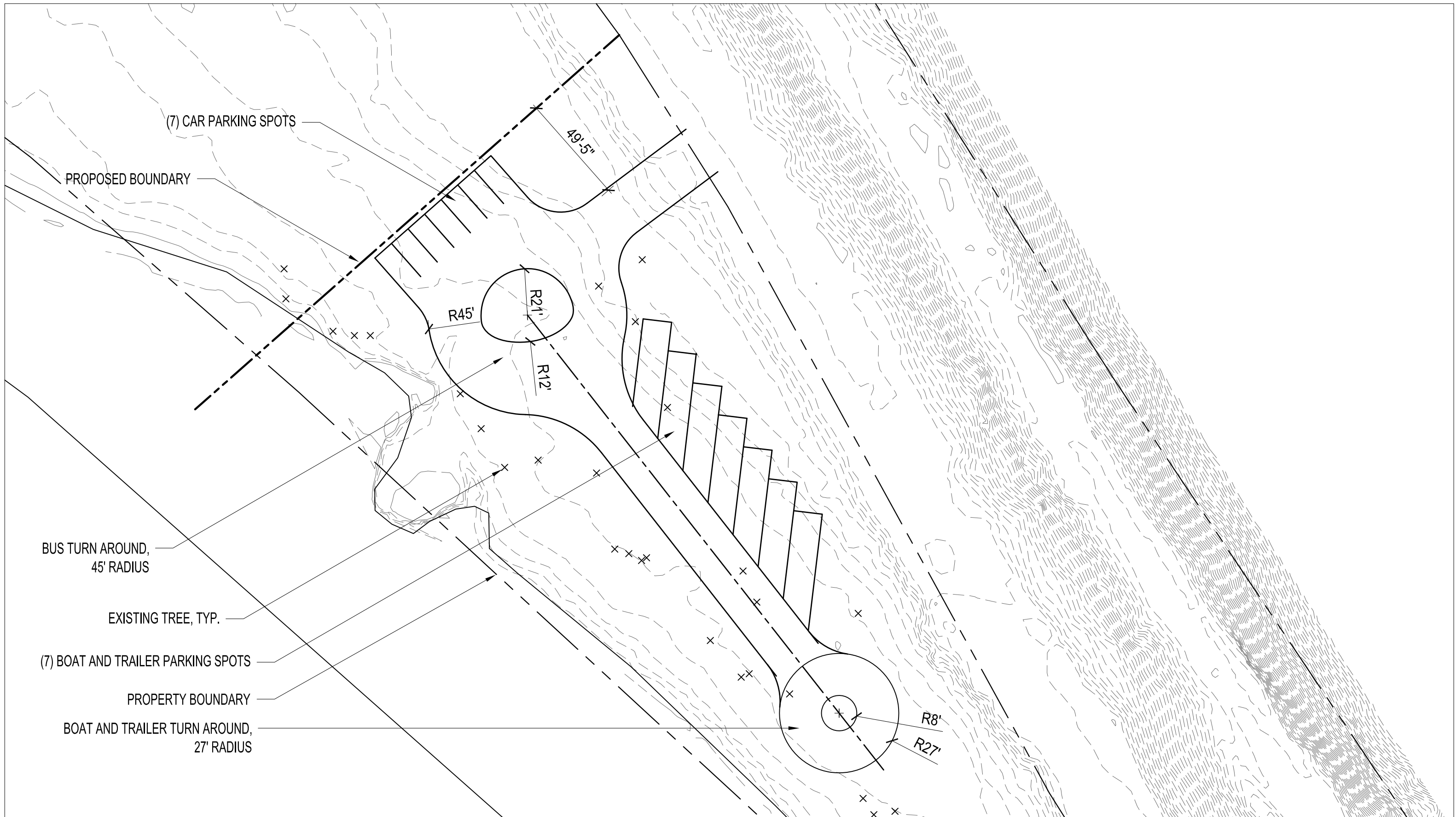


## Appendix C

### Proposed Midland Trail New River Access Site Aerial and Conceptual Drawing

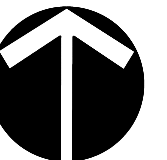
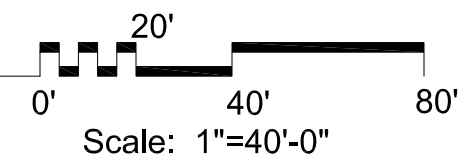
**AERIAL OF PROPOSED MIDLAND TRAIL NEW RIVER ACCESS SITE LOCATION**

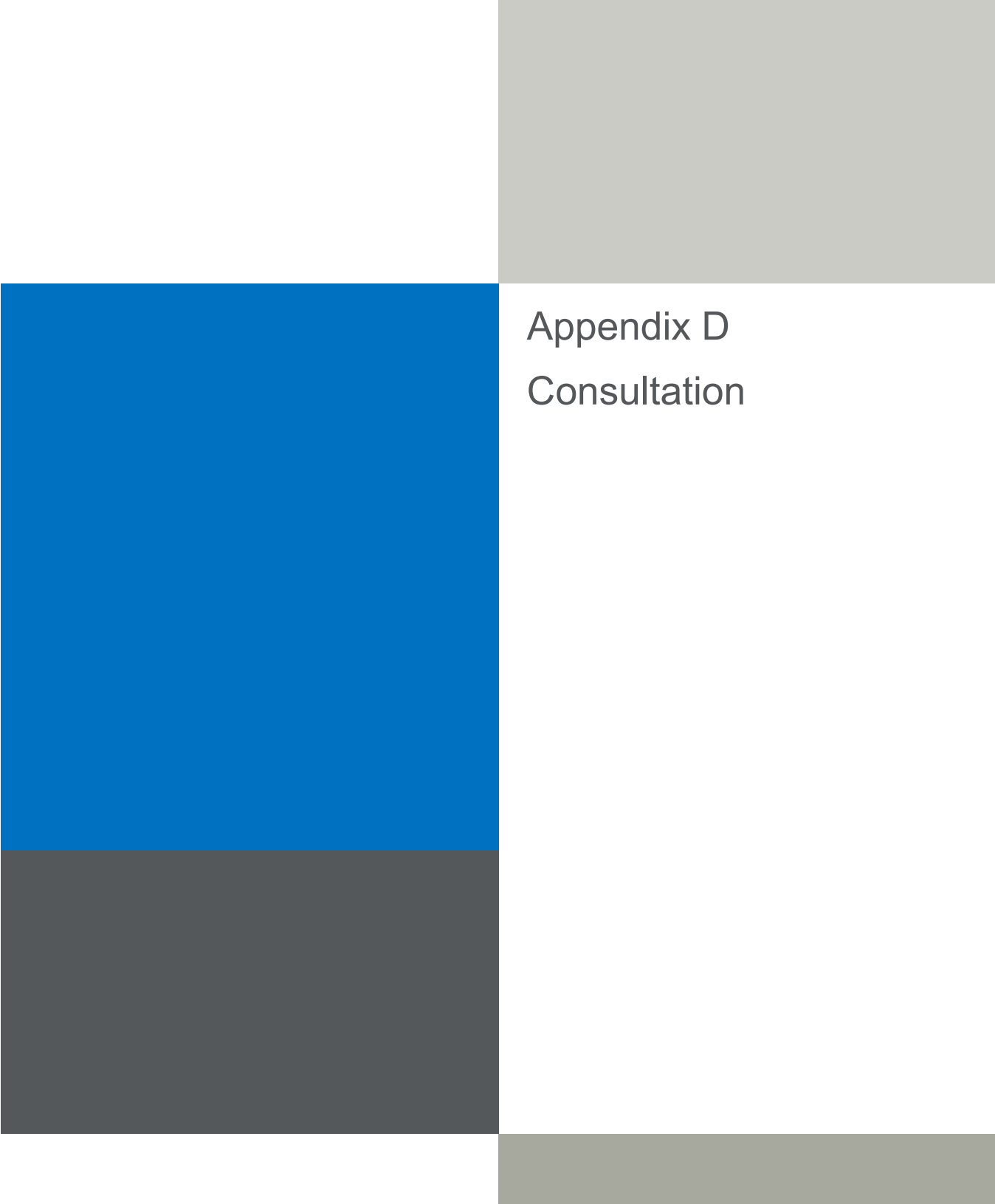




**HAWKS NEST PROJECT**  
**MIDLAND TRAIL NEW RIVER ACCESS**

9/20/18  
 LPDA





Appendix D  
Consultation

**Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2512)  
Response to Comments Received on Draft Recreation Management Plan**

Section(s)	Summary of Agency Comment	Licensee Response
<i>West Virginia Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Section (WVDNR-WRS) (November 26, 2018)</i>		
3.2	The boating access area specifics (at the Cotton Hill Bridge area) still need to be discussed in greater detail and the WVDNR-WRS welcomes the opportunity to further the productive conversations it has thus far made with Brookfield to finalize these plans.	Hawks Nest Hydro is and will continue to engage in consultation with WVDNR-WRS regarding planned and potential recreation facility enhancements on lands that been deeded to, or leased by, or will be owned by WVDNR-WRS, consistent with the requirements of 401 WQC conditions 6, 9, and 10 for the Hawks Nest Project and 401 WQC conditions 3 and 5 for the Glen Ferris Project.
3.2	Based on the 401 Water Quality Certificate and the narrative presented within this draft plan, the anticipated and eventual owner of the aforementioned New River Campground take-out site will be the WVDNR-WRS. As is such, any access property owned and managed by the WVDNR-WRS must adhere to the standards as outlined in 58CSR61...In this case, river access needs to be established and maintained for boats if it is to be considered a river access point at al. Therefore, the New River Campground access should also include a boat ramp. The WVDNR-WRS would appreciate the opportunity for further consultation to resolve these deficiencies.	<p>Hawks Nest Hydro believes that the Recreation Management Plan fully meets the requirements of Condition 9 of the 401 WQC, as well as the intent of this condition as described by WVDEP’s letter to FERC dated September 19, 2017.</p> <p>As stated above, Hawks Nest Hydro is and will continue to engage in consultation with WVDNR-WRS regarding planned and potential recreation facility enhancements on lands that been deeded to, or leased by, or will be owned by WVDNR-WRS, consistent with the requirements of 401 WQC conditions 6, 9, and 10 for the Hawks Nest Project and 401 WQC conditions 3 and 5 for the Glen Ferris Project.</p>
4	The WVDNR-WRS requests further clarification with regards to the maintenance responsibilities which would be under the purview of the WVDNR-WRS. Specific clarification should be included to distinguish the Cotton Hill Day Use Area from the larger Cotton Hill Site.	Hawks Nest Hydro has clarified text in Sections 2 and 4 to reflect Hawks Nest Hydro’s understanding of the division of maintenance responsibilities between Hawks Nest Hydro and WVDNR-WRS.

**Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2512)  
Response to Comments Received on Draft Recreation Management Plan**

<i>National Park Service - New River Gorge National River (November 28, 2018)</i>		
3.1	The NPS recommends that any planned trail closures be added to the central public website to be established for information relevant to flows in the bypass reach to better inform trail users of the trail status.	Hawks Nest Hydro has added the following statement to the relevant paragraph in Section 3.1:  <i>In the event of a planned trail closure, notification will be posted to the public website to be developed pursuant to the Recreation Flow Release Plan for the Project.</i>
NA	The NPS requests that New River Gorge National River be added to the list of recreation stakeholders who are on the distribution list for the draft Recreation Management Plan so that NPS can best engage in trail connectivity projects.	Hawks Nest Hydro will include NPS on future correspondence related to the Recreation Management Plan.
6	The NPS also requests to be included in the periodic recreation management plan meetings and updates discussed in the plan.	Hawks Nest Hydro has added the NPS New River Gorge National River to the parties to be invited to participate in the periodic recreation meetings described in Section 6.



IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER  
GAULEY RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA  
BLUESTONE NATIONAL SCENIC RIVER  
104 Main Street  
P.O. Box 246  
Glen Jean, West Virginia 25846



November 28, 2018

1.A(NERI)

Marshall Olson  
Compliance Manager  
Brookfield Renewable  
Hawks Nest Hydro LLC  
326 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Suite 201  
Montgomery, WV 25136

Re: Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2512) Draft Recreation Management Plan

Dear Mr. Olson:

Thank you for the opportunity for New River Gorge National River, a unit of the National Park System (NPS), to review and comment on the Draft Recreation Management Plan for the Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project in Fayette County, West Virginia.

NPS staff and I visited the Cotton Hill site and trail site on September 20, 2018, at the invitation of Ashley Thomas. We discussed the proposed Hawks Nest Portage/Bike-Hike Trail and how the trail relates to regional trail planning and connectivity. On the upstream side, the proposed trail will connect to Hawks Nest State Park trails where there is a planned connection to the existing Hawks Nest Connector Trail at New River Gorge National River. On the downstream side, the proposed trail will connect with a planned bike trail to Gauley Bridge, West Virginia.

The NPS supports the trail alignment proposed in the Draft Recreation Management Plan. The proposed trail alignment will be a key segment to connecting northwestern Fayette County communities to each other and to New River Gorge National River. This trail project is consistent with the NERI *General Management Plan* (2011) and the *Connecting the Parks with Their Gateway Communities – Concept Plan* (2012). Both plans express the NPS' vision to assist in the development of a regional trail network. The National Park Service believes that expanding the regional trails network will contribute to the region's thriving tourism industry by increasing connections between communities and public lands.

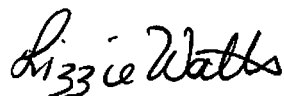
The NPS recommends that you add any planned trail closures to the central public website that will be established for information relevant to flows in the bypass reach to better inform trail users of the trail status.



The NPS requests that Brookfield Renewable add New River Gorge National River to the list of recreation stakeholders who are on the Distribution List for the Draft Recreation Management Plan so that the NPS can best engage in trail connectivity projects by receiving timely updates and provide timely comments. The NPS also requests to be included in the periodic recreation management plan meetings and updates discussed in Section 6 of the Draft Recreation Management Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lizzie Watts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lizzie Watts  
Superintendent

cc: Hydro Program Manager, NPS-NER



**DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**Wildlife Resources Section**  
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**Jim Justice**  
*Governor*

**Stephen S. McDaniel**  
*Director*

November 26, 2018

Marshall Olson, Compliance Manager  
Brookfield Renewable  
326 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Montgomery, WV 25136

**RE: Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (FERC no. 2512) Draft Recreation Management Plan**

Dear Mr. Olson:

Thank you for allowing the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Section (WVDNR-WRS) the opportunity to provide comments with regards to the referenced draft Recreation Management Plan for Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (Hawks Nest), FERC no. 2512 as required under Article 408 of the new license. The WVDNR-WRS has reviewed the draft plan and offers the following comments.

**Section 3.2 Non-Project Recreation Facilities – Cotton Hill Site**

Condition 6 of the state Water Quality Certificate required a one-time funding of \$50,000 for improvements to the Cotton Hill site with specific improvements to relate to an improved boating access area. In discussions between Brookfield, WVDNR-WRS and WVDEP, it is assumed that this access will be at, or around the Cotton Hill Bridge area. The inclusion of the changing facility and restroom at the Cotton Hill Bridge Day use area as presented within this plan affirms

the general expectations and agreements that were made at previous meetings between the interested parties to have the access be included within the Cotton Hill Bridge area. The actual access specifics still need to be discussed in greater detail and the WVDNR-WRS welcomes the opportunity to further the productive conversations it has thus far made with Brookfield to finalize these plans.

### **Section 3.2 Non-Project Recreation Facilities – Midland Trail Access**

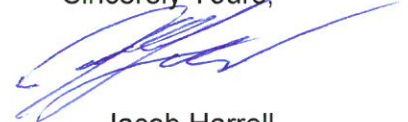
While the natural conditions of the New River Campground take-out may be suitable for a kayak or raft take-out, the access site would also need to be able to accommodate boat traffic. Based on the state 401 Water Quality Certificate and the narrative presented within this draft plan, the anticipated and eventual owner of the aforementioned New River Campground take-out site will be the WVDNR-WRS. As is such, any access property owned and managed by the WVDNR-WRS must adhere to the standards as outlined in 58CSR61 so as to be generally inclusive to all parties and to fulfill the mission and purpose of the WVDNR-WRS. In this case, river access will need to be established and maintained for boaters if it is to be considered a river access point at all. Therefore, the New River Campground access should also include a boat ramp. The WVDNR-WRS would appreciate the opportunity for further consultation to resolve these deficiencies.

### **Section 4 Provisions for Operation and Maintenance**

The WVDNR-WRS requests further clarification with regards to the maintenance responsibilities which would be under the purview of the WVDNR-WRS. Specific clarification should be included to distinguish the Cotton Hill Day Use Area from the larger Cotton Hill Site as presented within this plan.

The WVDNR-WRS again appreciates the continued consultation throughout this process. If you have any questions or comments with regards to this letter, please feel free to contact me by phone at (304)825-6787 or by email at [jacob.d.harrell@wv.gov](mailto:jacob.d.harrell@wv.gov).

Sincerely Yours,



Jacob Harrell  
Hydropower Coordination Biologist

## Kulpa, Sarah

---

**Subject:** FW: HN Recreation Management Plan

**AMServiceURLStr:** <https://slingshot.hdrinc.com/CFSS/control?view=services/FTService>

**From:** Olson, Marshall [mailto:Marshall.Olson@brookfieldrenewable.com]

**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 8:07 AM

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**Subject:** FW: HN Recreation Management Plan

Rec Management Plan comment.

**Marshall L Olson**  
Compliance Manager

**Brookfield Renewable**  
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**From:** Russ Lang <[rlang@ferroglobe.com](mailto:rlang@ferroglobe.com)>

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**Cc:** Murphy, Steven P <[Steven.Murphy@brookfieldrenewable.com](mailto:Steven.Murphy@brookfieldrenewable.com)>

**Subject:** RE: HN Recreation Management Plan

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Marshall,

No issues for WVAM.

Thanks  
Russ

**Russ Lang**  
Corporate Manager, Energy - Americas



---

**From:** Olson, Marshall <[Marshall.Olson@brookfieldrenewable.com](mailto:Marshall.Olson@brookfieldrenewable.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 11, 2018 10:11 AM  
**To:** Laura K. Cooper ([Laura.K.Cooper@wv.gov](mailto:Laura.K.Cooper@wv.gov)) <[Laura.K.Cooper@wv.gov](mailto:Laura.K.Cooper@wv.gov)>; [Bob.L.Knight@WV.gov](mailto:Bob.L.Knight@WV.gov); Russ Lang <[rlang@ferroglobe.com](mailto:rlang@ferroglobe.com)>; 'kevin@americanwhitewater.org' <[kevin@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:kevin@americanwhitewater.org)>; [wvpro@westvirginia.com](mailto:wvpro@westvirginia.com)  
**Cc:** Murphy, Steven P <[Steven.Murphy@brookfieldrenewable.com](mailto:Steven.Murphy@brookfieldrenewable.com)>; Moriarty, Kevin <[Kevin.Moriarty@brookfieldrenewable.com](mailto:Kevin.Moriarty@brookfieldrenewable.com)>; Thomas, Ashley <[Ashley.Thomas@brookfieldrenewable.com](mailto:Ashley.Thomas@brookfieldrenewable.com)>; Sarah Kulpa ([sarah.kulpa@hdrinc.com](mailto:sarah.kulpa@hdrinc.com)) <[sarah.kulpa@hdrinc.com](mailto:sarah.kulpa@hdrinc.com)>  
**Subject:** HN Recreation Management Plan

Dear Ms. Cooper, Mr. Knight, Mr. Lang, Mr. Colburn, and Mr. Bower,

Please find attached the draft Recreation Management Plan for the Hawks Nest Project (No. 2512) for your review. As required under license Article 408, the enclosed draft Recreation Management Plan describes existing recreation facilities and addresses proposed recreation facility enhancements, includes provisions for operation and maintenance of recreation sites, and establishes a schedule and procedure for periodic consultation regarding the Recreation Management Plan throughout the license term. Consistent with the requirements of license Article 408, Hawks Nest Hydro respectfully requests comments on this draft plan within 30 days of your receipt of this transmittal.

Kindest regards,

**Marshall L Olson**  
Compliance Manager

**Brookfield Renewable**  
Tel 865-255-4240  
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VIA EMAIL

October 11, 2018

**Distribution List**

**Subject: Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2512)  
Draft Recreation Management Plan**

Dear Ms. Cooper, Mr. Knight, Mr. Lang, Mr. Colburn, and Mr. Bower:

Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC (Hawks Nest Hydro), a subsidiary of Brookfield Renewable (Brookfield), owns and operates the Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2512) in Fayette County, West Virginia. The Project is operated under the terms of the new license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on December 22, 2017. Article 408 of the new license requires the licensee to prepare a Recreation Management Plan in consultation with the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Section (WVDNR-WRS), West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, WVA Manufacturing, LLC, American Whitewater, and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters.

As required under license Article 408, the enclosed draft Recreation Management Plan describes existing recreation facilities and addresses proposed recreation facility enhancements, includes provisions for operation and maintenance of recreation sites, and establishes a schedule and procedure for periodic consultation regarding the Recreation Management Plan throughout the license term.

Hawks Nest Hydro will be filing a request for extension of time with FERC to file the final Recreation Management Plan by December 1. Hawks Nest Hydro has been working diligently with WVDNR-WRS over the summer to identify and pursue the new Midland Trail New River Access boater take-out area described in the enclosed draft plan, and additional time was needed to initiate a purchase offer with the landowner.

Consistent with the requirements of license Article 408, Hawks Nest Hydro respectfully requests comments on this draft plan within 30 days of your receipt of this transmittal. Hawks Nest Hydro will consider all comments received in this timeframe, convene a conference call or meeting if needed to discuss and resolve comments, revise the draft plan as appropriate, and file a final version of the Recreation Management Plan, including documentation of consultation, with FERC for approval. If no comments are received within this timeframe, Hawks Nest Hydro will assume concurrence with the draft plan.

Should you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (865) 255-4240 or via email at [marshall.olson@brookfieldrenewable.com](mailto:marshall.olson@brookfieldrenewable.com). Thank you for your participation in this process.

Sincerely,



Marshall Olson  
Compliance Manager

D-9

Enclosure

## Distribution List

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# DRAFT Recreation Management Plan

**Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project  
FERC No. 2512**

*Fayette County, West Virginia*  
October 2018

Prepared for:  
Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC  
**Brookfield**

Prepared by:  
HDR  


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Draft

## Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Project Background.....	1
1.2	Recreation Management Plan Requirements.....	1
2	Existing Recreation Facilities Summary.....	3
2.1	Project Recreation Facilities.....	3
2.2	Non-Project Recreation Facilities.....	3
2.3	Informal Recreation Facilities.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3	Proposed Recreational Enhancements.....	4
3.1	Project Recreation Facilities.....	4
3.2	Non-Project Recreation Facilities.....	5
4	Provisions for Operation and Maintenance.....	6
5	Recreational Feature Inventory.....	6
6	Periodic Recreation Management Plan Meetings and Plan Updates.....	7
7	References.....	7

## Appendices

Appendix A - Overview Map of Existing and Proposed Recreation Facilities

Appendix B - Cotton Hill Day-Use Area Proposed Enhancements Conceptual Drawings

Appendix C - Proposed Midland Trail New River Access Site Aerial and Conceptual Drawing

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Draft

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC (Hawks Nest Hydro), a subsidiary of Brookfield Renewable (Brookfield), owns and operates the Hawks Nest Hydroelectric Project (Hawks Nest or Project) (FERC No. 2512) in Fayette County, West Virginia. Hawks Nest is located along the New River and has a generating capacity of 102 megawatts. The Project is composed of a 243-acre impoundment, a concrete-gravity dam and spillway; a gated intake; water conveyance structures, including an approximately 3-mile-long underground tunnel that conveys water from the reservoir to a penstock system at the powerhouse, a surge basin and surge tank, manifold, and five penstocks; a 5.5-mile-long bypass reach; a powerhouse that contains four turbine-generator units; two approximately 5.5-mile-long, 69-kilovolt transmission lines; a tailrace channel; and appurtenances.

On December 22, 2017, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) issued a new license for the continued operation and maintenance of the Project pursuant to the Commission's delegated authority under the Federal Power Act. Article 408 of the new license requires Hawks Nest Hydro to file a Recreation Management Plan (Management Plan) for FERC approval, following consultation with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Section (WVDNR-WRS), West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), WVA Manufacturing, LLC, American Whitewater (AW), and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters. The Management Plan must be consistent with WVDEP's 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) conditions 11 (requiring an updated Recreation Management Plan), 3 (maintenance of the stage gauge at Cotton Hill), 4 (providing flow information in the bypass reach via a website), 5 (through-access and portage), 6 (improved boating access at Cotton Hill), 7 (facility improvements at Cotton Hill), 8 (maintenance of the existing tailrace fishing access area), 9 (take-out location), and 10 (annual funding to WVDNR-WRS). License Article 408 further requires the Management Plan to also include the following:

1. Provisions for ongoing operation and maintenance of the sites.
2. An inventory of amenities at the sites, and maps showing existing facilities and any proposed enhancements.
3. Provision for consultation with WVDNR-WRS, WVDEP, WVA Manufacturing, LLC, AW, and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters every six years, consistent with Form 80 timing.

## 1.2 Recreation Management Plan Requirements

This Management Plan identifies required actions to support the maintenance and enhancement of public recreation resources within the Project area. The Management Plan addresses the following WVDEP 401 WQC conditions for the Project:

3. *The licensee shall continue to maintain a stage gauge in the vicinity of the Cotton Hill Bridge (preferably operated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)) and have the information available via the internet real-time. The stage/flow relationship (up to 3,000 cfs) must be spot-checked against actual USGS readings once annually, and updated if conditions warrant.*
4. *The licensee must develop and maintain a central public website for information relevant to flows in the bypass reach, including links to available gauges, applicable conversions or calculations to*

*derive real-time flow information, and relevant forward-looking operational information (including that which may be available from upstream dams).*

5. *In lieu of public vehicular access from the Cotton Hill Bridge to the Hawks Nest Dam, and within 18 months of new license issuance, the licensee shall open to biking and hiking traffic the existing trail/right of way beginning approximately 1,000 feet downstream of the mouth of Mill Creek, near Hawks Nest State Park and continuing downstream to the Hawks Nest Dam. The licensee must design and construct safe passage for biking/hiking, during daylight hours, past the intake gate/dam area to allow for connection of the road/trail from the Cotton Hill Bridge upstream to the mouth of Mill Creek. Upstream of the dam's boat barrier, the trail must have an accommodation for carryable boat portage. The newly opened trail portion will be approximately 0.6-mile long and maintained by Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC. With good cause, and with 30-day advance notification to WVDNR-WRS, Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC may close the trail to the public temporarily if needed for facility construction/maintenance. The trail may also be closed for short duration without advanced notification for operation and maintenance activities, large equipment access, emergency, or unforeseen safety conditions and will be reopened immediately after such condition has passed. Plans must be submitted to and approved by WVDNR-WRS prior to construction.*
6. *Provide one-time funding of \$50,000, by June 2<sup>nd</sup> following new license issuance, for improvements or enhancements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area (on lands owned by WVDNR-WRS or Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC) with specific improvements to be identified in consultation with WVDNR-WRS. Provided however, the improvements must include accommodations for improved boating access. This boating access shall serve in lieu of the proffered shuttle access to the dam during scheduled whitewater release.*
7. *Within 18 months of new license issuance, and consistent with the new license, identify, design, construct and maintain improvements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area parking area (on lands owned by Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC). This area is managed by WVDNR-WRS, therefore, improvements would need to be identified in consultation with WVDNR-WRS and are generally expected to include a seasonal toilet/changing facility, new picnic facilities, and improvements to parking and signage.*
8. *The licensee shall maintain angler access to the existing Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access Area and continue to allow angler access to the bypass reach, with bypass reach maintained by WVDNR-WRS as set forth in Condition 10 below.*
9. *In lieu of a take-out location at the powerhouse tailrace area the licensee shall work in conjunction with WVDNR-WRS to acquire and develop, or long term lease, a take-out location on the New River in the Gauley Bridge area within approximately 18 months of new license issuance (recognizing the goal is to have access available prior to the first scheduled whitewater releases and that actual transaction durations may be shorter or longer). Funding for the purchase/lease and development shall be provided by Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC. The amount paid shall be subject to an appraisal and be consistent with costs for other access site purchases/leases made by WVDNR-WRS. WVDNR-WRS will maintain the site with funding set forth in Condition 10 below.*
10. *By June 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year following new license issuance, provide annual funding in the amount of \$25,000, to WVDNR-WRS for maintenance of and enhancement to recreation facilities on project-associated lands that have been deeded to, or leased by, WVDNR-WRS. This value will be adjusted for inflation annually based on the Bureau of Labor's Consumer Price Index.*

## 2 Existing Recreation Facilities Summary

As currently licensed, there are two formal recreation facilities associated with the Hawks Nest Project: the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area and the Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access.

### 2.1 Project Recreation Facilities

#### *Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area*

The Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area is a day-use facility that is located on lands owned by the licensee at the northeast terminus of the Cotton Hill Bridge (State Route 16) as it crosses over the New River. This Project recreation facility currently offers gravel parking for approximately ten to twelve vehicles. The parking area was constructed by the prior licensee and is maintained by the WVDNR-WRS, along with other amenities in the larger Cotton Hill Site area (see Section 2.2). The location of the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area is depicted on the overview map provided in Appendix A.

#### *Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access*

The Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access is a day-use facility located on river right (looking downstream), adjacent to the Hawks Nest powerhouse. The facility includes a paved parking area for approximately 17 vehicles, steps down to the New River for angler access, and a fenced walkway to a tailrace catwalk fishing platform. The facility was constructed by the prior licensee, and Hawks Nest Hydro is responsible for maintenance and operation of this Project recreation facility. The location of the Hawks Nest Tailrace Site is depicted on the overview map provided in Appendix A.

### 2.2 Non-Project Recreation Facilities

Recreation within the Project area has been developed in coordination with the WVDNR-WRS, primarily in the form of Hawks Nest State Park (HNSP) and the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area.

#### *Hawks Nest State Park*

In 1966, the original licensee of the Hawks Nest Project leased 200 acres of land upstream of the Hawks Nest Dam and adjacent to HNSP to the State of West Virginia for the use and benefit of the WVDNR-WRS. This land became part of the 838-acre HNSP, which is operated and maintained by the WVDNR-WRS (FERC 1987). The lease remains in effect as long as the Hawks Nest Project is operating under a valid license issued by FERC.

The park borders the New River Gorge National River, and offers a scenic, panoramic view of the gorge. HNSP is located on the Midland Trail Scenic Highway about one hour east of Charleston. Hawks Nest Dam is located 0.5 miles west/southwest of HNSP, while the Hawks Nest powerhouse is located 3.5 miles southeast of the park.

HNSP is one of six state parks located in the New River Basin. HNSP offers numerous recreational opportunities, including an aerial tramway running from Hawks Nest Lodge to a marina located at the bottom of the New River Gorge. Visitors can experience the New River via a jet boat tour offered May through October annually. The park's River Complex provides a picnic area, gift shop, access to the Hawks Nest Rail Trail and a nature center with interactive displays. Hiking is a primary activity available at HNSP, which boasts a variety of trails. Other recreational facilities at the park include an overlook vista, picnic shelters, souvenir shops, and a playground area. Accommodations are available at the park's 31-room lodge, which includes a conference center and a full-service restaurant (WVSP 2014).

### *Cotton Hill Site*

The larger Cotton Hill Site generally refers to a large area that provides public recreational access to the upper Hawks Nest bypass reach (i.e., in the vicinity of the Cotton Hill Bridge / State Route 16) and area below Hawks Nest Dam. This large area, which is comprised of lands owned by the licensee as well as land that has been deeded to WVDNR, includes informal trails and corresponding signage, informal parking and turnaround areas.

This area includes the approximately 10-acre area deeded to WVDNR by the prior licensee, which is now designated by WVDNR as the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area. In addition to wildlife habitat, the Cotton Hill Wildlife Management Area is designated for hunting and trapping.

The Cotton Hill Site also includes the land upstream of Cotton Hill Bridge up to Hawks Nest Dam, between the Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail and the river bank, including a series of informal trails that provide access to the Hawks Nest bypass reach. The Cotton Hill Site provides opportunities for hiking, wildlife observation, and fishing access, and the multi-use pedestrian trails also serve as the put-in locations for boater access to the bypass reach. The most upstream trail consists of a series of switchbacks from the trail head to a point approximately 0.1 miles downstream of the dam. Steeper trails in the vicinity of Cotton Hill Bridge more commonly serve as informal kayak launch sites and provide angler access to the bypass reach.

## 3 Proposed Recreational Enhancements

The licensee will continue to provide public access to the existing Project recreation facilities at the Cotton Hill Site and Hawks Nest Tailrace Site, and will also provide the following enhancements as required by the new license and the 401 WQC for the Hawks Nest Project. Appendix A provides a map showing the general location of the existing and proposed recreational facilities for the Hawks Nest Project.

### 3.1 Project Recreation Facilities

#### *Recreation Flow Releases and Bypass Reach Flow Information*

WVDEP's 401 WQC conditions 4 (providing flow information in the bypass reach via a website), 12 (recreation flow release scheduling), and 13 (number of and schedule for planned recreation releases) specifically pertain to recreation flow releases required at the Hawks Nest Project. Details of Hawks Nest Hydro's plan to implement these requirements over the license term are addressed in the Recreation Flow Release Plan, submitted to stakeholders and FERC under separate cover.

#### *Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail*

WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 5 requires Hawks Nest Hydro to (1) open to biking and hiking traffic the existing trail/right of way beginning approximately 1,000 feet downstream of the mouth of Mill Creek, near Hawks Nest State Park and continuing downstream to Hawks Nest Dam; (2) design and construct safe passage for biking/hiking, during daylight hours, past the intake gate/dam area to allow for connection of the gated/Project Hawks Nest Dam access road from the Cotton Hill Bridge upstream to the mouth of Mill Creek, and (3) accommodate carryable boat portage upstream of the Hawks Nest Dam boat barrier.

The entire route of what will now be referred to as the Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail is depicted on the conceptual drawing included in Appendix B. The trail shown in red is currently existing/established and will be maintained by Hawks Nest Hydro. Hawks Nest Hydro plans to install fencing and signage along the trail for public safety purposes, particularly in the vicinity of the dam and intake. A primitive portage take-

out will be constructed by Hawks Nest Hydro as depicted on the conceptual figure in Appendix B. Based on a site visit conducted with WVDEP and WVDNR-WRS in June 2018, Hawks Nest Hydro anticipates that, as constructed, the portage egress from the river upstream of the boat barrier will consist of a directional sign and timber/crushed stone steps up the shoreline to connect to the established trail. Hawks Nest Hydro proposes to file details of the final, constructed portage and associated signage as an addendum to the Management Plan, along with the feature inventory described in Section 5.

The Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail will be open to pedestrian and non-motorized vehicles year-round, from dawn until dusk, except there are no provisions for snow removal upstream of the intake structure. With a 30-day advanced notification to WVDNR-WRS, Hawks Nest Hydro may close the trail to the public temporarily if needed for facility construction and maintenance. The trail may also be closed for a short duration without advanced notification for operation and maintenance activities, large equipment access, emergency, or unforeseen safety conditions and will be reopened immediately after such condition has passed.

### *Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area*

WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 7 requires Hawks Nest Hydro to identify, design, construct and maintain improvements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area parking area in consultation with WVDNR-WRS, with such improvements expected to include a seasonal toilet/changing facility, new picnic facilities, and improvements to parking and signage.

Hawks Nest Hydro proposes the following enhancements to the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area (1) addition of a portable toilet and changing facility, (2) addition of new picnic facilities (including 2 picnic tables), (3) installation of additional signage, and (4) expansion of the available area for parking. The parking expansion will be made possible by relocating the gate along the Hawks Nest Dam access road (a.k.a., Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail) to a point approximately 200 feet closer to the dam. The Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area, as proposed, will provide a total of 22 parking spaces and will include two turn around areas. Appendix B of this Management Plan provides conceptual drawings of the proposed recreational enhancements for the Cotton Hill Site. Hawks Nest Hydro proposes to file details of the final, constructed picnic facilities, improved parking and associated signage as an addendum to the Management Plan, along with the feature inventory described in Section 5.

The Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area will be open year-round, from dawn until dusk, except that the toilet facility may only be provided on a seasonal (April 1 through November 30) basis.

## **3.2 Non-Project Recreation Facilities**

### *Cotton Hill Site*

As required by WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 6, Hawks Nest Hydro is providing one-time funding to WVDNR-WRS in the amount of \$50,000 for improvements or enhancements to the Cotton Hill Site. Specific improvements will be identified by WVDNR-WRS. Per condition 6 of the WQC, improvements must include accommodations for improved boating access during scheduled recreation flow releases.

Hawks Nest Hydro understands that WVDNR-WRS is presently evaluating potential locations and trail improvements or other amenities to improve boater access to the bypass reach for the scheduled recreation flow releases. These improvements are outside of the scope of this Management Plan. Hawks Nest Hydro notes that if such improvements are not constructed prior to the planned start of the recreation flow releases in June 2019, the existing trails and parking areas in the vicinity of Cotton Hill Bridge will provide interim access.

### *Midland Trail New River Access*

WVDEP's 401 WQC condition 9 requires Hawks Nest Hydro to work in conjunction with WVDNR-WRS to acquire and develop a take-out location on the New River in the Gauley Bridge area. Once constructed, this non-Project recreation facility will be maintained by WVDNR-WRS using annual funding provided by Hawks Nest Hydro per condition 10 of the WQC.

Hawks Nest Hydro and WVDNR-WRS, in consultation with WVDEP, have identified a suitable and practicable location for constructing a take-out area approximately 0.2 miles upstream from the New River Campground. The proposed Midland Trail New River Access site is proposed to consist of seven parallel parking spots, seven angled boat and trailer parking spots, and a bus turn around at each end of the parking lot. A conceptual drawing of the proposed facility along with an aerial showing the approximate location along the New River are included in Appendix C of this Management Plan. The natural conditions of the existing flat shoreline and rock shelf at the site are suitable for kayak or raft take-out.

With additional funding provided by Hawks Nest Hydro, WVDNR-WRS is currently in the process of acquiring the land necessary to develop this non-Project recreation facility, based on a verbal acceptance by the landowner of the purchase offer. Pending and assuming a successful final real estate transaction, Hawks Nest Hydro and WVDNR-WRS anticipate construction of the Midland Trail New River Access by the end of May 2019.

## 4 Provisions for Operation and Maintenance

As noted above, Hawks Nest Hydro is responsible for operation and maintenance of the Hawks Nest Dam Portage/Bike-Hike Trail, the Cotton Hill Bridge Day-Use Area parking area, and the Hawks Nest Tailrace Fishing Access.

Operation and maintenance of the larger Cotton Hill Site and the proposed Midland Trail New River Access will be the responsibility of WVDNR-WRS. Under condition 10 of the 401 WQC, the licensee provides \$25,000 annually (adjusted for inflation annually, based on the Bureau of Labor's Consumer Price Index) to WVDNR-WRS for maintenance of and enhancements to recreation facilities on Project-associated lands.

## 5 Recreational Feature Inventory

License Article 407 requires this Management Plan to include an inventory of amenities at the Project recreation sites. Due to near-term proposed enhancements to the Cotton Hill Day-Use Area, as described above, Hawks Nest Hydro will submit the required inventory, including all Project recreation-oriented signs, with final plans or as-built drawings of the Project recreation facilities as an addendum to this Management Plan, following FERC's approval.

## 6 Periodic Recreation Management Plan Meetings and Plan Updates

As required by license Article 408, Hawks Nest Hydro will convene periodic (i.e., 6-year) meetings regarding this Management Plan and recreational facilities at the Hawks Nest Project. The schedule for these meetings is as follows: 2021, 2027, 2033, 2039, 2045, 2051, 2057, and 2063. Because this schedule overlaps with the periodic post-recreation flow release meetings to be conducted under the license Article 407 Recreation Flow Release Plan, and the meetings would be open to the same group of stakeholders, Hawks Nest Hydro expects to conduct a single meeting (with follow-up communications and communications in between meeting years, as appropriate to address specific issues) to address the requirements of license Articles 407 (post-recreation flow release meetings) and 408 (Recreation Management Plan meetings).

Consistent with the procedure established by the Recreation Flow Release Plan, Hawks Nest Hydro will coordinate with the parties who were consulted in development of this Plan (WVDNR, WVDEP, WVA Manufacturing, LLC, AW, and West Virginia Professional River Outfitters), and/or who are actively participating in annual recreation flow release meetings or post-recreation flow release meetings at such future time, after the last summer recreation flow release or August 31<sup>st</sup>, as applicable, to identify a mutually suitable time for the post-recreation flow release meeting. This meeting may be conducted in-person proximate to the Hawks Nest Project or via conference call. Hawks Nest Hydro notes that because several of the recreation areas and facilities proximate to the Project are managed by WVDNR, WVDNR's active participation in these meetings will be critical.

In addition to the standing agenda items identified in the Recreation Flow Release Plan, Hawks Nest Hydro proposes that the meetings also include the following agenda item, relevant to license Article 408:

- Recreational issues, needs, and opportunities

Reporting to FERC on the conduct of or outcomes from this meeting will be addressed through the report prepared by the licensee pursuant to license Article 407. If any changes to this Management Plan are proposed by Hawks Nest Hydro as a result of these meetings or other Project developments, a revised Management Plan will be submitted to the Commission for approval.

## 7 References

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). 1987. Elkem Metals Company. Order Issuing New License (Major Project – Existing Dam).

FERC. 2017. Hawks Nest Hydro, LLC. Order Issuing New License.

West Virginia State Parks. 2014. Hawks Nest State Park. Online [URL] <http://www.hawksnestsp.com/>. Accessed December 2014.