

Recreation study plan: FERC boater egress comment resolution

In their comments on the preliminary draft study plans developed by PacifiCorp FERC staff provided the following comments concerning the recreation resources study plan:

“Section 2.7 of the Commission regulations requires Commission staff to seek the ultimate development of recreational resources at licensed projects. Currently, access to the downstream portion of the project is limited due to topographical and developmental constrains. Public access to this portion of the project is important because it could provide egress for whitewater boaters. The applicant proposes to identify, map, and describe any existing and potential sites of access and portage along the bypassed reach. However, this portion of the study plan needs more detail to ensure adequate steps are taken to consider the feasibility of providing a whitewater boating take-out. Specifically, we recommend that each existing and potential access site be evaluated with specific metrics to identify the benefits and constraints of each sites, including: proximity to the terminus of the whitewater run, site topography and bank slope to the river, the number of vehicles that could be accommodated, potential cost or range of costs for developing the site, current property ownership, and identifying specific constrains (other than cost) unique to each site.

We also recommend that a minimum of three sites be considered: (1) the area east of the powerhouse, (2) the area across the river from the powerhouse, and (3) the gated area that provides access to the ‘old highway.’”

These comments were discussed during the preliminary draft study plan meeting with stakeholders on Wednesday October 7th. FERC staff in attendance at the meeting suggested that PacifiCorp provide the information in the following table concerning four potential egress sites under consideration for study in the re-licensing process.

Recommendation:

Based on the information presented below PacifiCorp intends to eliminate egress sites 1 and 3 from further study. Due to their similarity, it is not necessary to study in detail egress sites 2 and 4 simultaneously. Egress site 4 will only be studied further in detail if the locked gate issue associated with egress site 2 cannot be resolved.

	Egress 1: East of the powerhouse	Egress 2: Across the river from the powerhouse	Egress 3: Gated area that provides access to the 'old highway'	Egress 4: Just downstream of egress 2 (this location was suggested during the stakeholder meeting on 10/7)
Proximity to terminus of whitewater run (approximate miles)	~1.25 mile float	~1.25 mile float	~0.25 mile hike Closest	a) 1.25 mile float + 700ft portage to additional 0.5 mile float b) 1.25 mile float+ 0.5 mile hike to parking (if insufficient water available below Weber-Davis diversion) Furthest
Site topography and bank slope to river	Steep, rocky	Shallow, dirt/gravel	Steep, rocky	Shallow, dirt/gravel
Number of vehicles accommodated	8-10 (MED)	20-25 (MED-HIGH)	3-5 (LOW)	25-30 (MED-HIGH)
Acceleration/deceleration lanes required on I-84 (See row below for details related to feasibility of accel/decel construction)	YES Deceleration from the left (fast) lane would be required to access the area east of the powerhouse. Re-entry onto I-84 would require an acceleration lane west of the powerhouse. Re-entry onto I-84 at this location is into the left (fast) lane. NOTE: At present only PacifiCorp personnel or others with permission from PacifiCorp are allowed to access the powerhouse site. This is for safety and site security reasons.	NO Access to egress is off of I-84	YES Deceleration and acceleration lanes would be required for vehicles to safely pull off of I-84 and pull back on to I-84 NOTE: In recent years UDOT has instructed the Utah Highway Patrol to ticket vehicles parked on the shoulder of I-84 through the canyon (including this location). This is intended, for safety reasons, to prevent vehicles from parking in the canyon unless parking is required for other reasons (vehicle breakdown, flat tire, etc.). The gate was added in 2007 to prevent illegal access to the freeway margin leading to the 'old highway.' The closure was initiated for safety reasons specifically associated with a lack of deceleration/acceleration lanes on this section of I-84.	NO Access to egress is off of I-84

	Egress 1: East of the powerhouse	Egress 2: Across the river from the powerhouse	Egress 3: Gated area that provides access to the 'old highway'	Egress 4: Just downstream of egress 2 <small>(this location was suggested during the stakeholder meeting on 10/7)</small>
Construction concerns and complications	<p>HIGH+</p> <p>There is no known way to provide a safe deceleration lane due to the constraints of the canyon in this location: steep canyon walls, east-bound and west-bound sections of I-84 are separated by the powerhouse area, river banks and river bed, presence of the project penstock, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) lines, and other linear features such as transmission lines and multiple pipelines.</p> <p>In addition, development of this area for egress would create impacts that are not warranted relative to the potential benefits of this location for boaters. These impacts (which are likely significant) include, but are not limited to, the following resources: socioeconomics, vegetation, geology/soils, wildlife, and cultural.</p>	<p>MED-LOW</p> <p>Limited construction concerns and complications including underlying landownership and control issues</p>	<p>HIGH+</p> <p>Similarly building deceleration and acceleration lanes and a parking area here is likely not possible due to constraints of the canyon in this location: steep canyon walls, presence of the project penstock, UPRR lines, and other linear features such as transmission lines and multiple pipelines.</p> <p>In addition, development of this area for egress would create impacts that are not warranted relative to the potential benefits of this location for boaters. These impacts (which are likely significant) include, but are not limited to, the following resources: socioeconomics, vegetation, geology/soils, wildlife, and cultural.</p>	<p>MED-LOW</p> <p>Limited construction concerns and complications including underlying landownership and control issues</p> <p>May include additional construction/improvements of a path to the river</p>
Cost range to develop site	\$\$\$\$\$ (millions)	\$	\$\$\$\$\$ (millions)	\$\$
Current property ownership/control	<p>U.S. Forest Service/PacifiCorp</p> <p>New USFS Special Use Permit would include boater access to this site</p> <p>Permission and permits required from all state and federal transportation agencies</p>	<p>U.S. Forest Service/Weber-Davis Irrigation Company</p> <p>New USFS Special Use Permit would need to include boater access to this site</p>	<p>UPRR/UDOT ROW</p> <p>Permission and permits required from all state and federal transportation agencies</p>	<p>U.S. Forest Service/; adjacent to South Weber Irrigation Company facilities</p> <p>New USFS Special Use Permit would need to include boater access to this site</p>
Safety concerns	<p>HIGH+</p> <p>Requires boaters to exit I-84 west-bound from the left (fast) lane and decelerate quickly; requires boaters to accelerate west-bound into the left (fast) lane with limited visibility; not possible to construct deceleration and acceleration lanes on this section of I-84; providing this egress location for boaters would put boaters in close proximity to substation and powerhouse particularly when exiting the location west-bound</p>	<p>LOW</p> <p>Egress is located under I-84 and in close proximity to other infrastructure</p>	<p>HIGH</p> <p>Requires boaters to exit and re-enter I-84 west-bound from the freeway shoulder on a curve in the road with limited visibility</p>	<p>LOW</p> <p>Portage is located under I-84 and in close proximity to other infrastructure</p>

	Egress 1: East of the powerhouse	Egress 2: Across the river from the powerhouse	Egress 3: Gated area that provides access to the 'old highway'	Egress 4: Just downstream of egress 2 <small>(this location was suggested during the stakeholder meeting on 10/7)</small>
Other considerations	<p>Modifications to existing site are likely not feasible (see above)</p> <p>Even if accel/decel construction was deemed feasible, public access in the very near vicinity of the substation would still be required, putting the public at risk by being within the substation minimum approach distance</p> <p>UDOT's strong preference is to avoid this option due to considerations indicated in construction concerns section</p> <p>Security concerns for PacifiCorp facilities given access the public would have to cottages, powerhouse, and substation</p>	<p>There is a locked gate currently preventing public access to this egress location</p> <p>This option was presented in the preliminary draft recreation study plan and approved by all responding stakeholders, including American Whitewater (AW)</p>	<p>Modifications to existing site are likely not feasible (see above)</p> <p>UDOT's strong preference is to avoid this option due to considerations indicated in construction concerns section</p>	<p>There is currently public access to this egress location (parking area and egress are not located behind a locked gate)</p> <p>The benefit of this site is only if there is water remaining below Weber-Davis Irrigation Canal diversion structure; as lack of water necessitates an additional 0.5 mile hike (carrying a boat) to the parking area</p> <p>Requires a 700-foot portage around the Weber-Davis Irrigation Canal diversion structure and potentially additional construction for path back to river</p> <p>Egress 4 is a suitable alternative to egress 2 only if the locked gate issue associated with egress 2 cannot be resolved</p> <p>This alternative to egress 2 was suggested by the AW representative during the 10/7 study plan stakeholder meeting</p>
Conclusions (based on information above)	<p>Infeasible</p> <p>Not worthy of further study</p>	<p>Feasible</p> <p>Further study</p>	<p>Infeasible</p> <p>Not worthy of further study</p>	<p>Feasible</p> <p>Further study (very similar to egress 2; only beneficial if locked gate issue is unresolved)</p>