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Federal license granted for Weber power plant

The small hydroelectric plant built in 1910 was granted a renewed 40-year license

SALT LAKE CITY — After a six-year review process, Rocky Mountain Power’s Weber hydroelectric plant was granted a renewed operational license by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The term of the license is 40 years.

The ruling is the product of a consultation process that began in March 2015 with key stakeholders concerning a series of project environmental improvements, proposed mitigation measures, and operational refinements. The FERC issued the license March 19, 2021.

“This process was a cooperative effort involving Rocky Mountain Power, state and federal agencies, and recreational, fishing and other public interest organizations,” said Eve Davies, Weber relicensing project manager for Rocky Mountain Power. “Their hard work, collaboration, important suggestions and review resulted in a license that satisfies multiple-use considerations of the Weber hydroelectric project. We’re grateful for their involvement and input.”

Rocky Mountain Power worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service, the Utah Departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality, Trout Unlimited, American Whitewater, irrigators, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in developing the license application, which was submitted to the FERC in 2018.

The new license provides for electric generation to continue at the plant, with certain improvements for environmental quality and recreational access. The main provisions are:

- A new fish ladder that will help improve habitat, migratory and spawning access for two sensitive fish species: the bluehead sucker and the Bonneville cutthroat trout (Utah’s state fish).
- Numerous recreation site improvements in the project area, including improved access to downstream reaches of the river, a new permanent restroom and accessible picnic area, and four weekend whitewater boating flow releases prior to July 15 each year.
- Continuing the existing minimum flows to maintain Weber River water quality and fishery values, while also continuing to provide clean, low-cost renewable power generation and maintaining the historic powerhouse.

The Weber hydroelectric project is located on the Weber River about nine miles southeast of Ogden near the mouth of Weber Canyon. It was completed in 1910 by a predecessor company of Rocky Mountain Power. The first federal license was issued in 1938 and was renewed in 1970 and 1990. Weber has a capacity of 3.85 megawatts, with average annual generation of 16,926 megawatt-hours, which is equivalent to the annual electrical usage of about 1,800 typical homes.

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About Rocky Mountain Power

Rocky Mountain Power provides safe and reliable electric service to 1.2 million customers in Utah, Wyoming and Idaho. The company works to meet customers' growing electricity needs while protecting and enhancing the environment. Rocky Mountain Power is part of PacifiCorp, one of the lowest-cost electricity providers in the United States. More information available at www.rockymountainpower.net.