
A BASIN-SCALE APPROACH: OPTIONS, BEST PRACTICES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVANCE BASIN SCALE PLANNING AND LICENSING

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INTRODUCTION

Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

Working Group 3/5

Basin-Scale Subgroup

- Basin-Scale Subgroup
 - Tim Brush, Interfluve
 - Maryalice Fischer, Low Impact Hydropower Institute
 - Cheryl Laatsch, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 - Jeff Opperman, World Wildlife Federation
 - Jeff Reardon, Trout Unlimited
 - John Suloway, Gomez and Sullivan

SUBGROUP PROCESS

- Insights from informal discussions with individuals/team directly involved with basin-scale licensing and planning:
 - Challenges and benefits to basin-scale planning
 - Pathways to success in basin-scale licensing
 - Outcomes and lessons learned
 - Information gaps and outstanding questions
- Subgroup work product: Guidance Document



APPROACHES TO BASIN-SCALE LICENSING, PLANNING, AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Focus of most basin-scale efforts to date:
 - Basin-scale relicensing
 - Coordinating license expiration dates within a basin
- Challenging to start with relicensing with the intent to also accomplish basin-scale planning and resource management
- The Subgroup identified three approaches for accomplishing basin-scale licensing and planning:
 - Start with the Relicensing Process
 - Building Blocks of Improving Resource and Operational Management
 - Hybrid Approach

APPROACH I (RELICENSING): OVERVIEW

- Coordinating licensing/relicensing timelines within a river basin
- Primary or near-term focus is relicensing
- Initiated by licensee(s) or other stakeholder(s)
- Request to FERC

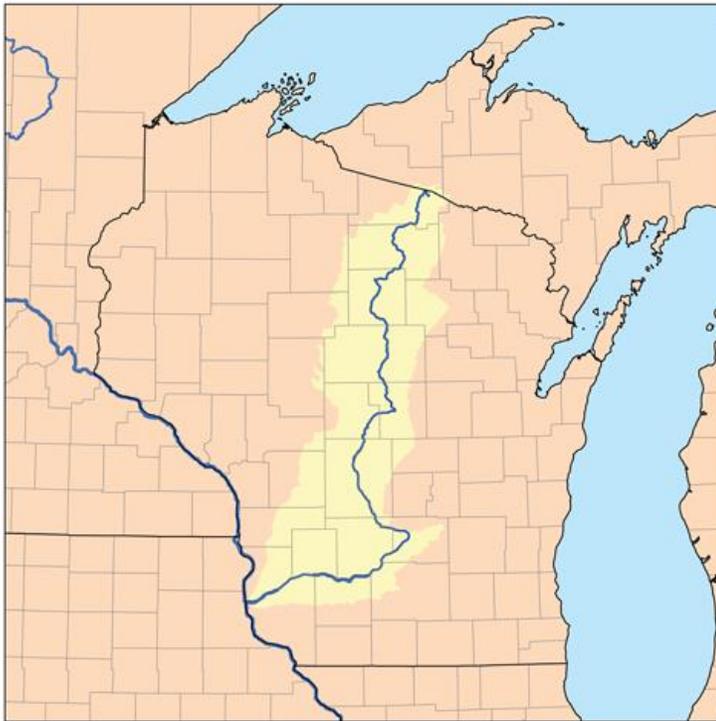


APPROACH I (RELICENSING): RATIONALE

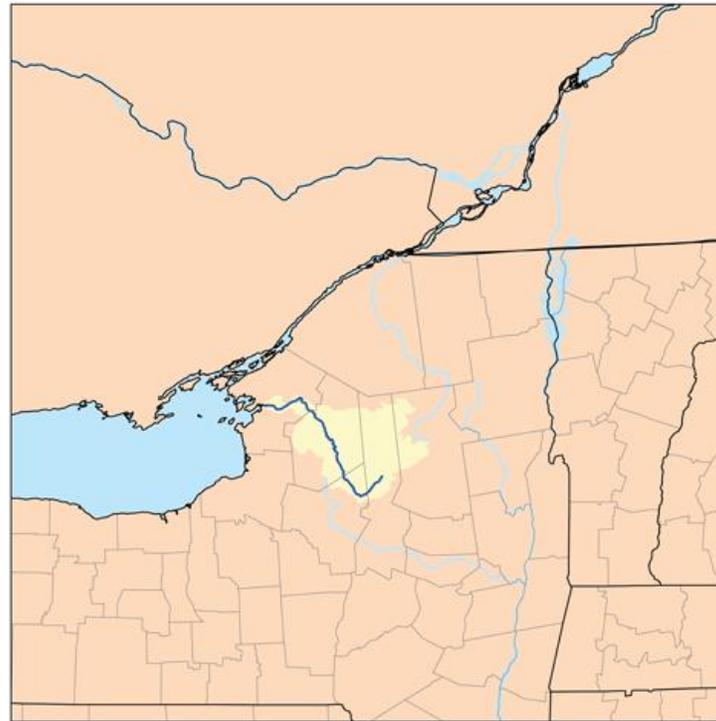
- Changing/aligning license expiration dates can:
 - Assist with FERC's comprehensive study and analysis of projects' cumulative environmental effects
 - Reduce the burden for stakeholders
 - Eliminate redundancies during relicensing
- Opportunities for improvements and broader benefits for resources
- Potential for operational improvements and streamlining in regulatory oversight

APPROACH I (RELICENSING): EXAMPLES

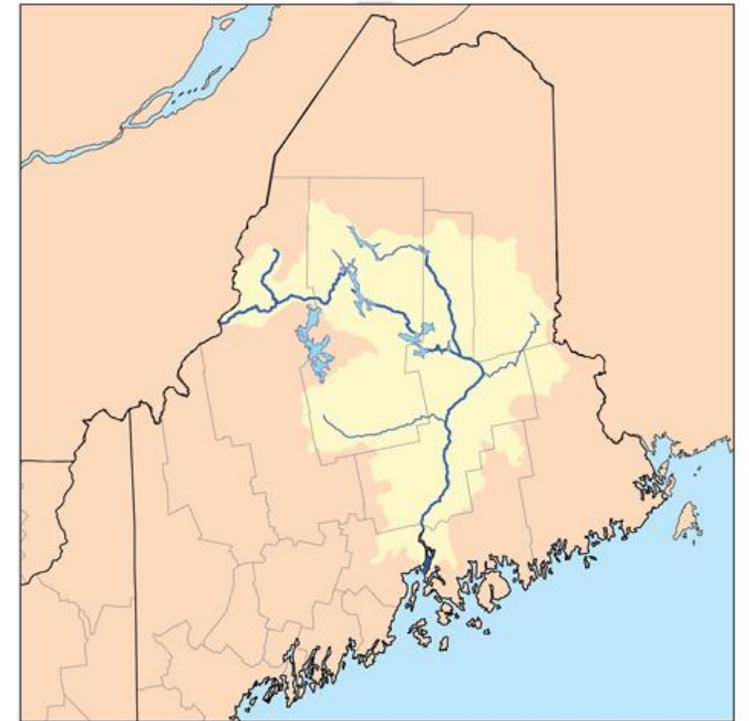
- Wisconsin River, Wisconsin



- Black River, New York



- Penobscot River, Maine



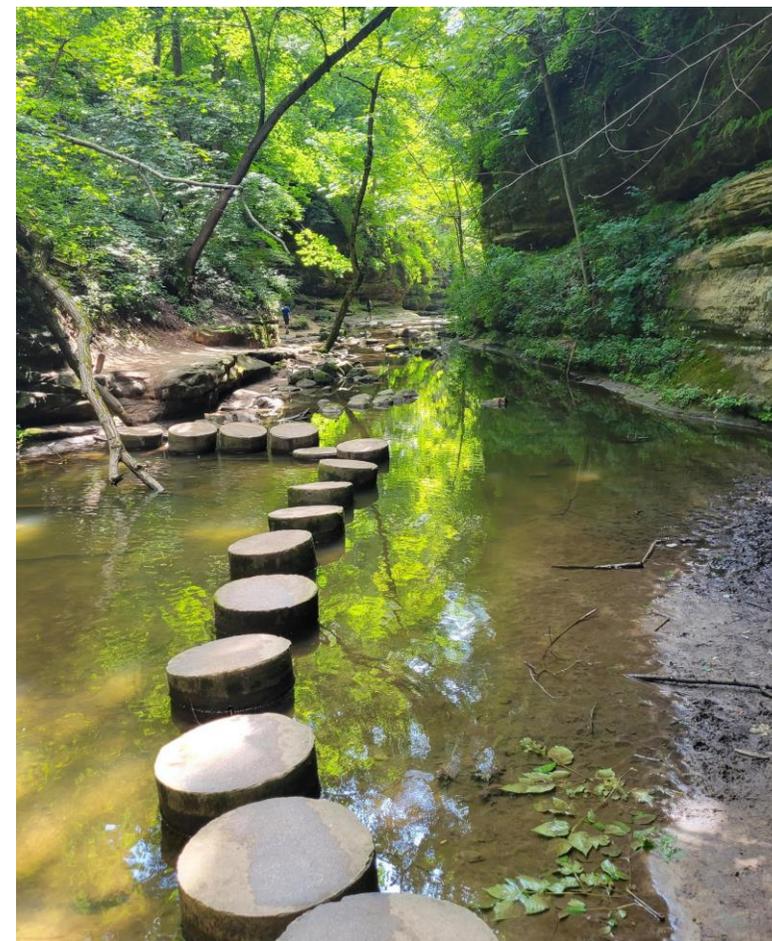
APPROACH I (RELICENSING): BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES



- More efficient, coordinated, consistent and comprehensive relicensing process
- Reduced workload for participants and costs associated with relicensing
- Extended license terms
- Comprehensive and ecologically sound environmental analysis
- Enhancement, mitigation, or restoration options that would be unlikely or impossible with single-project management and/or licensing

APPROACH I (RELICENSING): CHALLENGES

- Geographic scale and diversity of characteristics and resources
- Process challenges
- Different capabilities, interests, and approaches among licensees or one licensee with multiple projects that wants them treated differently
- Participant concerns about staffing and financial resources
- Equity/fairness and conflicts in relicensing process



APPROACH 2 (BUILDING BLOCKS): OVERVIEW



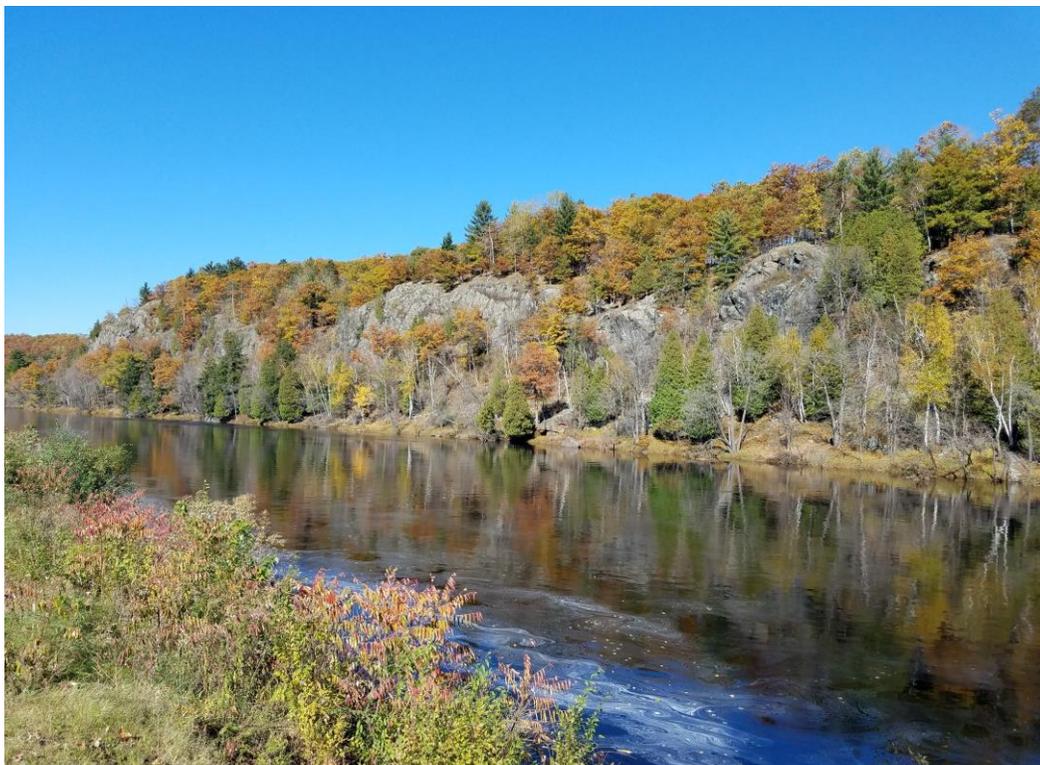
- Primary or near-term focus is basin-scale planning and resource management
- Start small, with building blocks
 - The specifics can vary widely
- A licensee (or an agency representative or another stakeholder) is seeking to use a basin-scale approach to align management plans and operations with other licensees within a river basin scale
 - Amendments

APPROACH 2 (BUILDING BLOCKS): EXAMPLES

- Coordination of assessments/studies, monitoring, standardizing methods, sharing consultants, and reducing costs
- Deviation Reporting
- Emergency Response



APPROACH 2 (BUILDING BLOCKS): BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES



- Build relationships and trust using a low cost and low risk approach
- Reduce costs to implement license requirements; by coordinating with other dam owners
- Learn from more experienced dam owners
- Implement operational and environmental improvements throughout the life of an existing license
 - Use “friendly amendments” to simplify and improve license requirements
 - Work on improvements outside of the license requirements

APPROACH 2 (BUILDING BLOCKS): CHALLENGES



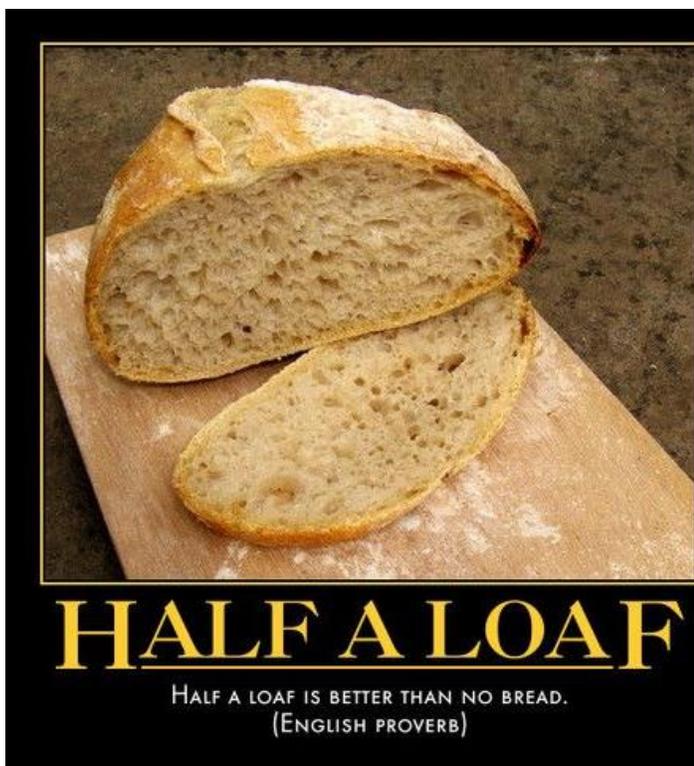
- A lack of resources may limit the ability of the licensee, state agencies, and other stakeholders, to proactively engage in basin planning
- License amendment processes can be expensive and costly, and may include outsourcing consultants
- Delays in FERC decisions create uncertainty
- FERC may not support the requests of the licensee and/or stakeholders, even if there is consensus

APPROACH 3 (HYBRID): OVERVIEW

- Relicensing process has started or soon will be; licensee is already engaging in some basin-scale planning
- Three examples:
 - Some preliminary basin-scale planning and resource management work has been done but not enough to address most or all potential issues
 - During a relicensing process started under Approach 1, one or more of the licensees drop out of the collective process
 - Exemptions or recently relicensed facilities as stakeholders
- Primary or near-term focus is relicensing and to a lesser extent, basin-scale planning and resource management.
 - Mid-term focus is implementation of the new license with consideration of any successful basin-scale work.
 - Long-term focus is basin scale planning and management and next relicensing.



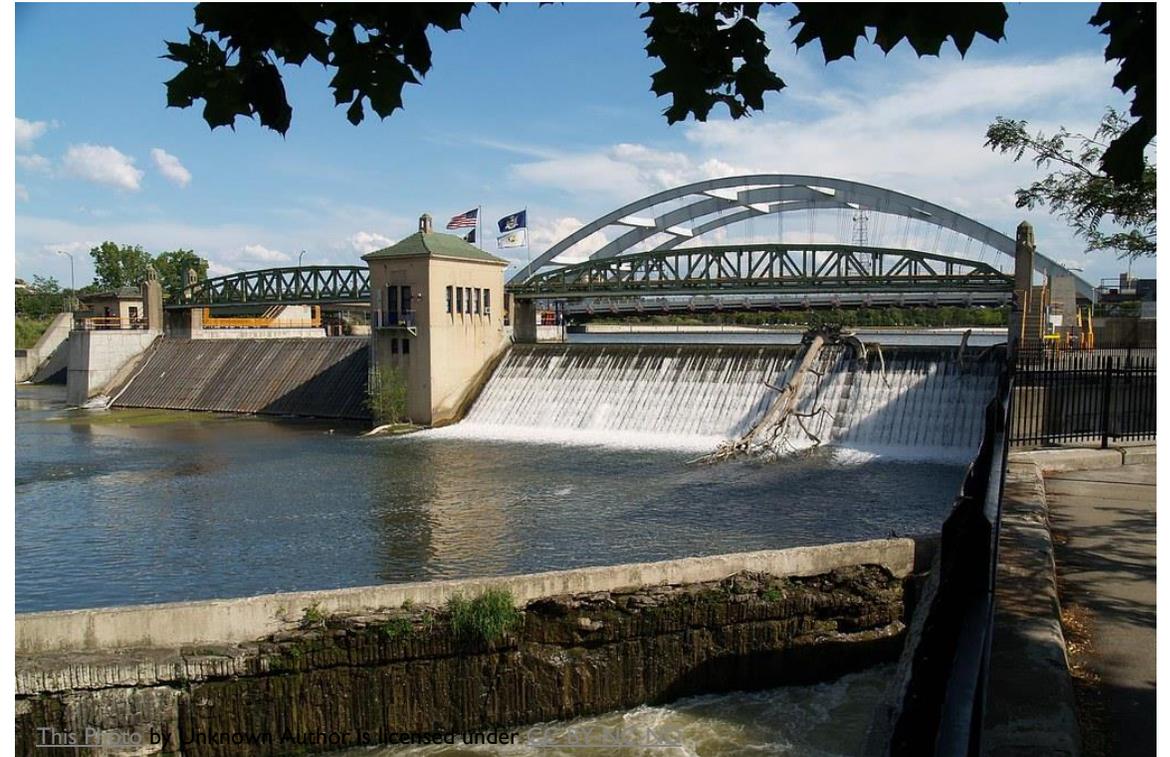
APPROACH 3 (HYBRID): RATIONALE



- Sometimes half a loaf is better than none
- Flexibility regarding the definition and extent of basin-scale planning could provide more opportunities for win-win initiatives
- When stakeholders collaborate with licensee(s) to develop cost effective ways to perform basin-scale planning, licensee(s) can incorporate those concepts into relicensing agreements and the implementation of a new license

APPROACH 3 (HYBRID): BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- All of the opportunities listed under Approach 1 (Relicensing)
- Preliminary basin-scale planning work can help build relationships and trust for relicensing
- Success in early stages may create opportunities for more dam owners to (re)join the process



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APPROACH 3 (HYBRID): CHALLENGES



- All of the challenges listed under Approach I (Relicensing).
- If this process was initiated as Approach I and one or more licensees dropped out of the process, there may be some distrust among the stakeholders.
- Lack of resources may limit the ability of federal and state agencies and other stakeholders to proactively engage licensees/dam owners prior to relicensing

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING BASIN-SCALE LICENSING AND PLANNING

- Continue to monitor existing basin scale efforts, and learn from the experiences
- Engagement of the Hydro Community to discuss and work to resolve the resistance/barriers to basin-scale planning and licensing
 - All Sectors
 - Potential Regional Meetings and Surveys



QUESTIONS?



Teamwork Makes the Dream Work