

AT B-G, MAJOR UPGRADE GETS UNDER WAY THIS FALL

A comprehensive, four-year life extension and modernization program to increase the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project's ability to respond to the state's power needs gets under way this fall.

The replacement or rehabilitation of key components—one of the project's four pump turbine units will be shut down from fall through spring for each of the next four years—will improve cycle efficiency, pumping flow and flexibility of operation. The increased capacity and expansion of the operating range of the units will help B-G employ a wider range of bidding strategies in the state's open electricity market.

"This is a win-win for NYPA and the state's consumers," said Joseph Kelliher, chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which authorized the upgrade earlier this year. "It will provide more efficient use of an existing resource to provide 160

megawatts of emission-free electricity during periods of peak demand, which will contribute to the operational flexibility of the New York Independent System Operator," the organization administering the state's electricity market.

"The project was constructed about 80 percent underground, and there should be very little activity visible on the project grounds, and minimal traffic interruption," said Horace Horton, NYPA's regional manager, Central New York. Below the surface, however, motor-generators,

spherical valves and related electrical and mechanical systems will be replaced or modernized as they reach their normal end of life.

B-G operates like a giant storage battery. In daily peak demand times, water released from the reservoir on top of nearby Brown Mountain plunges 1,200 feet within the moun-



New York State's largest energy storage system and one of the nation's largest hydroelectric plants, the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project's quick-starting units can compensate for the temporary loss of another generating plant. B-G can play a key role in restoring service in case of a power blackout.

tain to power the turbines, producing more than 1,000 megawatts of electricity, and then flows into the lower reservoir on Schoharie Creek. At night, when demand and the cost of electricity are lower, the water is pumped back to the upper reservoir.

"The work on each unit will require the water level of the upper reservoir to be reduced each fall," said Horton. "This will permit access to and replacement of the spherical valves that control the water flow." ♦



On the B-G Visitors Center grounds this May, more than 300 authentically garbed and armed troops simulated the real Revolutionary War battles that took place nearby in the Schoharie Valley. "Wounded" soldiers were treated, and the 18th-century weekend included discussions of local politics, a ladies' tea, a country dance, an ecumenical worship service and more.

VN Notes

Did You Say: Speak Up? Gladly!

NYPA energy professionals believe energy issues are important for everyone. Power Authority speakers can provide talks, slide shows, videos and demonstrations for groups, clubs and schools, free of charge. Wouldn't you, or your children, like to know more about home energy conservation...electric and hybrid-electric cars...the basics of electricity (grades 3-6) or electrical safety for students (grades 4-8)...or careers in the electric utility industry? Our speakers can also detail NYPA's history and statewide role in powering New York businesses and municipalities, and explain how a pumped storage power project differs from others—and how B-G's facilities make a vital contribution to the state's daily peak power needs.

On the other hand, maybe your group needs a meeting facility with a view. The B-G Visitors Center is available seven days

a week. In good weather, the grounds are open for your group's outdoor activities. Contact:

1-800-724-0309.



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This Summer, History, Water Sports Await in the Valley

Summer in the valley...time to look at (1) soaring gasoline prices and (2) local travel alternatives. How about—
•Boating or fishing at the Blenheim-Gilboa project's reservoirs: They're open now, they're close by, and this year have been

the two at B-G. Also catchable will be bass, walleye, carp and pan fish. Boaters will, as in the past, need to display special permits on boats and trailers. Call 1-800-724-0309, or drop in on www.nypa.gov. Permits are good until Sept. 30. Upper reservoir: permit holders should call 1-800-367-6972, ext. 6364, on the day before they plan to visit. Note: the upper reservoir is restricted to rowboats or canoes, with or without electric trolling motors. Gasoline-powered engines, and water sports—swimming, waterskiing, windsurfing, tubing—are allowed on the lower reservoir only.

•Mine Kill State Park: The park, open year round, also includes picnic tables, nature and hiking trails, a playground, pavilions and a pool. The park and reservoirs are on route 30, 15 miles south of Middleburgh.

•B-G Visitors Center: This

is a major Capital Region attraction, drawing more than 45,000 people in 2005, up 5,000 from the previous year. Located in a restored 19th-century dairy barn over-

looking the B-G power project, the Visitors Center is loaded with hands-on exhibits on electricity and displays highlighting environmental and geographical features of the area. The adjacent restored Lansing Manor, a classic example of Federalist period architecture, is operated by NYPA and the Schoharie County Historical Society. Like the Visitors Center, it's free of charge. This summer, plan to visit any time. ♦



Boaters' choice: Some look up, at the stunning views from the lower reservoir. Some look down, for signs of bass, carp, tiger trout or walleye. All look forward to a Schoharie summer.

stocked with tiger trout, acquired from neighboring SUNY Cobleskill. NYPA is helping the school to establish a fish stocking program for the county's reservoirs, including



Left, the Niskayuna High School Envirothon team's challenge was to identify a specific plant growing within the project's expanded wetlands. Right, the Duanesberg High team had to identify differences between elk and deer antlers. The Capital Region Envirothon drew high schoolers from Albany, Schenectady and Schoharie Counties to B-G's woods and fields in late April.

WHAT'S COMING UP AT THE BLENHEIM-GILBOA VISITORS CENTER

JULY 16

The Schoharie Valley Antique Auto Show will be held on the Visitors Center grounds.

SEPTEMBER 23

The Visitors Center will host the 21st annual wildlife festival.

OCTOBER 28

Time again for the annual S'cary Halloween event at the Visitors Center.

Information: 1-800-724-0309

About Valley News

Valley News is produced periodically by the New York Power Authority to update our neighbors on activities at our Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project and its Visitors Center, and as a community newsletter for residents of the Schoharie Valley.

If you have questions, comments or suggestions, please contact Steve Ramsey, NYPA's community relations manager, at 518-287-6380, fax 518-287-6381, or at steve.ramsey@nypa.gov. ♦