

RIVER NEWS

NEW YORK POWER AUTHORITY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER • FALL 2007

FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR RIVER RESEARCH, EDUCATION PROJECTS

The New York Power Authority conducted more than 40 environmental studies during the recent relicensing of its St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project. Now, it is making funding available for others to do their own research and educational projects along the St. Lawrence River.

The St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund (SLRREF) is part of a relicensing settlement agreement the Power Authority reached with local community representatives, environmental groups, regulatory agencies and other stakeholders. A board reflecting these interests will review proposals and disburse funds annually for projects that meet SLRREF criteria.

An outreach campaign is beginning this fall to solicit project proposals. To be considered eligible for funding, proposals should have at least one of the following objectives:

- increase knowledge or awareness of the natural environment;



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As part of its hydro project relicensing, the Power Authority will fund research and education proposals pertaining to the waters of the St. Lawrence River and immediately adjoining terrestrial features.

- advance knowledge of one or more aspects of the St. Lawrence River ecosystem;
- promote environmental education.

The fund is intended to support the efforts of local or state education organizations, tribal education organizations, colleges or universities, environmental agencies and not-for-profit groups.

While the total amount of funding to be made available each year is expected to range between \$30,000 and \$50,000, SLRREF board members

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Environmental Initiatives Help Local Wildlife

A \$7.45 million improvement project recently approved for the Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area is just the latest in a series of environmental initiatives the Power Authority is conducting to enhance local flora and fauna.

The same St. Lawrence River that provides diverse recreational opportunities to North Country residents and tourists is also home to a wide variety of animal life. The new federal license for NYPA's St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project provides for a number of environmental improvements and mitigation measures that are now under way.

In late July, for example, NYPA trustees approved a contract to refurbish existing dikes and water control

structures at Wilson Hill to enhance the natural habitat for nesting waterfowl and other animals in the 3,300-acre wildlife refuge. J.E. Sheehan Contracting Corp. of Potsdam



This innovative eel ladder installed inside NYPA's St. Lawrence-FDR project helps American eels safely swim up and over the Robert Moses Power Dam.

was selected to begin the improvements at Wilson Hill this summer.

Also in July, the Power Authority received two different awards for engineering excellence, which recognize the eel ladder installed at the St. Lawrence-FDR project's power dam last year. The \$2 million eel passage facility, designed by C&S Engineers of Syracuse, received a "diamond" award, the highest honor, from the New York chapter of the American Council of Engineer-

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Wilson Hill Hunting Schedule Outlined

Working with the state Department of Environmental Conservation, NYPA has balanced the needs of area hunters with plans for a construction project at the Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area this fall.

In response to concerns about weekend construction interfering with the upcoming hunting season, NYPA and its contractor have revised plans so that work will not occur on weekends this fall. Waterfowl hunting will be allowed at Wilson Hill starting with the Early Canada Goose Season (Sept. 1-25) and continuing through the Youth Waterfowl Hunt Days (Sept. 22-23) and the Northeastern Zone Waterfowl Hunting Season (Oct. 6-14, Oct. 27-Dec. 13).

Hunting for upland game species and bowhunting for deer will also be allowed during the waterfowl season. Visit www.nypa.gov/presscenter.htm to learn more; information is also available at the Wilson Hill waterfowl permit station and the Bureau of Wildlife offices in Potsdam and Watertown.

Whalen Park Upgrade

Louisville officials joined NYPA representatives in August to mark completion of recreational improvements to Whalen Park. The renovations include a major

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New York Power Authority

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Environmental Initiatives

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ing Companies (ACEC). It earned one of 16 “honor” awards in the ACEC’s national competition as well.



Showing off engineering awards for NYPA’s eel ladder are, from left, Orrin MacMurray, chairman of C&S Engineers; John Suloway, Steve Schoenwiesner and Tom Tatham of NYPA’s licensing division; and John Trimble, senior vice president of C&S Engineers. MacMurray is also chairman of the American Council of Engineering Companies.

Earlier this year, the National Hydro-power Association presented NYPA with its Outstanding Stewardship of America’s Waters award for the eel ladder, which enables American eels to safely migrate upstream past the power project dam. Built by B-S Industrial

Contractors of Gouverneur and Collins Hammond Electric of Ogdensburg, the innovative installation had helped almost 8,000 juvenile eels make their way toward the Great Lakes by late August. The eels’ annual migration season runs through October.

NYPA is also proceeding with several Habitat Improvement Projects (HIPs) at various sites along the St. Lawrence River. Six HIPs have already been implemented for species that include osprey, common loon

and Blanding’s turtle. Work on new spawning beds for sturgeon and walleye will begin this year, with additional HIPs planned for 2008. Each HIP includes a monitoring phase to ensure the effectiveness of this \$8.4 million program to improve wildlife habitats.

Additional funding has also been set aside for three new funds to address fish, wildlife and other ecological issues including a \$3.9 million fund for future HIPs. ♦

RN Notes

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upgrade to the park’s bathhouse facilities, new playground equipment, a handicapped-accessible fishing pier, floating docks and other amenities to Sand Island and a paved walkway between Whalen Park and Massena Country Club. The improvements at Whalen Park were performed as part of a \$1.9 million contract to Perras Excavating, Inc., of Massena, which also included work at public recreational facilities in Massena, Waddington and other sites in Louisville. ♦

River Research Projects

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hope to support multiple projects by keeping individual awards to approximately \$15,000 or \$20,000 apiece. They also encourage prospective applicants to seek matching funds from other sources for project proposals.

The focus area for SLRREF activities is the stretch of river between the City of Ogdensburg and Summerstown, Ontario, in the general vicinity of NYPA’s St. Lawrence-FDR project.

The St. Lawrence River is an important North Country resource, and funding proposals can explore both natural and man-made influences on the St. Lawrence Valley watershed. International waters are included in the focus area boundary; in fact, Canadian

research organizations can apply for SLRREF funding, since ecological issues are a concern on both sides of the border.

Besides NYPA, the SLRREF board is comprised of representatives of the following entities:

the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the St. Lawrence County Planning Office, the St. Lawrence-Lewis Board of Cooperative Education Services, New York Rivers United, the St. Lawrence Adirondack Audubon Society and, on a rotating basis, a representative from the towns of Massena,



Blanding’s turtle is presently listed as a threatened species in New York State.

Louisville and Waddington.

Twice-yearly deadlines have been scheduled for proposal submissions: Jan. 1 and July 1. Applications and additional details are available at: www.nypa.gov ♦

HAWKINS POINT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 22

Wildlife Festival

NOVEMBER 3

Photos with Santa Paws

DECEMBER 26-28

Winter Holiday Movies

ABOUT RIVER NEWS

This newsletter reports on Power Authority activities in Northern New York, particularly those associated with NYPA’s St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project.

We welcome your comments. To contact us, call Jill Chamberlain, Community Relations, 315-764-0226, ext.300.