

Wausau Kayak Course Operation

Many people have asked if the rapid drop in water levels is due to the operation of the Wausau Kayak course. The short answer is NO, for more information read the following.

Included in the Environmental Impact Statement for the 1996 dam re-licensing is the following unedited information from FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission).

Page A-87

“According to WPSC (Wisconsin Public Service Corporation), the kayak course is supplied by water that would otherwise be run through the Wausau hydroelectric facility. Hydropower generation is decreased by an amount equal to the water that is diverted to the east channel for the kayak course on the day of the event. WPSC and WVIC (Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company) have stated that no water is withdrawn from WVIC’s storage system for this purpose.”

Pages 4-124, 4-125

“We reviewed flow data for the Merrill, Wausau, and Rothschild reservoirs to determine whether flow was intentionally released from any headwater reservoirs to supply the Wausau kayak course. The data do not indicate that reservoir releases occur specifically to supply the course. Our calculations show that even if water from the Rice Reservoir alone were used to supply the course, water level in Rice reservoir would decrease 7 or 8 inches. Using water from the Rice reservoir would be impractical because of its distance from the course and the specific timing needed to accommodate the kayak event.

We recommend that WPSC continue to provide water for the kayak course thus decreasing power generation. We also recommend that WPCSC make generation and flow records available to WDNR for legitimate concerns regarding the operation of the kayak events. Because WPSC charges fees to kayakers to partially replace lost generation, WPSC should not release water from the headwaters system to provide kayak course water. It should use some of the existing in-stream flow and reduce hydropower generation instead.”

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