

Background and Overview

The Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that there is a potential for 12 gigawatts of new hydropower in the United States by adding power at non-powered dams. Assessments from DOE and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) agree that at least six gigawatts of that potential exists at USACE facilities.

Adding power at USACE non-powered dams involves completing three regulatory processes, shared between the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission (FERC) and USACE. All three processes require project proposal identification, information gathering, and environmental and engineering analyses to support a decision.

Goal

Prompted by a 2011 FERC/USACE Memorandum of Understanding, and facilitated by DOE, it is the intent of FERC and USACE to coordinate their regulatory responsibilities for authorizing non-federal hydropower projects, with the goal of reducing redundancy in this process, increasing efficiency, and decreasing process time.

Benefits

The two-phased approach provides:

- Increased Efficiencies
- Reduced overall license/permit application review time
- Cooperative National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental document
- More certainty and less risk for developers



Red Rock Hydroelectric Project located just outside of Pella, Iowa, on the Lake Red Rock Dam. *Photo credit Missouri River Energy Services.*

FERC-USACE Two-Phased Process, Synchronized Environmental Review

The two-phased, synchronized environmental review allows the environmental impacts of a project to be evaluated up front through one coordinated environmental review

addressing FERC licensing, USACE 408 environmental review (for non-federal hydropower projects at USACE facilities), and USACE Regulatory 404 environmental review.

Timeline for Review of Process



FERC-USACE Two-Phased Process, Synchronized Environmental Review

