



## Dead River Campers, Inc.

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Ms. Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20426

January 20, 2022

RE: Dead River Hydroelectric Project

Dear Secretary Bose:

On behalf of the 400 residents of the Hoist Storage Basin, and the Dead River Campers, Inc. Board of Directors, including the visitors that enjoy the Hoist Storage Basin for recreational purposes, we would like to share our thoughts concerning the 2022 refill plans for the Hoist Storage Basin. The water elevation for season 2020 / 2021 declined consistently, and up until winter snows arrived, the decline took the elevation to a recent all-time low. Currently, without trying, UPPCO finds the current elevation near numbers that would emulate spring low levels in preparation for the 2022 breakup of winter and spring melt.

The summer of 2021 was once again a repeat of the summer of 2012 when drought conditions were present. Although the Upper Peninsula of Michigan did receive often well-needed rains during this past summer, the weather patterns consistently avoided the Hoist Storage Basin watershed and there was little or no hope of maintaining 1341 elevation for May, June, July, and August as wished for and generally present in past years. With the drought conditions in place in the summer of 2021, another factor was the consistent demand by the guiding agencies, (MDNR, EGLE, and Fish and Wildlife) to provide 100 CFS to the lower river below the Hoist Dam. With a declining elevation via uncontrolled circumstance provided by the weather, this 100 CFS was the straw that "broke the camel's back" so to speak and began the exposure of 8.5 miles of usual water-covered beach to appear around the Hoist Storage Basin. We are providing pictures taken this past summer for

your review. Given the nature of the Hoist Storage Basin perimeter, the shallow shorelines created significant mudflats, and the rock shorelines exposed rock-covered and vertical surfaces rarely viewed. The Hoist Storage Basin water decline also exposed many hidden underwater pinnacles and hazards that ultimately ended recreational boating well before the typical Labor Day Weekend conclusion to boating by residents and guests.

Due to the steady decline of the water elevation, the License provided two launch ramps ultimately became impossible to access as the Clark Creek Ramp was nearly dry, and the East End Launch Ramp exposed a significant distance of bottomless mud while boaters attempted to recover their vessels.

We (DRCI) would like to suggest that changes be made to the spring refill plan from typical experience. We would hope that you can see the impossible task of maintaining the 1341 summer elevation if we do not have spring water at higher elevations than past practice would show. We know of no solution for maintaining water elevations without consistent rains, Silver Lake cresting at 1485.2 and holding water for late summer use, and developing a new philosophy regarding a flexible minimum discharge other than 100 CFS.

We are not suggesting that the Hoist Storage Basin levels; other than unplanned weather conditions; get to the point that the Dam would “spill”. That being said we would suggest that higher spring target elevations be considered to preserve water for the later months of summer.

At present, the following Targets are in place for the Hoist Storage Basin.

Please consider our Suggested elevations which are not extreme by any means. These suggestions will potentially help preserve the Hoist Storage Basins water elevation, and of course, we will still need consistent summer rains. Currently, as of this letter, the Elevation of the HSB is 1336.98.

January	1339	Start of Month		
February	1337.5	Start of Month		
March	1337.5	Start of Month		
April	1337.5	Start of Month		
May	1340.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1342.0
June	1341.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1341.75
July	1341.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1341.5
August	1341.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1341.25
September	1341.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1341.0
October	1341.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1341.0
November	1341.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1341.0
December	1339.0	Start of Month	Suggested	1339.0

We do believe that within reason UPPCO does have the ability to manage the elevations well if they are allowed to do so. History has proven they are professionals in this arena, as long as there is water to manage.

We would also like to note that the concern for keeping the lower portion of the Dead River; below the Hoist Dam; water elevations stable does not seem to apply equally to the Hoist Storage Basin? In laypersons terms, Keeping the shoreline stable and water covered Below the Hoist, was not what happened to the Shoreline of the Hoist Storage Basin in the summer months of 2021. We consistently hear about the need to keep plants and microorganisms alive

along the shoreline in the Dead River waterway. Somehow this did not take place in the summer of 2021 with miles of mud along the shore, and an elevation close to 4 vertical feet below what might be considered normal fall elevations.

We do not pretend to be able to predict the weather or create the weather. We do know that once water elevations begin to decline, and there are no consistent summer rains, there is no possible way to create the needed water we are all wishing for. With reasonable target guidelines and the ability to be flexible in the management of the elevation of the Hoist Storage Basin; once the decline naturally happens due to summer evaporation, let alone generation; we would hope to be able to enjoy the body of water we all love and appreciate.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share with you our thoughts,

*Jim Grundstrom*

Jim Grundstrom  
DRCI President

enclosure



Low Water Levels on the Dead River Basin  
August/September 2021







