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Subject: West Branch flow disruption and fire
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At approximately 16:02 hrs yesterday afternoon (Monday, July 27th), McKay Station tripped offline. This facility is part of the Ripogenus Project (FERC No. 2572) and located on the West Branch of the Penobscot River in T3 R11 WELS, Maine. Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC (GLHA), licensee for the Ripogenus Project, responded by immediately dispatching two local technicians to investigate the outage and to resume normal flows to the West Branch. The technicians discovered that a cross-arm failure on the Project's transmission line (approximately ½ mile from McKay Station) had caused the outage and resulted in a small fire (less than one acre) beneath the line. After reporting the fire and checking/securing the station, the technicians proceeded to Ripogenus Dam; following public safety checks and activation of the Project's siren warning system, the technicians opened two crest gates at the dam at 18:20 hrs to resume normal flows to the West Branch. The fire was extinguished by the Maine Forest Service and local fire crews last evening.

Article 402 of the Ripogenus Project license requires an outage flow of 400 cfs during generating unit outages at McKay Station, with scheduled minimum flows to be resumed as quickly and practically as possible. Although normal West Branch flows were disrupted by this event, the automated minimum flow system at McKay Station functioned properly thereby preventing an excursion from outage flow requirements, with Project outflows of approximately 610 cfs released once the minimum flow system was fully activated (510 cfs via the minimum flow system, plus 100 cfs being released from the dam at the time).

At the time of the station trip, outflows from McKay Station were running at approximately 2,400 cfs to satisfy whitewater recreation flows required by the Project license; since whitewater flows are required daily from 08:30 – 17:00 hrs from May 1 – September 15, these boating flows were impacted for about 58 minutes by this outage.

GLHA is still investigating and collecting information on this event, which will be detailed in a report to FERC within 10 days. I will copy everybody on this report, but in the meantime, please let me know if you have any comments or questions.

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