

**FINAL LICENSE APPLICATION  
EXHIBIT E**

**APPENDIX X**

**ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**NORTH CASCADES  
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
ANNOTATED OUTLINE**

**SKAGIT RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT  
FERC NO. 553**

**Seattle City Light**

**April 2023**

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

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ADA.....	Americans with Disabilities Act
City Light.....	Seattle City Light
ELC.....	Environmental Learning Center
FERC.....	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
LEED .....	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
NHPA.....	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS .....	National Park Service
O&M.....	operation and maintenance
Project .....	Skagit River Hydroelectric Project

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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This document describes Seattle City Light’s (City Light) proposed North Cascades Environmental Learning Center (ELC) Management Plan (ELC Plan) for the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project (Project or Skagit River Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) No. 553. This ELC Plan will ensure that the operation of the ELC by City Light continues to meet the purpose of “educating the public about the North Cascades bioregion and its natural and human history and resources consistent with applicable law” (City Light 1991).

City Light will coordinate the efforts required under this ELC Plan with other license article requirements and resource management plans included in the new license. In particular, the ELC Plan will be consistent with the Recreation Management Plan (City Light 2023a) and the Historic Properties Management Plan (City Light 2023b), which is being developed to comply with National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and in consultation with Section 106 and the cultural resources work group for the new license. Specifically, resources with related guidance measures are designed to work in tandem to meet comprehensive management goals through the implementation of the suite of City Light’s proposed resource measures.

Through the term of the new license, City Light will continue to consult with the National Park Service (NPS) regarding programming and other elements of this plan.

## **2.0 PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND ROLES**

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### **2.1 Goals and Objectives**

As stated above, the purpose of the ELC Plan is to ensure that the operation of the ELC by City Light continues to meet the purpose of “educating the public about the North Cascades bioregion and its natural and human history and resources consistent with applicable law” (City Light 1991).

The objective is to ensure that all lands and buildings covered by the ELC Plan be dedicated to educational purposes for the duration of the new Project license in a manner that aligns with and complements the NPS education programs for the North Cascades National Park. City Light’s implementation of the ELC Plan will occur in consultation with the NPS and will build upon the successful programming implemented in the current license.

City Light anticipates that the educational programs described in the ELC Plan will be periodically reviewed and revised through the term of the next license based upon information developed pursuant to this Plan.

### **2.2 Geographic Area**

The ELC Plan specifically covers the facilities located on the ELC campus related to the environmental educational programming within the Project Boundary. This plan does not address public recreational facilities located outside the ELC campus along the shoreline of Diablo Lake, which are addressed in City Light’s Recreation Management Plan (City Light 2023a).

### **2.3 Roles**

This section describes the roles of the parties involved in the implementation or oversight of the ELC facilities and programming.

#### **2.3.1 City Light**

City Light owns the ELC facilities and is responsible for maintaining and furnishing the ELC facilities and implementing the ELC Plan. City Light is responsible for ensuring that the ELC is operated in a manner that complies with the ELC Plan. City Light will lease the ELC facilities with terms consistent with the ELC Plan to a contractor, who City Light will select through its bidding process. City Light and the NPS will develop the minimum qualifications and selection criteria for the contractor.

#### **2.3.2 National Park Service**

The ELC occupies land within the NPS’s Ross Lake National Recreation Area. The NPS will participate in the oversight of the ELC through co-chairing the Program Oversight Committee with City Light.

This section will describe additional roles for NPS.

### **2.3.3 Program Oversight Committee**

A Program Oversight Committee, co-chaired by City Light and the NPS, will develop and make recommendations regarding programs and operations of the ELC. The Program Oversight Committee will likely also include, in addition to the co-chairs, Indian Tribes, North Cascades Conservation Council, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Program Oversight Committee will participate in allocation of funds related to program support.

### **2.3.4 Program Contractor**

The ELC will be operated by a contractor who will provide education programs on behalf of City Light. City Light will lease the ELC facilities with terms consistent with the ELC Plan. The lease will be reviewed by the Program Oversight Committee prior to execution of the lease.

This section will provide additional details related to the lease such as periodic reviews of the lease by City Light and the NPS, contractor's allowable uses of the ELC facilities to ensure compliance with specified NPS rules and regulations, and periodic performance reviews of the contractor by City Light and the NPS. Additional lease details may be provided here or as part of a separate operating agreement with the contractor.

### **3.0 EXISTING FACILITIES**

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This section will describe the existing ELC facilities. The intent is to describe the baseline ELC facility conditions at the issuance of the new license. A site plan of existing facilities will be provided as an appendix to the ELC Plan.

The ELC, which opened in 2005, is a Project recreation facility owned by City Light. The ELC is located on the north shore of Diablo Lake on federal land administered by the NPS. The facility has 16 buildings including multimedia classrooms, a research library, aquatic and terrestrial labs, overnight lodging for up to 92 guests, housing for graduate students and staff, and a lakeside dining hall with recycling and composting center. There is also an outdoor amphitheater, several outdoor learning shelters, and various trails and paths. The ELC Canoe and Kayak Dock, located on the shoreline in front of the ELC, provides boat access to Diablo Lake for visitors participating in programs at the ELC.

The ELC was awarded Silver Certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System in 2009. Most of the facilities and campus pathways at the ELC are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, though some pathways may become seasonally impassible in the event of extreme weather like heavy rains or snow.



## **4.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

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Upon approval by FERC, the ELC Plan will be implemented in consultation with the Program Oversight Committee. City Light will continue to implement measures for routine operation and maintenance (O&M) and new construction and will incorporate additional measures if new data indicates they are necessary. No ground-disturbing activities, such as gardening, landscaping, utility trenching, may be undertaken without advance written approval for such activity from the Superintendent of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex.

The following sections describe the programs that are intended to help guide ELC management under the new FERC license.

### **4.1 Environmental Education Programs**

This section will describe the ELC programs that City Light (through its contractor) will implement, including a description of existing ELC Environmental Education Programs; and a description of proposed changes to the ELC Environmental Education Programs (if any). City Light will work with the contractor to ensure there are sufficient resources to implement the programs.

This section will also include methodology for monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting ELC Environmental Education Programs during the term of the next license. The methodology will be based upon a decision-making process between City Light and NPS. It will include input from the Program Oversight Committee and stakeholders including entities served by the education program and be based on current best practices for environmental education at residential environmental learning centers.

### **4.2 Capital Improvements**

This section will describe the program for new and/or enhanced ELC facility capital improvements (e.g., gender-neutral lavatories), major maintenance (e.g., roofing, heating system, structural foundations, exterior building envelope), and any new facilities (e.g., housing) to help meet existing and future environmental education program needs, including a schedule for making the improvements. City Light anticipates conducting an assessment of the existing ELC facilities to determine any necessary capital improvements.

### **4.3 Operations and Maintenance**

This section will describe City Light's O&M responsibilities at the ELC facilities. In general, City Light will be responsible for the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing or new ELC facilities, including utilities needed for the operation of the ELC (e.g., water and sewer system, electric power supply, telephone and internet, and trash service).

## **5.0 REPORTING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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### **5.1 Reporting**

Annually, City Light will prepare and file with the FERC an annual report no later than March 15 of each year of the ELC programs and activities for preceding calendar year. The Annual Report will include the following:

- Statement of goals and objectives for the previous year, together with an analysis of how well they were met;
- Statement of goals and objectives for the current year;
- Description of programs;
- Description and conditions of facilities;
- Maintenance needs of the facility; and
- Financial statement for the preceding year.

### **5.2 Accounting**

This section will describe City Light's accounting requirements for the ELC contractor.

## 6.0 REFERENCES

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Seattle City Light (City Light). 1991. Memorandum of Agreement, North Cascades Environmental Learning Center. Seattle, Washington.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2023a. Recreation Management Plan Annotated Outline for the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553. Prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. April 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2023b. Draft Historic Properties and Management Plan for the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553. Prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. April 2023.