

**FINAL LICENSE APPLICATION
EXHIBIT E**

APPENDIX W

RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

**RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
ANNOTATED OUTLINE**

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

Seattle City Light

April 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section No.	Description	Page No.
1.0	Introduction.....	1-1
2.0	Purpose and Scope of the Plan.....	2-1
2.1	Goals and Objectives	2-1
2.2	Project Vision for Visitor Experience.....	2-1
2.3	Geographic Area	2-1
2.4	Agencies with Land Management Authority	2-2
2.4.1	National Park Service (NPS)	2-2
2.4.2	US Forest Service (USFS)	2-2
2.4.3	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).....	2-2
3.0	Existing Recreation Resources.....	3-1
3.1	Recreational Setting	3-1
3.2	Project Recreation Facilities	3-1
3.2.1	Ross Lake.....	3-1
3.2.2	Diablo Lake.....	3-1
3.2.3	Gorge Lake.....	3-3
3.2.4	Newhalem Townsite	3-4
3.3	Existing Recreational Use Levels	3-7
3.3.1	Overall Project Recreation Use.....	3-7
3.3.2	Project Trail Use	3-7
3.3.3	Developed Facility Occupancy Levels (Peak Season).....	3-8
4.0	Recreation Resources Programs.....	4-1
4.1	Recreation Facility Capital Improvements	4-1
4.1.1	General Measures.....	4-1
4.1.2	Diablo Lake Facilities	4-1
4.1.3	Newhalem Facilities.....	4-2
4.1.4	Marblemount Boat Launch	4-3
4.2	Annual Recreation Facility Operations and Maintenance	4-3
4.3	Interpretation and Education Program	4-3
4.4	Diablo Lake Ferry Service	4-3
5.0	Reporting and Communications.....	5-1
5.1	Monitoring	5-1
5.2	Reporting Schedule.....	5-1
5.3	Communications	5-1
6.0	References	6-1

List of Tables		
Table No.	Description	Page No.
Table 2.3-1.	FERC-approved Project recreation facilities covered in this Recreation Plan.	2-2
Table 3.3-1.	Project recreation use estimate in Recreation Days by season.	3-7
Table 3.3-2.	Summary of 2022 monthly Project trail users.	3-8
Table 3.3-3.	Current and projected developed picnic and parking area occupancy at Project recreation facilities.	3-9

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
City Light	Seattle City Light
CoSD	City of Seattle Datum
ELC	Environmental Learning Center
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
I&E	interpretation and education
NAVD 88	North American Vertical Datum of 1988
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NCI	North Cascades Institute
NPS	National Park Service
O&M	operation and maintenance
Project	Skagit River Hydroelectric Project
RD	recreation days
RLNRA	Ross Lake National Recreation Area
SR	State Route
SRCC	Skagit Resource Coordinating Committee
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document describes Seattle City Light’s (City Light) proposed Recreation Management Plan (Recreation Plan) for the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project (Project or Skagit River Project), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) No. 553. This Recreation Plan will address City Light’s recreation resource roles and responsibilities for the Project for the term of the new FERC license. The Recreation Plan will define a vision of the desired future condition for recreation resources, establish long-term goals and objectives for managing recreation resources, and identify both site-specific actions and broader programmatic measures.

City Light will coordinate the efforts required under this Recreation Plan with other license article requirements and resource management plans included in the new license. In particular, the Recreation Plan will be consistent with the Historic Properties Management Plan (City Light 2023a), 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.

2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE PLAN

2.1 Goals and Objectives

This section will describe the purpose and scope of the Recreation Plan. In general, the purpose of the Recreation Plan will be to specify City Light's role and responsibilities in managing existing and future recreation resources associated with the Project.

2.2 Project Vision for Visitor Experience

This section will describe the Project vision for visitor experience levels in the Project Boundary and broader Project vicinity. This Project vision will guide management of Project recreation resources. This vision will help guide City Light's development and implementation of recreation resource programs at the Project over the term of the new license. The Project vision will be developed in coordination with Indian Tribes.

City Light and the National Park Service (NPS) both contribute to visitor experience in the area. It is City Light's intention to continue its partnership with the NPS to provide a unified visitor experience. City Light intends to develop a Project vision and commitments under this Recreation Plan consistent with this unified approach. The vision does not make resource or management commitments for adjacent federal or state land and resource managers. The implementation programs in this Recreation Plan are designed to be consistent and compatible with this vision, including each location's unique natural setting and resources, as well as the desired recreation experience and future conditions.

2.3 Geographic Area

This section will delineate the geographic area that will be addressed by the Recreation Plan, which is primarily the area within the Project Boundary. Table 2.3-1 lists the FERC-approved Project recreation facilities covered in this Recreation Plan.

Table 2.3-1. FERC-approved Project recreation facilities covered in this Recreation Plan.

Resource Area	Land Management	Project Recreation Facility
Diablo Lake	Federal (NPS)	Skagit Tour Dock
	Federal (NPS)	Diablo Dam Parking Area
	Federal (NPS)	West Ferry Landing
	Federal (NPS)	East Ferry Landing
	Federal (NPS)	North Cascades Environmental Learning Center
Gorge Lake	City Light	Ross Lodge Picnic Shelter
	City Light	Gorge Lake Boat Launch
Newhalem	Federal (NPS)	Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Gardens (0.4 mile)
	Federal (NPS)	Trail of the Cedars (0.3 mile)
	City Light	Gorge Powerhouse Parking Area
	City Light	Gorge Powerhouse Visitor Gallery
	City Light	Skagit Information Center
	City Light	Gorge Inn Museum
	City Light	Newhalem Picnic Sites
	City Light	Newhalem Main Street Parking Area
	City Light	Newhalem State Route 20 Parking Area
	City Light	Newhalem Interpretive Displays (standalone) ¹
	City Light	Newhalem Playground

¹ Interpretive displays include: “The Iron Horse of the Skagit,” “Automobiles Come to the Skagit,” “The Meaning of Place,” “Newhalem Company Town,” “Spinning Waterwheel,” “Temple of Power,” and “Chinook Redd.”

2.4 Agencies with Land Management Authority

This section will describe the following agencies with land management authorities in the Project vicinity, including relevant management plans and guidance.

2.4.1 National Park Service (NPS)

2.4.2 US Forest Service (USFS)

2.4.3 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

3.0 EXISTING RECREATION RESOURCES

This section summarizes the existing Project recreation facilities and use levels. The intent is to describe the baseline recreation conditions at the issuance of the new license.

3.1 Recreational Setting

The Skagit River Project is in a remote area, with steep terrain and harsh winter conditions that both define and limit recreation opportunities. Major population centers are 100 miles away, and portions of the parks and the one highway, State Route (SR) 20, in the vicinity are closed each year, usually from November until April. Nonetheless, the Project reservoirs and vicinity provide many recreational opportunities and receive significant visitation, especially in the summer.

The Project is unique in that the generation facilities are located almost entirely within a national recreation area, the Ross Lake National Recreation Area (RLNRA). The RLNRA is managed by the NPS and was established in 1968 by the enabling legislation for North Cascades National Park to provide for the “public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of portions of the Skagit River and Ross, Diablo, and Gorge lakes.” The RLNRA attracts nearly 1 million visitors annually and when combined with the rest of the North Cascades National Park Complex, it provides both frontcountry, backcountry, and wilderness recreation opportunities and settings. Per the RLNRA General Management Plan, the NPS manages RLNRA using five management zones, including the Frontcountry Zone (5 percent of RLNRA), Backcountry Zone (18.5 percent of RLNRA), Wilderness Zone (73 percent of RLNRA), Skagit River Zone (3 percent of RLNRA), and Hydroelectric Zone (0.5 percent of RLNRA) (NPS 2012). The Skagit River Project lies in the Hydroelectric Zone (i.e., Project dams, powerhouses, switchyards and townsites), Frontcountry Zone (i.e., Diablo and Gorge lakes and northern/southern portions of Ross Lake), and Backcountry Zone (middle portion of Ross Lake).

City Light operates and maintains several Project recreation and interpretive facilities at the Project. Project recreation facilities are FERC-approved facilities that are required by the current Project license. In addition, there are numerous non-Project recreation facilities within and adjacent to the Project Boundary. Most of the non-Project recreation facilities are operated and maintained by the NPS as part of the RLNRA; in addition, there are several facilities owned and managed by the USFS and other entities.

3.2 Project Recreation Facilities

This section describes City Light’s Project recreation facilities by area.

3.2.1 Ross Lake

There are no Project recreation facilities on Ross Lake.

3.2.2 Diablo Lake

The 4.5-mile-long Diablo Lake, with several developed recreation facilities on the shoreline and direct access from SR 20, is the most publicly accessible of the three Project reservoirs. All recreation facilities along the Diablo Lake shoreline are within the Project Boundary and the RLNRA, unless otherwise stated. Recreation opportunities include water sports, camping, hiking,

angling, environmental education, and boat tours. Recreation facilities and services at Diablo Lake include the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center (ELC), boat tours and ferry service, docks and ferry landings, a boat launch, campgrounds, boat-in camps, and trails.

3.2.2.1 North Cascades Environmental Learning Center

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 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 purpose of the ELC is to educate “the public about the North Cascades bioregion and its natural and human history and resources consistent with applicable law” (City Light 1991). Since the ELC opened in 2005, City Light leases the ELC to the North Cascades Institute (NCI), a non-profit organization focused on environmental education, which provides in-depth environmental education, including information about hydropower and climate change. Environmental education programming is targeted to youth, but also to adults and families. NCI hosts tours, conferences, trainings, retreats, and other special events, all of which contain an environmental education component, for organizations and civic groups throughout the year. In addition to developing these various programs and experiences at the ELC, NCI is responsible for the site’s day-to-day operations. NCI charges fees for participation in most programs but uses funds from private contributions to subsidize most of the environmental education programs offered to schools.

3.2.2.2 ELC Parking Area

The ELC parking area is located at the end of Diablo Dam Road at the entrance to the ELC, but outside the controlled access of the main ELC campus. This parking area provides public access to Diablo Lake (outside the ELC) and to the adjacent non-Project Diablo Lake Trail. The ELC parking area facility consists of two unmarked gravel parking areas with two accessible parking spaces. The ELC parking area also includes trash facilities (i.e., dumpsters) and an information board. The facility is managed by NPS. Overall, the facility is in good condition and does not meet current accessibility standards with only a few elements meeting the standards (i.e., trash facilities) (City Light 2023b).

3.2.2.3 Skagit Tour Dock

The Skagit Tour Dock is on the north shore at the west end of Diablo Lake, near Diablo Dam. The dock is accessible by road from Diablo Dam Road. It is used for Skagit Tours which are offered by City Light during the summer months. The facility consists of three paved/striped parking spaces and unmarked roadside gravel parking, a 24-foot by 48-foot staging area shelter with eight benches and two information boards, and a recently replaced 24-foot by 48-foot boat dock with a 40-foot gangway with handrail. The facility is owned and managed by City Light. Overall, the tour dock is in fair-to-good condition with an aging parking area surface and does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

3.2.2.4 Diablo Dam Parking Area

The Diablo Dam Parking Area is located on the north side of Diablo Dam. The facility consists of a flush restroom building, a paved parking area with three striped spaces, and an informal roadside parking area for up to three vehicles. Visitors may park here to view or walk across the dam. The facility is owned and managed by City Light. Overall, the parking area and restroom are in good condition and do not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

3.2.2.5 Ferry Landings

West Ferry Landing

The West Ferry Landing is on the north shore at the west end of Diablo Lake, along Diablo Dam Road. It is used exclusively for embarking and disembarking the Diablo Ferry, a service managed by City Light, which provides boat transportation to the East Ferry Landing, and ultimately Ross Lake, via the Ross Haul Road. The ferry generally operates from June through the end of October. City Light provides the ferry service between the West and East Ferry Landings. The facility consists of 32 paved/striped parking spaces, a 24-foot by 48-foot boat dock with a 40-foot gangway with handrail although the access route includes concrete steps, two parking signs, and an information board. The facility is owned and managed by City Light. Overall, the ferry landing is in good condition and does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

East Ferry Landing

The eastern terminal for the Diablo Lake Ferry is the East Ferry Landing, which is on the south shore at the east end of Diablo Lake, only accessible by boat or trail. A canoe/kayak dock is attached to the East Ferry Landing dock, providing access for visitors who wish to shuttle non-motorized watercraft to and from Ross Lake via the Ross Haul Road. Visitors may walk between the East Ferry Landing and Ross Lake via the Ross Haul Road or be transported by a shuttle operated by Ross Lake Resort. Both the ferry landing and the canoe/kayak dock are owned and managed by City Light. The ferry landing consists of a 32-foot by 60-foot boat dock with a 30-foot gangway with handrail and an information board. At lower water levels, the slope of the gangway may exceed the requisite slopes and affect the accessibility of the boat dock. Overall, the ferry landing is in good condition and does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

3.2.3 Gorge Lake

The 4.5-mile-long Gorge Lake is largely undeveloped due to the steep topography of the shoreline and resulting access constraints. SR 20 parallels almost the entire lake on the north side and crosses it at the upper end near the Town of Diablo. There are two developed Project recreation facilities associated with Gorge Lake—a boat launch and picnic shelter.

3.2.3.1 Gorge Lake Boat Launch

The Gorge Lake Boat Launch is located adjacent to Gorge Lake Campground. The facility consists of a single-lane concrete boat launch ramp, floating courtesy dock, gravel parking area, an information kiosk, and two picnic sites. The boat ramp and dock are on City Light land and used by City Light when boat access to Gorge Lake is needed. The facility is owned and managed by City Light. Overall, the boat launch facilities are in good condition but do not meet current

accessibility standards (City Light 2023b). The adjacent Gorge Lake Campground, consisting of eight campsites, is owned and maintained by the NPS.

The Gorge Lake Boat Launch ramp is usable by trailered boats down to an elevation of 878 feet North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88; 871.5 feet City of Seattle Datum [CoSD]) (City Light 2023b). For the period of record from 1983 to 2021, the boat ramp was usable 66 percent of the year and 65 percent of the peak season (July and August), on average. The Gorge Lake Boat Launch is located in a cove on the north side of Gorge Lake where gravel is deposited at the outlet to the boat launch cove, which impedes many large boats from using the launch, particularly when Gorge Lake levels are low; however, below 878 feet NAVD 88 (approximately 871.5 feet CoSD), the launch ramp remains usable by non-motorized watercraft and other watercraft not requiring a trailer.

3.2.3.2 Ross Lodge Picnic Shelter (City Light)

The Ross Lodge Picnic Shelter is in the Hollywood section of the Diablo townsite adjacent to Ross Lodge. The picnic shelter consists of roadside parking and a picnic shelter with picnic tables. The facility is owned and managed by City Light. Overall, the picnic shelter is in good condition but does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

3.2.4 Newhalem Townsite

Newhalem is the last town for 70 miles for travelers headed east on SR 20. It is a popular stop for travelers and for visitors to the RLNRA. The Newhalem townsite is owned by City Light where a number of visitor amenities and recreational facilities are provided.

3.2.4.1 Parking Areas

The Newhalem townsite has three designated parking areas dispersed throughout the townsite, including on Main Street, along SR 20, and near the Gorge Powerhouse/Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden.

Main Street Parking Area

The Main Street parking area is located on Main Street in Newhalem. The facility provides a paved parking area with 24 striped parking spaces including three accessible spaces. This parking area provides access to numerous Newhalem recreation facilities and buildings including the Skagit Information Center, Gorge Inn Museum, Skagit General Store, and the picnic, playground, and interpretive displays (see below for descriptions). Overall, the parking area is in good condition, but does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

There are seven interpretive displays dispersed throughout the Main Street area. The interpretive displays are named The Iron Horse of the Skagit; Automobiles Come to the Skagit; The Meaning of Place; Newhalem Company Town; Spinning Waterwheel; Temple of Power; and Chinook Redd. Overall, the interpretive displays are in good condition but do not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

A playground structure is located off Main Street, which provides multiple play structures and equipment. Overall, the playground equipment is in good condition but does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

SR 20 Parking Area

The SR 20 gravel parking area is located on the north side of SR 20 in Newhalem. The facility provides a gravel parking area for 30 single vehicles including 2 accessible spaces, as well as an area for overflow recreational vehicle and trailer parking since these types of vehicles are not permitted on Main Street in Newhalem. The facility also has trash/dumpster facilities and two dual, 30-amp and 70-amp, electric vehicle charging stations. Overall, the parking area facilities are in good condition but do not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

Gorge Powerhouse Parking Area

The Gorge Powerhouse parking area is located at the east end of Newhalem along the Skagit River. The parking area consists of a gravel parking area and interpretive displays. The parking area also serves as the trailhead parking for the adjacent Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden. Overall, the parking area is in good condition but does not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

Picnic Sites

There are 17 picnic sites dispersed throughout the Newhalem townsite along Main Street, along SR 20, and near the start of the Trail of the Cedars. Each picnic site consists of a picnic table, and some are connected to the SR 20 gravel parking area via an access route that meets accessibility standards. Overall, the picnic sites are in good condition but do not meet current accessibility standards (City Light 2023b).

3.2.4.2 Recreational Trails

Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden

Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden is located on federal land administered by NPS within the Project Boundary. The Ladder Creek Falls Trail is a 0.3-mile loop trail that leads to Ladder Creek Falls, a dramatic series of waterfalls in a slot canyon, and winds along the creek and through a garden developed on the adjacent hillside. The trail includes four interpretive panels, three wooden benches, and colored lighting that illuminates the falls, and surrounding features at night. The facility is open year-round and managed by City Light. The trail and garden were first developed in the mid-late 1920s by City Light as a tourist attraction. At the time, the garden featured exotic plants collected by J.D. Ross, outdoor lighting, and amplified music. In 2009, City Light refurbished the trail and lights and added several interpretive panels. Currently, colored light-emitting diode lights illuminate the falls from dusk to 11 pm each night. The trail does not have a designated trailhead; instead, visitors start in the Gorge Powerhouse parking area and follow a directional sign. The recreational facilities are in good condition; however, the trail does not meet accessibility standards, and does not have a trail conditions sign that describes the level of difficulty, trail conditions, and general accessibility constraints or obstacles (City Light 2023b).

Trail of the Cedars

This 0.4-mile-long interpretive trail is located within the Project Boundary on federal land administered by NPS and provides pedestrian access from Newhalem to the Newhalem Creek Powerhouse, and links with a NPS trail that leads to Newhalem Campground downstream of Newhalem. The trail begins at the suspension bridge at the end of Main Street in Newhalem,

crosses the river, and then loops through the forest and along the river. Interpretive signs along the trail focus on the plants and natural history in the area. The Trail of the Cedars is open year-round and portions of it comply with outdoor accessibility guidelines for trails. The facility does not have a designated trailhead; instead, visitors utilize the general parking areas in Newhalem.

The trail is a compacted, gravel surface trail ranging from 3 to 6 feet in width. A total of 28 interpretive displays are dispersed along the trail. The displays generally consist of synthetic panels with metal frames on metal posts unless affixed to a structure. The displays are either situated along the edge of the trail or at the Newhalem Creek Powerhouse building. The non-Project Newhalem Creek Powerhouse building serves as an interpretive feature at the midpoint of the trail with windows allowing visitors to observe various powerhouse facilities. All the interpretive displays are in good condition although the information on some of the trail interpretive displays is outdated. Overall, the majority of the trail meets accessibility standards but the trail has a few accessibility constraints and does not have a trail conditions sign that describes the level of difficulty, trail conditions, and general accessibility constraints or obstacles (City Light 2023b).

3.2.4.3 Skagit Information Center

The Skagit Information Center is located just off SR 20 on Main Street in Newhalem. The facility includes restrooms, a breezeway with cases for maps, a large room with interpretive exhibits on Project history and information on the natural and cultural resources of the North Cascades, a retail store with maps and books, and outdoor exhibits including a hydropower turbine, sidewalk scaled mural of the Project, and a sculpture of a salmon redd by the artist Tom Jay. In recent years, the center has been staffed by employees from City Light, NPS, and NCI from Memorial Day weekend into September. At the facility, visitors may obtain a free pamphlet with a self-guided walking tour of Newhalem if they wish to explore the historical features of the townsite at their own pace. The facility is owned and managed by City Light.

3.2.4.4 Gorge Powerhouse Visitor Gallery

The visitor gallery was added to Gorge Powerhouse in 1949 when that structure was expanded. The gallery is located above the powerhouse floor and has large glass windows that provide visitors with a view of the generators and other equipment on the generator floor below. Interpretive exhibits installed in 2016 provide information around four themes, including how hydroelectricity is generated, the history of the Project, Project operations, and environmental programs included in the current Project license. The visitor gallery is open to the public daily from May through October. The facility is owned and managed by City Light.

3.2.4.5 Gorge Inn Museum

The Gorge Inn Museum is in the front of the Gorge Inn on the south end of Main Street in Newhalem. The Gorge Inn, constructed in 1920, is one of the oldest buildings remaining at the Project and served as the cookhouse for City Light crews and visitors until sometime in the 1970s. The museum presents a social history of the Upper Skagit River Valley and the Skagit River Project, including Indian Tribe and Canadian First Nation use of the area; Newhalem town life over the years; and the role of J.D. Ross, the long-time superintendent and “Father of City Light” who conceived of and drove the construction of the Project. The Gorge Inn, renovated in 2010, primarily serves meals to City Light staff and contractors who are working at the Project, but

during the Skagit Tours season, the Gorge Inn has also recently offered the Dam Good Chicken Dinner to the public two nights per week.

3.3 Existing Recreational Use Levels

3.3.1 Overall Project Recreation Use

The estimated Project recreation use totaled 83,800 Recreation Days (RDs)¹ with most of the use occurring at Diablo Lake (53,500 RDs or 64 percent of the total Project use) and Newhalem (29,500 RDs or 35 percent of the total Project use) (Table 3.3-1). Peak season use (56,200 RDs or 67 percent of total Project use) was more than double the off-peak season (27,600 RDs or 33 percent of total Project use). Most peak season use occurred at Diablo and Gorge lakes. Day use is the primary recreation use type, accounting for 95 percent of the total Project use. Given the nature of recreation use in the Project vicinity, whereby visitors are often moving from one recreation site to the next and visitors' vehicles may have been counted at multiple study sites in the same general area, it is very likely this estimate of Project use is overcounting visitation and is a conservative estimate of Project recreation use. The only Project overnight use occurs as part of the ELC programs at Diablo Lake.

Table 3.3-1. Project recreation use estimate in Recreation Days by season.

Resource Area	Project Use Estimate in RDs								
	Overall (May-Oct)			Peak Season (Jul-Aug)			Off-Peak Season (May-Jun, Sep-Oct)		
	Overnight	Day Use	Total	Overnight	Day Use	Total	Overnight	Day Use	Total
Ross Lake	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Diablo Lake	1,800	51,700	53,500	500	35,100	35,600	1,300	16,600	17,900
Gorge Lake	--	800	800	--	500	500	--	300	300
Newhalem	--	29,500	29,500	--	20,100	20,100	--	9,400	9,400
Total	1,800	82,000	83,800	500	55,700	56,200	1,300	26,300	27,600

3.3.2 Project Trail Use

Based on trail counters installed in 2022, the Project trail use is summarized below in Table 3.3-2. Approximately 86,000 users or 74 percent of all trail use occurring at four trails—Ross Dam Trail, Ladder Creek Falls Trail, Thunder Knob Trail, and Trail of the Cedars (ranging between 19,000 and 25,000 users at each trail). The next tier of trail use ranged between 7,000 and 11,000 users and included Thunder Creek Trail and the Diablo Lake Trail—both at Diablo Lake. In general, the higher use trails were located along the SR 20 corridor with direct vehicle access to the trailheads. The lower use trails were generally the more remote trails in the Ross Lake area that lack direct vehicle access and require hike-in or boat-in access. Of note, trail use in the Hozomeen area was likely lower than normal in 2022 because the only vehicle access to the area (from the Silver-

¹ A Recreation Day (RD) is defined by FERC as each visit by a person to a development for recreational purposes during any portion of a 24-hour period.

Skagit Road in Canada) was closed due to extensive damage and washouts from the November 2021 flood event in the Project vicinity.

Table 3.3-2. Summary of 2022 monthly Project trail users.

Trail	Total Daily Users						Total
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	
Ladder Creek Falls Trail	1,572	4,436	6,566	4,687	3,098	1,323	21,682
Trail of the Cedars	1,633	3,519	5,977	4,239	2,935	1,088	19,391
Total	3,205	7,955	12,543	8,926	6,033	2,411	41,073

3.3.3 Developed Facility Occupancy Levels (Peak Season)

In 2022, peak season picnic site occupancy levels at the two developed Project picnic sites (Ross Lodge Picnic Shelter and in Newhalem) were low and, as a result, the projected average occupancy levels by 2060 also remain low at 5 and 14 percent overall (Table 3.3-3). The highest use occurred on weekend days yet it is projected to reach only 21 percent by 2060.

There are two developed Project parking areas with marked parking spaces – West Ferry Landing (32 marked spaces) and Newhalem Main Street (24 marked spaces). The 2022 occupancy levels were higher at the West Ferry Landing at 63 percent overall and 64 percent on weekends/holidays (Table 3.3-3). By 2060, the average occupancy levels at the West Ferry Landing are projected to exceed full capacity at 108 percent overall and 109 percent on weekends/holidays. At the Newhalem Main Street parking area, average occupancy levels are projected to reach 76 percent overall and 78 percent on weekend days, well below full capacity. The West Ferry Landing is a longer-term parking area as it provides visitors access to the ferry service which often transports visitors to the Ross Lake area for extended trips (i.e., multiple days). In contrast, the Newhalem Main Street parking area is generally a short-term (quick turnover) parking location, whereby visitors are stopping to gather information or use as a rest stop. Therefore, there is a much higher rate of vehicle turnover at the Newhalem location versus the West Ferry Landing.

Table 3.3-3. Current and projected developed picnic and parking area occupancy at Project recreation facilities.

Developed Facility Type	Project Facility	Type of Day	2022 Percent Occupancy	Average Percent Occupancy Projections			
				2030	2040	2050	2060
Picnic Sites	Ross Lodge Picnic Shelter (3 picnic sites)	Overall	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%
		Weekday	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		Weekend	6%	8%	9%	9%	10%
		Holiday	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Newhalem Parking Areas (17 picnic sites)	Overall	9%	11%	13%	13%	14%
		Weekday	6%	8%	10%	10%	10%
		Weekend	13%	16%	19%	19%	21%
		Holiday	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Parking Areas	West Ferry Landing (32 parking spaces)	Overall	63%	80%	88%	97%	108%
		Weekday	64%	81%	89%	98%	109%
		Weekend	64%	81%	89%	98%	109%
		Holiday	58%	74%	81%	90%	100%
	Newhalem Main Street Parking Area (24 parking spaces)	Overall	44%	56%	62%	69%	76%
		Weekday	44%	57%	63%	69%	77%
		Weekend	45%	58%	64%	70%	78%
		Holiday	38%	49%	54%	60%	66%

4.0 RECREATION RESOURCES PROGRAMS

Upon approval by FERC, the Recreation Plan will be implemented in consultation with the Skagit Resource Coordinating Committee (SRCC).² City Light will continue to implement recreation measures for routine operation and maintenance (O&M) and new construction and will incorporate additional measures if new data indicates they are necessary. Further, City Light proposes to continue existing measures related to the operation of the ELC, Skagit Tours, ferry services, and Skagit Information Center, as well as maintenance of Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden and Trail of the Cedars.

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

4.1 Recreation Facility Capital Improvements

This section will describe the program for new and/or enhanced recreation facility capital improvements at the Project to help meet existing and future recreation facility needs identified. This section will describe new, expanded, and/or renovated recreation facilities that will be constructed and funded by City Light. This section will describe appropriate design guidelines to ensure recreation facility capital improvements are consistent with NPS design guidelines for RLNRA and the aesthetic/historic character of the area. Further, this section will describe how applicable accessibility standards will be addressed during the planning and design phase of new/enhanced recreation sites. The applicable standards include the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design for public accommodations on City Light lands (U.S. Department of Justice 2010), and the 2015 Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) on federal lands standards (U.S. Access Board 2015).

City Light proposes to include the following Capital Improvements measures in the Recreation Plan.

4.1.1 General Measures

To implement accessibility (i.e., ADA and ABA) enhancements at Project recreation sites, as feasible, and to develop and install enhanced and consistent Project-wide signage, including visitor information, wayfinding, and interpretation and education (I&E) at Project recreation sites. City Light anticipates coordinating with the NPS to provide consistent information across all Project and non-Project recreation sites in the Project vicinity.

4.1.2 Diablo Lake Facilities

4.1.2.1 ELC

City Light proposes to continue existing measures related to the operation of the ELC. The purpose of the ELC is to educate “the public about the North Cascades bioregion and its natural and human history and resources consistent with applicable law” (City Light 1991). The ELC provides in-depth environmental education, including information about hydropower and climate change.

² The SRCC includes agency representatives that will collaborate regarding implementation and monitoring of this Recreation Plan and contribute to adaptive management decisions.

Environmental education programming is targeted to youth, but also to adults and families. The ELC hosts tours, conferences, trainings, retreats, and other special events, all of which contain an environmental education component, for organizations and civic groups throughout the year.

City Light anticipates ongoing use of the ELC to facilitate delivery of the education components of the various management plans related to cultural, environmental, and interpretive programs. City Light is developing a separate ELC Management Plan (City Light 2023c), in consultation with the NPS and other licensing participants, to ensure that City Light's operation of the ELC continues to meet its educational purpose.

4.1.2.2 Skagit Tour Dock

City Light anticipates constructing a new tour dock on the shoreline of Diablo Lake near the ELC. A new dock near the ELC would improve the tour experience for participants by improving access and safety. The existing tour dock would be removed, and the site repurposed for NPS use, potentially for a new boathouse/dock, or otherwise restored.

4.1.2.3 West Ferry Landing

City Light anticipates installing an information kiosk in the parking area for the Diablo Lake Ferry to provide a place to post information on scheduled run times and other updates.

4.1.2.4 ELC Parking Area and Shoreline

City Light anticipates coordinating with the NPS to manage visitor use and experiences along the shoreline of Diablo Lake in the vicinity of the ELC to address conflicts between Project operations, public visitor use of these areas, and resource impacts. This may include development of additional or enhanced recreation facilities (e.g., parking, restrooms, signage, shoreline access).

4.1.3 Newhalem Facilities

4.1.3.1 Main Street

City Light anticipates converting Main Street to a pedestrian setting only, which will require expanding and reorganizing the parking in Newhalem, including at the SR 20 parking area, Gorge Powerhouse parking area, and potentially other areas.

City Light will also coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in an attempt to enhance SR 20 pedestrian and vehicle traffic management between the SR 20 parking area and Main Street (e.g., crosswalks, stoplights, turning lanes, etc.). City Light recognizes that measures in the SR 20 right-of-way are beyond City Light's control (and within WSDOT's responsibility), but City Light will work with WSDOT to determine if enhancements are possible.

City Light will provide enhanced visitor information and I&E facilities throughout Newhalem.

4.1.3.2 Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden

Anticipated projects in the Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Garden include reorganizing the parking area at Gorge Powerhouse to provide: (1) improved parking; (2) enhanced visitor information for Newhalem recreation opportunities and the Project as a whole; and (3) expanded I&E information.

City Light also anticipates providing improved connectivity from the parking area(s) to the Ladder Creek Falls Trail and Gardens area including pathways and signage/wayfinding, and rehabilitating the pedestrian bridge over the Skagit River.

4.1.3.3 Trail of the Cedars

For the Trail of the Cedars, City Light anticipates addressing the trail's accessibility constraints in collaboration with Indian Tribes, and replacing and updating the I&E displays throughout the trail, including accessibility.

4.1.4 Marblemount Boat Launch

City Light anticipates improving boat launch, parking area, signage, and day use area, as well as upgrading the restroom to a permanent vault toilet.

4.2 Annual Recreation Facility Operations and Maintenance

This section will describe City Light's recreation facility O&M responsibilities and standards to be used at Project recreation sites and use areas. It is likely that an attachment with O&M standards will be included in the Recreation Plan.

4.3 Interpretation and Education Program

This section will discuss City Light's I&E program role within the Project boundary. The purpose of the I&E program will be to provide enhanced experiences for visitors, encourage participation in multi-resource protection measures by area visitors, and promote cooperative, safe behaviors to benefit all Project resources and visitors. This section will identify and describe potential themes and messages for the I&E program. It is anticipated that this section will include not only recreation-related themes, but also cultural/historical resources, geologic resources, renewable energy, dam engineering, terrestrial resources, fish and aquatic resources, visitor management and rules, and Project operations and public safety. The I&E program will include the Skagit Information Center and Skagit Tours.

4.4 Diablo Lake Ferry Service

City Light proposes to continue providing a ferry service between the West Ferry Landing on lower Diablo Lake and the East Ferry Landing on upper Diablo Lake near Ross Dam. Currently, the *Cascadian*, a 40-passenger ferry, transports visitors between the ferry landings. The ferry generally operates from June through the end of October.

5.0 REPORTING AND COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 Monitoring

This section will describe City Light's role in conducting periodic monitoring of recreation resources. Monitoring is an extension of City Light's protection and enhancement implementation and will use baseline information from City Light relicensing study efforts. The goals of monitoring are to address changes over time and to identify if management actions may be needed. This section will define the desired type of visitor experience to be provided and will establish monitoring indicators and standards that will be used over time to assess whether the desired visitor experience has been maintained.

5.2 Reporting Schedule

This section will describe the schedule and method for regular communications with the SRCC and submittals to FERC.

5.3 Communications

This section will describe a process for making coordinated, timely, and informed decisions while implementing the Recreation Plan, including how City Light will coordinate and communicate its Recreation Plan implementation actions with the SRCC. Because of simultaneous implementation of multiple resource management plans (e.g., cultural, wildlife, fish and aquatics), cross-resource communication will be necessary. An important goal of this communication will be to achieve a balanced integration of resource goals in the Project Boundary. Coordination processes may include:

- Clarifying resource goals, objectives, and priorities;
- Ongoing consultation with NPS and other entities;
- Sharing information used to make resource decisions; and
- Solving problems and resolving issues.

If City Light and NPS collaboratively determine that revisions to this Recreation Plan should be made, City Light will make any revisions in coordination and consultation with NPS. Any revisions to this plan shall be filed with FERC for approval prior to implementation.

6.0 REFERENCES

- Seattle City Light (City Light). 1991. Memorandum of Agreement, North Cascades Environmental Learning Center. Seattle, Washington.
- _____. 2023a. Draft Historic Properties and Management Plan for the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553. Prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. April 2023.
- _____. 2023b. RA-01 Recreation Use and Facility Assessment Study, Report for Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553. Prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. March 2023.
- _____. 2023c. North Cascades Environmental Learning Center Management Plan Annotated Outline for the Skagit River Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 553. Prepared by HDR Engineering, Inc. April 2023.
- National Park Service (NPS). 2012. Ross Lake National Recreation Area General Management Plan. North Cascades National Park Complex. March 2012.
- U.S. Access Board (USAB). 2015. Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) standards (2015). Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ). 2010. 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Washington, D.C. September 15, 2010.