

2021

Riverwatcher Report

Few among us had heard of COVID-19 at the onset of 2020, and fewer still knew how it would fundamentally change our lives in ways large and small. As a business dedicated to providing clean, reliable electricity, Gravity was faced with the challenge of maintaining operations while protecting employees, contractors and neighbors. Our frontline operations staff, the men and women who are truly the power makers and riverwatchers, have continued to work as essential employees. We have put in place new protocols that provide for regular health monitoring and strict cleaning standards. Typically, we host many groups on an annual basis, including groups of students who are eager to learn about hydropower's rich history, technology, and potential to combat today's environmental challenges. We look forward to future opportunities to share the hydropower experience with these groups again. We are finding other ways to share these stories such as *TheHydropowerStory.com* and the launch of *Talk Shop with Drop*. For now, we take great comfort that our operations team remains on the rivers. Their presence allows them to stay attuned to the rivers' daily tempo.

Gravity's pre-pandemic facility tour

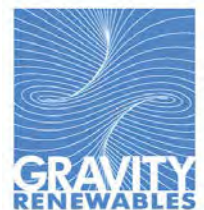


Launch of Talk Shop with Drop



One of our favorite activities is to share our passion for the power of rivers through public tours. Over the years, we have welcomed many curious community members for "behind the scenes" tours of our facilities. We emphasize the long history of hydropower, its interdependence with complex watershed systems and the importance of balancing river and community needs. As a complement to in-person tours, Gravity is introducing Drop. Students are invited to ask Drop questions and learn more about hydropower through our website.

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Our Eyes on the River

As our homes and local communities have been transformed into our offices, classrooms and vacation destinations, we have realized the importance of our local environment. Gravity's hydropower projects are part of this fabric.

Located primarily in small communities, the existence of a hydropower facility and the maintenance of the important infrastructure that accompanies it can have an outsized and

positive impact. Our facilities help create recreational opportunities; they maintain reservoir levels that can support fire suppression apparatus, well water availability and boating access; we are a significant contributor of property taxes and economic activity, from direct jobs to hiring local contractors, all while providing a power source free of climate-altering emissions. With all things being local, we are proud to keep our eyes on the river and our foot firmly in the local communities where we operate.



When Rivers Run Low

Drought is an unfortunate reality that periodically affects all of us in a variety of ways. In 2020, much of the northeastern United States suffered drought conditions that impacted river flows, soil moisture, wildfire risk and power generation. While hydropower is not a consumptive use of water, its operations are closely intertwined with river flows.

During droughts, we get lots of questions about how flows are being passed through our facilities and whether we can do more to ease the impacts of low river elevations. Hydropower generally operates under federally-issued licenses with rules that regulate when facilities should operate based on the volume of water in the river.

River Priorities

Our first priority, in accordance with Federal regulatory compliance, is to maintain sufficient ecological flows in the river, this is sometimes called a minimum flow requirement. A fixed amount of river flow is maintained in the bypass channel and/or released downstream to maintain a river's ecological needs. This water is important to local wildlife and ecosystems, including fish, eels, plants, and water quality.



Our second priority is to meet defined priority uses for the water, including fish passage or boat navigation. For example, on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal, our hydropower generation is secondary to the need for water to operate the lock system used for boat traffic.



Finally, if river flows allow, we use the water to generate hydropower, passing it through our turbines and releasing it back into the river downstream of our facility. During periods of drought, we often produce little to no power in order to ensure available water is used for community needs. When possible, we try to utilize these naturally occurring low water periods to conduct facility maintenance so the equipment is ready to operate when sufficient water is available.

