



We work with the community to conserve and protect the beauty and health of the Kinnickinnic River and its watershed.

January 11, 2018

**Kinnickinnic
River Land Trust**

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Kinni Corridor Project Committee
City of River Falls
222 Lewis St
River Falls WI 54022

Dear Committee Members,

The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) was formed by a group of concerned citizens and landowners twenty five years ago with a Mission of working with the community and preserving and enhancing the Kinnickinnic River and its watershed to help assure that the river would run cold, clear and clean forever. The Board of Directors passed a resolution (attached) which calls for the removal of the dams. The Kinnickinnic River, a Class I trout stream, flows through counties which have, and will continue to see, some of the highest growth rates in the state. This expansion is due to their proximity and accessibility to the Twin Cities metropolitan area and will have a direct impact on the health of the Kinnickinnic River.

Since its formation, KRLT has worked in partnership with the City of River Falls and other, like-minded conservation organizations towards accomplishing our Mission. Our efforts towards stream preservation were preceded by consistent efforts from the Wisconsin DNR, City of River Falls, Federal SCS, County Land Conservation Departments, farmers, land owners and conservation groups for nearly 50 years. Those combined efforts have led to the conservation of nearly 50% of land along the riparian boundaries of the stream and key tributaries. Today, the river and its watershed support a unique and diverse ecosystem and a tremendous population of naturally reproducing brown and brook trout. As a stake-holder, we believe in taking all necessary steps to preserve the river and that ecosystem to the best of our ability.

The most urgent matter for the long-term health of the river at this time is whether to relicense the hydro-electric power generating license for the two dams owned and operated by the City of River Falls. At the beginning of the Relicensing review process in December 2014, the KRLT Board presented a resolution to the River Falls Mayor and City Council urging careful planning and implementation of a process leading to the removal of its two dams and restoration of the Kinnickinnic River. KRLT representatives have been active participants since the start of the City of River Falls' Kinni Corridor Planning process and have provided frequent input to the decision-making process.

As early as February 2018, the City of River Falls will make a decision regarding whether to relicense the dam(s) for continued production of hydroelectric power. Those power generating turbines are 60 to 75 years old and produce less than 2% of household power needs of the City. Power is available to residents through the electrical service grid at or below true generating costs. While arguments have been put forward that it is good to retain a local renewable energy source, investments in energy conservation programs and developing other alternative energy sources could easily offset the contribution of hydro power without long-term impacts to the river.



Sediment studies have shown the impoundments are shallow, at capacity and contribute suspended sediment, nutrients and algae and significantly warmer water (4 to 5 degrees F during summer months) to the lower Kinnickinnic River. In addition, there are 25 untreated storm water outfalls in the older parts of the City contributing to degradation of downstream water quality. We believe that an improved storm-water management system and dam removal are best addressed concurrently. Given the 40 year term of renewed hydro-electric permits, the risk of maintaining the status quo is significant, to the detriment of the long-term health of the Kinnickinnic River, a major tributary to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

In our review of the City's Corridor Planning process leading to the City's upcoming relicensing decision, we find it long on public input and education, but surprising that so little time, effort and expense was devoted to developing accurate cost estimates of the alternatives now under consideration. Much of the cost data available today is through the efforts of Friends of the Kinni (FOTK), an ad hoc citizens group. Without engineering design or a thorough study of the likelihood of capturing federal, state and private cost sharing revenues, questions from citizens regarding the likely impact on property tax and energy bills cannot be answered with confidence. We believe it wise to take the time to quantify the true fiscal impact of the dam removal decision is required before a vote is taken.

Should the present schedule be maintained, KRLT has taken this position. Based on the information available and alternatives we have reviewed, we continue to urge the City to remove both dams in accordance with our resolution of keeping the river cold, clean and free forever. We strongly urge the City to plan for dam removal and river restoration in a fiscally prudent and manageable short to mid-term timeline. The Trust is prepared to continue to work with the City towards this goal. Additionally, the community of River Falls has a tremendous number of energetic, educated and committed members who can be engaged to supplement work by city staff and its consultants to make this project a long-term win.

In the end, in our opinion, it comes down to having the courage to make an investment in the long-term quality of life of our community. A cold, clean, free flowing river will benefit all ages and current and future residents. Taking the steps necessary to preserve and enhance the Kinnickinnic River, the community's most unique and scenic asset, is best accomplished by dam removal. It is a source of community pride, as aptly put by a resident during the recently completed Charrette process: "It is the heart beat of our community".

We advise committing to keeping that heartbeat strong!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Drewiske".

David P. Drewiske
Executive Director and Board Member
Kinnickinnic River Land Trust

Encl.



KINNICKINNIC
River Land Trust

We work with the community to conserve and protect the beauty
and health of the Kinnickinnic River and its watershed.

December 12, 2014

Mayor Dan Toland
City Council Members
222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022

RE: Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) Resolution Number 20141203-1
To Support a Process Leading to the Removal of the River Falls Dams

Dear Mayor Toland and City Council Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to observe your Council Workshop on hydroelectric relicensing and participate in the Public Comment portion of your City Council meeting this past Tuesday, December 9th. As I mentioned during my comments, I am submitting the attached resolution that was unanimously adopted by the KRLT Board of Directors on December 3rd for your consideration as you proceed with your ongoing review and consideration of hydroelectric facility options.

Our Board's unanimous approval of this resolution and the position it articulates for the KRLT are based on our longstanding mission to "work with the community to conserve and protect the beauty and health of the Kinnickinnic River and its watershed". The Strategic Plan that we adopted in 2013 also updated our KRLT vision whereby "we see a cold, clean and free-flowing river". We have learned over the last year as we have thoughtfully participated in the First Stage Consultation of the relicensing process that existing information suggests that the dams and their impoundments compromise a "cold, clean and free-flowing" river in many ways.

As I indicated in my comments to you on Tuesday night, we offer this resolution as a partner in community conservation. We have historically cooperated with the City of River Falls on land protection, KinniRiverCleanUp, stormwater management policy and environmental education. We look forward to serving as one of many conservation partners with you to carefully plan and implement the removal of the dams and the restoration of the Kinni through the City of River Falls. We recognize and respect that this issue represents a challenging opportunity for you as City elected officials, and we offer to help in any way we can. The outcomes could be nothing short of a renaissance for the Kinni and the heart of River Falls.

Thank you again for your consideration of the attached resolution and the opportunity to engage in the process. Please let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to continuing as your community conservation partner.

Sincerely,

Dave Fodroczi,
Executive Director

pc: Scot Simpson, Kevin Westhuis, Ray French

Board of Directors

Robert Chambers, *President*
River Falls, WI

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River Falls, WI

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River Falls, WI

Shawn Monaghan
Minneapolis, MN

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Office Manager



**KINNICKINNIC RIVER LAND TRUST, INC.
RESOLUTION NUMBER 20141203-1**

TO SUPPORT A PROCESS LEADING TO THE REMOVAL OF THE RIVER FALLS DAMS

Whereas the mission of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) is to “work with the community to conserve and protect the beauty and health of the Kinnickinnic River and its watershed”; and

Whereas as part of the vision of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) is that “we see a cold, clean, and free-flowing river”; and

Whereas the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust is committed to a cold water resource, and it has become clear based on scientific evidence that the dams on the Kinnickinnic River within the City of River falls are causing the river's summer temperature below the dams to increase, and

Whereas the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust is committed to a clean river resource, and it has become clear from simple observation that the dams on the Kinnickinnic River within the City of River Falls have diminished the ecological integrity of the river and are causing algae blooms in the waters of the impoundments, and this diminished water quality is noticeable both within the city and downstream in the summer, and

Whereas the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust is committed to a free-flowing river, and by definition the dams on the Kinnickinnic River impede the free flow of water and diminish the beauty of the natural falls buried below them. Recent and historic water-stage and discharge data show that the City has not been able to maintain “run-of-the-river” conditions as required by their current license, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Inc. (KRLT) headquartered at 265 Mound View Road, Suite C, PO Box 87, River Falls, Wisconsin 54022 hereby concludes that the City of River Falls hydroelectric facility should pursue a process leading to the removal of the dams for the health of the river, for the benefit of the River Falls community, and to help ensure a free-flowing cold water natural resource for years to come; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the KRLT authorizes the Conservation Committee, with support from the Executive Director and in coordination with other stakeholders, to cooperate with any and all efforts by the City of River Falls to remove the dams and restore the Kinnickinnic River.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Inc. on the 3rd day of December, 2014 pursuant to Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, Inc. bylaws.

Authorized signature: _____



Typed or printed name: Robert W. Chambers

Title: President

Date: _____

8 Dec 2014