

**ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTION REPORT
(ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED)
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

Chicago Regional Office

Date of Inspection: May 23, 2007

Date of Previous Inspections: September 23, 1998; August 23, 2001

Name: Au Train

Project No. 10856

Licensee: Upper Peninsula Power Company

License Type: Minor

License Issued: June 26, 1997 (Effective June 1, 1997)

License Expires: May 31, 2037

Location: Au Train River in Alger County, Michigan

Inspector: Patricia A. Grant

Licensee Representatives: Greg Egtvedt, Manager of Environmental Programs;
Connie Granroth-Eardley, Supervisor of Regional
Generation-East Michigan.

Resource Agency Representatives: None.

Summary of Findings

This is the third environmental inspection of this project since issuance of the license renewal. There are 18 articles related to recreation, fish and wildlife, cultural resources, land use, and public safety in this license.

The environmental, recreational, cultural resources, land use, and public safety aspects of the project were inspected. This includes file reviews, discussions, and observations made during the inspection. The environmental, recreational, cultural resources, land use, and public safety aspects of the project were found to be satisfactory.

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At the time of the environmental inspection, according to licensee staff, no land sales had occurred yet at the AuTrain project.

The Forest Lake campground is located on property that is owned by the licensee, and leased to the State of Michigan DNR on a 99-year lease. This area provides the primary access to the basin. The MiDNR also operates the campground. It is located on the lefthand side of the AuTrain Basin, off Basin Road, about 2 miles upstream from the dam. There is garlic mustard along the road to the campground. Garlic mustard is a persistent invasive species, which the licensee is working to eradicate. In addition to the campground, there are a boat launch, picnic area, and restrooms.

Although there have been numerous filings related to flow deviations, Commission staff have consistently found that the deviations from run-of-river operation did not constitute violations of articles 401 and 402.

The AuTrain River begins in the AuTrain Basin, which becomes riverine downstream of the AuTrain dam and powerhouse. The AuTrain River then flows into AuTrain Lake, which flows into Lake Superior.

Submitted July 25, 2007

**Patricia A. Grant
Environmental Protection Specialist**

A. PROJECT PROFILE

The Au Train project is located on the Au Train River in Alger County, off scenic State Route 28, which follows the coast of Lake Superior, on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Au Train River flows into Lake Superior at Au Train Bay, near the community of Au Train, in the Hiawatha National Forest. Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore is directly east of the project. Access to the project is via County Road M-94 at Forest Lake Road.

The Au Train project impounds the upstream limit of the Au Train River, including its original source, Mud Lake. Three tributaries, Joe Creek, Johnson Creek, and Slapneck Creek, flow into Au Train Basin (Exhibit 1). The reservoir has over 15 miles of shoreline, is about 6.5 miles long, and ranges from 0.25 to 0.50 miles wide. The project is located about 15.3 river miles upstream from the mouth of the Au Train River at Lake Superior. The Au Train Basin is impounded by an earth-filled dike, the South Levee, which creates the divide between the Lake Superior and Lake Michigan drainage basins.

USGS gage station #04044724 on the Au Train River at Forest Lake is located at the confluence of the powerhouse discharge canal and the natural river channel, below the Falls. This USGS gage station is monetarily supported by the licensee, as required under Article 402, component No. 4.

B. INSPECTION FINDINGS

Requirements*	Date of Requirement	Follow-Up
Article 401 requires that the licensee shall operate the project in a modified run-of-river mode, with a steady draw-down of the reservoir in the winter and reservoir draw-downs as necessary at other times of the year to provide a continuous minimum powerhouse discharge of 50 cfs for the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources in the Au Train River, as detailed in the article, and except as provided under Article 402. (C204)	O: 6-26-97	No
	O: 11-8-01	
	F:1-16-02	
	O: 2-26-02	
	F:3-12-03	
The licensee shall maintain an absolute minimum water surface elevation in the reservoir of 772.0 feet local datum/773.7 feet msl for the protection of aquatic resources in the reservoir, as detailed in the article and except as	Flow Dev	
	O: 4-22-03	
	F:7-30-01	
	Flow Dev	

Requirements*	Date of Requirement	Follow-Up
provided under Article 402.	O: 6-11-03	
	F:11-12-03 Flow Dev	
	O: 1-14-04	
	F:11-29-03 Flow Dev	
	O: 3-12-04	
	F:12-4-03 Flow Dev	
	O:3-12-04	
	F:9-24-04 Flow Dev	
	O: 12-30-04	
	F:6-20-05 Flow Dev	
	O: 8-16-05	
	F:10-4-05 Flow Dev	
	O: 11-17-05	
	F:11-12-05 Flow Dev	
	O:1-5-06	
	F:6-25-06 Flow Dev	
	O: 8-23-06	
	F:7-23-06 Flow Dev	
	O: 8-28-06	
	F:8-30-06 Flow Dev	
	O: 1-16-07	

Requirements*	Date of Requirement	Follow-Up
	F: 4-5-07 Flow Dev O: 4-26-07	
<p>Article 402 requires that after consultation with the MiDNR and USF&WS, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Project Operation Plan. The 10 components of the plan and other requirements are detailed in the article. Thereafter, the plan is to be updated once every 5 years and filed for Commission approval. (C211)</p> <p>The Project Operation Plan was filed by the licensee March 5, 1999, and approved by Commission order issued November 18, 1999.</p>	<p>O: 6-26-97</p> <p>F: 3-26-02 O: 1-30-03</p> <p>F: 3-29-04 O: 4-8-04</p> <p>Ap: 12-13-04 5-Yr Update</p>	No
<p>Article 403 provides that authority is reserved by the Commission to require the licensee to construct, operate, and maintain, or to provide for the construction, operation, and maintenance of such fishways as may be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior, under Section 18 of the Federal Power Act.</p>	O: 6-26-97	No
<p>Article 404 requires that after consultation with the MiDNR and USF&WS, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Purple Loosetrife and Eurasian Watermilfoil Monitoring Plan, as detailed in the article. (C182)</p> <p>This plan was submitted August 31, 1998. It was approved by Order issued September 28, 1998.</p>	<p>O: 6-26-97</p> <p>F: 10-1-01 O: 11-23-01</p> <p>O: 1-24-03</p> <p>O: 5-28-03 EOT until 9-30-04</p> <p>O: 10-28-03</p> <p>F: 11-10-03 O: 12-11-03</p> <p>O: 7-19-07</p>	No

Requirements*	Date of Requirement	Follow-Up
<p>Article 405 requires that after consultation with the MiDNR, USFS, and USF&WS, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Bald Eagle Protection Plan at the Au Train Project, as detailed in the article. (C025)</p> <p>The licensee filed the Bald Eagle Protection Plan (Bald Eagle Management Plan) on March 8, 1999. It was approved by Order issued April 13, 1999.</p>	O: 6-26-97	No
<p>Article 406 requires that after consultation with the MiDNR and USF&WS, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Wildlife Management Plan to project and enhance wildlife within the Au Train Project buffer zone, as detailed in the article. The 8 components of the plan and other requirements are detailed in the article. (Please refer to Article 407 requirements in the Land Management section of this report.) (C148)</p> <p>The licensee filed the Wildlife Management Plan on March 8, 1999, and approved by Commission order issued May 13, 1999.</p>	O: 6-26-97	No
<p>Article 407 requires that after consultation with the MiDNR, USFS, and USF&WS, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Comprehensive Land Management Plan for a buffer zone around the reservoir and downstream of the dam on licensee-owned lands. The plan shall define the location of and establish policies for management of the buffer zone. The 4 components of the plan and other requirements are detailed in the article. (C116)</p> <p>The Comprehensive Land Management Plan was filed with the Commission March 5, 1999, and approved by Commission order issued May 3, 1999.</p>	O: 6-26-97	No

Requirements*	Date of Requirement	Follow-Up
<p>Article 408 requires that before the commencement of any construction or development of any project works or other facilities at the project, the licensee shall consult and cooperate with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer (MiSHPO) to determine the need for, and extent of, any archaeological or historic resource surveys and any mitigating measures that may be necessary, as detailed in the article. (C184)</p> <p>The Historic Resources Management Plan was filed March 3, 1999. It was approved by letter dated March 17, 1999.</p>	<p>O: 6-26-97</p> <p>O: 2-26-02</p> <p>F: 1-2-03</p> <p>O: 8-19-03</p> <p>F: 12-29-03</p> <p>O: 3-8-04</p> <p>O: 1-6-05</p> <p>F: 12-29-05</p> <p>O: 5-4-06</p> <p>O: 2-8-07</p>	No
<p>Article 409 requires that after consultation with the MiDNR and USF&WS, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Recreation Plan, as detailed in the article. The 7 components of the Recreation Plan and other requirements are detailed in the article. (C113)</p> <p>The Recreation Plan was filed March 5, 1999, and approved by Commission order issued May 4, 1999.</p>	<p>O: 6-26-97</p> <p>F: 4-2-01</p> <p>Ap: 6-29-01</p> <p>F: Form 80</p>	No
<p>Article 410 is the Land Use Article, which gives the licensee the authority to grant permission for certain types of use and occupancy of project lands and waters and to convey certain interests in project lands and waters for certain types of use and occupancy, without prior Commission approval, as detailed in the article. No later than January 31st of each year, the licensee shall file a report with the Commission describing each conveyance made during the prior calendar year. (C202)</p>	O: 6-26-97	No
Part 8 CFR - Recreational signs in place (C113)	O: 6-26-97	No
Part 12 CFR - Public Safety Plan (C111)	U: 2-9-01	No

This license is also subject to the articles set forth in **Form L-12** (October, 1975).

Art=Article Number

O:=Order

Am: = Amended

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Ap= Approved

F=Filing

U = Updated

C=OEP-IT Code

18CFR=Title 18 Code of Federal Regulations

OP:=Ordering Paragraph Letter

C. EXHIBITS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

The following are provided to show the location of the project and to illustrate project features. Exhibit 1 shows the location of the project. Twenty-nine photos show the nature of the project area at the time of the site visit.

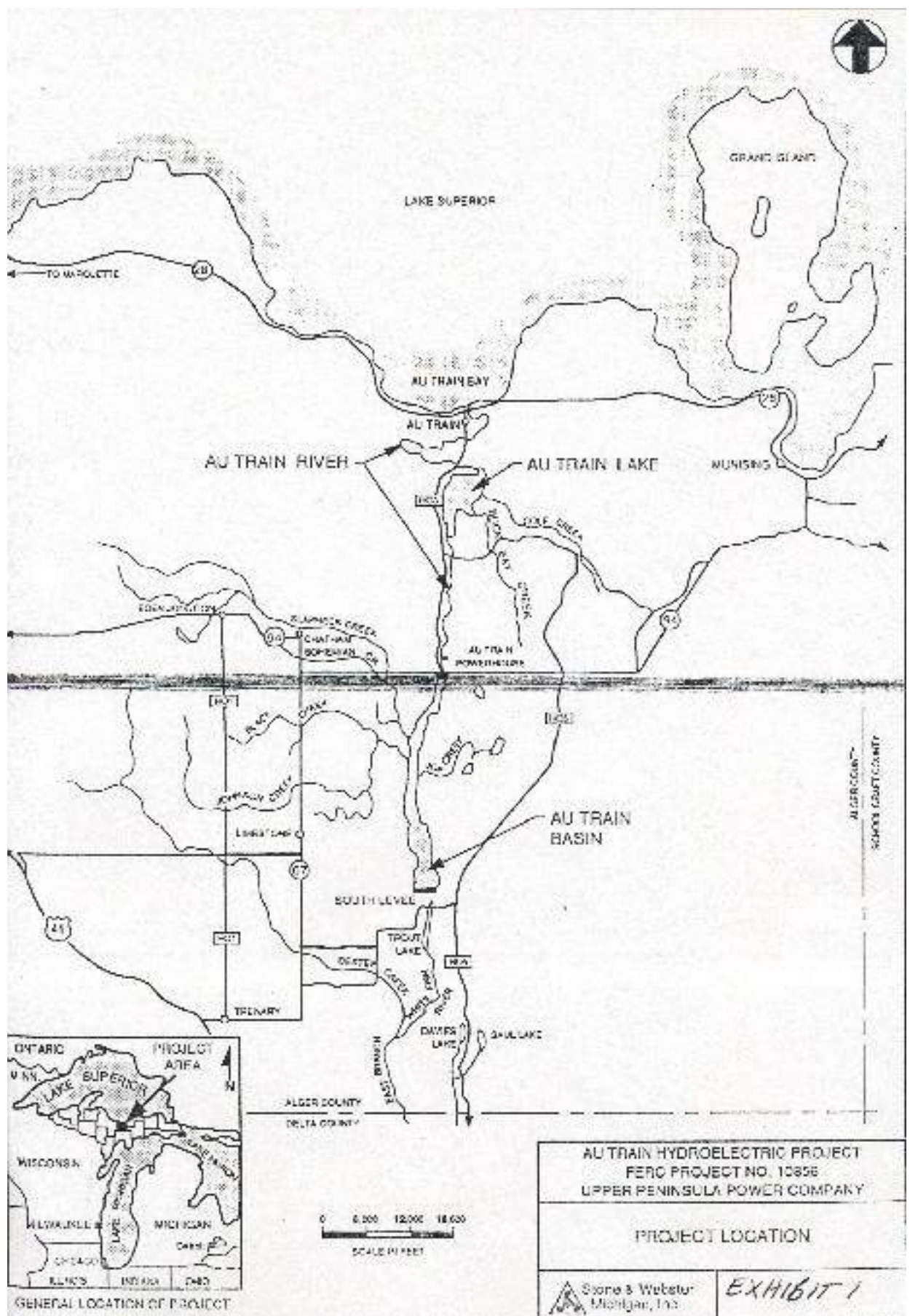




Photo 1. The reservoir and boat barrier on the upstream side of the AuTrain dam at Michigan State Route M-94.



Photo 2. View of Au Train River and State Route M-94 downstream of the dam.



Photo 3. Top of the AuTrain dam and nature of the area. Camping facilities are on both sides of the reservoir. The campground off the dike is a Michigan state campground.

People park on SR M-94 and climb or drive up the side of the dike to get to the reservoir. The licensee intends to rake it and monitor for damage. If such usage continues, a concrete barrier may be considered.



Photo 4. Part 8.2 sign was in place at the project.



Photo 5. AuTrain Falls is a popular recreation site at the project.



Photo 6. The low bridge leading to the powerhouse from the SR M-94.



Photo 7. The nature of the recreation area at the AuTrain Falls.



Photo 8. The nature of the recreation area at the AuTrain Falls.



Photo 9. NGVD is now being used for elevation monitoring rather than local datum. The powerhouse discharge area.



Photo 10. Closeup view of minimum flow monitoring. Minimum flow is 50 cfs from the powerhouse.



Photo 11. The AuTrain powerhouse and one of the warning signs.



Photo 12. The bridge leading to the powerhouse crosses the AuTrain River below the falls.



Photo 13. The scenic nature of the AuTrain River downstream of the bridge near the powerhouse.



Photo 14. On the lefthand side of the river, at the confluence of the powerhouse discharge canal and the natural river channel is the USGS gage station No. 04044724. This gage is monetarily supported by the licensee, as required by Article 402, component No. 4.



Photo 15. The confluence of the powerhouse discharge canal and the natural river channel below AuTrain Falls.



Photo 16. View of the AuTrain Basin from the South Levee earthen dike. There is a great deal of driftwood here at all times.



Photo 17. The South Levee, which is an earthen dike, creates the divide between the Lake Superior (on the right side of the photo) and Lake Michigan (on the left side of the photo) drainage basins.



Photo 18. The Lake Michigan drainage basin.



Photo 19. Shoreline stabilization on the South Levee. Note driftwood on the left.



Photo 20. This AuTrain Basin reservoir is a waterfowl refuge area in the fall.



Photo 21. The nature of the AuTrain Basin.



Photo 22. Restroom at the AuTrain unimproved access site.



Photo 23. Forest Lake boat landing.



Photo 24. Informational sign at Forest Lake. Nature of the AuTrain River at Forest Lake.



Photo 25. Example of camping at Forest Lake campground.



Photo 26. The mouth of the AuTrain and the sandy shoreline are a popular swimming beach.



Photo 27. The AuTrain River meanders toward Lake Superior.



Photo 28. The AuTrain River, sandy shoreline, and Lake Superior in the background.



Photo 29. An example of the scenic view turnouts along Lake Superior near the mouth of the AuTrain River.

Document Content(s)

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