

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

Lock 11 Hydro Partners, LLC: Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact – College Hill Hydroelectric Project

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for financing assistance to Lock 11 Hydro Partners, LLC for construction of the College Hill Hydroelectric Project in Estill and Madison Counties, Kentucky.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or to obtain copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI, contact: RUSPublicComments@usda.gov. The EA and FONSI are also available at: [College Hill \(Lock and Dam 11\) Hydroelectric Project | Rural Development](#)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Proposed Action (Proposed Project) includes the installation of four 642-kW Voith 14.9 and two 222-kW Voith 8.95 StreamDiver turbine-generators into the existing lock chamber of Lock and Dam Number 11 at river mile 201.0 on the Kentucky River. Lock and Dam Number 11 is owned by the Commonwealth of Kentucky and operated by the Kentucky River Authority (KRA) for water supply. The existing 208-foot-long fixed crest concrete dam has a 148-foot-long by 52-foot-wide lock chamber. The 482-acre reservoir provides approximately 4,820 acre-feet of storage and only operates at run-of-river levels (i.e., does not draw water from below its crest). Lock 11 Hydro Partners would also construct a canoe portage path, fishing area, and parking lot within the Project Area to fulfill recreational requirements pursuant to the amended FERC license. Alternatives considered by RUS and the Applicant include the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action. The alternatives are discussed in the Lock 11 Hydro Partners College Hill Hydroelectric Project EA. The RUS has reviewed and adopted the EA for the Project.

A local newspaper advertisement announcing the availability of the EA was published in *The Richmond Register* on June 24, 26, & 28, 2025 and *Estill County Tribune* on June 18, & 25, 2025. A copy of the EA was available for public review at: [College Hill \(Lock and Dam 11\) Hydroelectric Project | Rural Development](#). The 14-day comment period ended on July 8, 2025. RUS did not receive any comments during the comment period.

Based on the EA and commitments made by Lock 11 Hydro Partners, RUS has concluded that the Project will have no significant impacts to recreation and land use, floodplains, wetlands, water resources, coastal resources, biological resources, cultural and historic resources, noise, human health and safety, geology, and soils.

The USFWS issued a Biological Opinion (BO) for the sheepsnose, round hickorynut and snuffbox mussels and concluded that the proposed Action *may affect, is likely to adversely affect* the three mussel species.

The BO identified a number of conservation measures that Lock 11 Hydro Partners will implement prior to and during construction of the facility, as well as during operations of the facility.

Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 4231–4347), and USDA Rural Development’s Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the project. RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the Project have been adequately addressed. RUS’s federal action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

Dated: July X, 2025

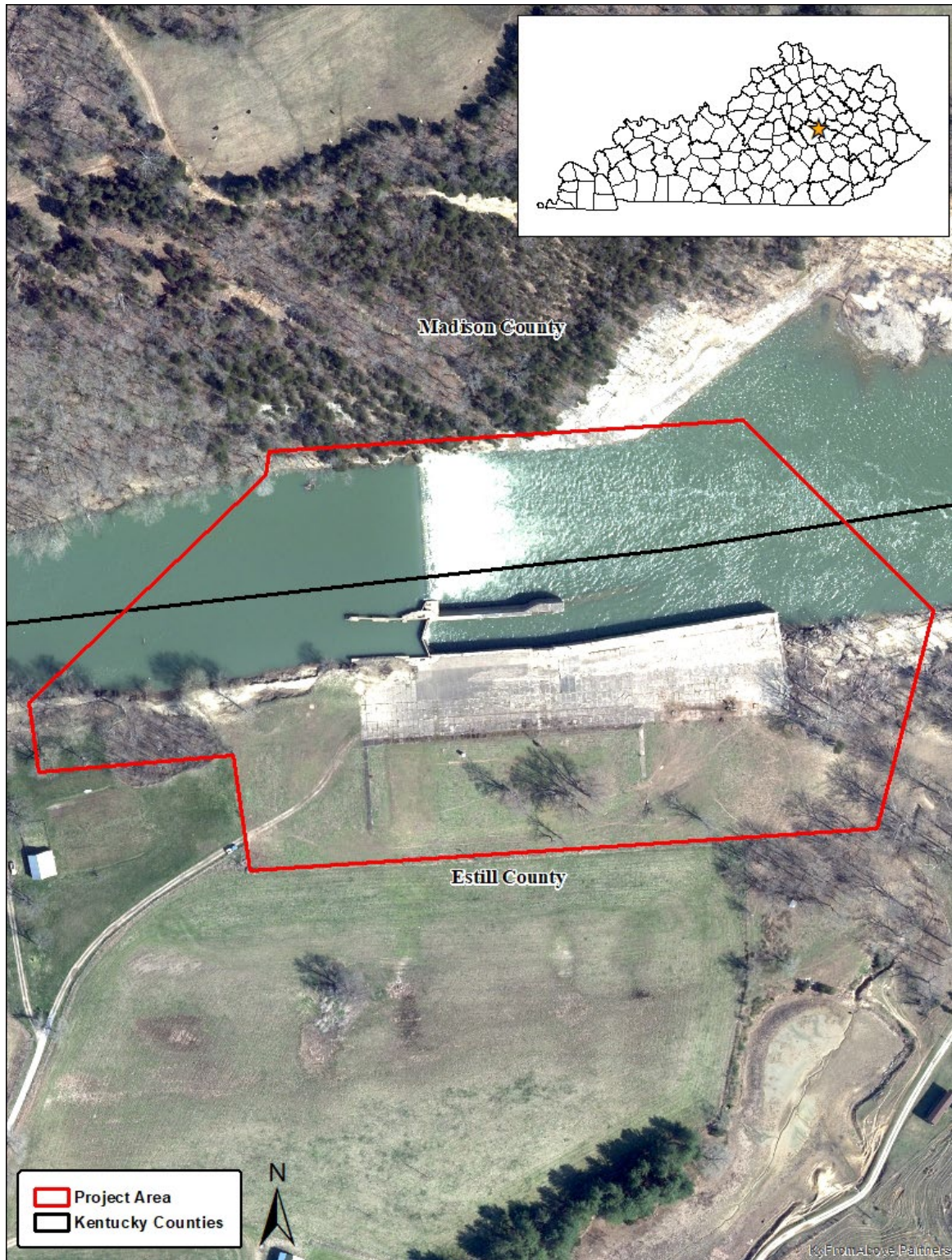


Figure 1. Lock and Dam Number 11 Aerial Location

Lock 11 Hydroelectric Project – Project Features (all on KRA Property)

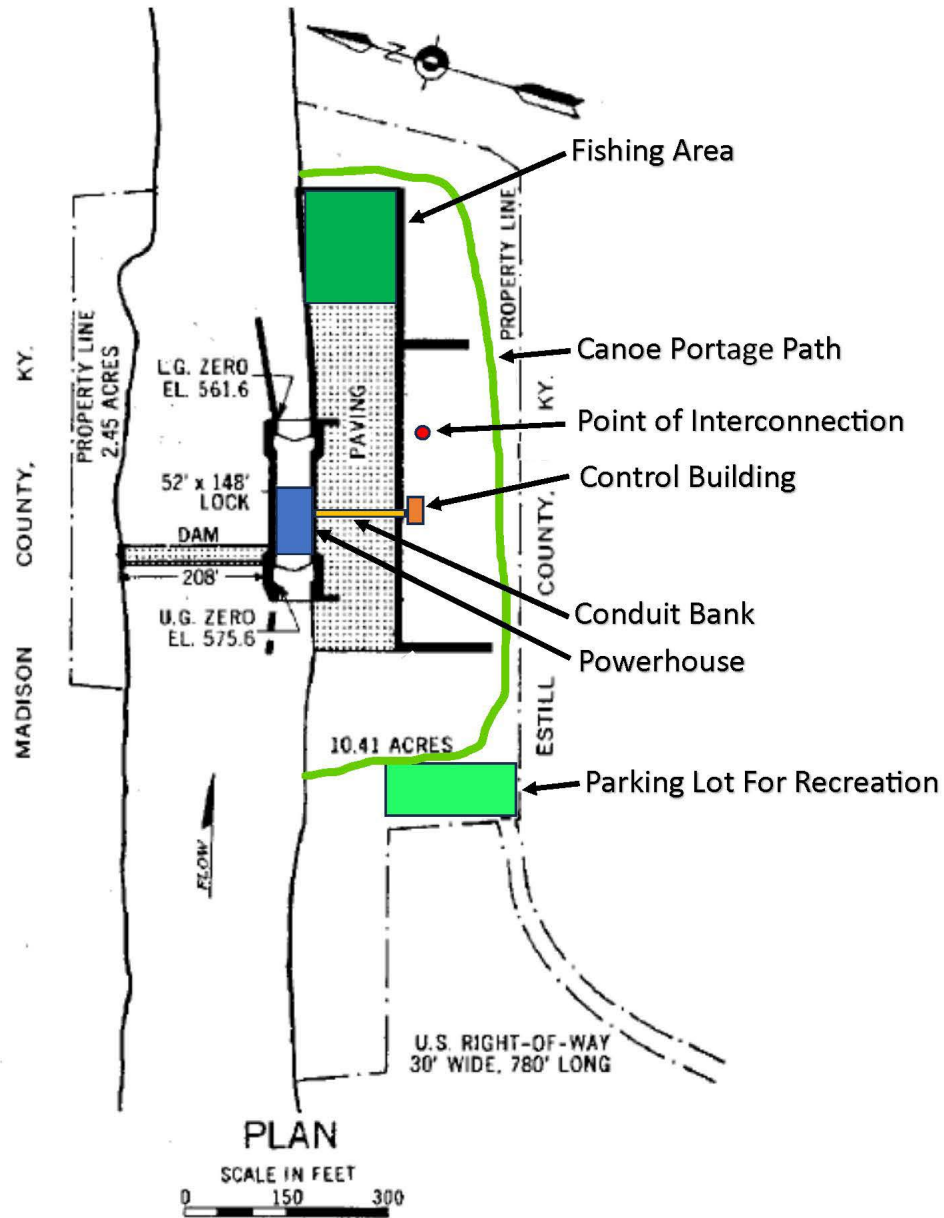


Figure 2. Approximate Locations of Proposed College Hill Project Facilities