



## PRESS RELEASE

Stacy Wemhoff  
Communications Coordinator  
[swemhoff@loup.com](mailto:swemhoff@loup.com)  
(402) 562-5711

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Neal Suess  
President/CEO  
[nsuess@loup.com](mailto:nsuess@loup.com)  
(402) 564-3171, ext. 268

# Loup Power District Granted Waiver to Divert Water into Loup Power Canal

**COLUMBUS, Neb.** — Loup River Public Power District was granted a temporary waiver early this afternoon that allows the District to resume diverting water into the Loup Power Canal.

On July 12, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service requested a suspension of certain conditions in the District's new license order to operate its hydroelectric facilities including the canal and the powerhouses at Columbus and Monroe. However, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) did not agree to this suspension until today.

On Saturday, the District began bypassing water flow from the canal and powerhouses, allowing all water in the Loup River to flow down the Loup River. District officials were concerned about stagnating water in the canal and the potential for a large fish kill.

The District started to notice large populations of stressed fish that were beginning to die in the canal early this morning. It is too early to determine how many fish died as a result of the stagnant water and the low dissolved oxygen levels in the water.

This temporary waiver allowing the District to resume normal operations should alleviate any larger fish kills in the canal.

Neal Suess, President/CEO of Loup Power District, indicated this was welcome news for the District, its customers and for those who enjoy the wildlife along the canal.

“This suspension allows the District some normalcy in operation and protects the fisheries in the canal to the benefit of those who appreciate the wildlife along the canal. We have been in discussions with the USFWS regarding our concerns. Their reconsideration of the requirement to cease diversion is greatly appreciated,” Suess said. “It is unfortunate this suspension could not have occurred prior to today, so that all fish kills could have been avoided.”

Suess also indicated there could be concerns with potential fish kills in the Loup River.

“With the cessation of diversion, the Loup River has seen an increase in the amount of flow since Saturday evening. This could lead to a pooling of water in some areas of the Loup River, as flow is gently decreased and diverted into the canal. Individuals should be aware that fish could become stranded in these pools, depending upon the manner in which the flows move within the river bed.”

The FERC also today provided the District with an “Order Granting Rehearing for Further Consideration.” This Order will allow the FERC additional time to process the District request for rehearing and to take under advisement the District concerns with the entire new license and order issued by FERC on May 22, 2017.

FERC will not be able to take action on the District’s request until it reaches a quorum of Commissioners. The timing of this is unknown, as the United States Senate must act to ratify several Commissioners who have been nominated by President Trump.

“The District will work with the USFWS, as well as FERC, to review the flow restrictions contained with the new license order, to look for areas of agreement for protection not only of the endangered species within the project boundaries, but for all wildlife in this area. This has been the District’s concern all along in the filing of our license application with FERC.”

**ABOUT LOUP POWER DISTRICT:** For more than 80 years, Loup Power District has provided reliable, low-cost electricity to customers in Boone, Colfax, Nance and Platte Counties and part of Madison County. The District also provides economic development and recreational services in these areas. More information about Loup is available at [www.loup.com](http://www.loup.com).

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