



RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS

Agencies

FERC Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

NYSOPRHP New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

NYSDEC New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Regulatory

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

Miscellaneous

NYPA New York Power Authority

Assessment Recreation Needs Assessment

Project Niagara Power Project

RFIA Recreation Facility Inventory and Assessment

NYSCORP New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

RFUCI Recreation Facility Use and Capacity Investigation

Addendum Recreation Facility Use and Capacity Investigation Addendum

GPR General Public Recreation

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ECPSMP Erie County Park System Master Plan

CBCP City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York Power Authority (NYPA) is engaged in the relicensing of the Niagara Power Project in Lewiston, New York. As part of relicensing preparation, NYPA conducted this Recreation Needs Assessment for the Project. The Recreation Needs Assessment is designed to provide information on the supply of, and demand for, recreation in and around the Niagara Power Project. This information will aid in the development of a license application for the Project, including development of a report on recreational resources in accordance with FERC regulations.

There is a wide diversity of recreation opportunity available at the Niagara Power Project and its surrounding area. These opportunities are well supported by the existing supply of recreation facilities. There are a total of 33 developed recreation sites located along approximately 5 miles of the Niagara River. Ten of these sites are located either wholly or partially within the Niagara Power Project Federal energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Project boundary. Many of the sites are connected through a fairly well developed trail network, as well as major roadways. Public access and facilities are particularly well developed along the Upper Niagara River and at Niagara Falls itself. Existing public access and facilities are more limited along the Niagara River Gorge (due in part to the Gorge's steep topography) and the Lower Niagara River (due in part to private land ownership).

On an annual basis, recreation sites located along the Niagara River from the Peace Bridge in the City of Buffalo downstream to Lake Ontario accommodate an estimated 8.9 million recreation days. The vast majority of this use (7.6 million recreation days) is associated with Niagara Falls State Park. Use within the FERC Project boundary accounts for a relatively small percentage (approximately 3 percent) of the estimated total for the study area.

The existing supply of recreation facilities associated with the Project (i.e. located within the FERC Project boundary) is accommodating the current demand for recreation activity. On-site recreation surveys conducted in 2002 and 2003 indicate that none of the ten sites associated with the Project experienced regular use approaching facility design capacity. Demand projections for the regional area

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suggest that the existing recreation supply will also be adequate to accommodate future recreation demand, assuming facilities are maintained.

Most other recreation sites within the study area are also capable of accommodating current and projected future demand. Notable exceptions where existing parking is frequently insufficient to accommodate existing demand, particularly on peak use days were Ontario Street, Lewiston Landing, and Fort Niagara Boat Launch. All three of these sites provide boat launching opportunities, one on the Upper River and two on the Lower River. Unfortunately, there are significant site constraints associated with all of these facilities that make expansion difficult.

While none of the recreation sites within the project boundary are experiencing demand in excess of supply, several of the existing recreation sites are in need of repairs or upgrades to improve the overall quality of the existing supply (and thus its ability to accommodate demand). Upgrades are generally needed to address issues associated with aging infrastructure, and in some cases what appears to be deferred maintenance. This includes a general need to improve ADA compliance at many several of the facilities. Some of the facilities located within the Project boundary have recently been renovated including the Niagara Power Project Visitor Center and Overlook, portions of the Great Gorge Railroad Right-of-way Trail, the Discovery Museum, and Whirlpool State Park.

With regard to connectivity, there is an outstanding network of existing trails in the study area, including the Riverwalk which connects most of the Upper Niagara River sites and several walking/hiking trails within the Niagara Falls and Gorge areas. The need for improved interfaces between recreation sites along the Niagara River Gorge and the Lower Niagara River and downtown Niagara Falls has been cited as a strategic initiative in improving recreational use of and tourism in the Niagara Falls region (Urban Design Project, 2002). Other identified initiatives include improved signage and interpretive information, connectivity among waterfront recreation sites in the Gorge and Lower River areas, and improvements to the reconfigured Robert Moses Parkway

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The New York Power Authority (NYPA) is engaged in the relicensing of the Niagara Power Project (Project) (FERC No. 2216) in Lewiston, Niagara County, New York. The present operating license for the Project expires in August 2007. As part of its preparation for the relicensing of the Niagara Project, NYPA is developing background information related to the ecological, engineering, recreational, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects of the Project.

The Recreation Needs Assessment (Assessment) described in this report represents a synthesis of information on existing recreation facilities and recreational uses of lands and waters associated with the Niagara Power Project and surrounding area. The Assessment provides a summary of available information, including results and recommendations from recent studies, on the existing supply of outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities, the demand for recreation, and the ability of current recreation access and facilities to accommodate existing and future demand. Based on this information, along with input from stakeholders, an assessment of current and future recreation needs is developed.

In accordance with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulations (18 CFR § 4.51), the Assessment described herein focuses primarily on lands and waters associated with the Project (i.e. located within the FERC Project boundary). However, consideration is given to waterfront and water related recreation facilities and uses in the general vicinity of the Project recognizing that the Project may affect recreation beyond the immediate FERC boundary and that the facilities and opportunities associated with the Project are part of a larger recreation picture for the Niagara River. The recreation needs assessment presented herein does not address indoor recreation facilities or community facilities such as schools and playgrounds unless they are located within the FERC Project boundary or are otherwise directly related to the Niagara River, such as the Discovery Museum or elements of the Niagara Power Project. The needs assessment also does not address detailed engineering evaluations that might be considered with regard to specific recreation structures.

Numerous planning studies and evaluations have been conducted over the years regarding recreational development, public access, and economic development along the Niagara River waterfront,

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particularly within the City of Niagara Falls, including a recent study prepared by the Urban Design Project, Foit-Albert Associates, and The Waterfront Regeneration Trust in 2002 entitled Achieving Niagara Falls Future: An Assessment of Niagara Falls Waterfront Planning (Urban Design Project, 2002). The City of Niagara Falls and other interests are actively working on implementation of many of the recommendations embodied in these planning documents in an effort to improve and enhance public access and economic development along the waterfront. The Needs Assessment presented herein acknowledges the various planning efforts that have occurred and/or are underway in the region and provides a general summary of the relevant recommendations associated with these efforts. However, the Assessment does not represent a planning effort itself and therefore does not endorse any particular proposal or recommendation. The Assessment is intended to provide a factual basis of information regarding recreational resources, particularly recreation supply and demand, that can be used in the development of a suitable Recreation Plan for the Niagara Power Project in accordance with FERC regulations. An updated Niagara Power Project Recreation Plan will be developed and submitted to FERC post-licensing.

1.1 Contents of the Report

The Recreation Needs Assessment is designed to provide information on the supply of, and demand for, recreation in and around the Niagara Power Project. This information will aid in the development of a license application for the Project, including development of a report on recreational resources in accordance with FERC regulations. The Assessment is also designed to address specific comments and concerns received from stakeholders regarding recreational resources including concerns regarding waterfront access. A summary of stakeholder comments relative to recreational resources is provided in [Appendix A](#). The Assessment identifies recreation needs, particularly needs associated with project lands and waters, but does not provide any specific recommendations or proposals for addressing those needs.

The Recreation Needs Assessment report is comprised of seven sections. Following this introduction, which includes background information on the Project and a description of the study area applicable to the Assessment, Section 2.0 provides a discussion of the methodology for identifying recreation demand and supply and for determining Project-related recreation needs. Section 3.0 presents

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information on existing recreation access and facilities (i.e. supply), including the condition of those facilities. Section 4.0 describes the amount and patterns of current recreation use (i.e. current demand) and Section 5.0 presents estimates of anticipated future demands for recreation. Section 6.0 presents a summary of relevant existing recreation plans and studies, including recommendations from those studies regarding recreation resources. Section 7.0 provides an assessment of recreation needs based on information from the previous sections. Specific requests and comments received from stakeholders regarding recreation needs related to the Project are discussed and addressed in Section 7.0.

1.2 Project Description

The 1,880-MW Niagara Power Project is one of the largest non-federal hydroelectric facilities in North America. The Project was licensed to the Power Authority of the State of New York (now the New York Power Authority) in 1957. Construction of the Project began in 1958, and electricity was first produced in 1961.

The Project has several components. Twin intakes are located approximately 2.6 miles above Niagara Falls. Water entering these intakes is routed around the Falls via two large low-head conduits to a 1.8-billion-gallon forebay, lying on an east-west axis about 4 miles downstream of the Falls. The forebay is located on the east bank of the Niagara River. At the west end of the forebay, between the forebay itself and the river is the Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant, NYPA's main generating plant at Niagara. This plant has 13 turbines that generate electricity from water stored in the forebay. Head is approximately 300 feet. At the east end of the forebay is the Lewiston Pump Generating Plant. Under non-peak-usage conditions (i.e. at night and on weekends), water is pumped from the forebay via the plant's 12 pumps into the 22-billion-gallon Lewiston Reservoir, which lies east of the plant. During peak usage conditions (i.e., daytime Monday through Friday), the pumps are reversed for use as generators, and water is allowed to flow back through the plant, producing electricity. The forebay therefore serves as headwater for the Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant and tailwater from the Lewiston Pump Generating Plant. South of the forebay is a switchyard, which serves as the electrical interface between the Project and its service area.

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For purposes of generating electricity from Niagara Falls, two seasons are recognized: tourist season and non-tourist season. By the 1950 Niagara River Water Diversion Treaty, at least 100,000 cfs must be allowed to flow over Niagara Falls during tourist season (April 1 – October 31) daytime and evening hours, and at least 50,000 cfs at all other times. Canada and the United States are entitled by international treaty to produce hydroelectric power with the remainder, sharing equally.

Water level fluctuations in the Chippawa-Grass Island Pool (in the upper Niagara River) are limited by an International Joint Commission directive to 1.5 feet per day. It is important to note that water level fluctuations in both the upper and lower Niagara River may be caused by a number of factors other than the operation of the Niagara Power Project. These may include wind, natural flow and ice conditions, and operation of power plants on the Canadian side of the river

Water-level fluctuations in the lower Niagara River (upstream of the Robert Moses Niagara Power Project tailrace) from all causes can be as great as 12 feet per day. Most of this daily fluctuation is due to the change in the treaty-mandated control of flow over Niagara Falls. Water level fluctuations downstream of the Robert Moses Niagara Power Project tailrace are much less. The average daily water level fluctuation 1.4 miles downstream of the Robert Moses Niagara Power Project tailrace, during the 2002 tourist season, was approximately 1.5 feet.

Operation of the Niagara Power Project can result in water level fluctuations in the Lewiston Reservoir of 8-18 feet per day, and as much as 36 feet per week.

1.3 Description of the Recreation Study Area

The following sections describe the regional recreation setting, the FERC Project boundary that serves as the focus of the Recreation Needs Assessment and a summary of the various recreation service providers that manage waterfront recreation facilities and activities in the region. [Figure 1.3-1](#) illustrates the regional area and the location of the FERC Project boundary. Existing recreation facilities within the region are also shown in [Figure 1.3-1](#) for context.

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1.3.1 Regional Setting

The Project is located in Lewiston, Niagara County on the Niagara River in upstate Niagara Falls, New York. (See [Figure 1.3-1](#)). This area of New York State is comprised of the Cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, the Towns of Tonawanda, Porter, Lewiston, the Villages of Youngstown and Ferry, Grand Island and portions of the Town of Wheatfield. The Niagara River runs from Lake Erie north at the Peace Bridge, is divided into the Chippewa and Tonawanda Channels by Grand Island, and continues over the Falls and through the Niagara River Gorge to Lake Ontario.

Recreation areas in the general vicinity of the Niagara Power Project extend from the Peace Bridge to Lake Ontario, encompassing the Niagara River and the Niagara Power Project works from the intakes (approximately two miles upstream of the Falls) to the river's confluence with Lake Ontario. The region contains four relatively distinct geographical areas, each offering different recreation opportunities: the Upper River Area (upstream of Niagara Falls); Niagara Falls, the Niagara River Gorge (downstream of the Falls); and the Lower River Area (Lewiston area to Lake Ontario).

1.3.2 FERC Project Boundary

The FERC Project boundary encompasses an area from the Grand Island Bridge, west to the Project's twin intakes approximately 2.6 miles above Niagara Falls, extends along a land corridor from the intakes to Lewiston Reservoir and includes the reservoir itself and appurtenant facilities, and continues along a second corridor running from Lewiston Reservoir to the Niagara River and includes the Project and appurtenant facilities. [Figure 1.3-1](#) illustrates the Project boundary, as well as the regional recreation facilities located outside and within the boundary.

1.3.3 Recreation Service Providers

There are several state and local organizations that operate, maintain, and manage public access and recreation facilities located along the shores of the Niagara River. These include the New York State

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Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) which operates the numerous state parks in the region (including lands immediately adjacent to Niagara Falls), NYPA, the City of Buffalo, the Town of Tonawanda, the City of Niagara Falls, the Village of Lewiston, and the Town of Lewiston. Some of the facilities located within the FERC Project boundary are operated by NYPA while others are operated by other recreation service providers such as NYSOPRHP and the City of Niagara Falls. There are also regional and local organizations that are involved in planning for and promoting recreation within the region, such as the Niagara Waterfront Revitalization Task Force and the Friends of the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers. The Recreation Needs Assessment considered planning documents, studies, and other available data regarding recreational use prepared by the various service providers in the region as well as other organizations involved in planning for recreation and tourism. A listing of the documents and data reviewed in preparing the Recreation Needs Assessment is provided in [Appendix B](#).

Non-Internet Public (NIP) information has been removed from the following page(s).

**This material is contained in:
Volume 2
Section: Recreation Needs Assessment**

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**FIGURE 1.3-1
STUDY AREA**

[NIP – General Location Maps]

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2.0 METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this report, recreation needs are defined as the gap between the supply of recreation resources, and the demand for those resources. Recreation needs were determined by comparing available information on public access and waterfront facilities against estimated existing and future demand. Existing information on the supply of and demand for recreation resources was assembled and reviewed to identify existing recreation resources in the study area, current use of those resources, and existing conditions of recreation facilities (as described in more detail in [Sections 2.2](#) and [2.3](#) below). Consideration was also given to physical site opportunities and constraints in assessing needs, as well as information presented in existing planning documents and studies and relevant stakeholder comments provided through the relicensing process. Both primary and secondary information were compiled and analyzed within the context of this report to identify recreation needs in the study area.

The assessment and identification of recreation needs was conducted for existing conditions (i.e. today's level of supply and demand) and a future condition set at 2019. The assessment was conducted at both a site specific level and a regional level (with "regional" being defined as the study area from Peace Bridge to Fort Niagara). The region was divided into four geographic areas representing distinct recreation opportunities and constraints: the Upper Niagara River, Niagara Falls; the Niagara River Gorge, and the Lower Niagara River, recognizing that these areas are linked by existing trails and transportation corridors.

2.1 Collection of Existing Data

The Recreation Needs Assessment draws on numerous sources of existing information regarding the recreational resources of the Niagara Falls area. In 2000, NYPA commissioned a Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment (RFIA) focused on identifying existing recreation facilities in the region and documenting the condition of those facilities. In 2003 and 2004, NYPA commissioned a Recreation Facility Use and Capacity Investigation (RFUCI) to estimate the level of existing use, document the types of activities occurring, and identify any facility capacity issues associated with the

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existing facilities. The Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment was also updated in 2003 to include recreation facilities located along the Upper Niagara River. In addition to the NYPA commissioned recreation studies, information was compiled and reviewed from several other sources including: NYSOPRHP, the NY Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (NYSCORP), the comprehensive plans for the Cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, existing planning studies and analyses, and regional and national tourism and recreation trends reports. The information provided by these sources was used to identify existing recreation resources within the study area (including the accessibility of these resources), assess the current condition and capacity of developed recreation facilities, estimate existing and future projected recreation use, and evaluate the ability of existing facilities to meet current and expected future demand.

2.2 Supply Analysis

Site visits and a literature review were completed to determine the existing supply of recreation resources. A significant volume of existing information is available regarding public access and recreational opportunities associated with the Niagara River. The reports identified in [Section 2.1](#), the New York NYSCORP and local tourism information provided background data on the level and condition of existing recreation access and facilities. This information was utilized to assemble a comprehensive list of access points and recreation facilities, shown in [Figure 1.3-1](#). Details regarding the sites, amenities and primary activities available within the study area were assembled.

2.3 Demand Analysis

Existing information regarding current recreation demand within the recreation region was reviewed via the New York NYSCORP, national recreation trends reports, and local tourism information. Specific recreation use estimates for facilities within the Project boundary and in the regional recreation area were obtained from the RFUCI and its Addendum (Addendum). The data were extrapolated, based on population trends data, to estimate future use of the recreation sites in the study area and the recreation region.

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For each recreation site, current use estimates were adjusted by the estimated percentage change in population for Erie and Niagara Counties from 2003 to 2019, as reported in based on population data compiled for the Project area and regional recreation facilities to the year 2019. This method involves current recreation use estimates (in recreation days) as a function of current population. In developing the estimates, it was assumed that participation rates in individual recreation activities would remain relatively static over time. Variations in use across recreation sites are reflected in the distribution of existing use across these sites. The changing demographics of the county populations are expected to be reflected in the growth Projections presented by the Socioeconomics Report. State and national estimates of trends in recreation participation and tourism were also reviewed and compared to the estimated future use and regional recreation trends.

While it is acknowledged that future changes in the supply of recreation resources, either in their quantity, accessibility, and/or quality may influence future demand and use, the demand summary presented herein does not attempt to speculate on what these future changes might consist of or how they might specifically affect levels of use at Project facilities. The demand information presented herein should be viewed as a low assessment of potential future recreation pressure developed for planning purposes only.

2.4 Recreation Needs

Needs for public access and opportunities within the study area and the FERC Project boundary were developed based on an assessment of existing recreation resources, including public access, facility capacity and facility condition, and the ability of those resources to meet current and anticipated future recreation demand pressures. To assess the ability of recreation sites to accommodate future demand, projected use estimates were compared against site capacity estimates provided in the RFUCI and Addendum. Consideration was given to site opportunities and constraints as well as support facilities such as signage and educational materials. Comprehensive recreation plans for communities within and adjacent to the Project boundary were also reviewed. Although this Assessment focuses on recreation sites within the Project boundary, regional recreation sites were assessed in the context of their impacts on recreation use of sites within the Project boundary and how recreation demands are supported within

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proximity of the Project boundary. Recommendations from existing recreation plans or studies are summarized in [Section 6.0](#) and [Appendix C](#) of this report.

Each site was assessed with respect to the existing facilities condition and the anticipated future condition of sites if only the minimal upkeep and maintenance is applied. It is important to note that the original Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment, which provided condition assessments for the bulk of recreation sites included in this report, was conducted in 2000. When possible, improvements or changes made to those sites subsequent to the year 2000 are mentioned. In addition to the RFIA and RFIAU, existing literature available for each site was reviewed and “remoteness” issues identified and addressed where “remoteness” of a facility relates to the accessibility, location identification, and ease of admission to a recreation site. Current ADA requirements were also reviewed and each site was assessed for ADA compliance.

In addition to site-specific considerations, the overall distribution of existing recreation sites and existing means of public transportation available to facilitate movement among Project sites and adjacent sites was examined. Connections between existing recreation sites are of growing importance in state and municipal planning activities. Connectivity is expected to enhance and possibly disperse recreation use between sites that are grouped nearby or which provide similar types of opportunities. In addition, connectivity may assist in alleviating the “remoteness” of recreation sites included in this investigation. Areas that lend themselves well to being connected, based on volume of use at each site, types of use at sites, and existing infrastructure and pathways are identified and discussed.

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3.0 EXISTING SUPPLY AND CONDITION OF RECREATION RESOURCES

A variety of recreation opportunities exist in the study area, ranging from sightseeing and attraction-oriented tourism to relatively remote fishing access points. The most significant outdoor recreation features in the study area are Niagara Falls and the Niagara River Gorge below the falls. These dramatic natural features and the existing parklands and open space which surround them, particularly the Niagara Reservation State Park, also known as Niagara Falls State Park, are significant national and international tourist destinations. These features provide highly unique recreation opportunities and experiences, for tourists and local residents alike. Most of the land along the waterfront in this area consists of publicly owned parkland and undeveloped lands owned by NYPA that are available for recreation.

With regard to the Niagara Power Project, NYPA operates and maintains two developed recreation facilities directly associated with the Project, the Niagara Power Project Visitor Center and Overlook, and the Robert Moses Fishing Pier and Shoreline Access - both located at the Robert Moses Power Plant located in the Niagara River Gorge downstream of Niagara Falls. NYPA also has provided for public access and passive shoreline recreation at two other Project facilities, Lewiston Reservoir and the Upper Niagara River Observation Facility (located at the Project intake gates). There are six additional recreation sites located partially within the FERC Project boundary that are not managed or maintained by NYPA. These sites include the Great Gorge Railroad Trail, portions of the Upper River Trail, Reservoir State Park, portions of the Robert Moses Parkway, the Discovery Museum, and portions of Hyde Park.

There are a total of 33 formal recreation sites located along an approximately 5-mile reach of the Niagara River that provide public access to the River or are otherwise directly related to the river and/or the Niagara Power Project (see [Table 3.0-1](#)). These sites are fairly evenly distributed geographically along the Niagara River from the City of Buffalo to Lake Ontario (see [Figure 1.3-1](#)). Many of the sites located within the river corridor are connected through a fairly well developed trail network, as well as major roadways.

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Existing recreation sites include state parks managed and operated by the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP), facilities operated by various local municipalities, and facilities built and operated by NYPA. Specific outdoor recreation amenities found in the study area include picnic sites and shelters, vista points and overlooks, campgrounds, restrooms, boat ramps, fishing piers, trails, fish cleaning stations, playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, basketball courts, sports fields, and a golf course. [Table 3.0-2](#) provides a summary listing of the specific recreation amenities available in the study area.

The condition of the existing facilities varies considerably depending on location, age, use, and maintenance. Generally speaking, the overall condition of the recreation facilities in the study area is good (Table 3.0-3). However, a few facilities suffer from a lack of maintenance and ADA compliance issues exist at almost every facility. Approximately 22 percent of the recreation sites evaluated are in excellent condition; 50 percent are in good condition; 25 percent are in fair condition. Only one site, Reservoir State Park, was identified as being in poor condition during the time of the assessment.

3.1 Upper Niagara River

There are 15 developed recreation sites located along the Upper Niagara River (see [Tables 3.0-1](#) and [3.0-2](#)). Of these 15 sites, 3 are located within the Project boundary: the Upper Niagara River Observation Site, portions of the Upper River Trail and the Hyde Park Golf Course (which is not located directly on the Niagara River).

Recreation sites along the Upper Niagara River include several small fishing access areas in the City of Buffalo, as well as, several large sites oriented toward day use activities and boating. In addition, there are three recreation sites located on Grand Island, two of which are state parks. The majority of the existing sites along the Upper River (8 of 15, or approximately 60 percent) include boat launching facilities. Most of these sites also include fishing piers and docks for angling activity. Several of the sites along the Upper Niagara River have picnic facilities, while five have concessions. Walkways and hiking trails are available at 9 of the 15 sites. The two sites with golf courses, Hyde Park and Beaver Island State Park, are also home to the only baseball diamonds and soccer fields among the sites located along

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the Upper Niagara River. [Table 3.0-3](#) provides information on the existing condition of the facilities located along the Upper Niagara River.

3.2 Niagara Falls

Three developed recreation sites are located directly adjacent to or within proximity of Niagara Falls: the Discovery Center Museum, the Aquarium of Niagara Falls, and Niagara Reservation State Park (see [Tables 3.0-1](#) and [3.0-2](#)). The Discovery Center Museum (formerly known as the Schoellkopf Museum) is located within the Project boundary. The other two sites are located outside the Project boundary. Recreation opportunities provided by these sites include: picnic shelters and tables, walking/hiking/jogging trails, education and interpretive facilities, commercial tourist attractions, and sightseeing.

Overall, the sites at Niagara Falls were rated in good condition see [Table 3.0-3](#)). The Discovery Center Museum recently underwent a \$2.4 million renovation and re-opened during the 2003 season. Significant investments in infrastructure improvements and landscaping have also recently occurred at Niagara Reservation State Park.

3.3 Niagara River Gorge Area

There are eight developed recreation sites located along or within proximity of the Niagara River Gorge (see [Tables 3.0-1](#) and [3.0-2](#)); the majority of which, 75 percent, are located within the Project boundary: a section of the Robert Moses Parkway; the Great Gorge Railroad Trail; Niagara Project Visitors Center; Robert Moses Fishing Pier; Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access; and Reservoir State Park. Half of the sites in this area are located within the City of Niagara Falls while the other half are located within the Town of Lewiston. Sites around the Niagara River Gorge provide trails and walkways (50 percent), scenic overlooks (38 percent), angling opportunities (25 percent), and picnic facilities (38 percent).

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Public access to the waterfront in the Gorge area, particularly from adjacent local neighborhoods is constrained and fragmented by the existing Robert Moses Parkway configuration and other roadway infrastructure. Access into the Gorge itself is also limited, primarily due to topography. Linear access along the Gorge rim and within the gorge itself is provided by several formalized interconnected trails as well as a variety of informal trails. The condition of the facilities located along the Niagara Gorge is displayed in [Table 3.0-3](#).

3.4 Lower Niagara River

There are seven developed recreation sites located along the Lower Niagara River (see [Tables 3.0-1](#) and [3.0-2](#)). All are located outside the Project boundary. These sites include such facilities as: picnic tables and shelters, walkways and trails, a scenic overlook, playgrounds, and soccer fields. Three of these sites (43 percent) provide boat launching facilities while over half (57 percent) provide fishing piers or docks. This area includes four state parks and three municipal parks. [Table 3.0-3](#) displays the condition of these facilities.

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**TABLE 3.0-1
RECREATION SITES INCLUDED IN THE INVESTIGATION**

Site	State Park	Municipal Park	NYPA	In-Project
Upper River Area				
Upper River Observation Site			X	X
Upper River Trail		X		X
Hyde Park Golf Course		X		X
Niawanda Park		X		
Isle View Park		X		
Ontario Street Boat Launch		X		
Sheriden Drive Boat Launch		X		
Buckhorn State Park	X			
Beaver Island State Park	X			
Big Six Mile Creek Marina	X			
Gratwick Park		X		
Griffon Park Boat Launch		X		
Tow Path Park		X		
Broderick Park		X		
Bird Island Pier		X		
Niagara Falls Area				
Niagara Reservation State Park	X			
Aquarium		X		
Discovery Center Museum	X			X

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**TABLE 3.0-1 (CONT.)
RECREATION SITES INCLUDED IN THE INVESTIGATION**

Site	State Park	Municipal Park	NYPA	In-Project
Niagara River Gorge				
Whirlpool State Park	X			
Devil's Hole State Park	X			
Robert Moses Parkway*				X
Great Gorge RR Trail	X			X
Niagara Project Visitor Center			X	X
Robert Moses Fishing Pier			X	X
Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access			X	X
Reservoir State Park	X			X
Lower River Area				
Earl W. Brydges Artpark	X			
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	X			
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	X			
Lewiston Landing		X		
Fort Niagara Boat Ramp	X			
Youngstown Boat Ramp		X		
Constitution Park		X		

* A portion of the Robert Moses Parkway is located within the Project boundary

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TABLE 3.0-2 RECREATION SITES AND FACILITIES IN THE STUDY AREA

RECREATION SITES	LOCATION										RECREATION FACILITIES																		
	TOWN OF PORTER	TOWN OF LEWISTON	TOWN OF NIAGARA	TOWN OF WHEATFIELD	VILLAGE OF LEWISTON	CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN	TONAWANDA FALLS	TONAWANDA TOWNSHIP	CITY OF TONAWANDA	GRAND ISLAND	CITY OF BUFFALO	PARKING	PICNICTABLES	SHELTERS/PAVILIONS	RESTROOM	BOAT LAUNCH	DOCKS/FISHING PIERS	WALKWAYS/TRAILS	OVERLOOKS/VISTA POINT	CAMPGROUND	PLAYGROUND	BASEBALL DIAMOND	SOCCER FIELD	BASKETBALL COURT	TENNIS COURT	GOLF COURSE	MARINAS	CONCESSIONS	OTHER
UPPER RIVER AREA																													
<i>UPPER NIAGARA RIVER OBSERVATION SITE</i>																													
<i>UPPER RIVER TRAIL</i>																													
<i>HYDE PARK GOLF COURSE</i>																													
<i>NIAWANDA PARK</i>																													
<i>ISLE VIEW PARK</i>																													
<i>ONTARIO STREET BOAT LAUNCH</i>																													
<i>SHERIDAN DRIVE BOAT LAUNCH</i>																													
<i>BUCKHORN ISLAND STATE PARK</i>																													
<i>BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK</i>																													
<i>BIG SIX MILE CREEK MARINA</i>																													
<i>GRATWICK PARK</i>																													
<i>GRIFFON PARK BOAT LAUNCH</i>																													
<i>TOWPATH PARK</i>																													
<i>BRODERICK PARK</i>																													
<i>BIRD ISLAND PIER</i>																													
NIAGARA FALLS AREA																													
<i>NIAGARA RESERVATION STATE PARK</i>																													
<i>AQUARIUM</i>																													
<i>DISCOVERY CENTER MUSEUM (SCHOELLKOPF MUSEUM)</i>																													
NIAGARA RIVER GORGE AREA																													
<i>WHIRLPOOL STATE PARK</i>																													
<i>DEVILS HOLE STATE PARK</i>																													
<i>ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY</i>																													
<i>GREAT GORGE RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY</i>																													
<i>NIAGARA PROJECT VISITORS' CENTER & OVERLOOK</i>																													
<i>ROBERT MOSES FISHING PIER</i>																													
<i>LEWISTON RESERVOIR FISHING ACCESS</i>																													
<i>RESERVOIR STATE PARK</i>																													
LOWER RIVER AREA																													
<i>EARL W. BRYDGES ART PARK</i>																													
<i>LEWISTON BRANCH GORGE TRAIL</i>																													
<i>JOSEPH DAVIS STATE PARK</i>																													
<i>LEWISTON LANDING</i>																													
<i>FORT NIAGARA BOAT LAUNCH</i>																													
<i>YOUNGSTOWN BOAT LAUNCH</i>																													
<i>CONSTITUTION PARK</i>																													

NOTE: Recreation Sites in Italics are within the Project boundary.

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**TABLE 3.0-3
RECREATION FACILITIES CONDITION ASSESSMENT**

Site	Recreation Amenities	ADA Compliance	Roads/ Parking	Landscaping	Buildings	Overall
Upper River Sites						
<i>Upper River Observation Site</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Upper River Trail</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Hyde Park Golf Course</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>
Niawanda Park*	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
Isle View Park*	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
Ontario Street Boat Launch*	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Sheridan Drive Boat Launch	Good	Good	Good	N/A	Fair	Good
Buckhorn Island State Park*	Good	Good	Good	Good	N/A	Excellent
Beaver Island State Park*	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
Big Six Mile Creek Marina*	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Gratwick Park*	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good
Griffon Park Boat Launch	Fair	Poor	Good	Good	N/A	Fair
Tow Path Park*	Good	Fair	Poor	Good	N/A	Fair
Broderick Park*	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	N/A	Good
Bird Island Pier*	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
Niagara Falls Sites						
Niagara Reservation State Park	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good
Aquarium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Discovery Center Museum</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>

**NIAGARA POWER PROJECT (FERC NO. 2216)
RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

TABLE 3.0-3 (CONT.)

RECREATION FACILITIES CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Site	Recreation Amenities	ADA Compliance	Roads/ Parking	Landscaping	Buildings	Overall
Niagara Gorge Sites						
Whirlpool State Park	Good	Poor	Good	Good	Fair	Good
Devil's Hole State Park	Good	Poor	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair
<i>Robert Moses Parkway</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Great Gorge RR Trail</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Niagara Project Visitors Center</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Robert Moses Fishing Pier</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Reservoir State Park</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Lower River Sites						
Earl Brydges Artpark	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Excellent
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	Good	Poor	Good	Fair	N/A	Fair
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair
Lewiston Landing	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Youngstown Boat Launch	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	N/A	Good
Fort Niagara Boat Launch	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Constitution Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Good

NOTE: Condition assessments for recreation sites marked with an asterisk were conducted in 2003. All others assessed in 2000.

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4.0 EXISTING RECREATION USE AND DEMAND

On an annual basis, the recreation sites in the study area accommodate approximately 8.9 million recreation days ([Table 4.0-1](#)). The majority of this use (7.6 million recreation days) is associated Niagara Reservation State Park. Other heavily used sites include: Beaver Island State Park, Niawanda Park, Isle View Park, and Reservoir State Park. Use within the FERC Project boundary accounts for a relatively small percentage (approximately 3 percent) of the estimated total for the study area.

Most of the recreational activity in the study area occurs during the summer months during the primary tourism season. Approximately 90 percent of recreation activity is shoreline use (picnicking, trail use, shoreline angling, etc), while the remaining 10 percent involved boating activity (pleasure boating, boat angling, etc.). The predominant activities occurring on shore include sightseeing, shore angling, and trail use.

Overall, sites are being used at a rate well below their individual capacity limits ([Table 4.0-2](#)). Capacity issues (in terms of parking) were observed at only three sites, all of them providing boat launch facilities: Ontario Street, Lewiston Landing, and Fort Niagara Boat Launch. Percentage capacity levels at which the recreation sites are being used by month is presented in [Table 4.0-3](#).

Sites within the Project boundary generally received light recreation pressure. None of them experience regular use approaching their capacity limits (see [Tables 4.0-2](#) and [4.0-3](#)). The percentage of time sites were observed at or above maximum capacity during the course of one year, in addition to the busiest day of the year for each site, is presented in [Table 4.0-4](#).

4.1 Upper Niagara River

Overall, recreation sites along the Upper Niagara River supported an annual total of 759,600 recreation days, approximately 9 percent of total use within the study area. Sites supporting the greatest number of recreation days were Beaver Island State Park (over 200,000 recreation days annually) and Niawanda Park (approximately 117,000 recreation days). By contrast, the two recreation sites supporting

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the least amount of recreation use are the Upper River Observation Site at 3,400 recreation days and Tow Path Park at 4,800. The most popular activities for all sites along the Upper Niagara River were observed as sightseeing (22 percent), trail use (15 percent), parking (13 percent), boating activities such as boat fishing and pleasure boating (8 percent), and shoreline angling (8 percent). With the exception of Ontario Street Boat Launch, no reoccurring capacity issues were observed along the Upper Niagara River. These sites are able to support the recreation pressures that they currently experience.

The three Upper River sites within the Project boundary (Upper River Observation Site, Upper River Trail, and Hyde Park Golf Course) supported approximately 36,400 recreation days from April, 2002 to May, 2003. As none of these sites provide boating access to the River, all of the recreation use observed at these sites is attributable to shoreline activities. The Upper River Observation site experienced very low use, reaching an average use high of only 7 vehicles in April. The predominant shoreline activities occurring at this site are sightseeing (41 percent) and running (18 percent). The Upper River Trail also experienced light use all season. This site was observed at or above capacity only 1 percent of the time and average weekday and weekend use reached high of only approximately 3 vehicles in August. The predominant shoreline activities observed at this site were angling (26 percent), parking (31 percent), and biking (11 percent). Recreation use estimates for Hyde Park Golf Course were obtained directly from the golf course. No on-site monitoring was conducted to determine the capacity at which the site is being used.

The remaining twelve sites along the Upper Niagara River that are not located within the Project boundary supported an estimated 723,200 recreation days. Nine of these sites have boat ramps and boating activities accounts for between 0 and 33 percent of use at these sites. All but one recreation site are used at levels well within their design capacities. Only the Ontario Street Boat Launch, as indicated above, is routinely used at levels exceeding its physical capacity. This occurs through the months of March through June. On average, capacity at this site was exceeded approximately 23 percent of the time. The three remaining sites, Towpath Park, Broderick Park and the Bird Island Pier do not have boat launching facilities and support such shoreline activities as parking (33 percent), shoreline angling (26 percent) and trail use (20 percent).

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4.2 Niagara Falls

There are three recreation sites located in the immediate vicinity of Niagara Falls: Niagara Reservation State Park, the Aquarium of Niagara Falls, and the Discovery Center Museum (formerly the Schoellkopf Museum); one of which, the Discovery Center Museum, is located within the Project Boundary. The Discovery Center Museum was closed for renovations during the year use estimates were obtained and visitation for the Aquarium of Niagara Falls was not available. Because of this, the overall estimates provided here are low.

Niagara Falls provides for the largest percentage of tourism and recreation use in the Buffalo-Niagara region. The Falls has a large national and international tourism draw. Niagara Falls is reported by the American Automobile Association as the fourth most popular destination for summer vacations among US residents. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, it is also the 30th most popular US tourist destination for overseas travelers.

Niagara Reservation State Park, also known as Niagara Falls State Park, is the oldest state park in the United States and is home to numerous islands, a visitor center, the Niagara Scenic Trolley, the Observation Tower, and the Cave of the Winds. The park rests on the banks of the Niagara River at American Falls and Bridal Veil Falls, and includes Goat Island which abuts Horseshoe Falls. The NYSOPRHP provided use estimates for Niagara Reservation State Park, which supported a total of 7,585,500 recreation days from April, 2002 to May, 2003. This accounts for fully 85 percent of the total estimated recreation use for the entire study area. The park is directly adjacent to Niagara Falls. Shoreline use, primarily sightseeing, accounts for 100 percent of all use at this site. Site capacity information is not available for Niagara Reservation State Park.

4.3 Niagara River Gorge Area

Developed recreation sites along or within proximity of the Niagara River Gorge supported a total of 287,700 recreation days in 2002. The Great Gorge Railroad Trail is not included in this estimate as it was closed when monitoring efforts occurred. The sites supporting the greatest number of recreation days along or nearby the Gorge are Reservoir State Park with approximately 98,000 recreation days annually

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and the Niagara Project Visitors Center with approximately 85,000 recreation days annually. The recreation site supporting the least amount of recreation use is the Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access, at approximately 12,000 recreation days annually.

Shoreline activities accounted for 100 percent of all use at sites along or adjacent to the Niagara Gorge Area as none of these sites provide boat access to the river. The most popular activities occurring within the Gorge area are sightseeing (39 percent), shoreline angling (30 percent), trail use (14 percent), and picnicking (8 percent).

In general, capacity was not an issue for those sites surveyed along the Niagara River Gorge. Three sites, the Robert Moses Parkway, the Great Gorge Railroad Trail, and the Niagara Project Visitors Center were either closed or not included in on-site monitoring efforts and therefore, no capacity use level information is presented for these sites. Sites for which capacity levels were observed indicate that site use pressures in this region are generally low. Robert Moses Fishing Pier was used at an overall average of 38 percent of capacity and was observed at or above capacity approximately 8 percent of the time.

Sites within the Project boundary supported an estimated 217,900 recreation days annually, excluding the Great Gorge Railroad Trail and the Niagara Project Visitors Center, for which use estimates are not available. Portions of the Robert Moses Parkway are also within the Project boundary, however, use estimates for this site are included in use estimates for Whirlpool and Devils Hole State Parks, as these sites serve as key staging areas for Parkway users.

Whirlpool and Devil's Hole State Parks, both located outside the Project boundary support an estimated 69,800 recreation days annually. These sites support shoreline activities such as sightseeing (56 percent), trail use (17 percent) and picnicking (11 percent). These sites were never observed to be at or above maximum capacity during on-site monitoring efforts.

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4.4 Lower Niagara River

There are seven recreation sites located along the Lower Niagara River, none of which are within the Project boundary. An estimated 264,800 recreation days were supported at these sites, accounting for approximately 3 percent of total use within the study area. The sites supporting the most recreation days in this area are Earl Brydges Artpark with over 90,000 recreation days annually followed by Lewiston Landing at approximately 71,000 recreation days. The recreation sites supporting the least amount of recreation use overall in this region are Constitution Park at 2,900 recreation days and Joseph Davis State Park Pier at 5,800 recreation days annually. Constitution Park, in recreation days, supports the fewest recreation days of all recreation sites in the study area.

Three recreation sites along the Lower Niagara River provide boat ramps - Lewiston Landing, Fort Niagara Boat Launch, and Youngstown Boat Launch - and boating use accounts for approximately 33 percent of total use at these sites. The most popular shoreline activities at these sites are shoreline angling (17 percent), sightseeing (17 percent), and trail use (15 percent). Shoreline activities accounted for 100 percent of all use at the remaining four sites without boat ramps. The most popular activities for these sites were observed as angling (43 percent), trail use (19 percent), and sightseeing (14 percent). On-site monitoring was not conducted at Earl Brydges Artpark and therefore, no activity or capacity information is available for this site.

Recreation pressures relative to supply appear to be greatest for sites located along the Lower Niagara River. On average, these sites were observed at or above maximum capacity approximately 11 percent of the time. These sites, excluding Earl Brydges Artpark, were observed at an average of 38 percent of capacity overall with use levels ranging from 7 percent of capacity on average for Joseph Davis State Park Pier to 95 percent of capacity on average for Lewiston Landing. Lewiston Landing, supporting the second largest number of recreation days annually in the Lower River Area, is also the busiest in terms of capacity with an overall average observed use level at 95 percent of capacity and being observed at or above maximum capacity 32 percent of the time.

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4.5 Recreational Fishing Survey Reports

Two recreational fishing surveys were conducted on Lewiston Reservoir and the Lower Niagara River ([Stantec 2005a](#), [2005b](#)). Both studies used instantaneous angler counts and angler surveys to estimate angling effort (in terms of hours), catch, and harvest by month, day type, and fish species. Counts and surveys at Lewiston Reservoir involved shoreline anglers only as there is no boating access at the reservoir. Counts and surveys of shoreline anglers on the Lower Niagara River were conducted at Whirlpool and Devil's Hole State Parks, Robert Moses Fishing Pier, Earl Brydges Artpark, and areas adjacent to the Youngstown and Fort Niagara Boat Launches, Constitution Park, Joseph Davis State Park Pier, and Lewiston Landing. Additionally, aerial counts were conducted from Whirlpool State Park to Earl Brydges Artpark and from Artpark to Lake Ontario to calculate estimates of boat angling. Boat angler surveys were conducted at Youngstown Boat Launch, Lewiston Landing and Fort Niagara State Park.

From April through November, 2002, 413 anglers were observed at Lewiston Reservoir from which a total angler effort of 8,032 hours was estimated. In addition, over 500 angler surveys were conducted at the reservoir. April received the most angling pressure (52 percent) with a total of 4,199 angler hours. Pressure was relatively consistent (at about 10 percent of total angler effort in hours) for the months of August and September. Yellow perch received the most angling effort overall (57 percent) followed by small mouth bass (11 percent) for anglers specifying a targeted species. Over 98 percent of shoreline anglers surveyed at Lewiston Reservoir were from New York State, 72 percent of which were from Niagara County and 26 percent of which were from Erie County.

The Lower Niagara River area supported a total estimated shoreline angler effort of 48,438 hours from May, 2002 to June, 2003. Total estimated boat angler effort on the Lower Niagara River was 170,934 hours during the same period. In addition to instantaneous and aerial counts, 3,433 shoreline angler surveys and 1,395 boat angler surveys were completed on the Lower River. Approximately 39 percent of shoreline anglers were observed at the Robert Moses Fishing Pier despite the pier being closed to the public from December, 2002 to the end of the study period. July received the most shoreline angling pressure (approximately 20 percent) with a total of 9,258 angler hours. Summer also represented the greatest boat angler effort by season, accounting for approximately 35 percent of total boat angler

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effort. Shoreline angling effort for targeted species varied by month. Rainbow trout consistently received shoreline angling effort across all months of the survey period, but only accounted for approximately 14 percent of the overall effort. Likewise, boat anglers targeted rainbow trout more than any other species during the survey period, accounting for approximately 22 percent of the total effort for targeted species.

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**TABLE 4.0-1
USE ESTIMATES FOR THE NIAGARA PROJECT STUDY AREA**

Site	Weekend	Weekday	Peak Weekend	TOTAL
Upper River Area				
<i>Upper River Observation Site</i>	2,700	500	200	3,400
<i>Upper River Trail</i>	4,000	1,400	600	6,000
<i>Hyde Park Golf Course</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	27,000
Niawanda Park	65,700	40,700	10,200	116,600
Isle View Park	54,200	36,300	8,700	99,200
Ontario Street Boat Launch	46,300	21,000	4,900	72,200
Sheridan Drive Boat Launch	22,700	13,300	3,400	39,400
Buckhorn Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	16,600
Beaver Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	204,200
Big Six Mile Creek Marina	N/A	N/A	N/A	36,900
Gratwick Park	19,300	14,600	3,700	37,600
Griffon Park Boat Launch	16,500	10,700	2,700	29,900
Tow Path Park	3,100	1,200	500	4,800
Broderick Park	15,300	7,400	2,300	25,000
Bird Island Pier	27,100	10,600	3,100	40,800
Niagara Falls Area				
Niagara Reservation State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,585,500
Aquarium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Discovery Center Museum</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>

Note: Recreation sites in italics are within the Project boundary. Recreation use for all sites except Tow Path Park, Broderick Park and the Bird Island Pier, are reported for April, 2002 to May, 2003. Recreation use at Tow Path Park, Broderick Park and the Bird Island Pier is reported for May, 2003 to November, 2003.

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**TABLE 4.0-1 (CONT.)
USE ESTIMATES FOR THE NIAGARA PROJECT STUDY AREA**

Site	Weekend	Weekday	Peak Weekend	TOTAL
Niagara River Gorge Area				
Whirlpool State Park	25,100	16,200	4,800	46,100
Devil's Hole State Park	12,200	9,600	1,900	23,700
<i>Robert Moses Parkway</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Great Gorge RR Trail</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<i>Niagara Project Visitors Center</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	85,200
<i>Robert Moses Fishing Pier</i>	<i>12,000</i>	<i>9,400</i>	<i>1,200</i>	<i>22,600</i>
<i>Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access</i>	<i>9,900</i>	<i>1,900</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>12,200</i>
<i>Reservoir State Park</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>97,900</i>
Lower River Area				
Earl Brydges Artpark	N/A	N/A	N/A	90,400
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	5,500	3,300	300	9,100
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	1,800	3,100	900	5,800
Lewiston Landing	41,400	25,400	3,800	70,600
Fort Niagara Boat Launch	26,700	32,800	6,000	65,500
Youngstown Boat Launch	11,600	7,200	1,700	20,500
Constitution Park	1,900	800	200	2,900
Total				8,897,600

Note: Recreation sites in italics are within the Project boundary. Recreation use for all sites except Tow Path Park, Broderick Park and the Bird Island Pier, are reported for April, 2002 to May, 2003. Recreation use at Tow Path Park, Broderick Park and the Bird Island Pier is reported for May, 2003 to November, 2003.

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TABLE 4.0-2

ESTIMATED PERCENT CAPACITY AT WHICH RECREATION SITES ARE USED (BY DAY TYPE)

Site	Maximum Parking Capacity (Number of spaces)	Average Percent Capacity (%)			
		Weekend	Weekday	Peak Weekend	Overall
Upper River Area					
<i>Upper River Observation Site</i>	40	2	1	4	2
<i>Upper River Trail</i>	10	12	10	52	14
<i>Hyde Park Golf Course</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Niawanda Park	191	9	16	41	14
Isle View Park	202	7	13	32	11
Ontario Street Boat Launch	30	45	54	123	54
Sheridan Drive Boat Launch	50	13	20	49	18
Buckhorn Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Beaver Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Big Six Mile Creek Marina	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gratwick Park	134	4	9	22	7
Griffon Park Boat Launch	50	9	16	43	14
Tow Path Park	8	18	23	48	22
Broderick Park	50	20	20	32	21
Bird Island Pier	76	17	23	35	20
Niagara Falls Area					
Niagara Reservation State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aquarium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Discovery Center Museum</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>

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TABLE 4.0-2 (CONT.)

ESTIMATED PERCENT CAPACITY AT WHICH RECREATION SITES ARE USED (BY DAYTYPE)

Site	Maximum Parking Capacity (Number of spaces)	Average Percent Capacity (%)			
		Weekend	Weekday	Peak Weekend	Overall
Niagara River Gorge Area					
Whirlpool State Park	150	3	6	13	5
Devil's Hole State Park	42	6	11	19	8
<i>Robert Moses Parkway</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Great Gorge RR Trail</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<i>Niagara Project Visitors Center</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Robert Moses Fishing Pier</i>	20	14	19	25	38
<i>Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access</i>	35	15	8	9	12
<i>Reservoir State Park</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Lower River Area					
Earl Brydges Artpark	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	15	13	26	16	18
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	25	2	12	27	7
Lewiston Landing	20	77	118	145	95
Fort Niagara Boat Launch	43	18	55	111	35
Youngstown Boat Launch	14	28	34	93	34
Constitution Park	2	36	32	88	37

Note: Recreation sites in italics are within the Project boundary.

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**TABLE 4.0-3
ESTIMATED PERCENT CAPACITY AT WHICH RECREATION SITES ARE USED (BY
MONTH)**

Site	Average Percent Capacity (%)											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Upper River Area												
<i>Upper River Observation Site</i>	11	3	1	2	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
<i>Upper River Trail</i>	23	36	23	26	29	12	11	1	2	3	3	9
<i>Hyde Park Golf Course</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Niawanda Park	12	19	20	28	50	36	4	0	0	0	0	2
Isle View Park	10	16	18	23	36	28	4	1	0	0	0	2
Ontario Street Boat Launch	56	78	111	94	125	118	36	7	8	2	8	13
Sheridan Drive Boat Launch	15	15	25	32	63	61	4	1	1	0	0	0
Buckhorn Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Beaver Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Big Six Mile Creek Marina	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gratwick Park	4	9	8	11	24	19	4	1	1	0	0	2
Griffon Park Boat Launch	6	19	23	25	51	41	3	0	0	0	0	1
Tow Path Park	N/A	42	36	27	30	16	12	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Broderick Park	N/A	25	27	26	29	21	14	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bird Island Pier	N/A	21	28	28	27	19	13	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Niagara Falls Area												
Niagara Reservation State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aquarium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Discovery Center Museum</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>

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TABLE 4.0-3 (CONT.)

ESTIMATED PERCENT CAPACITY AT WHICH RECREATION SITES ARE USED (BY MONTH)

Site	Average Percent Capacity (%)											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma y	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Niagara River Gorge Area												
Whirlpool State Park	5	5	6	13	4	5	7	4	1	0	0	0
Devil's Hole State Park	14	12	8	12	14	10	12	6	5	2	3	6
<i>Robert Moses Parkway</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Great Gorge RR Trail</i>	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
<i>Niagara Project Visitors Center</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Robert Moses Fishing Pier</i>	0	18	33	29	39	47	36	60	41	29	47	7
<i>Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access</i>	11	8	33	14	7	10	7	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Reservoir State Park</i>	5	5	6	13	4	5	7	4	1	0	0	0
Lower River Area												
Earl Brydges Artpark	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	N/A	19	9	11	13	10	22	58	5	7	7	28
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	3	21	9	9	14	5	3	1	1	0	1	34
Lewiston Landing	176	62	58	67	84	138	160	72	57	34	98	154
Fort Niagara Boat Launch	61	57	40	56	96	81	13	4	8	2	0	6
Youngstown Boat Launch	28	96	65	63	62	63	15	7	2	2	0	9
Constitution Park	N/A	64	65	136	47	18	5	13	2	14	6	0

Note: Recreation sites in italics are within the Project boundary.

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**TABLE 4.0-4
MAXIMUM RECREATION SITE USE**

Site	Date	Number of Vehicles	Percentage of Time Site was Observed at or Above Maximum Capacity (%)
Upper River Area			
<i>Upper River Observation Site</i>	<i>April 17, 2002</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Upper River Trail</i>	<i>May 27, 2002</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Hyde Park Golf Course</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Niawanda Park	August 11, 2002	287	1
Isle View Park	August 11, 2002	161	0
Ontario Street Boat Launch	August 30, 2002	85	23
Sheridan Drive Boat Launch	August 3, 2002	72	5
Buckhorn Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A
Beaver Island State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A
Big Six Mile Creek Marina	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gratwick Park	September 15, 2002	72	0
Griffon Park Boat Launch	August 11, 2002	62	2
Tow Path Park	July 6, 2003	16	3
Broderick Park	July 6, 2003	45	0
Bird Island Pier	June 1, 2003	21	0
Niagara Falls Area			
Niagara Reservation State Park	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aquarium	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Discovery Center Museum</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>

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**TABLE 4.0-4 (CONT.)
MAXIMUM RECREATION SITE USE**

Site	Date	Number of Vehicles	Percentage of Time Site was Observed at or Above Maximum Capacity (%)
Niagara River Gorge Area			
Whirlpool State Park	July 4, 2002	61	0
Devil's Hole State Park	May 4, 2002	29	0
<i>Robert Moses Parkway</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Great Gorge RR Trail</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<i>Niagara Project Visitors Center</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Robert Moses Fishing Pier</i>	<i>November 9, 2002</i>	98	8
<i>Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access</i>	<i>June 27, 2002</i>	73	3
<i>Reservoir State Park</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Lower River Area			
Earl Brydges Artpark	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	November 9, 2002	30	3
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	March 16, 2003	59	1
Lewiston Landing	March 15, 2003	102	32
Fort Niagara Boat Launch	August 3, 2002	159	9
Youngstown Boat Launch	June 19, 2002	52	9
Constitution Park	July 24, 2002	16	14

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5.0 ANTICIPATED FUTURE USE

This section presents population growth trends in the study area and discusses the relationship between population and recreation activities to help identify potential future recreation demand. The New York State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that examines recreation trends for the State of New York is also summarized here and used to help identify future needs in the study area.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics and Trends

The populations of Erie and Niagara Counties are projected to decrease over the next 16 years by an average of approximately 1.75 percent ([Table 5.1-1](#)). This information suggests that recreational use within the study area may remain relatively constant, or potentially decline between 2003 and 2019. However, Niagara Falls is a significant national and international recreation destination that draws visitors from well outside the region. As such, it is not unreasonable to expect that visitation will increase at a rate greater than the population projections for the surrounding communities, at least for facilities associated with, or in direct proximity to Niagara Falls. In addition, demands for particular recreation activities and thus participation rates commonly change even as population estimates remain constant. This is because people either increase their participation in particular recreation pursuits and/or additional people take up a particular activity. While population projections provide a good initial indication of potential future demand, it is important to also look at other data specific to recreation participation. One of the best sources for such information is the New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (NYSCORP), as described in the following section.

5.2 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (NYSCORP)

The NYSCORP serves as the policy manual for managing, planning and developing recreation resources in the State of New York through the year 2007. This document estimates current recreational demand based on information collected in the 1998 General Public Recreation (GPR) Survey. According to the NYSCORP, “recreation participation is measured not only by the percent of the population that does an activity, but also how frequently each participant takes part in his/her activity.” Using GPR

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Survey response data in conjunction with 2000 census data and population projections for the year 2020, recreation estimates were calculated by recreation activity for 1998 and 2020. Although the NYSCORP analyzed the data and created estimates by county, it presents the results for the entire state. The estimated change in recreation activity participation for the State of NY as a whole as reported in the NYSCORP is presented in [Table 5.2-1](#). Estimated changes in participation rates range from a low of .55 percent for basketball to a high of 6.38 percent for historic sites from 1998 to 2020. Projected activity participation growth rates of particular relevance to the study area include walking (5.66 percent), fishing (5.70 percent), boating (5.41 percent), and biking (3.23 percent). A number of activity categories relevant to the study area resources such as sightseeing, visiting major tourist attractions, and wildlife viewing, are not represented in the NYSCORP survey.

In addition to providing recreation use estimates and projections for the State of New York by activity, the NYSCORP compares these estimates with the recreation resources available within that county, as well as the convenience, location and attractiveness of these facilities, to determine recreation needs. Counties are assigned an “index of need” for each of the recreation activities that facilities within that county support. The “index of need” is a rating developed through the comparison of estimated future demand by recreation activity and present recreation facility supply for each county with “1” indicating a large availability of recreation resources relative to demand and “10” indicating that sites supporting that activity are heavily used. A score of 3 or 4 means that a county “will need new recreation facilities to replace existing ones as they become obsolete and wear out over the next twenty years.” For Erie County, scores ranged from 4 to 10. Facilities that will be in need of replacement over the next twenty years in Erie County include picnicking facilities, parking facilities, outdoor tennis and basketball courts, field sports facilities, historic sites, and winter activity sites. For Niagara County facilities, almost 40 percent of facilities were rated as 5 and 28 percent rated as 6. In Niagara County, the facilities identified as potentially needing replacement in the future include parking facilities, historic sites, outdoor tennis courts and field sports facilities such as soccer fields. These findings from the NYSCORP suggest that many of the recreation facilities in the Recreation Needs Assessment study area may be in need of upgrading, modernization and revitalization in the near future to accommodate future recreational demand.

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**TABLE 5.1-1
TOTAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS FROM 2003 TO 2019 AS REPORTED IN THE
SOCIOECONOMICS REPORT**

Location	Total Estimated Population 2003	Total Projected Population 2019	Percent Change in Population from 2000 - 2020 (%)
Niagara County	214,260	210,843	-1.59
Erie County	936,163	918,091	-1.93

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**TABLE 5.2-1
ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS 1998 AND 2020 – NYSCORP***

Activity	Estimated Number of Participants in 1998	Percentage of 1998 Population (%)	Estimated Number of Participants in 2020	Percentage of 2020 Population (%)	Growth in Participants (1998 – 2020)	Percentage Growth (1998 – 2020)
Relaxing in Park	10,901,801	73.53	11,475,496	77.40	573,695	5.26
Swimming	7,687,154	51.85	8,033,555	54.18	346,400	4.51
Biking	5,242,681	35.36	5,411,849	36.50	169,168	3.23
Golfing	2,378,038	16.04	2,524,301	17.02	146,263	6.15
Walking	9,173,807	61.87	9,692,892	65.37	519,086	5.66
Tennis	2,444,658	16.49	2,543,334	17.15	98,676	4.04
Basketball	2,742,192	18.49	2,757,299	18.60	15,107	0.55
Field Sports	3,086,063	20.81	3,141,449	21.19	55,386	1.79
Historic Sites	3,682,223	24.83	3,917,109	26.42	234,886	6.38
Camping	1,915,988	12.92	2,016,290	13.60	100,303	5.24
Hunting	1,874,539	12.64	1,985,486	13.39	110,947	5.92
Hiking	3,150,310	21.25	3,303,820	22.28	153,510	4.87
Boating	3,564,820	24.04	3,757,673	25.34	192,854	5.41
Fishing	3,462,233	23.35	3,659,717	24.68	197,485	5.70
ATV	673,578	4.54	706,253	4.51	32,765	4.85
Horseback Riding	1,362,542	9.1	1,428,302	9.2	65,760	4.83
Ice Skating	2,224,410	15.00	2,314,360	15.61	89,950	4.04
X-Country Skiing	779,626	5.26	821,864	5.54	42,238	5.42
Downhill Skiing	1,626,855	10.97	1,678,672	11.32	51,818	3.19
Snowmobiling	758,989	5.12	790,897	5.33	31,907	4.20

* Adapted from the NY State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

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6.0 EXISTING RECREATION PLANS AND STUDIES

As part of the Recreation Needs Assessment, several reports and studies regarding recreation and tourism in the Niagara Falls area were reviewed. This section provides summary information for relevant recreation, tourism and planning documents reviewed for this effort. In addition, planning documents, recommendations and recreation reports reviewed during the 2000 facility condition assessment study are summarized by region in [Appendix C](#).

6.1 Erie County Park System Master Plan

The Erie County Park System Master Plan (ECPSMP) was reviewed as part of this effort and serves as the management plan for the park system in Erie County, NY, addressing such planning issues as transportation, land use, infrastructure, and economic development. The Plan has five main components: an inventory and assessment of existing facilities database, a review and update of existing park plans, recreational trails, waterfront strategy, and planning opportunities. It is comprised of four separate documents: Vol. 1 Park System Master Plan, Vol. 2 Park Management Plans, Vol. 3 Recreational Trail System, and Vol. 4 Parks Inventory and Assessment. Vol. 4 is currently unavailable.

Vol. 1 Park System Master Plan provides overall information on the Erie County region: history, transportation network, land uses, and demographics and population. The ECPSMP also reports results of the Erie County Park User Survey noting that 16% of park goers surveyed reside in the City of Buffalo. The survey results also note that “the majority of park goers participate in activities pertaining to walking (65.5%), family/group picnics (49.5%), special events/festivals (39.8%), hiking (38.8%), bike riding (33.5%), and cross country skiing (35.0%).” For future planning, the Plan states, “(w)ith its extensive river and lake front lands, and over 11,000 acres of County managed parkland, much of it in a natural state, Erie County is positioned to deliver these leisure activities. The County will be expected to continue into the foreseeable future, its support and influence on land conservation, environmental protection measures, and the provision of passive recreation opportunities, in conjunction with state and federal initiatives. In particular, it is expected that the revitalization and development of the Buffalo waterfront will be of paramount public and political interest over the next decade.”

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- Intake Park and Fort Schlosser Interpretive Venue – proposal includes creating open space at and providing interpretive information for the power intakes and the site of historic Fort Schlosser.
- Naturalize Niagara River Shoreline – planting new trees and native vegetation for screening and improve aesthetics.
- Connect City to Trail and Parkway at Various Locations – consists of three line item proposals to connect various urban areas within Niagara Falls to the Robert Moses Parkway and creating recreation facilities such as waterfront trailheads, dock facility access, and interpretive signs.
- Riverview Park and Trail Head – proposal includes creating a new park, Riverview Park, along the Upper Niagara River.
- Gorge Trail System and Trailhead Improvements – includes the repair, reconstruction and improvements to existing gorge trails and the development of new trailhead facilities.
- Gorge Rim Pathway – proposes the construction of a recreation path with overlook facilities and the creation of open space greenways along the gorge rim.
- Reconfigure Parkway – link Robert Moses Parkway to the gorge rim trail and make connections to city streets for improved access.

6.5 USA Niagara Development Strategy

The purpose of this document is to serve as a revitalization strategy for downtown Niagara Falls with a particular focus on the interaction between Niagara Falls State Park and the downtown area. While this document mainly addresses the need for development, renovation, and improvement of facilities in the “Downtown Development District” such as lodging, entertainment, commercial, and residential, it

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Vol. 2 Park Management Plans provides information on existing park features and facilities. It also identifies “current issues and problems” associated with existing facilities. Namely, that all park sites suffer from “urban conditions and abuse”, that boat launch facilities at Ontario Street are separated from the community by the highway, and that there is “little directional signage which highlight the locations of these (facilities) to travelers.” Although this document does not provide information regarding recreation use trends, it is useful for this investigation in that it identifies deficiencies associated with recreation sites included in this study. Vol. 3 Recreational Trail System directs its attention to the existing and proposed recreational trail facilities for Erie County. The Riverwalk, which connects and is contained within several of the recreation sites investigated for the Recreation Needs Assessment, is identified as the “most heavily used segment of the entire (recreational trail) network.”

6.2 City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan

The City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan (CBCP) was also reviewed as part of this investigation. This document states that the City of Buffalo is home to “some 120 park facilities and numerous areas of green space. These facilities range in size from over 350 acres to less than one acre, and provide a variety of recreational opportunities and amenities to the local and regional communities.” Of the park facilities identified, 16 are “destination parks” or large facilities that are used regionally and contain a variety of amenities, 50 are neighborhood parks or playgrounds, 30 are “passive neighborhood parks” that primarily support passive recreation, and 24 are facilities such as community centers, pools, and ice-skating rinks.

The CBCP provides an overview of the condition of the parks within the Buffalo region stating that many of these parks “are subject of a wide variety of intense uses and require extensive management. Their physical condition varies depending on the intensity of use and the ability of City staff to schedule and conduct ongoing maintenance activities.” In fact, 33 percent of parks in the City of Buffalo were rated in good to excellent condition. Sixty seven percent, on the other hand, were rated as fair to poor condition with 15 park facilities reported to having health or safety issues. As with the NYSCORP and the Erie County Park System Master Plan, it would seem that the majority of facilities in the Recreation Needs Assessment study area are in need of currently or will be in need of revitalization to accommodate future recreational demand.

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6.3 Niagara Waterfront Master Plan

The Niagara Waterfront Master Plan was released in 1992 and provided recommendations for the development, improvement and revitalization of the Niagara River shoreline in Niagara Falls. Among its key recommendations was the development of a gorge trail system linking several state parks such as Whirlpool and Devil's Hole and the reconfiguration of the Robert Moses Parkway. With respect to the parkway, the Niagara Waterfront Master Plan recommended that it be partially converted for pedestrian uses, slowing traffic in vehicular corridors of the parkway, and providing additional access to the parkway from city streets.

6.4 Achieving Niagara Falls Future

Achieving Niagara Falls Future: An assessment of Niagara Falls' waterfront planning is a comprehensive review of several previous proposals, plans, reports, and studies conducted on behalf of the revitalization and development of the waterfront in Niagara Falls. This report provides recommendations for short-term and long-term projects for economic and community development gleaned from these previous documents and receiving significant citizen support. The general goals of the plan are to reestablish a connection between the Niagara River waterfront and the City of Niagara Falls, provide urban revitalization and environmental enhancements, and create a sense of place and culture for the residents of and visitors to the Niagara Falls region.

The projects recommended fall into five categories: Niagara Falls Heritage projects, State Park/City Interface projects, and Upper Niagara River, Niagara River Gorge, and City-wide Niagara Falls Waterfront projects. The general goals for the development of Niagara Falls waterfront outlined in this document include increasing and improving public access to the Niagara River and the Niagara Reservation, beautifying and revitalizing the shoreline, maintaining power generation and industrial uses as they currently exist, and promoting cultural heritage in the region. Among the 46 specific projects recommended in this report, nine would fall, in part or in total, under the control of NYPA:

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identifies the need for connectivity between the Falls and downtown area and provides a number of recreation, tourism, and cultural heritage projects directly related to the Falls and the surrounding area. Among these, the Niagara Experience Center is recommended as providing a transitional zone between Niagara Falls State Park and the downtown area. The “Southern Gateway Project” consists of a pedestrian bridge linking two areas of Niagara Falls State Park that are divided by the Robert Moses Parkway. Furthermore, the development strategy recommends the conversion of parts of the Robert Moses Parkway into a pedestrian path.

6.6 Robert Moses Parkway Pilot Project Evaluation Report

The Robert Moses Parkway Pilot Project Evaluation Report provides an overview and assessment of a NYSOPRHP sponsored recreation pilot program designed to provide and improve pedestrian access to, and recreational use of, the Niagara River Gorge area. In 2001, the south bound lanes of the 4 lane Robert Moses Parkway from the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center to Devil’s Hole State Park were closed to vehicular traffic and converted to a pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle path. The remaining north bound lanes remained open for vehicles and were converted to a two-way traffic pattern with a reduced speed limit. The Robert Moses Parkway conversion project was evaluated in 2003, two years after implementation, to determine whether or not to continue maintaining the south bound lanes as a recreationway and identify any improvements necessary to continue or enhance recreational use of the parkway.

The pilot program was assessed on two main components: recreation issues associated with the pedestrian and bike path and transportation, traffic, and safety issues associated with the vehicular lanes. A recreational user survey and recreational user counts were conducted during 2002 and 2003. Overall, use of the Robert Moses Parkway recreation path was low during the study period. Survey respondents provided such comments and suggestions as providing maps and signage for the path, improving and increasing access to the path and to the gorge area, moving the recreation path closer to the gorge and away from traffic, and creating separate lanes for bikes and pedestrians. NYSOPRHP anticipates that addressing some of these issues will result in increased use of the recreation trail. The conversion of the north bound lanes to a two-way traffic pattern with a reduced speed limit was reported to be a “safe and effective configuration”. The report cites that the revised drive time for that section of the Robert Moses

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Parkway has only increased by approximately two minutes. Accidents were noted to have decreased by approximately 50 percent while vehicle emissions have decreased by 16 percent as a result of reduced speeds through the Niagara Gorge corridor section of the parkway. The report recommends maintaining the recreation path and two-lane roadway with some modifications designed to further address the concerns and recommendations of parkway users and Niagara Falls residents.

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7.0 RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As described in [Section 2.0](#) of this report, recreation needs for the purpose of this assessment are defined as the difference between the supply of recreation resources and the demand for those resources, either at the current time or in a potential future out year. The concept of recreation needs can be further broken down to include more specific considerations such as:

- Needs at a regional versus a site-specific scale, including needs for public access to existing and potential recreation resources;
- Needs to improve the condition of existing facilities to meet current and/or potential future use.
- Needs to expand recreation facilities and/or develop new facilities to accommodate existing and/or potential future increases in demand;
- Needs to upgrade facilities to be ADA compliant; and
- Needs relative to specific recreation activities or opportunities.

Specific comments and concerns expressed by stakeholders regarding recreation resources associated with the Niagara Power Project (which generally fall within the categories noted above) include:

- The need for facility enhancements or improvements that would improve or increase public access to the Niagara River;

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- The adequacy of existing educational and interpretive information regarding the Falls, the history of power in the Niagara Falls vicinity, access to the Niagara River, and wildlife of the area;
- The need to connect and improve existing waterfront parks, including the need to remove access impediments and reduce remoteness;
- The effect of existing and future Project-related recreation on tourism;
- Project-related recreation needs of the Tuscarora Nation and local host communities.

Within the Project boundary, public access is provided at each of the major elements of the Niagara Power Project (intake, storage reservoir, and power plant) and there is an abundance of public access opportunities elsewhere within the Project boundary (see [Figure 1.3-1](#)) and the surrounding area. The existing supply of recreation facilities associated with the Project (i.e. located within the FERC Project boundary) is currently accommodating the existing demand for recreation activity. On-site recreation surveys conducted in 2002 and 2003 indicate that none of the ten sites associated with the Project experienced regular use approaching facility design capacity. Demand projections for the regional area suggest that the existing recreation supply will also be adequate to accommodate future recreation demand, assuming facilities are maintained.

Most other recreation sites within the study area are also capable of accommodating current and projected future demand. The vast majority of the facilities within the study area are operating at levels well below their design capacity most of the time. This condition is not expected to change dramatically in the future due to Projections for a relatively modest level of decline in recreation participation, as a result of declining populations within the region between 2004 and 2020. Notable exceptions where existing parking is frequently insufficient to accommodate existing demand, particularly on peak use days were Ontario Street, Lewiston Landing, and Fort Niagara Boat Launch. All three of these sites provide boat launching opportunities, one on the Upper River and two on the Lower River. Unfortunately, there are significant site constraints associated with all of these facilities that make expansion difficult.

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With regard to the physical condition of the existing stock of recreation facilities within the Project boundary, some of the existing sites are in need of repairs and upgrades to address issues associated with aging infrastructure, and in some cases what appears to be deferred maintenance. This includes a general need to improve ADA compliance at many of the facilities. Even if recreation demand remains relatively constant into the foreseeable future, some degree of renovation and rehabilitation will be required at many of the sites to support continued recreation activity. A number of the facilities located within the Project boundary have recently been renovated including the Niagara Power Project Visitor Center and Overlook, the Great Gorge Railroad Right-of-way Trail, the Discovery Museum, and Whirlpool State Park. Specific sites within the Project boundary that are in need of upgrades include:

- Upper River Observation Facility (NYPA Intake Structures) - Repairs are needed to the site's parking lot and walkway. Improvements are also needed to comply with current ADA requirements for accessibility. This site is owned by NYPA, but maintained by the state highway department because of its proximity and relationship to the Robert Moses Parkway.
- Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access - Although not heavily used, the site is in poor condition and in need of additional management attention. This site is owned by NYPA, but managed as a part of Reservoir State Park by the Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).
- Reservoir State Park - Generally in poor condition with several of the facilities in disrepair, particularly the tennis and basketball courts. Facilities are generally not accessible to persons with disabilities and are in need of maintenance. Portions of this park are within the project boundary and owned by NYPA, but the facility is managed and maintained by OPRHP.
- Portion of Robert Moses Parkway - If a portion of the Parkway (between Niagara Falls State Park and Devils Hole State Park) is to serve as a permanent pedestrian and bicycle, trail as proposed by OPRHP additional design work and roadway modifications, as well

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as landscaping will be needed to create a truly functional recreation asset. Only a portion of the proposed pedestrian Parkway is located in the project boundary

At a regional level, there is a wide diversity of recreation opportunities available under current conditions that are well supported by the existing access and recreation facility infrastructure, including facilities associated with the Niagara Power Project. This is particularly true along the Upper Niagara River and at Niagara Falls itself. Existing public access is more limited along the Niagara River Gorge (due in part to geography) and the Lower Niagara River (particularly with respect to boating access).

With regard to connectivity, there is an outstanding network of existing trails in the study area, including the Riverwalk which connects most of the Upper Niagara River sites and several walking/hiking trails within the Niagara Falls and Gorge areas. The need for improved interfaces between recreation sites along the Niagara River Gorge and the Lower Niagara River and downtown Niagara Falls has been cited as a strategic initiative in improving recreational use of and tourism in the Niagara Falls region (Urban Design Project, 2002). Other identified initiatives include gorge trail system and trailhead improvements, the creation of a continuous open space and pathway along the gorge rim, and additional and/or improved overlook facilities along the Niagara River Gorge.

Chief among the initiatives to create and improve access to and viewing of the Niagara River Gorge is the reconfiguration of the Robert Moses Parkway into a pedestrian/bike path and two-land vehicular roadway. The Robert Moses Parkway Pilot Project Evaluation Report proposes to maintain the existing experimental closure of the Robert Moses Parkway in the Niagara River Gorge area. Furthermore, if the parkway is to function as a viable pedestrian and biking trail, renovations and design improvements will be needed including creating “a more parklike setting through landscape improvements and other measures,” installing interpretive signage, repair recreation path pavement, and provide various vehicular roadway improvements such as breakdown lanes, turning and merging lanes, Jersey barriers, and surface pavement repairs.

The following sections provide a more specific assessment of recreation needs according to the major geographic areas within the study area. [Table 7.0-1](#) provides a summary assessment of the ability

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of each of the recreation 33 sites in the study area to meet existing and future demand based on site capacity and site conditions.

7.1 Upper Niagara River

There are two developed recreation facilities within the Project Boundary that provide public access to the Niagara River (Upper River Observation Facility and the Upper Niagara Trail). The Hyde Park Golf Course located inland from the river is also within the Project Boundary. None of these three facilities receives use in excess of capacity with any regularity, but there is a high demand for golf facilities nationally and within the region which contributes to heavy utilization of the Hyde Park course. Future demand for shoreline access and trail use is not expected to exceed the design capacity of either the Upper River Observation Facility or the Upper River Trail over the next 20 years. The Upper River Observation Facility is in fair condition overall and is in need of improvements to comply with current ADA requirements for accessibility.

Outside the FERC Project boundary, there are numerous recreation sites along the Upper Niagara River which provide public access to the Niagara River, both for shoreline and on-water recreation activities (see [Section 3.0](#)). These sites provide for a diversity of recreation opportunities and for the most part are well utilized, particularly during the summer months. Most of the sites along the Upper Niagara River are in good to excellent condition and appear to be well maintained. One site along the Upper River, Ontario Street Boat Ramp, receives use in excess of the site's design capacity on a frequent basis during high use months. Unfortunately, opportunities to expand the site are extremely limited due to its urban location and surrounding land uses, including the adjacent highway. There are several alternative public boat launching and trailhead staging areas within a few miles of the existing Ontario Street site.

7.2 Niagara Falls

The only developed recreation facility located in the immediate vicinity of Niagara Falls that is within Project is the Discovery Museum. This facility was completely renovated in 2003 and therefore is in excellent condition. In association with renovation of the Discovery Museum, OPRHP upgraded the

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trailhead and portions of the Great Gorge Railroad Right-of-Way Trail which can be accessed from the Museum area. There are no waterfront recreation needs associated with the Niagara Power Project in the immediate vicinity of Niagara Falls that are not already being addressed with existing facilities.

Outside the FERC Project Boundary, there is an abundance of well developed recreation opportunities and facilities at Niagara Falls, including commercial and interpretive opportunities. Many of these facilities have recently been upgraded, including construction of a new visitor center and associated educational and interpretive displays and a total renovation of the existing observation tower. The area is heavily used accommodating over 7 million users annually and frequently experiences use levels that exceed existing parking capacity. However, given the significance of Niagara Falls as a national and international tourist destination heavy use, particularly during the peak recreation season, is to be expected and contributes significantly to the local and regional economy. Opportunities to expand facilities, particularly parking facilities associated with Niagara Falls are extremely limited without adversely impacting existing greenspace in and around the Falls. Efforts to utilize various forms of intermodal transportation have already been implemented by OPRHP at the site and should be continued as an appropriate means of accommodating future demand.

7.3 Niagara River Gorge

Overall access opportunities in the Niagara River Gorge are limited, due largely to the physical constraints of geography and the gorge itself as well as the current configuration of the Robert Moses Parkway which isolates the gorge from adjacent local neighborhoods. Despite existing constraints, there are several existing trails and staging areas, as well as recently renovated educational and interpretive facilities in the Niagara Power Project Visitor Center. None of the facilities within or along the Niagara River Gorge are experiencing use levels in excess of capacity and there is no indication that the existing supply of recreation resources in this area will not be capable of adequately accommodating future recreation demands. However, several of the sites in this area and/or specific site amenities are in need of upgrades and potential enhancements to better serve the recreating public. Several of these needs involve sites within the Project Boundary and are described in more detail below.

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With the exception of Whirlpool and Devil's Hole State Parks, most of the existing public access areas and recreation sites along the Niagara River Gorge are located (either wholly or in part) within the FERC Project boundary. These sites include: the Great Gorge Railroad Trail; Robert Moses Parkway; Robert Moses Fishing Pier; and the Niagara Power Project Visitor Center and Overlook. Two additional sites, Lewiston Reservoir and Reservoir State Park, are also located within the Project boundary and are in the general vicinity of the Niagara River Gorge. Recreation needs associated with each of these sites are briefly summarized below.

Robert Moses Fishing Pier is used at an estimated overall 38 percent of its design capacity. The highest overall average use capacity of all of the sites located along the Niagara Gorge, regardless of their location relative to the Project boundary. This facility is generally in good condition and is not in need of any significant upgrades. The site also appears to be accommodating existing demand and is expected to be able to handle future demand. The site is rated as having a good ability to meet existing and future recreation demands. Routine maintenance and renovations will be necessary to counter the effects that age is expected to have on the condition of this site and its ability to accommodate recreation needs in the future. The Niagara Power Project Visitor Center and Overlook was completely renovated in 1999 and is not in need of any upgrades or enhancements to accommodate existing or future demand.

Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access is generally in poor condition. The site, however, is not used above capacity on average. This site was observed to be at or above capacity only three percent of the time. On average, it is used only at about 12 percent of its design capacity. The condition of this site, however, precludes it from receiving a high rating with respect to its ability to meet existing demand. As such, it is rated as poor regarding the site's ability to accommodate recreation use in the future. Although recreation pressures are not expected to increase in the future at this site, the site's poor condition coupled with advancing age results in inadequacy to meet future demand without some additional management attention.

Reservoir State Park is generally in poor condition with several of the facilities in disrepair, particularly the tennis and basketball courts. Facilities are generally not accessible to persons with disabilities and are in need of maintenance. As with Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access, the condition of facilities at Reservoir State Park suggests the site is in need of some renovations and upgrades. Capacity

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utilization estimates are not available for Reservoir State Park. However, it is known the site receives heavy pressure for regional sports leagues, particularly softball and soccer. Field sports facilities are limited in the local community and thus Reservoir State Park currently serves an important local need. At times the site is over used due to the sporting events and parking and other amenities are inadequate to accommodate the demand. If Reservoir State Park is to continue to serve this function into the future, some degree of redesign and upgrades will be necessary.

The Great Gorge Railroad Trail was significantly upgraded by OPRHP in 2003. However, there are still portions of the trail within the gorge which are informal and there is an area where the right-of-way traverses a severe slide area. Opportunities to improve the trail in this area and create a formal connection to the Whirlpool and Ongiara Trails further downstream are extremely limited due to the physical and geological constraints associated with the Gorge in this area.

A portion of the Robert Moses Parkway has been closed to vehicles for two seasons as a test regarding its viability as a pedestrian and bike trail, as well as a test on the potential implication of closure on traffic circulation patterns and congestion. Since closure, the Parkway has received only minor levels of pedestrian and bike use. However, the Parkway as is a new resource that is not fully developed. Experience elsewhere, including along the Upper Niagara River indicates that there is considerable demand for paved pedestrian and bike trails in the region and in the state. The Parkway also offers an obvious trail link to existing trail networks upstream and downstream of the Niagara River Gorge and could be an integral part of a continuous trail corridor from Buffalo to Lake Ontario. If the Parkway is to serve as a pedestrian and bicycle trail, additional design work and roadway modifications, as well as landscaping would be needed to create a truly functional recreation asset.

7.4 Lower Niagara River

Access to the Lower Niagara River is generally more limited than other portions of the river. This is particularly true in terms of boat access. There are only a few existing boat ramps located along the Lower River and they are relatively small one or two lane ramps. Most of the shoreline along the Lower River is privately owned and thus opportunities for public access are limited.

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There are no Niagara Power Project facilities located along the Lower Niagara River and the FERC Project Boundary does not extend downstream of the Niagara Power Project. There are a number of recreation needs along the Lower River, as alluded to above and as described in more detail below. However, none of these needs are directly associated with the Niagara Power Project itself.

Overall, the majority of the sites along the Lower River are used well within their existing capacity. Future recreation pressures are not expected to have much impact on these sites. However, two sites Lewiston Landing and the Fort Niagara Boat Ramp frequently receive recreation demands in excess of their design capacities. Both of these sites offer boat access to the Lower Niagara River and both are used by commercial operators that offer guided fishing trips and jet boat tours in the Lower River and up into the lower end of the Niagara River Gorge. There is only one other boat ramp along the Lower River located at Youngstown, but this ramp is small and not particularly well known except by locals. There are also significant parking limitations associated with the Youngstown site.

A number of the facilities located along the Lower Niagara River are in need of renovations and upgrades to accommodate existing and future recreation use. In particular, Lewiston Landing, Youngstown Boat Launch and the Fort Niagara Boat Launch are all in need of upgrades, including improvements to the boat ramps themselves and associated docks and piers. All three sites also have potential parking capacity issues whereby the existing parking is frequently insufficient to accommodate existing demand, particularly on peak use days. Unfortunately, there are significant site constraints associated with all of these facilities that make expansion difficult.

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RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**TABLE 7.0-1
OVERALL RECREATION FACILITIES NEED ASSESSMENT**

Site	Estimated Recreation Use (April 2002 – May 2003)	Overall Average Capacity (%)	Overall Site Condition	Ability of Site to Meet Existing Demand	Estimated Recreation Use (2019)	Ability of Site to Meet Future Demand
Upper River Sites						
<i>Upper River Observation Site</i>	<i>3,400</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>3,346</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Upper River Trail</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>5,905</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Hyde Park Golf Course</i>	<i>27,000</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>26,571</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Niawanda Park*	116,600	14	Excellent	Excellent	114,350	Good
Isle View Park*	99,200	11	Excellent	Excellent	97,285	Good
Ontario Street Boat Launch*	72,200	54	Good	Fair	70,807	Fair
Sheridan Drive Boat Launch	39,400	18	Good	Good	38,640	Fair
Buckhorn Island State Park*	16,600	N/A	Excellent	N/A	16,280	N/A
Beaver Island State Park*	204,200	N/A	Excellent	N/A	200,259	N/A
Big Six Mile Creek Marina*	36,900	N/A	Good	N/A	36,188	N/A
Gratwick Park*	37,600	7	Good	Good	37,002	Fair
Griffon Park Boat Launch	29,900	14	Fair	Fair	29,425	Fair
Tow Path Park*	4,800	22	Fair	Fair	4,707	Fair
Broderick Park*	25,000	21	Good	Good	24,518	Good
Bird Island Pier*	40,800	20	Fair	Fair	40,013	Fair
Niagara Falls Sites						
Niagara Reservation State Park	7,585,500	N/A	Good	N/A	7,464,894	N/A
Aquarium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Discovery Center Museum</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>

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**TABLE 7.0-1 (CONT.)
OVERALL RECREATION FACILITIES NEED ASSESSMENT**

Site	Estimated Recreation Use (April 2002 – May 2003)	Overall Average Capacity (%)	Overall Site Condition	Ability of Site to Meet Existing Demand	Estimated Recreation Use (2019)	Ability of Site to Meet Future Demand
Niagara Gorge Sites						
Whirlpool State Park	46,100	5	Good	Good	45,367	Good
Devil's Hole State Park	23,700	8	Fair	Fair	23,323	Fair
<i>Robert Moses Parkway</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Great Gorge RR Trail</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<i>Niagara Project Visitors Center</i>	85,200	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>N/A</i>	83,845	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Robert Moses Fishing Pier</i>	22,600	38	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	22,241	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Lewiston Reservoir Fishing Access</i>	12,200	12	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Fair</i>	12,006	<i>Poor</i>
<i>Reservoir State Park</i>	97,900	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	96,343	<i>Poor</i>
Lower River Sites						
Earl Brydges Artpark	90,400	<i>N/A</i>	Excellent	<i>N/A</i>	88,963	<i>N/A</i>
Lewiston Branch Gorge Trail	9,100	18	Fair	Fair	8,955	Fair
Joseph Davis State Park Pier	5,800	7	Fair	Fair	5,708	Fair
Lewiston Landing	70,600	95	Good	Fair	69,477	Poor
Youngstown Boat Launch	65,500	35	Good	Good	64,459	Fair
Fort Niagara Boat Launch	20,500	34	Good	Good	20,174	Fair
Constitution Park	2,900	37	Good	Good	2,854	<i>N/A</i>

NOTE: Condition assessments for recreation sites marked with an asterisk were conducted in 2003.

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REFERENCES

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Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. 2005b. A Recreational Fishing Survey of the Lower Niagara River in 2002 and 2003. Prep. for the New York Power Authority.

Websites

<http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/> - US Department of Commerce, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries

<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/info/> - New York State Parks, General Information

www.iloveny.com – Official New York State Tourism Website

www.greaterniagara.com – Tourism Website for the Niagara Falls Region

www.erie.gov – Erie County Works Website

www.myrtlebeachinfo.com – Tourism statistics

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APPENDICES

**NIAGARA POWER PROJECT (FERC NO. 2216)
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APPENDIX A – COMPREHENSIVE ISSUE DESCRIPTIONS AND REQUESTING ENTITIES

ID	Comprehensive Issue ID	Comprehensive Issue Description	Requesting Entity
Issue			
Recreational Resources			
58		Preparation of a Project Recreation Plan (formerly consolidated issue 35)	
	419	<i>As in Canada, a given percent of hydro revenue should be devoted to the creation and maintenance of waterfront parks from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario</i>	<u>BCHAC</u>
	422	<i>Have NYPA's initial studies and surveys (described in FSCR) adequately identified recreation and facilities, existing use, carrying capacity, and need</i>	<u>NPS</u>
	189	<i>Identify the existing and potential recreational facilities and resources</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	*414	<i>Increased recreational use of Lewiston Reservoir has led to increased trespassing on Tuscarora Reservation. How will NYPA keep reservoir for its intended use and help Tuscaroras in meeting the trespass issue</i>	<u>BIA</u>
	500	<i>List any public benefit projects that are proposed by NYPA, either currently or during the license period and their projected costs</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	503	<i>NYPA should provide financial and technical assistance to the host Communities in the preparation and/or updating of the plans noted in Section 4.5 of the FSCR</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	501	<i>Study and then develop a Recreation Plan</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	190	<i>What are the effects of the Project on The Project's Impacts on recreation and parks</i>	<u>BUF</u>
57		Project facility recreation needs assessment (formerly consolidated issue 35)	
	134	<i>Add an interactive sport fishing display at NYPA's visitor center</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	687	<i>Address project impacts to the planned Cherry Farm site, the Riverwalk system, and the Town's boat launch and Aqua Lane Park at the foot of Sheridan Drive</i>	<u>TTDC</u>
	386	<i>Are we adequately interpreting & educating people regarding river ecology & human uses</i>	<u>FBNR</u>

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APPENDIX A (CONT.)

ID	Comprehensive Issue ID	Comprehensive Issue Description	Requesting Entity
Issue			
Recreational Resources			
57 (cont.)	665	<i>Assess the impact of the Proj.and structures on Olmsted Parks and Parkway system and ID pos.enhancements to mitigate the env., socio-economic and other impacts on the City of Buffalo x-ref: Rec.Cult., Land Mgmt & Aest.,Ter. and Aq. Res</i>	<u>BUF</u>
	676	<i>Assess feasibility of enhancing access to the Lower Niagara River</i>	<u>DEC</u>
	677	<i>Assess feasibility of establishing a fishing pier at Fort Niagara State Park</i>	<u>DEC</u>
	323	<i>Assess NYPA participation in creation of a linear park along the Niagara Gorge - State Parks and National Heritage Corridor initiatives</i>	<u>NWRTF</u>
	691	<i>Assess winter sports opportunities in Hyde Park</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	695	<i>Construction of the Gateway Point Harbor Project, City of North Tonawanda</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	681	<i>Construction of the Olcott Harbor Breakway, Town of Newfane Lake Ontario</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	664	<i>Determine how the Project and related structures have impacted the use and management of natural resources (used for recreation) in the City of Buffalo and mitigate same</i>	<u>BUF</u>
	182	<i>Develop a passive park at Squaw Island Park in the City of Buffalo</i>	<u>RCC/EC</u>
	183	<i>Develop ecotourism</i>	<u>GI/OOC/EC</u>
	184	<i>Establish a regional Environmental Education Center at Beaver Island Park</i>	<u>GI/OOC</u>
	138	<i>Expand marina and launch facilities in Lake Erie</i>	<u>RCC/EC</u>
	420	<i>Explore establishment of a bird observatory to support research, public education & ecotourism in the Niagara River Corridor (link w/ 339, 341, and 426 and consolidated issue 48)</i>	<u>BOS</u>

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APPENDIX A (CONT.)

ID	Comprehensive Issue ID	Comprehensive Issue Description	Requesting Entity
Recreational Resources			
57 (cont.)	417	<i>Fully develop Joseph Davis State Park in Lewiston (see comprehensive plan proposed by state parks and Town of Lewiston)</i>	<u>TLEW</u>
	*395	<i>History of Power: Feasibility of using landscape & historic structure (Adam, plant, Echota, Canal, etc Schoellkopf) into Power Trail</i>	<u>FBNR</u>
	423	<i>How can existing riverfront parks and facilities be linked and enhanced to provide seamless linear park/trail/greenway along Niagara River</i>	<u>NPS</u>
	170	<i>Identify what the priority park improvements are in Niagara County</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	678	<i>Improve birding access points in Lower Niagara River through signage, viewing and parking areas</i>	<u>DEC</u>
	133	<i>Install a fishing pier in Lewiston Reservoir</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	397	<i>Inter-Kinetic Transit Safety - multiple season, multi-Cultural field study</i>	<u>TF</u>
	232	<i>Is there sufficient public access and park development along the river corridor</i>	<u>NWRTF/EC</u>
	186	<i>Provide funding to construct a public fishing pier on Grand Island immediately south of the South Grand island Bridge</i>	<u>GI</u>
	*521	<i>REC - Consider purchasing or renting the Adel. Sports Dome for the purpose of providing rec. prog. during the winter months for Ni. County residents (link w/ 35)</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	*502	<i>REC - The study and assessment of recreational resources should include the recreational facilities situated in the Host Communities as well as Niagara County as a whole</i>	<u>NPC</u>
	*411	<i>River access: study of what exists, who uses, what activities; potential expanded access – neighborhood, regional, tourist</i>	<u>FBNR</u>

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APPENDIX A (CONT.)

Issue			
ID	Comprehensive Issue ID	Comprehensive Issue Description	Requesting Entity
Recreational Resources			
57 (cont.)	*340	<i>Study impacts of increase use of gorge- how much access possible?</i>	<u>FBNR</u>
	230	<i>What affect does the Project have on the recreational, hunting and fishing needs of the Tuscarora Nation</i>	<u>TNLC</u>
	425	<i>What/where are additional opportunities to make Niagara Riverfront and Gorge accessible and congenial to non-motorists</i>	<u>NPS</u>
	412	<i>Whitewater study in Lower River Access</i>	<u>NYRU</u>
56	Recreation facility rehabilitation assessment (formerly consolidated issue 35)		
	410	<i>Enhancement & Restoration of NYS office of Park properties and facilities</i>	<u>OPRHP</u>
	130	<i>Improve access and a fishing platform at NYPA's intake structures</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	129	<i>Improve access at Artpark, the Village of Lewiston, and Fort Niagara</i>	<u>RCC</u>
	290	<i>Reclamation and restoration of Devil's Hole State Park</i>	<u>NHP</u>
55	Recreation facility use and condition (formerly consolidated issue 35)		
	*482	<i>Conversion of Reservoir Park to commercial and light industrial use</i>	<u>NIAG</u>
	*400	<i>Return of poorly used reservoir park to Towns of Niagara and Lewiston for development</i>	<u>NIAG/NPC</u>
	479	<i>Review of the use of Reservoir Park - what is the highest and best use</i>	<u>NIAG</u>

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APPENDIX B – COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF DATA SOURCES

Previous Reports

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**APPENDIX C – SUMMARY OF RECREATION AND REPORTS ADAPTED FROM
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT 2000**

The following is adapted from the Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment commissioned by NYPA in 1999. The material summarizes recreation plans and proposals that were in play as of December 1999. Relevant plans and proposals developed since 1999 are summarized in [Section 6.0](#) of the Recreation Needs Assessment. A complete listing of all the plans, proposals, studies, and requests reviewed in developing the Recreation Needs Assessment is shown in [Appendix B](#). In some cases information presented below has been updated to reflect current status.

There are numerous existing plans and proposals for modifying, expanding, and enhancing recreation facilities in the Study Area, including the development of new parks and trails. These proposals range from formal, adopted plans developed with extensive public input, to informal requests for funding submitted to NYPA by local municipalities and school districts. Some of the plans and proposals focus on fairly large geographical areas, while others focus on specific park facilities.

The following sections briefly summarize the plans and proposals reviewed by region. The intent of this summary is to provide a broad overview of the various recreation facility enhancements that have been suggested for the Study Area, and to highlight any potential conflicts or inconsistencies among the existing proposals or between proposals and existing facilities. Very few of the proposed facilities conflict with either existing or proposed sites. Wherever conflicts exist, they are indicated in the site descriptions.

1.0 Upper Niagara River

In addition to various Master Plans and recreation project proposals, two trail corridor studies conducted in 1988 and 1989 focused on recreation facilities along the Upper River waterfront area. Summaries of the recreation improvements proposed for the Upper Niagara River are provided below.

- Upper River Trail – Phase II: This phase of development consisted of constructing a new park on NYPA lands adjacent to the Adam’s Slip area – to be called River View Park, and improvements to the Upper Niagara River Observation Facility. Both River View Park and the area around the NYPA Intakes would include facilities for passive

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recreation including parking, bathrooms, interpretive displays, benches, viewing areas, and landscaping.

- Wildlife Viewing Area: The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) developed proposal to construct a wildlife viewing area along the east-bound lane of the Robert Moses Parkway approximately three quarters of a mile downstream from the NYPA Intake Gates on the Upper Niagara River. The area of the Niagara River adjacent to this site is a known concentration area for waterfowl, particularly diving ducks. The project would include construction of a 10 car parking area, deceleration and acceleration lanes adjacent to the Parkway, and informational kiosks and signs. The project is intended to complement the Upper River Trail, which will pass through this area (as described above).
- Modifications to the Robert Moses Parkway (RMP): Numerous potential modifications to the RMP were identified to improve the accessibility of the waterfront, particularly for pedestrians and local residents, and to improve the scenic quality of the City's entrance. Potential modifications to the Parkway from the North Grand Island Bridge to the downtown area at Quay Street focused primarily on landscaping and visual screening of adjacent industrial areas.
- LaSalle Parks: The City of Niagara Falls identified several specific recreation facility improvement needs for parks located in the LaSalle area of the City. These improvements included: (1) renovation of facilities at the 91st Park, particularly the restroom and swimming pool; (2) development of a new recreation facility adjacent to the old 93rd street school; (3) improvements at Jayne Park, including water oriented trails and fishing access; and (4) redevelopment of Griffon Park.
- Griffon Park: The City of Niagara Falls developed a Master Plan to rehabilitate and redevelop Griffon Park (June 1997). Planned developments at Griffon Park included picnic areas, a boardwalk and fishing platforms, a children's play area, walkways, landscaping, and a restroom.

2.0 Niagara Falls and the Niagara River Gorge

The City of Niagara Falls has conducted several planning studies focused on recreation and tourism enhancement, particularly related to Niagara Falls and the Niagara River waterfront within the

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City, both upstream and downstream of the Falls. These studies include development of a Waterfront Master Plan in 1992, and a recent Draft Master Plan released in 1998 for the Downtown Redevelopment Area, which includes recommendations for the waterfront park areas adjacent to downtown. The City also recently prepared a Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program in October 1998 for the Niagara Falls Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA), which encompasses approximately 12 miles of the Niagara River shoreline. This program generally incorporates the recommendations of the 1988, 1989, and 1992 waterfront studies. In 1981 the City also prepared and adopted an Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Action Program, which addresses the parks and recreation needs of the City. The following list is a summary of the recreation proposals included in these various planning documents.

- American Heritage River Designation: The Niagara Falls Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) has been nominated for a national designation as an American Heritage River.
- Modifications to the Robert Moses Parkway (RMP): Numerous potential modifications to the RMP were identified to improve the accessibility of the waterfront, particularly for pedestrians and local residents, and to improve the scenic quality of the City's entrance. Proposed modifications within the Niagara Reservation focused on removing the roadway entirely and restoring the area as parkland. These modifications were designed to improve pedestrian access to the waterfront parklands, particularly from adjacent neighborhood streets. Proposed modifications to the Parkway from the area north of the Niagara Reservation to the Robert Moses Power Plant focused on improved roadway and traffic circulation and realignment of Whirlpool Street and the Parkway to reduce redundancy and remove pavement, which would free up lands for additional park development. As detailed in [Section 6.0](#) of the Recreation Needs Assessment, the NYSOPRHP subsequently undertook the Robert Moses Parkway Pilot Program for this section of the Parkway from 2001 to 2003.
- Niagara Gorge Hiking Trail: This proposal, as detailed in the 1989 Master Plan Study of the Niagara Gorge Hiking Trail, and reconfirmed in the recent 1998 Draft LWRP for the Niagara Falls WRA, involves development of five separate trails and trailheads extending from Prospect Park in the Niagara Reservation to Devil's Hole State Park. This would include rim trails on the bluffs above the river as well as utilizing the Great Gorge right-of-way within the Niagara Gorge. The proposal would take advantage of the existing

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facilities at the Schoellkopf Museum and include interpretive displays focused on the Schoellkopf Power Station.

- Dismantling of the Observation Tower: a feasibility study was conducted in 1997 to evaluate options for dismantling the existing observation tower and elevator shaft at Prospect Point in the Niagara Reservation, and replacing the facility with a new underground elevator system for accessing the Maid of the Mist operation at the base of the Falls. The Observation Tower was subsequently redesigned and rehabilitated, re-opening on Memorial Day weekend of 2001.
- Aquarium Expansion Project: The Aquarium of Niagara, a private, not-for-profit organization, developed a proposed Master Plan for renovating and expanding the existing Aquarium. Improvements included the development of a totally new facility including a new aquarium and environmental education center intended to be a significant destination attraction for the region.
- Downtown Redevelopment Project: In June 1997, the City of Niagara Falls signed a redevelopment agreement with the Niagara Falls Redevelopment Corporation giving the Corporation development rights to approximately 142 acres of downtown land in return for the Corporation's commitment to invest a minimum of \$130 million in the area over the next eight years. A draft Developer Master Plan for this project was prepared in March 1998. The plan includes proposals focused on expanding the park experience, reconstructing the pedestrian fabric of downtown, and creating a new entertainment destination for the region. Specific actions oriented toward the Niagara waterfront and Niagara Reservation include removing the Parkway from the Reservation and restoring the lands to park uses, relocating the existing parking areas to the urban edge of the park, establishing design principles for park buildings and adjacent public attractions, including the Schoellkopf Museum and Aquarium, and establishing a new Visitors' Center.
- City of Niagara Falls Hyde Park Recreation Facilities: The City of Niagara Falls in partnership with the City of Niagara Falls School District and two private corporations (Honeywell Inc. and The Hiller Group) prepared a Master Plan for, and constructed the new Niagara Falls High School. This new facility, including the new school building and associated sports fields, is located directly adjacent to, and in some areas on top of, the aqueduct alignment for the Niagara Project. The District, in exchange for the property

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leased from the City had also agreed to renovate and upgrade the city's existing Sal Maglie Pool and Stadium Complex and Hyde Park Ice Pavilion located in Hyde Park.

3.0 Lower Niagara River

During the 1999 facility condition assessment study, the Villages of Youngstown and Lewiston and the Town of Lewiston had identified several recreation facility improvement and expansions within the towns. Proposals for recreation facilities located along and within the vicinity of the Lower Niagara River are briefly described below.

- Constitution Park: The Village of Youngstown was pursuing improvements to Constitution Park, including upgrading existing docks and improving public access to the Niagara River.
- Joseph Davis State Park Master Plan: In November 1998, the OPRHP released a draft Master Plan and EIS for modifications to Joseph Davis State Park. Proposed modifications include development of a new golf course (including a club house and driving range) in the park to be operated and maintained by the Town of Lewiston, renovations to the existing swimming pool complex, development of nature trails, and modifications to the existing parking areas.
- Pedestrian and Bikeway Trail System: The town-wide comprehensive plan includes provisions for sidewalks and bike paths connecting population and interest nodes within the community. Plans include a trail connecting Devil's Hole with Joseph Davis State Park with overlooks on the escarpment at Artpark and at Stella Flats opposite the Senior Citizens Center.
- Stella Flats Scenic Overlook and Fishing Access: The Town had applied for grant funding to construct a park and fishing pier access to the Niagara River on town property below the existing Senior Center. .
- Artpark Master Plan: In 1988, the OPRHP prepared a Master Plan for modifications to Earl W. Brydges Artpark. The plan included development of improved shoreline access to the river and several fishing piers, improved traffic circulation, improved pedestrian access from the upper parking area to the theater complex, including a large set of stairs,

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additional restrooms, upgrades to the performing arts facility, and additional picnic shelters.

- Lewiston Reservoir: Local fishing interests had requested that the NYPA develop fishing piers at Lewiston reservoir to enhance public access and fishing opportunities. No formal plans or proposals have been developed.
- Lewiston Landing: Lewiston Village proposed to expand Lewiston Landing to create more parking, open space and picnic facilities by removing an existing Public Works building across the street from the Landing and converting this space into parking and additional park lands. A new Public Works building is proposed at the top of South Eighth Street. However, this land is located within Artpark and therefore would have to be removed from the park boundaries. The Village has also requested development of additional finger piers at Lewiston Landing to provide eight visitor boat slips and eight rental boat slips. No formal plans have been developed for any of these proposed modifications.
- NYPA Right of Way Lands: The Town of Niagara had proposed development of a new Town Park and Community Center located between Grauer Road and several existing transmission line rights-of-way, including lines owned by the NYPA. The development would include parking and roadways, four new baseball diamonds, soccer fields, tennis courts, a community center, an amphitheater, picnic areas, and open space and trails. Land for the development had been acquired by the Town and a site development concept had been prepared as of 1999.