

To address public safety concerns, effective immediately, Great River Hydro (GRH) is taking steps to address those concerns along our access road to the Deerfield No.5 Hydro Station in Florida, MA. The area in question is located between the Dunbar Brook Picnic Area and the downstream whitewater take-out and loading zone. During busy public use periods, including but not limited to scheduled whitewater release days, moving vehicles and pedestrians are exposed to each other within a very limited travel corridor. Despite clearly marked “No Parking” areas, parked vehicles along the roadway and in the designated turn-around/loading zone exacerbate this issue and restrict the passage of emergency vehicles to the river access point.

To facilitate the public’s safe use of this recreational resource, GRH is implementing a traffic safety plan to include the following:

1. Improving the area at the top of the roadway, currently used for materials stockpile, as additional parking, as well as augmenting parking in and around Dunbar Brook Picnic Area.
2. Delineating a pedestrian walkway from the improved parking area to the take-out.
3. Establishing a roadway speed limit of 10 m.p.h.
4. Posting “No Parking” along the entire length of the roadway, including the turn-around and loading zone.
5. Installing a gate at the roadway entrance adjacent to the improved parking area.

Under this plan, public vehicular use of the roadway is specifically limited to accessing the take-out for active loading of people and equipment only. All parking is limited to the Dunbar Brook Picnic Area and area outside of the new gate. These restrictions apply to commercial and private, non-commercial users alike. This plan will be fully implemented in advance of the first scheduled whitewater release day (May 26). A Massachusetts State Police detail will be on-site during scheduled release days, in addition to increased random patrols, to educate the public and enforce the restrictions as necessary. Patrols will include the whitewater put-in area in Monroe.

GRH is also planning to repair the damaged roadway in stages over the next two years. These activities will be scheduled to minimize impacts to the recreational resources and users, and GRH will continue this open communication with interested parties as we proceed. Please contact Matthew Cole (413) 773-6509 or mcole@greatriverhydro.com) with any questions.