

White Pine Pumped Storage Project

Ely City Council Meeting
January 25, 2024



White Pine Waterpower, LLC
A Subsidiary of rPlus Hydro, LLP
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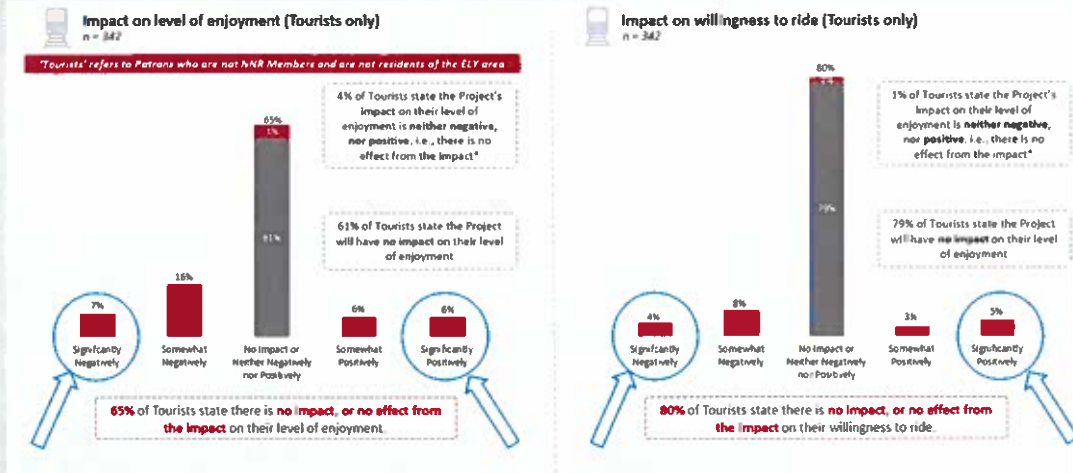


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NNR Visitor Use and Experience Survey

Interpreting the data



Only the "Significantly" responses are an indicator of potential change in habit.

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rPlus Hydro

Cicero
Implementing Data-Driven Strategy

NNR Visitor Use and Experience Survey

Executive Team Summary

October 2023

Executive Summary | Glossary

Key Terms

Patrons n=435	Refers to all individuals collectively in the sample i.e., all 435 survey participants.
Tourists n=342	Refers to those who are NOT from the Ely area and are NOT members of the NNR.
NNR Members n=73	Refers to those who are subscribed members of the NNR.
Locals n=27	Refers to those who live in the Ely area. ¹

The Mainline rail visuals which Patrons were shown (KOP 13/15²) when taking the survey depict the portion of the Mainline rail near the proposed project site. This portion of the Mainline is not operational, meaning no Mainline train excursions currently pass the proposed project site. Survey participants who took Mainline excursions went in the opposite direction towards Ruth, Nevada.



Q26 Are you staying overnight in the Ely Area, spending less than one day in the Ely area, or are you a resident of the Ely area?
¹Answered "I am a resident of the Ely area" to Q26
²Refer to the appendix to see photo simulations

Executive Summary | Study Overview & Methodology



Methodology

Cicero conducted live-intercept surveys using iPads and printed paper copies at the Nevada Northern Railway (NNR) depot to gauge visitor use, primarily interviewing Patrons before they boarded the train. Surveyors attempted to reach a variety of visitors, though participation in the survey was voluntary.

Patrons were shown photo simulations of what the proposed pumped storage project would look like from both the **Mainline** and **Hi-Line** rails and were then asked to indicate if and how much that would impact their **enjoyment level** and **willingness to ride** NNR trains.

Surveys fielded between June 14th and September 9th

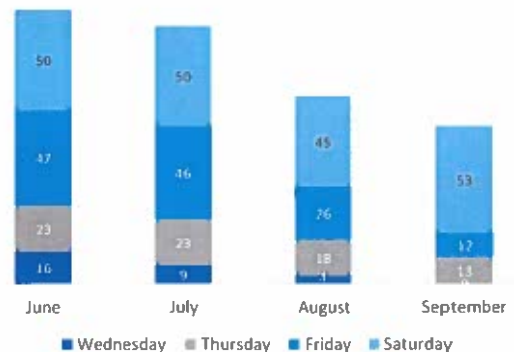


Sample Distribution

Population Size ¹ (total annual NNR riders)	Sample Size	Confidence Interval	Margin of Error ²
17,484	N=435	95%	5%

For market research generally, an acceptable margin of error is typically considered to fall between 4%-9% at a 95% confidence interval. Of equal, or perhaps greater importance than margin of error is the quality of sample – in this instance, survey participants are known to be actual Patrons of the NNR and therefore, constitute a very high-quality sample set.

It is important to note that the 'Tourist' subset analyzed (n=342) has a margin of error of 5%.



¹Population size extracted from NNR report included in the 09/14/23 Ely City Council Agenda
²Margin of error calculated by Survey Monkey, an online margin of error calculator

Executive Summary | Timeline



	June 14-17	July 19-22	August 9-12	September 6-9
% completed towards 435 survey total	31%	60%	81%	100%
Number of surveyed Patrons per day	Wednesday: 16 Thursday: 23 Friday: 47 Saturday: 50 Total: 136	Wednesday: 9 Thursday: 23 Friday: 46 Saturday: 50 Total: 128	Wednesday: 4 Thursday: 18 Friday: 26 Saturday: 45 Total: 93	Wednesday: 0 Thursday: 13 Friday: 12 Saturday: 53 Total: 78
Relevant call-outs and notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey fielding event kick-off meeting took place before survey collection Survey methodology passed off by all the parties involved About 10 Locals came by to question the Project throughout the week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision was made to allow all Patrons to take the survey besides NNR employees and volunteers for non-bias reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several Patrons mentioned an email sent by the NNR to its members stating their negative opinion of the Project.* Total number of weekly surveys noticeably decreased compared to the previous week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual event 'Race the Rails' occurred on Sept 9th increasing number of Patrons at the Depot Total number of weekly surveys noticeably decreased compared to the previous week

*The email referred to by several Patrons during the August fielding event is believed to be the same email sent by the NNR in April – said email was discussed and addressed by project stakeholders at that time. It is not possible to know exactly how many respondents read this email or the extent to which it may have led to negative bias toward the Project, but it is assumed that it did indeed introduce some amount of negative bias. To account for this, certain analyses in this report are conducted for all 'Patrons' i.e., all 435 survey responses, then repeated to include only 'Tourists' i.e., the 342 survey responses of NNR visitors who were neither Ely area residents, nor members of the NNR who would have received the email. This 'Tourists' subset of the total sample is likely less affected by bias and more representative of unaffiliated visitors to the NNR.



NNR Patron Profile and Demographics

Ridership Stats

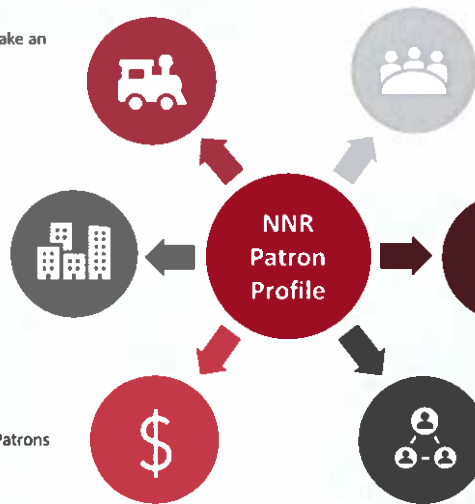
- 89% of Patrons have taken, or plan to take an NNR excursion
- 72% of Patrons have not taken an NNR excursion before

Travel Accommodations

- 6% of Patrons are residents of the Ely area
- 80% stay in a lodge, hotel, or motel during their stay

Money Spent

- 25% of the median amount of money Patrons spend in Ely is spent at the NNR



NNR Membership & Awareness

- 17% of Patrons are NNR Members; nearly half of those report entry-level membership (active level)
- 28% of Patrons have taken NNR excursions before

Location

- 37% of Patrons are from Nevada while Utah and California each constitute 18%
- 61% of Nevada Patrons are from Clark County with the next highest being White Pine County at 14%

Group Makeup

- NNR Patrons' median group size is two
- 69% of Patrons are visiting with no minors in their party
- Roughly 50% of Patrons are between age 60-79

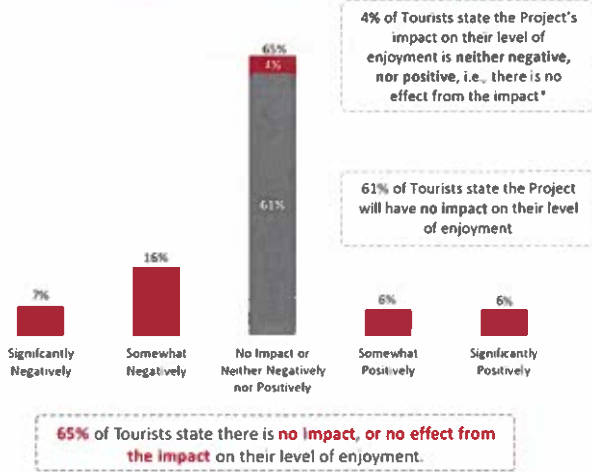


Tourists are especially likely to state the Project will have no impact on their level of enjoyment and willingness to ride the Hi-Line rail.

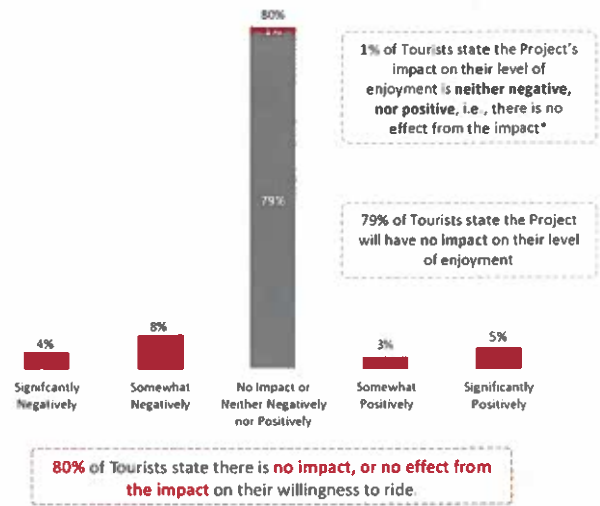


Impact on level of enjoyment (Tourists only)
n = 342

"Tourists" refers to Patrons who are not NNR Members and are not residents of the ELY area



Impact on willingness to ride (Tourists only)
n = 342



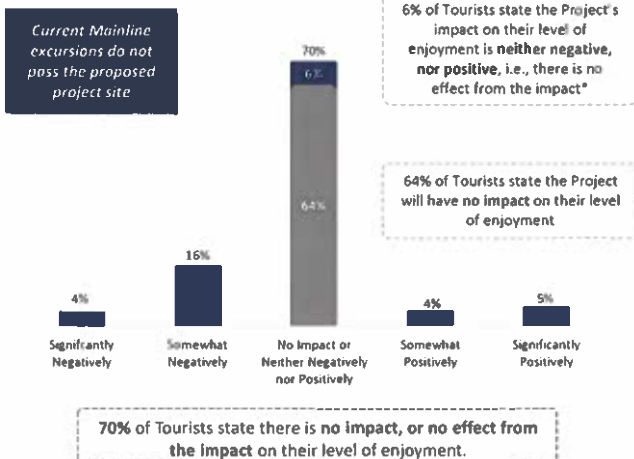
Q7a: How would the proposed pumped storage project impact your level of enjoyment when riding on this portion of the Hi-Line rail?
Q8a: How would the proposed pumped storage project impact your willingness to ride on this portion of the Hi-Line rail?
*If patron responded "Yes" to Q7/Q8 then answered Q7a/Q8a with "Neither Negatively or Positively"

Tourists are especially likely to state the Project will have no impact on their level of enjoyment and willingness to ride the Mainline rail.

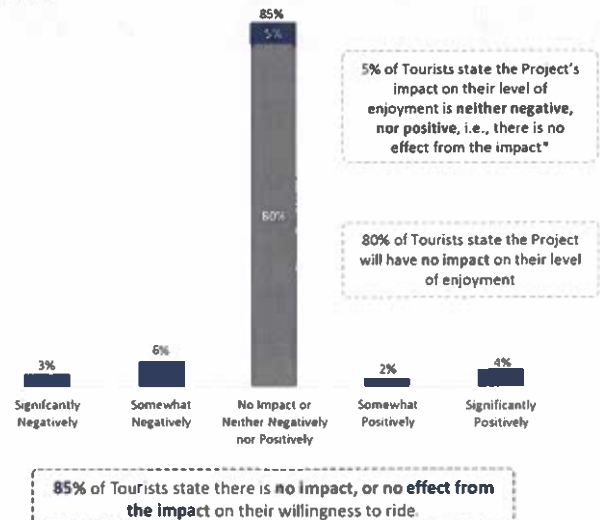


Impact on level of enjoyment (Tourists only)
n = 342

"Tourists" refers to Patrons who are not NNR Members and are not residents of the ELY area



Impact on willingness to ride (Tourists only)
n = 342



Q5a: How would the proposed pumped storage project impact your level of enjoyment when riding on this portion of the Mainline rail?
Q6a: How would the proposed pumped storage project impact your willingness to ride on this portion of the Mainline rail?
*If patron responded "Yes" to Q5/Q6 then answered Q5a/Q6a with "Neither Negatively or Positively"

Key Findings



A large majority of Patrons indicate the Project will have no impact on both their enjoyment level and willingness to ride.

This applies to both the Mainline and Hi-Line rails.



Patrons are slightly more likely to indicate possible impact from the Project for the Hi-Line rail than for the Mainline rail.

This includes both negative and positive impacts.



Very few NNR Patrons are local to the Ely area, few are NNR Members, and a large majority have NOT taken an NNR excursion before.

6% are local to the Ely area, 17% are NNR Members, and 72% have not taken an NNR excursion before.



NNR Members and Ely area residents (affiliated populations) are more likely to perceive negative impact from the Project.

These groups comprise a small portion of the total sample (17% and 6%, respectively).



Patrons indicate their willingness to ride will be less affected by the Project than their level of enjoyment.

Only 15% and 17% indicate negative impact on their willingness to ride compared to 26% and 29% on their level of enjoyment when riding the Mainline and Hi-Line rails, respectively.

Update on NPS Study Dispute Resolution

May 2022 - NPS filed a Request for Study Dispute Resolution with FERC, with three requests:

1. Additional KOP's
2. NNR Visitor Use and Experience Survey
3. NNR Socioeconomic Study

2022 through 2023 – Consultation between WPW/rPlus, NPS, and NNR to reach consensus on:

1. Additional KOP location and panoramic photo simulation angles
2. NNR Visitor Use and Experience survey instrument and methodology
3. NNR Socioeconomic data needs and methodology

July 2023 – Filed Supplemental Key Observation Points and Photo Simulations to Visual and Aesthetic Resources Study Report (to resolve request #1)

October 2023 – Filed NNR Visitor Use and Experience Survey and Assessment Report (to resolve request #2)

November 2023 – NPS relinquished request #3

November 2023 – Reached agreement with NPS to settle request for Study Dispute Resolution. WPW/rPlus agreed to:

1. Provide additional analysis of the Star Train Excursion for passengers of the NNR (using data collected Jun-Sept 2023)
2. Conduct addition fielding event and survey analysis for Santa Reindeer Flyer train Dec 2023
3. Redo the photo simulation from KOP#4 to show the NNR HiLine rail crossing

January 2024 – WPW/rPlus completed tasks agreed to in November settlement agreement.



THANK YOU

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