Rankin Rapids Development Reservoir Map

MCC-0595

Total boxes: 0
Linear feet: 2

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Rankin Rapids Development Reservoir Map (MCC-00595)

Shelf List Number: V10-595

Collection Overview

Creator

International Passamaquoddy Engineering Board

Lois Lozier (collector)

Pat Lozier (collector)

Dates

1959

Extent

One 2 x 1.5 foot map.

Provenance

The map was created in 1959 as part of the International Joint Commission Passamaquoddy Tidal Power Survey; Lois Lozier, resident of the Saint John Valley, collected it, passing it on to her son Pat. He then donated it to the Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes in the summer of 2026.

Language

English

Conservation Notes

Material has been placed in a protective sleeve.

Conditions Governing Access and Use

Restrictions

Access:

None

Physical:

None

Technical:

None

Rights Statement

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Recommended Citation

Rankin Rapids Development Reservoir Map (MCC-00595). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Collection Description

Historical and Biographical Information

The waters of the Saint John Valley have long since provided sustenance and means of transportation for Indigenous communities in the area, but the introduction of international borders has strained these relationships. To oversee future conflicts, the United States and Canada signed the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, creating an international governing board, the International Joint Commission (IJC), to manage disputes. Their first meeting took place in 1912, and their work has continued ever since.[1]

In 1956, the IJC was tasked with surveying the potential for tidal power plants in Passamaquoddy and Cobscook Bays along the Bay of Fundy. To accomplish the task,

[1] *History of the IJC*. International Joint Commission, 2026, https://www.ijc.org/en/who/history.

the IJC created two boards, including the International Passamaquoddy Engineering Board, which examined potential sites from 1956 to 1959. The Reservoir map, dated to September 1959, was likely created as part of this work. While their primary focus was the coastal sites, auxiliary power sources were also considered to maximize hydroelectric output. Rankin Rapids, 175 miles by air from the Bay of Fundy and along the Saint John River near St. Francis, Maine, was determined to be the ideal location. The combined cost of the tidal and river plants was estimated in 1959 at $630 million, with an annual energy generation of three billion kilowatt hours; while viable for the United States, the cost was not deemed economically justified for Canada.[2]

The project also faced resistance from conservationists, who protested the potential flooding of thousands of acres in Northern Maine. Others voiced concern over the impact the project would have on trout fishing and white water canoeing. In their April 1961 report, the IJC proposed an alternative to Rankin Rapids: a high dam upstream of the Allagash along the Saint John River at Big Rapids, and a low dam at the Lincoln school site, downstream of Rankin Rapids. This was determined to be less impactful on the wildlife.[3]

The Rankin Rapids hydroelectric project never saw fruition. In the following years, the United States Army Corps of Engineers began preliminary work on the proposed alternative: the Dickey-Lincoln School Lakes project, authorized by Congress in 1965. While beneficial for the power grid, drawbacks included cost and environmental impact, the most famous of which was an endangered plant, Furbish's lousewort, rediscovered by a botanist on survey in 1976. Many residents of Allagash would also need to relocate, with the reservoir flooding around a hundred thousand acres of forest. The project was deauthorized, again by Congress, in 1986.[4] The upper Saint John River and the Allagash River remain undammed.

Scope and Content

One 2 x 1.5 foot map of the northern Maine waterways, including the Saint Francis, Little Black, Big Black, Allagash, and Saint John Rivers. Potential dam and dike sites are marked, and peak water expansion has been outlined around each existing river.

Arrangement

Not Applicable

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[2] International Passamaquoddy Engineering Board. *Investigation of the International Passamaquoddy Tidal Project*. International Joint Commission, October 1959.
[3] *Report of the International Join Commission on the International Passamaquoddy Tidal Project*. International Joint Commission, April 1961.
[4] Town of Allagash collection (MCC-00582). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Separated Materials (If Applicable)

Newspapers and books originally donated alongside the map have been deaccessioned.

Subject Headings

Allagash (Me.)

Allagash River (Me.)

Dickey-Lincoln School Lakes Project

Hydroelectric power plants

Maps

Rankin Rapids Development Project

Saint John River (Me. and N.B.)

Related Materials

Dickey-Lincoln Dam newspaper clippings (MCC-00581). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Town of Allagash collection (MCC-00582). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Collection Inventory

One 2 x 1.5 foot map dated September 1959.