

HAT 3 Stakeholder Meeting Summary March 20, 2019 10 am to 2 pm E. W. Shell Fisheries Center, Auburn, AL

Participants:

Taconya Goar - Alabama Department of Conservation of Natural Resources Mike Holley – Alabama Department of Conservation of Natural Resources Nick Nichols – Alabama Department of Conservation of Natural Resources Angie Anderegg – Alabama Power Jeff Baker – Alabama Power Jason Carlee – Alabama Power Keith Chandler – Alabama Power Steve Krotzer – Alabama Power Tina Mills – Alabama Power Curt Chaffin – Alabama Rivers Alliance Kristie Coffman – Auburn University Dennis Devries – Auburn University Elise Irwin – Auburn University Ehlana Stell – Auburn University Russell Wright - Auburn University Matt and Ann Campbell – Alabama Water Watch Leslie Allen – Balch and Bingham Jim Hancock – Balch and Bingham Colin Dinken - Kleinschmidt Amanda Fleming – Kleinschmidt Jason Moak – Kleinschmidt

Action Items:

- Alabama Power will continue to conduct relicensing studies and provide periodic updates to Harris Action Team (HAT) members.
- Kleinschmidt will add Matt and Ann Campbell (Alabama Water Watch (AWW)) to the email stakeholder database.

Notes:

The following is a summary of the March 20, 2019 Harris Action Team (HAT) 3 meeting. The presentations from the meeting are included in Attachment A.

Introduction - Angie Anderegg (Alabama Power)

Angie gave an introduction, a safety moment, and the status of the Alabama Power R.L. Harris Project (Project) relicensing process. Alabama Power filed Study Plans in November 2018 and comments were made during and following the December 2018 study plan meeting. Revised Study Plans were filed March 13, 2019. The FERC will issue their decision on the Study Plans on April 13, 2019.

Aquatic Resources – Jason Moak (Kleinschmidt)

Jason discussed the goal, geographic scope, and components of the Aquatic Resources Study, including temperature requirements of fish, an assessment of temperature data from both

regulated and unregulated reaches of the river, and fish community surveys by both wadeable (30+2 method) and boat-mounted methods. Jason explained that recent weather events and high flows have delayed field work, which will continue in the spring. Results of the 2017 and 2018 fish surveys at Heflin, Malone, and Wadley were similar to results reported over the past 14 years. The majority of specimens sampled were species of minnows and sunfish. Next, Jason explained that the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) was looking to develop a standardized procedure for non-wadeable areas similar to the 30+2 method used in wadeable reaches. Jeff Baker (Alabama Power) noted that fish were sampled at Wadley and Horseshoe Bend using boat-mounted electrofishing in summer of 2018. Some species found in these areas are not typically seen in wadeable areas. Jason explained that Horseshoe Bend yielded twice as many fish as Wadley. Matt Campbell asked if dissolved oxygen or other water quality factors at Horseshoe Bend could have affected those results. Jason replied that it is hard to determine, as monitors are not present in these locations yet and these were individual sampling events; multiple sampling events may have reduced variation between the two sites.

Aquatic Resources Study Continued – Dr. Dennis Devries, Dr. Russell Wright, and Ehlana Stell (Auburn University)

Dr. Devries discussed the research objectives. The first objective is to review relevant research to determine temperature tolerances and limits of Redbreast Sunfish, Tallapoosa Bass, and Channel Catfish. Dr. Devries explained that there is little temperature data available for the Redbreast Sunfish and Tallapoosa Bass species; however, Spotted Bass data could possibly be used as surrogate data for Tallapoosa Bass. There is more temperature data available for Channel Catfish than Redbreast Sunfish and Tallapoosa Bass, but much of this is applied to pond settings, and may not be applicable to riverine habitat.

Dr. Wright then explained bioenergetics and how temperature is involved. Many bioenergetic components are temperature dependent. Bioenergetics will be used in this study to assess the effects of Harris Dam operations on fish growth and stress. Dr. Wright explained the components of bioenergetics models and how results may be used in predicting growth. Dr. Wright explained the limitations to the bioenergetics model: (1) there is currently no model for Redbreast Sunfish or Tallapoosa Bass (although one could possibly be generated using similar species such as Bluegill Sunfish and Spotted Bass), (2) the current model for Channel Catfish is derived from pond systems instead of riverine systems, and (3) in the current model code, temperature and activity operate on a daily time step, so a model using a sub-daily timestep may be necessary.

Ehlana described the temperature data provided by Alabama Power to Auburn University. Minimum, maximum, and mean temperature data were presented by location (tailrace, Malone, and Wadley) and compared pre- and post-Green Plan conditions from 2000-2019. Ehlana displayed histograms depicting daily temperature range (daily maximum – daily minimum) for each location and noted that the occurrence of daily temperature ranges of 10° C or greater was extremely rare. Jason explained that water is drawn into the forebay around 30 feet below the surface at full pool and may be pulled from shallower depths depending on the number of turbines that are running. Ehlana said that in winter, reservoir waters are not stratified and there would not be a large temperature difference between surface and deeper waters. Dr. Wright stated that presently, the temperature difference may be only a few degrees. Taconya Goar (Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)) stated that some variability may be missed when using daily data instead of hourly data. Dr. Wright said daily mean temperatures were calculated from hourly measurements, and the daily fluctuation were calculated as the difference between the maximum and minimum hourly reading for each day. Jason noted that some additional analysis may be performed to determine the magnitude and frequency of sub-daily temperature fluctuations (e.g. 1-hr, 2-hr, etc). Matt Campbell asked about the effects of turbidity on fish. Jason noted that excess turbidity could result from bank erosion or sediment contributions from tributaries and described the elements of the Harris Erosion and Sedimentation Study. Jason explained that Auburn's 2018 fish sampling in the fall and winter did not occur due to high flow conditions, and sampling would likely begin in April 2019. Matt Campbell asked about shoal lilies (or Cahaba lilies). Jason replied that while we are aware of the presence of lilies at Irwin Shoals, stakeholders have not indicated an issue that would require a study.

Downstream Release Alternatives – Jason Moak (Kleinschmidt)

Jason discussed the goal, geographic scope, and components of the Downstream Aquatic Habitat Study, including mesohabitat analysis (desktop analysis of the types of available habitat), installation of water level loggers at 20 sites between Harris Dam through Horseshoe Bend, and the use of the HEC-RAS model to evaluate the effect of current operations on the amount and persistence of wetted aquatic habitat, especially shoals and shallow-water habitat. The mesohabitat was evaluated using GIS to classify reaches of the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam as pools, riffles, or runs. Some stretches were easy to classify using aerial imagery. Jason explained that the classifications may be improved with information gathered during field work. The mesohabitat type was summarized by reach: Malone, Wadley, Bibby's Ferry, Germany Ferry, Horseshoe Bend, and Irwin Shoals. Jason explained that level logger locations were chosen based on the need to space them out evenly along the river and to incorporate data from pools, riffles, and runs. Lake Harris will begin filling on April 1, potentially opening a window of flows in which level loggers can be deployed. Jason anticipates collecting one year of data and will download data from the loggers on a regular basis. Taconya asked if ADEM was measuring turbidity and Jason noted ADEM did gather some turbidity data every few years dating back 15-20 years, which would be used as a component in the Harris Water Quality Study. Keith Chandler (Alabama Power) said Alabama Power would incorporate any turbidity data from ADEM according to the Water Quality Study Plan.

Jason explained the HEC-RAS model. It is based on transects crossing the river (cross sections) and the topographic profile. Alabama Power collected bathymetric data from the upper reach (Harris Dam to Wadley) in the 2000s. Alabama Power also conducted a depth survey of the thalweg (center of the river channel) to provide data for the HEC-RAS model during its development in the 2000s. However, many model cross-sections downstream of Wadley were interpolated and were not actual bathymetric profiles. Jason presented examples of transects with good and poor bathymetry data and noted the importance of accurate data when evaluating wetted habitat. As a result, Alabama Power will be collecting additional bathymetric data. Some bathymetry data was collected during level logger deployment in fall 2018. Jason showed a figure displaying the slope of the river and the water depth. Dr. Wright commented that it appears flow rate will negatively correlate with depth. Jason explained that this study is trying to quantify the amount and persistence of wetted habitat and to compare present conditions with possible alternatives. Jason stated that the Downstream Release Alternatives Study will review current operations and several possible alternatives: no change (baseline), a continuous minimum flow of 150 cubic feet per second (cfs), or a modified Green Plan (changing the timing of releases).

The group then embarked on a walking tour of the laboratory facilities, including views of the swimming chambers and static respirometry labs. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

R.L. Harris Project Relicensing

HAT 3 – Aquatic and Wildlife Resources

March 20, 2018



Safety Moment



In case of an emergency.....

- Designee will contact 911
- Exit locations
- Designated meeting area
- Location of AED



Meeting Agenda

- Process Update
- Aquatic Resources Study
 - Fall Wadeable Fish Survey Update
 - Temperature Data Analysis
- LUNCH
- Downstream Aquatic Habitat Study
 - Draft Mesohabitat Analysis
 - Level Logger Deployment Update
 - HEC-RAS Model Development
- Research Lab Tour

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March 13 - Revised Study Plans Filed

April 12 - FERC Study Plan Determination

Summer/Fall 2019 – Various HAT meetings

Aquatic Resources Study



<u>Goal</u>

Evaluate the effects of the Harris Project on aquatic resources.

Geographic Scope

Harris Reservoir, the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam through Horseshoe Bend, and in selected unregulated reference streams.

Study Components

- Desktop Assessment of Aquatic Resources
- Downstream Fish Population Research
 - Fish Temperature Requirements
 - Assessment of Temperature Data from Regulated and Unregulated Reaches
 - Fish Community Surveys
 - Wadeable standardized (30+2) sampling
 - Boat Electrofishing
 - Bioenergetics Modeling





2017 & 2018 Fish Survey Results



	Heflin		Malone		Wadley	
Family	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Catostomidae	28	19	14	23	16	15
Centrarchidae	95	51	45	22	97	39
Clupeidae	-	-	1	-	-	-
Cottidae	2	1	-	-	-	1
Cyprinidae	207	121	61	91	41	127
Fundulidae	23	6	2	1	2	3
Ictaluridae	8	4	6	1	5	4
Percidae	242	124	153	174	80	88
Poeciliidae	5	-	-	-	-	-
Total Individuals	610	326	282	312	241	277
# Таха	31	26	19	18	20	27
Diversity (H')	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.7



Tour lie		Medieu	Horseshoe
Family		wadley	Bena
Clupeidae	Gizzard Shad	-	1
Cyprinidae	Alabama Shiner	5	31
	Blacktail Shiner	11	15
	Common Carp	11	9
	Grass Carp	-	3
	Silverstripe Shiner	10	29
	Striped Shiner	3	-
	Tallapoosa Shiner	1	1
Catostomidae	Alabama Hogsucker	1	6
	Black Redhorse	1	6
	Blacktail Redhorse	33	49
	Golden Redhorse	-	1
	Largescale Stoneroller	8	-
	River Redhorse	-	2
Ictaluridae	Blue Catfish	-	8
	Channel Catfish	2	17
	Flathead Catfish	-	3
Fundulidae	Blackspotted Topminnow	3	1
Centrarchidae	Alabama Bass	13	81
	Black Crappie	3	-
	Bluegill	33	21
	Lepomis sp. Hybrid	1	-
	Green Sunfish	-	5
	Largemouth Bass	3	
	Redbreast Sunfish	51	150
	Redear Sunfish	1	4
	Shadow Bass	11	18
	Tallapoosa Bass	4	16
Percidae	Bronze Darter	1	5
	Lipstick Darter	1	-
	Muscadine Darter	2	1
	Speckled Darter	1	-
	Tallapoosa Darter	1	-
	# Individuals	215	483
	# Taxa	26	26







1. Summarize the data that are available in the literature concerning temperature requirements for target species, including spawning and hatching temperatures, lethal limits, and thermal tolerance

2. Summarize the data that are available in reports and from relevant agencies for water temperatures across a gradient downstream from the Harris Dam tailrace and compare those data with similar data from reference sites upstream of Harris Reservoir





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able 4. Estim	ated physiological parameter values of Definition	f channel catfish used as in Value	puts to the Hewett & Johnson (1992) model Reference	
	Consumption			il a more
A	Intercept Cmax	0.33	Cuenco et al. (1985), Andrews et al. (19	
в	Slope	-0.33	Cuenco et al. (1985)	APP Contraction
Q	Temperature	2.3	Andrews & Matsuda (1975)	
	dependent coefficient			
	Optimum temperature	31°C		
то				
то		30°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972)	
то		30°C 30–32°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972) Gammon (1973; large adult)	
то	Maximum temperature	30°C 30–32°C 37°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972) Gammon (1973; large adult)	
то	Maximum temperature Acclimation temperature	30°C 30–32°C 37°C 36,6°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972) Gammon (1973; large adult) Allen & Strawn (1968)	
то	Maximum temperature Acclimation temperature (=26)	30°C 30–32°C 37°C 36.6°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972) Gammon (1973; large adult) Allen & Strawn (1968)	
тм	Maximum temperature Acclimation temperature (=26) Indiana maximum	30°C 30−32°C 37°C 36.6°C 37.8°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972) Gammon (1973; large adult) Allen & Strawn (1968) Proffitt & Brenda (1971)	
тм	Maximum temperature Acclimation temperature (=26) Indiana maximum temperature	30°C 30-32°C 37°C 36.6°C 37.8°C	Andrews & Stickney (1972) Gammon (1973; large adult) Allen & Strawn (1968) Proffitt & Brenda (1971)	

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Uses of Bioenergetics Models

- evaluation of stocking
- nutrient recycling
- contaminant accumulation
- aquaculture
- exploring evolutionary influences

Uses of Bioenergetics Models

- evaluation of stocking
- nutrient recycling
- contaminant accumulation
- aquaculture
- exploring evolutionary influences
- habitat effects on growth
- effects of environmental stress

Growth = Consumption - (Costs)

Costs = Respiration + Feces + Urine + Cost of Digestion







Model Inputs

Individual Model

- Growth
 - -body size, caloric density, reproduction
- Diet
 - prey type, caloric density
- Temperature

Population Level

- Density
- Mortality

Application of Bioenergetics Approaches to Harris Dam Impact Assessment

- Temperature fluctuation effect on metabolism
- Flow impact on activity rate metabolism
- Downstream shifts on community structure and food availability

Limitations of the "Wisconsin" Bioenergetics Model

- Currently no model for Tallapoosa Bass or Redbreast Sunfish
- Channel Catfish model parameters from lentic systems
- Temperature and activity operate on a daily time step













































































Ongoing Work

Begin work on objectives 3 and 4
Objective 3: Quantify the fish community across a gradient downstream from the Harris Dam tailrace and in a reference site upstream of Harris Reservoir
Objective 4: Quantify effects of temperature and flow variation on target fish species energy budgets using bioenergetics modeling

Downstream Aquatic Habitat Study



<u>Goal</u>

To develop a model that describes the relationship between Green Plan operations and aquatic habitat.

Geographic Scope

Harris Dam through Horseshoe Bend

Methods

- 1. Mesohabitat Analysis: Desktop analysis of the types of available habitat (classified as riffle, run, pool)
- 2. Install water level loggers at up to 20 sites
- 3. Use HEC-RAS to evaluate the effect of current operations on the amount and persistence of wetted aquatic habitat, especially shoal/shallow-water habitat.

Mesohabitat Analysis





Mesohabitat Type by Reach (hectares)

Reach	Pool
Malone	50.7
Wadley	20.4
Bibbys Ferry	86.3
Germany's Ferry	60.3
Horseshoe Bend	60.7
Irwin Shoals	87.9
Grand Total	366.3



Water Level Logger Deployments



HEC-RAS Model Development











~200 cross-sections

Collect bathymetry data at:

- Poorly interpolated cross-sections
- New cross-sections where gradient is steep

