



R. L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

FERC No. 2628

Meeting Summary

HAT 6 Meeting- Southeast Archeological Conference (SEAC)¹

November 6, 2019 9:30 am- 2:30 pm

Participants:

Rachel McNamara – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) (via phone)
Stacye Hathorn- Alabama Historical Commission (AHC)
Eric Sipes- Alabama Historical Commission (AHC)
RaeLynn Butler - Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Turner Hunt- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Gano Perez- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Robin Soweka- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Emman Spain- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
LeeAnne Wendt- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Elizabeth Toombs- Cherokee Nation (via phone)
Angie Anderegg- Alabama Power (via phone)
Keith Chandler - Alabama Power (via phone)
Bill Gardner - Alabama Power
Matt Gage- Office of Archaeological Research (OAR)
Kristen Koors- Office of Archaeological Research (OAR)
Carey Oakley- Affinity LLC.
Amanda Fleming - Kleinschmidt Associates

Action Items:

- Alabama Power will send the proposed APE/Project Boundary maps, meeting presentation, and meeting notes to meeting participants.
- Alabama Power will provide specific due dates for meeting participants to provide written comments.
- Alabama Power will distribute the research design for cultural resources assessments at Lake Harris and Skyline.
- RaeLynn will contact Angie with a request for joining additional Harris Action Teams (HATs).
- Alabama Power will provide consultation information (including consulting parties and consultation timeframe) in the Inadvertent Discovery Plan.
- Alabama Power will continue to pursue fish weir data from Charles Hubbard collection.
- Alabama Power will provide photos of rock shelters to the Muscogee, where and when available.
- RaeLynn will provide Alabama Power with any additional information related to TCPs and Muscogee (Creek) oral histories.
- Kristen and Muscogee (Creek) will conduct a TCP site visit in Spring 2020.

Notes:

¹ Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, Alabama Power limited the meeting participants.

Amanda gave an update on the relicensing process and reviewed the six Harris Action Teams (HATs) and how cultural resource impacts are being evaluated as part of other studies. Meeting notes for all HATs are available on the relicensing website at www.harrisrelicensing.com.

RaeLynn asked how the evaluation of impacts to threatened and endangered (T & E) species is incorporated in the relicensing process, specifically if it is a part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Angie explained that T&E impacts are evaluated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Endangered Species Act Section 7 process which has to be complete before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) can issue a new license.

There was a question about how to receive information on the other HATs. Amanda said that anyone can be on any or all of the HATs. Interested parties should send an email to Angie to request being added to a specific HATs distribution list. Rachel reminded everyone that all stakeholders who are signed up for eSubscription will receive everything filed with FERC related to the Harris Project. There is a link on www.harrisrelicensing.com to FERC's eSubscription site that has instructions on to register.

Stacye asked if participants in site visits would be limited to tribes and archaeological professionals. Amanda said yes, that is the case and site information is provided to a limited group.

Bill explained how hunting lands and associated food plots are unique to Harris. Alabama Power tried to avoid known cultural resource sites when the food plots were developed. Therefore, the vast majority of upland cultural resources sites are not located within a food plot. Food plots managers will be trained on how to avoid sites and identify looting. This training will be documented in the Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). In addition, Alabama Power will provide additional details on food plot management and include provisions for site inspections on a regular basis.

RaeLynn noted that the Muscogee likely won't be able to participate in all of the field investigations. The Muscogee requested pictures and descriptions of the site assessments.

Turner asked what happens when we know there is looting. Bill and Keith explained that our reservoir surveillance personnel do surveillance on a regular basis and are trained in looting identification. If they discover looting, Alabama Power contacts the Alabama Marine Police, who approach looters, tell them they can't dig, etc. Stacye explained how the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) handles looting. Bill noted that no one has permission to dig on Alabama Power property and Alabama Marine Police are aware of this. Outreach programs and public education on looting will be included in HPMP.

RaeLynn mentioned the need to elaborate on the timing for responses due to inadvertent discovery in the HPMP. Amanda noted that the current license requirement in Article 62 says to consult with SHPO in the event of inadvertent discovery, but we will also consult with tribes as appropriate.

Matt went over the Lake Harris survey schedule and site evaluation methods.

Matt then went over the Skyline site selection and evaluation methods. Keith noted that Section 7 consultation is ongoing, and that Alabama Power would take all necessary precautions and consultations related to biota in the caves.

Elizabeth asked if they will have to opportunity to review and comment on methodology. Matt will adjust his draft research design based on the feedback from this meeting and Alabama Power will share it with appropriate stakeholders for comments.

Amanda gave an overview of the HPMP outline. There was a question about Quasi-Public Use lands. Angie explained that Quasi-Public Use areas are specific locations that provide potential use by non-profits such as scouts.

The Inadvertent Discovery Plan will be a stand-alone plan that is referenced in the HPMP. The draft will be sent out in late November/early December with the final submitted to FERC next April. RaeLynn asked about curation of materials and Amanda noted the details will be presented in Documentation of Archaeological Materials section of the Inadvertent Discovery Plan.

Amanda reviewed the Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) Identification Plan outline. She noted that the draft plan should be complete by late February and it will be filed with FERC in April. Amanda also noted that the ethnography portion of the plan applies to the Muscogee Creek Nation only because to-date they are the only tribe that has requested it. She asked that everyone send Alabama Power any thoughts on what may be missing from the outline.

There was a question about timing of the HPMP and Programmatic Agreement (PA). Rachel explained that a PA can't be executed until a NEPA document is issued.

In conclusion, Amanda Fleming asked for any further comments or discussion, and, with none given, thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting.