



R. L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

FERC No. 2628

Meeting Summary HAT 5 Meeting December 11, 2019 9:00 am to 10:00 am Conference Call

Participants:

Angie Anderegg – Alabama Power
Dave Anderson – Alabama Power
Kate Cosnahan – Kleinschmidt Associates
Colin Dinken – Kleinschmidt Associates
Amanda Fleming – Kleinschmidt Associates
Tina Mills – Alabama Power
Alan Creamer – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
Martha Hunter – Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA)
Carol Knight – Stakeholder
Donna Matthews – Stakeholder
Sarah Salazar – FERC

Action Items:

- Alabama Power will revise the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Research Plan to include a paper survey option in the mailings.
- Alabama Power will develop an anonymous internet survey for river users to express opinions regarding their recreation experience on the Tallapoosa River.
- Carol Knight, Martha Hunter, and Donna Matthews will talk to local landowners they know about the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey (meeting, social media, etc).

Meeting Summary:

Angie Anderegg (Alabama Power) opened the meeting by introducing everyone. Amanda Fleming (Kleinschmidt Associates) then explained the purpose, study area, goals and objectives, and timeline of the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Research Plan (Research Plan).

Martha Hunter (ARA) and Donna Matthews (Stakeholder) stated that reviewing and commenting on the landowner survey portion of the Research Plan seemed to be happening fast, and stakeholders usually have a longer time to comment. They also expressed concerns that some landowners may not have internet access and would not be able to participate in the landowner survey. Angie responded that Alabama Power could also send out a paper version of the landowner survey. Donna suggested that local people may need to communicate with other local people to get full cooperation, perhaps by sending out hard copies of the survey. Carol Knight knows several landowners that do not use the river but let other people use it from their land. These users would have valuable opinions so she asked if she would be allowed to take copies of the survey to distribute them to these river users. Amanda replied that the downstream recreation user study included a question asking river users where they started their trip and where they planned to end it, listing private property as an option.

Martha commented that a public meeting may be a good way to brief downstream landowners and recreators on filling out the survey. Amanda replied that Alabama Power held several public meetings in 2018-2019, giving people an opportunity to provide input. Donna suggested evening meetings and more convenient venues and ways to collect information. Carol asked about input from other river recreationists using private property. Amanda suggested that perhaps the survey could be adapted to include those who access the river via private land.

Donna asked when the results from the downstream portion of the recreation study would be available and Amanda replied that the data is still being analyzed. Donna asked how many interviews were administered to recreators during the downstream user survey and Colin Dinken (Kleinschmidt Associates) replied that the number was around 200.

Carol expressed concern that locals may not be represented by the questionnaires issued at public recreation sites. Angie agreed and said that is one reason why the landowner survey was developed. Alabama Power continues to post information on the relicensing website for stakeholders that may or may not be participating in a Harris Action Team (HAT).

Amanda reminded the attendees that comments on the landowner survey are due to Angie by December 16, 2019 and Alabama Power will file the landowner survey with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on December 18, 2019. Those stakeholders that signed up for eLibrary on the FERC website will see the filing when it posts in FERC's system. Sarah Salazar (FERC) asked if there was someone to contact if a landowner needed help completing the survey. Amanda replied that there will be a number to contact Dr. Kevin Hunt, the researcher who designed the landowner survey.

Sarah suggested that HAT 5 members could collaborate with Alabama Power to develop the cover letter for the landowner survey and add statements from landowners and ARA to encourage participation. Martha commented that a longer timeframe may be needed to comment and collaborate. Carol offered to help inform landowners about the survey in the local paper or on social media. Regarding the timeframe, Angie stated that the licensing process has certain deadlines to which Alabama Power must adhere. The landowner survey will be filed with FERC before the holidays and will be sent to landowners on January 6, 2020¹. Landowners will have a few months to complete the survey and return it (if paper survey) or complete the online survey. Amanda stated that Alabama Power put a lot of effort into developing this landowner survey so it would be great to receive plenty of responses.

The group discussed capturing feedback from the years predating the dam when people may have used the river more frequently. Angie noted that Alabama Power has already received several stakeholder comments on this issue. Angie suggested that question 14 of the landowner survey could be expanded to include users' opinions of historical river conditions. Sarah said the cover letter may need a sentence or two explaining that it is not important to know everything about the Harris Project or the FERC licensing process to participate in and complete the survey.

¹ Based on stakeholder comments, Alabama Power does not plan on distributing the landowner survey until February 2020.

Donna asked about how best to stay informed on this study and the overall Harris Project relicensing process. Angie responded that stakeholders can stay informed through the communications to HAT 5 and the relicensing website at harrisrelicensing.com.

The meeting concluded at 10 AM central.