

December 19, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Project No. 2628-065
R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project
Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Research Plan

Ms. Kimberly D. Bose
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street N.
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Secretary Bose,

Alabama Power Company (Alabama Power) is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensee for the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project (Harris Project) (FERC No. 2628). On March 13, 2019, Alabama Power filed 10 study plans for FERC approval as part of the Integrated Licensing Process for the Harris Project. In its April 12, 2019 Study Plan Determination for the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) notes that Alabama Power “may choose to conduct any study not specifically required herein that it feels would add pertinent information to the record.”

As Alabama Power gathered information on recreation use of the Tallapoosa River downstream of the Harris Project as outlined in the Recreation Evaluation Study Plan, researchers noted a lack of information from downstream landowners. In order to supplement data collected at public recreation sites on the Tallapoosa River downstream of the Project, Alabama Power plans to survey downstream landowners regarding river-related recreation. The survey, along with details on the survey area, research goals and objectives, and research plan are presented in the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Research Plan (attached).

In order to provide stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the survey, Alabama Power hosted a Harris Action Team (HAT) 5 meeting on December 11, 2019. At this meeting, Alabama Power received several comments on the timing and intent of the survey. Meeting notes are attached to the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Research Plan. Alabama Power also received written comments from Martha Hunter (Alabama Rivers Alliance) and Donna Matthews (stakeholder). In response to the comments received, Alabama Power has revised the plan to include a paper survey option and is also developing an anonymous internet survey for river users to express opinions regarding their recreation experience on the Tallapoosa River. The anonymous survey will be in addition to the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey and data will be analyzed separately. Additional details on the anonymous survey will be communicated to HAT 5 members in the coming months.

Finally, to address stakeholder concerns on the timeframe of the Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey, Alabama Power does not plan on distributing the landowner survey until February 2020.

If there are any questions concerning this filing, please contact me at arsegars@southernco.com or 205-257-2251.

Sincerely,



Angie Anderegg
Harris Relicensing Project Manager

Attachment

cc: Harris Action Team 5 Stakeholder List

Attachment
Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Research Plan



TALLAPOOSA RIVER LANDOWNER SURVEY RESEARCH PLAN

R.L. HARRIS PROJECT
FERC NO. 2628

Prepared for:

Alabama Power Company
Birmingham, Alabama

Prepared by:

Kleinschmidt

December 2019

TALLAPOOSA RIVER LANDOWNER SURVEY RESEARCH PLAN
R.L. HARRIS PROJECT
FERC NO. 2628

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TALLAPOOSA RIVER LANDOWNER SURVEY RESEARCH PLAN
R.L. HARRIS PROJECT
FERC NO. 2628

1.0 PURPOSE

In its April 12, 2019 Study Plan Determination for the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) notes that “Alabama Power may choose to conduct any study not specifically required herein that it feels would add pertinent information to the record.” As Alabama Power Company (Alabama Power) gathered information on recreation use of the Tallapoosa River downstream of the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2628) (Project), researchers noted a lack of information from downstream landowners. In order to supplement data collected at public recreation sites on the Tallapoosa River downstream of the Project, Alabama Power plans to survey downstream landowners regarding river-related recreation.

2.0 STUDY AREA

For purposes of this proposal, a downstream landowner is defined as one owning residential, vacation, agricultural, or vacant land beginning at the R.L. Harris Dam (Harris Dam) in Randolph County, Alabama traveling southward through Chambers County, and then into Tallapoosa County until the river reaches Lake Martin near the Jaybird Landing Boat Ramp maintained by Alabama Power (Hunt 2019).

3.0 RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the study is to determine how landowners in Randolph, Chambers, and Tallapoosa County, Alabama (who own property along the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam) use it for recreational purposes, and how instream flow affects their recreational activity and satisfaction in the study area. To achieve this goal, the four objectives are to:

- 1) Identify downstream landowners and obtain their mailing address.
- 2) Develop a survey instrument that will collect information from downstream landowners on their recreational use of the Tallapoosa River, use by others they may provide access to on their property, landowner perception of instream flow, and their attitudes about

recreation and other resource issues on the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam to Jaybird Landing Boat Ramp.

- 3) Send landowners an introductory pre-survey letter via first-class mail in February 2020 informing them of the study, followed one week later with a first-class mailing with a request to participate in study. This mailing will include a paper copy of the questionnaire, including a self-addressed stamped envelope for return, and also provide directions to fill out the questionnaire online, if the landowner so chooses. One reminder letter will be sent, as necessary, in March 2020.
- 4) Use information collected from the landowners who complete the survey instrument to characterize their use of the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam to Jaybird Landing Boat Ramp, and precise information on river flow provided by Alabama Power to determine how instream flow affects their recreational use and satisfaction on the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam.
- 5) Combine landowner/landholder information with data gathered at public recreation sites as part of the 2019 Tallapoosa River User Survey (Hunt 2019).

4.0 GENERAL RESEARCH PLAN

1. Alabama Power provided the Principal investigator (PI) with the Randolph, Chambers, and Tallapoosa County tax databases for individuals who own property(ies) along the Tallapoosa River. Breakdown of the total number of properties is below.

PARCEL LAND USE CATEGORY	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES
AGRICULTURAL LAND	14
ALABAMA POWER OWNED LAND	40
COMMERCIAL PROPERTY	8
INDUSTRIAL TIMBERLAND	105
RESIDENTIAL LAND (residential or vacation)	78
STATE OF ALABAMA OWNED LAND	21
U.S. GOVERNMENT OWNED LAND	10
UNIDENTIFIED LAND	22
VACANT LAND	150
TOTAL	448

For purposes of this study, only landowners who own residential, vacation, agricultural land that may be used as a residence, or non-industrial vacant land that is tied to an individual landowner will be studied. After removing duplicate listings for landowners, this will result in a sample size of **n=205** landowners who will be targeted with the survey.

2. A survey instrument (Attachment A) was developed by PI in close cooperation with Alabama Power. The survey focuses on landowner's use of the Tallapoosa River for purposes of recreation (i.e., swimming, boating, canoeing, kayaking, wade or boat/canoe/kayak fishing, and wildlife watching) including days of participation, use of the Tallapoosa River on the landowner's property by others, and attitudes about their

experience with the Tallapoosa River and water level/flow. Additionally, landowners will be provided two open-ended comment sections to provide feedback on a) recreation on the Tallapoosa River, and b) other resources issues in the Tallapoosa River associated with the Harris Dam Relicensing Project. Finally, the survey includes a mechanism (Attachment B) for landowners to provide the acceptability of water levels at a given point in time within 30 days of the survey start date.

3. The online survey will be housed on SurveyMonkey.com, a commercial website. A short URL, such as: <https://surveymonkey.com/Tallapoosa> will be used for the survey for ease of use by participants. Each landowner will be provided with a unique ID number to use when they log into the survey that can be only used once to complete the questionnaire. This ID will also be on the paper copy of the questionnaire to ensure duplicate surveys are not submitted.
4. The PI will prepare three (3) mailings associated with this undertaking. First, an introductory Pre-Survey Letter will be sent to each of the 205 landowners (signed by an Alabama Power representative) on February 3, 2020 with general information about the study. Second, a letter requesting landowner participation in study, directing them to the online survey, and providing landowners with a paper copy of the questionnaire, self-addressed stamped envelope, and return postcard will be sent on February 10, 2020. Third, a second letter requesting the participation of those who have not already responded will be sent on March 2, 2020. Each of the three letters will stress the confidentiality of the data provided by landowners.
5. The PI will make all analysis associated with survey responses and will provide open ended comments in an organized manner. Nonresponse bias will be investigated and corrected as necessary using appropriate statistical weighting procedures.
6. The PI will incorporate survey analysis with data collected at public recreation access areas as part of the 2019 Tallapoosa River User Survey and develop a comprehensive report regarding recreation use and instream flow in the Tallapoosa River below Harris Dam to Jaybird Landing (Hunt 2019).

4.0 LITERATURE CITED

Hunt, Kevin M. 2019. R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project Downstream Landowner Survey; A Research Proposal Submitted to Kleinschmidt Associates for Alabama Power R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 2628. Starkville, MS.

5.0 CONSULTATION

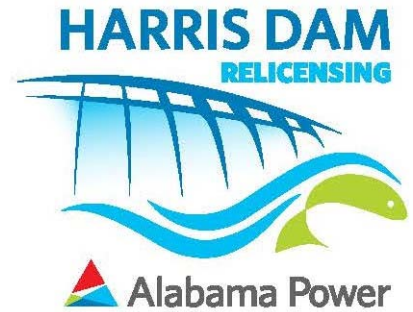
<u>DATE</u>	<u>CONSULTATION</u>
December 2, 2019	Alabama Power submitted Tallapoosa River Landowner Research Plan and Survey to Harris Action Team 5
December 11, 2019	Conference Call with Harris Action Team 5 to discuss the Tallapoosa River Landowner Research Plan and Survey ¹
December 16, 2019	Comments from Harris Action Team 5 due to Alabama Power. Alabama Power received written comments from Martha Hunter (Alabama Rivers Alliance) and Donna Matthews (stakeholder).
December 19, 2019	Alabama Power files Tallapoosa River Landowner Research Plan and Survey with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

¹ Detailed meeting notes are located in Attachment C.

ATTACHMENT A

TALLAPOOSA RIVER LANDOWNER SURVEY

Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey



You were selected for this study because you were identified as a residential landowner, agricultural landowner, or the owner of vacant land adjacent to the Tallapoosa River between R.L. Harris Dam and Jaybird Landing in the upper reaches of Lake Martin that could possibly be used for river-related recreation. **Where you may own multiple land parcels on the Tallapoosa River, please complete this questionnaire based on the land parcel on which you reside or use as a vacation destination. If you do not reside or vacation for some part of the year at your property(ies) on the river, please complete this survey based on your most upstream property.** The information you provide will remain strictly confidential, and you will not be identified with your answers. Answers will be grouped with other respondents in a non-identifiable manner for reporting purposes.

1. How long have you owned this property on the Tallapoosa River? _____ YEARS

2. What are the primary uses of your land on this property? *(Please check all that apply)*

- _____ PERMANENT HOME RESIDENCE
- _____ SEASONAL/VACATION RESIDENCE
- _____ RECREATIONAL USE
- _____ TIMBER PRODUCTION
- _____ AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
- _____ VACANT PROPERTY WITH NO DESIGNATED USE
- _____ OTHER *(Please specify: _____)*

3. Which of the following types of river-related recreation do you personally engage in on the Tallapoosa River from your property? *(Please check all that apply)*

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| _____ A. SHORE OR WADE FISHING | _____ G. CANOE FISHING |
| _____ B. SWIMMING | _____ H. KAYAKING (NON-FISHING) |
| _____ C. TUBING | _____ I. KAYAK FISHING |
| _____ D. BOATING (NON-FISHING) | _____ J. SCENIC/WILDLIFE VIEWING |
| _____ E. BOAT FISHING | _____ K. I DON'T PARTICIPATE IN ANY <i>(Please go to</i> |

Question #10)

_____ F. CANOEING (NON-FISHING)

4. Of the ten (10) river-related recreation activities listed in Question #3, what is your personal **favorite** to do from your property? *(Please circle only one)*

A B C D E F G H I J

5. From January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019 , how many days did you personally participate in all of the river-related recreation activities listed in Question #3 **combined** from your property?

_____ DAYS

6. From January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, how many days did you personally participate in your **favorite** river-related recreation activity you selected in Question #4 from your property?

_____ DAYS

7. Do you check the Tallapoosa River USGS water level gages or Alabama Power generation schedule before planning your **favorite** river-related recreation activity on your property?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

8. In general, is there a time of day where you find the water level of the Tallapoosa River most acceptable to you for participating in your favorite river-related recreation activity from your property?

- 1 YES – *(Please specify TIME: _____ AM or PM)*
- 2 NO

9. In general, is there a month of the year where you find the water level of the Tallapoosa River most acceptable to you for participating in your favorite river-related recreation activity from your property?

- 1 YES – *(Please specify MONTH: _____)*
- 2 NO

10. Do you allow people other than individuals who live with you to participate in river-related recreation from your property?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO --- *(Please go to Question #13)*

11. What is the relationship to you of the individuals who you allow to participate in river-related recreation from your property? *(Please check all that apply)*

- _____ EXTENDED FAMILY OR RELATIVES
- _____ FRIENDS
- _____ RENTERS
- _____ BUSINESS ASSOCIATES/EMPLOYEES
- _____ HUNTING OR FISHING LEASE HOLDERS
- _____ OTHER *(Please specify: _____)*

12. Including yourself, how many people that you know of accessed the Tallapoosa River from your property for river-related recreation from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019?

_____ NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS

13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your experiences with the Tallapoosa River:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a) I am concerned with bank erosion on my property along the Tallapoosa River	1	2	3	4	5
b) I believe the water quality on the Tallapoosa River near my property is good	1	2	3	4	5

- c) I believe the variety and abundance of aquatic organisms (fish, reptile, amphibians) in the Tallapoosa River near my property is good 1 2 3 4 5
- d) I believe the variety and abundance of wildlife populations on the Banks of the Tallapoosa River near my property is good 1 2 3 4 5
- e) The overall health of the Tallapoosa River on my property is good ... 1 2 3 4 5
- f) I believe there is sufficient public access on the Tallapoosa River downstream of Harris Dam for recreational purposes..... 1 2 3 4 5
- g) Most of the encounters I have with Tallapoosa River recreationists who pass by my property are pleasant ones 1 2 3 4 5
- h) Most Tallapoosa River recreationists are respectful of my property and property rights 1 2 3 4 5
- i) I am concerned with people I do not know accessing my property from the Tallapoosa River 1 2 3 4 5

14. Alabama Power changed the Harris Project operations in 2005. Based on your experiences, how would you rate the conditions of the Tallapoosa River around your property since that time?

- 1 WORSE
- 2 BETTER
- 3 SAME
- 4 I DON'T KNOW, I DIDN'T OWN THE PROPERTY BEFORE 2005

15. You were provided with a post card in the mailing that informed you about this study asking you to visit the Tallapoosa River on your property and complete the questions on the post card. Will you be able to complete and send back that post card prior to February 21, 2020²?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

16. Is there anything you would like to share with Alabama Power specifically regarding recreation on the Tallapoosa River? Please provide use box provided below for your comments.

17. Is there anything in general you would like to share with Alabama Power regarding the R.L. Harris Dam Relicensing Process or Tallapoosa River? Please provide the box provided below your comments.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

² For paper copies of the survey, the postcard question regarding water level acceptability will appear here.

ATTACHMENT B

TALLAPOOSA RIVER LANDOWNER SURVEY - POSTCARD

TEXT OF POSTCARD CORRESPONDENCE

SURVEY ID

At your next possible convenience, please go to the Tallapoosa River on your property with this postcard and a pen.

Once at the Tallapoosa River, please complete the following

Date: _____

Time: _____ AM or PM

What is your favorite river-related recreation activity at this spot on the Tallapoosa River?

On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being “**VERY UNACCEPTABLE**” and 10 being “**VERY ACCEPTABLE**”, how would you rate the water level right now for your favorite activity indicated above?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Thank you for your cooperation. Please put this card in the mail as soon as possible, no additional postage is needed.

ATTACHMENT C

DECEMBER 11, 2019 MEETING NOTES AND SUBMITTED COMMENTS



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.



December 16, 2019

RE: HAT5 Tallapoosa River Landowner Survey Project FERC 2628

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for hosting the call on December 11 concerning the Tallapoosa River landowner survey for downstream landowners. We appreciate you giving the community a space to express their concerns and suggestions.

The Alabama Rivers Alliance would like to request a review of the updated survey and procedures based on the suggestions made on the conference call.

Our understanding is that this survey and process is scheduled to begin on January 6, 2020. **Please note that we request a 30 day extension for this important process.** The Alabama Rivers Alliance is confident this would give Alabama Power and FERC a better representation of how instream flow affects the downstream landowner's recreational use and satisfaction on the Tallapoosa River downstream of the Harris Dam.

Here are some of the areas of concern and our suggestions:

1) NOTIFYING LANDOWNERS

According to some of the local residents we have worked with, there is a cynicism associated with Alabama Power and some of the community members who are contacted may immediately dismiss any correspondence received. Others may read the request but not fully understand the importance of their input. Other landowners may not have access to participate in a computer-only survey.

Our suggested solution: A local landowner has expressed interest and willingness to plan and implement a meeting of the local landowners. This grassroots approach of neighbor-to-neighbor will help increase the trust level to participate. This also provides an opportunity for those without computer access to fill out online with some assistance, or to complete a paper survey.

2) ARE YOU LOSING THE INPUT FROM WHO USE THE RIVER VIA THESE PROPERTY OWNERS?

Questions 10-12 relates to others using the property, but doesn't really give a voice to the actual river user. We would like to request that the survey be modified to show whether the person taking the survey is the landowner, or if they are someone who participates from a private piece of property. They could be identified as one of those listed in Q #11.



They would answer the same questions about how many days, etc. For the non-landowners, we suggest that the survey should determine how many private pieces of property they access to get to the river.

3) HISTORICAL USAGE INCREASE OR DECREASE

Is the historical usage/change captured and if the use has decreased, is it because of the age of landowners, changes in the rivers or other factors? We don't feel the current questions as worded is capturing this information. Our understanding is that many of these property owners are now aging, and recreation they enjoyed on the river 10 or 40 years ago may have changed based on their current ability. For instance, question #3: maybe they used to personally engage in these activities 15 years ago, but they can't today.

We suggest that there should be a question that captures if there is a decrease (or increase) of recreational usage, what is the cause of that increase or decrease. Possible answers may include: aging landowners, bank erosion, flooding, water quality, decrease in fish size or quantity, not knowing the water level/releases, etc. Some landowners may have an increase in usage because they now lease their property for recreational use, or have grandkids who bring friends, or they like the predictable highs and lows of the Harris Dam release.

4) FAVORITE RECREATION ACTIVITY On question 7, we would recommend removing "favorite" from this question. Also, we believe the landowners are aware of the general schedule.

5) PRE-DAM QUESTION? Do you remember this part of the river prior to the dam? Do you feel the river has improved or gotten worse since the river was dammed? We suggest the survey captures what changes they have seen in an open-ended comment box or provide a list of potential changes for the landowner to select.

6) POSTCARD. Does completion of the postcard counted as landowner participation even though it does not capture the detailed info? What is the goal of this postcard?

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments. We hope these suggestions are useful in advancing the purpose of the relicensing process.

Sincerely,

Martha Hunter
Alliance Coordinator

From: Donna Matthews <donna Matthews2014@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2019 11:50 AM
To: Anderegg, Angela Segars; APC Harris Relicensing; Martha Hunter
Subject: FERC 2628 Harris Project Downstream Landowners Survey

December 16, 2019 FERC #2628

Comments from Downstream survey, protocol and teleconference

Dear Amanda and All,

Thank you for hosting the call on the 11th and for sending out protocol details and the sample survey. Some comments and thoughts are below.

1. Using the postcard (Attachment B) is a good way to quickly assess landowner interest amongst the 205 landowners, but does not appear to be sufficiently detailed to serve as a substitute for a completed survey.
2. I am concerned that **limiting the survey to the landholders** along the 30+ miles of river in the project boundary will not produce a fulsome picture of recreation on the river; what questions in the new survey will 'fill the gaps' left from the onsite surveys conducted May – October 2019? Elder landowners who were active 40 years ago, may not participate as they once did. Their interests may have shifted or they may have left the area. They may require encouragement to engage.

Local stakeholders can organize peer-to-peer effort to generate survey participation and completions.

3. The **stringent compressed timetable for conducting this late-date survey** is concerning. For the life of this APC project, the downstream owners and river users have not had resolution of their complaints. The final resolution will likely not give them what they desire for this relicensing period (redesign of the dam to allow run of river flows and some upstream fish migration), but the relicensing process can certainly acknowledge and record their experiences of the river for the past 40 years. The downstream subgroup of HAT 5, while utilizing river within the project boundaries has seen no upside to Harris Dam for their lives or property. Without a formal group to speak for them (a lake association for instance) they are slower than other HAT teams to mobilize. To get an accurate look at how people use what is left of the river requires extra effort and **additional time. What modifications can be made to the timetable?**

4. **An exclusively online survey will exclude elderly landowners** and others. Many people we previously contacted regarding making a submission to FERC before the end of the public comment period, simply had no internet or email. The protocol as presented would disallow their participation.

5. **Regarding the 05-13-2019 Tallapoosa River User Survey implemented May-Oct 2019:** Questions 1-11 focus on respondent 'snap shots' of their river experience at a precise moment in time. These are important questions and they capture a specific type of data.

Under represented is capture of prospective desires of river users. Question 12 asks the question, but fails to elicit what might enhance river utilization, ie, camping sites, toilet facilities, better signage. This issue can be addressed by modifying the proposed new survey by adding **additional questions.** (See #7 below) "Would you like to see more access points for recreation along the Tallapoosa River? More campsites? More boat launches? Improved parking areas? Toilet facilities?" ??? Or a more open ended "Given the current operating protocols of water release from the dam, what actions could APC take to improve your recreational experiences; ie, better communication regarding release times, prominently displayed fish consumption warning advisory signage?"

6. Maybe at this stage of the project, the rollout of plans for improvements for public use of the 40+ miles of downstream project area is untimely. I am searching for an indication that public improvements downstream are in the works or have been considered and rejected during this relicensing effort. Is there a publication of such considerations? Are the May-Oct findings public yet? I am also unclear about the FERC Form 80, when it will be published, whether there is a separate publication for each HAT?

7. It would be very helpful if APC would provide contact information of the 205 Landowners to be contacted about the new survey.

8. Regarding the current survey: **I propose adding questions to landowners**

a. to assess their interest in working with to APC to satisfy user appetite for additional access and public recreation sites along the 40 miles of the downstream project area. For instance, this may look like APC purchase of choice access points or establishing long term leasing arrangements..... possibly with landowners not targeted to receive the surveys.... ie industrial, commercial timber interests, state or government owned properties.

b. to better address prospective river use: "Would you like to see more access points for recreation along the Tallapoosa River? More campsites? More boat launches? Improved parking areas? Toilet facilities?" ???

Or a more open ended "Given the current operating protocols of water release from the dam, what actions could APC take to improve your recreational experiences; ie, better

communication regarding release times, prominently displayed fish consumption warning advisory signage?"

c. specifically, what -if anything- has been lost in recreational opportunity since completion of the dam? Have things changed for you? If so, how?

Going forward it seems, genuine APC interest in the concerns of downstream stakeholders and willingness to make community requested/driven **investments in infrastructure is the only practical remediation available during this licensing cycle to heal/repair decades of local distrust.**

Thank you for the care and time you all have put into this project. Even with all the planning and organizing you have done, there is still a staggering learning curve, difficult for citizens to grasp.

Sincerely,

Donna Matthews

105 Woodland Ave SE

Wedowee, AL 36278

PO Box 1054