



R. L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

FERC No. 2628

Meeting Summary
Harris Relicensing Harris Action Team (HAT) 1 Meeting
April 1, 2021
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Participants:

Angie Anderegg – Alabama Power Company (Alabama Power)
Dave Anderson – Alabama Power
Clyde Avery – Lake Harris Property Owner
Jeff Baker – Alabama Power
Jason Carlee – Alabama Power
Keith Chandler – Alabama Power
Allan Creamer – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
Jim Crew – Alabama Power
Colin Dinken – Kleinschmidt Associates (Kleinschmidt)
Scott Fant – Alabama Power
Amanda Fleming – Alabama Power
Todd Fobian – Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
Chris Goodman – Alabama Power
Stacey Graham – Alabama Power
Jim Hancock – Balch and Bingham
Jennifer Haslbauer - Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)
James Hathorn – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Martha Hunter – Alabama Rivers Alliance
Elise Irwin – U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Kelly Kirven – Kleinschmidt
Michael Len – ADEM
Fred Leslie – ADEM
Ashley Lockwood – ADEM
Donna Matthews – Downstream Property Owner
Tina Mills – Alabama Power
Jason Moak – Kleinschmidt
David Moore – ADEM
Barry Morris – Lake Wedowee Property Owners Association (LWPOA)
Kevin Nebiolo – Kleinschmidt
Jessica Nissenbaum – Alabama Power
Kenneth Odom – Alabama Power
Erin Padgett – USFWS
Alan Peebles – Alabama Power
Jennifer Rasberry – Alabama Power
Sarah Salazar – FERC
Kelly Schaeffer – Kleinschmidt
Sheila Smith – Alabama Power
Thomas St. John – Alabama Power
Jimmy Traylor – Downstream Property Owner
Sandra Wash – Kleinschmidt
Jack West – Alabama Rivers Alliance

Meeting Summary:

Angie Anderegg (Alabama Power) opened the meeting with a safety moment and stated the meeting purpose: to present a summary of the results of the Phase 2 Operating Curve Change Feasibility Analysis study by resource area. Angie noted the Draft *Operating Curve Change Feasibility Analysis Phase 2 Study Report* (Draft Report) will be filed April 12, 2021 with a stakeholder comment period until May 11, 2021.

Dave Anderson (Alabama Power) provided a summary of the Harris operating curve, the four operating curve alternatives analyzed, and the downstream structures analysis. Sarah Salazar (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)) asked if it would be useful to add a point display on top of the graph (slide 16) to show how many structures are impacted under the different operating curve alternatives. Kevin Nebiolo (Kleinschmidt Associates (Kleinschmidt)) noted that this graph is a particular cross section near Wadley and the point display would only show those structures near this particular cross section. Sarah asked if there was another way to show the impacts of the operating curve alternatives on specific structures. Dave replied that the Draft Report does not show which polygons associated with downstream flooding the structures are located in, but the structures identified are presented in a table in the Draft Report. Dave and Angie noted additional information is in the report that is not included in the presentation and recommended stakeholders comment on the Draft Report if additional information is needed. Sarah noted that polygons associated with downstream flooding may be helpful and answer questions regarding flood duration and particular structures. Allan Creamer (FERC) asked if the Draft Report will contain maps of the structures and the flooding limits associated with each of these operating curve alternatives. Dave replied that the Phase 1 Report contained maps of the flooded areas with the operating curve alternatives color-coded. Dave added that the Draft Report contains one map that shows all of the identified structures (over 1,000). Allan agreed with Sarah that this information would be useful in the final report. Sarah requested Alabama Power to file the GIS data related to the structures with the final report. Kelly Schaeffer (Kleinschmidt) noted the data could be filed, at the latest, with the Final License Application (FLA).

Jason Moak (Kleinschmidt) presented results of the water quality and use analysis. Sarah asked for confirmation that all potential operating curves would not affect the ability to release any of the downstream flows. Angie confirmed but noted that some of the downstream release alternatives impact the lake level elevation. Allan asked if Alabama Power is prioritizing the downstream flows. Dave explained that the HEC-ResSim model looked at lake level elevation and downstream releases separately. Stacey Graham (Alabama Power) added that at this point in the analysis, the combinations of operating curve scenarios and downstream release alternatives have not been modeled together.

Jason M. presented the results of the erosion and sedimentation analysis. Jason M. explained that increased potential for scour may occur downstream with higher operating curve elevations due to decreased storage in the reservoir and associated increased velocities downstream. Sarah asked if certain downstream release alternatives, in combination with the operating curve alternatives, could potentially result in less scour. Jason M. noted that the generalized statement regarding increased potential for scour downstream that is associated with higher operating curve elevations is related to extreme events. Jason M. agreed that a minimum flow may not expose the channel to as much fluctuations and could reduce scour downstream. Sarah asked if the effects related to scour would attenuate downstream similar to flows. Jason M. stated the attenuation would likely be further than seven miles downstream with storm events.

Martha Hunter (Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA)) requested clarification on the use of “submerged” and “inundation”, specifically, if that is considered flooding or still within the riverbanks. Jason M. noted that many of the sedimentation areas on the upper portion of the lake are underwater at full pool, and depending on the lake elevation, are currently exposed during the winter drawdown and may be partially flushed by spring rains. Jason noted that a higher winter pool would not allow these areas to be flushed. Martha clarified her question, if the use of “submerged” and “inundation” downstream, specifically in terms of wetted habitat, is considered flooding or within the riverbanks. Jason M. confirmed the use of those terms related to wetted habitat is referencing water in the river channel. Barry Morris (LWPOA) asked for clarification on the Sedimentation Area Change table (slide 20). Dave clarified that numbers in the table represent acreage of sediment areas that are inundated (not exposed) and noted that inundation would allow for vegetation to grow and decrease flushing events. Barry asked if any studies cover deposition of the sediments under the various operating curve changes and how long it would take areas of sediment to be seen above the water. Barry stated that short-term benefits could be experienced with an increase in the operating curve but could potentially cause more mud where the creeks and rivers flow into the lake. Jason M. noted that it was not analyzed but subjectively, the lake has likely reached an equilibrium and increasing the winter operating curve would likely increase sedimentation until a new equilibrium, or new normal, was reached.

Jason M. presented the results on the wildlife and terrestrial species and threatened and endangered (T&E) species analysis. Sarah asked if there were any state-listed species. Jeff Baker (Alabama Power) stated that he checked during the break and did not notice any state-protected species in the Project Area according to the Natural Heritage Database¹. Sarah asked specifically about the rare plants found at Flat Rock Park (Flat Rock). Jeff noted that he only checked animals but did not know of any state-protected plant species at Flat Rock. Sarah asked how the operating curve alternatives may affect other rare plants documented at Flat Rock. Jason M. noted that due to its elevation, Flat Rock is not impacted by any of the operating curve alternatives. Allan asked if the zone of influence increased upriver with each operating curve increase. Jason M. confirmed. Allan asked how close the zone of influence encroaches on Finelined Pocketbook’s (*Hamiota altilis*) (mussel) critical habitat under the four-foot operating curve increase. Jason M. explained that the river downstream of the critical habitat (downstream of the Highway 431 bridge) is still flowing under normal, summer pool conditions. Jason M. stated that Alabama Power could provide a map of the elevation contours during summer pool in relation to the critical habitat boundary. Allan noted that would be helpful. Sarah asked if any sedimentation areas could affect the flow from the Finelined Pocketbook’s critical habitat to the reservoir. Jason M. replied no.

Jason M. presented the terrestrial wetlands analysis noting the majority of the wetlands exist in the shallower areas of the reservoir (sloughs, creeks, etc.) due to the terrain surrounding the reservoir. Sarah asked if an increase in the operating curve would potentially inundate mostly upland habitat. Jason M. explained that areas that are typically dewatered for five or six months would be inundated and allow vegetation to persist in littoral areas.

Colin Dinken (Kleinschmidt) presented the results of the recreation analysis. Barry asked what criteria were used to determine if a structure was usable, specifically on floating docks. Colin

¹ The Lipstick Darter (*Etheostoma chuckwachatte*) is a state-protected fish species occurring downstream of Harris Dam. The Finelined Pocketbook (*Hamiota altilis*) is a federal and state-protected mussel species with critical habitat located in the Tallapoosa River upstream of Harris Reservoir.

replied that criteria varied depending on recreation structure type and floats were considered usable if 2.5 feet of water existed on the back end of the structure. Sarah asked if the downstream results of the operating curve change analysis (slide 32) took in account both the downstream release and the operating curve alternatives. Colin confirmed the analysis only considered the operating curve alternatives. Sarah asked when both of those scenarios will be analyzed together. Kelly stated that Alabama Power did not propose to do so in the study plans and focused on the discrete impacts of the downstream release alternatives and the operating curve change alternatives on Project resources. Kelly added that Alabama Power's relicensing proposal will be presented in the Preliminary Licensing Proposal (PLP), but Alabama Power does not have plans to model the downstream release alternatives in combination with the operating curve alternatives. Sarah stated that flooding will have to be addressed and the data sets will need to be combined to understand how water level fluctuations may interact. Jack West (ARA) asked if the final report will provide quantifiable results related to increases in flooding for each operating curve change. Dave explained that percentage of time spent in spillway operations (flooding increase) and in turbine capacity was presented in Phase 1. Angie added that the Phase 1 Report provides quantified results on flooding, specifically related to the increase, frequency, and magnitude of flooding.

Amanda Fleming (Alabama Power) presented the results of the cultural analysis.

James Hathorn (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)) asked if additional flooding would be expected upstream with the operating curve alternatives. Dave stated that the Phase 1 Report showed that the reservoir did not exceed the 795 foot-msl flood easement elevation. James asked if any proposed changes to the Induced Surcharge Curve were anticipated with any of the operating curve changes. Kenneth Odom (Alabama Power) replied that it had not been analyzed. Stacey Graham (Alabama Power) confirmed that was not something being considered, and current operations were used in the models. James asked if the HEC-ResSim model would be provided to USACE. Dave noted that the model outputs will be filed with the FLA. James stated that all results are based on the 100-year design flood and asked FERC if any other flood event modeling would be requested. Allan did not anticipate that FERC would require additional modeling based on other storm events. Sarah asked James if the HEC-ResSim model was needed to allow USACE to perform their own model runs. James confirmed it would be used to verify the results and perform "what-if" scenarios that could prompt a comment on the report. Angie confirmed that the model would be provided to USACE.

The meeting concluded.