



# R. L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

## FERC No. 2628

**Meeting Summary**  
**Harris Action Team (HAT) 4 Meeting**  
**July 22, 2021**  
**1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Participants:**

Angie Anderegg – Alabama Power Company (Alabama Power)  
Jeff Baker – Alabama Power  
Jason Carlee – Alabama Power  
Keith Chandler – Alabama Power  
Colin Dinken – Kleinschmidt Associates (Kleinschmidt)  
Amanda Fleming – Alabama Power  
Todd Fobian – Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)  
Keith Gauldin - ADCNR  
Tina Mills – Alabama Power  
Jason Moak – Kleinschmidt  
Sarah Salazar – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)  
Kelly Schaeffer – Kleinschmidt  
Brian Seale - Alabama Power  
Sheila Smith – Alabama Power  
Sandra Wash – Kleinschmidt  
Jack West – Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA)  
Ken Wills – Alabama Glade Conservation Coalition

*NOTE: A copy of the July 22, 2021 Wildlife Management Plan Review presentation is attached.*

**Action Items:**

- Alabama Power will incorporate comments captured in this meeting as well as any written comments, as applicable, into a revised draft WMP that will be filed with the Final License Application.
- Discuss incorporating lands designated as hunting lands (except lands designated as the hunting lands for disabled hunters) at Lake Harris into Special Opportunity Areas with Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

**Meeting Summary:**

Angie Anderegg (Alabama Power Company (Alabama Power)) opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Tina Mills (Alabama Power) presented a brief safety moment and stated the purpose of the meeting: to review and discuss the draft Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) that was distributed to Harris Action Team (HAT) 4 on June 28, 2021.

Tina presented an overview of the Project Lands Evaluation goals and objectives, which include the following: 1) identify and classify lands around Lake Harris and Skyline that are needed for Harris Project purposes, 2) evaluate the existing land use classifications for Harris and determine if any changes are needed, 3) identify lands for addition, removal, or reclassification within the

current Harris Project Boundary, 4) develop a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), and 5) develop a WMP.

Tina listed the completed Phase 1 action items and noted that Phase 2 includes developing a SMP and WMP in consultation with HAT 4 to file with the Final License Application (FLA) in November 2021.

Tina outlined the components of the WMP, which include: 1) introduction, 2) purpose of the plan, 3) background and existing information, 4) wildlife management objectives, 5) shoreline management, 6) permanent managed openings, 7) timber management, and 8) Harris hunting areas.

Tina noted that the purpose of the WMP is to protect and enhance the available wildlife habitat within the Harris Project Boundary, to consolidate numerous wildlife management activities into a single document, and to provide additional technical information and management guidelines.

Tina noted that the 1984 FERC Order Conditionally Approving Revised Land Use Plan and Revised Exhibit S added Article 63 to the Harris license and required Alabama Power to file a Wildlife Mitigation Plan (1988 WMP). The 1988 WMP was developed with agency consultation and approved by FERC in 1988, adding 15,300 acres at Skyline and 779.5 acres at Lake Harris. In accordance with the 1988 WMP, Alabama Power leased the Skyline tract to Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) in 1988. In addition, the FERC order approving the 1988 WMP required Alabama Power to file a Management Plan for Skyline (1990 Skyline WMP). Tina outlined the management actions implemented by the 1988 WMP, which included the installation and maintenance related to Wood Duck boxes, initial release and nesting platforms for Canada Goose, nesting platforms for Osprey, timber management, large and small animal cavity nesting structures, land acquisition, and the Skyline Management Area. Tina outlined the management actions implemented by the 1990 Skyline WMP, which included development (establish wildlife openings, construct firebreaks, construct waterholes, and add more campsites as needed), maintenance (conduct annual boundary maintenance, upgrade roads to all-weather status and maintain annually, install and maintain gates, maintain campsites, and erect and maintain nest structures), and operations (develop and maintain herbaceous and shrub plantings, manage wildlife openings, and conduct timber management). The 1990 WMP also provides descriptions of wildlife resources, botanical resources, and riparian and littoral habitat at Lake Harris and Skyline.

Tina presented four overall wildlife management objectives and outlined how they are being achieved. The objectives include: 1) management of shoreline areas, 2) implementation of timber management methods, 3) management of permanent openings, and 4) management of public hunting areas.

Tina noted that written comments on the draft WMP are due by July 29, 2021 and Alabama Power will incorporate written comments as well as comments captured in today's meeting, as applicable, into a draft WMP. A revised draft WMP will be provided to HAT 4 and will be included as part of the FLA.

Ken Wills (Alabama Glade Conservation Coalition) noted that the draft WMP mentions Stream Management Zones (SMZs) for Lake Harris and inquired if these practices would also be used near streams at Skyline in order to protect the mesophytic forests in the area. Tina confirmed that

best management practices (BMPs) recommended by the Alabama Forestry Commission will be used at Skyline, which include SMZs as outlined in Section 7.2.2 of the current draft WMP.

Ken noted that the Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), a neotropical migrant songbird, would be a good species to monitor at Skyline as it is one of the few places in the state where the species breeds. Ken stated that the species relies on unfragmented forest, and a stable or increasing population would imply that there is enough unfragmented forest in the area.

Ken noted that the draft WMP states prescribed burning occurs on 160 acres at Lake Harris and asked why prescribed burning was not used as a management activity at Skyline. Brian Seale (Alabama Power) stated that steep terrain and limited resources prevent Alabama Power from using prescribed burning at Skyline. Brian added that constructing firebreaks at Skyline is extremely difficult and unsafe. Brian noted that the 160 acres that are available for burning at Lake Harris are less steep. Ken noted that communication and outreach with nearby residents is typically conducted when burning is implemented. Ken stated that there may be approximately 476 acres of planted pines at Skyline that may be flat enough to implement prescribed burning and noted the benefits of this management practice. Brian reiterated the safety and access issues of the area, stating that controlling a fire, if it were to get out, in the area would be extremely difficult.

Keith Gauldin (ADCNR) referenced the Lake Harris Project Boundary (Figure 1-1 in the draft WMP) and asked if the larger tracts north of the Highway 48 bridge and along the Big Tallapoosa arm were currently leased to private hunting clubs. Tina confirmed that over time, these lands transitioned to private leases but noted Alabama Power does not intend for the leases to continue upon implementation of the new license. Keith G. stated that ADCNR offers a limited quota hunting format (random draw permit) at Special Opportunity Areas (SOAs) that add a new perspective on public hunting. Keith G. added that SOA tracts are typically 300 to 500 acres and noted that the Project land north of the Highway 48 bridge, along the Big Tallapoosa arm, currently classified as hunting lands may be suitable. Tina stated that this was previously discussed with ADCNR, and Alabama Power is interested in identifying these lands as SOAs. Alabama Power is planning to incorporate this request as a proposed PME during the relicensing process.

Sarah Salazar (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)) stated she was pleased with the amount of detail in the draft WMP. Sarah suggested adding language regarding the specific goals of prescribed burning and notating the location where the treatment is being used within the Project Boundary. Sarah asked if the Geographic Information System (GIS) data provided with the Project Lands Phase 2 Progress filing included that information. Tina stated that it is not in the GIS data provided but will include a map and information on why the treatment is being used in the WMP.

Sarah requested Alabama Power add more detail regarding the ongoing maintenance activities that were mentioned on Slide 11 of the presentation (how boundary maintenance is performed, how roads, gates, and campsites are maintained, etc.). Tina noted that additional detail on those maintenance items will be included. Sarah noted that this information will be needed for FERC's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. Sarah reiterated her request and noted that some terms are vague and asked what is meant by "annual boundary maintenance". Tina said that specific term is referencing maintaining property lines, such as painting trees, etc., and Alabama Power will clarify these terms in the WMP.

Sarah noted a slight discrepancy in Section 3.2.2 of the draft WMP regarding the acreage of the two parcels surveyed at Blake's Ferry Pluton, including a 20-acre parcel and a 35-acre parcel, together totaling 55 acres. However, Alabama Power's proposal is to reclassify 57 acres of project lands in the area from "Recreational" to "Natural/Undeveloped". Tina stated that this discrepancy is due to the acreage included in the Project Boundary but below 800-foot mean sea level (msl). The Project Boundary includes land used for flood storage (793 feet msl to 795 feet msl) as well as a scenic easement (to 800-foot msl or 50 horizontal feet from 793-foot msl, whichever is less, but never less than 795-foot msl). Tina noted that Alabama Power plans to reclassify these project lands down to the shoreline as Natural Undeveloped, which encompasses the additional 2 acres.

Sarah asked if the "sensitive resources" designation will be a new shoreline classification. Tina noted that the draft SMP outlines the general land use classifications. The "sensitive resources" designation is a special designation that overlaps the other classifications. Tina added that this designation is used for wetlands, threatened and endangered (T&E) species, and cultural resources. Sarah asked if that designation provides for an additional level of protection. Tina confirmed that it does and stated that the draft SMP outlines the process of extra review and what additional permitting may be needed for areas designated as "sensitive resources". Angie added that this process is dependent on the activity, and for example, if it is designated for cultural resources there would be certain activities that do not require additional consultation while other certain activities may require consultation. Keith Chandler (Alabama Power) noted that Alabama Power uses the sensitive resource designation at other projects. Sarah asked if the GIS data identifies the natural/undeveloped land classification under the sensitive resource designation. Tina noted that this layer does exist for other projects but was not sure if it existed for the Harris Project. Angie reiterated that the information is sensitive in nature and when reviewing a permit only a map is provided and not information regarding why the area may contain a sensitive resource. Keith confirmed and noted that only the Environmental Affairs (EA) department knows why a particular area is designated as sensitive. Tina added that the sensitive resource designation layer is updated regularly to maintain an accurate record of lands classified under this designation. Sarah stated that this data would be needed for FERC's NEPA analysis. Tina stated that Alabama Power anticipates filing this data with the FLA in November 2021.

Regarding Section 6.1 of the draft WMP, Sarah asked how monitoring looting at historic properties relates to wildlife and requested Alabama Power elaborate on how this monitoring relates to the WMP. Amanda Fleming (Alabama Power) stated that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation requested that wildlife openings are monitored in order to prevent looting of cultural resources. Amanda added that this language is also in the Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP). Angie noted that this is related to how wildlife management activities (for example, hunting) could affect cultural resources. Sarah asked that Alabama Power clarify the relationship between the WMP and monitoring for looting of cultural resources.

Ken noted the SMP encourages landowners to plant native species. Ken suggested Alabama Power include a list of common non-native species to inform landowners of species not to plant. Tina stated that Alabama Power shares publications with property owners regarding shoreline BMPs which may include a species list of some sort. Jason Carlee (Alabama Power) noted that landowners are referred to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System for a list of recommended plants for the region. Ken agreed but reiterated that a list of non-native species would be helpful for landowners. Jason C. said that

Alabama Power provides educational information on wetland species through the Aquatic Plant Management program but would check with those publications to confirm if there are any non-native plants listed. Keith added that Alabama Power's Shorelines website also includes BMPs and links to those resources. Sarah agreed that Ken's suggestion would be helpful and stated the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council (SE-EPPC) provides a list of non-native species and their relative threat levels.

Regarding Section 5.1.3, Planting of Native Species, Sarah asked what entities perform the planting. Tina stated that Alabama Power would be performing the planting at all Project lands that are classified as Recreation and Commercial Recreation, as these lands are owned by Alabama Power. Sarah suggested language to clarify that this is a proposed environmental measure to be executed by Alabama Power at lands classified as Recreation and Commercial Recreation.

Regarding Table 7-1, Sarah asked what the definition was for "natural" longleaf pine or "natural" pine. Brian replied that this refers to longleaf pine or pine that was regenerated naturally (not planted by a tree crew). Sarah requested that terms (such as natural, saw timber, pulpwood, etc.) be defined in a footnote. Sarah explained that in the NEPA documents, FERC needs to clarify regarding what environmental measures are being implemented currently and what measures will be continued into the new license for each resource area.

Tina thanked the group for participating and reminded the participants to submit written comments by July 29, 2021. Submitted comments will be considered for inclusion in the final WMP to be filed with the FLA. The meeting adjourned.



# HAT 4

## Project Lands

Draft Wildlife Management Plan

# Phone Etiquette



- Be patient with any technology issues
- Follow the facilitator's instructions
- Phones will be muted during presentations
- Follow along with PDF of presentations
- Write down any questions you have for the designated question section
- Clearly state name and organization when asking questions
- Facilitator will ask for participant questions following the presentation and as applicable during the presentation

# Health & Safety Moment



## Staying Hydrated

- Drinking water can prevent dehydration.
- Dehydration = unclear thinking, mood changes, body overheating, constipation, & kidney stones
- No recommendations for how much plain water a person should drink daily; recommendations for daily fluid intake, which includes water consumed by not only plain water but also food and other beverages.
- Daily fluid intake recommendations vary by age, sex, pregnancy, breastfeeding status, activity level, environment, etc.
- The U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends a total daily fluid intake (from both food and beverages) of 3.7 liters for men and 2.7 liters for women.



# PROJECT LANDS EVALUATION



## Goals and Objectives

- Identify lands around Lake Harris and at Skyline that are needed for Harris Project purposes and to classify these lands.
- Evaluate the land use classifications for Harris and determine if any changes are needed to conform to Alabama Power's current land classification system and other Alabama Power FERC-approved Shoreline Management Plans
- Identify lands to be added to, or removed from, the current Harris Project Boundary and/or be reclassified.
- Develop a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP).
- Develop a Wildlife Management Plan (WMP).



# STATUS OF PHASE 1 ACTION ITEMS



## Status – Phase 1: Complete

- ✓ Meet with HAT 4 to discuss potential changes to the Harris Project lands (add, delete, or reclassify); include tract by tract description, rationale for change, and present in GIS format; consider potential resources impacts; draft a map showing all changes.
  - ✓ HAT 4 meeting was held on 09/11/19; tract by tract discussion, including maps, background information, and rationale for change; overview map of all proposed changes provided.
  - ✓ Meeting summary provided on [www.harrisrelicensing.com](http://www.harrisrelicensing.com)
  
- ✓ Conduct a botanical inventory of a 20-acre parcel at Flat Rock
  - Report included in Final Phase 1 Report filed with FERC, emailed to HAT 4, and available at [www.harrisrelicensing.com](http://www.harrisrelicensing.com)
  - Evaluation of adjacent, additional 20-acre tract currently underway; report will be provided upon completion
  
- ✓ Evaluate acreage at Skyline to determine suitability for bobwhite quail habitat
  - Results of evaluation included in Final Phase 1 Report filed with FERC, emailed to HAT 4, and available at [www.harrisrelicensing.com](http://www.harrisrelicensing.com)
  
- ✓ Develop a Draft and Final Phase 1 Project Lands Evaluation Study Report
  - 04/10/20: Draft Phase 1 report filed with FERC, emailed to HAT 4, and available at [www.harrisrelicensing.com](http://www.harrisrelicensing.com)
  - 10/02/20: Final Phase 1 report filed with FERC, emailed to HAT 4, and available at [www.harrisrelicensing.com](http://www.harrisrelicensing.com)



# PHASE 2 ACTION ITEMS



## Phase 2:

Phase 2 includes developing a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) and a Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) to file with the final license application. In addition to the results from the Phase 1 Land Use Evaluation, Alabama Power will also integrate information collected during other relicensing studies (e.g., T&E, water quality, and recreation studies), as appropriate, to the SMP and WMP.

## Status – Shoreline Management Plan & Wildlife Management Plan

~~Form a HAT 4 work groups~~

- ✓ Create a Draft Shoreline Management Plan in consultation with HAT 4
  - Draft version provided to HAT 4 via email on 10/05/20
  - Held HAT 4 meeting to discuss draft on 10/19/20; written comments were due no later than 11/02/20
  - Revised draft emailed to HAT 4 on 01/05/21
  
- ✓ Create a Draft Wildlife Management Plan in consultation with HAT 4
  - Annotated outline provided to HAT 4 via email on 10/05/20
  - Held HAT 4 meeting to discuss outline on 10/19/20; written comments were due no later than 11/02/20
  - Preliminary agency consultation conducted January – June 2021
  - Draft version emailed to HAT 4 on 06/28/21

# WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN (WMP)



## Table of Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Purpose of the Plan
- 3.0 Background and Existing Information
- 4.0 Wildlife Management Objectives
- 5.0 Shoreline Management
- 6.0 Permanent Managed Openings
- 7.0 Timber Management
- 8.0 Harris Hunting Areas

## 2.0 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN



Purpose:

...to protect and enhance the available wildlife habitat within the Project boundaries of the Harris Project.

...consolidate numerous wildlife management activities into a single document...

...provide additional technical information and management guidelines...

# 3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING INFORMATION



12/27/1973 – FPC issues Harris license

- Article 52 requires APC file a revised Exhibit S; Article 19 requires a Land Use Plan
- 9/21/1984 - FERC Order Conditionally Approving Revised Land Use Plan and Revised Exhibit S and Amending License
  - Order also added Article No. 63 requiring APC file WMP

1984 – 1988: development of WMP; agency consultation

5/23/1988 filed revised WMP; 7/29/1988 – FERC approved WMP (1988 WMP)

- Approves addition of 15,300 acres at Skyline and 779.5 acres at Lake Harris
- Paragraph B requires filing of Skyline WMP

8/12/1988 – APC leases Skyline tract to ADCNR

7/18/1989 (7/24/1989) – APC files Skyline WMP

06/29/1990 – FERC approves Skyline WMP (1990 WMP)



# 3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING INFORMATION



## 1988 WMP Management Actions

- Waterfowl – Wood Duck (ongoing)
- Waterfowl – Canada Goose (completed)
- Osprey (completed)
- Acquisition of 779.5 acres of land surrounding the reservoir (completed)
- Timber Management practices to meet the needs of wildlife species (ongoing)
- Managed Openings (ongoing)
- Additional Nesting Structures (completed)
- Skyline Wildlife Management Area (ongoing): Acquire and lease approximately 15,300 acres in Jackson County, Alabama, providing funding to ADCNR for wildlife management, and provide public hunting opportunities.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING INFORMATION



### 1990 WMP Management Actions

...provided the following additional specific management activities for Skyline:

- Development (completed): establish wildlife openings, construct firebreaks, construct waterholes, and add additional campsites as needed
- Maintenance (ongoing): Conduct annual boundary maintenance, upgrade roads to all-weather status and maintain annually, install and maintain gates, maintain campsites, and erect and maintain nest structures.
- Operations (ongoing): develop and maintain herbaceous and shrub plantings, manage wildlife openings, and conduct timber management.



## 3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING INFORMATION



...also provides descriptions of

- Wildlife Resources,
- Botanical Resources
- Riparian and Littoral Habitat

For both:

- Lake Harris
- Skyline

## 4.0 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES



- 1) Management of shoreline areas for native vegetative communities and enhanced value as wildlife habitat;
- 2) Implementation of timber management methods that result in enhanced value of Project lands as wildlife habitat;
- 3) Management of permanent openings for the benefit of both game and non-game species, including food plots;
- 4) Management of public hunting areas, including areas for the physically disabled.

## 5.0 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT



...will be accomplished through implementation of the proposed Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)

- Shoreline Classification System and Sensitive Resources Designation
  - While not solely designed for protection of wildlife habitat, the Sensitive Resources designation and the Natural/Undeveloped and Hunting shoreline management classifications often include valuable wildlife habitats.
- Shoreline Buffers
  - As specified in the SMP, Alabama Power provides for preservation or establishment of a naturally managed vegetative filter strip along the shoreline to keep clearing of native trees and vegetation to a minimum (BMP ...does not in any way supersede or replace the requirements of the scenic easement).
- Planting of Native Species
  - The SMP recommends, and in some instances requires, planting of native trees, shrubs, and plant species for landscaping and for purposes of shoreline stabilization

## 6.0 PERMANENT MANAGED OPENINGS



Under the 1988 WMP, Alabama Power established and managed permanent openings for the benefit of both game and non-game species. 105 acres of permanent openings were established at various locations at Lake Harris:

- 55 acres of the 105 were established for annuals or perennials
- the remaining 50 acres were established as open areas

Managed openings at Skyline were established as part of the 1990 Skyline WMA.

Management Actions under draft plan:

- Continue management of permanent openings at Lake Harris and Skyline

# 7.0 TIMBER MANAGEMENT



## Lake Harris

- Dominated by Mixed Pine-Hardwood
- Selective cutting is the primary means of timber harvest
- Utilizes prescribed burns on approximately 160 acres every two years.

## Skyline

- Dominated by Upland Hardwood
- Selective harvesting and natural regeneration are primary goals of timber harvest
- Prescribed burns are not utilized at Skyline
- Clear cutting is selectively conducted in small areas located on the mountain tops

# 7.0 TIMBER MANAGEMENT



## Management Actions:

### Lake Harris

- Timber Harvest
- Best Management Practices
- Timber Harvest Conservation Actions for the Protection of Listed Bat Species

### Skyline

- Timber Harvest
- Best Management Practices
- Timber Harvest Conservation Actions for the Protection of Listed Bat Species

## 8.0 HARRIS HUNTING AREAS



- Lands designated for hunting at Lake Harris provide hunting opportunities to the public.
- Hunting opportunities provided at Skyline are managed by ADCNR, including the issuance of permits and maps as well as the determination of regulations such as hunting seasons and bag limits and the collection of data and maintenance records.

### Management Actions:

- Lake Harris
- Skyline
- Harris Physically Disabled Hunting Area

# WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN (WMP)



## Next Steps

- Written comments due no later than 07/29/2021
- Alabama Power will incorporate comments written comments and well as comments from today's meeting, as applicable, into a draft WMP
- A revised draft WMP will be provided to HAT 4 and will be included as part of the Final License Application