

Comments and Concerns Expressed During the Saluda Hydroelectric Project
Public Issues Workshops
October 26, Saluda · October 27, Newberry · October 28,
Lexington/Richland

Recorded Public Attendees:

October 26, Saluda, SC:

Mr. Kenneth G. Fox (LMA)
Mr. James P. Black (Saluda Cnty)
Mr. Charles Rentz
Mr. Henry Black

Mr. Dick Christie (SCDNR)
Mr. William Ellis
Mr. Robert Anderson

October 27, Newberry, SC:

Mr. Steven G. Davis
Ms. Fran Merchant
Mr. Richard Kidder (LMA)
Mr. Yoder Bedenbaugh
Mr. Ronald R. Boozer
Mr. Ron Ahle (SCDNR)
Mr. Tom Brooks (Newberry Cnty)

Mr. Tom Shealy
Ms. Teresa Powers (Newberry Cnty)
Mr. Joseph Boozer
Mr. Clint Shealy
Mr. Dick Christie (SCDNR)

October 28, Lexington/Richland, SC:

Ms. Gina Kirkland (SCDHEC)
Mr. George Duke (LMA)
Ms. Kirsten Lackstrom (USC)
Mr. Robert Seibels (Riverbank Zoo)
Mr. Tony Bebber (SCPRT)
Mr. Tom Brooks
Mr. Tim Burgess(Milmont Shores Rd Assoc.)
Ms. Kim Westburg (Saluda Ec. Dev.)
Mr. Jim Black
Mr. Steve Bell (Lake Watch)
Mr. and Mrs. Bob Keener (LMA)
Mr. Curtis Hipp (LMA)
Ms. Joy Downs (LMA)
Ms. Charlene Coleman (Am. Whitewater)
Mr. Malcolm Leaphart (TU, SC Council)

Mr. Gerrit Jöbsis (CCL, Am Rivers)
Mr. Michael T. Dawson (River All.)
Mr. Tom Ruple (LMA)
Ms. Ann B. Dawson
Mr. Tim Finch
Mr. Dick Christie (SCDNR)
Mr. Richard Kidder (LMA)
Mr. Joseph C. Barrett.
Mr. Thomas Rawl
Mr. Patrick Moore (CCL)
Mr. Randy Snow
Mr. Woody Ford (Saluda Rv. TU)
Mr. Raymond Clepper
Mr. Richard Connor
Mr. Archie Trawick Jr.

Expressed Concerns:

Water Quality

- “How will phosphorous levels, current and projected, affect the Saluda CPW sewage plant’s discharge?” (mentioned several times)

- There is thought to be septic seepage into the Lake in Saluda County. (mentioned several times)
- Discharges from Saluda Hydro (D.O., temperature, Hydrogen Sulfide and others) are a concern in the Lower Saluda River and confluence.
- “Control of nuisance species has resulted in copper buildup, impacting water quality and recreation- use caution in the future.”
- “Discharge from ‘Heads’ is impacting Water Quality in Lake Murray.” (Water quality in reservoir mentioned several times)
- “How is/are the no discharge zones enforced? DHEC can’t board boats but DNR can.”
- “How are their pump out facilities and are there enough?”
- “What are the impacts of shoreline development on water quality?”
- “Are there updated septic/sewer requirements around Lake Murray ‘Development’?”
- “Even if a boat has a waste treatment unit that discharges into the water, make it so they have to pump the unit out.”
- There is the concern of runoff from agricultural operations causing water quality problems, and thus the need for more water quality monitoring stations. (agricultural run-off mentioned several times, esp. Saluda and Newberry Co.)
- “There needs to be enforcement from agencies to address non-point source runoff. They need to identify sources and address and consider costs.”
- “SCE&G needs to identify the individual sources of pollution (specifically phosphorous).”
- “What are the impacts of low D.O. on fish survivability?”
- There were questions concerning the sediment transport in the Lower Saluda River and the need for “channel maintenance”. (mentioned a couple times)
- “What are the storm water run-off impacts in Lake Murray?”
- “What are the effects of condos in coves and their non-point discharge?”

- “There needs to be more water quality monitoring in the coves.”
- “What is the monitoring status of WQC marinas on petro/gas/fecal matter?”
- “Is the algal growth on the lake a potential water quality cause, and how does it affect navigation?”
- There was concern expressed about the effects of thermal shifts on plants in the LSR
- “Where are the water quality monitoring stations?”
- “What is the current status of monitoring stations that show exceedances (303 sites in Lake Murray)?”
- “Newberry County discharges back into the river, this might meet federal standards but are federal standards good enough?”
- “The Caughman Rd. Junkyard is causing runoff problems into the Little River (battery acids, autos, etc).”
- “The vegetation in the river has changed from having virtually no grass to being full of grass in the past 20 years. What has caused this? Are water temperatures up?”
- “How was the lake so successfully maintained at a constant level over the past two years?”
- “Minimum flow can help in the dilution of pollutants.”
- Several individuals expressed interest in maintaining the dissolved oxygen at a level sufficient for the maintenance of trout fisheries and striped bass populations.
- “There is a sewage problem at 2 Rivers Converge, things such as improper well casings, and horse and cow runoff add to the pollution.”

Land Use

- “Lake levels and drawdowns need to be regulated with 355’ being the minimum (some say 354’ is min, others say it needs to stay at 356’). Anything less than this has a great impact on the property values as well as safety concerns.” (mentioned several times)
- “There is the belief that the 75’ buffer zones do little as wildlife areas while in turn bringing down property values. There are other larger wildlife sites that can be used as mitigation due to the loss of buffer zones and wildlife access to the

lake can still be maintained. Other vegetation could be used to control the erosion.”

- “Development of Lake Murray in Saluda County will have a tremendous impact on the tax base of an economically distressed county. No development, or development with poor planning will have an adverse effect on the county’s economic development, and on its future prospects for enhancement of the tax base.”
- “The outstanding “14” fringeland cases, and people wondering when SCE&G and FERC will make a decision on the use of ‘fringelands’.” (mentioned several times)
- “How far upstream is the PBL?”
- “Will SCE&G keep fringelands in buffer?”
- “Will fringelands be opened up for purchase?” (mentioned several times)
- “The length of time, and the FERC process itself, is very frustrating and hard to understand. There needs to be a way that it can be easily understood.”
- Explain the 75’ buffer enforcement and the effects on water quality
- “There needs to be a reclassifying or shoreline to ESA.”
- Developing land needs to have integrated plans for sewage disposal, there needs to be infrastructure at the time of development.”
- There is a desire expressed by the public for SCE&G to develop a land use plan that addresses long-term non-developmental interests, including recreation, water quality and aesthetics.
- Counties are trying to move toward better sewage systems, county regulations and zoning issues.
- “Commercial development should be considered as part of the Land Use Plan.”
- Enhance long-term sewage planning for development around the Lake, one partner may be the Council of Governments.
- There was a request to put FEMA regulations on SCE&G’s website as a link , and tie together FEMA flood maps and Lake Murray Maps.
- “Work to protect private property owners’ rights to develop in the future.”

- “There needs to be maintenance of sufficient habitat and lands for recreation such as duck hunting.”
- “Will current property owners have the opportunity to purchase easements for the future use of adjacent shoreline properties owned by SCE&G?”
- “Are dock permits required and are docks even permitted in forest preservation areas?”
- “Will lands classified as forest management ever be allowed to have a dock or other permitable activity?”
- “Determine land needs for future recreation, wildlife, scenic/aesthetic areas/views, may need possible shoreline reclassification.”
- “Limit the loss of natural areas.”
- There is the desire for policy that allows for the use or future sale of fringeland by adjacent landowners.
- “There needs to be a restoration of buffer zones that have been disturbed.”
- Homeowners desire education on shoreline regulations.
- “The land use on the lower Saluda needs to be compatible with the Scenic River Plan.”
- “Where does project boundary go?” There is a problem in understanding the project boundary at its upper reaches.
- “Will there be areas restricted from development and if so, which areas?”
- “Improve shoreline management guidelines per recently updated info.”
- “How much development will SCE&G allow on Newberry/Saluda Co. side of Lake Murray?”
- “How many miles of shoreline at 358’, 354’ and 351’ in Saluda County?”
- “Development needs to be done very carefully, to consider ecology, because land in Saluda is still at the “fish camp” stage.”
- “Mitigate more area in coves where it would best benefit wildlife.”
- “SCE&G should look at ways to manage the PBL and buffer zones.”

- “How much land does SCE&G own in Saluda County?”
- “Do property owners have the right to purchase the buffer zone and how much property to the project boundary line?”
- “How much of the shoreline in Saluda County is developed?”
- “Does SCE&G want to develop 75% of shoreline? Because that is too much according to some people, and Saluda Co. has no zoning, they say you shouldn’t go over 66%.”
- Some believe that you do not need to increase buffer zones because undeveloped land serves the same purpose.
- In contrast, others believe there needs to be a restoration of disturbed buffer zones, and SCE&G should plan to educate homeowners on re-vegetating buffer areas.
- Newberry Co. is developing a land use regulation policy.
- “In regards to permit fees for docks, will fees, rules and regulations be defined and made permanent?”
- There is a desire for no more heavy development. “Restrict more area and allow only low impact recreation.”
- A couple people believe that there needs to be a very strict enforcement of shoreline regulations because there is an entire area of property that has been cut down to 360’ which should not have been, it’s reported to be in a protected zone.
- There is family timber land in Saluda County about 1 mile back from lake; will there be any restrictions on the ability of future generations to sell the land for development?

Recreation

- “There is need for more areas available for fishing, hiking and biking.” (mentioned several times)
- There are safety questions about the Lower Saluda River and water level rise.
- “What degree of environmental effects do river users have on the area, such as litter? It seems to be the worst in the zoo area.”
- “There needs to be communication from SCE&G to the public about discharges, there should be a better public warning system.”

- Plan to address recreational needs for potential license term, recreational needs such as shoreline access, boating access, paddling, and bank fishing (bank fishing mentioned several times).
- “There needs to be scheduled recreational flows in Lower Saluda making it available for Kayaking, tubing, swimming, wade fishing, and fishing from boat.”
- There was also the request for base navigational flows and whitewater flow schedules.
- Other issues included water surface elevation and recreational use during winter, also the economic impacts of winter drawdown. Boating safety during the winter drawdown is an issue.
- “What is the nature and costs of future recreational areas?”
- “What are the effects of future recreation on other resources?”
- “There needs to be a continuance of formal public involvement as it relates to Lake Management.”
- “What is the effect of shoreline development on recreational opportunities and the quality of those opportunities, both private and commercial?”
- Also, the safety of fisherman during different flows is a concern to many. (mentioned several times)
- “There needs to be more access, including more boat launches, on south side of the Lake, away from the dam.” (mentioned several times)
- There was the request for more informal recreation sites around lake so that boaters can pull up for hiking etc.
- “What are the effects of flows on the sites down river, such as the Congaree National park? Could these effects cause basin effects?”
- “There needs to be improved access on the Lower Saluda River.”
- “There tends to be health problems, such as ear infections, in regards to the pollution dumped into the lower Saluda River. Carolina Water Services may be to blame.”
- “Future river uses and plans should be designed to maintain low levels of mercury- to maintain the ability to consume fish in the Lower Saluda River.”

- There are conflicts between the river users and the power boat users, such as jet skis (anti-jet ski comments came up a number of times). There are many groups that want a “protection of the solitude of the river”.
- There is a request for the improvement of the warning system for water release. Ramping (slowly raising water level in increments) is the preferred method for river rise among the informed public. There was also the request for more warning lights to be placed along the river instead of noisy horns. (mentioned several times)
- A request has been made for a change in dock permitting to allow roofs on boat docks.
- “Designate undeveloped coves for overnight mooring for all boats.”
- “SCE&G should purchase privately owned islands within project for recreational use.”
- It was stated that the year-round minimum lake level should be 354’, and that at this level 85% of lakeshore residents could use the lake and 100% of commercial.
- “What are the impacts of SCE&G and the governmentally owned public recreational sites on the privately owned sites for public access (economically and usage-wise).”
- “There needs to be assistance to the public in regards to the permitting process for privately owned public access sites.”
- “There is a lack of available moorings and dry storage for larger boats.”
- “SCE&G needs to limit the size of boats in Saluda River resort area (where lake turns into river and up).”
- “Coves need to be designated as no wake zones for anglers and canoeists.”
- Some say ample lake access does exist, and individuals are not taking into account all of the privately owned lake access that is available.
- “Are there public facilities for people who do not own boats in Saluda County?”
- “Would SCE&G be willing to partner with Saluda County to create an eco-tourism site?”
- “No. 3 and No. 4 in Saluda County need upgrading, including the bathhouse at No. 3. Both facilities are used quite a bit. No. 4 needs a larger float and more

parking (especially a problem during summer weekends, people have to wait to load their boats and access the float).”

- “Numbers 1-16 roads need grading in Saluda County.”
- “There needs to be an ongoing formal public involvement in regards to lake management.”
- “Also, there is the need for an adaptive management that you evaluate through the life of the license in order to address uncertainty.”
- “What are the impacts of development on boating and on shore-based recreation and the quality of the recreation experience?”
- “A study is needed to determine how much land is needed for future recreational development. This may involve reclassifying shorelines to meet future needs.”
- “There is the need for more primitive recreation sites around the lake.”
- “Limit the outboard engine size.”
- “There may be the need to restrict flows during high recreational periods in order to protect public safety. In consequence, there may be the need for a study to determine when the high recreational periods are (seasonally, daily, etc.).”
- “Who enforces the laws down on the lower River?” The public doesn’t know who to call if they have a problem, regardless of whether they are on the lake or on the river.
- “How will recreation needs for the next 30-50 years be identified and addressed? Boating access? Shoreline access? On the Lake? On the River?”
- “Is there adequate land for recreation surrounding the reservoir?”
- “What is the definition of a recreation area?”
- “Will there be any control over what is developed at “future” recreation sites?”
- “The nature and costs of future recreation areas should be taken into account. Expansion won’t help if they aren’t well managed. Will there be a fee assessed?”
- “There needs to be adequate lands for habitat and the associated recreation, such as hunting.”
- “How is passive recreation defined by SCE&G?”

- A gentleman from River Watch mentioned that he would like to see a survey done here, similar to the Gallop poll done for TVA, to better understand what the people want. He is aware that SCE&G has the names and addresses of all permittees and that LMA has a mailing list. He also mentioned boater registrations as a sample source.
- “The Landing at Hope Ferry is washed out.”
- One individual states that there is a change in character of the use of Lake Murray since its construction, and that residential and recreational uses have an equal if not higher priority than generation. He requests changes to accommodate these uses.
- “There is a need to limit boat speed and size where lake turns into a river and up into the Saluda Resort area.”
- There was a desire expressed for more fish huts to be built on the shore.

Project Operations

- Joy Down, Exec. Director of Lake Murray Assoc. would love to provide a link on their website to SCE&G’s Relicensing website. They also would be very happy to host guest columns in their quarterly newsletter.
- Project Operations and water level fluctuations are believed to cause erosion. (mentioned several times)
- “Take a whole new look at how the project operates to balance with other resources.”
- “Is there a rule curve that the public could look at?”
- “There needs to be accountability to the public on how the project is operating and to work together with all the different interests being represented.”
- “There needs to be a higher winter lake level, especially look at the ’99-’00 winter that was maintained at 354’, can that be applied now?”
- “The current minimum flow may not be enough.”
- There was the suggestion for a presentation of studies that already exist, such as the IFIM study below project, and a recreational flow study.
- “There needs to be maintenance of the DO levels that benefit trout in the lower Saluda.”

- “SCE&G needs to be maintaining sufficient DO for striped bass during fall/winter in Lake Murray. “
- Saluda County is concerned that historic drawdowns have impacted access in Saluda Co. The Lake is usable but access is a primary issue, especially during November through early March. (mentioned several times)
- “In Saluda County the drawdowns adversely affect the coves (76 miles of shoreline).”
- “What are the lake effects of operations on fisheries, such as entrainment, cool water, habitat in lake and thermal refuge?”
- “What are the projects operation affects on the shoreline, such as habitat and recreation, homeowners, boating and safety?”
- “What are the tax implications of developing land (property taxes in county)?”
- There needs to be an explanation to the public on the definitions of historical vs. present operations and peak vs. reserve.
- “Why are there winter drawdowns when there is year-round recreation?” There is a desire to stop or minimize these drawdowns.
- “What is the dam safety post-remediation and in regards to terrorism?”
- There needs to be communication about repairs.
- “What is the dam remediation in relation to relicensing? Is there a longer license term due to investment?”
- “Are there fees for permitting shoreline mgt issues structure in the future?”
- “High flows can cause scouring, impacts to macro-invertebrates in the first few miles.” (mentioned by DHEC)
- There was a request to create an informed public by posting a description of how and why the project operates as it does on the website.
- Website suggestion: What does the name Saluda mean? “River of Corn”?
- “Will permit fees, rules and regulations etc. be discussed as part of the project relicensing? Is there a handbook?”

- The suggestion was made that they should maintain as much water as possible in the lake.
- “What are the impacts of municipal supply on operation and availability?”
- “Is there coordination between this project and others? How frequently?” KM stated coordination with Greenwood over last few years because of remediation, also occurs with storms, and hurricanes.
- "Does Saluda provide reserves for systems other than SCE&G's?"
- “What are SCE&G’s concerns about the project?”

Wildlife and Fisheries

- It is felt that Bass tournaments need to be more supervised and as a result of these tournaments much is taken from the lake and little is given back. It is thought that tournaments greatly promote the spread of noxious weeds and deplete the local fisheries. They also cause many disturbances such as speed, noise and inconsiderate wakes in coves.
- There are concerns about the condition of migratory fish species.
- The Lower Saluda flow patterns are of concern and how they affect minimum flow, habitat, water quality, trout growth and high flows.
- Threatened and Endangered Species such as Rocky Shoals Spider Lilly, Short-Nosed Sturgeon, Bald Eagles, Wood Storks, and Ospreys are a concern.
- “There needs to be a protection of fish habitat and spawning areas.”
- “Is there/will there be Lake stabilization during spawning periods.”
- “Will SCE&G maintain or put in place woody debris/structure for spawning?”
- “There is a need to find a balance between the adverse effects and the benefits of nuisance aquatic plants.”
- “Is nuisance aquatic plant species control affecting waterfowl diversity?”
- “What is the current condition of the Wood Storks, and the effects upon them by the different land use practices, the water quality, plant operations, and recreation?”

- “How does dissolved oxygen issue, affected by operations, affect aquatic resources?”
- “What are the impacts of both permitted and non permitted discharges?”
- “How accurate are the current monitoring devices for DO in the Lower Saluda River?”
- “What are the Diadromous fish movements and their use of the Saluda and Congaree Rivers?”
- There were questions in reference to Diadromous fish migration and how project operations impact the ability to survive and complete life cycle.
- “How will SCE&G manage nuisance aquatic plants in Lake Murray?”
- “What are the ecological benefits of a buffer for wildlife?”
- “How does lake stratification effect spawning success?”
- “Is there clean gravel for spawning in the Lower Saluda River?”
- Many people feel development needs to be reduced along the Saluda in order to preserve habitat for fish and wildlife.
- There was a suggestion that DHEC was not really enforcing runoff standards from various sources. It was suggested that they need to aggressively pursue and identify the source.
- “How accurate is the current DO monitoring equipment being used by USGS? There needs to be a D.O. standard that has a 5.5 running day average.”
- “There needs to be better enforcement of various laws on the lower Saluda river.”
- There was a suggested need for speed limits on the lake.
- “Will DNR continue to stock trout in the Lower Saluda River, and where exactly are they stocked downstream?”
- “There is a lack of accurate info from FEMA in regards to flood insurance on lakeshore properties.” (not really in SCE&G’s hands) (mentioned several times)