Dillsboro Hydroelectric Project (FERC # 2602)

Report on High Water Availability for Recreation and Recreation Opportunity Studies

The Dillsboro Project is located on the Tuckasegee River in the town of Dillsboro in a mountain valley setting surrounded by commercial and home development, woodlands, and open fields. Five Duke Power Developments (the East Fork and West Fork Projects) located 20 miles upstream affect water flows at Dillsboro. The Tuckasegee Plant and the Thorpe Plant (FERC 2686), located on the West Fork of the Tuckasegee River, are run in tandem. The usual release from the Tuckasegee Plant (the lower plant) is about 190 cfs plus a continuous release of 20 cfs for a total of 210 cfs in the riverbed at the confluence of the East and West forks. The Cedar Cliff development on the East Fork provides another 10 cfs when it is not generating for a total of about 220 cfs in the riverbed from power generation and from continuous releases. Average annual runoff in the West Fork (at Tuckasegee Reservoir) is about 158 cfs with significant seasonal variations. The Tennessee Creek, Bear Creek, and Cedar Cliff developments (FERC 2698) on the East Fork are operationally linked to each other and are operated as such. The usual release from the Cedar Cliff Plant (the lower plant) is about 480 cfs plus a continuous release of 20 cfs from the West Fork for a total of about 500 cfs from power generation and continuous releases. Average annual runoff in the East Fork (at Cedar Cliff Reservoir) is about 239 cfs with significant seasonal variations. The average annual runoff at Dillsboro is about 779 cfs with significant seasonal variations. Information about generation releases is available through a Duke Power telephone message system for the public interested in downstream recreation. The number is 828 369 4556.

The Dillsboro Project does not significantly affect flow levels in the Tuckasegee River at Dillsboro since it is a hydroelectric project with limited storage. Water either flows through the generator(s) and back into the riverbed below the 12-foot high dam or it runs over the dam or both. Since the Project has minimal effects on either river flows or reservoir levels, it also has no impact on angling and paddling recreational opportunities on the reservoir and downstream of the Project whether at low or high stream flows. Further information will be available from the Dillsboro Plant Operation Plan currently being developed as part of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of the Dillsboro Project.

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