

**Duke Power Nantahala Area**

**Hydropower Relicensing**

**Action Number (#): NPLOTH4**

**Rename Thorpe Reservoir**

**Study Report**

**October 2002**

## **I. Background/ History**

The North Carolina Utilities Commission granted Nantahala Power & Light Company (NP&L), owned at the time by the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), permission to construct the Glenville project in 1940. The construction of this plant was to support aluminum production necessary for the war effort. The construction of the Glenville project, which began on July 27, 1940, brought forth not only power for the war but also opportunity to the citizens of Western North Carolina who were still recovering from the economic depression of the 1930's. Many of the 1500 workers that constructed the Glenville project were from the local area. The Glenville project was completed and the lake filled in sixteen months. The entire project was dedicated and declared in service on October 13, 1941.

In 1950, Nantahala Power and Light President John Edward Sterling Thorpe died. In that same year the project was named in his honor.

The Thorpe Project, part of the West Fork Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2686) licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This license was issued for 25 years beginning on January 28, 1981 and extending 25 years to January 28, 2006. Duke Power, current owner of the project, is conducting the process to have that license renewed. As part of the relicensing process Duke Power has requested public comment on and participation in the process. Representatives of the Glenville community requested that Thorpe Lake be legally renamed "Lake Glenville."

## **II. Study Purpose**

The goal of the study was identify the necessary steps to officially change the name of Thorpe Lake to "Lake Glenville" in publication(s), map(s), and other documents. Western North Carolina depends heavily on the tourism industry. The presence of a lake in an area becomes a natural destination for many people; however, inconsistent naming makes it difficult to locate and market that destination. Regional promotional and marketing publications refer to the reservoir as "Lake Glenville," while official government maps identify Thorpe Lake. The Glenville community expressed a desire to address this inconsistency.

## **III. Regulatory Process**

The USGS Board of Geographic Names, which is a part of the United States Geological Survey (USGS), has jurisdiction to change the names of places in the United States and its territory. The USGS produces most publicly published federal maps. The US Board of Geographic Names also requests advisory comments from other major stakeholders. In this case, the US Board of Geographic Names requested comments from the State of North Carolina's Geographic Names Board, the USDA Forest Service, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. The North Carolina Board of Geographic Names serves as an advisor to the federal board which changes the actual name. The state board ensures that a name change will not conflict

with any other location within that state. The NC Board of Geographic Names must also get consent from their parent organization, the NC State Mapping Advisory Council. The US Board of Geographic Names then hears the case to change or not to change the name of the resource.

#### **IV. Project Timeline**

- June 18, 2000** The Friends of Lake Glenville submitted a letter requesting changing the name of “Thorpe Reservoir” to “Lake Glenville” in response to the first stage consultation report.
- November 2000** A Technical Leadership Team (TLT) was formed to evaluate and begin the proposed name change application process.
- July 28, 2001** The Friends of Lake Glenville submitted a letter to Duke Power - Nantahala Area and the Executive Director for Domestic Geographic Names formally requesting changing the name of “Thorpe Reservoir” to “Lake Glenville”
- January 2002** Duke Power filed a request with the U.S. Geological Survey to officially have the name “Thorpe Reservoir” changed to “Lake Glenville.”
- February 19, 2002** The USGS Board of Geographic Names sent an application receipt letter to Duke Power - Nantahala Area stating that the USGS Board of Geographic Names had received the request and was requesting comments on the proposed name change from the USDA Forest Service, NC Board of Geographic Names, and the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.
- August, 2002** The USGS Board of Geographic Names requested comments on the proposed name change from the USDA Forest Service.
- August 28, 2002** The USDA Forest Service sent a letter stating it had “no reason to oppose” the renaming of the Thorpe reservoir to “Lake Glenville.”
- September 6, 2002** The Jackson County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution supporting and officially requesting that Duke Power change the name of Thorpe Lake to the locally referred to name of Lake Glenville.

- September 23, 2002** The USGS Board of Geographic Names was notified by the NC State Mapping Advisory Council and the NC Board of Geographic names that they had no opposition to the renaming of the Thorpe Reservoir to “Lake Glenville”
- September 27, 2002** The USGS Board of Geographic Names requested that the Duke Power Company send a request for comments to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians prior to case review by the USGS Board of Geographic Names. Duke Power requested comments from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians on Sept. 30, 2002.
- October 6, 2002** The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians sent a letter supporting the name change of the Thorpe Reservoir to “Lake Glenville”
- October 7, 2002** All comments were sent to USGS Board of Geographic Names for consideration on Thursday October 10, 2002 during their regular board meeting
- October 10, 2002** The USGS Board of Geographic Names notifies Duke Power that the name of the reservoir created by Thorpe Dam will be referred to as “Lake Glenville.” This reference will take effect immediately on any new document(s) referring to that reservoir. All new inferences and acknowledgement on federally produced maps, applications, and other documents shall bear the name of “Lake Glenville.” The USGS Board of Geographic Names shall send out letters to involved stakeholders acknowledging its actions.