

Action name: Recreational Use and Needs Study

Prerequisite Actions: none

Action Description:

Conduct a recreational use and needs study to determine present demand and projected future and induced recreational demand, including possible additional public access needs.

Applicable Hydro Projects/Developments:

Nantahala, Thorpe, Tuckasegee, Cedar Cliff, Bear Creek, Tennessee, Wolf Creek, Bryson, Dillsboro, Franklin, Dicks Creek, White Oak Creek and Mission Projects.

I. Objective

The study objectives are: 1) to provide data sufficient to indicate the present recreation use and experiences on the reservoirs, bypasses and downstream of the reservoirs, 2) to provide information sufficient to estimate the future potential recreational development of the project and adjacent lands for developed and dispersed recreation areas and 3) gather information needed to indicate the present and foreseeable public use in relation to the capacity of the project lands and waters and downstream areas, serving multiple uses without impairment to the natural resources and the satisfaction of users (i. e. carrying capacity).

II. Basis

The basis for the study is a result of 18 CFR Ch. 1 §2.7 Recreational development at licensed projects.

III. Geographic and Temporal Scope

The geographical study area will include the project areas and adjacent lands, downstream river reaches of powerhouses, the tailwaters and the bypassed reaches for determining existing uses and the counties surrounding the projects for determining the potential future uses at the projects. The study will take one year.

IV. Approach and Analysis

A Recreation Use and Needs Survey will need to be conducted for each of the 11 reservoirs and adjacent lands. The survey will consist of five work elements:

- (1) The preparation of a recreation needs survey to identify the existing and planned recreation facilities; the demand for different types of facilities; the experience levels the public seeks when going to the projects; the mix of boating uses on the projects and downstream tailwaters; a description and quantifying of other types of land based recreation use taking place at the projects, bypassed reaches and tailwater areas; and a profile of the reservoir users (by places of residence, travel time to the reservoir, etc.). The survey will need to gather data from a cross section of public access users, lake front residents, commercial facility customers, the general public and individuals that did not visit the reservoirs (those that stayed away for specific reasons). The various user segments that are surveyed will not be combined unless statistically similar and we will attempt to collect sufficient seasonal data to allow for statistical comparison.

- (2) Estimates of present and future use levels of boating and land based recreation. This will also require documentation of the percent capacity that each access area receives on average peak and non-peak weekend days during the recreation season.
- (3) An evaluation of the boat carrying capacity for each reservoir based on the mix of boating uses. The calculated percent of carrying capacity will need to be compared to the recreationist's perception of crowding on the lakes.
- (4) An evaluation made from the study data, including information from all recreational and aesthetic studies, that indicates the facilities that are most needed and the best locations of initial sites. This evaluation will also need to establish a "triggering mechanism" to determine when additional facilities may be needed in the future (i. e. when a site or facility reaches an occupancy rate of ?? for ?? days during the recreation season consideration should be given to additional facilities).
- (5) The analysis will include an evaluation of the recreational setting in a regional context that will characterize the relative uniqueness of both the reservoir and river experience levels compared to other resources of the region.

V. Schedules and Required Conditions

The study will need to be conducted during a full calendar year (probably 2001).

VI. Results

The results of this study will provide information on the types and amounts of current and future use at the projects and surrounding lands and the ability of the projects to accommodate future increases in use. It will also provide information on the existing and proposed recreation facilities available at the projects and in the vicinity of the projects. Results from the surveys will indicate types of facilities the public identifies as needed at and adjacent to the projects.

VII. Participants

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VIII.Expected Benefits

The expected benefits of this study are to provide information that will identify recreation facilities the public desires at and adjacent to the projects and the ability of the projects to support those facilities while preserving the projects' economic, scenic, environmental and recreation values.

IX. List of Attachments

X. List of References