

# Lake Rhodhiss Perspectives

## Catawba-Wataree Comprehensive Relicensing Agreement (CRA)

### Background

Lake Rhodhiss was built in 1925. The Rhodhiss Dam is 65 feet high and 1,500 feet long. A relatively small lake, Rhodhiss has 93 miles of shoreline and a surface area of approximately 3,060 acres. Full pond elevation is 995.1 feet above mean sea level.

Lake Rhodhiss is also a reliable source of water for the nearby cities of Granite Falls, Lenoir and Valdese, North Carolina.

Duke Energy provides four boat access areas and one bank fishing area on the lake in cooperation with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

### Interests addressed in the CRA

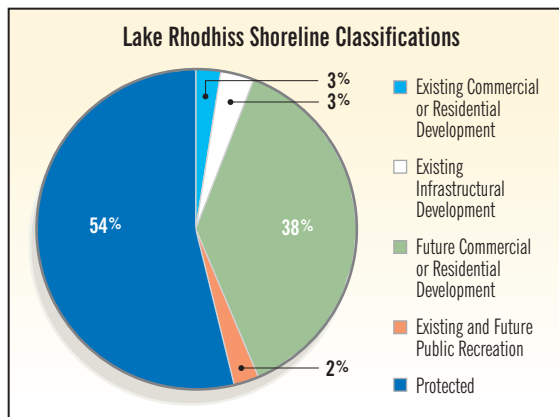
**1. Lake Level Ranges** – Lake level ranges (located in the adjacent chart) have been established to protect fish habitat, public water system, industrial and power generation water intakes, recreation access and aesthetics. Ranges are bounded by normal minimum and normal maximum elevations with a normal target elevation in between. For Lake Rhodhiss the normal target lake level is 97 feet year-round.

Lake Rhodhiss Elevations (in feet on the 1st of the month)				
Month(s)	Existing Guide Curve	Minimum	Target	Maximum
Jan - Dec 31	97	94	97	100

**2. Drought Management** – As part of the relicensing process, a Low Inflow Protocol has been

established to "trigger" water use restrictions by large water intake owners. These water use restrictions apply to hydroelectric generation, public water system withdrawals and flows for recreation and aquatic life.

**3. Shoreline Management** – Duke Energy operates a comprehensive shoreline management program on all 11 lakes along the Catawba River. Duke Energy's program depends on the



Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) and Shoreline Management Guidelines (SMG) to balance private and public access with protecting the environmental, public recreational, cultural and scenic values. As part of the relicensing process, both the SMP and SMG have been updated. The updated SMP and SMG were implemented in September 2006. The SMG provide rules on what facilities are allowed and how they can be built/constructed/maintained.

Overall, the update to the SMP has resulted in more refined shoreline mapping and additional restrictions on construction activity within the project boundary of the reservoir. The SMP is a series of maps with shoreline classifications denoting locations where piers, marinas, excavations and shoreline stabilization within the project boundary either already exist or can take place. Each shoreline classification has a separate set of restrictions and allowed activities.

### 4. Public Information Systems for Lake and River Information --

Information including reservoir level ranges, water release times, generation schedules and maps to public reservoir access will be provided as a result of relicensing. River paddlers and anglers will have access to information on releases from dams to paddle and

fish. Information posted on signs will be provided in English and/or international symbols with signage in Spanish also available immediately downstream of the dams.

### 5. New and Expanded Public Recreation

**Facilities/Access** – Recreational enhancements planned for Lake Rhodhiss and the Johns River area include:

- a. *Corpening Bridge Access Area* – Provide approximately ten acres and develop a trailered boat ramp and ten gravel parking spaces on the

### Stakeholders signing the Comprehensive Relicensing Agreement (CRA)

In addition to state resource agencies, Duke Energy and national special interest groups – many representatives of local entities and public citizens around Lake Rhodhiss signed the CRA. These include:

- Area II Soil and Water - Conservation Districts
- Catawba Valley Heritage Alliance
- Town of Valdese
- Burke County
- Catawba-Wataree Relicensing Coalition
- Trout Unlimited
- Caldwell County
- Foothills Conservancy
- Western Piedmont Council of Governments
- Carolina Canoe Club
- North Carolina Wildlife Federation

Johns River at the Corpening Road Bridge.

b. *Wilson Creek Access Area* – Acquire 50 - 100 acres of land along Wilson Creek between Adako Road and the confluence of Wilson Creek with the Johns River and offer to lease to Caldwell County to develop camping, canoe/kayak access, parking, trails and restrooms, and also fund installation of a USGS streamflow gage if Caldwell County will fund maintenance.

c. *Upper Johns River Access Area* – Provide up to \$125,000 to Caldwell County to develop an additional canoe/kayak access with parking.

d. *Johns River Gameland* – Provide a \$915/acre discount toward the acquisition by the Foothills Land Conservancy and/or the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission of up to 2,882 acres in the vicinity of the confluence of the Johns River and Lake Rhodhiss for public recreation and compatible permanent conservation.

e. *Conley Creek Access Area (Sawmills Veterans Park)* – Construct approximately two added miles of trail.

f. *Rhodhiss Access Area* – Provide restrooms.

g. *Castle Bridge Access Area* – Provide restrooms.

h. *Rhodhiss Dam Canoe Portage* – Provide signage for canoe and kayak put-in.

#### **6. Habitat, Water Quality and Land**

**Conservation Enhancements** – Duke Energy will replace one of the existing hydro units at Rhodhiss Hydro Station with a new aerating runner to support improvements in dissolved oxygen in hydro station flow releases. Duke Energy will also contribute \$1 million to the Habitat Enhancement Fund in each state to support, protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and contribute \$4 to \$5.5 million to North Carolina state agencies dependent on the license term for additional land conservation.

One hundred-foot-wide conservation easements will also be established on approximately 29 miles of land adjoining the Johns River, Catawba River and Linville River.

**7. Public Drinking Water Supply and Water Conservation Programs** -- Water is vital to life and drives our region's economy and way of life. However, Catawba-Wateree relicensing process studies indicate demands for water will more than double over the next 50 years. A group of approximately 20 water supply experts, including Duke Energy, have outlined water management objectives, identified tangible projects to protect our water supply and proposed a voluntary water conservation fund to finance these projects. The money will come from contributions paid by Duke Energy and other members of the Catawba-Wateree Basin Water Management Group. Contributors to the voluntary fund will determine the timing and priority of projects.



#### CONTACT

For more information and updates and other relicensing news, contact Duke Energy at [www.duke-energy.com](http://www.duke-energy.com).