Duke Energy files report on recent Keowee drowning

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SALEM — Duke Energy reported this week to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that a drowning at Lake Keowee on April 3 was not a Keowee-Toxaway-related incident.

In 1966, FERC granted Duke Energy a 50-year license — which expires next year — to operate the Keowee-Toxaway hydroelectric project. Federal regulations require that the licensee report any fatal accidents within the project site.

Duke concluded in its report submitted Monday the drowning death was a non-project-related incident because it "did not take place near a dam, spillway, intake or power line," as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, 18 CFR 12.10.

The report signed by Jeffrey G. Lineberger, director of water strategy and hydro licensing for Duke Energy, states that the 17-year-old victim, Treven Tolliver, "drowned while trying to swim from the lake shore to an island with friends."

Tolliver, of Greer, was transported to Oconee Memorial, where he was resuscitated. However, he was transferred to Greenville Memorial Hospital, where he died.

The drowning occurred at Fall Creek Landing, which has become a popular spot for swimmers because of its proximity to an island called "The Rock" and a nearby waterfall.

Four drownings have been reported in that area over the past five years,

Last week, Duke spokesperson Jennifer Jabon told The Journal the company does not plan to develop a swimming beach at Fall Creek Landing.

Oconee County councilwoman Edda Cammick, whose district includes much of Lake Keowee, said last week that she would like to see a floating platform set up between the shores of Falls Creek Landing and "The Rock" to help prevent future drownings in that area.

FERC is scheduled to issue a draft environmental assessment of Duke's Keowee-Toxaway relicensing application sometime in October and file a final EA in March 2016. Duke submitted a series of studies addressing issues such as water quality and supply, shoreline management, recreational needs, erosion, wetlands and wildlife protection in asking FERC for a 40-year relicensing.