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About 65 percent of Lake Jocassee's shoreline is available for public use, although the only public access point to the lake is through Devils Fork State Park, according to a Duke Energy report recently subitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Duke Energy spends $1.2M on lake recreation

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
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SENECA — Duke Energy spends more than $1.2 million annually on recreation facilities at lakes Keowee and Jocassee, which combine to attract about 849,000 visitors from spring to fall, according to reports prepared by Duke Energy for each lake.

Licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to manage the shorelines of Keowee and Jocassee, Duke submitted its reports March 31. FERC requires the reports be filed every six years.

The recreation season stretches from April 1 to Sept. 30 at each lake, according to Duke Energy.

FERC issued Duke a 50-year license in 1966 to operate the Keowee-Toxaway hydroelectric project, consisting of electric power generation facilities at its man-made Keowee and Jocassee lakes. The license expires in 2016, and FERC is currently reviewing Duke Energy's application to be relicensed for another 40 years.

The surface waters of Lake Keowee cover 17,660 acres, and the lake includes almost 388 miles of shoreline that have attracted thousands of new residents, mostly retirees, over the past four decades.

According to Duke's report, less than 5 percent of Lake Keowee's shoreline is available for public use.

Jocassee's surface waters cover 7,980 acres, less than half that of Keowee, while its 92 miles of shoreline is about one-fourth of Keowee's.

Duke says about 65 percent of Jocassee's shoreline is available for public use. The only public access point to Jocassee is through Devils Fork State Park, located at 161 Holcombe Circle off S.C. Highway 11 near Salem.

In the recreation reports, Duke Energy tabulates the number of recreation amenities at each park, whether they are "user free" or "user fee" operated and the percent of capacity utilization of those amenities.

The most popular amenities used by the general public at Lake Keowee include 13 boat-launch areas (nine free), 20 picnic areas (18 free), five free reservoir fishing spots such as platforms, walkways or similar structures and 270 campsites (24 free) for tents, cabins, trailers, RVs or a combination of temporary uses.

Jocassee's amenities are located within Devils Fork State Park, and all require user fees. They include 97 campsites that can accommodate tents, trailers, RVs, cabins or a combination of temporary uses, 20 permanent cottage sites for short-term use, four boat-launch areas and two picnic areas.

Duke Energy states in its reports that it does not take in revenues from either lake.

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