FOLKS vows involvement in Duke relicensing

Workshop slated for Thursday to outline process

Staff Reports

SENECA — Friends of the Lake Keowee Society (FOLKS) says it is vitally concerned and will be deeply involved in the five-year relicensing process of the Keowee-Toxaway Project — the official name for the Lake Keowee/Jocassee Hydroelectric Project.

Duke Energy will hold an open house workshop Thursday, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. to outline the relicensing process and answer questions. An earlier report that the relicensing was for the firm's nuclear facility was incorrect. This relicensing is for the firm's hydroelectric project.

Duke Energy is planning to deliver its relicensing request to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by 2014.

"This workshop will be an opportunity for the public to become familiar with the relicensing process. We hope to have a large public turnout on June 18," said FOLKS President Bill Graham.

Graham said the current Recreation Management Plan (RMP), which is still in the FERC approval process, will control improvements to the public access areas until 2016. The same is the case for the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP).

"The relicensing is the last opportunity in many of our lifetimes to impact many of the aspects of how the lake system is managed," Graham said.

Graham said FOLKS has several active concerns it hopes to see addressed as part of the relicensing process. Among them are:

- Minimizing commercialization of the public access service areas
- Accelerating the passive development of the remaining non-leased public access areas to provide easy public access to developed swimming areas and thereby reducing the use of "unofficial recreation areas" that add to the pollution of Lake Keowee
- Increased emphasis on boating safety
- Active use of the Boat Carrying Capacity Study included in the Recreation Use and Needs Study (RUNS) and the development of a model to estimate future Boat Carrying Capacity
- The desirability of Duke Energy setting aside additional lands, probably without lake access, to provide additional recreational green space.

Graham said FOLKS also plans to ask Duke to review the 150 million gallons per day interbasin transfer to Greenville.

"FOLKS has been an active stakeholder in the SMP, RUNS, and RMP and looks forward to being an active participant in this extremely important five-year endeavor," Graham said.

If you go

WHAT: Duke Energy open house
WHEN: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday
WHERE: World of Energy, 7812 Rochester Hwy., Seneca