

# Oconee planners to revisit Duke Energy pact



JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

The Oconee County Planning Commission agreed this week to take a new look at a memorandum of understanding with Duke Energy that would formalize oversight along lakes Keowee and Jocassee.

## Agree to take another look at memorandum of understanding

BY CARLOS GALARZA  
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WALHALLA — A divided Oconee County Planning Commission is grudgingly bringing to the table in August a discussion on whether the county should enter into a memorandum of understanding with Duke Energy.

The MOU was first brought to commissioners' attention in late 2010 as a way for Oconee and Duke to cooperate and share information to better manage and monitor activity on lakes Keowee and Jocassee.

Duke has shoreline management jurisdiction over the two lakes.

However, planners never made a recommendation to council at the time and the MOU was given up for dead.

At this week's commission meeting, though, planners were again kicking around a revived effort to move the MOU forward.

Commission Chairman Ryan Honea bluntly said that in his opinion "it's useless to go down that road."

"There's a lot of people out there that I think don't want us messing with utilities," Honea said.

Commissioner Tommy Abbott wanted to know what the county would gain

with an MOU.

David Lyle, the newest member of the commission, asked how the MOU would change what is currently done by Oconee and Duke on the lakes.

Commissioner Bill Gilster spoke on behalf of new members, such as himself, who were not privy to what happened with the MOU the first time around.

"A lot of us are new to this process," Gilster said. "Do we need it? Do we not need it? I don't know, but I know we should hear it out.

"We should hear from Duke, we should hear from the people who are against it and the people who are for it so we can make a decision."

Commissioner Gwen McPhail, another newcomer, said someone must have gone through a lot of trouble putting together a draft of the MOU.

Aaron Gadsby, the Planning Department facilitator for the commission, said the MOU document is a boilerplate obtained from Duke's website.

Gadsby said that with the commission having just one busy meeting in July, he suggested it would be best to wait until August to address the MOU.