

# Catawba-Wateree Relicensing Project

## Agreement-in-Principle

### Lake Rhodhiss Perspective

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

#### Stakeholders representing the reservoir and river in hydro relicensing

In addition to federal and state resource agencies, Duke Power and national special interest groups – many representatives of local entities and public citizens around Lake Rhodhiss have participated in the 3-year relicensing process. These include:

Area II Soil and Water  
Conservation Districts  
Catawba Riverkeeper  
Foundation  
North Carolina Wildlife  
Federation  
Town of Valdese

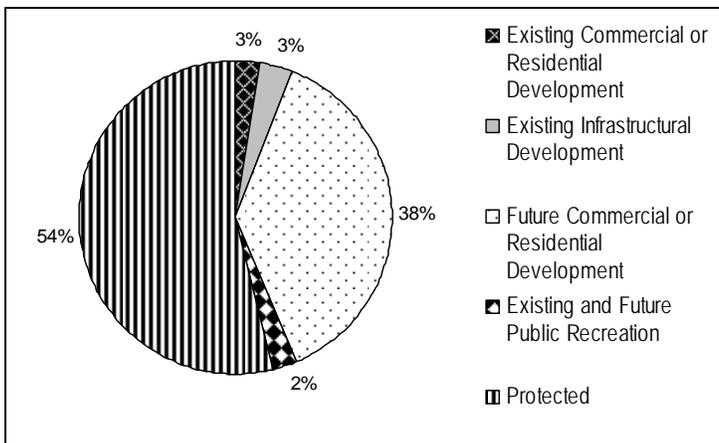
Caldwell County  
Burke County  
Western Piedmont Council of  
Governments  
Foothills Conservancy  
Carolina Canoe Club

Catawba Valley Heritage  
Alliance  
Wilson Creek Outfitters  
Catawba Wateree Relicensing  
Coalition

#### Interests addressed in the Agreement-in-Principle

- Lake Level Ranges – Lake level ranges (located in the adjacent chart) have been established to protect fish habitat, municipal, 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.
- Drought Management – As part of the relicensing process, a Low Inflow Protocol has been established to “trigger” water use restrictions by large water users. These water use restrictions apply to hydroelectric generation, public water system withdrawals and flows for recreation and aquatic life.
- Shoreline Management – Duke Power operates a comprehensive shoreline management program on all 11 lakes along the Catawba River. Duke Power’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 and these updates will begin to be used 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.

Lake Rhodhiss		Elevation on 1st Day of Month		
Month	Existing Guide Curve (ft.)	Normal Minimum (ft.)	Normal Target (ft.)	Normal Maximum (ft.)
Jan	97	94	97	100
Feb	97	94	97	100
Mar	97	94	97	100
Apr	97	94	97	100
May	97	94	97	100
Jun	97	94	97	100
Jul	97	94	97	100
Aug	97	94	97	100
Sep	97	94	97	100
Oct	97	94	97	100
Nov	97	94	97	100
Dec	97	94	97	100
31-Dec	97	94	97	100



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**Agreement-in-Principle**  
**Lake Rhodhiss Perspective**

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 include:
  - a. Corpening Bridge Access Area – Provide 10 acres and develop a trailered boat ramp and ten gravel parking spaces on the Johns River at the Corpening Road Bridge.
  - b. Wilson Creek Access Area – Acquire 50 -100 acres of land along Wilson Creek between Adako Rd and the confluence of Wilson Creek with the Johns River and make it available to Caldwell County to develop camping, canoe/kayak access, parking, trails and restrooms.
  - 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. Sawmills Park – Develop two miles of trail at the Sawmills Veterans Park.
  - f. Rhodhiss Access Area – Provide restrooms and boating access facilities.
  - g. Castle Bridge Access Area – Provide restrooms and boating access facilities.
  - h. Rhodhiss Dam Canoe Portage – Provide signage for canoe and kayak put-in.
  
6. Habitat, Water Quality and Land Conservation Enhancements – Duke Power 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 Power 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 each state dependent on the license term for additional land conservation.
  
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 Power, 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 Power and large water users. Contributors to the voluntary fund will determine the timing and priority of projects.

The Agreement in Principle, which reflects almost three years of studies and negotiations by 160+ stakeholders was finalized and distributed to representatives of 80 organizations involved in the relicensing process. In mid-April 2006, stakeholders will be asked to sign the agreement – indicating their level of consensus. Those in agreement with the Agreement in Principle will then, in turn, construct the binding Final Agreement which will be included in the license application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by August 31, 2006.