

**Alcoa Power Generating Inc.
Yadkin Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2197)**

**Regional Recreation Evaluation Final Study Plan
July 2004**

Background

Alcoa Power Generating Inc. (APGI) is the licensee for the Yadkin Hydroelectric Project. The Yadkin Project is currently licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as Project No. 2197. This license expires in 2008 and APGI must file a new license application with FERC on or before April 30, 2006 to continue operation of the Project.

The Yadkin Project consists of four reservoirs, dams, and powerhouses (High Rock, Tuckertown, Narrows, and Falls) located on a 38-mile stretch of the Yadkin River in central North Carolina. The Project generates electricity to support the power needs of Alcoa's Badin Works, to support its other aluminum operations, or is sold on the open market.

As part of the relicensing process, APGI prepared and distributed, in September 2002, an Initial Consultation Document (ICD), which provides a general overview of the Project. Agencies, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and members of the public were given an opportunity to review the ICD and identify information and studies that are needed to address relicensing issues. To further assist in the identification of issues and data/study needs, APGI has formed several Issue Advisory Groups (IAGs) to advise APGI on resource issues throughout the relicensing process. IAGs also have the opportunity to review and comment on draft study plans. A draft study plan was developed to provide additional necessary information for consideration in the relicensing process. On April 22, 2004, Yadkin distributed a copy of the Regional Recreation Evaluation Draft Study Plan. On May 5, 2004, Yadkin met with the Recreation, Aesthetics, and Shoreline Management (RASM) IAG to review and discuss the draft study plan. Yadkin received several comments on the draft study plan at the May 5 meeting, and written comments were accepted on the draft study plan through May 21, 2004. The Final Study Plan has been revised to address the received comments.

1.0 Study Objectives

Based on the recommendations of the Recreation, Aesthetics, and Shoreline Management IAG, the purpose of this study is to compare the outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences afforded by the Yadkin Project reservoirs to those afforded by other regional reservoir related recreation sites. The specific objectives for the study are:

- Identify and inventory the publicly available (governmental and private) recreation sites/facilities at other reservoirs in the study region

- Provide a general characterization of the recreational opportunities and experiences available at these reservoirs and sites
- Evaluate how recreation opportunities available at the Yadkin Project compare with those available elsewhere within the study region

2.0 Technical Approach

2.1 Data Collection

The information used for this study (to the extent available) will rely entirely on existing information and consultation with regional recreation site managers. Information that is to be used in this study includes:

- Tourist guides
- Maps
- Brochures
- The Internet
- Recreation and tourism studies
- Literature from recreation providers
- Direct consultation with regional recreation providers, site managers and local officials

2.2 Regional Recreation Review

Existing recreation information will be reviewed to compile a general inventory of major regional recreation sites found at the Yadkin Project and at other locations within the “study region”. For purposes of this study, the “study region” is defined as the area within a 100-mile radius of the Yadkin Project. The inventory will focus on the outdoor water-based recreational opportunities afforded by other reservoirs and lakes within the study region. Currently, the major reservoirs/lakes to be evaluated are listed below:

- Yadkin Project (High Rock, Tuckertown, Narrows, and Falls)
- Tillery Project (Tillery and Blewett Falls)
- Harris Lake
- Hyco Lake
- Catawba-Wateree Project (James, Rhodiss, Hickory, Lookout Shoals, Norman, Mountain Island, Wylie)
- Corps of Engineers Projects (W. Kerr Scott, John H. Kerr, Falls Lake, B Everett Jordan)

The inventory of reservoir recreation sites will include all pertinent information on each of the reservoirs, including reservoir owner/operator/manager, reservoir location, reservoir setting, size, reservoir operating regime (including seasonal water level changes) and the general character of the reservoir shoreline.

While the primary focus of the evaluation will be water-based recreation opportunities associated with regional reservoirs, the study will also consider (to a lesser extent) any other **major** recreation facilities or sites in the study region that provide other types of outdoor recreation opportunities. Types of outdoor recreation sites to be included in the inventory are listed in the following categories:

- National and state forests
- National, state, and local parks
- Wildlife refuges and nature preserves
- Game lands
- Designated recreation areas
- Major rivers and streams
- Wilderness areas
- Trail systems
- Other notable outdoor recreation sites

The inventory of recreation sites within the study region will include information such as location, type of recreation area, and managing agency.

2.3 Characterization of Regional Recreation Sites and Opportunities

After inventorying the major recreation sites in the study region, a characterization of the types of recreational opportunities available at each site will be made using existing information.

2.3.1 Types of Activities

Each site will be characterized by the types of recreational activities afforded by that site. The characterization will focus on traditional categories of outdoor recreation.

Types of recreational activities to be characterized for each site include:

- Fishing
- Boating
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Swimming
- Hunting
- Wildlife observation
- Bicycling
- Hiking/Backpacking
- Camping
- Picnicking
- Rock Climbing
- OHV use
- Horseback Riding/Trails

The characterization of each activity type will include activities available and their supporting facilities, trends in use, and other available information.

2.3.2 Recreational Experience

Each of the major reservoirs in the study region will also be characterized according to the recreational experience offered by that site. The “experience” of a reservoir will be characterized by a number of factors. To the extent such information is available, a

reservoir's experience will be predominantly characterized by the reservoir's setting and the volume and types of use. Specifically, information will be sought on the amount of development, the type of development, project operations, the carrying capacity of the reservoir, and the volume and type of use the reservoirs receive. After all available information has been compiled and a qualitative assessment of the data has been completed, each reservoir will be classified in one of three recreation experience categories: Natural, Limited Development, or Developed. An initial determination of the recreational experience provided by each of the reservoirs will be made initially by LVA based on data and information collected during the study, and will be provided in the draft study report. During review of the draft study report, input will be solicited from Recreation, Aesthetics, and Shoreline Management IAG members regarding a final determination of the experience provided at these reservoirs.

2.3.3 Tourism

In addition to specific recreation opportunities and experiences available, each reservoir will be characterized using existing information with respect to tourism. Tourism will be generally evaluated in terms of the amount of tourism generated by the recreation site(s) and opportunities available at each reservoir. For purposes of this study, tourism will generally be distinguished from local use by considering multi-day visits as "tourism", and single day use as "local use". Local officials (i.e. county planners) and recreation site owners or operators will be contacted and asked to provide a general characterization of tourism at each reservoir. The information sought from requisite officials will be standardized to include general tourism information such as any estimates they may have on type of use, volume of use, and seasonal use patterns and activities by tourists at each reservoir. Local officials will also be asked if they actively promote reservoir related tourism, and whether they have information or data that suggests that their promotional efforts have increased tourism use.

2.4 Comparison of Yadkin Recreational Opportunities and Experiences with Other Regional Sites

After the inventory and characterization of the regional recreation sites is completed, the types of recreation facilities, recreation opportunities and recreation experiences afforded by the Yadkin Project reservoirs will be compared to the other recreation sites in the study region. The comparison will generally characterize the similarities and differences in the recreational opportunities and experiences provided at the Yadkin Project to those available elsewhere in the region.

2.5 Review of Yadkin Area Recreation Plans and Future Opportunities Reporting

An inventory of recreational facilities at the Yadkin Project is being completed as part of a separate study. However, as part of the regional recreation evaluation, additional information on future recreational sites and facilities planned for the Yadkin Project area will be gathered and reviewed. Specifically, each of the 5 Counties surrounding the Yadkin Project and will be interviewed to determine what plans the Counties have for adding recreational sites or facilities to the 5 county region over the next 10-20 years. The Counties will also be queried about their assessment of recreational needs that exist in the region, that are not currently being met at the Yadkin Project or elsewhere within the 5 County region. Information obtained from the Counties concerning recreation facility plans and needs will be incorporated into the overall regional recreation assessment.

3.0 Study Reports and IAG Meetings

3.1 Reporting

A Draft Study Report will be prepared and distributed to the IAG for review and comment. After meeting with the IAG to review and discuss the draft report a final study report will be prepared.

4.0 Proposed Study Schedule

It is anticipated that the draft study report will be completed in the 3rd quarter of 2004.