

Hydrology Section — Land, Water and Conservation Division

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

www.dnr.sc.gov

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DNR

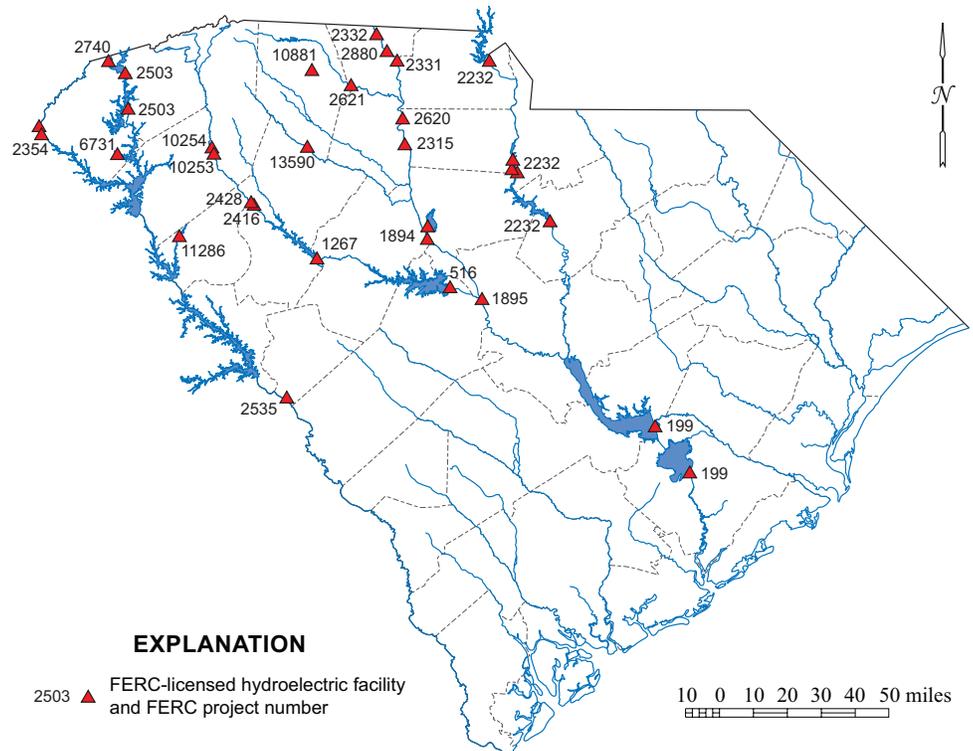
PROJECT: FERC Relicensing

OBJECTIVE: Protect the State's natural resources through hydropower facility licensing

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), created by the Federal Power Act of 1920 and formerly known as the Federal Power Commission, is an independent regulatory agency whose responsibilities include the licensing and relicensing of nonfederal hydropower projects. The duties of the Commission regarding hydropower include: the issuance of licenses for the construction of new projects; the issuance of licenses for the continuance of existing projects (relicensing); and the oversight of all ongoing project operations, including dam safety inspections and environmental monitoring. FERC licenses stipulate the operating and management guidelines regarding power generation and the resources affected by a hydropower project, and are typically administered for 30 to 50 years.

FERC licensing is a multi-year process involving a variety of stakeholders, including the licensee, state and federal agencies, conservation groups and other nongovernment organizations, and the general public. The licensee must solicit comments and requests for information, surveys, and studies from the various stakeholders and are required to consider the results of any surveys and studies and any other information collected during the soliciting period. The development of a flow release schedule downstream of a hydropower project and the development of a low inflow protocol (LIP) during drought periods are often the most difficult aspects of the licensing process. Balancing the needs for fish and wildlife, recreation, and water withdrawers in both the river and the reservoir, along with the requirements of the hydropower operator to meet the peaking, base load, and reserve demands can be a challenging process. As a result, the licensing or relicensing of large hydropower projects may involve numerous scientific studies and surveys, which help facilitate the development of management plans regarding power generation, reservoir elevations, and downstream flows. DNR hydrologists and biologists work closely with the numerous stakeholders to ensure that the State's natural resources associated with each licensed hydropower project are protected.

There are currently 24 FERC-licensed projects in South Carolina. Over the past decade, most of the large FERC projects in the State or nearby in Georgia or North Carolina have undergone the relicensing process. These projects include Santee-Cooper (No. 199), Saluda (No. 516), Catawba-Wateree (No. 2232), and Yadkin-Pee Dee (No. 2206, not shown on map). Though none of these projects has yet received a new license, applications have been completed and are under final review by FERC. Major projects currently undergoing the relicensing process are Keowee & Jocassee (No. 2503) and Parr Shoals (No. 1894). Other large projects in the State include Lake Greenwood (No. 1267), relicensed in 1995, and Bad Creek PS (No. 2740), which expires in 2027. Other projects in the State regulated by FERC are typically run-of-river projects that have relatively small power generation capacity and limited available reservoir storage.



For information about FERC's hydropower licensing, visit FERC's website: <http://www.ferc.gov/industries/hydropower.asp>.

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