

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

***LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER
January 10, 2006***

final dka 03-06-06

ATTENDEES:

| Name | Organization | Name | Organization |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bill Argentieri | SCE&G | George Duke | Lake Murray Homeowners Coalition |
| Alison Guth | Kleinschmidt Associates | Bill Marshall | SCDNR/LSSRA |
| Tom Eppink | SCANA | Jim Devereaux | SCE&G |
| Aaron Small | USCG Auxiliary | Tommy Boozer | SCE&G |
| Norm Nicholson | Lexington County Sheriffs Dept. | Mike Waddell | Trout Unlimited |
| Patrick Moore | American Rivers/CCL | Bret Hoffman | Kleinschmidt Associates |
| Randy Mahan | SCANA | Karen Kustafik | Columbia Parks and Recreation |
| Alan Axson | Columbia Fire Dept. | Lee Barber | LMA |
| David Price | Lake Murray Power Squadron | Alan Stuart | Kleinschmidt Associates |
| Bill Mathias | LMPS & LMA | Dave Anderson | Kleinschmidt Associates |
| Kenneth Fox | LMA | | |

HOMEWORK ITEMS:

- Dave Anderson – contact local hospitals to see if they are interested in participating
- Dave Anderson – start locating data on project related accidents
- Tommy Boozer and/or Norm Nicholson – contact Sea Tow to see if they are interested in participating
- Patrick Moore – attempt to locate other "safety plans" at FERC projects
- Jim Devereaux – contact Mike Dawson to see if he is interested in participating
- Aaron Small – bring copies of DNR pamphlets related to boating/safety
- Alan Axson – begin getting data on emergency responses on the LSR
- Tom Eppink – look into state laws about boating safety

PARKING LOT ITEMS:

- None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

**February 14, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.
Located at the Lake Murray Training Center**

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER

January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

MEETING NOTES:

These notes serve to be a summary of the major points presented during the meeting and are not intended to be a transcript or analysis of the meeting.

The meeting began with a recap of organizations and their responsibilities for safety around Lake Murray and the Lower Saluda River (LSR). Alan Axson with the Columbia Fire Department began by explaining the CFD responds to anything in Richland County related to swiftwater rescue, mainly below the I-20 bridge. The CFD also responds to some calls in the Congaree River in West Columbia, occasionally responding to calls down to State Highway 601. Alan talked about how the number of visitors at the Columbia Canal have increased (from 5 to 10 per hour to 100 per hour). The CFD is in the process of putting another station at the Broad River and Greystone. The CFD has two Zodiacs and about 30 people trained for swiftwater rescue.

Jerry Wise was absent, but Dave went over the information he submitted reporting his involvement with various safety related organizations around the lake (especially on the Lexington County side and the Saluda River above the lake).

Lee Barber explained the LMAs involvement with safety around the lake, mainly dealing with education and legislation. He briefly explained Drew's Law, one of LMAs successes, which deals with boating laws and boating under the influence.

Mike Wadell told the groups about Trout Unlimited's concern with safety education, mainly with their members.

Aaron Small gave a short presentation about the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, which is under the jurisdiction of the USCG base in Charleston, SC. The Auxiliary are located at Lake Murray to assist with boating safety and emergencies until the Charleston-based unit arrives. They also maintain the weather link for the U.S. Weather Bureau and have an unofficial reporting station on the lake. They presently have one unit on-duty (Unit 1) available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, which is available to assist with emergencies. They also have seven other USCG certified boats and have about 41 members who work closely with the Lake Murray Power Squadron. They also have boats on Lake Greenwood and Wateree; additional boats can be requested from the Charleston base. Education is their major concern for promoting boating safety. Aaron noted that the National Weather Service issues small craft advisories for the lake. While the Auxiliary does not have any authority for punishing boating violations, when members from the Charleston base ride with them, they have that authority. Tommy B. noted that SCE&G has a long standing positive relationship with the USCG Auxiliary and appreciate the work they do; Aaron expressed similar sentiments about SCE&G.

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

Karen Kustafik talked about her efforts teaching whitewater kayaking to prevent emergencies and is coordinating park rangers for assistance with the riverfront area in Columbia. She also has a few ACA-certified instructors doing instruction for kids. These park rangers are not able to issue citations, but may eventually be able to and will start patrolling within the city limits of the Three Rivers Greenway. The rangers are funded by the city of Columbia. Further information on the whitewater program is available through the city's website: www.columbiasc.net.

Patrick Moore explained that while American Rivers/CCL don't have any staff who deal directly with safety, they are concerned with water quality and its possible effects on public health.

Bill Marshall talked about the Lower Saluda River Scenic River Advisory Council and their responsibility for advising the Department of Natural Resources regarding the management of the State Scenic River. Two Lower Saluda River corridor plans have been developed from this effort and the 1990 plan contains a section with recommendations dealing specifically with safety. Objectives range from improving information and warning systems to removing rebar from rocks in the river¹. The Council has worked with SCE&G to put river markers in place on poles and bridge pilings to help users interpret danger associated with rising water levels. They have put this information at all public access points and have the information available on their website: http://www.dnr.sc.gov/water/envaff/river/low_saluda_scenic.htm. Bill noted that the river marker project was accomplished with leadership from Charlene Coleman of American Whitewater and with cooperation from SCE&G who provided various flows for evaluation. The color-coding on the poles equates to river flows as follows: top of blue/bottom of yellow is approximately 2600 cfs; top of yellow/bottom of red is approximately 8800 cfs.. He also noted that this information is probably not being handed out at local outfitters, but has been in the past.

David Price talked about the Lake Murray Power Squadron. They offer safe boating courses to everyone and specific courses to their members on anything from taking care of engines to navigating the ocean. They also offer a weather course and work with other groups, such as the Boy Scouts. The Squadron helps to maintain the emergency center on Lake Murray, including the helipad. They also maintain reference lights and day markers (with the help of the Lake Murray Association). The Squadron is completely volunteer organization and rely on their members for continuing education opportunities related to boating.

¹ The 1990 Lower Saluda River Corridor Plan, User Safety Recommendations identify the following needs: improved warning systems, river map signs at access points, training programs for river rescue personnel, improved access to flow release information, portage path around majors rapids, and river safety education materials for the public. Most of these safety-related needs have been addressed to some degree but the needs merit ongoing attention and upgrading of solutions through time.

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

Steve Bell explained that his organization is mainly concerned with safety on the lake but has concerns on the LSR as well. Steve would like to focus on public education and changes in project operations to make things safer. They have about 16 volunteers who provide reports of hazards on the lake.

Norm Nicholson discussed the Lexington County Sheriffs Department's involvement with safety issues around the lake and the upper Saluda River. They have patrol boats and fire rescue boats on the lake and have a helicopter to use located at the substation on Lake Murray. Tommy B. explained that SCE&G leases the land for the sub-station and have been since the late 1990s. This substation is a very important part of maintaining safety on the lake since it allows responsible parties to keep emergency boats on the lake. Norm continued explaining that the LCSD also covers Saluda and Newberry counties and they have jurisdiction in all four counties (Lexington, Saluda, Newberry, and Richland). David P. noted that his organization has started Harbor Watch to keep an eye out for terror related activities. Alan S. noted they patrol heavily around the water intake structures to the dams. It was noted that all agencies work together when there is an emergency. Lee B. noted that the LMA sells dock signs, at the request of the Sheriff's Dept., that indicate the property's street address to assist with location of emergency situations.

Dave A. listed the organizations that are responsible on the lake, the river, or both.

| Lake | Both | River |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hollow Creek FD | AR | Columbia Fire Dept. |
| Lexington County EMS | CCL | Trout Unlimited |
| LMA | SCWF | CoC Parks and Recreation |
| Lake Murray CG | LMW | American Whitewater |
| Lake Murray PS | SCDNR | LSSRAC |
| LMHOC | Lexington County Sheriff | |

The group then discussed the need to contact the Richland, Saluda, and Newberry County Sheriffs office, as well as Providence Hospital, Richland Hospital, and West Columbia Rescue.

Randy M. questioned the group concerning a registry of certified first responders and who is responsible for contacting them in case of an emergency. Norm N. indicated the fire departments should have a list. There was some discussion between Tommy B. and Norm N. about getting someone from SeaTow to attend the RCG meetings. Norm N. further explained that he helps get first responders to the location. However, the bottom line is that the number to call in case of emergencies is 911.

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER

January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

Dave A. asked the group about statutory authority and who is able to issue citations. Someone responded that the only people that have that authority were the USCG, SCDNR, and the Sheriffs Depts. (anyone who is a class one certified law enforcement officer).

Tommy B. explained that there is a FERC safety plan that deals with warning signage and is being updated right now. It was noted that signs don't necessarily mean that people will act responsibly. Tommy B. showed some examples of the signs that SCE&G uses at their sites. The group talked about the need to increase public education about the signs. It was noted that the USCG Auxiliary and the SCDNR have created a safe boating checklist and that would be a good beginning for education efforts. Norm N. and Tommy discussed the idea about getting a package together that the DNR could give to people when they register a boat. Tommy B. also asked if the DNR could enforce the signs on the back of the dam in the tailrace. Norm N. replied that if there are four signs up; then it could be enforced. Tommy talked a little about the idea of putting a positive barrier across the tailrace so people could not approach the dam.

The discussion turned to the warning system that is in place on the LSR to warn river users of rising water. Bill A. explained the sirens are activated by a float switch upstream; on every three-inch rise of the river, the sirens are activated. The sirens stay on for three minutes and there are some controls in place that keep the sirens from sounding continuously if there is a prolonged rise in water. After this delay, the sirens will activate on the next three-inch rise in water. The sirens will sound 24 hours a day; SCE&G received many complaints, so they have performed studies that resulted in a lowering of the volume. The sirens are located upstream of Riverbanks Zoo and at Hope Ferry (Metts) Landing.

The group then proceeded to talk about ramping and the pros and cons of ramping releases at Saluda. Randy M. made the point that ramping is a double-edged sword; it gives the river user a false sense of security when they know they have "more" time to get off the river. In addition, if SCE&G needs the reserve capacity of Saluda, then ramping is not an option. Patrick M. noted we need to approach the ramping issue like FERC will approach it and made the point that SCE&G has options for offline capacity if Saluda cannot be operated safely. Bill M. suggested the group should study and understand how fast the water actually rises below the dam, in areas such as Hope Ferry Landing, to see how rapidly conditions can change for people in the river when the turbines are opened.

The group then looked at the mission statement and decided to finalize the statement and post it to the website.

The discussion turned to the difference between the FERC required safety plan and the expected deliverable from this RCG. The group wondered if there had been another safety plan of this type

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

at other FERC projects. Patrick M. agreed to search e-Library to see if there have been any other plans at a FERC project (besides the FERC required safety plan). Alan S. stated that he envisions some type of plan that summarizes the safety personnel and equipment around the lake and what is available and a way to get this information out to the public. Tommy B. noted that this would probably be the only committee that continues after the licensing process is over. Steve B. asked about if this committee will examine ramping and higher lake levels. It was explained that lake levels will be addressed in the Operation RCG and that this group can make recommendations to the Operations RCG as it relates to safety. The Operations RCG can then balance all the factors before making a recommendation to FERC. Alan asked what is the main cause of accidents on Lake Murray. David P. replied that there is probably not one main cause attributable to operations, most of it is alcohol related. There was some discussion on ramping and lake levels. Norm N. made the point that it does not matter how the project is operated; the bottom line is that we need to educate lake/river users on how to be safe. Someone mentioned it would be useful to get data on calls to the fire department from the lake/river. Dave A. agreed and noted we would be getting these kinds of data.

After lunch, Dave A. led a discussion about what happens when there is an emergency on the lake or river. Norm N. talked about 911 and enhanced 911 and the differences between them. When a 911 call is placed, the dispatcher forwards the call to the appropriate authority depending on what the emergency is. If there is an on-water emergency, the call goes to the Lexington County Sheriffs Dept.; if a call is for the river, the call usually goes to the Columbia Fire Dept. There are a lot of problems with people knowing where they are on the water and with emergency personnel locating accidents (i.e., there are different names for the same coves, people don't know distances on the water, etc.). It was noted that the USCG monitors channel 16 on the lake usually, and the two on-water towing companies monitor it all the time. Dave A. inquired as to what information is generated when an accident occurs. Norm N. said that the DNR usually writes reports for the lake; Alan A. said they keep a record of the 911 calls they receive. It was also noted that a big problem is when a new semester starts at the University of South Carolina and there is an influx of thousands of new people that don't know the hazards of the river. It was noted that we should contact someone from the university to participate in this group. Alan S. wondered if we should also invite Mike Dawson from the Rivers Alliance. Jim D. agreed to get in touch with him.

The discussion then turned back to the need for better education of lake/river users. Randy M. noted that if we can get people to use certain access areas, we can get the information to them at those areas.

The group then entered into a question and answer session about safety and accidents around the lake. It was noted that all the agencies work together to make sure emergencies are taken care of and they are in constant communication when they are patrolling the lake. Questions were raised as

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

to how best promote safety and the group discussed a public education campaign and the possibility of monthly meetings about safety on the lake. Tommy B. noted that this would be good for SCE&G as well as they can get input on future access points. There was a discussion as to data that show how fast the water rises on the river.

The discussion then turned to laws that govern boating use in South Carolina. Aaron S. agreed to bring in some DNR pamphlets that cover boating laws. Dave A. questioned the group on warning buoys and the process for getting them installed. The DNR has criteria for placing new buoys.

The group then turned to listing specific issues they will be dealing with in the RCG meetings. The group talked about water release response time and the issue of ramping. It was mentioned that ramping provides a false sense of security and the rate of water rise will not encourage people to get off the river. Alan S. made the point that if the sirens start going off, it's time to get off the water. Karen K. noted there are some places where the sirens cannot be heard and the group agreed that is an issue worth exploring. The issue of egress from the river when the water starts rising was also discussed. The group agreed to look at maps of the river next time and the estimated coverage of the current warning system to begin examining if there are areas where the sirens should be heard. There was some discussion if the confluence needs to be included. The group would like some more information from Mike Dawson before looking at this issue.

The group then returned to applicable laws that might affect water recreation and use. Tom E. agreed to look up these applicable laws. Alan S. reminded the group that we need to prioritize the issues so that we can deal with them in the license application. We don't necessarily have to have the safety plan in place, but the issues that will be affected by the application need to be the first to be resolved. The group agreed that improvements to the information/warning systems for river-user safety is a priority safety issue. There was also a discussion about the management of river flows as a safety issue.

The group agreed to meet next month and be prepared to discuss the warning system and the siren coverage on the LSR. The agenda for this meeting is attached below.

Comments received after this meeting are attached after the agenda.

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP**

**LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER
January 10, 2006**

final dka 03-06-06

**Saluda Hydro Relicensing
Safety Resource Conservation Group**

Meeting Agenda

**January 10, 2006
9:30 AM
Lake Murray Training Center**

- **9:30 to 11:30** Discussion on Safety Organizations and Responsibilities
- **11:30 to 12:00** Group Discussion of Mission Statement for Finalization Purposes
- **12:00 to 12:30** Lunch
- **12:30 to 3:00** Discussion on Prioritized Issues



MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER

January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

Comments from Steve Bell: Probably, the most important issue that must be addressed in the relicensing is the impact project operations have on public safety. It is apparent that dangerous situations occur as a result of lake level management and releases downstream. We recommend this committee be given the task of identifying and quantifying these unsafe conditions. This information should then be sent to an operations technical committee assigned the task of determining alternatives to the existing operational scheme which could reduce or eliminate the unsafe conditions. In addition the committee should review all FERC regs and articles that address public safety at these projects.

Comments from Malcolm Leaphart: There has been much discussion about the topics and approaches discussed at the last Safety meeting. There is a real concern from Trout Unlimited and other stakeholders that the emphasis is being placed on developing public education and warning systems to deal with the huge fluctuations in flows, without a true consideration of eliminating the source of the danger. The flows from Lake Murray into the lower Saluda River ranging from 180 cfs to over 18,000 cfs, often in extremely short time frames, are simply unacceptable in a new FERC license because of the grave danger that flow regime presents to the public, especially with the lack of advanced notice. Trying to deal with the safety concerns with the confinements of maintaining the current operational framework is too limited and will not successfully address the threats to public life, including those involved in river rescues; and, also the expense to the taxpayers who bear the costs for those.

The safety problems being raised now by all involved will continue until the flow range is either significantly reduced or eliminated, preferably to a more natural, 'run of the river' flow, altered only by hydrological conditions, and managed for constant flows. See the IDC comments from Trout Unlimited of 8-15-05 for further concerns and suggestions for safety issues -

<http://saludatu.org/news/www/articles.cfm?fo=Articles&method=story&RecordID=322>

A more constant minimum flow was discussed in the the 1980's with several from SCE&G, including engineers and also Mr. Mahan who suggested that could be accomplished with the purchase of a new, smaller generator that could run more efficiently at lower flow levels than the existing turbines. His valid comment then was that his company would want a definitive flow level determined and set for a long term so that they could maximize any purchased equipment without altering or even replacing it for new flow requirements. A maximum flow limit also needs to be established for many reasons, especially safety, and the new FERC license would be the opportune time to set both upper and lower flow limits from the hydro at Lake Murray.

Using the hydro to meet SCE&G's regional power reserves has obviously changed thinking from the time when it was used for 'peak power'; but, ways to meet the regional power demands outside of the hydro at Lake Murray should be developed. Until those demands can be met with other

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

alternatives in the SCE&G power system, the Saluda will never be safe to the public. Plus, the extremely low and high flows are very detrimental to the fisheries, through scouring of the river cobble and fish spawning sites, de-watering of spawning sites, erosion of the river banks, and other frequently documented factors from studies such as the one done on the Smith River in Virginia. See the following link for the study on the effects on that river from releases at the Philpott Dam near Martinsville, Virginia.

http://www.cnr.vt.edu/fisheries/Smith_River/

Also, in addition to public safety and fisheries, the dangers from the current flow regime affects or is directly linked to overall operations, management of the lake, and the provision for recreational opportunities on a public lake and river in a safe atmosphere. So, all of the RCG's need to be open to the optimum solution to safe operations, not just the current lowest cost mode. I am recommending through copies of this note, that all of the above mentioned RCG's add this request to their agendas as the Operations RCG has for Mike Waddell's request to study gas turbines for regional power demand.

We would appreciate a Safety agenda item for February 14 for consideration of alternatives to drastically reducing the fluctuations in the flows, or at least reducing them to no more than a few thousand cfs in a 24 hour period, with an advanced release schedule. And we certainly hope that as a meeting facilitator, that you will foster a serious discussion of how to eliminate the safety problems, not continue to live with them as the public has for over 75 years; that is, please encourage all to 'think outside the box' rather than trying to maintain the current unacceptable level of danger for the way flows have been managed. I would ask you also to try to reach a consensus from the Safety RCG member whether the new FERC license is the time to place more importance on human life than power production, especially for temporary regional power needs which could be met by other means. A consensus 'vote' on that question would probably provide the proper direction to the entire current FERC guidelines process that many think is missing now.

Comments from Charlene Coleman: I must say that after reading the minutes I have a few serious concerns:

- 1) SCE&G, at first impression, values reserve capacity needs greater than human life. I sincerely hope that is not the case.
- 2) ramping does NOT create a false sense of security, it is a responsible operational procedure during high seasonal public use periods.
- 3) the present siren system does create a false sense of security for SCE&G. Where technological testing is useful for equipment, in this situation it is not. Until someone from SCE&G physically stands at the rapids and has a sensory acceptance that this system is, has

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

been and may always be a “cry wolf” to the public, we will get no resolution as to the actual response of this “system” to actual water fluctuation.

- 4) The present warning system does not cover many high use areas and that type of system may not fit all areas, making ramping an even more critical option during the summer and trout stocking seasons.
- 5) Education must be universal, everyone (SCE&G, DNR, CPD, CFD, City governments, development groups, and the public) needs an education on the river, it’s dangers, its resources, its subculture, and its very critical place in the community as more than just a power source. The river has an important role in this area as a food source for many poorer families, water for numerous areas, recreation for generations, a habitat for threatened, redeveloping, and endangered species and a natural treasure of seeming remoteness in an urban area. Yet in its beauty is the fact, it is formidable whitewater.
- 6) the local boaters are the unidentified/unpaid/highly skilled rescuers of the public at the major rapid. I have included a message from American Whitewater on river safety and who we are in the US [attached]. I represent local boaters and their concerns. The Saluda also provides a training ground for some of the best whitewater paddlers in the world. Several US Olympic and Free style Team members are either from here or have come here to train. Several pioneers in extreme “creek” boating are from the area. But most important is the fact, we average over 35 rescues each summer alone. Rescues that don’t make the news, don’t cause the water to be turned off, and go unnoticed for the skill required to make those rescues non news worthy.
- 7) the whitewater boating community has a good relationship with SCE&G, CPD, DNR, and CFD Rescue units. The “rock people” consider us their guardians. Most boaters on the Saluda are Swift and Whitewater rescue trained and have first responder and wilderness responder first aid training by the same schools that train CFD and DNR. Not to mention certifications as instructors in rescue and boating and years of experience in whitewater, a different animal than swiftwater. We offer our skills as the first line of defense and would like to suggest cooperative training with all rescue sources on the river.
- 8) all river users must be identified and how they interact with the river must be examined, to better understand the impact of reserve capacity rapid high water fluctuation, through out the project’s effected areas.

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

**LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER
January 10, 2006**

final dka 03-06-06



PO Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org>

(828) 293-9791 Phone

(828) 227-7422 Fax

For Immediate Release

Contact: Charlie Walbridge,
AW Safety Editor
PH 304-379-9002
e-mail ccwalbridge@cs.com

American Whitewater's Accident Database and Safety Code

The Most Comprehensive Source for
Whitewater Safety Education...*Anywhere!*

Cullowhee, NC -- February 7, 2006 -- Safety has been at the core of American Whitewater's mission since 1954. "We've been reporting and analyzing accidents since our earliest days and today we are leaders in whitewater safety education based on that research. Our Accident Database is the most comprehensive collection and analysis of whitewater accidents and close calls anywhere," explains Charlie Walbridge, American Whitewater's Safety Editor. He goes on to say, "The freedom to take calculated risks, in business, love, or whitewater, is one of the most cherished prerogatives of a free people. We support the right of knowledgeable paddlers to push their limits, and at the same time help give uninformed paddlers the information they need to have fun and stay safe." The Accident Database is online at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/accidents/>.

Accident analysis is the foundation for the AW Safety Code which outlines whitewater safety guidelines applicable to all skill levels. First written in 1957 and regularly updated, it is the most complete set of guidelines for whitewater paddlers in existence. It also contains the International Scale of River Difficulty which is in use throughout North America and the world. AW's listing of Standard Rated Rapids helps make river classification more consistent across the country. It was developed by former AW Safety Chair Lee Belknap by scientifically analyzing forms filled out by hundreds of paddlers across the country. Paddlers across the nation use it to know what to expect when traveling to an unfamiliar river.

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING SAFETY RESOURCE GROUP

LAKE MURRAY TRAINING CENTER January 10, 2006

final dka 03-06-06

Safety often becomes an issue in river stewardship work; AW's key programmatic focus. The challenge is often explaining whitewater paddling to the non-paddling public. Commonly asked questions are: "How safe is whitewater paddling? Where does AW stand on riverbed modification or boat registration? What are the most important issues for legislators, river managers, and emergency responders?" All of these questions are answered in the safety section of the stewardship toolkit online at [AW Stewardship](#).

To Report an Accident:

Accident reporting is vital to American Whitewater's mission. But more importantly, it's a sure antidote to the rumor, gossip, and innuendo that always follows a serious accident. AW's Accident Database works with individuals who were on the scene and is thus able to set the record straight.

The Accident Database contains reports of fatal accidents, serious injuries, and near-misses. A serious injury is one requiring hospitalization; a near miss is an event which could easily have been fatal. The Safety Committee examines all submissions prior to the final posting and decides which incidents will be added to the database.

There are several ways to report an accident:

- 1) Each witness can post their own account to the AW web site and the Safety Committee will create a report.
- 2) Groups or individuals can create their own report and post it. If you would like help in crafting your report, contact Charlie Walbridge, AW Safety Editor, at ccwalbridge@cs.com or by phone at 304-379-9002.
- 3) You can post emails, message board and chat room postings, and newspaper articles here. In addition to providing a link, please cut and paste the text from the article. The links may be dead when someone from Safety Committee follows it up. Always be sure that the SOURCE and DATE is clearly indicated.
- 4) If you want to pass on information that you DON'T want the public to see, please specify on the report form that the material is private. If so designated, it will not be released without your OK.

If you have corrections, questions or comments about any accident please email Charlie Walbridge at ccwalbridge@cs.com.

The recent improvements and updates of the AW Accident Database were made possible by the Andy Banach Memorial Safety Fund. AW thanks the family and friends of Andy Banach.