

## Recreation Interests and Issues

**Response From:** Bill Marshall

**Organization:** Lower Saluda Scenic River Advisory Council

**Recreational Issues of Interest:** Public access to the lower Saluda River corridor; Conservation of lands to enhance recreational use in the lower Saluda River corridor; In-stream flows for the lower Saluda to support recreational uses such as small boat navigation and fishing; Safety for river users related to flows: information and warning systems, portage and egress above major rapids

**Geographic Area:** Lower Saluda River and downstream

---

**Response From:** Tony Bebbber

**Name of Organization:** South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism

**Recreation Issues of Interest:** As the agency responsible for outdoor recreation planning in the State and as a manager of public lands on Lake Murray, SCPRT provides a long-term commitment to the stewardship of significant natural and cultural resources and to quality recreational service. Supporting this resource-management approach, SCPRT recognizes the following important issues as being high priority needs regarding the Saluda Relicensing Project:

1. Ensure that recreational facilities and opportunities are protected and enhanced for current and future users, on and near the lake and river.
2. Provide sufficient recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities to support the growing population of the region throughout the license period.
3. Provide safe and enjoyable recreation experiences for the boating and non-boating public including state residents and visitors.
4. Conserve natural, cultural, and recreational resources for future generations to enjoy.
5. Include enough land in the project boundary to assure optimum development of recreational resources afforded by the project.

Specific interests include the following:

1. Permanent protection for Dreher Island State Recreation Area.
2. Permanent protection of a new state park property with significant shoreline on the Lexington/Saluda side of the lake.

3. Continuation of existing recreational resources on Lake Murray and new/expanded resources where possible and appropriate.
4. Conservation of areas identified as important during interagency review of shoreline management maps.
5. Continued implementation of the Lower Saluda River Corridor Plan & Update, including additional recreational access at “Sandy Beach”, I-20, I-26, take out above Mill Race Rapids, and development of the Saluda River greenway and Three Rivers Greenway.
6. Continuation of existing recreational resources on the Saluda River.
7. Improved water quality for the lake and river to meet recreational needs (suitable for propagation of aquatic life and primary and secondary recreational contact and coldwater trout fishery).
8. Maintenance/enhancement of the scenic integrity of Lake Murray and the Saluda River.
9. Safe, predictable hydro flows for waders, boaters, and other downstream users.
10. Identification and enhancement of paddling opportunities in the tributaries and tributary arms of the lake.
11. Interactive process to periodically review recreation needs and adjust resources associated with the project.

**Geographic Area Covered:** Entire project.

Please refer to our Initial Consultation Document response (8/12/05) for additional information.

---

**Response From:** Steve Bell

**Name of Organization:** Lake Murray Watch

**Recreation Issues of Interest:** Enhancing recreational opportunities for the public by reclassifying all lands in future development to natural/public recreation areas. Access by land to these areas should be provided by purchasing land from back property owners and constructing access roads. Shorelines with high natural resource values should be protected for wildlife and scenic values, etc.

**Geographic Area Covered:** We are interested enhancing recreational opportunities in both the lake and the lower Saluda.

---

**Response From:** Dick Christie

**Name of Organization:** South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

**Recreation Issues of Interest:** Ensuring the public has adequate access to the project and the Lower Saluda River is a high interest of the DNR. Some of the information needed to evaluate the recreational resource is provided in the ICD (Table E-15). However, additional information is needed:

Current facilities: according to the ICD, there are 20 public recreation sites in the project area. Of these, 15 provide boat access, 10 provide for picnicking, 3 provide for pier fishing, and one provides a swimming beach. We need information to allow us to evaluate the current use of these facilities to include carrying capacity and level of user satisfaction, as well as to identify any additional recreation needs. Also, we need to know what level of handicapped accessibility is provided at the existing facilities.

Future needs: population trends for 1990 through 2000 (Table E-18) indicate that the local area grew by as much as 2.8 % per year. Additional public recreational facilities may be needed to accommodate future growth. Information regarding recreational use and needs, projected for at least 10 years, is needed to plan for future recreational enhancements. Information regarding future plans to develop shore based recreational access is needed. If surveys show that a large, multi-lane boating facility is needed, the location and property for such a facility should be explored.

In the lower Saluda River, information regarding the timing and magnitude of flows needed to provide optimal recreational opportunity for a variety of boating and wading anglers should be provided.

Adaptive management - there is no way to predict recreational needs for 30-50 years. A plan to evaluate recreational needs and provide for those needs for shorter periods of time, such as ten years, should be developed.

---

**Response From:** Charlene Coleman

**Name of Organization:** American Whitewater

**Recreation Issues of Interest:**

- 1) Access and Safety
  - a) Upgrading and repairing of all existing access points.
  - b) Creation of a take out above Mill Race Rapid (class IV,) to provide a safe and legal area above a known river hazard for float trips.
  - c) Provision of minimum flow requirements for the river that support navigation for recreational boating.
  - d) Provision of consistent and timely communication concerning anticipated flows on the river for recreational users and rescue via online and phone sources.

- e) Development of procedures and guidelines for gradual releases (ramping) of flows before peak hydro power production is achieved, to protect river users from harm with rapidly rising water.
  - f) Inclusion of all high and seasonally high use areas in the siren and flashing light system, to warn users of rapidly rising water and dangerous conditions. That includes Tail Race, Saluda Shoals, Hopes Ferry, Mill Race, Shandon Rapid, Oh Brother and Ocean Boulevard Rapids.
  - g) Creation of guidelines for introduction of any structure in the river should be established to prevent public endangerment. (i.e., The Proposed Low water bridges at the Broad and Saluda Rivers' confluence for the proposed greenway.)
- 2) River Flows
- a) A seasonally variable minimum flow requirement should be set to support the health, survival and propagation of aquatic life and natural communities in and around the river that meets or exceeds state water quality standards.
  - b) Pre-project flows and project inflows should be studied and used to inform decisions on flow regulation.
  - c) Minimum flows should support navigation of the river for recreational boating.
  - d) Ramping (gradual staged raising of water levels) should be studied and used, especially during high use times of the year.
  - e) Scheduled flow releases for recreational events and at desired times of the year when flows can support optimal conditions for recreational uses, such as whitewater boating, special events, and rescue training should be studied and provided.
  - f) A dependable on-line and phone communication system informing of river flows and special conditions needs to be established.
  - g) The value of the spillway as a whitewater recreation resource should be studied following peer reviewed methods. These methods should include at a minimum an on-water single flow whitewater boating feasibility study, possibly followed by a controlled whitewater flow study.
- 

**Response From:** Malcolm Leaphart

**Name of Organization:** Trout Unlimited

**Recreation Issues of Interest:**

- fishing - mostly trout, but also other species of game fish
- public access, including both parking for bank and wade fishing, and also boat landings for both motorized and non-motorized water craft; and, also for riverbank trails such as those at Saluda Shoals and as proposed from there to the Riverbanks Zoo and confluence area with the Broad River
- flow levels that are safe for public recreation uses
- boating, for both motorized and non-motorized water craft
- water quality that supports fishing and contact, including wastewater management and state water quality standards
- sound fisheries management in the best public interest

**Geographic Area Covered:** generally, the lower Saluda River is the focal point, but as a Federation of Fly Fishers club, Lake Murray is also of interest. Also, many members fish for striped bass and warm water species which are in both water bodies.

---

**Response From:** Patrick Moore

**Name of Organization:** Coastal Conservation League and American Rivers

**Recreation Issues of Interest:**

- (1) Improved access to upper lake Murray/Saluda river for paddling.
- (2) Increases in land-based shoreline activities such as hiking, bank fishing, swimming, loafing at lake.
- (3) Increases in land-based shoreline activities such as hiking, bank fishing, swimming, and loafing along the lower Saluda corridor.
- (4) Improved flows for boating on the lower Saluda River.
  - (a) “happy” paddling flows/navigation flows [always available],
  - (b) scheduled whitewater flows,
  - (c) scheduled wade-fishing flows.
- (5) Improved access/portage at Millrace Rapids.
- (6) Dependable forecasts and published schedules of hydroelectric operations on the Internet, possibly by phone.
- (7) Improved handicap-accessible bank fishing opportunities.
- (8) Improved recreational safety warning systems for entire lower Saluda.
- (9) A healthy aquatic ecosystem fully supporting all designated primary and secondary recreational uses such as fishing, boating, swimming, and wildlife viewing.

**Geographic Area Covered:** Saluda River upstream of Lake Murray, Lake Murray, and Saluda River downstream of Lake Murray