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Socastee Interview, Participant #02, April 2, 2021

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"Flooded Afterlives Project" Interview

Participant ID: 02
Community: Rosewood/Socastee
State: SC

Interviewer: Gabrielle Mackeown
Interview date: 04/02/2021
Interview location: Zoom

This protocol for this study was approved by the Coastal Carolina University Institutional Review Board (Approval #2021.102) on March 3, 2021. All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before participation in the study.

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Interviewer: It says it's recording, so let's hope it's doing it. So how many times have you experienced flooding in your home or your place of residence?

Participant: Well, only in my home. We think about...well this is kind of an issue around what is a flood and what isn't a flood. Because we've had four reportable floods ranging in depths from two inches to 60 inches in our garage area. But we've had, probably, four or five more than that...we've had water come in the garage. We did not report it, which means we didn't file a claim with federal national flood insurance. So we've had about four reportable floods and probably three or four that did not get reported because they were not serious enough and we did not see fit to report it.

Interviewer: Gotcha, okay. So, if you could give me an estimation of how many times you would say you flooded that you didn't necessarily report.

Participant: I would say, probably around eight.

Interviewer: And how bad, would you say that flooding was, those times you didn't report?

Participant: Well, it's a learning curve. The first time we reported, we only had two inches and in retrospect we would not have reported that, after we learned how to recover from a flood. Which is the learning curve. It's an art and a science to recovery, how much you can do yourself and how much you can hire to have done. And one of the issues is that

contractors charge on average between \$100 and \$150 a foot to do renovation or repairs. My son's a contractor, so I get immediate feedback on that. The amount that flood insurance pays for restoration is probably about less than \$20 a foot. No that's not right...anyway, maybe it's in the 40s. But it's substantially less than you to just go out and hire somebody to come in and do it. So you got to do some hands on things. You got to do your painting and you gotta...I get almost nothing for clean-up so you gotta do your own clean-up.

Interviewer: Gotcha. So in those major times that it did flood and you did report them, did you receive enough money to take care of the repairs that you needed to have outsourced?

Participant: Umm...I would say yes, we did. Without contributing labor to it, yeah we did.

Interviewer: That's good to hear.

Participant: Yeah. It's good to know. We're undergoing one right now, as we speak, my wife is gathering paperwork for FEMA, which she gets paid nothing. It's an unbelievable process, each time you have to prove that you spent the money that they gave you last time, or else they won't give it to you again. Anything that you didn't use they deduct that from what they might give you this time. So it's a heck of a bookkeeping and devil, just to keep track all that stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah I can only imagine. That sounds like a...nightmare. When was the last time, your home flooded? I think you said that it was you're in it now. So is your home occupiable currently?

Participant: Yes, the property is currently rented, because we could sell it due to flooding. We had it on the market two different times and had one buyer who was very interested. And then, a flood occurred and that buyer that was very interested was no longer very interested. So we got stuck with it. We couldn't sell it, we could rent it. So that's what we're doing now we're renting it, out of default...

Interviewer: Is it appropriate for me to ask you monetary questions related to that?

Participant: Sure.

Interviewer: Do you think renting it, overall, is a better monetary decision for you to make rather than selling it as a way to keep the property upkeep?

Participant: Well, at 65 I would have said yes. At 81 I'm not so sure. At 81, my wife and me, I think two or three times already this year since the flood have gone to myrtle beach spent a whole day doing various recovery things. And...it's just a lot. I was more comfortable with it years earlier more than I am right now. At 80 I don't want to be doing that as much. So it's a factor of ages and it's a matter of survival. We kept it vacant for about a year after we couldn't sell it. We finally realized we just can't continue to make two house payments, without having some income from rental. So we rented it and the problem with renting is that you can't rent it when you're trying to sell it and you can't sell it when you're trying to rent it. So you got to make a commitment to several months, of whatever it is you're doing whether you're renting or trying to sell because each one of those processes takes preparation. You have to do [things] with selling. You have to do touch up and extra extra extra cleaning and landscaping and those kinds of things. With renting you have to mainly do repairs after renters leave because every time you rent something gets destroyed in the process. So...it's a hassle. But you know,

economically, I would say that it's not a bad...not a bad thing, considering income tax went up just a little bit. But, it's not my choice of what I would like to do.

Interviewer: If FEMA or the state gave you the option to just demolish the house, would you consider it?

Participant: No...not at the price they're offering. They only offer, as I understand it, up to about 250 [thousand]. Pre flooding appraisals for our house, were about 675 [thousand]. So that's about a 400...or a little more than a \$400,000 difference. We were not prepared to eat \$400,000 if we can help it. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah absolutely....

Participant: Oh we just lost audio...

Interviewer: Wait, can you hear me?

Participant: I do, yeah.

Interviewer: Great. Can you describe your experience with the flooding? Were you actively in any floods, and things like that?

Participant: In a word helpless...helpless. You're sitting duck. There is nothing you can do. We have a very narrow driveway, but when the flooding comes we move the cars, tractors, boats, and whatever we have. We move them up as far as we can into an area that doesn't flood as badly. Maybe 100 feet or so from the house, but then we run out of driveway. You can only park so many cars in the driveway. That's the main thing, you just feel helpless. There's nothing you can do. When the water starts coming up, it's gonna keep on coming. And then, at some point, about a week or two weeks or sometimes even longer it'll go back down again, but you can't begin to recover until the water recedes. It brings with it a stench that is...incredibly bad. I don't know where that comes from, I'm afraid to know. I think it probably has to do with farmers who have hog farms and that's not a cheery thought. But we don't know what it is. That's another part of the helplessness is not knowing. We have a pretty good- I have a much better idea right now, in 2021, than I had in 2015 when we first began to experience flooding. I go on Google daily many times, and I have not been able to find a definitive answer as to why flooding occurs. I have a pretty good idea, at this point, why it does but I've not- for example, there are floods in North Carolina...I mean there are dams in South Carolina and dams and North Carolina. All of them require approval by somebody. FEMA, DHEC...whoever the North Carolina equivalent to DHEC is. There is the information on which ones are not meeting the base minimum of what they're required to meet, in terms of upkeep. The actual upkeep of the dam...I don't know any way you can go to find that. So we don't know, as a consumer downstream from whoever's causing problems upstream, we have no clearing house to learn what dams failed and what reasons they were. Whatever information that was or what inspections turned up previous to their failure. None of that is known to me and I would like to see that. We did hear reports...I think about 2015, that 17 North Carolina dams failed. And then we heard reports a year or two later that more or less around that same number, South Carolina dams failed. Well, where do you go to find that out? There's not anywhere, that I know, that I can learn what happened, what caused the flooding. It's another hopeless kind of situation. All you know is that you flood. You don't know why, you don't know who's responsible, you don't know what is being done, if there's anything to mitigate future flooding. If the dam failed, who was held responsible? Were there repairs to the

damn that would bring it up to a certain code level? I don't know any of that and I can't find any of that. That would be helpful to know. I really have a strong feeling that if I caused the problem, to my downstream neighbors, by releasing water, I would have some responsibility for that. But apparently, that's not happening. Nobody is holding accountability to those who have caused the problem or are causing the problem. That's another kind of helpless situation that you're just a sitting duck. I think back to 2015 when we had one of our first floods. The adjuster came to look at our property and make the adjustment for the insurance claim and he said to us before he left, "You need to be prepared that you're going to have some pretty strong water that will follow this about in a week or 10 days." For years I had thought, how did he know that? How did he, as an adjuster, know that we were back to get a couple days worth flood dumped on us from upstream somewhere? That information is not known. It's not published in any way that I can find. It's just allowed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission or whoever regulates...they regulate the energy for producing dams like Blewett Falls and Tiller Dam in North Carolina. They are under the for licensing situation. But again that's the word. It's just a very helpless feeling. You don't know who to talk to. I've tried talking to lawyers. We are talking with one right now with the possibility of helping us, but I don't know if that'll ever amount to anything or not. I've spent four years trying to find a lawyer who would sit down with us and just say "I think, you might have an interesting case here". And nothing...nobody's willing to take on the big corporate structure. And again, what do you do? It's a helpless feeling. All of that wasn't known to us when we purchased the property.

Interviewer: Yeah. So you're currently pursuing legal action. You would like that documentation of the dams upkeep and everything like that, in pursuit of that legal action?

Participant: I would say we are exploring the possibility of legal action. I'm in conversation with many people who have the same problem and who are also interested in not having that same problem to continue on and on without some kind of mitigation. But that's a long shot...even if somebody were to take it, we're talking about 10 years of legal litigation before any resolution that might occur.

Interviewer: Yeah it's the long haul. So I'm hearing that the community is also interested in this action, this legal action. How has the flooding also impacted your community?

Participant: Well, the community that we have is called Socastee. And the section that we live on, that our houses live on, is called River Road. It runs from behind Socastee High School into that little community call Rosewood. Rosewood has probably been the hardest hit of all of the Myrtle Beach communities. Although, I'm learning this year for the first time, that the people who have properties in the Bridge Creek area and the Forestbrook area are really just across the river from where our properties are located. I've known for years that Lee's Landing has flooded with some regularity on the Waccamaw river. Also the people in Bucksport have flooded. The people in Pitch Landing have also flooded. There are a lot of other areas that I'm not aware of that I expect have had similar problems. When we had our most recent serious flood, it was after Florence in 2018...the normal river level is 11 feet. Flood stage is 15 feet. That means...that's what we know the river is going to be like when it reaches the flood stage following a hurricane or tropical storm. The river level after Florence was almost 22 feet, almost 11 feet higher than normal. So things like docks- three times we've had docks float over their post. You can't put posts up high enough to keep a dock from floating off of it when you got 11 foot tide. Normally docks are built for about a six foot tide, especially on a coast where you have a six foot rise and fall of tide. But we'd have to put a post, up 20 feet high from the water level to- well let's see...if we went from normal we'd have to have 11 feet

showing. And then you have to have about that much in the ground. So we'd have to have over 20 foot poles in the ground. I don't know of anybody locally who could install 20 foot poles for homeowners. I mean companies can do that, but that's above what a homeowner would expect to spend on a dock. It can be done, but not for reasonable cost. So a lot of little things like that...this year for the first time we are learning some interesting things about our upstream neighbors that I would like to share with you, if you think it would be appropriate.

Interviewer: Yeah, of course.

Participant: One thing we have in our favor here, is the U.S. geological survey. It keeps gauges on many bridges throughout wherever there may be rivers and ponds- well not so much ponds but rivers and sea level. And there's one in Socastee on the 544 bridge. And there are other locations throughout all the waterways locally. We can read the discharges of water. What we are learning with the discharges- are you familiar with Tyler Servant? He's a county councilman on the Horry County Council.

Interviewer: I am not.

Participant: He is reading a lot of interest in flooding. He is probably, in my opinion, the most well educated person when it comes to flooding about areas. As is Stephen Goldfinch, who's been very helpful on taking information and correcting our efforts. What we are learning is there are two gauges, in particular, that are of concern to me. One is the Yadkin River near Rockingham, North Carolina and the other is the Great Pee Dee River, which is not far from that. What Servant tied together for us, which was the first time I'd ever heard anything like that, is that if you calculate the water that is discharged from the Blewett Falls Dam on a periodic schedule...I don't know I cannot find how they publish it, but I have seen copies of it. Excerpts from it are being published as well as published releases that track them from Blewett Dam and also Tillery Dam. I don't really know how you find that all in one place, but the water from the estimate that Servant put together is based on the cubic feet that Duke energy says they release from Blewett Falls down. Periodically, and when I say periodically it is 23 hours and I think 59 minutes per day for three consecutive days, which is a lot of water when you consider that the volume of that water being released, according to Servant, is 149,000 cubic feet per second. Per second! Then you multiply that time almost 24 hours. That is a huge quantity of water. What I think is happening, is that it's under an arrangement- let me backup and give you a little running history of Duke Energy's Blewett Falls Dam. I'm going to ignore Tillery Dam for this discussion for a little while. But Blewett Falls Dam was first licensed in 1958. It was licensed at that time for 50 years, then at some period, the owner of that property, I don't know it's changed ownership a number of times. Carolina Power and Light owned it at one time. Cube Energy owned it at one time and then Duke Energy bought it with somebody, I think. Maybe humanity was a part of that...so the license was due to expire in 2008. So in about 2003, Duke Energy began to make an application for another 50 year license. In 2015- let me back up, they were granted the 50 year license from 2008 to whatever 50 years after 2008 is. This is what I don't understand, but it's important and I think it needs somebody to research. In 2015, on April 1, 2015, Duke Energy applied for a license, and I don't know- I don't understand whether it was a real license or new license or what exactly it was. I can give you the call numbers. It was license number 2206-0303. And that's Google-able. It's a 174 page document that spends probably 100 of those pages talking about wildlife, fish, and flowers. Everything related to downstream, except for one species, and that is human beings. There's not one word in that document that I could find that addresses what happens if the dam floods, as it has on several occasions. Their own person is saying that the dam was

damaged in 2018 and has operated since that time, which didn't make sense to me because the water is flowing through it every day. I don't know how it's not operating. Anyway, that's what we think is a huge part of what we're dealing with right now. And I don't understand what happened and why it happens, but what I do know is that in 2015, for the first time in my memory, that water began to be discharged from Blewett Falls Dam at that monumental rate that I just described, from Mr. Servant. That was new! That coincides with where we live! We owned the property, in Socastee, from 2004 to right now. We built on it in 2006. We lived in it from 2006-2014. Never had a single flood. Never got to a flood stage of 15 feet, which would have been bad but okay. It wouldn't have come in our garage at 15 feet. From 2015 to the present there have been 12 recorded incidences of water over flood stage, at a 15 foot level flood stage. So my question is what changed? Well, we know one thing that changed is that Duke Energy was relicensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to discharge water into the Blewett Falls from the Blewett Falls Dam. How could you those two not be related? That is so obvious to me, that all of a sudden in 2015 you have a problem, and it happens to be the same year that Duke Energy was licensed or relicensed or whatever that was. Whatever that action was in 2015 on April 1. So we think- well, I think that's a huge part of our problem. Now, I have neighbors who think that Duke Energy is not the only contributor to our problem, and I don't know. Maybe they are, maybe they're not. I don't know enough to disagree with that, but I do know that you go to go with what you know. And what we know is that Duke Energy was licensed on April 1, 2015 to release tons of water into...there's a waterway right there by Blewett Falls Dam. It's called Yadkin Pee Dee Hydroelectric River Basin. That's where the water ends up. From there it flows into the Pee Dee. From Pee Dee it flows into the Waccamaw and on out into the ocean. Well, the Duke Energy people argued that the water that they release does not touch the Waccamaw River, and that is not true because it does touch the Waccamaw River when it comes to Bull Creek which is south of Bucksport. Not that far south, but those two rivers do come together. So, what they're saying is really not true. Even if it was true was true that water mingles. When the water from the Pee Dee, that is flowing from the Yadkin Pee Dee River Basin, flows into the Waccamaw it flows to the, what some people call the Georgetown Harbors, also known as Wingate Bay. I believe five other rivers also flow into [the harbors]. What happens is that the harbor is so overcome with water. Think about those 149,000 cubic inches per second times however many days they let the water flow in those flood conditions. I think the three day period is normal discharge for the routine, the accumulation of water. Blewett Falls was developed in part to create a residential riverfront- I mean a residential lake called Blewett Falls Lake. They want to keep that level, that water level in Blewett Lake, at a level that pleases their homeowners. Then a concern is that- they say their primary concern is to protect the dam, with good reason, you can understand they want to protect the dam. But all of that is to say, that they have been a lot more interested in plants, wildlife, and fish than they are about the people who live downstream. And the people that live downstream from them, sadly, are the people in the Rosewood community. Many of whom are modest income people, are flooding out for probably about the fifth or sixth time. And since 2015, many of those people have had to sell that property at greatly diminished prices under dire circumstances just to get out of the property and not have to do the foreclosure. So I don't know much about the socio-economic situations in the other properties in the other neighborhoods that we've been talking about, but I do know about Rosewood because it's close enough and I have been lucky enough to have some Facebook contacts with some of those folks. And I know that they, thank goodness, have gotten some buyouts now from the government and I don't know how long it'll take for those buyout to be provided to the people that need them. But I do know, we had another property that flooded in a large city area that we owned for number of years, and one of the considerations that we were offered by FEMA was a buyout of that

property and they pay you typically a price that you're not gonna make a profit off of. We couldn't have done that because the property was more than what they probably would've offered us. But then you still own the property, but you can't use it. I don't know if the rules in Rosewood are the same as that or not, but even if you get a buyout the homeowner doesn't really win. They might avoid distress and catastrophic financial distress but they're not making out extremely well. They're just barely breaking even. The thing that concerns me about all of this is that, yeah you do buyouts and you do have a contract that spends a lot of time talking about flood mitigation and moving houses, and a flood plan...and I recognize that that's all important. Climate control, of course, is a big part of our life. I am very aware of climate control and the fact that we are losing ice caps every minute of every day that will never probably be replaced. I'm very aware of hurricanes becoming more frequent and stronger and more damaging than ever before in my lifetime. So, I know that my friend, is right about that. But I also know that all of that doesn't cause our problems. It contributes to them, but it doesn't cause them. I think our problem is caused- if you just look at the two graphs of the water from 2007 to 2014 with no flooding, and 2015 to 2021 with 12 incidences of flooding and one almost 22 feet...that tells a story. That that tells me, "Hey there's something going on there that we don't know about". And the strongest evidence I have today, points to Duke Energy. I could be totally wrong about that, but that's where the evidence points me to at this time.

Interviewer: Do you think Duke Energy is aware of that?

Participant: I don't know. Duke Energy had a representative at the Horry County Council, Mr. Jeff, who is in charge of- I guess downstream water distribution. Basically, what he was saying, was that Duke Energy is not responsible for your problems. I assume from that, that they either don't know about it or they know about it and they're just not being honest about what they know. I don't know the answer to that. That will come out in time, I guess. I have no way of knowing whether they're being dishonest or whether they are just aren't unaware, but you would think that in a 50 year licensure that somewhere, it would be addressed- somewhere in that process would be addressed the question of what, if any, risk are posed to downstream neighbors as result of the project that is being considered and was licensed. So I think whoever's upstream has an obligation to the people who live downstream. I don't know, I have done some reading on that. There is a little bit of evidence to back that the suggestion that upstream neighbors who released water to downstream neighbors and cause damage do have some responsibility. But I don't know how it gets settle without some kind of litigation. That's usually how things get settled. Or at least one way. I've thought about what the answer could be. Now, a couple of answers that I've come up with that make a little bit of sense to me, is that these agencies, an agency with the United States Government...they're not gonna be influenced by a little homeowner like me who happened to be flooded about a half a dozen times. So I think the best hope, for working with them, is to convince them to mitigate the water releases. Because another thing that happens here, that we haven't addressed that I'd like to comment about, is that the time that we don't need more water is a time Duke Energy needs to be releasing that water. When storm clouds are forming or when tropical storms, hurricanes, are being forecasted and rainfall is coming, that rainfall comes and we all know it's coming, because the weather forecasting nowadays is so good. And immediately, if I was operating the plant, I would do what they probably do. I would dump water. Well, the water is dumping at a time when we get hit with a hurricane. You can see how that works together. You got water coming from a hurricane and rainfall, and then you got water coming from Duke Energy trying to save their dam by dumping all the water to everywhere they can dump it. That's a thorny problem, but I think it is the responsibility

of the people who dammed the water up. Originally, before 1958 there wasn't a dam up there, I guess. I think about Enterprise Landing...on up to...maybe around Barefoot Landing I don't know, to the extent of the intercoastal waterway when it was built in '36 but before that time it was open more. So I think Duke energy has a lot of questions to answer about what their responsibility is and so does the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee. They are the ones that have helped create this problem, whether others have joined them or not, I don't know. But I would like to know. I think it would be appropriate to know that as a homeowner downstream.

Interviewer: Certainly, I would agree wholeheartedly. We've spent quite a bit of time talking about that, so I want to kind of maybe shift direction, a little bit if that's okay with you.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: What do you wish people understood about your experiences flooding?

Participant: Oh, I guess what we were just talking about. I wish people understood that flooding has a cause and a wish. Just that they have better understanding of what the causes are.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: And I guess, I would like people to understand...I'm one of the lucky ones, and I know I am. I don't like to complain, because I am lucky enough to have a waterfront property which I'm grateful for. But I think the thing that is universal, to all of all of our neighbors that I'm aware of, is that helpless feeling when you know something's wrong and you don't know...it's kind of like what we're going through right now with this hearing with Mr. Floyd. You know something's wrong, but we don't know what happened and what to do about it. We need to address it in some meaningful way in the future. There is one other...maybe I'll stop and come back to it in the future. There's another plan that is being considered that may help...

Interviewer: Go ahead and speak about it.

Participant: There was a study done and I believe it was conducted in 2009 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They did a study and there's a swamp somewhere around Little River that...and I think the word connects is not correct but there's a wetlands area that flows or has some possible potential water flow between the intercoastal around Little River and the ocean. Some people have considered the idea of creating a diversion canal between those two to help the water flow go out to the ocean. And when you mess with Mother Nature you got problems. So, I'm not quite sure that's the right answer, but it is a consideration. It was recommended in 2009 that the benefits did not outweigh the risks at that time. That was before the flooding of 2015. It may very well be that there were some expensive properties long waterways that have flooded many times since 2015. I don't know just how many but I'm pretty sure there are thousands, if not more, of properties that were flooded. So, it may be economically feasible today in a way that it wasn't in 2009...so that's one option that probably should be the explored.

Interviewer: Is that the main option, you would want them to consider, or is there, another major thing you would want them to do?

Participant: Well, the main option, I would want people to consider is to unbreak what was broken in 2015. Whatever that was and I don't know what it was, but I see pretty good evidence that there was something that happened in 2015. And I do see the evidence that shows

that a week to two weeks following the discharges into the Yadkin Pee Dee River Base, that people in our area have really experienced the kind of flooding that we've been talking about. So there's something there but I don't know what it is. If it's not Duke Energy, it might be somebody else but there's somebody- there's something that started in about 2015 that's different and that's causing all this flooding in the Socastee and Forestbrook area, and in the Coastal and Waccamaw River bases. I would like to know that. I'd like to know what it is and what, if there's anything, we can do to address it. So I don't know which is the right answer. Whether it's mitigation or talking to Duke Energy about adjusting the severity of their water releases and timing them differently, might help or not. I don't know. The diversion canal would be, I think, as a last ditch kind of emergency effort. But if you got continued flooding, I don't know how you move on looking at something like that. If it relieves the situation...the water tends to find its own level, so I don't think that there would be a serious problem with water flow between the intercoastal and the ocean. If that were to be addressed, would there be some disruption of wildlife? Yeah, but I don't think you would be any worse off than what happens when wildlife is flooded with 11 feet or more water than it's accustomed to. Anyway, if you leave it the same, there's a huge environmental factor that includes humankind. Which is the thing I guess I wish for. I wish for Duke Energy to think about people that live downstream, not just the animals, fish, and flowers. People live downstream and they get affected. I did a little bit of research, but not near enough, about deaths that may have occurred in the Rosewood area as a result of flooding. I don't have evidence that any deaths occurred as a result the flooding, but that puts it in a whole new area if people have died. That is a far more serious situation than anything other than that. So, I'd like Duke Energy to think about what they're doing to the humans downstream.

Interviewer: Yeah. Absolutely.

Participant: If they are the problem or if there are any part of the problem, just being aware of that is something that I think would be very important for them to acknowledge.

Interviewer: If they were to discover a way to fix the flooding problem by just destroying the dam entirely, but it would potentially cause a large flood and then heal...do you think that that would be something you would consider a good thing?

Participant: I know why we have dams, because we like turn the light switch on. And I'm in favor of electricity, but I'm not in favor of dams, period. Yeah, that would not necessarily be a bad thing. It would be, as you said, catastrophic for a few months until the water got civilized again. But one of the new representatives...one of the comments he made was that the Blewett hydro plant had not operated successfully since 2018. I think he said in 2018 it was damaged, I guess after Hurricane Matthew. Well, if it's not making them any money...it's not operating so it's probably not making them any money. Why wouldn't you just abandon the thing? They could leave it alone and let it go. We still got Tillery dam to worry about which is further upstream, but still. I don't know who owns Tillery dam, I think it may be Duke Energy also. It seems to me that one of the hazards that we may have here is when you put two dams, like we have- I think Tillery might be 30 or 40 miles up the stream. But you have two dams that close together, it seems to me that in itself is kind of an engineering nightmare. You got potential flooding and two dams that could occur simultaneously and probably often does. So, I don't I don't know what the answer to that is but yes, I would be in favor of that. I say that frivolously and looking at the alternatives, and there's not showing that there would be some. But it's hard to see how the alternatives, long range, would be worse than current situation that we're experiencing.

Interviewer: Yeah. What is your ideal vision for the future of that area? Do you have a kind of ideal way you would like things to pan out?

Participant: Well, I see two potential solutions. One is to work, and this is asked to be political, to get Duke Energy to mitigate the water flows to a greater extent than they do right now. And I'm sure that's difficult but I'm also satisfied that they could do a better job than they're doing now. It couldn't hurt to do a workshop. That and the diversion canal is a pretty good alternatives if- let's be realistic, do I think FERC is gonna close down Duke Energy or that the government is gonna close down FERC? I don't. I wish I had a better view of that, but I don't think that's ever gonna happen. Then the next alternative is to try to work with them to mitigate or at least to have them be responsible for damages. And then there's the coastal diversion canal and the only reason that would even come into my thinking is because, if nothing else would work with the dams upstream from us, then you go to a diversion canal possibly. The studies- and there are some pretty good studies. I think one was 90 pages, which is not very long with all the engineering terms, but I was impressed that they do as much research as they did. I'm sure that more research will be done as a follow up in about five more years...but we gotta start somewhere. I think you start at identifying the problem. And the problem is we have flooding in Horry County, period. I understand that climate change and floodplain issues are important and need to be addressed. We bought our property when it was not in a floodplain, and it is now. Well, we haven't moved the property. So, somebody missed the ball somewhere along the way. Somebody should have done a better job of selling property and preparing homeowners for what they're facing. We, as homeowners, lived there, five or six years, and it was some reason we needed to find out if we were in a floodplain or not and we found out we weren't. Well, that was nice to know. So, I'm sure that Horry County has to do a better job of managing the floodplain and warning people who purchase property in the floodplain of the dangers that lie in their purchase.

Interviewer: Do you think that, with the homes and other property in the floodplain, if Horry County decided that the best route would be to demolish it and let it return to nature, in a sense, that people would accept that and that buyouts of a reasonable price would be accepted?

Participant: Well...we believe that we have lost about \$200,000 in property value. And...that's a lot. It's a life savings for a lot of people, including us. So...it's hard to let go of that but...I'm not sure I'm being responsive to your question. I think you're asking about returning it to nature. I think the person in that equation, who would be the most reticent to accept that solution would be the two groups: the power plant owners and operators and the customers who enjoy the electricity. But would I be in favor of that? Yes, I would, at the moment. We'll have to see what the research shows. You can use research to show anything you want to. And the research may show that it would be detrimental to do that, but I would think that would at least be worth looking at. The same concerns about the diversion canal should have been present with the licensing of Duke Energy to continue operation of Blewett Falls and Tillery Dam. If the studies that they conducted did not address, in any way, human suffering downstream, how is that a good study?

Interviewer: Do you think that they should have been allowed to be relicensed or do you have the opinion they should have been denied because they didn't take into account human lives?

Participant: I think they should have paid least as much attention to human life as they did to wildlife.

Interviewer: I absolutely agree with that.

- Participant: Okay. I appreciate the detailed study of the wildlife, but why would you just completely ignore the whole town of Socastee. Well not the whole town but certainly- I don't know how many people have been flooded more than once, over the last few years, say since 2015, but you would think that they would have had to pay some attention to them. The thing that struck me, was that the license or relicense in 2008, was 416 pages long. And the 2015 license about Blewett Falls was 174 pages long. I read both of them, I didn't read every word of every page, but I skimmed both of those searching for any reference to human life downstream and I could find none in either document. So why would you license an agency that has that kind of unawareness, or perhaps even disregard for, human life downstream? Do I think FERC should have taken a closer look at that? Yeah, I really do. Do I think they should have not granted the license? I don't know. I think, at least, if they did know that releasing 149,000 cubic feet per second for 23 and almost 24 hours, would have an impact on neighbors downstream...are you kidding me? These people are engineers! They wouldn't know that? If they don't, I don't think they need to be licensed to be engineers.
- Interviewer: Do you think that if as much research went into relicensing the dam as went into looking at potentially creating the new channel you wouldn't be in this issue?
- Participant: Oh, that's a good point. Good question. I don't know. Because I just don't know enough. It certainly seems to me that, that would be a valid opinion. If, as much research had gone into the diversion canal idea as went into the wildlife study and downstream impact...they have an environmental impact statement in both of those voluminous document that I referred to. But, why would you ignore the most important lives downstream? Why would you even bother to have an environmental impact if it completely ignores human lives? Hello? People lived down here!
- Interviewer: Absolutely. Do you have anything else, that you would like to just talk about just generally?
- Participant: There is one other thing. I have a four o'clock appointment with a very important person, so if I could kind of finish up I'd appreciate it. But no, I think you've hit it. You have a good understanding of the problem. Your questions indicate that you have a pretty good understanding of the scope of the problem, which I appreciate. Also, you raise questions about where we go from here, which I think is entirely appropriate for future studies and I commend you for that.
- Interviewer: Thank you, I really appreciate that. All right, well if that's all we have time for, then I really appreciate talking to you and for you giving your time today. You have a lovely weekend.
- Participant: Thank you. I hope you do too.
- Interviewer: I wish you the best of luck in the future.
- Participant: Thank you. Pleased to meet you.
- Interviewer: Pleased to meet you too.
- Participant: Good luck in your future and your project.
- Interviewer: Thank you, you too.