

Issue Action Group: E12 Wetlands

Meeting Notes & Summary: APC Conference Call Center February 14, 2002

Finalized 03-13-02

Warrior and Coosa Relicensing Projects Combined

Meeting Attendees

IAG Members:

Carl Couret	USFWS
Jim Crew	APC
Elrand Denson	USFS
Henry Mealing	Kleinschmidt
Dan Murchison	Lake Mitchell Home Owners & Boat Owners Association
Kelly Schaeffer	Kleinschmidt
Isabella Trussell	Logan-Martin Lake Protection Association
Diana Woods	USEPA

Unable to Attend:

Mike Eubanks	USACOE
Jon Hornsby	ADCNR

Other Attendees:

Jason Moak	John Peconom
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Action Items

- Prepare and distribute meeting notes and summary to team members.
Jim Crew: Due - February 26, 2002
- Revise public education outline per IAG recommendations and redistribute to the IAG.
Jim Crew & John Peconom Due - February 26, 2002
- Review and comment on meeting notes and summary.
IAG Team Members Due - March 1, 2002
- Wetlands database ARC Explore presentation.
Jason Moak Due - March 13, 2002

Meeting Notes

These notes summarize the major items discussed during the meeting and are not intended to be a transcript or analysis of the meeting.

Introductions - Jim Crew and Kelly opened the meeting by reviewing the WCRT Coosa EcoRAT meeting on January 29, 2002. At that meeting, the E12 IAG had presented a "closure" form since they believed they had completed their tasks, as outlined in the work plan. . However, after reviewing and discussing the IAG's progress, the EcoRAT decided that the groups' tasks were not completed and that the IAG should continue work on the tasks to meet the original responsibilities and goals.

The meeting agenda was outlined as follows:

- Wetlands Database
- Draft Public Education Outline
- Next Meeting

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Wetlands Database - Jason Moak and Bill Sim have been working together to organize APC's wetlands data into a format that will be both easily accessible and usable by IAG team members and other stakeholders in the relicensing process. Previously, IAG members had been provided a CD containing picture files of the wetland data. IAG members determined that the picture files didn't really provide the needed information. In order to provide team members with a more usable database, APC plans to distribute a revised CD that uses ARC Explore to view actual GIS data. APC will also try to include a GIS road overlay and / or other data layers that will provide geographic landmarks and relative location information. During the March IAG meeting, Jason and Bill will present the new information to the IAG and conduct a brief workshop on how to access and use the revised GIS data.

Draft Public Education Outline - IAG members spent a significant amount of time discussing the draft public education outline prepared by APC and Kleinschmidt. Several issues were raised and several suggestions were made to improve the outline.

Issues of Concern:

- Importance of using existing available information
- Both federal and state agencies can provide a wealth of wetlands information
- No need to "recreate the wheel"
- Focus information directly to project wetlands
- Abundance of existing information may be overwhelming
- Wetlands are a complicated issue and there may be some crossover with other IAG's
- Need to discuss the audience we want to reach

Improvement Suggestions:

- Outline reorganization, "scope of work"
- Add a "What can you do" section to the outline that will target how individuals can positively effect wetlands
- Include a Restoration section that contains general information
- Include a information on types of grants available
- Increase detail in the entire outline
- More information on federal and state regulations, requirements and responsibilities (404 Permit)
- Improve degradation section (USACOE can assist)

Several IAG members participated in the public education outline discussion and formed a consensus that there is a lot of wetland information currently available. One of this IAG's challenges will be to collect and review appropriate information (based on the audience), and put together recommendations on what information, to whom and how it will be presented. The IAG decided to create fairly specific public education recommendations for the R8 Public Education and Awareness IAG. Attached to these notes is a revised public education outline that will be discussed in greater detail at the next E12 IAG meeting.

The IAG agreed to identify and assess specific project wetlands before discussing PM&E measures. A more detailed discussion of PM&E's will occur after the group has identified specific wetlands that may be affected by current and proposed project operations.

Conclusion

The next meeting of the E12 IAG will be held on either March 12th or 13th, 2002. APC will send meeting materials (an agenda and work products as well as meeting logistics) to IAG members in advance of the next meeting.

IAG documents and materials are posted on the Internet at www.southerncompany.com/alpower/hydro.

Issue Action Group: E12 Wetlands

Meeting Summary: Sheraton Perimeter Park South Hotel March 13, 2002

Draft 03-27-02

Meeting Notes

These notes summarize the major items discussed during the meeting and are not intended to be a transcript or analysis of the meeting.

Introductions – Jim Crew and Henry Mealing welcomed the group and thanked them for their ongoing participation in this process. After distributing the agenda, Henry informed the group that a computer with internet access was available for tutorials on using the APC relicensing web site.

Review Meeting Minutes – The February 14th Conference Call meeting notes were approved and will be posted to APC's hydro relicensing web site.

Wetlands Database Presentation – Jason Moak provided the IAG with a detailed overview of the reformatted wetlands database. This database is an improved version of the one that was previously provided to IAG members on compact disc. New features in the database include:

- Arc Explorer software for viewing GIS data
- Wetlands code classifications and descriptions

The database depicts wetlands within the project boundaries. IAG members spent a good deal of time familiarizing themselves with the database by searching several different project areas and asking numerous questions about the database's many features. The IAG recommended adding road and threatened, endangered and sensitive species GIS overlays to the database. APC will make each of these layers available to the Shoreline Management IAG.

Value of Wetlands

After discussing the technical features of the database, the group discussed the value of wetlands. The IAG identified several valuable wetlands functions including pollution filtering, wildlife habitat, water recharge and sedimentation control. Jason Moak stated that based on his review of EPA wetlands information and the wetlands database, there are very few (if any) wetlands in the project boundary that serve pollution filtering or water recharge functions. The wetlands in the project boundaries provide some wildlife habitat and possibly some limited erosion and sedimentation control.

Revised Public Education Outline – At the last meeting, the IAG made several suggestions on how to improve the wetlands public education outline. These changes were incorporated into the outline and presented to the IAG for review. At the meeting, the IAG was asked to focus on "audience" and "subject matter" because a clear definition of these two subjects will increase the outline's effectiveness. After reviewing the changes, the IAG made some additional comments including adding school children to the "Target Audience" section and adding ADCNR and USFS to the "Wetlands Management and Development" section. Development of the public education outline will continue and IAG members will begin to look for existing wetlands public education materials. Sara Chubb mentioned that this IAG might be able to coordinate its public education efforts with those of other groups concerned with Alabama's environment.

Issue Action Group: E12 Wetlands

Meeting Summary: Sheraton Perimeter Park South Hotel March 13, 2002

Draft 03-27-02

Conclusion

The next meeting of the E12 IAG will be held on either May 20th or 21st, 2002. APC will send meeting materials (agenda, work products and meeting logistics) to IAG members in advance of the next meeting.

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www.southerncompany.com/alpower/hydro

Issue Action Group: E12 Wetlands

Meeting Summary: Conference Call June 18, 2002

Draft 06-18-02

Warrior and Coosa Relicensing Projects Combined

Meeting Attendees

IAG Members:

Sara Chubb	USFS
Jim Crew	APC
Henry Mealing	Kleinschmidt
Kelly Schaeffer	Kleinschmidt
Isabella Trussell	Logan Martin Lake Protection Association

Other Attendees:

Jason Moak	John Peconom
Danny Tignor	

Action Items

- Post March 13, 2002 meeting notes on APC's hydro relicensing web page.
Jason Moak Due - June 29, 2002
- Prepare and distribute meeting summary including draft recommendations to IAG members.
John Peconom & Jim Crew Due - June 19, 2002
- Redistribute Public Education Outline to IAG members.
Jason Moak Due - June 19, 2002
- Contact Dan Murchison regarding his participation in the R8 IAG (Public Education).
Kelly Schaeffer & Jim Crew Due - June 29, 2002

Agreements & Resolutions

- 1) IAG members agreed to review and provide comments on the draft recommendations to forward to the CCRT & WCRT.
- 2) The Public Education Outline will be forwarded to the R8 IAG for development and two E12 IAG members were identified to help with that effort.
- 3) Members agreed that the E12 IAG should go on inactive status until further notice.

Meeting Notes

These notes summarize the major items discussed during the meeting and are not intended to be a transcript or analysis of the meeting.

Issue Action Group: E12 Wetlands

Meeting Summary: Conference Call June 18, 2002

Draft 06-18-02

Review of Meeting Minutes – The March 13, 2002 meeting notes were approved and will be posted to APC's hydro relicensing web site.

Wetlands Database Questions, Concerns & Comments – Jason Moak confirmed that everyone who requested a CD of the database had received a copy and that it was working satisfactorily. Isabella Trussell informed the IAG that she was very happy with the wetlands database. Isabella asked APC if she could forward it to the ADEM's Clean Water Partnership (CWP) program for use in that process. Jim Crew wholeheartedly supported this action since APC is involved with and supports the CWP process. The IAG also agreed to forward the database to the R6 IAG (Shoreline Management Plan) for use in its efforts to develop the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP).

APC's ability to restrict disturbance of jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional wetlands within the project's boundaries – Originally raised at the January 29, 2002 meeting and discussed at the March 13, 2002 meeting, Jim Crew investigated what APC can do to protect wetlands located within the project boundary. Jim's report to the IAG is summarized below. Jim and Henry began with a discussion of jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional wetlands.

Jurisdictional wetlands meet specific hydrology, soil types, and vegetation types requirements and are protected/regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). APC is obligated by law to comply with ACOE wetland regulations and will continue to do so. These wetlands may exist within or outside of the FERC jurisdictional boundary for these projects.

Non-jurisdictional wetlands are riparian areas designated as "wetlands-type" habitats by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. These areas do not fully meet the ACOE's stringent wetland classifications and are located between the APC flood easement and normal pool elevation (within the project boundary).

In the past, APC has instituted several programs to protect project lands including buffer strips and scenic easements. Jim informed the group that APC is currently investigating the use of similar easements on the Coosa and Warrior projects. There are legal complications associated with this type of approach where private property rights are concerned. Since there are still some legal questions concerning restrictions of property rights, it will take some time for APC to develop this program. Jim will continue to follow-up on this topic and report any new information to the IAG.

Tentatively set to begin work in September, the R6 IAG will specifically investigate options for protecting project lands which will include protection of non-jurisdictional wetlands within the project boundary as part of the SMP.

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Meeting Summary: Conference Call June 18, 2002

Draft 06-18-02

R8 IAG Public Education – As discussed and agreed upon at the May 20, 2002 meetings, the E12 will be the first group to work with the R8 IAG to develop public education materials for inclusion in a public education plan.

The public education outline developed by the E12 IAG will be forwarded to the R8 IAG and used to direct this process. In addition to forwarding the public education outline, the IAG agreed that one or two IAG members will work with the R8 IAG on wetland education issues. The group members suggested that Dan Murchison serve as a primary contact in this effort. Jim and Kelly agreed to contact Dan to see if he would be willing to serve in this function. Isabella Trussell agreed to help as a secondary resource. Sara Chubb also offered her assistance as needed. Henry and Jason also volunteered their technical services should Isabella or Dan need some assistance. The structure of the R8 interface allows for some interaction between the R8 and E12 IAGs, especially if Dan or Isabella believe that there is need for additional input from the E12 IAG.

E12 IAG Draft Recommendations – The IAG summarized its efforts into the following recommendations:

The E12 IAG recommends that APC provide protections for wetlands located within the project boundaries of the Warrior and Coosa hydroelectric projects. Specifically, APC should:

- Incorporate the wetland database into APC's GIS database as a tool for administering the Shoreline Management Plan.
- Continue to cooperate with the ACOE wetland permitting process for developments that impact jurisdictional wetlands.
- As part of the Shoreline Management Plan, APC will investigate guidelines to protect riparian zones located within the project boundary.

The E12 IAG recommends that the R8 IAG develop material and identify existing material or programs that can be used to provide public education on wetlands. This effort should include:

- The E12 IAG Public Education Outline to provide direction
- 1 to 2 members of the E12 to work with the R8 IAG

Inactive Status – Jim Crew noted that the E12 IAG had made significant progress on workplan items. Although group members will probably need to interface with the R8 IAG as they develop public education items and the R6 IAG as it develops a SMP, it may be some time before the entire IAG needs to meet on a regular basis. As such, the group members agreed to go on inactive status until further notice, and there are no plans for future meetings at this time.

IAG documents and materials are posted on the Internet at www.southerncompany.com/alpower/hydro