

DRAFT MEETING NOTES

***ALABAMA POWER COMPANY
MARTIN RELICENSING
Agency Meeting***

***APC Southern Division Office-Conference Room 2A
February 14, 2008
1-4 pm***

ATTENDEES:

Name	Organization
Jim Crew	Alabama Power Company (APC)
John Grogan	Alabama Power Company (APC)
Jim Lochamy	Alabama Power Company (APC)
Steve Krotzer	Alabama Power Company (APC)
Andy Sheppard	Alabama Power Company (APC)
Ericha Nix	Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
Rick Claybrook	Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
Chris Greene	Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
Nick Nichols	Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)
Jeff Powell	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Amanda Fleming	Kleinschmidt
Henry Mealing	Kleinschmidt
Kelly Schaeffer	

ACTION ITEMS:

- MIG meeting in late March
- Technical Meeting on Modeling
- Technical Meeting to discuss current Martin, Yates and Thurlow operations
- APC & ADCNR Project Tour of Wildlife Resources
- Revise Study Plans to include discussions.

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MEETING NOTES:

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

Jim Crew gave an update on the comments received by APC on the Draft Study Plans. APC has decided to hold one-on-one meetings with each of the groups that sent in comments with the goal of discussing and better understanding the comments. APC plans host the next set of MIG meetings during the last week of March; an exact date will be determined and an email sent to all stakeholders.

Jim updated the group on the status of the proposed relicensing rule curve variance. The “drought based” rule curve variance was approved by FERC in November and will end on April 1. APC had planned to file an application with FERC and seek approval for a continued rule curve variance during the relicensing period so that APC could study the effects of the increased winter pool on project resources. This relicensing rule curve variance would have provided real data on the effects of the proposed changes and would have provided higher winter pools during the relicensing process, which is the primary issue of the Lake Martin HOBO. Ashley McVicar completed the initial flood modeling for this effort using the March 1990 flood as a basis (which was 96% of the 100 yr flood). Those modeling efforts determined that a change in the winter pool of three feet (elevation 480 to 483 ft) would result in a two to three feet increase in the downstream flooding for more than 30 miles downstream. When APC visited FERC on February 5, 2008 and presented these initial modeling results, FERC told APC they would have great difficulty in approving the interim variance due to the difference in downstream flow impacts compared to the baseline. FERC suggested that APC continue their modeling efforts for any proposed rule curve change, determine potential impacts and mitigation efforts, and submit the findings in the relicensing proposal application in 2011.

Based on the meeting with FERC, Jim stated that there would be no change in the rule curve during relicensing, and that APC would model alternatives to changing the winter rule curve during relicensing. If a rule curve change is found to be possible, APC will perform the necessary analysis/studies to address that specific change.

As an immediate follow up to this issue, APC has planned a “technical workshop” in March for representatives of each stakeholder group to meet and review the flood flow model with Ashley McVicar (APC). ADCNR and USFWS are welcome to send representatives to this modeling workshop. Jim will coordinate a date with each group.

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Kelly provided a review of the ILP study plan process culminating in FERC approval. June 1st will officially begin the ILP with the filing of the PAD and NOI with FERC. Within 60 days from this date (August), FERC will issue a scoping document (which is required for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)). Within 30 days from this date (September), FERC will hold two scoping meetings (one daytime and one evening meeting) in the vicinity of Lake Martin. Within 30 days (October) from those meetings, public comments should be submitted to FERC on the scoping document and PAD. Within 45 days (mid to late November), APC is required to submit their Final study plans for FERC's approval. The filing of the study plans initiates a 90 day period for all stakeholders to file their own study plans (which must meet FERC criteria) or offer comments on APC's study plans. Within 60 days (April 2009), FERC will issue their approved study plans (may be a modified version of the plans submitted by APC). Unless a mandatory conditioning agency (FWS, ADEM, ADCNR, and NMFS) disagrees with FERC's study plan which would put the process into dispute resolution, APC will implement the FERC Approved Study Plan. If a dispute resolution process is implemented, it would likely be complete by July 2009 and the modified FERC approved Study Plan would be issued at the completion of the process for APC's immediate implementation.

Discussion of Study Plans

Henry Mealing led the discussion of agency comments on the study plans.

Sedimentation and Nuisance Aquatic Plants

Is this study necessary if APC doesn't change the rule curve? ADCNR would like to keep the option to study this issue on table in the event that the rule curve is eventually proposed to be changed. ADCNR also would like to keep the option of implementing periodic drawdowns to the elevation 480 every few years to assist with sedimentation and aquatic vegetation issues. ADCNR would also like to study sedimentation on a smaller scale if the rule curve is not changed especially relative to nuisance aquatic vegetation. Henry reminded the group that APC's Aquatic Vegetation Management on the lake will be presented in a formal Plan that will be included as part of the Shoreline Management Plan. Ideas for prevention of the spread of nuisance aquatic vegetation include: education, signs at boat ramps, TV ads, articles in the Shorelines publication, and presentations at bass clubs.

Entrainment and Mortality

APC has proposed a paper study on entrainment and mortality. ADCNR and USFWS would like to have some validation of the numbers estimated in the paper study and would like field data collected on a seasonal basis to verify seasonal entrainment estimates and variation in species

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impacted. APC is looking for a cost effective and safe manner to supplement the paper study. APC would support limited collection of hydroacoustic data either in the forebay or penstocks. APC currently owns a Biosonics and a DIDSON acoustic system and would propose the use of either or both of these systems. APC is also considering conducting limited gill netting during this study. It may be that collection of this data will also be useful in resolving portions of the striped bass issue. APC will revise the study plan to reflect this discussion.

Wildlife Management

ADCNR requested that the wildlife management plan include all APC project lands and some APC owned non-project lands. APC appreciates the comments provided by ADCNR and is willing to work with them to identify wildlife issues and potential mitigation and enhancement measures. However, APC is unable to control what occurs on private lands and is limited in adding lands to the project boundary (FERC must approve this and must have justification to do so). Jim Lochamy and Ericha Nix briefly discussed the current amounts of Longleaf Pine habitat in relation to Red Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) colonies.

John Grogan emphasized the importance of getting Lake Martin into the Safe Harbor Program. He stated that APC does not like to give conservation easements on project lands but may be willing to consider certain alternatives if there is a need.

Jim Lochamy reminded the group that there is a habitat type map in the Preliminary Information Document (PID) and that APC would be glad to discuss the lands around the project. LIDAR data for the project is also available for viewing.

Jim L. will set up a meeting with Mark Tuggle (APC Forestry) to take Ericha Nix on a tour of the Martin lake properties in March.

In relation to preparation of a Martin Wildlife Management Plan, the ADCNR may want to do things a little differently than performed on the Coosa Projects. APC will be glad to work with ADCNR to develop this plan.

Migratory Fish Passage

Jeff Powell from USFWS stated that one of his concerns (stated in his comment letter) was that Martin would be overlooked because of plans at Clairborne Lock and Dam that were developed as part of the Coosa River relicensing. He confirmed that he was not currently asking for fish passage at Martin but is required by Section 18 to undergo a certain course of action to build a record for any decision made on Section 18. He would like to enhance the fish spawning runs on the Tallapoosa and is extremely interested in distribution of American eels downstream of the project.

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He would support preparation of a “concept document”, similar to the one prepared for the Coosa projects. USFWS may want to perform a study later in the process after the concept paper is developed and the drought is over.

Henry Mealing asked Jeff Powell if the USFWS had a restoration plan or some specific goals that APC could use in the “concept document”. Jeff stated that they did not have a specific restoration plan but would like to develop one based on overall migratory restoration plans for the Gulf Atlantic Fisheries. Jeff Powell also noted that APC should keep Prescott Brownell (NOAA Fisheries) updated on the relicensing process.

Minimum Flows

Nick Nichols confirmed that ADCNR viewed the reservoirs on the Tallapoosa as one entity, especially with regards to operations during a drought. Martin has 50% of the storage capacity of the ACT basin and the flows from Martin influence Yates, Thurlow and the Tallapoosa River downstream to the Alabama River.

Henry Mealing asked the agencies to help the group understand their comments and their ultimate goals from a minimum flow study. Nick Nichols stated their immediate concern was to enhance riverine habitat areas downstream of Martin. He confirmed that his long-term concern was seasonal variations in the power operations. The agencies realize that mimicking natural flows 100% of the time may be impossible but would like investigate opportunities for APC to tweak project operations to more closely resemble natural flows.

John Grogan was concerned about the definition of natural flows. Nick Nichols stated he would like the inflows to more closely resemble the outflows.

Andy Sheppard discussed the operations on the Tallapoosa River and pointed out that the fluctuations at Yates were not as high as they were 15 years ago. Nick Nichols mentioned he would like to see Adaptive Management on the flows out of Martin. All agreed that the HOBO’s should be included in conversations and to explain that changes did not necessarily mean less water in the lake, only a change in how the water is released.

APC will gather some historical and current operations data for the Tallapoosa Projects to review with the agencies during a Technical Meeting in March. Andy will gather the data on inflows and outflows for Martin, Yates, and Thurlow, as well as lake elevation on Yates and Thurlow. The agencies would like to look for ways to balance operational costs and more natural flows. A meeting to review the Tallapoosa River water movement through the existing hydroelectric projects will be scheduled in March prior to the March MIG meetings. APC noted that this information would also be shared with the operations MIG.

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Jim thanked the attendees for their input and stated that he would identify dates for the proposed meetings and get the notices out to potential attendees as soon as possible.

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Agenda

Martin Relicensing Agency Meeting
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Meeting Purpose: Review and discuss study plan comments and next steps in the ILP process.

- 1:00 PM Introductions, Review Meeting Purpose and Agenda
- 1:15 PM Update on Martin Rule Curve and Proposed Variance
- 1:30 PM Discussion topics
- Sedimentation rates and nuisance aquatic plants
 - Entrainment & Mortality
 - Wildlife Management
 - Migratory Fish and Passage
 - Minimum Flows
- 3:45 PM Review Next Steps in ILP Process
- 4:00 PM Adjourn