

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE GROUP**

**SCE&G Training Center
November 10, 2005**

ATTENDEES:

Bill Argentieri, SCE&G
Alison Guth, Kleinschmidt Associates
Shane Boring, Kleinschmidt Associates
Prescott Brownell, NOAA Fisheries
Gina Kirkland, SCDHEC
Malcolm Leaphart, TU
George Duke, LMHOC
Joe Logan, Midlands Stripers
Jeff Duncan, National Park Service
Bill Marshall, SCDNR & LSSRAC

Alan Stuart, Kleinschmidt Associates
Steve Summer, SCANA Services
Randy Mahan, SCANA Services
Dick Christie, SCDNR
Bob Seibels, Riverbanks Zoo
Tom Bowles, SCE&G
Steve Leach, SCDNR
Hal Beard, SCDNR
Bill Hulslander, Congaree National Park

HOMEWORK ITEMS:

- Review list of study requests.
- Review the ICD and the water quality report at the back of the ICD.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

**December 7, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. (Combined Meeting with
Fish and Wildlife Resource Group)
Located at the Saluda Shoals Park Rivers Center**

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE GROUP**

**SCE&G Training Center
November 10, 2005**

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.

Alan Stuart opened the meeting at approximately 9:30 AM, noting that the Resource Conservation Groups (RCG)s were formed to allow relicensing stakeholders and their diverse interests to be expressed.

Mission Statement

Several groups/individuals cited issues that they believe need to be considered in the mission statement. Specifically, the National Park Service noted that floodplain inundation at the Congaree National Park is among their primary issues and suggested that floodplain vegetation somehow be considered in the mission statement. Gina Kirkland added that a discussion of state water quality standards as they pertain to fisheries might be beneficial. Prescott Brownell noted the importance of having a high, overarching goal in the statement. George Duke cited the need for a method to measure success under the mission statement and to consider at every meeting 'are we in fact doing this?'.

Through an interactive session, the group developed the following list of essential elements for the mission statement:

- Fish, wildlife, and plant species, ecological communities and the eco-systems and/or habitat
- Seek to achieve the highest level of consensus based, good faith cooperation
- Highest level of integrated management best adapted to serve the public interests
- Develop a PM&E (Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement) Agreement
- Fisheries and wildlife management

SCE&G agreed to develop a draft mission statement base on the above elements and distributed to group members for review and comment.

Potential of Combining F&W and WQ RCGs

Several group members enquired as to the whether or not the WQ and F&W RCGs should be combined due to the many common issues. Several members agreed that it may be beneficial; however, after some discussion it was agreed that they should remain separate for the time being. Steve Summer suggested that combining the groups at the Technical Working Committee (TWC) level might be more appropriate. The group agreed that this issue should be discussed further once a work plan has been developed for each group. Alan Stuart added that, if group members are

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE GROUP**

**SCE&G Training Center
November 10, 2005**

interested in topics being discussed at the other RCGs, they you are welcome to attend as an observer.

Relicensing Operating Procedures

Alan Stuart noted that comments have been received from several NGOs on the Operating procedures. He added that those comments are being evaluated and additional comments are expected from Patrick Moore's group very soon.

Study Requests

Alan Stuart noted that the relicensing study requests had been categorized according to resource groups. He noted that, if stakeholders did not see their request/comment under the Fish and Wildlife (F&W) category, it likely was included with another RCG. Anyone who felt that their comment/request should have been included in F&W, but was not, was asked to let the group know. Dick Christie noted the need to review study requests and discuss the appropriateness of where they had been placed in the RCG's. For example, he suggested that the IFIM study request might be more appropriate in the F&W RCG, rather than WQ.

Alan also noted that discussions regarding the study requests will likely begin soon; therefore, any other concerns/comments regarding studies should be brought to light as soon as possible. Ron Ahle (SDNR) noted his concern about the status of waterfowl populations and habitat on the lake. In regards to the Congaree Swamp floodplain study request, Jeff Duncan added that his agency is interested in the possibility of coupling an inundation model with a hydrologic operations model. He added that this would likely provide much needed information regarding the relationship between operations at the dam and their ecological management efforts at the park. Gina Kirkland added that DHEC met as a board earlier in the day, and they are considering designating waters of the Congaree Swamp as outstanding resource waters.

Hal Beard enquired as to who would ultimately decide which studies will be performed. Alan Stuart noted that, although all the study requests may not be carried out, all will be considered in some shape or form by the various RCGs. Randy Mahan clarified that, ultimately, SCE&G has the statutory obligation to prepare and file the license application; therefore, they also have an obligation to study the issues appropriately. He went on to note that, although all parties may not agree as to whether or not a study needs to be performed, an effort will be made to address each and every study request submitted. Jeff Duncan added that FERC typically will look at whether the study request has a nexus to the project, and if so, is the available data adequate to address it. He also noted that those requesting studies are required by FERC to state explicitly how the available data is inadequate.

MEETING NOTES

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE GROUP

**SCE&G Training Center
November 10, 2005**

The group then briefly discussed the potential for use of existing data in addressing study request. Alan Stuart mentioned specifically the request for fish community and habitat surveys, noting that the lake and river fish resources have been studied extensively over the years. USFWS (Amanda Hill) recommended that existing data be compiled to identify any data gaps and proceeding from there with the studies, if needed. Steve Summer noted that SCE&G recently completed a helicopter video of the river from the confluence up to the dam at low flows, and that this data may be helpful in assessing habitat conditions. He added that they also have some footage from the Santee all the way up to the Saluda River, but at higher flows. The group agreed that this has potential as a starting point for assessing the river habitat. Randy Mahan summarized the discussion by noting that there is a tremendous amount of data out there that many people may not be aware of.

Malcolm Leaphart enquired as to whether or not most of SCE&G's studies have been peer reviewed. Randy Mahan and Alan Stuart both noted that, while studies typically have not been reviewed for publication, they typically seek involvement from resource agencies, which serves as the peer review. Jeff Duncan noted that, in this relicensing, both FERC and the RCG will function as the peer review. Prescott Brownell noted that NOAA Fisheries typically has a group of engineers/scientists that they use to provide review for instream flow, fish passage, and other studies. Gina Kirkland added that there is quite a bit of quality data and information available that is not peer reviewed, but that doesn't mean that it is not good or valid data. She added that quality assurance quality control standards in establishing a certain level of confidence among stakeholders and that the technical working groups may be a useful platform for establishing the standards.

Several group members enquired as to how the Technical Working Committees (TWC) would be formed. Alan Stuart noted that TWC's would likely be formed from within the RCGs to address specific issues identified by the group. Malcolm Leaphart emphasized the importance of having the TWC's coordinate with the RCGs to promote education regarding relicensing issues.

Baseline For Studies

Dick Christie noted the importance of the RCG having a good understanding of what constitutes the baseline. Alan noted that FERC views the baseline as the project is today, not pre-project. Jeff Duncan added, "The courts have interpreted what the baseline is, but that doesn't preclude us from doing what is better or looking at historical aspects for resources such as fisheries, etc." Randy Mahan added that SCE&G has no problem with attempting to understand historical conditions and added that "If the current baseline is not good it does not mean we will keep a bad baseline."

Dick Christie noted that he interpreted the ICD as being SCE&G's attempt to describe the baseline. He added that SCDNR has provided comments regarding some of the information presented in the

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE GROUP**

**SCE&G Training Center
November 10, 2005**

ICD and would like to discuss those comments as they relate to establishing baseline. Gina Kirkland added that, even if we consider the ICD a starting point, nothing precludes us from building upon that. Alan agreed, noting that, although the ICD itself is final, we will build on its content to develop the application. He added that it should not be confused, that we will not distribute multiple versions of the ICD. Dick Christie added that he felt the ICD, with a few possible exceptions, was a pretty accurate portrayal of the Fish and wildlife resources. Bill Argentieri closed the discussion, noting that SCE&G did send an acknowledgement of receiving SCDNR's comments on the ICD.

Next Meeting Date / Agenda

Alan noted that at the Water Quality (WQ) RCG meeting the previous day (November 9th), the group proposed that their next meeting be combined with the F&W group to discuss common issues (i.e., tie-ins between water quality and fisheries, etc.) He added that several potential presentations had been discussed (see 11-9-05 notes), as well as a proposed meeting date (December 7th). The group agreed that this date was acceptable. The group briefly discussed the proposed agenda for the next meeting, including the following presentations:

- Presentation: Water Quality Standards and Classifications of Lake Murray and the Lower Saluda River
Gina Kirkland
- Presentation: Status on impaired areas within Lake Murray
Andy Miller
- Presentation: A Review of 25 years of Water Quality in Lake Murray
Jim Ruane - Reservoir Environmental Management
- A Review of the QUAL 2 -E Water Quality Model and its Application to Lake Murray
Jim Ruane
- A Review of the Site-Specific Dissolved Oxygen Standard
Alan Stuart/Shane Boring

Operations Presentation

The meeting was closed by a presentation by Lee Xanthakos on operations at Saluda Hydro and it's role in providing reserve capacity. This presentation can be viewed through the Saluda Relicense <http://www.saludahydrorelicense.com/documents/Presentaion-SaludaHydroWorkshop-LeeX.pdf>, as well as through the November 1st Operations meeting notes.