

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES TECHNICAL WORKING
COMMITTEE**

**SCE&G Training Center
March 8, 2006**

final 04/21/2006

ATTENDEES:

Bill Argentieri, SCE&G	Tom Eppink, SCANA**
Alan Stuart, Kleinschmidt	Amanda Hill, USF&WS**
Jennifer Summerlin, Kleinschmidt**	Shane Boring, Kleinschmidt*,**
Ed Diebold, Riverbanks Zoo	Brandon Stutts, SCANA Services
Bob Seibels, Riverbanks Zoo	Gerrit Jobsis, Am. Rivers/Coastal Cons. League**

*Facilitator

** R,T&E Species TWC member

ACTION ITEMS:

- Provide a tracking sheet for RT&E species occurring in the project vicinity
Shane Boring
- Send historical information on the Saluda Darter to S. Boring to distribute to committee members
Gerrit Jobsis
- Distribute SCE&G's Rocky Shoals Spider Lilly report for the Columbia Hydro project
Shane Boring

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: **May 3, 2006 at 9:00 AM**

**Location: SCE&G Offices at Carolina Research Park
111 Research Drive
Columbia, SC 29203**

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MEETING NOTES:

These notes serve as a summary of the major points presented during the meeting and are not intended to be a transcript or analysis of the meeting.

Shane Boring opened the meeting at 12:40 PM. Shane reminded the group that, at the February 22nd Fish and Wildlife RCG meeting, the Technical Working Committees (TWCs) were formed and study requests were assigned to the TWCs¹. He added that the purpose of today's meeting would be to further discuss the study requests assigned to the Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species TWC and to begin evaluating the need for studies, reviewing available data and data needs (gaps), defining study objectives and scope, and to assign tasks toward addressing each study request.

The group then briefly discussed the status of several of the RT&E species mentioned in study requests and at the February 22nd Fish and Wildlife RCG meeting:

Saluda Crayfish

Amanda Hill noted that the Saluda Crayfish is federally listed as a species of concern. She explained that the only known location of the Saluda Crayfish is in Newberry County, near Silverstreet. It was noted that Saluda Crayfish construct chimneys along the shoreline and that it is thought to be correlated with soil type. She recommended that habitat within the project boundary should be compared to requirements for this species to determine whether it is likely to occur in the project area.

Rocky Shoals Spider Lilly (RSSL)

Gerrit noted that a survey on the RSSL population should be conducted to examine possible impacts from project operations. Tom Eppink provided some additional background on this species, noting that there are approximately 8,000 RSSL plants located in the vicinity of the Broad/Saluda confluence. Alan noted that Kleinschmidt conducted a survey of this population during relicensing of the Columbia Hydro Project. He suggested taking a group boat trip in late May or June, depending on when this species blooms, to look at the RSSL population on the river. The group agreed and scheduled a float trip for May 31, 2006.

¹ See February 22nd, 2006, Fish and Wildlife RCG meeting notes for study request summaries and assignments.

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Bald Eagle

Shane noted that bald eagle surveys are ongoing on the lake by Tom Murphy from SCDNR. Amanda noted that no survey is needed, but a Bald Eagle Management Plan of some type would likely be needed. She added that Tom Murphy can identify the locations of this species within the project area.

Shortnose Sturgeon

Shane noted that he talked to Shane Guan (NOAA Fisheries), and that Shane G. had indicated that the scientific research permit would be issued in 9-10 weeks. He added that, due to the permitting delays, sturgeon sampling will likely begin in 2007 since spawning season has almost come to an end for this year. Alan noted that Steve Leach is presently tracking sturgeon, and they are currently moving through the confluence of the Wateree. He added that information that Steve is collecting at this time will be beneficial to us next year.

Saluda Darter

Gerrit noted that the Saluda Darter should be considered. He added that he has life history information on the species, and would send it to Shane to distribute to the committee.

Shane noted that, in addition to the species mentioned specifically in the study requests and previous RCG meetings (i.e., RSSL, shortnose sturgeon, bald eagle, Saluda crayfish, wood stork), the USFWS had provided a much more substantial species list as part of their comments on the Initial Consultation Document (ICD). Shane added that many of these species have not been discussed thus far during relicensing and enquired as to how these species should be dealt with. Amanda noted that this list was based on the USFWS county listings for the counties surround the Saluda Project (Saluda, Richland, Lexington, Newberry). In assessing the status of these species, Amanda recommended comparing habitat available in the project area to the habitat requirements for the species. It was noted that, if there are no known occurrences of a species in the project area and likewise no suitable habitat, it may be possible to begin eliminating some species from further analysis. She added that looking at the Heritage Trust Database to find out if any of these species occur in the project boundaries may be a beneficial first step.

Bill Argentieri noted that Kleinschmidt should begin constructing a list of the RT&E species that occur in the project area. Shane noted he has developed tracking sheets for other projects that may

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be beneficial for tracking the consultation status of each of the species. The group agreed that this would be beneficial, and Shane was tasked with developing and distributing the tracking sheet.

Date/Location of Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet again on May 3, 2006, at Carolina Research Park. Shane noted that an effort would be made to hold several TWC meetings on a single day to cut down on travel for agency staff. He added that he will issue an electronic meeting invitation to confirm the date with individual members and provide directions to the meeting site. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:47 PM.