

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL WORKING COMMITTEE**

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

Final csb 04052006

ATTENDEES:

Bill Argentieri, SCE&G
Alan Stuart, Kleinschmidt
Jennifer Summerlin, Kleinschmidt
Ed Diebold, Riverbanks Zoo
Bob Seibels, Riverbanks Zoo**
Bob Perry, SCDNR

Tom Eppink, SCANA
Amanda Hill, USF&WS**
Shane Boring, Kleinschmidt*, **
Brandon Stutts, SCANA Services**
Randy Mahan, SCANA Services
Buddy Baker, SCDNR**

*Facilitator

** Terrestrial Resources TWC member

ACTION ITEMS:

- Provide bird observation data from Riverbanks Zoo site (to S. Boring via e-mail)
Bob Seibels
- Compile existing bird observation data (Columbia Audubon, Jerrold Riggs) and distribute to TWC
Shane Boring
- Provide TWC with electronic copies of Catawba-Wateree migratory bird study plan and final report
Shane Boring
- E-mail Lake Murray waterfowl observation data to S. Boring for distribution to and review by TWC
Buddy Baker
- Draft study request detailing SCDNR's concerns regarding historical versus current waterfowl usage on Lake Murray
Buddy Baker and Bob Perry

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 10:30 AM. 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 Terrestrial Resources TWC to begin evaluating the need for a study, available data, data needs (gaps), study objectives and scope, and to assign tasks toward addressing each study request.

Migratory Bird Study Request

Shane asked agency staff in attendance to further clarify their objectives for the study request. Amanda Hill summarized the USFWS's objectives for this study as essentially three-fold: 1) continuation of the Wood Stork survey to provide additional information on usage at the project; 2) identification of all bald eagle sites; and 3) identification of all species that are using the project (i.e., a species list). Shane noted that the first two are being addressed. He added that the woodstork surveys are ongoing and are being jointly conducted by Kleinschmidt and SCNDR staff (Shane Boring and Tom Murphy, respectively). He added that Tom Murphy is also conducting bald eagle nest surveys for SCDNR again this year and that data should be available to the group. Amanda noted that, as long as the data is made available during the relicensing process, these efforts should satisfy the first two objectives.

In regards to the USFWS request to identify all species known to use the project (item 3 above), Shane suggested that, if the primary objective is simply a measure of diversity for the project area, this probably can be accomplished using existing data. He added that a number of data sources have potential to provide a fairly comprehensive species list, including the Columbia Audubon observations from Dreher Island State Park, data compiled by Riverbanks Zoo, and Jerrold Grigg's (professor at USC) observations from Saluda Shoals Park and other areas of the LSR. Bob Seibels noted that the zoo's data is available in an Excel spreadsheet, which could easily be shared with the group. Ed Diebold provided additional background on the Zoo's efforts, noting that they have begun to do faunal inventory of the zoo site, with migratory birds being a primary component of the survey efforts. He added that they are currently seeking funding for this effort and hope to hire a fulltime conservation biologist, as well as potentially expand their survey efforts beyond just the zoo grounds, possibly to a regional level. The group agreed that the available data should be

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

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gathered and distributed to TWC members for review to determine if further studies are needed. Alan Stuart added that a fairly comprehensive species list was provided in the ICD and urged group members to review that section in evaluating data needs.

Shane noted that a similar request was made for the Catwaba-Wateree relicensing and suggesting a review of the study plan and final report might be beneficial in evaluating the need for a study at Saluda. The group agreed and Shane was tasked with distributing electronic copies of these documents to the TWC members.

Shane noted that information regarding waterfowl usage of Lake Murray (i.e. species present, numbers, seasonality) was requested by both the USFWS and SCDNR. Buddy Baker noted that his group at SCDNR has conducted boat-based surveys on the main lake pool during the winter months for the last 3 years. He added that this data could provide information regarding general species distribution, but likely will be of limited value in assessing seasonal and/or year-to-year trends. Bob Perry and Buddy noted that, should the TWC determine that trend data is needed, additional aerial survey, similar to those done for the Santee-Cooper relicensing, would likely be needed. Buddy agreed to pass the data collected thus far on to Shane for distribution to the group. The group agreed that it should meet again after reviewing the data to determine whether further surveys are warranted.

Bob Perry noted that SCDNR is concerned that abundance and diversity of ducks using Lake Murray have declined from historic levels due to habitat losses associated with shoreline development and increased noise, boat traffic, and other disturbances associated with increased popularity of the lake. He added that it might be useful to compare current and historical data on waterfowl usage to examine these factors. He added that it might also be useful to examine the influence of current versus historical operations (i.e. lake levels) on waterfowl usage. Shane noted that this had not been previously submitted as a study request, and that he had some uncertainty regarding the feasibility of such a study and what its objectives would be. Shane proposed, and the group agreed, that SCDNR prepare a study request to further clarify their objectives and the project nexus. Bob and Buddy Baker agreed to draft a study request for distribution to the TWC.

Bob Perry also enquired as to whether there is benthic macroinvertebrate data for the lake, noting their importance as prey for diving ducks. Shane noted that the status of benthic macroinvertebrate data for the lake is being evaluated by the Freshwater Mussels/Benthic Macroinvertebrates TWC. Finally, Shane noted that the request regarding designation of additional waterfowl hunting areas would be addressed in the Recreation RCG and TWCs.

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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 11:35 am.