

MEETING NOTES

**SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY
SALUDA HYDRO PROJECT RELICENSING
LAKE AND LAND MANAGEMENT TWC
Natural Resource Values Sub-Committee**

**SCE&G Lake Murray Training Center
December 20, 2006**

Final ACG 1-29-07

ATTENDEES:

Alison Guth, Kleinschmidt Associates
Ron Ahle, SCDNR
Steve Bell, Lake Watch
Tony Bebber, SCPRT
Jennifer O'Rourke, SCWF
Joy Downs, LMA
Amanda Hill, USFWS
David Hancock, SCE&G
Dick Christie, SCDNR

HOMEWORK:

- David H. – Discuss the acquisition of land parcel information with Orbis (length of shoreline, area, mean width, tract number) and the possibility of combining small, adjacent tracts of land
- Ron A. - incorporate the changes into the workplan document that the group discussed and send it out to the group members by email
- Alison G. – acquire RT&E data from Shane Boring

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: **January 17, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.**
Located at Lake Murray Training Center

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.

Welcome and Review of Resource Value Factors:

The meeting opened and Ron Ahle distributed the draft criteria that he developed on land rebalancing scoring according to the natural resources perspective. Ron noted that at the last meeting he was informed that his task of putting together the strawman included a list of natural resource values and their definitions. It was noted that an important item of the morning's agenda

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would be to review the natural resource value definitions and discuss whether there needed to be any additional text added.

It was noted that during the afternoon session the group would review the scoring method. Ron noted that when developing this method he took into account that making an assessment by map review may require a qualitative analysis.

The group began by reviewing the natural resource definitions. Ron explained that there was no particular order or weight to which these items were listed. This being noted, the group opened discussions by reviewing each item.

The first item discussed was fish spawning and nursery habitat. David Hancock noted that the topographic layers were available from the 354' contour and up. Ron noted that this would be beneficial because the fish spawning areas are commonly associated with the 354' and higher. It was noted that the water levels would typically be above 354' during the spring spawning season, and it may be just as important that the water is stable during that time period. Ron noted that when evaluating this criteria it would be important to keep in mind two items, substrate and water depth. The group developed additional wording for the definition that noted that fish spawning and nursery habitat was commonly associated with elevation 354' and higher. The group agreed that the maps would provide the data that was needed in order to make a qualitative assessment on fish habitat.

The group moved on to discuss the length of shoreline value. Ron explained that the longer the undisturbed shoreline then the higher the resource value. The group agreed to the definition.

Steve Bell asked the group if there should be a section specifically dealing with areas for wildlife. It was noted that wildlife was being accounted for indirectly through the other categories, such as the width of fringeland and the vegetative cover in the fringeland. After some discussion, the group decided that they would have a category entitled terrestrial wildlife and would be measured by acreage.

The group then discussed the value of the mean width of shoreline. David explained that Orbis would be able to calculate the length of shoreline and the mean width. The group discussed the wording of the definition and noted that consideration will be given to the lands below the 360'.

Ron briefly explained the definition of waterfowl hunting opportunities. He noted that this was based on the limitations of the area. Dick Christie noted that DNR is pursuing waterfowl hunting areas outside of the rebalancing process. It was noted that if there is a need to minimize the list, this may be a value that can be eliminated.

The group continued to review the natural resource values and discussed the definition of regional importance. Ron gave the example of Two Bird Cove to describe regional importance. Ron noted

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that Two Bird Cove was regionally important because it is in an area where there is very few areas still available with similar qualities.

Aesthetics was the next topic of discussion. Ron noted that aesthetics was judged on the degree to which the shoreline was naturally vegetated. This would include land cover such as pine, hardwood, bottomland hardwood forests, and natural rocky points.

The group then discussed recreational values and was generally agreeable to the concept with minor adjustments to the wording. Adjacency was also briefly discussed and Tony Bebbler pointed out that this would be important when considering areas next to parks. Ron also explained that scoring for the ESA value would be quantitative, the more the area of ESA's, the better the scoring.

There was some discussion on the value of threatened and endangered species. There was concern expressed that this may be a value that will bog the group down during the evaluation process. It was noted that threatened and endangered species are already being addressed in the relicensing process. Amanda Hill noted that if there is specific habitat for an endangered or threatened species on a parcel of land that the group may want to consider giving the parcel a higher score. The group noted that they would attempt to score land for threatened and endangered species as Ron has it outlined in the draft workplan. However, if the rebalancing process becomes excessively drawn out due to this category, the group would consider alternative means of scoring or elimination. Alison noted that Shane Boring had developed a list of endangered and threatened species that could possibly occur within the project area based on their habitat preferences. She explained that she would check on the status of this and distribute it to the group. David noted that the SCE&G forestry department has the documented locations of bald eagle nests, however, the information was considered critical and could not be given to the group. The group also discussed culturally significant areas. However, this information was also critical and was currently being addressed by the Cultural Resource Surveys.

The value of unique habitats was discussed and it was proposed that threatened and endangered species be combined with this category. The group agreed that this was an appropriate measure and the value definition and the scoring was modified to reflect this change.

The group further discussed the addition of a value entitled terrestrial habitat. This item would take into account both wildlife habitat and acreage, acreage being the scoring value:

- < 1 acre – mod (1)
- 1-5 acres – good (3)
- >5 acres - best (5)

After the group had completed the review of the natural resource values, the group discussed the scoring criteria for each of the values. Steve Bell noted that it would be important to make sure that

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ESA and cove areas would be high priorities for protection. Dick explained that even if a land parcel scores low, this does not mean that the area cannot be protected. He further clarified that this process of scoring shows the high priority areas that the group may work the hardest at to protect.

Discussion on Scoring Criteria:

The group viewed an excel sheet that Ron developed that illustrated how the scores would be entered and summed. The group noted that it would be helpful to have information on the tracks of land already entered into the spreadsheet. This information would include acreage, shoreline length, mean width, and tract number. David noted that he would discuss this with Orbis.

The group then discussed each of the scoring criteria individually, beginning with fish spawning habitat. Ron noted that for fish spawning and nursery habitat the scoring percentages are in reference to the length of shoreline. The group agreed and moved on to discuss the length of shoreline. Ron explained that it was difficult to determine the various lengths that the tracts will be scored by. However, the group felt that the lengths that Ron developed were appropriate and the group would further determine if any changes were necessary when they viewed the tracts of land.

The mean width of fringeland was the next scoring item discussed. Ron noted that these numbers were developed by taking into consideration all of the functions that the group will try to protect. The group noted that this also will be a category that they will make adjustments to during the scoring process, if need be.

There was only brief discussion on the scoring criteria for waterfowl hunting and regional importance and no changes were made. Aesthetics was the next topic of conversation. Aesthetics is scored based on the degree to which it is developed. Tony pointed out that even if a large tract of land has development on portion of it, it may still rank high because of its size. Ron noted that because aesthetics was based solely on the condition of the land at the time of scoring then this may be an value that the group could leave off. The group left the item as it was for the moment but would consider removing it in the future.

The group only briefly discussed recreational values and everyone was agreeable to the method of scoring that item. The group also discussed adjacency and altered the wording some. Tony noted that trail linkages may play a part in this scoring.

The group discussed the criteria for ESA's. Steve Bell asked if there were any ESA's that were not mapped. David responded that they have all been mapped. Ron noted that the percent of the tract of land covered with ESA's is what determines the score. The group agreed to the criteria.

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As discussed above, the group decided to combine threatened and endangered species with unique habitat and the separate section on threatened and endangered species was removed. The scoring of unique habitat was altered to include habitat for threatened and endangered species.

The last item under scoring that the group discussed was the new category entitled terrestrial wildlife. The group agreed that it should be scored by acreage.

Review of Homework Items:

The group concluded discussions on scoring and reviewed homework items. David noted that he would check into getting the length of shoreline, area, mean width and tract numbers for each parcel of land from Orbis prior to the next meeting. Dick suggested combining small, adjacent parcels of land and David noted that he would look into this. Ron noted that he would incorporate the changes into the workplan document and send it out to the group members by email.

Group Adjourned