

MEETING NOTES
Stevens Creek Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2353)

Dominion Energy South Carolina, Inc.
Joint RCG Meeting

April 23, 2020

Final KMK 5-29-20

ATTENDEES:

Amy Bresnahan (DESC)	Elizabeth Miller (SCDNR)
Ray Ammarell (DESC)	Jason Bettinger (SCDNR)
Caleb Gaston (DESC)	Ron Ahle (SCDNR)
Randy Mahan (DESC)	Melanie Olds (USFWS)
Alison Jakupca (Kleinschmidt)	Don Imm (USFWS)
Kelly Kirven (Kleinschmidt)	Scott Glassmeyer (USFWS)
Henry Mealing (Kleinschmidt)	Morgan Wolf (USFWS)
Jason Moak (Kleinschmidt)	Keith Whalen (USFS)
Jordan Johnson (Kleinschmidt)	Derrick Miller (USFS)
Bret Hoffman (Kleinschmidt)	Twyla Cheatwood (NMFS)
Jay Payne (GDNR – WRD)	Andy Herndon (NMFS)
Paula Marcinek (GDNR – WRD)	Tonya Bonitatibus (SRK)
Stacy Rieke (GDNR – HPD)	John Harris (homeowner)
Cameron Henderson (SCDHEC)	
Rusty Wenerick (SCDHEC)	

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

The purpose of the meeting was to review the revisions made to the Water Quality Study Plan, Mussel Study Plan, RTE Whitepaper, and draft Pre-Application Document (PAD). The presentation used during the meeting is attached to the end of these notes. Alison opened the meeting by reviewing the relicensing schedule. DESC plans to file the Notice of Intent (NOI), PAD and draft study plans with FERC on or around May 15, 2020. At that time, DESC will request to use the Traditional Licensing Process (TLP). FERC will act on that request in June/July 2020. The Joint Agency Meeting (JAM) and site visit will be held in August 2020 and comments on the PAD will be due in October 2020. The first study season will begin in January 2021.

Alison asked the agencies if they expected any time delays in reviewing the PAD associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. All agencies indicated that they don't expect any delays in their reviewing timeframes.

The group reviewed the changes made to the Water Quality Study Plan since the last RCG meeting. Jason M. noted that a sixth monitoring site was added to the study. The site is located in the Savannah River arm of the Stevens Creek Reservoir, just upstream of the Savannah River's

confluence with Stevens Creek. At a previous meeting, Jason B. requested that this area be monitored periodically in the summer months for temperature, DO and pH.

Henry reviewed the changes made to the Mussel Study Plan. The study methodology was updated to match that as written in the SCDNR Mussel SOP. Morgan said that she is generally supportive of the study plan, however she has some concerns about the survey window. Surveys were planned to take place through late October 2021. Morgan said she would rather see the surveys end in September. If surveys occur too late into fall, leaf litter can begin to obstruct view. Paula said that she spoke with the GDNR malacologist and he indicated that some of the tributaries on the Georgia side of the reservoir should potentially be included in the study plan, including little Kiokee Creek and Uchee Creek. Paula said that these areas shouldn't be disregarded because of degradation. Paula will provide Kelly the contact information for the GDNR malacologist. He may be able to provide some existing data that can be included in the study. Alison said that the Forest Service provided a report on mussel surveys that were conducted on Forest Service lands near the Project. Henry asked if a comprehensive report that includes existing data and the new data that would be collected during the mussel study would be helpful. The agencies agreed that this would be good since there isn't something like that already in existence for the Project area.

Kelly reviewed the changes made to the RTE Whitepaper. Revisions included updating the species list for South Carolina state protected species and adding state protection status to the state species included in the report. Ron had a few comments on the report. He said that although Shortnose and Atlantic Sturgeon are not in the Project area at this time, they may be in the future following downstream fish passage installation. He requested these species be included in the report. Ron also noted that some of the language regarding logging and construction in the Project area that was included in the red-cockaded woodpecker and relict trillium summaries contradicted each other. Ron also noted that the Robust Redhorse distribution is more widespread than the report indicates. Paula said she would provide more information on this that can be included in the report. Finally, Ron requested that additional discussion be added to the Shoals Spider Lily summary on why this species won't be impacted by continued Project operations. Kelly said that the report will be revised to address Ron's comments.

The group then focused on updates that were made to the draft PAD. Alison highlighted changes that were made in the following sections: Section 4.2 - Water Resources; Section 4.3 - Fish and Aquatic Resources; Section 4.5 - Floodplains, Wetlands, Riparian and Littoral Habitat; Section 4.6 - Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species, Section 4.7 - Recreation and Land Use; Section 4.9 - Cultural Resources; Section 5.0 - Preliminary Issues and Studies List for Each Resource Area; and Section 6.0 - Summary of Contacts. A list of the revisions to each section is included in the presentation (attached).

Alison then requested that stakeholders send in letters or emails that indicate their support for using the TLP. Alison said these TLP support letters would be filed with the PAD and can aid in FERC's decision to approve the use of the TLP.

Alison opened the meeting for questions. John Harris asked if there was any information in the PAD regarding water levels and operating ranges for Stevens Creek Reservoir. Amy said that the reservoir level can reach 183' per the existing license, however, DESC can and has deviated from that occasional maintenance following agency and FERC approval. However, DESC does not always operate to the lower level of 183'. John said that he receives a lot of comments from other

homeowners and recreators on Stevens Creek Reservoir that they would like to see the lower level of the operating range raised a foot or two. He said that it is his hope that through relicensing, the lower operating range is raised to 184'. Henry and Alison said that this issue can be addressed during relicensing. Kelly added that relicensing is a years-long process and that even if the operating range were raised a foot, DESC would not have to comply until a new license is issued. And that could be in five or more years. However, it was noted that the current operating range is important in allowing DESC the flexibility they need to re-regulate the flows that are released from the upstream Thurmond Dam. This is one of the primary functions of the Project, in addition to producing hydroelectric power.

John asked if there were any projects planned for the near future that might require DESC to operate at an even lower level, as they did last year when replacing the flashboards. Ray said that DESC is planning to install post-tension rock anchors in the dam later this year. The reservoir will be lowered beginning in June/July and will likely last until late September, as weather and flows permit. The reservoir drawdown will be to levels like those last summer. Kelly will send John a link to the Project website, where drawdown information will be posted. He can share this link with other homeowners that are interested.

Action items from this meeting are listed below.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Kleinschmidt will post the draft PAD and study plans to the Project website for final agency review.
- Paula will provide the Georgia DNR malacologist information. Kleinschmidt will follow up with him to gather additional mussel information in the Project area.
- Stakeholders will send DESC TLP support letters/emails, if able.
- Kleinschmidt will address Ron's comments on the RTE Whitepaper, and include any revisions made in the PAD.
- Kelly will send John a link to the Project website.