MEETING NOTES
Stevens Creek Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2535)

Dominion Energy South Carolina, Inc.
Water Quality Technical Working Committee Meeting

April 17, 2023

Final JAG 3/7/25

ATTENDEES:

Amy Bresnahan – DESC
Caleb Gaston – DESC
Ray Ammarell – DESC
Paul Vidonic – Dominion
Alison Jakupca – Kleinschmidt
Jason Moak – Kleinschmidt
Jenn Güt – Kleinschmidt
Jordan Johnson – Kleinschmidt
Kevin Mack – NMFS
Twyla Cheatwood – NMFS
Jamie Sykes – USACE
Keith Whalen – USFS
Melanie Olds – USFWS
Clint Peacock – GADNR
Paula Marcinek – GADNR
Jeffrey Williams – GAEPD
Sean Hayes – GAEPD
Rusty Wenerick – SCDHEC
Elizabeth Miller – SCDNR
Jason Bettinger – SCDNR
Chad Hendrix – City of Augusta
Oscar Flite – City of Augusta

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 discuss the 2023 Water Quality Study for the Stevens Creek Hydroelectric Project, the results of the reconnaissance survey, and agency comments on the draft Study Plan.

Jason M., Kleinschmidt, began the meeting with a narrative of the reconnaissance survey undertaken by Kleinschmidt and Dominion staff on February 22, 2023. The boat was deployed as water was being released from Thurmond Dam and entering Stevens Creek. The group traveled approximately 11 miles upstream into Stevens Creek to the point where the creek became unnavigable with a motorboat. Jason showed photos of some of the areas where monitors will be deployed for off-channel surveys. Jason reviewed the proposed methodology of the entire study. In summary, continuous monitors at the mouth of Stevens Creek and at RM 4.5 will collect hourly temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, pH, and turbidity measurements. The monitor at RM 10.5 will collect hourly temperature and DO measurements. The continuous loggers will be deployed from May 1 through October 31, 2023. Longitudinal surveys will be conducted once a month from May

through October; the probe will collect DO levels in 30-second intervals. Six sites are included in the off-channel survey portion of the study. The monitors will be deployed for at least four separate 48-hour periods between May and October and will collect temperature and DO in 15-minute intervals.

Elizabeth M., SCDNR, inquired about the requested monitor at the confluence of Horn Creek and Stevens Creek, which was not included in the Study Plan. Kevin M., NMFS, stated the intent of a monitor at Horn Creek would be to determine the creek's influence on DO; there are SCDHEC monitors in the creek that would provide additional data. It was DESC's assumption that a monitor upstream (at RM 10.5) would meet the objective of determining the longitudinal extent of low DO levels. NMFS and SCDNR indicated that while they would like as many parameters measured as possible at Horn Creek, they were mainly interested in temperature and DO. DESC agreed to deploy a continuous logger, as requested by agencies, just below the confluence of Horn Creek and Stevens Creek in addition to the monitor at RM 10.5.

Inquires were made regarding the agency request to conduct sampling year-round. Jason and Alison J., Kleinschmidt, explained that there is a large quantity of continuous data and spot measurements for the Project (2021 Stevens Creek Water Quality Study, USGS, and Phinizy Center for Water Sciences) that indicate DO issues occur between May and October in Stevens Creek and sampling year-round was not justified to provide necessary data to answer the objective of the study. Kevin requested that responses to previous agency comments be provided in the next report to formally indicate Dominion's position on this, as well as the other agency comments. Further discussion on year-round sampling was raised by Twyla C., NMFS, and Paula M., GADNR. Twyla stated that migratory species could be above the Project dam prior to May 1, and NMFS is interested in knowing the DO levels during the entire migratory season. Paula said that continuous data year-round allows for more accurate comparisons and determination of when the DO issues start, end, and their severity. Keith W., USFS, asked if it was possible to monitor a subset of the continuous monitors rather than all four. Jason explained it would not necessarily result in a substantial cost savings because the deployed monitors would still undergo maintenance and biweekly data retrieval. There are also significant concerns that the monitors would be destroyed or lost during the high-flow winter season, which has previously occurred at the Project. Dominion will internally discuss sampling year-round and will inform the TWC of its determination.

Kevin asked about the order of operations for the longitudinal surveys. Ideally, the surveys would take place at the same time as the off-channel surveys. Timing would also be important, as data should be collected when DO is at its lowest during the morning AND when Thurmond Dam is releasing flows during the afternoon. Downstream tow data could be collected when picking up the off-channel monitors. DESC agreed to this methodology.

Elizabeth requested that additional metrics, tow depth and flow/discharge, be included in the longitudinal surveys. Various methods were discussed, including stream gaging and utilizing an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP). The closest USGS gage that measures discharge is near Modoc, SC, which is too far for an accurate assessment of discharge within the study area. Jordan J., Kleinschmidt, stated that a pro-rated measurement from the Modoc gage could be calculated but, at best, it would estimate discharge at the upmost point of the Project Boundary and not flow at each monitoring station. Amy B., DESC, stated that if the agencies were only interested in a general idea of flow, that they could provide relative flow (normal, high, low). Paul V., Dominion, asked if it was possible to use rainfall as an indicator of discharge given that Stevens Creek is a flashy system. It is possible if there is a decent gage next to the Modoc gage. Dominion will attempt to estimate inflow at the Project Boundary by pro-rating the Modoc gage based on drainage area and available rainfall data.

Twyla concluded the meeting identifying a concern with the timeline, as the study was to start two weeks from the date of the meeting. She expressed a desire to have more of the agency comments incorporated and/or addressed in the subsequently revised Study Plan.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Dominion to provide a revised 2023 Water Quality Study Plan to the TWC that includes responses to agency comments.