



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

January 15, 2004

DOCKET #
52-008
RESPONDING TO OUR
12/21/03 LETTER.

ANDY KUGLER
X2828

Mr. Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Re: North Anna Power Station Alternate
Barnwell County, South Carolina
FWS Log No: 4-6-04-T-110

Dear Mr. Kuo:

We have reviewed the information received December 21, 2003, concerning the above-referenced project. The following comments are provided in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 661-667e), and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

We believe there is potential habitat for federally protected species and/or the presence of designated or proposed critical habitat within the action area of the alternate project location at the Savannah River Site. You did not provide detailed information on the location of the potential alternate site and we can provide you with only general comments at this time.

Therefore, we are providing a list of the federally endangered (E) and threatened (T) and candidate (C) species which potentially occur in Aiken County and Barnwell County, South Carolina to aid you in determining the impacts your project may have on protected species. The list also includes species of concern identified by the Service. Species of concern (SC) are not legally protected under the Endangered Species Act, and are not subject to any of its provisions, including Section 7, unless they are formally proposed or listed in the future as endangered/threatened. We are including these species in our response for the purpose of giving you advance notification. These species may be listed in the future, at which time they will be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

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Therefore, it would be prudent for you to consider these species early in project planning to avoid any adverse effects.

In-house surveys should be conducted by comparing the habitat requirements for the attached listed species with available habitat types at the project site. Field surveys for the species should be performed if habitat requirements overlap with that available at the project site. Surveys for protected plant species must be conducted by a qualified biologist during the flowering or fruiting period(s) of the species. Surveys for the red-cockaded woodpecker should be conducted in accordance with the "Guidelines for preparation of biological assessments and evaluations for the red-cockaded woodpecker" by Gary Henry. A copy of these guidelines is available from this office. Please notify this office with the results of any surveys for the below list of species and an analysis of the "effects of the action," as defined by 50 CFR 402.02 on any listed species including consideration of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

We also recommend you contact the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), Data Manager, Wildlife Diversity Section, Columbia, SC 29202, concerning known populations of federal and/or state endangered or threatened species, and other sensitive species in the project area. Additional habitat information may also be available from SCDNR. The National Marine Fisheries Service, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2449 should be contacted for consultation on species under their jurisdiction.

Aiken County

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|----|
| Bald eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> | T |
| Wood stork | <i>Mycteria americana</i> | E |
| Red-cockaded woodpecker | <i>Picoides borealis</i> | E |
| Shortnose sturgeon | <i>Acipenser brevirostrum*</i> | E |
| Relict trillium | <i>Trillium reliquum</i> | E |
| Piedmont bishop-weed | <i>Ptilimnium nodosum</i> | E |
| Smooth coneflower | <i>Echinacea laevigata</i> | E |
| Southern Dusky Salamander | <i>Desmognathus auriculatus</i> | SC |
| Gopher frog | <i>Rana capito</i> | SC |
| Small-flowered buckeye | <i>Aesculus parviflora</i> | SC |
| Sandhills milk-vetch | <i>Astragalus michauxii</i> | SC |
| Elliott's croton | <i>Croton elliotii</i> | SC |
| Dwarf burhead | <i>Echinodorus parvulus</i> | SC |
| Shoals spider-lily | <i>Hymenocallis coronaria</i> | SC |
| White-wicky | <i>Kalmia cuneata</i> | SC |
| Bog spicebush | <i>Lindera subcoriacea</i> | SC |
| Boykin's lobelia | <i>Lobelia boykinii</i> | SC |
| Carolina bogmint | <i>Macbridea caroliniana</i> | SC |
| Awnead-meadowbeauty | <i>Rhexia aristosa</i> | SC |
| Pickering's morning-glory | <i>Stylisma pickeringii</i> var. <i>Pickeringii</i> | SC |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|----|
| Reclined meadow-rue | <i>Thalictrum subrotundum</i> | SC |
| Bachman's sparrow | <i>Aimophila aestivalis</i> | SC |
| Henslow's sparrow | <i>Ammodramus henslowii</i> | SC |
| American kestrel | <i>Falco sparverius</i> | SC |
| Loggerhead shrike | <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> | SC |
| Painted bunting | <i>Passerina ciris ciris</i> | SC |
| Redhorse, Robust | <i>Moxostoma robustum</i> | SC |
| Arogos skipper | <i>Atrytone arogos arogos</i> | SC |
| Rafinesque's big-eared bat | <i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i> | SC |
| Gopher tortoise | <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> | SC |
| Southern hognose snake | <i>Heterodon simus</i> | SC |
| Pine or Gopher snake | <i>Pituophis melanoleucus melanoleucus</i> | SC |

Barnwell County

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----|
| Bald eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> | T |
| Wood stork | <i>Mycteria americana</i> | E |
| Red-cockaded woodpecker | <i>Picoides borealis</i> | E |
| Shortnose sturgeon | <i>Acipenser brevirostrum*</i> | E |
| Smooth coneflower | <i>Echinacea laevigata</i> | E |
| Pondberry | <i>Lindera melissifolia</i> | E |
| Canby's dropwort | <i>Oxypolis canbyi</i> | E |
| Piedmont bishop-weed | <i>Ptilimnium nodosum</i> | E |
| American chaffseed | <i>Schwalbea americana</i> | E |
| Southern Dusky Salamander | <i>Desmognathus auriculatus</i> | SC |
| Gopher frog | <i>Rana capito</i> | SC |
| Sandhills milk-vetch | <i>Astragalus michauxii</i> | SC |
| Elliott's croton | <i>Croton elliotii</i> | SC |
| Dwarf burhead | <i>Echinodorus parvulus</i> | SC |
| Creeping St. John's wort | <i>Hypericum adpressum</i> | SC |
| Bog spicebush | <i>Lindera subcoriacea</i> | SC |
| Boykin's lobelia | <i>Lobelia boykinii</i> | SC |
| Carolina bogmint | <i>Macbridea caroliniana</i> | SC |
| Awned meadowbeauty | <i>Rhexia aristosa</i> | SC |
| Bachman's sparrow | <i>Aimophila aestivalis</i> | SC |
| Henslow's sparrow | <i>Ammodramus henslowii</i> | SC |
| American kestrel | <i>Falco sparverius</i> | SC |
| Loggerhead shrike | <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> | SC |
| Painted bunting | <i>Passerina ciris ciris</i> | SC |
| Yellow lampmussel | <i>Lampsilis cariosa</i> | SC |
| Southern hognose snake | <i>Heterodon simus</i> | SC |

We are particularly concerned about potential project impacts to mussel species of concern and anadromous fish in the Savannah River. The Savannah River continues to support remnant but nationally important populations of anadromous fishes including

American shad, blueback herring, striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, and the federally listed endangered shortnose sturgeon. Populations of these species have been seriously diminished as a result of dam construction, over-fishing, habitat degradation, and pollution. The Service is seeking, through Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing and Corps project modifications, to restore access to needed spawning habitat for these fishes from New Savannah Bluff Lock and Dam to Thurmond Dam.

In addition, the Savannah River basin supports one of the most diverse unionid mussel faunas of all Atlantic Slope river systems in North America. Freshwater mussels are currently experiencing a nationwide decline, and considering channel alterations, impoundment, and flow regulation, the Savannah River is almost certainly no exception to these national trends. The extensive forested wetlands of the Savannah River floodplain below Augusta are important habitat for many significant fish and wildlife species, including neotropical migratory birds as well as many other plants and animals of management concern.

Your interest in the protection of endangered species is appreciated. If you have further questions or require additional information, please contact Ed EuDaly of this office at (843) 727-4707 ext. 13. In future correspondence concerning this project, please reference FWS Log No. 4-6-04-T-110.

Sincerely yours,

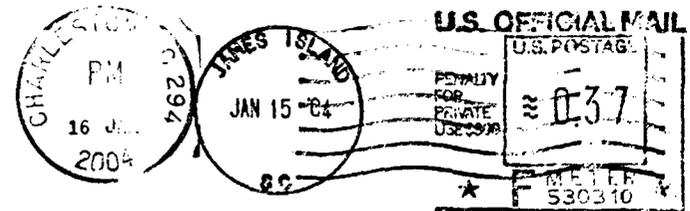


Timothy N. Hall
Field Supervisor

TNH/EME

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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