Southern Nuclear Operating Company

Early Site Permit Application

for the

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant

Part 3
Environmental Report

Revision 1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section Page

Chapter 1 Introduction....1.1-1
1.0 Introduction....1.1-1
1.1 Proposed Action....1.1-1
1.1.1 Purpose and Need....1.1-2
1.2 The Proposed Project....1.2-1
1.2.1 The Applicant and Owner....1.2-1
1.2.2 Site Location....1.2-1
1.2.3 Reactor Information....1.2-1
1.2.4 Cooling System Information....1.2-2
1.2.5 Transmission System Information....1.2-2
1.2.6 Pre-application Public Involvement....1.2-2
1.2.7 Construction Start Date....1.2-2
1.3 Status of Reviews, Approvals and Consultations....1.3-1
1.3.1 ESP Issuance....1.3-1
1.3.2 Pre-Construction Activities....1.3-2
1.3.3 Site Redress Activities....1.3-3
1.3.4 Construction Activities....1.3-4
1.3.5 Operation....1.3-5
1.4 Methodology....1.4-1

Chapter 2 Environmental Description....2.0-1
2.1 Site Location....2.1-1
2.2 Land....2.2-1
2.2.1 The Site and Vicinity....2.2-1
2.2.1.1 The Site....2.2-1
2.2.1.2 The Vicinity....2.2-2
2.2.2 Transmission Corridors and Off-Site Areas....2.2-3
2.2.2.1 Existing Corridors....2.2-3
2.2.2.2 Proposed Transmission Corridors....2.2-4
2.2.2.3 Land Use Issues....2.2-4
2.2.3 The Region....2.2-5
2.3 Water....2.3.1-1
2.3.1 Hydrology....2.3.1-1
2.3.1.1 Surface Water Resources....2.3.1-1
2.3.1.2 Groundwater Resources....2.3.1-10
2.3.2 Water Use....2.3.2-1
2.3.2.1 Surface Water....2.3.2-1
2.3.2.2 Groundwater Use....2.3.2-5
2.3.3 Water Quality....2.3.3-1
2.3.3.1 Surface Water....2.3.3-1
2.3.3.2 Groundwater....2.3.3-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

2.4 Ecology 2.4-1
2.4.1 Terrestrial Ecology 2.4-1
2.4.1.1 Site Habitats and Communities 2.4-1
2.4.1.2 Transmission Corridor Habitats and Communities 2.4-5
2.4.2 Aquatic Ecology 2.4-6
2.4.2.1 Onsite Waterbodies 2.4-6
2.4.2.2 Savannah River 2.4-7
2.4.2.3 Sensitive Species 2.4-15
2.5 Socioeconomics 2.5-1
2.5.1 Demography 2.5-1
2.5.2 Community Characteristics 2.5-6
2.5.2.1 Economy 2.5-6
2.5.2.2 Transportation 2.5-8
2.5.2.3 Taxes 2.5-11
2.5.2.4 Land Use 2.5-14
2.5.2.5 Aesthetics and Recreation 2.5-16
2.5.2.6 Housing 2.5-17
2.5.2.7 Community Infrastructure and Public Services 2.5-17
2.5.2.8 Education 2.5-20
2.5.3 Historic Properties 2.5-22
2.5.3.1 Historic or Archaeological Sites in the Vicinity of the VEGP Site 2.5-23
2.5.3.2 Historic or Archaeological Sites on the VEGP Site or Associated Transmission Lines 2.5-24
2.5.3.3 Native American Cultural Resources and Concerns 2.5-25
2.5.4 Environmental Justice 2.5-25
2.5.4.1 Methodology 2.5-25
2.5.4.2 Minority Populations 2.5-26
2.5.4.3 Low-Income Populations 2.5-27
2.6 Geology 2.6-1
2.6.1 Geologic Setting 2.6-1
2.7 Meteorology and Air Quality 2.7-1
2.7.1 Regional Climatolgy 2.7-1
2.7.1.1 Data Sources 2.7-1
2.7.1.2 General Climate Description 2.7-2
2.7.1.3 Normal, Mean, and Extreme Climateological Conditions 2.7-4
2.7.2 Regional Air Quality 2.7-7
2.7.2.1 Background Air Quality 2.7-7
2.7.2.2 Projected Air Quality 2.7-7
2.7.2.3 Restrictive Dispersion Conditions 2.7-7
2.7.3 Severe Weather 2.7-9
2.7.3.1 Thunderstorms and Lightning 2.7-9
2.7.3.2 Extreme Winds 2.7-10

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

2.7.3.3 Tornadoes 2.7-10
2.7.3.4 Hail, Snowstorms, and Ice Storms 2.7-13
2.7.3.5 Tropical Cyclones 2.7-14
2.7.4 Local Meteorology 2.7-16
2.7.4.1 Normal, Mean, and Extreme Value 2.7-16
2.7.4.2 Average Wind Direction and Wind Speed Conditions 2.7-20
2.7.4.3 Wind Direction Persistence 2.7-21
2.7.4.4 Atmospheric Stability 2.7-22
2.7.4.5 Topographic Description and Potential Modifications 2.7-23
2.7.5 Short-term Diffusion Estimates 2.7-23
2.7.5.1 Basis 2.7-23
2.7.5.2 PAVAN Modeling Results 2.7-25
2.7.6 Long-term (Routine) Diffusion Estimates 2.7-26
2.7.6.1 Basis 2.7-26
2.7.6.2 XOQDOQ Modeling Results 2.7-27
2.7.7 Noise 2.7-28
2.8 Related Federal and Other Project Activities 2.8-1
2.9 Existing Plant Site Characteristic, Design Parameters, and Site Interface Values 2.9-1

Chapter 3 Plant Description 3.0-1
3.0 Introduction 3.0-1
3.1 External Appearance and Plant Layout 3.1-1
3.1.1 Existing Site 3.1-1
3.1.2 Proposed Site 3.1-1
3.2 Reactor Power Conversion System 3.2-1
3.3 Plant Water Use 3.3-1
3.3.1 Water Consumption 3.3-1
3.3.2 Water Treatment 3.3-2
3.4 Cooling System 3.4-1
3.4.1 Description and Operational Modes 3.4-1
3.4.1.1 Normal Plant Cooling 3.4-1
3.4.1.2 Ultimate Heat Sink 3.4-3
3.4.1.3 Other Operational Modes 3.4-3
3.4.2 Component Descriptions 3.4-4
3.4.2.1 River Intake Structure 3.4-4
3.4.2.2 Final Plant Discharge 3.4-5
3.4.2.3 Heat Dissipation System 3.4-5
3.5 Radioactive Waste Management System 3.5-1
3.5.1 Liquid Radioactive Waste Management System 3.5-1
3.5.1.1 Reactor Coolant System (RCS) Effluents 3.5-2
3.5.1.2 Floor Drains and Other Wastes with Potentiall High Suspended Solid Contents 3.5-4
3.5.1.3 Detergent Wastes 3.5-4

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

3.5.1.4 Chemical Wastes 3.5-4
3.5.1.5 Steam Generator Blowdown 3.5-5
3.5.1.6 Radioactive Releases 3.5-5
3.5.2 Gaseous Radioactive Waste Management System 3.5-5
3.5.2.1 System Description 3.5-6
3.5.2.2 System Operation 3.5-7
3.5.2.3 Radioactive Releases 3.5-9
3.5.2.4 Estimated Annual Releases 3.5-9
3.5.2.5 Release Points 3.5-9
3.5.3 Solid Radioactive Waste Management System 3.5-9
3.6 Non-radioactive Waste Systems 3.6-1
3.6.1 Effluents Containing Chemicals or Biocides 3.6-1
3.6.2 Sanitary System Effluents 3.6-1
3.6.3 Other Effluents 3.6-1
3.6.3.1 Gaseous Emissions 3.6-2
3.6.3.2 Liquid Effluents 3.6-2
3.6.3.3 Hazardous Wastes 3.6-3
3.6.3.4 Mixed Wastes 3.6-3
3.6.3.5 Solid Effluents 3.6-4
3.7 Power Transmission System 3.7-1
3.7.1 Switchyard Interfaces 3.7-1
3.7.2 Transmission System 3.7-1
3.8 Transportation of Radioactive Materials 3.8-1
3.8.1 Transportation of Unirradiated Fuel 3.8-1
3.8.2 Transportation of Irradiated Fuel 3.8-1
3.8.3 Transportation of Radioactive Waste 3.8-1
3.9 Pre-Construction and Construction Activities 3.9-1
3.9.1 Preparatory Work 3.9-2
3.9.2 Pre-Construction Activities 3.9-2
3.9.2.1 Installation and Establishment of Environmental Controls 3.9-2
3.9.2.2 Road and Rail Construction 3.9-3
3.9.2.3 Security Construction 3.9-3
3.9.2.4 Temporary Utilities 3.9-3
3.9.2.5 Temporary Construction Facilities 3.9-4
3.9.2.6 Lay-down, Fabrication, Shop Area Preparation 3.9-4
3.9.2.7 Clearing, Grubbing ,and Grading 3.9-4
3.9.2.8 Underground Pipe Installation 3.9-4
3.9.2.9 Docking and Unloading Facilities Installation 3.9-5
3.9.2.10 Intake/Discharge Coffer Dams and Piling Installation 3.9-5
3.9.2.11 Power Block Earthwork (Excavation) 3.9-5
3.9.2.12 Module Assembly 3.9-5
3.9.2.13 Nuclear Island Basemat Foundaton 3.9-6
3.9.2.14 Power Block Earthwork (Backfill) 3.9-6
3.9.3 Construction 3.9-6

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

3.9.3.1 Power Block Construction 3.9-8
3.9.3.2 Testing 3.9-9
3.9.4 Noise 3.9-9
3.10 Work Force Characterization 3.10-1
3.10.1 Construction Work Force 3.10-1
3.10.2 Workers Relocation and Commuting 3.10-1
3.10.3 Operations Work Force 3.10-2

Chapter 4 Environmental Impacts of Construction 4.0-1
4.1 Land Use Impacts 4.1-1
4.1.1 The Site and Vicinity 4.1-1
4.1.1.1 The Site 4.1-1
4.1.1.2 The Vicinity 4.1-3
4.1.2 Transmission Corridors and Offsite Areas 4.1-3
4.1.3 Historic Properties 4.1-4
4.2 Water-Related Impacts 4.2-1
4.2.1 Hydrological Alterations 4.2-1
4.2.2 Water Use Impacts 4.2-2
4.2.3 Water Quality Impacts 4.2-3
4.2.3.1 Surface Water 4.2-3
4.2.3.2 Groundwater 4.2-5
4.3 Ecological Impacts 4.3-1
4.3.1 Terrestrial Ecosystems 4.3-1
4.3.1.1 The Site and Vicinity 4.3-1
4.3.1.2 Transmission Corridors 4.3-2
4.3.2 Aquatic Ecosystems 4.3-3
4.3.2.1 The Site and Vicinity 4.3-4
4.3.2.2 Transmission Corridors 4.3-4
4.4 Socioeconomic Impacts 4.4-1
4.4.1 Physical Impacts 4.4-1
4.4.1.1 Groups Vulnerable to Physical Impacts 4.4-1
4.4.1.2 Predicted Noise Levels 4.4-3
4.4.1.3 Predicted Air Pollutant 4.4-4
4.4.2 Social and Economic Impacts 4.4-5
4.4.2.1 Demography 4.4-5
4.4.2.2 Impacts to the Community 4.4-6
4.4.3 Environmental Justice 4.4-19
4.5 Radiation Exposure to Construction Workers 4.5-1
4.5.1 Site Layout 4.5-1
4.5.2 Radiation Sources 4.5-1
4.5.2.1 Direct Radiation 4.5-1
4.5.2.2 Gaseous Effluents 4.5-1
4.5.2.3 Liquid Effluents 4.5-1
4.5.3 Measured and Calculated Dose Rates 4.5-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

4.5.3.1 Direct Radiation....4.5-2
4.5.3.2 Gaseous Effluents....4.5-2
4.5.3.3 Liquid Effluents....4.5-2
4.5.4 Construction Worker Doses....4.5-2
4.5.4.1 Direct Radiation....4.5-3
4.5.4.2 Gaseous Effluents....4.5-3
4.5.4.3 Liquid Effluents....4.5-3
4.5.4.4 Total Doses....4.5-3
4.6 Measures and Controls to Limit Adverse Impacts During Construction....4.6-1
4.7 Nonradiological Health Impacts....4.7-1
4.7.1 Public Health....4.7-1
4.7.2 Occupational Health....4.7-1

Chapter 5 Environmental Impacts of Station Operations....5.0-1

5.1 Land Use Impacts....5.1-1
5.1.1 The Site and Vicinity....5.1-1
5.1.1.1 The Site....5.1-1
5.1.1.2 The Vicinity....5.1-1
5.1.2 Transmission Corridors and Offsite Areas....5.1-2
5.1.3 Historic Properties and Cultural Resources....5.1-2
5.2 Water Related Impacts....5.2-1
5.2.1 Hydrology Alterations and Plant Water Supply....5.2-1
5.2.2 Water Use Impacts....5.2-1
5.2.2.1 Surface Water....5.2-1
5.2.2.2 Groundwater....5.2-2
5.2.3 Water Quality Impacts....5.2-3
5.2.3.1 Chemical Impacts....5.2-3
5.2.3.2 Thermal Impacts....5.2-5
5.2.3.3 Georgia Mixing Zone Regulations....5.2-6
5.2.3.4 Discharge Design....5.2-6
5.2.3.5 Bathymetry....5.2-7
5.2.3.6 Existing Discharge....5.2-8
5.2.3.7 Proposed Discharge Mixing Zone....5.2-8
5.2.3.8 Bottom Scour....5.2-9
5.2.4 Future Water Use....5.2-9
5.3 Cooling System Impacts....5.3-1
5.3.1 Intake System....5.3-1
5.3.1.1 Hydrodynamic Descriptions and Physical Impacts....5.3-1
5.3.1.2 Aquatic Ecosystems....5.3-1
5.3.2 Discharge Systems....5.3-3
5.3.2.1 Thermal Discharges and Other Physical Impacts....5.3-3
5.3.2.2 Aquatic Ecosystems....5.3-5
5.3.3 Heat Dissipation Systems....5.3-6
5.3.3.1 Heat Dissipation to the Atmosphere....5.3-6

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

5.3.3.2 Terrestrial Ecosystems....5.3-9
5.3.4 Impacts to Members of the Public....5.3-10
5.3.4.1 Thermophilic Microorganism Impacts....5.3-10
5.3.4.2 Noise Impacts....5.3-10
5.4 Radiological Impacts of Normal Operation....5.4-1
5.4.1 Exposure Pathways....5.4-1
5.4.1.1 Liquid Pathways....5.4-1
5.4.1.2 Gaseous Pathways....5.4-2
5.4.1.3 Direct Radiation from Units 3 and 4....5.4-2
5.4.2 Radiation Doses to Members of the Public....5.4-3
5.4.2.1 Liquid Pathway Doses....5.4-3
5.4.2.2 Gaseous Pathway Doses....5.4-3
5.4.3 Impacts to Members of the Public....5.4-3
5.4.4 Impacts to Biota Other than Members of the Public....5.4-4
5.4.4.1 Liquid Pathway....5.4-4
5.4.4.2 Gaseous Pathway....5.4-4
5.4.4.3 Biota Doses....5.4-5
5.4.5 Occupational Radiation Doses....5.4-6
5.5 Environmental Impact of Waste....5.5-1
5.5.1 Non-radioactive Waste System Impacts....5.5-1
5.5.1.1 Impacts of Discharges to Water....5.5-1
5.5.1.2 Impacts of Discharges to Land....5.5-2
5.5.1.3 Impacts of Discharges to Air....5.5-2
5.5.1.4 Sanitary Waste....5.5-2
5.5.2 Mixed Waste Impacts....5.5-3
5.5.3 Waste Minimization Plan....5.5-3
5.5.4 Radioactive Waste....5.5-4
5.5.5 Conclusions....5.5-5
5.6 Transmission System Impacts....5.6-1
5.6.1 Terrestrial Ecosystems....5.6-1
5.6.2 Aquatic Ecosystems....5.6-3
5.6.2.1 Important Habitats....5.6-4
5.6.2.2 Important Species....5.6-4
5.6.3 Impacts to Members of the Public....5.6-5
5.6.3.1 Electrical Shock....5.6-5
5.6.3.2 Electromagnetic Field Exposure....5.6-6
5.6.3.3 Noise....5.6-6
5.6.3.4 Radio and Television Interference....5.6-7
5.6.3.5 Visual Impacts....5.6-7
5.7 Uranium Fuel Cycle Impacts....5.7-1
5.7.1 Land Use....5.7-3
5.7.2 Water Use....5.7-4
5.7.3 Fossil Fuel Impacts....5.7-4
5.7.4 Chemical Effluents....5.7-4

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

5.7.5 Radioactive Effluents 5.7-5
5.8 Socioeconomic Impacts 5.8-1
5.8.1 Physical Impacts of Station Operation 5.8-1
5.8.1.1 Air 5.8-1
5.8.1.2 Thermal Emissions 5.8-2
5.8.1.3 Visual Intrusions 5.8-2
5.8.1.4 Other Impacts 5.8-2
5.8.1.5 Conclusion 5.8-3
5.8.2 Social and Economic Impacts 5.8-3
5.8.2.1 Demography 5.8-3
5.8.2.2 Impacts to the Community 5.8-4
5.8.3 Environmental Justice 5.8-16
5.9 Decommissioning 5.9-1
5.9.1 NRC Generic Environmental Impact Statement Regarding Decommissioning 5.9-1
5.9.2 DOE-Funded Study o Decommissiong Costs 5.9-3
5.9.3 SNC Decommissioning Cost Analysts 5.9-5
5.9.4 Conclusions 5.9-5
5.10 Measures and Control to Limit Adverse Impacts During Operations 5.10-1
5.11 Transportation of Radioactive Materials 5.11-1
5.11.1 Transportation Assessment 5.11-1
5.11.1.1 Reactor Thermal Power 5.11-2
5.11.1.2 Fuel Form 5.11-2
5.11.1.3 Fuel Enrichment 5.11-2
5.11.1.4 Fuel Encapsulation 5.11-2
5.11.1.5 Average Fuel Irradiation 5.11-3
5.11.1.6 Time after Discharge of Irradiated Fuel before Shipment 5.11-3
5.11.1.7 Transportation of Unirradiated Fuel 5.11-3
5.11.1.8 Transportation of Irradiated Fuel 5.11-3
5.11.1.9 Radioactive Waste Form and Packaging 5.11-3
5.11.1.10 Transportation of Radioactive Waste 5.11-4
5.11.1.11 Number of Truck Shipments 5.11-4
5.11.1.12 Summary 5.11-4
5.11.2 Incident-Free Transportation Impacts Analysis 5.11-5
5.11.2.1 Transportation of Unirradiated Fuel 5.11-6
5.11.2.2 Transportation of Spent Fuel 5.11-8
5.12 Nonradiological Health Impacts 5.12-1
5.12.1 Public Health 5.12-1
5.12.2 Occupational Health 5.12-1

Chapter 6 Environmental Measurements and Monitoring Programs 6.0-1

6.1 Thermal Monitoring 6.1-1
6.1.1 Existing Thermal Monitoring Programs 6.1-1
6.1.2 Pre-operational and Operational Thermal Monitoring 6.1-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

6.2 Radiological Monitoring 6.2-1
6.2.1 Existing Radiological Monitoring Program Basis 6.2-1
6.2.2 Existing Radiological Environmental Monitoring Program Contents 6.2-1
6.2.3 Existing Radiological Environmental Monitoring Program Reporting 6.2-1
6.2.4 Existing Quality Assurance Program 6.2-2
6.2.5 Pre-operational and Operational Radiological Monitoring Program 6.2-2
6.3 Hydrological Monitoring 6.3-1
6.3.1 Existing Hydrological Monitoring 6.3-1
6.3.2 Construction and Pre-operational Monitoring 6.3-2
6.3.3 Operational Monitoring 6.3-2
6.4 Meteorological Monitoring 6.4-1
6.4.1 Existing Onsite Meteorological Monitoring Program 6.4-1
6.4.1.1 Location, Evaluation, and Exposure of Instruments 6.4-3
6.4.2 Instrument Calibration and Maintenance 6.4-4
6.4.3 Data Recording Systems 6.4-4
6.4.4 Meteorological Data Analysis Procedure 6.4-4
6.4.5 Pre-operational and Operationa Monitoring 6.4-5
6.5 Ecological Monitoring 6.5-1
6.5.1 Existing Ecological Monitoring 6.5-1
6.5.1.1 Terrestrial Resources 6.5-1
6.5.1.2 Aquatic Resources 6.5-1
6.5.2 Construction, Pre-operational and Operational Monitoring 6.5-2
6.5.2.1 Terrestrial Resources 6.5-2
6.5.2.2 Aquatic Resources 6.5-2
6.6 Chemical Monitoring 6.6-1
6.6.1 Pre-Application Monitoring 6.6-1
6.6.1.1 Chemical Surface Water Monitoring 6.6-1
6.6.1.2 Chemical Groundwater Monitoring 6.6-1
6.6.2 Construction and Pre-operational Monitoring 6.6-2
6.6.3 Operational Monitoring 6.6-2
6.7 Summary of Monitoring Programs 6.7-1
6.7.1 Pre-application Monitoring 6.7-1
6.7.2 Construction and Pre-operational Monitoring 6.7-1
6.7.3 Operational Monitoring 6.7-1

Chapter 7 Environmental Impacts of Postulated Accidents Involving Radioactive Materials 7.1-1

7.1 Design Basis Accidents 7.1-1
7.1.1 Selection of Accidents 7.1-1
7.1.2 Evaluation Method 7.1-2
7.1.3 Source Terms 7.1-2
7.1.4 Radiological Consequences 7.1-1
7.2 Severe Accidents 7.2-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

7.2.1 Westinghouse Methodology 7.2-1
7.2.2 SNC Methodology 7.2-3
7.2.3 Consequences to Population Groups 7.2-4
7.2.3.1 Air Pathways 7.2-4
7.2.3.2 Surface Water Pathways 7.2-4
7.2.3.3 Groundwater Pathway 7.2-5
7.2.4 Conclusions 7.2-6
7.3 Severe Accident Mitigation Measures 7.3-1
7.3.1 The SAMA Analysis Process 7.3-1
7.3.2 The AP1000 SAMA Analysis 7.3-2
7.3.3 Monetization of the VEGP Units 3 and 4 Base Case 7.3-4
7.4 Transportation Accidents 7.4-1
7.4.1 Transportation of Unirradiated Fuel 7.4-1
7.4.2 Transportation of Spent Fuel 7.4-1
7.4.3 Conclusion 7.4-3

Chapter 8 Need for Power 8.0-1

8.1 SNC Approach 8.1-1
8.2 Integrated Resource Planning in Georgia 8.2-1
8.3 Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan 8.3-1
8.4 Other Planning 8.4-1
8.4.1 Co-owner Planning 8.4-1
8.5 Conclusion 8.5-1

Chapter 9 Alternatives to the Proposed Action 9.0-1

9.1 No-Action Alternative 9.1-1
9.1.1 Early Site Permit 9.1-1
9.1.2 Combined Operating License 9.1-1
9.1.3 Additional Capacity Construction Impacts of No-Action Alternative 9.1-1
9.2 Energy Alternatives 9.2-1
9.2.1 Alternatives That Do Not Require New Generating Capacity 9.2-1
9.2.1.1 Purchasing Power from Other Utilities or Power Generators 9.2-1
9.2.1.2 Reactivating or Extending Service Life of Existing Plants 9.2-2
9.2.1.3 Demand Side Management 9.2-2
9.2.2 Alternatives That Require New Generating Capacity 9.2-4
9.2.2.1 Introduction 9.2-4
9.2.2.2 Wind 9.2-5
9.2.2.3 Solar Technologies 9.2-7
9.2.2.4 Hydroelectric power 9.2-8
9.2.2.5 Geothermal 9.2-9
9.2.2.6 Biomass Related Fuels 9.2-10
9.2.2.7 Municipal Solid Waste 9.2-11
9.2.2.8 Petroleum Liquids (Oil) 9.2-12

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

9.2.2.9 Fuel Cells 9.2-13
9.2.2.10 Pulverized Coal 9.2-13
9.2.2.11 Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle 9.2-15
9.2.2.12 Natural Gas 9.2-16
9.2.2.13 Combination of Alternatives 9.2-17
9.2.3 Assessment of Reasonable Alternative Energy Sources and Systems 9.2-18
9.2.3.1 Pulverized Coal-Fired Generation 9.2-18
9.2.3.2 Natural Gas Generation 9.2-21
9.2.4 Conclusion 9.2-23
9.3 Alternative Sites 9.3-1
9.3.1 Site Preferences and the Region of Interest 9.3-1
9.3.1.1 Site Preferences 9.3-1
9.3.1.2 Region of Interest 9.3-2
9.3.2 Superiority of Existing Sites Within the Region of Interest 9.3-2
9.3.3 Alternative Site Review 9.3-3
9.3.3.1 Evaluation of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Site 9.3-4
9.3.3.2 Evaluation of the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant Site 9.3-19
9.3.3.3 Evaluation of the Barton Site 9.3-34
9.3.4 Summary and Conclusions 9.3-47
9.4 Alternative Plant and Transmission Systems 9.4-1
9.4.1 Heat Dissipation Systems 9.4-1
9.4.1.1 Screening of Alternative Heat Dissipation Systems 9.4-1
9.4.1.2 Analysis of Mechanical Draft Cooling Tower Alternative 9.4-3
9.4.2 Circulating Water Systems 9.4-5
9.4.2.1 Intake Systems 9.4-5
9.4.2.2 Discharge Systems 9.4-6
9.4.2.3 Water Supply 9.4-7
9.4.2.4 Water Treatment 9.4-8
9.4.3 Transmission Systems 9.4-8

Chapter 10 Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action 10.1-1

10.1 Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts 10.1-1
10.1.1 Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts of Construction 10.1-1
10.1.2 Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts of Operations 10.1-2
10.1.3 Summary of Adverse Environmental Impacts from Construction and Operations 10.1-2
10.2 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources 10.2-1
10.2.1 Irreversible Environmental Commitments 10.2-1
10.2.1.1 Groundwater and Surface Water 10.2-1
10.2.1.2 Land Use 10.2-1
10.2.1.3 Aquatic and Terrestrial Biola 10.2-1
10.2.1.4 Releases to Air and Surface Water 10.2-2
10.2.2 Irretrievable Commitments of Resources 10.2-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section Page

10.3 Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity of the Human Environment 10.3-1
10.3.1 Construction of New Units at ESP Site and Long-term Productivity 10.3-1
10.3.2 Operation of the New Units and Long-Term Productivity 10.3-2
10.3.3 Summary of Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Long-Term Productivity 10.3-3
10.4 Cost-Benifit Analysis 10.4-1
10.4.1 Benefits 10.4-1
10.4.1.1 Need for Power 10.4-1
10.4.1.2 Fuel Diversity and Natural Gas Alternative 10.4-1
10.4.1.3 Emissions Reductions 10.4-3
10.4.1.4 Licensing Certainty 10.4-3
10.4.1.5 Advantages of Nuclear Power 10.4-4
10.4.1.6 Tax Payments 10.4-4
10.4.1.7 Local Economy 10.4-4
10.4.2 Costs 10.4-5
10.4.2.1 Monetary – Construction 10.4-5
10.4.2.2 Monetary – Operations 10.4-6
10.4.2.3 Environmental and Material 10.4-7
10.4.3 Summary 10.4-7
10.5 Cumulative Impacts 10.5-1
10.5.1 Cumulative Impacts from Construction 10.5-1
10.5.2 Cumulative Impacts from Operations 10.5-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.3-1	Authorizations Required for Early Site Permit	1.3-4
1.3-2	Authorizations Required for Pre-Construction Activities	1.3-5
1.3-3	Authorizations Required for Redress Activities	1.3-9
1.3-4	Authorizations Required for Construction Activities	1.3-12
1.3-5	Authorizations Required for Operation	1.3-15
1.4-1	Environmental Report Responses to Early Site Permit Regulatory Requirements	1.4-2
2.2-1	Land Use Along Existing Transmission Corridors	2.2-8
2.2-2	Land Use as Percent in Burke, Jefferson, McDuffie and Warren Counties	2.2-8
2.2-3	Land Use in Acres in Burke, Columbia and Richmond Counties	2.2-9
2.3.1-1	Savannah River Sub-basins and Drainage Areas Above VEGP	2.3.1-22
2.3.1-2	River Miles for Key Landmarks Along the Savannah River	2.3.1-23
2.3.1-3	USGS Quadrangles for Savannah River Watershed	2.3.1-24
2.3.1-4	Approximate Lengths and Slopes of Local Streams	2.3.1-28
2.3.1-5	USGS Gage Data for the Savannah River	2.3.1-29
2.3.1-6	Mean Daily Flows on the Savannah River at Augusta Georgia	2.3.1-30
2.3.1-7	Mean Daily Flows on the Savannah River at Jackson, South Carolina	2.3.1-31
2.3.1-8	Mean Daily Flows on the Savannah River at Burton's Ferry	2.3.1-32
2.3.1-9	Annual Mean Daily Flows on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia and at Burtons Ferry Near Millhaven, Georgia	2.3.1-33
2.3.1-10	Mean Monthly Stream Flow on the Savannah River Near Jackson, South Carolina	2.3.1-34
2.3.1-11	Mean Monthly Stream Flow on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia	2.3.1-35
2.3.1-12	Mean Monthly Stream Flow on the Savannah River at Burtons Ferry Near Millhaven, Georgia	2.3.1-37
2.3.1-13	Average daily flows by month for three gages on the Savannah River for entire record length and period of complete regulation	2.3.1-38
2.3.1-14	N-Day Low Flow Values for the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia	2.3.1-39
*2.3.1-15	SWSTAT Output for Log Pearson Frequency Analysis of 7-Day Low Flows on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia	2.3.1-41
2.3.1-16	Annual Peak Discharges on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia	2.3.1-42
2.3.1-17	Inventory of Savannah River Watershed Water Control Structures	2.3.1-44
2.3.1-18	Monthly Groundwater Level Elevations in the Water Table Aquifer	2.3.1-45
2.3.1-19	Monthly Groundwater Level Elevations in the Tertiary Aquifer	2.3.1-46
2.3.1-20	Hydraulic Conductivity Values	2.3.1-47
2.3.1-21	Summary of Laboratory Test Results on Grain Size, Moisture Content, and Specific Gravity for the Barnwell Formation	2.3.1-48
2.3.1-22	Summary of Laoratory Test Results on Grain Size, Moisture Content, and Porosity for the Lisbon Formation	2.3.1-50
2.3.1-23	Summary of Laboratory Test Results on Grain Size, Moisture Content, and Speicfic Gravity for the Still Branch and Congaree Formations	2-3.1-51
2.3.2-1	List of Counties Located Within 50 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.3.2-8
2.3.2-2	Registered Surface Water Users in the Savannah River Basin Within the State of Georgia	2.3.2-9

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
2.3.2-3	County-wise Surface Water Withdrawals, in Millon Gallons per Day (mgd) for Different Consumptive Surface Water Use Categories Within the State of South Carolina for 2004	2.3.2-12
2.3.2-4	Annual Surface Water Use Within 6 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.3.2-13
2.3.2-5	Registered Groundwater Users in the Savannah River Basin Within 50 miles of the VEGP Site in Georgia	2.3.2-14
2.3.2-6	Groundwater Withdrawal for 2004, in Million Gallons Per Day (mgd), within South Carolina Part of Savannah River Basin and within 50 Miles of the VEGP Site by Different Counties and for Different Consumptive Water Use Categories	2.3.2-16
2.3.2-7	County-wise Groundwater Withdrawals, in Million Gallons per Day (mgd), for Irrigation Use Within Georgia Part of the Savannah River Basin and 50 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.3.2-16
2.3.2-8	Georgia EPD Permitted Municipal and Industrial Groundwater Use Within 25 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.3.2-17
2.3.2-9	Georgia EPD Permitted Agricultural Groudwater Use Within 25 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.3.2-18
2.3.2-10	SDWIS Listed Public Water Systems Supplied form Groundwater Within 25 Miles of the VEGP Site in Georgia	2.3.2-20
2.3.2-11	VEGP Water Supply Well Specifications and Yields	2.3.2-21
2.3.2-12	Onsite Groundwater Use by VEGP for 2005, in Thousands Gallons Per month	2.3.2-22
2.3.2-13	Projected Groundwater Use by AP1000 in Gallons Per Minute (gpm)	2.3.2-23
2.3.3-1	Stream Segments and Classifications, Middle Savannah River	2.3.3-6
2.3.3-2	Savannah River Water Quality in 2003	2.3.3-7
2.3.3-3	Radioactivity in Savannah River Water in 2003	2.3.3-9
2.4-1	Protected Species in Burke County or Counties Crossed by Existing Transmission Lines	2.4-17
2.4-2	Protected Species in Counties Likely to be Crossed by the New VEGP Transmission Corridor	2.4-20
2.5.1-1	Current Populations and Projections to 2090	2.5-29
2.5.1-2	Counties within 50 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.5-37
2.5.1-3	Municipalities in the 50-Mile Region	2.5-38
2.5.1-4	Population Growth in the Three Counties and the State of Georgia, 1970 to 2015	2.5-39
2.5.1-5	Age Distribution of Population in 2000 for the Three Counties and State of Georgia	2.5-39
2.5.2-1	Employment by Industry Sectors - 1990 and 2000	2.5-40
2.5.2-2	Top 10 Employers Located in the Augusta, Georgia	2.5-41
2.5.2-3	Employment Trends - 1995 - 2004	2.5-42
2.5.2-4	Personal Income - 1990, 2000, and 2003	2.5-43
2.5.2-5	Road and Highway Mileage within the Three Counties	2.5-43
2.5.2-6	Statistics for Most Likely Routes to the ESP Site	2.5-44
2.5.2-7	Major Airports within 50 Miles of VEGP	2.5-48

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
2.5.2-8	Property Tax Information, 2000-2004	2.5-49
2.5.2-9	Recreation Areas within the 50-Mile of VEGP	2.5-50
2.5.2-10	Housing, 1990-2000	2.5-52
2.5.2-11	Housing in Communities Closest to VEGP, 1990-2000	2.5-52
2.5.2-12	State Regulated Public Water Systems in the Three County area	2.5-53
2.5.2-13	Largest Public Waste Water Treatment Systems in the Three Counties Area	2.5-54
2.5.2-14	Police and Fire Protection, 2001	2.5-54
2.5.2-15	Medical Facility and Personnel Data, 2001	2.5-54
2.5.2-16	Number and Type of Public Grade Schools in Burke, Columbia and Richmond Counties	2.5-55
2.5.2-17	Two-Year and Four-Year Colleges within 50-Miles of VEGP	2.5-56
2.5.3-1	National Register of Historic Sites Listings in Burke County, Georgia	2.5-57
2.5.3.2	Historic or Archaeological Sites Identified during a 2005 Survey of the Proposed New Units' Footprint	2.5-58
2.5.3-3	National Register of Historic Sites in Burke, Jefferson, McDuffie, and Warren Counties, Georgia	2.5-59
2.5.4-1	Minority and Low-Income Population Census Blocks within 50-Mile Radius of VEGP Site	2.5-62
2.5.4-2	Farms that Employ Migrant Labor in the 50-Mile Region	2.5-66
2.5.4-3	Regional Argicultural Information, 2002	2.5-67
2.7-1	NWS and Cooperative Observing Stations Near the VEGP Site	2.7-29
2.7-2	Local Climatological Data Summary for Augusta, Georgia	2.7-30
2.7-3	Climatological Normals (Means) at Selected NWS and Cooperative Observing Stations in the VEGP Site Area	2.7-31
2.7-4	Mean Seasonal and Annual Morning and Afternoon Mixing Heights and Wind Speeds for Athens, Georgia	2.7-32
2.7-5	Climatological Extremes at Selected NWS and Cooperative Observing Stations in the VEGP Site Area	2.7-33
2.7-6	Seasonal and Annual Mean Wind Speeds for the VEGP Site (1998-2002) and the Augusta, Georgia NWS Station (1971-2000, Normals)	2.7-34
2.7-7	Wind Direction Persistence/Wind Speed Distributions for the VEGP Site – 10-m Level	2.7-35
2.7-8	Wind Direction Persistence/Wind Speed Distributions for the VEGP Site – 60-m Level	2.7-39
2.7-9	Seasonal and Annual Vertical Stability Class and Mean 10-m Level Wind Speed Distributions for the VEGP Site (1998-2002)	2.7-43
2.7-10	Joint Frequency Distribution of Wind Speed and Wind Direction (10-m Level) by Atmospheric Stability Class for the VEGP Site (1998-2002)	2.7-44
2.7-11	Joing Frequency Distribution of Wind Spped and Wind Direction (60-m Level) by Atmoshperic Stability Class for the VEGP Site (1998-2002)	2.7-52
2.7-12	PAVAN Output – 5-Percent Overall Site Limit χ/Qs at the Dose Calculation EAB	2.7-60
2.7-13	PAVAN Output – 5-Percent Overall Site Limit χ/Qs at the LPZ	2.7-61

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
2.7-14	Shortest Distances Between The VEGP Units 3 and 4 Power Block Area and Receptors of Interest by Downwind Direction Sector	2.7-62
2.7-15	XOQDOQ-Predicted Maximum χ/Q and D/Q Values at Receptors of Interest	2.7-63
2.7-16	XOQDOQ-Predicted Maximum Annual Average χ/Q and D/Q Values at the Standard Radial Distances and Distance-Segment Boundaries	2.7-64
2.7-17	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at Specific Receptors of Interest (1998-2002 Meteorological Data)	2.7-66
2.7-18	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at Distances Between 0.25 and 50 mi, No Decay, Undepleted	2.7-67
2.7-19	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at he Standard Distance Segments Between 0.5 and 50 mi, no Decay, Undepleted	2.7-68
2.7-20	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at Distances Between 0.25 and 50 mi, 2.26-Day Decay, Undepleted	2.7-69
2.7-21	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at the Standard Distance Segments Between 0.5 and 50 mi, 2.26-Day Decay, Undepleted	2.7-70
2.7-22	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at Distances Between 0.25 and 50 mi, 8.00-Day Decay, Depleted	2.7-71
2.7-23	Long-Term Average χ/Q Values (sec/m^3) for Routine Releases at the Standard Distance Segments Between 0.5 and 50 mi, 8.00-Day Decay, Depleted	2.7-72
2.7-24	Long-Term Average D/Q Values (1/m^2) for Routine Releases at Distances Between 0.25 and 50 mi	2.7-73
2.7-25	Long-Term Average D/Q Values (1/m^2) for Routine Releases at the Standard Distance Segments Between 0.5 and 50 mi	2.7-74
2.7-26	Predicted Existing VEGP Noise Levels at Locations Along the Northern, Western, and Southern Site Boundaries	2.7-75
2.9-1	Plant Parameters for VEGP Units 1 and 2	2.9-2
3.0-1	ESP Site Characteristics, Design parameters and Site Interface Values	3.0-2
3.3-1	Plant Water Use	3.3-4
3.4-1	Nominal Service Water Flows and Heat Loads at Different Operation Modes per Unit	3.4-7
3.4-2	Circulating Water System Cooling Tower Design Specifications per Unit	3.4-7
3.5-1	Annual Normal Liquid Releases, in Curies, from a Single AP1000 Reactor	3.5-14
3.5-2	Annual Normal Gaseous Releases, in Curies, from a Single AP1000 Reactor	3.5-16
3.5-3	Estimated Solid Radioactive Waste Volumes for a Single AP1000 Reactor	3.5-18
3.5-4	Expected Annual Curie Content of Shipped Primary Wastes per Single AP1000 Reactor	3.5-19
3.5-5	Expected Annual Curie Content of Shipped Secondary Wastes per Single AP1000 Reactor	3.5-20
3.6-1	Water Treatment Chemicals that could be used in VEGP Units 3 and 4	3.6-5
3.6-2	Annual Emissions (lbs/yr) from Diesel Generators and the Auxiliary Boiler Associated with Two AP1000 Reactors	3.6-5

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
3.6-3	Annual Measures of Wastes Recycled from Units 1 and 2 and Estimated Volumes that would be recycled form Units 3 and 4	3.6-6
3.9-1	Peak and Attenuated Noise (in dBA) Levels Expected from Operations of Construction Equipment	3.9-10
3.10-1	Percent Construction Labor Force by Skill Set	3.10-3
3.10-2	Estimated Construction Work Force and Construction Duration for Two AP1000 Units	3.10-4
4.4-1	Construction Areas	4.1-5
4.4.1-1	Equipment and Approximate Noise Level in the Immediate Vicinity of the Equipment	4.4-21
4.4.2-1	Construction Workforce for the Proposed ESP Site	4.4-22
4.4.2-2	Impacts of the Construction Workforce on Three Counties of Interest	4.4-23
4.4.2-3	Construction Tax Revenues	4.4-23
4.4.2-4	Number of Construction Workforce Passenger Cars/Hour on River Road During Shift Changes During Construction	4.4-24
4.4.2-5	Police Protection in the Three-Counties of Interest Region, Adjusted for the Construction Workforce and Associated Population Increase	4.4-24
4.4.2-6	Fire Protection in the Three-Counties of Interest, Adjusted for the Construction Workforce and Associated Population Increase	4.4-25
4.4.2-7	Estimated Additional Public School Age Students in the Three-County Region as a Result of Construction	4.4-25
4.5-1	Annual Construction Worker Doses	4.5-4
4.5-2	Comparison with 10 CFR 20.1301 Criteria for Doses to Members of the Public	4.5-4
4.5-3	Comparison with 40 CFR 190 Criteria for Doses to Members of the Public	4.5-4
4.5-4	Comparison with 10 CFR 50, Appendix I Criteria for Effluent Doses	4.5-5
4.6-1	Summary of Measures and Controls to Limit Adverse Impacts During Construction	4.6-2
5.2-1	Comparison of Savannah River Flows and VEGP Cooling Water Flows	5.2-12
5.2-2	Monthly and Five-Year Blowdown Temperatures (°F)	5.2-13
5.2-3	Monthly and Five-Year ΔT (Blowdown Temperature Excess Above Ambient River, °F)	5.2-13
5.2-4	Blowdown Flow for Four Cycles of Concentration Operation (gpm per unit)	5.2-13
5.2-5	Blowdown Flow for Two Cycles of Concentration Operation (gpm per unit)	5.2-13
5.2-6	Discharge Parameters for Blowdown Modeling	5.2-14
5.2-7	Temperature Excess (Above Ambient) at the Proposed Discharge Location as a Result of the Existing Vogtle Discharge	5.2-14
5.2-8	Proposed Discharge Mixing Zone Statistics	5.2-15
5.4-1	Liquid Pathway Parameters	5.4-7
5.4-2	Liquid Pathway Consumption Factors for Maximally Exposed Individual	5.4-7
5.4-3	Gaseous Pathway Parameters	5.4-7
5.4-4	Gaseous Pathway Consumption Factors for Maximally Exposed Individual	5.4-8
5.4-5	Gaseous Pathway Receptor Locations	5.4-8

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
5.4-6	Liquid Pathway Doses for Maximally Exposed Individual (mrem per year)	5.4-8
5.4-7	Gaseous Pathway Doses for Maximally Exposed Individual (millirem)	5.4-9
5.4-8	Comparison of Maximally Exposed Individual doses with 10 CFR 50, Appendix I Criteria	5.4-10
5.4-9	Comparison of Maximally Exposed Individual Doses with 40 CFR 190 Criteria – (milllirem per year)	5.4-10
5.4-10	Collective Total Body Doses within 50 Miles (millirem per year)	5.4-11
5.4-11	Terrestrial and Aquatic Biota Species Analyzed	5.4-11
5.4-12	Terrestrial Biota Parameters	5.4-12
5.4-13	Doses to Biota from Liquid and Gaseous Effluents	5.4-12
5.7-1	10 CFR 51.51 Table S-3 of Uranium Fuel Cycle Environmental Data (normalized to model LWR annual fuel requirement [WASH-1248] or reference reactor year [NUREG-0116]) compared to proposed AP1000	5.7-7
5.8.2-1	Estimated Property Taxes Generated by VEGP Units 3 and 4	5.8-18
5.8.2-2	Police Protection in the Three Counties, Adjusted for the AP1000 Workforce and Associated Population Increase	5.8-18
5.8.2-3	Fire Protection in the Three Counties, Adjusted for the AP1000 Workforce and Associated Population Increase	5.8-19
5.8.2-4	Estimated Additional Public School Age Students in the Three-Counties as a Result of Operation of the AP1000	5.8-19
5.10-1	Summary of Impacts and Measures and Controls to Limit Adverse Impacts During Operations	5.10-2
5.11-1	Summary of Environmental Impacts of Transportation of Fuel and Waste to and from One LWR, Taken from 10 CFR 51.52 Table S-4	5.11-12
5.11-2	Number of Truck Shipments of Unirradiated Fuel	5.11-13
5.11-3	Number of Radioactive Waste Shipments	5.11-13
5.11-4	AP1000 Comparisons to Table S-4 Reference Conditions	5.11-14
5.11-5	RADTRAN 5 Input Parameters for NRC Analysis of Unirradiated Fuel Shipments	5.11-15
5.11-6	Radiological Impacts of Transporting Unirradiated Fuel to VEGP by Truck	5.11-16
5.11-7	Transportation Route Information for Spent Fuel Shipments from VEGP to the Potential Yucca Mountain Disposal Facility	5.11-16
5.11-8	Population Doses from Spent Fuel Transportation, Normalized to Reference LWR	5.11-17
6.2-1	Pre-Application, Construction/Pre-Operational, and Operational Radiological Monitoring Program	6.2-3
6.3-1	Existing Surface Water Hydrological Monitoring Program	6.3-3
6.3-2	Groundwater Pumping Wells	6.3-4
6.3-3	Groundwater Hydrological Monitoring Program	6.3-5
6.4-1	VEGP Onsite Weather Instruments	6.4-5
6.6-1	Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program	6.6-4
6.6-2	Drinking Water Wells Monitoring Program	6.6-5

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
7.1-1	Selection of Accidents	7.1-4
7.1-2	Activity Releases for Steam System Piping Failure with Pre-Existing Iodine Spike	7.1-5
7.1-3	Activity Releases for Steam System Piping Failure with Accident-Initiated Iodine Spike	7.1-6
7.1-4	Activity Releases for Reactor Coolant Pump Shaft Seizure	7.1-7
7.1-5	Activity Releases for Spectrum of Rod Cluster Control Assembly Ejection Accidents	7.1-8
7.1-6	Activity Releases for Failure of Small Lines Carrying Primary Coolant Outside Containment	7.1-9
7.1-7	Activity Releases for Steam Generator Tube Rupture with Pre-Existing Iodine Spike	7.1-10
7.1-8	Activity Releases for Steam Generator Tube Rupture with Accident-Initiated Iodine Spike	7.1-11
7.1-9	Activity Releases for Loss-of-Coolant Accident Resulting from a Spectrum of Postulated Piping Breaks Within the Reactor Coolant Pressure Bounday	7.1-12
7.1-10	Activity Releases for Fuel Handling Accident	7.1-15
7.1-11	Atmospheric Dispersion Factors	7.1-16
7.1-12	Summary of Design Basis Accident Doses	7.1-17
7.1-13	Doses for Steam System Piping Failure with Pre-Existing Iodine Spike	7.1-18
7.1-14	Doses for Steam System Piping Failure with Accident-Initiated Iodine Spike	7.1-18
7.1-15	Doses for Reactor Coolant Pump Shaft Seizure with No Feedwater	7.1-19
7.1-16	Doses for Reactor Coolant Pump Shaft Seizure with Feedwater Available	7.1-19
7.1-17	Doses for Doses for Spectrum of Rod Cluster control Assembly Ejection Accidents	7.1-20
7.1-18	Doses for Failure of Small Lines Carrying Primary Coolant Outside Containment	7.1-20
7.1-19	Doses for Steam Generator Tube Rupture with Pre-Existing Iodine Spike	7.1-21
7.1-20	Doses for Steam Generator Tube Rupture with Accident Initiated Iodine Spike	7.1-21
7.1-21	Doses for Loss-of-Coolant Accident Resulting from a Spectrum of Postulated Piping Breaks Within the Reactor Coolant Pressure Boundary	7.1-22
7.1-22	Doses for Fuel Handling Accident	7.1-22
7.2-1	Impacts to the Population and Land from Severe Accidents Analysis for the AP1000	7.2-7
7.3-1	Monetization of the SNC AP1000 Base Case	7.3-5
7.4-1	Radionuclide Inventory Used in Transportation Accident Risk Calculations for the AP1000	7.4-4
7.4-2	Spent Fuel Transportation Accident Risks for the AP1000	7.4-2
8.3-1	Contents, Georgia Power 2004 Integrated Resource Plan	8.3-2
8.4-1	Information Supporting the Estimated Need for Power in Georgia in 2015 CONFIDENTIAL	8.4-5
9.2-1	Coal-Fired Alternative	9.2-24
9.2-2	Gas-Fired Alternative	9.2-25

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Table		Page
9.2-3	Comparision of Environmental Impacts of Alternative Energy Sources to a New Nuclear Unit	9.2-26
9.3-1	Federally-Listed Species Recorded in Chilton, Coosa, Elmore, and Talledega Counties, Alabama	9.3-49
9.3-2	Characterization of Construction Impacts at the Alternative ESP Sites	9.3-50
9.3-3	Characterization of Operational Impacts at the Alternative ESP Sites	9.3-52
9.4-1	Screening of Alternative Heat Dissipation Systems	9.4-10
10.1-1	Constuction-Related Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts	10.1-5
10.1-2	Operations-Related Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts	10.1-10
10.4-1	Avoided Air Pollutant Emissions	10.4-8
10.4-2	Benefit-Cost Summary	10.4-9

*Appendix A – Agency Correspondance
Appendix B – Bathymetry Map
Appendix C- GPSC Order

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1-1	VEGP Site and Proposed New Plant Footprint	2.1-2
2.1-2	50 Mile Region	2.1-3
2.1-3	6 Mile Vicinity	2.1-4
2.2-1	USGS Land Use Classifications at VEGP Site	2.2-10
*2.2-2	USGS Land Use Classifications in the Vicinity of the VEGP Site	2.2-11
2.2-3	Existing Transmission System	2.2-12
2.2-4	Land use in Proposed Corridor	2.2-13
*2.3.1-1	Savannah River Watershed and HUCs	2.3.1-53
*2.3.1-2	USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Coverage for Savannah River Watershed	2.3.1-55
*2.3.1-3	Local Area Drainage Map	2.3.1-57
2.3.1-4	Average Daily Discharge on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia; Jackson, South Carolina; and Burtons Ferry for the Entire Period of Performance	2.3.1-59
2.3.1-5	Full-Period and Adjusted Average Discharges for Each Month on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia and Jackson, South Carolina	2.3.1-60
2.3.1-6	Flow-Duration Curves for the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia, for Unregulated and Regulated Periods	2.3.1-61
*2.3.1-7	Log-Pearson III Frequency Plot of 7-Day Low-Flow for Regulated Period on the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia	2.3.1-62
2.3.1-8	Unregulated and Regulated Peak Discharge Values for the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia (02197000)	2.3.1-63
*2.3.1-9	Unregulated and Regulated Annual Peak Discharge Frequency Curves for the Savannah River at Augusta, Georgia	2.3.1-64
*2.3.1-10	Extent of Major Aquifers or Aquifer Systems at the Land Surface in the VETP Site Region	2.3.1-65
2.3.1-11	Schematic Hydrostratigraphic Classification for the VEGP Site	2.3.1-66
*2.3.1-12	Observation Well Locations	2.3.1-67
2.3.1-13	Water Table Aquifer: 1971-1985 Hydrographs	2.3.1-69
2.3.1-14	Water Table Aquifer: 1995-2004 Hydrographs	2.3.1-70
2.3.1-15	Water Table Aquifer: June 2005 – June 2006 Hydrographs	2.3.1-71
*2.3.1-16	Water Table Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for June 2005	2.3.1-73
*2.3.1-17	Water Table Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for October 2005	2.3.1-75
*2.3.1-18	Water Table Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for December 2005	2.3.1-77
*2.3.1-19	Water Table Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for March 2006	2.3.1-79
*2.3.1-20	Water Table Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for June 2006	2.3.1-81
2.3.1-21	Tertiary Aquifer: 1971 – 1985 Hydrographs	2.3.1-83
2.3.1-22	Tertiary Aquifer: June 2005 – June 2006 Hydrographs	2.3.1-84
*2.3.1-23	Tertiary Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for June 2005	2.3.1-85
*2.3.1-24	Tertiary Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for September 2005	2.3.1-87
*2.3.1-25	Tertiary Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for December 2005	2.3.1-89
*2.3.1-26	Tertiary Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for March 2006	2.3.1-91
*2.3.1-27	Tertiary Aquifer: Piezometric Contour Map for June 2006	2.3.1-93

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF FIGURES (cont.)

Figure		Page
*2.3.2-1	Major Surface Water Bodies Within the Affected Hydrologic System	2.3.2-24
2.3.2-2	Major Rivers and Streams, and the Location of Major Reservoirs in the Savannah River Basin	2.3.2-25
2.3.2-3	Counties Located within a 50-Mile Radius from the VEGP Site and within the Savannah River Basin	2.3.2-26
2.3.2-4	Location of Surface Water Withdrawal Intakes Within the Savannah River Basin and Within 50 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.3.2-27
*2.3.2-5	Major Surface Water Bodies Within 6.2 Mile (10 km) Radius of VEGP Site	2.3.2-28
2.3.2-6	Location of Groundwater Withdrawal Wells Within the Savannah River Basin in South Carolina and Within 50 Mile of VEGP Site	2.3.2-29
2.3.2-7	Locations of Water-Supply Wells Within 25 Miles of the VEGP site	2.3.2-30
2.3.2-8	Location of Groundwater Withdrawal Wells for VEGP Units 2 and 3	2.3.2-31
2.3.3-1	Middle Savannah River	2.3.3-11
2.4-1	Vegetation Communities on the VEGP Site	2.4-21
2.5.1-1	10-Mile Vicinity with Directions Sectors Identified	2.5-69
2.5.1-2	50-Mile Region with Directional Sectors Identified	2.5-70
2.5.2-1	Transportation System in Columbia and Richmond Counties	2.5-71
2.5.2-2	Transportation System in Burke and Richmond Counties	2.5-72
2.5.2-3	Rail and Airports System in the 50-Mile Region	2.5-73
2.5.3-1	(Deleted per NRC Request)	2.5-74
2.5.4-1	Black Races Block Groups within the 50-Mile Radius of VEGP	2.5-75
2.5.4-2	Aggregate of Minority Populations Block Groups within the 50-Mile Radius of VEGP	2.5-76
2.5.4-3	Hispanic Ethnicity Population Block Groups within the 50-Mile Radius of VEGP	2.5-77
2.5.4-4	Low-Income Population Block Groups within the 50-Mile Radius of VEGP	2.5-78
*2.6-1	Physiographic Map	2.6-3
2.6-2	Generalized Stratigraphic Column	2.6-4
2.6-3	Site Geologic map (0.6-mile radius)	2.6-5
2.7-1	Climatological Observing Stations Near the VEGP Site	2.7-76
2.7-2	VEGP 10-m Level Annual Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-77
2.7-3	VEGP 10-m Level Winter Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-78
2.7-4	VEGP 10-m Level Spring Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-79
2.7-5	VEGP 10-m Level Summer Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-80
2.7-6	VEGP 10-m Level Autumn Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-81
2.7-7	VEGP 10-m Level January Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-82
2.7-8	VEGP 60-m Level Annual Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-95
2.7-9	VEGP 60-m Level Winter Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-96
2.7-10	VEGP 60-m Level Spring Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-97
2.7-11	VEGP 60-m Level Summer Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-98
2.7-12	VEGP 60-m Level Autumn Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-99

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF FIGURES (cont.)

Figure		Page
2.7-13	VEGP 60-m Level January Wind Rose (1998-2002)	2.7-100
2.7-14	Topographic Features Within a 5-Mile Radius of the VEGP Site	2.7-111
2.7-15	Terrain Elevation Profiles Within 50 Miles of the VEGP Site	2.7-112
*3.1-1	Photograph of Existing VEGP Site (view looking northeast)	3.1-4
*3.1-2	Artist's Conception of New AP1000 Units Adjacent to Existing Nuclear Facility (view looking northeast)	3.1-5
3.1-3	ESP Site Utilization Plan	3.1-7
3.1-4	Artist's Rendering of AP1000 Standard Unit	3.1-9
*3.2-1	Simplified Flow Diagram of Reactor Power Conversion System	3.2-3
*3.3-1	Water Use Diagram Summary	3.3-7
*3.3-2	Water Use Diagram Details	3.3-9
3.4-1	General Cooling System Flow Diagram	3.4-8
3.4-2	Plan View of River Intake System	3.4-9
3.4-3	Section View of River Intake System	3.4-10
3.4-4	Plan View of New Discharge Outfall for the Discharge System	3.4-11
3.4-5	Section View of New Discharge Outfall for the Discharge System	3.4-12
*3.4-6	Natural Draft Cooling Tower (Typical Design)	3.4-13
3.10-1	Projected Construction Workforce by Month, including Limited Work Authoriation Activities for VEGP Unites 3 and 4	3.10-5
5.2-1	River Cross Sections at Proposed Discharge Location	5.2-16
5.2-2	Mixing Zone for 2 Cycles of Concentration and Maximum Discharge ΔT	5.2-17
5.2-3	Mixing Zone for 4 Cycles of Concentration and Maximum Discharge ΔT	5.2-18
5.2-4	River Cross Sections at Existing Discharge Location	5.2-19
5.8-1	Modeled Plume Direction During Winter Months	5.8-20
5.8-2	Maximum Modeled Plume Length and Frequency During Winter Months	5.8-21
5.8-3	Modeled Plume Direction During Summer Months	5.8-22
5.8-4	Maximum Modeled Plume Direction Length and Frequency During Summer Months	5.8-23
*6.2-1	Locations of REMP Sampling Stations within 5 Miles of VEGP	6.2-4
*6.2-2	Locations of REMP Sampling Stations between 5 and 10 Miles of VEGP	6.2-5
*6.2-3	Locations of REMP Downstream Water Sampling Stations	6.2-6
*6.3-1	Groundwater Pumping Wells	6.3-7
*6.3-2	Locations of Groundwater Monitoring Wells at VEGP	6.3-8
8.1-1	Georgia Electric Suppliers Assigned Services Areas	8.3-3
9.3-1	Farley 50-Mile Vicinity	9.3-54
9.3-2	Hatch 50-Mile Vicinity	9.3-55
9.3-3	Barton 50-Mile Vicinity	9.3-56

*Does not meet NRC electronic filing criteria

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AADT	average annual daily traffic
ABWR	Advanced Boiling Water Reactor
ACT	Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa
ADCNR	Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
ADEM	Alabama Department of Environmental Management
AEA	Atomic Energy Act
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AECL	Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited
AFUDC	Allowance for Funds Used During Construction
ALARA	as low as reasonably achievable
APC	Alabama Power Company
AQCR	Air Quality Control Region
ARLH	Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage
ASS	auxiliary steam system
Btu	British thermal unit
CDF	core damage frequency
CEDE	committed effective dose equivalent
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
cfs	cubic feet per second
Ci/MTU	curies per metric ton uranium
CO	carbon monoxide
COL	combined license

CVS	chemical and volume control system
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWIS	Cooling Water Intake Sturctures
CWS	circulating water system
D&D	Decontamination and dismantlement
DAW	Dry Active Waste Building
DB	dry-bulb
dB	decibels
DBT	design-base tornado
DCD	Design Control Document
DHR	Department of Human Resources
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
DOT	Department of Transportation
DSM	demand-side management
EAB	Exclusion Area Boundary
EDE	effective dose equivalent
EIA	U. S. Energy Information Administration
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPD	Environmental Protection Division
ER	environmental report
ESBWR	Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor

ESP	early site permit
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FES	Final Environmental Statement
FNP	Farley Nuclear Plant
FPR	fliberglass-reinforced plastic
fps	feet per second
FR	Federal Register
FRP	Facility Response Plan
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GE	General Electric
GEIS	Generic Environmental Impact Statement
GEPD	Georgia Environmental Protection Division
GI-LLI	Gastrointestrial-lining of lower intestine
GIS	geographic information system
GPC	Georgia Power Company
gpd	gallons per day
gpm	gallons per minute
GPSC	Georgia Public Service Commission
HLW	high level waste
HNP	Hatch Nuclear Plant
NRHP	National Register of Historical Places
HVAC	Heating, ventilation, air conditioning [system]

IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICRP	International Commission on Radiation Protection
IGCC	Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle
IRP	integrated resource plan
ISFSI	Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation
JFD	joint frequency distribution
kWh	kilowatt hour
lb	pound
LCD	Local Climatological Data
LLW	Low-level radioactive waste
LPGS	Liquid Pathway Generic Study
LPZ	low population zone
LWA	limited work authorization
LWR	light water reactor
MAAP	Modular Accident Analysis Program
MCWB	mean coincident wet-blub
MDCC	Meteorological Data Collection Center
MDCT	Mechanical Draft Wet Cooling Tower
MEAG	Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia
MEI	maximally exposed individual
mgpd	million gallons per day
Mrem	Millrem
msl	Mean Sea Level

MSW	municipal solid wastes
MTU	metric tons of uranium
MWe	megawatt
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAFTA	North American Fee Trade Agreement
NCDC	National Climatic Data Center
NDCT	Natural Draft Wet Cooling Tower
NEHS	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NERC	North American Electric Reliability Council, Inc.
NESC	National Electrical Safety Code
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Services
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOx	oxides of nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSPS	New Source Performance Standard
NSSS	Nuclear Steam Supply System
NWS	National Weather Service
OPC	Oglethorpe Power Corporation
PCS	Passive Containment Cooling System
PFBC	pressurized fluidized bed boiler
PM	particulate matter

PRA	probabilistic risk assessment
PVC	polyvinyl chloride
PT	participant test
QA	quality assurance
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RCS	reactor coolant system
REMP	Radiological Environmental Monitoring Program
RIM	Rate impact measure
RTP	Rated Thermal Power
SAMA	severe accident mitigation alternatives
SCDHEC	South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
SCE&G	South Carolina Electric and Gas
scfm	standard cubic feet per minute
SCR	selective catalytic reduction
SCT	societal cost test
SERC	Southeastern Electric Reliability Council, Inc.
SERCC	Southeast Regional Climate Center
SG	steam generators
SMZ	Streamside Management Zone
SNC	Southern Nuclear Operating Company
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SPCCP	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures Plan
SRP	Standard Review Plan
SRS	Savannah River Site

SSC	Structures, systems, and components
STEP	sales taxes for educational purposes
SWS	service water system
TCS	traffic count sections
TEDE	total effective dose equivalent
TLD	thermoluminescent dosimeter
TRC	total recordable cases
TRC	total resource cost
TRU	transuranic
TSC	Technical Support Center
UHS	ultimate heat sink
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USAR	updated safety analysis report
USCB	US Census Bureau
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USEPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Services
USGS	US Geological Survey
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator
VEGP	Vogtle Electric Generating Plant
WINGS	Wildlife Incentives for Non-Game and Game Species
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

In accordance with the provisions of 10 CFR 52, Early Site Permits; Standard Design Certifications; and combined Licenses for Nuclear Power Plants, and supporting guidance, Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC or Southern Nuclear) has developed an application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for an early site permit. An early site permit (ESP) represents NRC approval of a site or sites for one or more nuclear power facilities, separate from the filing of an application for a construction permit or combined license for such a facility. The SNC ESP application is for the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP) site in Burke County, Georgia. In accordance with NRC regulations, SNC has included in its application this environmental report (ER) that analyzes impact to the environment from construction, operation, and decommissioning of two additional nuclear reactors at this site. NRC will use the environmental report in meeting the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirement that federal agencies consider the impacts that their actions (e.g., permit issuance) might have on the environment.

1.1 Proposed Action

The proposed Federal action is issuance, under the provisions of 10 CFR Part 52, of an early site permit to SNC for the VEGP site for two additional nuclear units, both of which will be Westinghouse Electric Company, LLC (Westinghouse), AP1000, advanced light water reactors. In addition, SNC proposes a plan for redressing the environmental effects of certain site-preparation and preliminary construction activities, i.e., those activities allowed by 10 CFR 50.10(e)(1), performed by an ESP holder under 10 CFR 52.25. In accordance with the plan, the site would be redressed if the NRC issues the requested ESP (containing the site redress plan), the ESP holder performs these site-preparation and preliminary construction activities, the ESP is not referenced in an application for a construction permit or COL, and no alternative use is found for the site. While the ESP would not authorize construction and operation of any new nuclear units (other than those site-preparation and preliminary construction activities addressed herein), this ER analyzes the environmental impacts that could result from the construction and operation of one or two new nuclear units at the VEGP site or at one of the alternative sites. These impacts are analyzed to determine if the proposed ESP site is suitable for the addition of the new nuclear units and whether there is an alternative site that is obviously superior to the proposed site.

1.1.1 Purpose and Need

Georgia Power Company (GPC), through the Georgia Public Service Commission's Integrated Resource Planning process, has identified a need for additional base load generation by no later than 2015. This need was identified through a detailed economic analysis associated with the IRP process. SNC is submitting the ESP application to preserve the option for new nuclear generation to meet GPC needs as well as the needs projected by the co-owners.

Underlying this need for baseload generation is the role that the State of Georgia and the NRC play in GPC business decision to pursue new nuclear generation. States retain approval authority over the types of electric generation that will be constructed and operated within their borders. However, states (and facility owners) cannot include nuclear power in their generation mix without NRC approval of the construction and operation of a nuclear generation facility. Conversely, NRC approval gives the state a generation option that the state may or may not exercise, at its discretion.

The NRC established the licensing process used by SNC in 10 CFR Part 52. NRC regulation 10 CFR 52 Subpart C, *Combined Licenses*, allows generating entities to apply for a combined license, that is, a combined construction permit and operating license for a nuclear facility. A COL authorizes construction and operation of the facility. Part 52 includes the ability to seek an ESP that allows an applicant to bank a reactor site for up to 20 years prior to obtaining a COL. A COL can reference an ESP for environmental issues.

The ESP process addresses and resolves site safety, environmental protection, and emergency preparedness issues. As part of an ESP application, the applicant must prepare an environmental report that addresses the safety and environmental characteristics of the site.

An application for a COL can reference an ESP issued under 10 CFR 52 Subpart A, *Early Site Permits*. In general, if the combined license application references an ESP, the application need not contain certain information or analyses submitted to NRC in connection with the early site permit. Instead, the combined license application must contain the following:

- Information and analyses otherwise required
- Information sufficient to demonstrate that the facility falls within the parameters specified in the ESP
- Information to resolve any other significant environmental issue not considered in any previous proceeding on the site or design

In accordance with NRC regulations, SNC is submitting this ESP application in order to obtain for the owners and the state of Georgia the option of including new nuclear capability in their future generation mix.

The ESP also allows for a limited work authorization (LWA) to perform non-safety site preparation activities, subject to redress, in advance of issuance of a COL.

1.2 The Proposed Project

Section 1.2 provides a brief summary of project information that subsequent chapters and sections, particularly Chapter 3, *Plant Description*, describe in detail.

1.2.1 The Applicant and Owners

Georgia Power Company, Oglethorpe Power Corporation, the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, and the City of Dalton, Georgia an incorporated municipality in the State of Georgia acting through its Board of Water, Light, and Sinking Fund Commissioners (Dalton Utilities) are the owners of the VEGP site and existing facilities. SNC has been authorized by GPC, acting as agent for the other owners (also known as co-owners) of the existing VEGP, to apply for an ESP for the VEGP site.

SNC is the plant licensee and operates VEGP Unit 1 and Unit 2 under contract with the owners. GPC and SNC are subsidiaries of Southern Company, and SNC is the licensed operator for all existing Southern Company nuclear generating facilities. SNC's business purpose is management and operation of nuclear generating facilities owned or co-owned by Southern Company subsidiaries. The SNC ESP application, Part 1, *Administrative Information*, Section 1.3 provides additional information about Southern Company, GPC, the VEGP co-owners and SNC.

1.2.2 Site Location

The VEGP site is located on the west bank of the Savannah River in eastern Burke County, in east-central Georgia. The site is approximately 100 miles northwest of Savannah, Georgia, and approximately 26 miles southeast of Augusta, Georgia, and across the river from the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (Barnwell County, South Carolina). The proposed VEGP Units 3 and 4 footprint will be adjacent to and west of the existing VEGP Units 1 and 2. The original VEGP design was for a four unit plant. The new VEGP Units 3 and 4 will occupy generally the same area that was developed for the original VEGP Units 3 and 4 when the plant was first proposed for construction.

1.2.3 Reactor Information

SNC has selected the Westinghouse Electric Company, LLC (Westinghouse), AP1000 advanced light water reactor for construction and operation of two new units at the VEGP site. The NRC has approved the Design Control Document (DCD) for the AP1000. Previous ESP applications included the AP1000 technology, in addition to others, in their plant parameters envelopes. Unlike previous ESP applicants, SNC is not relying on a plant parameters envelope methodology to bound environmental impacts. The SNC application analyzes the environmental impacts of two AP1000 reactors at the VEGP site to be referred to as VEGP

Units 3 and 4 in this application. ER Section 3.2, *Reactor Power Conversion System*, provides additional information on the AP1000.

1.2.4 Cooling System Information

Each new unit will use a recirculating cooling water system that includes a natural draft cooling tower similar to the towers for Units 1 and 2. A new recessed shoreline intake structure will supply makeup water from the Savannah River to Units 3 and 4. A common line for Units 3 and 4 will be constructed to discharge secondary system heated effluent water to the river. ER Section 3.4, *Cooling System*, provides additional detail.

1.2.5 Transmission System Information

The existing VEGP site is interconnected with the regional power grid via two 500 kV transmission lines and four 230 kV transmission lines. SNC has assumed one new 500 kV transmission line will be added initially to handle the additional new generation capacity to the electric grid. SNC has only general routing information for the new transmission line and identifies in the ER potential impacts to land uses and protected species in the counties that the line will cross. ER Section 3.7, *Power Transmission System*, provides additional detail.

1.2.6 Pre-application Public Involvement

The NRC held public outreach meetings in Waynesboro, Georgia, on May 10 and 11, 2006, to provide information to the public on the ESP review process, and to provide information on opportunities for public involvement in that process for the VEGP site. The meetings included a discussion of perspectives, roles, and responsibilities of the NRC with regard to VEGP. The May 10 meeting was held at the Burke County library. It utilized an informal open house format that allowed the public the opportunity to speak directly with NRC staff. On May 11, the NRC staff held a second public meeting at the Augusta Technical College Waynesboro Branch. The meeting began with another open house, followed by staff presentations on the regulatory framework for the ESP review process and a question-and-answer session. The staff also discussed opportunities for public involvement during the application review process.

1.2.7 Construction Start Date

The ESP does not constitute a decision or approval to build new units. SNC is pursuing the necessary steps to preserve the nuclear generation option. SNC has notified the NRC that they plan to submit a COL application in March of 2008 that could support a projected construction start date sometime in 2010. NRC regulations (10 CFR 50.10, *License required*) do provide for ESP holders to perform limited site preparation activities. SNC estimates that such site preparation activities will take 18 months to complete. SNC estimates that

construction of two AP1000 units will occur over about a 5-year period, beginning after NRC approval of an SNC COL application. ER Section 3.9, *Construction Activities*, provides additional detail.

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1.3 Status of Reviews, Approvals and Consultations

SNC has divided its discussion of the status of Federal, state, and local environmental protection licenses, permits, reviews, approvals, and consultations, collectively called authorizations, by activity. Tables 1.3-1 through 1.3-5 identify, for each activity, the following information:

- Jurisdictional agency
- Authority, law, or regulation that dictates the requirement
- Name of the required authorization
- License or permit number as applicable
- Expiration date of any existing licenses or permits
- Description of the requirements to be fulfilled by SNC prior to issuance of the authorization

The tables are structured on the assumption that authorizations for previously-initiated and ongoing activities were captured in the table representing the initiation of the work and, therefore, not repeated in subsequent tables. Except for ESP issuance, discussed below, SNC has not initiated work to secure any other necessary authorizations and, therefore, the columns for permit numbers and expiration dates have been left blank. SNC will apply for and receive any required authorizations prior to initiating the activity. The following sections describe the activities to be authorized.

1.3.1 ESP Issuance

Table 1.3-1 lists ESP authorizations required prior to NRC issuance of an ESP. As shown, four authorizations are consultations that NRC must undertake in accordance with following statutes:

Endangered Species Act - The Endangered Species Act requires Federal agencies to ensure that agency action is not likely to jeopardize any species that is listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened. Depending on the action involved, the Act requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding effects on non-marine species, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for marine species, or both. Due to the proximity of the VEGP site to the Atlantic Ocean, the NRC must consult with FWS and NMFS. In addition, as a matter of policy, the NRC consults with states regarding state-protected species.

National Historic Preservation Act - The National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies having the authority to license any undertaking to, prior to issuing the license, take into account the effect of the undertaking on historic properties and to afford the Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on the undertaking. Committee regulations provide for establishing an agreement with any State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to

substitute state review for Committee review (35 CFR 800.7). The NRC will consult with both the Georgia SHPO and the South Carolina SHPO due to the site's location.

The last ESP authorization is a water quality certification. Federal Clean Water Act Section 401 requires applicants for a federal license to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into navigable waters, to provide the licensing agency a certification from the state that the discharge will comply with applicable Clean Water Act requirements. Because the SNC ESP application includes a site redress plan and ESP issuance will authorize initiation of site preparation and non-safety construction activities, a construction stormwater permit issued by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR), Environmental Protection Division is required.

The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act imposes requirements on applicants for a federal license to conduct an activity that could affect a state's coastal zone. The Act requires the applicant to certify to the licensing agency that the proposed activity will be consistent with the state's federally approved coastal zone management program. The VEGP site is approximately 100 air miles and 150 river miles from the ocean. An existing VEGP transmission line traverses Georgia coastal counties. Construction of new reactors at the VEGP site will not result in any changes to this line. Due to the site's distance from the coast, small environmental effects, and lack of transmission line changes, SNC has concluded that the proposed action will not affect Georgia's coastal resources and that consistency certification requirements are not applicable.

1.3.2 Pre-Construction Activities

Pre-construction activities are those that NRC can authorize for undertaking prior to NRC issuance of a construction permit. A subset of these activities is limited to site preparation and construction of structures, systems, and components that are not nuclear-safety related. NRC approval of such activities can be obtained in either of two ways. First, if an ESP application includes a site redress plan, ESP issuance constitutes NRC authorization to conduct the activities. Second, rather than waiting for permit issuance, the ESP applicant can apply for authorization to perform these activities, commonly referred to as Limited Work Authorization 1, or LWA-1, early. The NRC would grant such authorization only after the presiding officer for the mandatory ESP hearing determines that NRC has satisfied NEPA requirements and that there is reasonable assurance that the proposed site and reactor are suitable from an environmental and radiological standpoint. This enables the applicant to start pre-construction before resolution of all safety issues and exhaustion of all appeals to construction permit issuance. SNC has included a site redress plan in this ESP application and is also preserving its option to seek a separate LWA-1 authorization. Table 1.3-2 lists authorization required for pre-construction activities.

The other subset of pre-construction activities is nuclear-safety-related and is commonly referred to as Limited Work Authorization 2, or LWA-2. The NRC would grant such

authorization only after, in addition to making the same determinations as for LWA-1, making a determination that there are no unresolved safety issues relating to the LWA-2 activities. SNC is preserving its option to seek an LWA-2 but has identified no required non-NRC authorizations not already included for LWA-1 or actual construction.

1.3.3 Site Redress Activities

Table 1.3-3 lists authorizations required prior to conducting site redress activities. "Redress activities" are activities that the licensee must perform to return the site to an environmentally stable and aesthetically acceptable state if LWA-1 activities were undertaken but construction abandoned.

1.3.4 Construction Activities

Table 1.3-4 lists authorizations required prior to start of construction activities.

1.3.5 Operation

Table 1.3-5 lists authorizations required prior to start of operation.

Table 1.3-1 Authorizations Required for Early Site Permit

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
USFWS	Endangered Species Act	Consultation regarding potential to adversely impact protected species (non-marine species)	NA	NA	Concurrence with no adverse impact or consultation on appropriate mitigation measures.
NMFS	Endangered Species Act	Consultation regarding potential to adversely impact protected species (marine species)	NA	NA	Concurrence with no adverse impact or consultation on appropriate mitigation measures.
GDNR	National Historic Preservation Act, (36 CFR 800)	Consultation regarding potential to adversely affect historic resources	NA	NA	Confirm site construction or operation would not affect protected historic resources.
South Carolina Department of Archives and History	National Historic Preservation Act, (36 CFR 800)	Consultation regarding potential to adversely affect historic resources	NA	NA	Confirm site construction or operation would not affect protected historic resources.
GDNR	Federal Clean Water Act (FCWA) (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)	Section 401 Certification			Compliance with water quality standards.

USFWS - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service

GDNR - Georgia Department of Natural Resources

[1] No permits have been issued.

Table 1.3-2 Authorizations Required for Pre-Construction Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
NRC	10 CFR 52.25 or 10 CFR 50.10(e)(1)	Early Site Permit with Site Redress Plan or Limited Work Authorization			Non-nuclear construction, including site preparation.
USACE	Clean Water Act (CWA)	Section 404 Permit			Disturbance or crossing wetland areas or navigable waters. For site and rail corridor upgrade.
USACE	33 CFR 323	Dredge and Fill Discharge Permit			Construction/ modification of intake/ discharge to Savannah River. For site and rail corridor upgrade[2].
USACE	Rivers and Harbors Act	Section 10 Permit			Barge slip modification impacts to navigable waters of the U.S.
USDOT	49 CFR 107, Subpart G	Certificate of Registration			Transportation of hazardous materials.
USFWS	Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 50 CFR 21	Federal Depredation Permit			Adverse impacts on protected species and/or their nests. For site and rail corridor upgrade.
FAA	49 USC 1501 14 CFR 77	Construction Notice			Notice of erection of structures (>200 feet high) potentially impacting air navigation.
GPSC	GA Public Utilities Act (O.C.G.A. Section 46-3-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 515-3-4-.07	Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity			Present and future public convenience and necessity require the operation of such equipment or facility.

Table 1.3-2 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Pre-Construction Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
GDNR	GA Endangered Wildlife Act (O.C.G.A. Section 27-3-130 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-4-10	Depredation Permit			Adverse impacts on state designated protected species and/or their habitat. For site and rail corridor.
GDNR	Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), GA Air Quality Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-9-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-1	Part 70 Air Quality Construction Permit			Construction air emission sources.
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act	Revision of existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit			Regulates limits of pollutants in liquid discharge to surface water.
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-20), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	General Permit Registration for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Common Developments	GAR100003	July 31, 2008	Discharge storm water from site during construction.
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-20), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	General Permit Registration for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Infrastructure Construction Projects	GAR100002	July 31, 2008	Discharge storm water from linear construction sites (e.g., roadways and rail corridor).
GDNR	GA Safe Drinking Water Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-170 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-5	Revision of existing permit to operate a public water system			Operate a public, non-transient, non-community water system.
GDNR	GA Safe Drinking Water Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-170 et seq.), GA	Revision of existing permit to operate a			Operate a public, transient, non-community water system.

Table 1.3-2 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Pre-Construction Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
	Rules and Regulations 391-3-5	public water system			
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.03	Modification of Existing Permit to Use Groundwater			Consumptive use of 100,000 gallons per day or more of groundwater.
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.09	Permit to Withdraw Groundwater			Dewater for foundation if needed for more than 60 days.
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.14	Certification of Abandoned Wells			Abandoned wells have been filled, plugged and sealed.
GDNR	GA Erosion and Sedimentation Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-7-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-7	Land Disturbing Activity Permit			Permission to conduct land disturbing activities of one acre or larger, or within 200 feet of the bank of any state waters. For site and rail corridor upgrade.
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4-.06	Permit by Rule - Inert Landfill Permit			On-site disposal of solid waste consisting of earth and earth-like products, concrete, cured asphalt, rock, bricks, and land clearing debris.
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4	Private Industry Landfill Permit			On-site disposal of solid waste consisting of construction and demolition debris.
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4	Solid Waste Handling Permit			Disposal of industrial solid wastes. Transportation of putrescible waste for disposal in a permitted landfill.

Table 1.3-2 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Pre-Construction Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
GDNR	Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), GA Air Quality Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-9-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-1	Revision of existing Title V Operating Permit			Operation of air emission sources.
Burke County Building Office	Burke County Code of Ordinances, Article VII, Sec. 26-331	Land Disturbing Activity Permit			All land disturbing activities within the boundaries of Burke County.
Burke County Building Office	Burke County Code of Ordinances, Article VII, Sec. 26-336	Building Permit			Construction, alteration, repair, or demolition of any building or structure within the boundaries of Burke County.

NRC - U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

USACE - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

USDOT - U.S. Department of Transportation

FAA - Federal Aviation Commission

GPSC - Georgia Public Service Commission

1 No permits have been issued.

2 The VEGP rail spur was recently upgraded, and SNC will verify that additional upgrades are not needed. For completeness, this table assumes upgrades to the rail corridor will be made.

Table 1.3-3 Authorizations Required for Redress Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
USACE	Clean Water Act (CWA)	Section 404 Permit			Disturbance or crossing wetland areas or navigable waters.
USACE	33 CFR 323	Dredge and Fill Discharge Permit			Construction / modification of intake / discharge to Savannah River.
USACE	Rivers and Harbors Act	Section 10 Permit			Impacts to navigable waters of the U.S. Barge Slip Modification.
USDOT	49 FR 107, Subpart G	Certificate of Registration			Transportation of hazardous materials.
GDNR	Federal Clean Water Act (FCWA) (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)	Section 401 Certification			Compliance with water quality standards.
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-20), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	General Permit Registration for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Common Developments	GAR100003	July 31, 2008	Discharge storm water from site during construction (might be covered by existing registration).
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-20), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	General Permit Registration for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Infrastructure Construction Projects	GAR100002	July 31, 2008	Discharge storm water linear construction sites (e.g., roadways, transmission lines) during construction)(might be covered by existing registration).

Table 1.3-3 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Redress Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
GDNR	GA Erosion and Sedimentation Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-7-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-7	Land Disturbing Activity Permit			Permission to conduct land disturbing activities of one acre or larger, or within 200 feet of the bank of any state waters. For site and rail corridor.
GDNR	Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), GA Air Quality Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-9-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-1	Part 70 Air Quality Construction Permit			Construction air emission sources.
GDNR	GA Safe Drinking Water Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-170 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-5	Notice of Termination (NOT) -Permit to operate a Public Water System			Operate a public, non-transient, non-community water system.
GDNR	GA Safe Drinking Water Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-170 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-5	NOT - Permit to operate a Public Water System			Operate a public, transient, non-community water system.
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.03	NOT - Permit to Use Groundwater			Consumptive use of 100,000 gallons per day or more of groundwater.
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.09	Permit to Withdraw Groundwater			Dewater for foundation if needed for more than 60 days.
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.14	Certification of Abandoned Wells			Abandoned wells have been filled, plugged and sealed.

Table 1.3-3 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Redress Activities

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/Permit No. (1)	Expiration Date (1)	Activity Covered
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4-.06	Permit by Rule - Inert Landfill Permit			On-site disposal of solid waste consisting of earth and earth-like products, concrete, cured asphalt, rock, bricks, and land clearing debris.
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4	Private Industry Landfill Permit			On-site disposal of solid waste consisting of construction and demolition debris.
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4	Solid Waste Handling Permit			Disposal of industrial solid wastes. Transportation of putrescible waste for disposal in a permitted landfill.
Burke County Building Office	Burke County Code of Ordinances, Article VII, Sec. 26-331	Land Disturbing Activity Permit			All land disturbing activities within the boundaries of Burke County.
Burke County Building Office	Burke County Code of Ordinances, Article VII, Sec. 26-336	Building Permit			Construction, alteration, repair, or demolition of any building or structure within the boundaries of Burke County.

[1] No permits have been issued.

Table 1.3-4 Authorizations Required for Construction Activities[1]

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (2)	Expiration Date (2)	Activity Covered
NRC	10 CFR 52, Subpart C or 10 CFR 50.10(e)(3)	Combined Operating License or Limited Work Authorization 2			Safety-related construction for a nuclear power facility.
FAA	49 USC 1501 14 CFR 77	Construction Notice			Notice of erection or structures (>200 feet high) potentially impacting air navigation.
USACE	Clean Water Act (CWA)	Section 404 Permit			Disturbance or crossing wetland areas or navigable waters. For transmission line corridor.
USACE	33 CFR 323	Dredge and Fill Discharge Permit			Construction/ modification of intake/ discharge to Savannah River. For transmission line corridor.
USFWS	Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 50 CFR 21	Federal Depredation Permit			Adverse impacts on protected species and/or their nests. For site transmission line corridor.
GDNR	GA Endangered Wildlife Act (O.C.G.A. Section 27-3-130 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-4-10	Depredation permit			Adverse impacts on state designated protected species and/or their habitat. For transmission line corridor.
GDNR	Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), GA Air Quality Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-9-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-1	Part 70 Air Quality Construction Permit			Construction air emission sources.

Table 1.3-4 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Construction Activities[1]

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (2)	Expiration Date (2)	Activity Covered
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-20), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	General Permit Registration for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Infrastructure Construction Projects	GAR100002	July 31, 2008	Discharge storm water linear construction sites (e.g., roadways, transmission lines) during construction.
GDNR	GA Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (O.C.G.A. 12-8-20 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-4	Solid Waste Handling Permit			Disposal of industrial solid wastes. Transportation of putrescible waste for disposal in a permitted landfill.
GDNR	GA Erosion and Sedimentation Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-7-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-7	Land Disturbing Activity Permit			Permission to conduct land disturbing activities of one acre or larger, or within 200 feet of the bank of any state waters. For transmission line corridor.
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-20), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	General Permit Registration for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity for Infrastructure Construction Projects	GAR100002	July 31, 2008	Discharge storm water linear construction sites. For transmission line corridor.

Table 1.3-4 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Construction Activities[1]

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No. (2)	Expiration Date (2)	Activity Covered
GDOT	23 CFR 1.23	Permit			Utility right-of-way easement.
Burke County Building Office	Burke County Code of Ordinances, Article VII, Sec. 26-331	Land Disturbing Activity Permit			All land disturbing activities within the boundaries of Burke County.
Various county offices responsible for land disturbing activities	Jefferson, Warren, and McDuffie County Ordinances	Land Disturbing Activity Permit.			Land disturbing activities within county boundaries. For transmission line corridor.

GDOT – Georgia Department of Transportation

1 Assumes that SNC obtained the authorizations that Table 1.3-2 identifies.

2 No permits have been issued.

Table 1.3-5 Authorizations Required for Operation[1]

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No.	Expiration Date	Activity Covered
GDNR	FCWA, GA Water Quality Control Act	Revision of existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit			Regulates limits of pollutants in liquid discharge to surface water.
GDNR	Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), GA Air Quality Act (O.C.G.A. Section 12-9-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-1	Revision of existing Title V Operating Permit			Operation of air emission sources.
GDNR	GA Groundwater Use Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-90 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-2-.03	Revision of existing Permit to Use Groundwater			Consumptive use of 100,000 gallons per day or more of groundwater.
GDNR	GA Water Quality Control Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-31 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-6	Revision of existing Surface Water Withdrawal Permit to Withdraw, Divert or Impound Surface Water			Withdraw water from the Savannah River for cooling makeup and in-plant use.
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control – Division of Waste Management	South Carolina Radioactive Waste Transportation and Disposal Act (Act No. 429)	Revision of existing South Carolina Radioactive Waste Transport Permit			Transportation of radioactive waste into the State of South Carolina.

Table 1.3-5 (cont.) Authorizations Required for Operation[1]

Agency	Authority	Requirement	License/ Permit No.	Expiration Date	Activity Covered
State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Radiological Health	Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Rule 1200-2-10.32	Revision of existing Tennessee Radioactive Waste License-for-Delivery			Transportation of radioactive waste into the State of Tennessee.
State of Utah Department of Environmental Quality Division of Radiation Control	R313-26 of the Utah Radiation Control Rules	Revision of existing General Site Access Permit			Transportation of radioactive materials into the State of Utah.
GPSC	GA Radiation Control Act (O.C.G.A. 31-13-1 et seq.), GA Rules and Regulations 391-3-17-.06	Revision of existing General Permit – Transportation of Radioactive Materials			Transportation of radioactive materials in the State of Georgia.

[1] Assumes that SNC obtained the authorizations that Tables 1.3-2 and 1.3-4 identify.

1.4 Methodology

NRC regulation 10 CFR 52.17(a)(2) specifies the contents of an environmental report for an ESP application and Regulatory Guide 4.2, *Preparation of Environmental Reports for Nuclear Power Stations, Revision 2,* July 1976 (RG 4.2) provides guidance to applicants preparing environmental reports for nuclear power stations. The NRC's *Standard Review Plans for Environmental Reviews for Nuclear Power Plants, Revision 0,* 1999 (NUREG-1555), provides guidance for NRC staff to use when conducting environmental reviews of applications related to nuclear power plants. Because RG 4.2 is an earlier NRC document (1976) and NUREG-1555 is relatively new (1999), SNC chose to look to the latter for guidance in establishing the format and content of its environmental report. SNC has provided additional information and organization in the material presented as seemed appropriate when applying lessons learned from the first three ESP applicants. SNC prepared Table 1.4-1 to verify conformance with regulatory requirements. The table identifies each requirement and indicates where in the environmental report SNC has responded to the requirement.

SNC also evaluated the conclusions of NRC's *Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants*, Revision 0, 1996 (NUREG-1437), for input in assessing the impacts of the new nuclear units on the VEGP site. SNC concluded that if characteristics of the proposed reactors are similar to those of the existing fleet, then NUREG-1437 significance determination criteria could be applied in the ESP environmental review. SNC has indicated in its environmental report where it has used NUREG-1437 in assessing VEGP environmental impacts.

Table 1.4-1 Environmental Report Responses to Early Site Permit Regulatory Requirements

No.	Regulatory Requirement (10 CFR)[1]	Responsive Environmental Report Section
1.	51.45(a), Signed original	Transmittal letter
2.	51.45(b), Description of proposed action	Chapter 3, *Plant Description*
3.	51.45(b), Statement of purpose of proposed action	Section 1.1.1, *Purpose and Need*
4.	51.45(b), Description of environment affected by proposed action	Chapter 2, *Environmental Description*
5.	51.45(b)(1), Environmental impact of proposed action	Chapters 4, *Environmental Impacts of Construction*; 5, *Environmental Impacts of Operation*; 7, *Environmental Impact of Postulated Accidents Involving Radioactive Materials*, and 10, *Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action*
6.	51.45(b)(2), Unavoidable adverse impacts	Section 10.1, *Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts*
7.	51.45(b)(3), Alternatives to proposed action	Chapter 9, *Alternatives to the Proposed Action*
8.	51.45(b)(4), Relationship between short-term use and long-term productivity	Section 10.3, *Relationship Between Short Term Uses and Long Term Productivity of the Human Environment*
9.	51.45(b)(5), Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources	Section 10.2, *Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources*
10.	51.45(c), Comparison of environmental effects of proposed action and alternatives	Chapters 4, *Environmental Impacts of Construction*; 5, *Environmental Impacts of Operation*; 7, *Environmental Impact of Postulated Accidents Involving Radioactive Materials*, 10, *Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action* and 9, *Alternatives to the Proposed Action*
11.	51.45(c), Alternatives for reducing or avoiding adverse environmental impacts	Sections 4.6 *Measures and Controls to Limit Adverse Impacts During Construction* and 5.10, *Measures and Controls to Limit Adverse Impacts During Operation*
12.	51.45(c), Economic, technical, and other benefits and costs of proposed action and alternatives	Section 10.4, *Benefit-Cost Balance*
13.	51.45(d), Federal permits and other entitlements and status of compliance	Section 1.3, *Status of Reviews, Approvals, and Consultations*
14.	51.45(d), Compliance with Federal and other environmental quality standards and requirements	Section 1.3, *Status of Reviews, Approvals, and Consultations*
15.	51.45(d), Compliance for alternatives	Section 9.2 *Energy Alternatives* and Section 9.3 *Alternative Sites*
16.	51.45(e), Adverse information	Section 10.1, *Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts*
17.	51.50 and 51.51(a), Uranium fuel cycle	Section 5.7, *Uranium Fuel Cycle Impacts*

Table 1.4-1 (cont.) Environmental Report Responses to Early Site Permit Regulatory Requirements

No.	Regulatory Requirement (10 CFR)[1]	Responsive Environmental Report Section
18.	51.50 and 51.52, Fuel and waste transportation	Sections 3.8, *Transportation of Radioactive Materials*, 511, *Transportation of Radioactive Materials*, and 7.4, *Transportation Accidents*
19.	51.50, Reporting and record keeping procedures	Chapter 6, *Environmental Measurements and Monitoring Programs*
20.	51.50, Conditions and monitoring	Chapter 6, *Environmental Measurements and Monitoring Programs*

[1] Incorporated by reference at 10 CFR 52.17(a)(2)

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Chapter 2 Environmental Description

Chapter 2 describes the existing environmental conditions at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP) site, the site vicinity and the region. The environmental descriptions provide sufficient detail to identify those environmental resources that have the potential to be affected by the construction, operation, or decommissioning of the new units. The chapter is divided into nine sections:

- Site Location (Section 2.1)
- Land (Section 2.2)
- Water (Section 2.3)
- Ecology (Section 2.4)
- Socioeconomics (Section 2.5)
- Geology (Section 2.6)
- Meteorology, Air Quality, and Noise (Section 2.7)
- Related Federal and Other Project Activities (Section 2.8)
- Existing Plant Site Characteristics, Design Parameters, and Site Interface Values (Section 2.9)

The following descriptions should help the reader understand the scope of the discussion:

- VEGP site – the 3,169 acre site as described in the Unit 1 and Unit 2 licenses
- New plant (VEGP Units 3 and 4) footprint – the approximately 500 acres within the VEGP site that will encompass the construction and operation of the new nuclear units
- Vicinity – the area within approximately the 6- or 10-mile (depending on the issue) radius around the VEGP site
- Region – the area within approximately the 50-mile radius around the VEGP site

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2.1 Site Location

SNC proposes to construct and operate up to two Westinghouse AP1000 reactors at VEGP in Burke County, Georgia. The two AP1000 reactors will be referred to as VEGP Units 3 and 4.

The proposed early site permit (ESP) is for the existing 3,169-acre VEGP site. VEGP Units 3 and 4 and supporting infrastructure will be sited in the area delineated in Figure 2.1-1. The centerline of VEGP Units 3 and 4 will be approximately 2,100 feet west and 400 feet south of the center of the existing Unit 2 containment building. Unit 4 containment will be approximately 800 feet west of Unit 3 containment.

The coordinates of the center of the containment buildings for VEGP Units 3 and 4 are given below in State Plane and Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates:

Unit		Georgia East Coordinates (NAD27)	UTM (Nad83)
3	N	1,142,600	3,667,166.728
	E	621,800	428,315.413
4	N	1,142,600	3,667,169.439
	E	621,000	428,071.651

The 3,169-acre VEGP site is located on a Coastal Plain bluff on the southwest side of the Savannah River in eastern Burke County. The site and its exclusion area boundary (EAB) are generally bounded by River Road, Hancock Landing Road and approximately 1.7 miles of the Savannah River (River Miles 150.0 to 151.7). The site is approximately 30 river miles above the U.S. 301 bridge and directly across the river from the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (Barnwell County, South Carolina). The site is approximately 15 miles east north east of Waynesboro, Georgia and 26 miles southeast of Augusta, Georgia, the nearest population center (i.e., having more than 25,000 residents) (Figure 2.1-2). It is also about 136 miles from Savannah, Georgia and 150 river miles from the mouth of the Savannah River.

Access to the site is from River Road via U.S. Route 25, and Georgia Routes 56, 80, 24 or 23 (Figure 2.1-3). Barge access is available from the Savannah River which is navigable to a point upstream of VEGP. A railroad spur runs to the site from the Norfolk Southern Savannah-to-Augusta track.

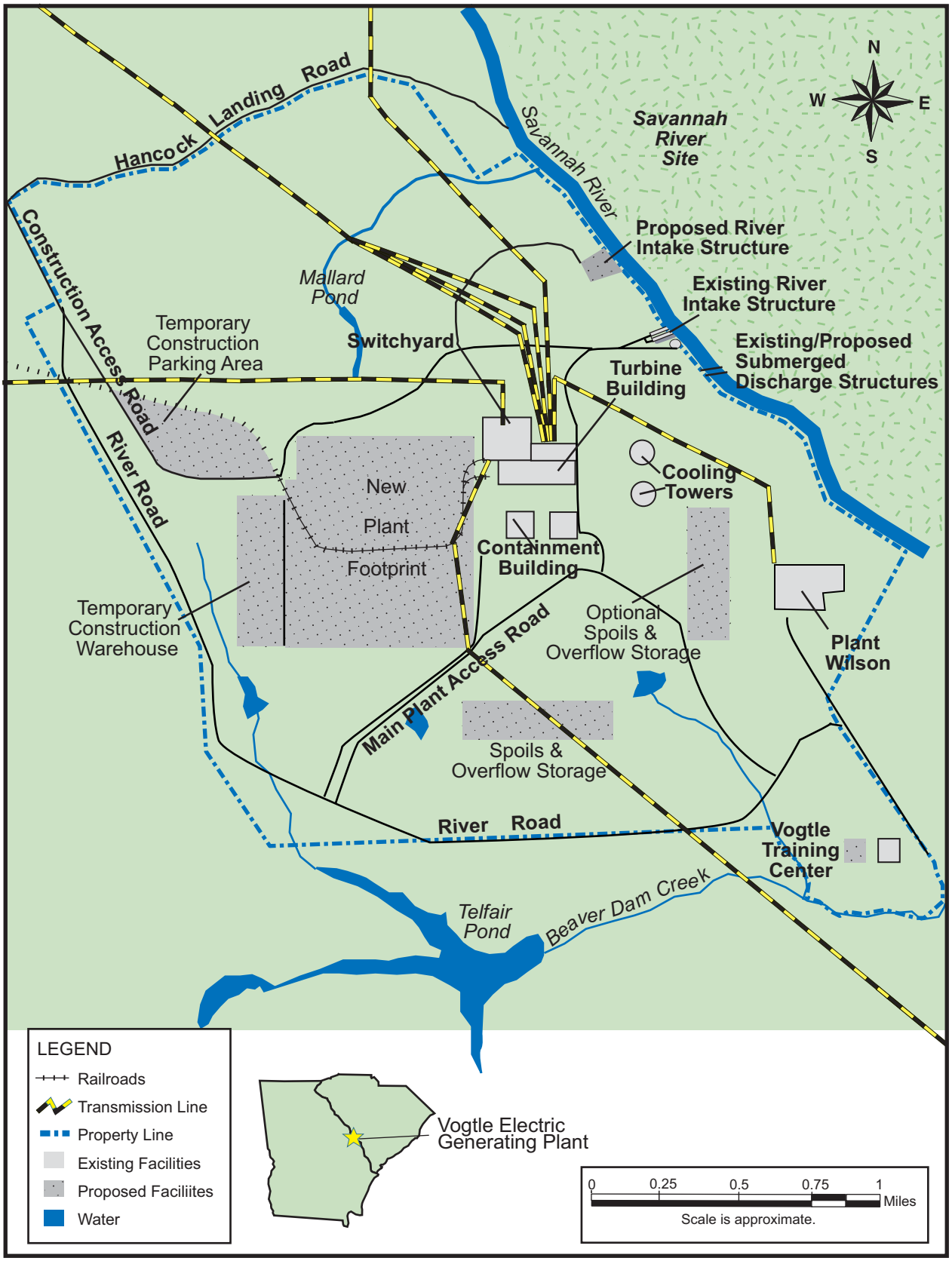

Figure 2.1-1 VEGP Site and Proposed New Plant Footprint

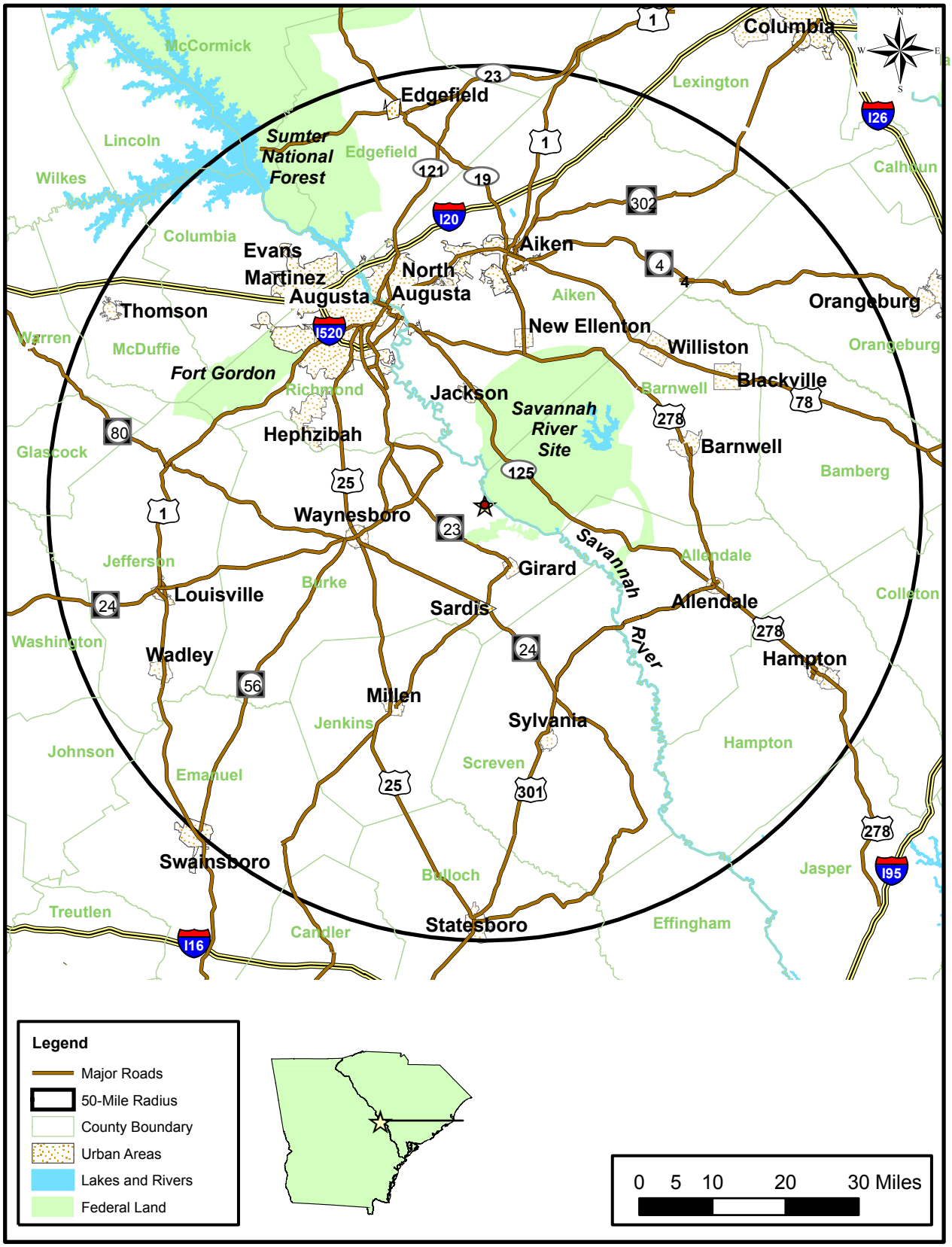

Figure 2.1-2 50-Mile Vicinity

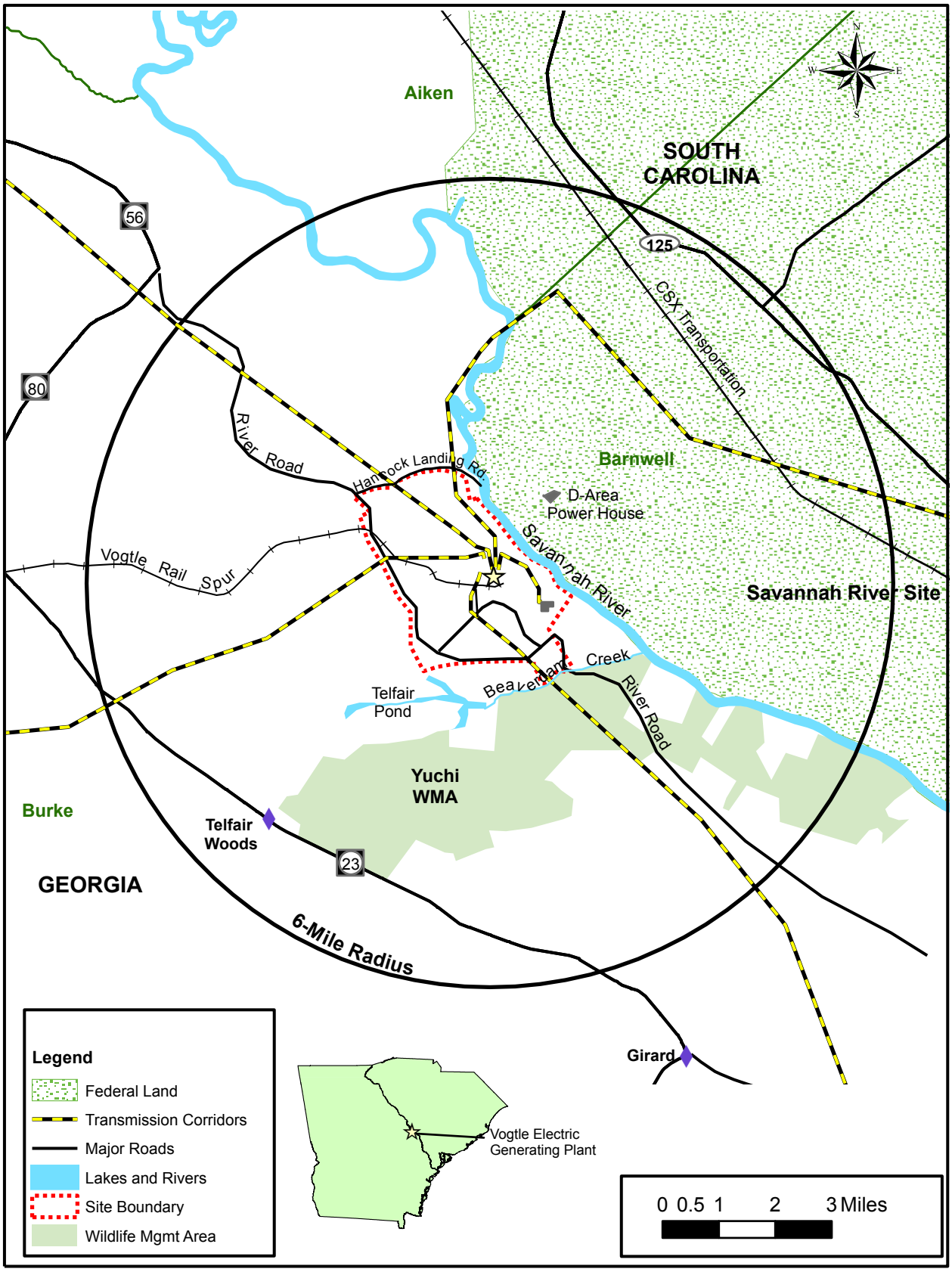

Figure 2.1-3 6-Mile Vicinity

2.2 Land

This section describes the land characteristics of the VEGP site and the vicinity, transmission corridors and offsite areas, and the region.

2.2.1 The Site and Vicinity

2.2.1.1 The Site

The 3,169-acre VEGP site is bounded by the Savannah River on the east, Hancock Landing Road on the north, and River Road on the west and south (Figure 2.1-1). Georgia Power Company (GPC), Oglethorpe Power Corporation (OPC), Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, and the City of Dalton, a municipality in the State of Georgia, doing business by and through the Water, Light and Sinking Fund Board of Commissioners (Dalton Utilities) own the VEGP Units 1 and 2 and most of the site property. Also on the VEGP site is the GPC-owned 354 MWe Plant Wilson facility composed of six oil-fueled combustion turbines. GPC directs land management activities for the VEGP site property. Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensed operator for VEGP Units 1 and 2 and manages and controls access to the site.

GPC developed a land management plan to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and permits and established a land management program with an emphasis on forestry and wildlife. The plan also considers the needs of plant security, project management, construction, and power generation. The plan went into effect in January 1983 and is periodically updated. The plan dedicates undeveloped areas of the site to managing natural longleaf pine, and maintaining the existing hardwood communities. Slash pine and cover crops were used to revegetate parts of the original VEGP Units 1 and 2 construction site. **(GPC 1985)**

The 3,169-acre site includes land developed for industrial use, previously disturbed land and undeveloped land. The existing VEGP Units 1 and 2 and auxiliary facilities, including the Vogtle Training Center, Plant Wilson, construction facilities, and transmission rights-of-way occupy about 800 acres. Areas on the site that have been previously disturbed, including the proposed VEGP Units 3 and 4 footprint, have been revegetated with a mix of planted pines and old field vegetation. Much of the site is wooded. Figure 2.2-1 illustrates the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) land use classifications on the VEGP site. Section 2.4.1.1 provides a description of the undeveloped portion of the site.

Several water bodies and streams exist on the site or border the site. Beaverdam Creek which drains Telfair Pond (located south of VEGP) is a major stream that borders the VEGP site south of the Vogtle Training Center (Figure 2.1-3). A second, small stream drains north out of Mallard Pond, north of the proposed new plant footprint. Both ponds are impounded blackwater creeks. Several borrow pits and two sediment retention basins constructed to control storm water runoff are on site. The sediment retention basins south of the industrial area have filled with water and

are permanent ponds **(GPC 1985)**. Several drainages drain from VEGP property to Beaver Dam Creek (Figure 2.1-3).

Most of the VEGP site property is atop the river bluffs and outside the 500-year floodplain. The Savannah River 100-year floodplain ranges from approximately 100 to 800 feet wide at the VEGP site **(FEMA 1989)**. The floodplain is separated from the rest of the VEGP site by steep bluffs along virtually all of the VEGP site river shoreline. The Savannah River is not designated a wild and scenic river **(**16 USC 1271 – 1287; **NPS No Date)**.

In 1993, the VEGP site was designated as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the Wildlife Habitat Council, a non-profit, Washington D.C.-based wildlife organization. The certification considered the wildlife enhancement work performed after original construction and a new plan developed in the early 1990's.

No railroads, transmission corridors (other than those owned and operated by GPC), natural gas pipelines, or major waterways traverse the VEGP site. Several communication facilities are on GPC property. West of the facility is the Vogtle Fiber Site (the old Microwave Site). Fiberoptic fiber from offsite comes into VEGP through this building. The fiber to Augusta exits the building to the south on poles to the 150 kV line near River Road. The fiber that goes south goes underground to the 500 kV line tower just to the southwest of the building. The fiber into the facility leaves the building underground east-southeast to the Security duct. The tower is home to the antennas for the NOAA transmitter, the Emergency Alert Siren Radio, and a variety of radios for the emergency notification network. Southwest of the facility are two meteorological towers which are discussed in detail in Section 6.4. Southeast of the plant is the iDEN tower, a SouthernLinc (Southern Company communications) site but the tower is owned by Global Signal Inc. (formerly Pinnacle Towers Inc.). The tower at Plant Wilson has an antenna for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and antenna for the Emergency Alert Siren Radio in South Carolina. Access to the VEGP site is primarily through a VEGP-owned and maintained road off River Road.

No prime farmland soils occur on the VEGP site **(USDA 1986)**. Burke County is developing zoning regulations, but the VEGP site currently is not zoned.

2.2.1.2 The Vicinity

The VEGP site is in the Coastal Plain, approximately 25 miles east of the Piedmont Province **(GPC 1972)**. The topography of the vicinity consists of low rolling hills with elevations ranging from 80 feet to 280 feet above mean sea level **(GPC 1985)**.

The Georgia side of the Savannah River within 6 miles of the VEGP site is primarily rural undeveloped land with a few homes and small farms. Figure 2.2-2 identifies USGS land use classifications in the vicinity of VEGP. The crossroads community of Telfair Woods is approximately 5 miles southwest of VEGP (Figure 2.1-3). Girard (population 230) is

approximately 8 miles to the south. A small, privately-owned airstrip, known as Rhodes Air Ranch, is located just north of the site boundary.

Much of the undeveloped land in the vicinity is sandhill-upland pine or oak-hickory hardwood communities. GPC provides access to the Savannah River and picnic tables at its boat landing, immediately downstream of the VEGP property. The 7,000-acre Yuchi Wildlife Management Area (WMA) managed by Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for public hunting, is adjacent to VEGP property. Primitive camping is allowed on the Yuchi WMA. No other recreation areas are within 6 miles of the VEGP site. No mineral deposits or mines occur in Burke County **(USGS 2003a)**. Forty-five percent of the soils in Burke County are classified as prime farmland **(USDA 1986)**. Forty-one percent of Burke County was farmland in 2002 **(NASS no date; Georgia.gov 2005)**. Of that 41 percent, 48 percent was in cropland, 42 percent was in woodland 6 percent was pasture and 4 percent was other uses. The largest money crops in the county are cotton and cottonseed, and milk and other dairy product from cows **(NASS no date)**. Burke County is revising its comprehensive plan, and will establish zoning classifications but currently does not have zoning classifications.

The Savannah River Site (SRS), a U.S. Department of Energy facility with restricted access, is directly across the Savannah River from VEGP. SRS has two remediated industrial areas and one fossil-fueled power plant within the 6-mile radius. The remainder of the SRS within the 6-mile radius is river swamp, bottomland hardwood or upland pine-hardwood communities. The U.S. Forest Service maintains pine plantations on SRS land that is not industrial. Barnwell County, South Carolina has no mineral deposits or mines **(USGS 2003b)**.

2.2.2 Transmission Corridors and Offsite Areas

2.2.2.1 Existing Corridors

The existing transmission system supporting VEGP Units 1 and 2 has two 500 kV lines and four 230 kV lines in four corridors. There is an additional 230 kV line to the Wilson Station. The Wilson connection provides offsite power in case of emergency.

The two 500 kV transmission lines (Scherer and Thalmann) run in separate corridors, and the four 230 kV lines (Goshen [black], Goshen [white], Augusta Newsprint, and SCE&G), generally run in two additional corridors. The Plant Wilson line connects the Wilson Plant switchyard to the VEGP switchyard and is totally within the owners' property, and thus is not further discussed in this section. Figure 2.2-3 depicts the existing transmission system. The figure also shows major highway crossings and historically or environmentally significant areas. Table 2.2-1 provides information on land use along the corridors and SNC prepared a calculation package supporting this analysis. Each corridor is described as follows:

Scherer – This corridor runs generally westward to Plant Scherer, north of Macon, Georgia. Built in 1986, it is 154 miles long and is mostly 150 feet wide, but up to 400 feet wide in some locations. The terrain is flat to rolling.

Thalmann – Running 159 miles to the south, this 150-foot-wide corridor connects VEGP to the West McIntosh substation near Plant McIntosh, just north of Savannah, Georgia then continues to its termination at the Thalmann substation near Brunswick. The VEGP Final Environmental Statement (FES) **(NRC 1985)** examined the entire 159 miles of transmission line, however, today, the VEGP line terminates at West McIntosh. Data for the entire Thalmann corridor are provided in Table 2.2-1. This line is also known as the McIntosh line.

South Augusta – This corridor contains three 230-kV transmission lines that run north to Goshen and Augusta Newsprint substations. The Goshen substation (2 lines) is approximately 19 corridor miles from VEGP, and the corridor is 275 feet wide. The Augusta Newsprint substation is approximately 20 corridor miles from VEGP. Augusta Newsprint shares the South Augusta corridor with the Goshen lines for approximately 17 miles. From that point to its termination at the substation it is 100 to 125 feet wide. The Augusta Newsprint line was built in 1983 and the Goshen lines were built in 1986. The terrain is generally flat.

SCE&G – Built in 1986, this corridor runs north and east for 4.5 miles to cross the Savannah River and then an additional 17 miles to a substation operated by South Carolina Electric and Gas. The corridor in South Carolina is 100 feet wide and the 4.5-mile Georgia segment is 125 feet wide. The part of the corridor in South Carolina is wholly contained on the SRS. The terrain is mostly flat.

2.2.2.2 Proposed Transmission Corridor

The existing transmission corridors to the VEGP site will support generation from existing Units 1 and 2 as well as the new Units 3 and 4. GPC and SNC estimate one additional 500 kV line will be required to distribute the additional generation. The proposed new switchyard will contain an extra 500 KV bay to support an additional 500 KV line for potential future expansion. The specific route of the new transmission line has not been determined. However, the end point and counties the line will traverse have been determined. For purposes of impact analysis, SNC evaluated the proposed new corridor route through Burke, Jefferson, McDuffie and Warren Counties. Land use in these counties is presented in Table 2.2-2 and Figure 2.2-4. The impact analysis is addressed at a county level in Section 4.1.2.

2.2.2.3 Land Use Issues

Land use along the existing corridors is presented in Table 2.2-1. The table breaks the Thalmann corridor into two segments (VEGP-West McIntosh and West McIntosh-Thalmann) to facilitate an understanding of how the proposed action will affect existing transmission corridors.

Special land uses along these corridors include the following as depicted on Figure 2.2-3:

- 17.1 miles on the SRS, which has restricted public access except along South Carolina Highway 125, which the transmission line crosses
- 4.4 miles of Oconee National Forest, northeast of Plant Scherer
- Ebenezer Creek Swamp crossed by the VEGP-West McIntosh line near its termination. Although privately owned, Ebenezer Creek Swamp is designated as a National Natural Landmark. It is part of the 29,000-acre Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. The State of Georgia has designated 7 miles of Ebenezer Creek as a Georgia Scenic River (Georgia Code Chapter 12, Section 12-5-352). Appendix J of the VEGP Units 1 and 2 FES identifies this crossing as receiving attention by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which provided recommendations on crossing the swamp. GPC implemented special construction practices to protect the swamp and has procedures that specifically address corridor and transmission line maintenance in this swamp, in accordance with the VEGP Environmental Protection Plan.
- Francis Plantation in Washington County, crossed by the VEGP-Scherer transmission corridor. The current VEGP Units 1 and 2 Environmental Protection Plan specifies that vegetation trimming in the Plantation shall be performed manually.
- A Georgia Power Company Transmission Bulletin identifies 196 cultural properties on existing Vogtle transmission lines and provides specifications for protecting these sites based on the Cultural Resources Plan approved by the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer.

2.2.3 The Region

All or parts of 28 counties (12 in South Carolina and 16 in Georgia) are within 50 miles of the VEGP site (Figure 2.1-2). The 50-mile radius is bordered by interstates on all sides; I-16 from Atlanta to Savannah lies to the southwest, I-95 lies to the east, I-26 from Columbia to Charleston, SC, lies to the northeast and I-20 from Atlanta to Columbia, is to the northwest. Only I-20 actually has any mileage within the 50-mile radius. Additional major transportation infrastructure within the region is discussed in Section 2.5.2.2.

This section focuses on three Georgia counties as the region of impact for the construction and operation of new units at VEGP - Burke, Columbia and Richmond - where 79 percent of current VEGP employees reside (see Section 2.5.1). Most land use changes will be due to increases in tax revenues associated with new units at VEGP, which will be limited to the county where the site is located (Burke), or population changes in counties where the greatest number of construction or operations employees will live (Burke, Richmond, and Columbia).

The State of Georgia mandates that cities and counties have comprehensive land use plans, and Burke, Richmond and Columbia Counties have such plans. Table 2.2-3 shows a breakdown of land use type and area in those counties.

Burke County

Burke County has the second largest land area of any county in Georgia. The predominant land uses are agriculture and forestry (76 percent of the unincorporated area in the county in 1990). Fifteen percent of the county is classified as preferential agriculture, and thus bound by covenant to remain agricultural for a given time. Less than 1 percent of the land was classified as industrial or commercial in 1990. The only major park, recreation area or conservation area is the Yuchi Wildlife Management Area, owned by the Georgia DNR. **(Burke County 1991)**

In 2002, Burke County had 494 farms; 176 produced cattle (up from 157 in 1997), 18 had hogs. Very few farms had poultry. In 2002, 248 had harvested cropland: 54 farms produced cotton (down from 66 in 1997), 36 produced soybeans (down from 73 in 1997), and 50 produced peanuts (down from 56 in 1997). **(USDA 2004)**

Columbia County

Sixteen percent of the total land in Columbia County is non-forestry farmland. Crops include corn, soybeans, and wheat. Commodities include forestry, dairy, beef, and greenhouse production (nursery plants). Harvested crops and livestock production have been steadily decreasing. In 1992 the county reported 3,046 acres of harvested cropland. By 1997, harvested cropland had decreased to 2,292 acres. In 1992, 5,400 head of cattle were reported. In 1997, that number had declined to 4,600 head. **(Columbia County 2000)**

Currently 140,500 acres (76 percent) of Columbia County is forested. The forest industry owns 31,600 acres and timber is the highest-valued commodity in the county. **(Columbia County 2000)**

Major parks, recreation and conservation areas in Columbia County include a portion of Clarks Hill Lake, the Augusta Canal, Mistletoe State Park, Heggie's Rock, and Stallings Island. The county is developing a greenway system. Clarks Hill Lake (known as S. Strom Thurmond Lake in South Carolina) is a 70,000 acre U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir on the Savannah River. It provides recreation, wildlife refuges and conservation, flood prevention and drinking water to Georgia and South Carolina. Heggie's Rock is near Appling and is one of Georgia's 12 natural landmarks. It is home to many endangered plant and animal species and is owned by The Nature Conservancy. Stallings Island is in the Savannah River and is thought to be the earliest Colonial settlement in the county. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. **(Columbia County 2000)**

Richmond County

Seven percent of Richmond County was non-forestry farmland in 1997. Crops include corn, soybeans, and peanuts. Commodities include forestry, dairy and beef production, and ornamental horticulture. Harvested cropland increased by 16 percent between 1992 and 1997. **(ARC 2004)**

Currently 121,000 acres (58 percent) of Richmond County is forested. Fifty-six thousand acres are owned by private individuals, 39,000 acres are owned by the Federal government (Fort Gordon), and 17,000 acres by the forest products industry. **(ARC 2004)**

Major parks, recreation and conservation areas in Richmond County include the Savannah River, the Augusta Canal, Phinizy Swamp WMA and Nature Park, Merry Brickyard Ponds, and Spirit Creek Education Forest. Phinizy Swamp WMA is a 1,500 -acre, state-owned cypress wetland approximately 2 miles from downtown Augusta. Phinizy Swamp Nature Park is an 1,100-acre park south of Phinizy Swamp WMA. It is owned by the City of Augusta. Merry Brickyard Ponds are strip mines that have filled with water and evolved into nationally recognized waterfowl habitat. **(ARC 2004)**

There are no Native American tribal land use plans for areas within the region.

Table 2.2-1 Land Use Along Existing Transmission Corridors

Corridor	Land Use Categories			
	Agricultural	Forest	Industrial	Residential
VEGP-Scherer				
Percent	29	63	<1	<1
Area (acres)	1,041	2,299	21.5	34.5
VEGP-Thalmann				
VEGP-West-McIntosh	32	29	0	0
Percent	397	362	0	0
Area (acres)				
West McIntosh-Thalmann[1]				
Percent	5	68	<1	3
Area (acres)	74.8	1,113	13.4	53.7
VEGP-South Augusta				
Percent	14	75	<1	2.8
Area (acres)	92.5	494	0.62	18.2
VEGP-SCE&G				
Percent	4	69	0	0
Area (acres)	11.4	188	0	0

Source: **EPA 1994**

[1] Provided to be consistent with the VEGP license renewal application.

Table 2.2-2 Land Use as Percent in Burke, Jefferson, McDuffie and Warren Counties

County	Land Use Categories					
	Agricultural	Forest	Water	Wetland	Barren	Urban[1]
Burke	46	43	<1	9	1	<1
Jefferson	40	48	<1	10	<1	1
McDuffie	16	78	3	<1	<1	3
Warren	22	76	<1	<1	<1	1

Source: **EPA 1994**

[1] Includes residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, communication, utilities, and other urban or built-up land.

Table 2.2-3 Land Use in Acres in Burke, Columbia and Richmond Counties

Land Uses	Burke County[1] (1990)	Columbia County[2] (2000)	Richmond County[3] (2003)
Residential	25,767	43,172	54,328
Commercial	731	2,416	5,772
Industrial	201	2,211	9,402
Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities	No data	7,671	11,893
Public/Institutional	9,254	4,322	52,890
Parks/Open Space/ Conservation	No data	10,304	5,903
Agriculture/Forestry/ Undeveloped	440,307 (includes open space)	126,727	70,020

1 **Burke County 1991**, Table 6-1

2 **Columbia County 2000**, Table L-1

3 **ARC 2004**, Table L-1

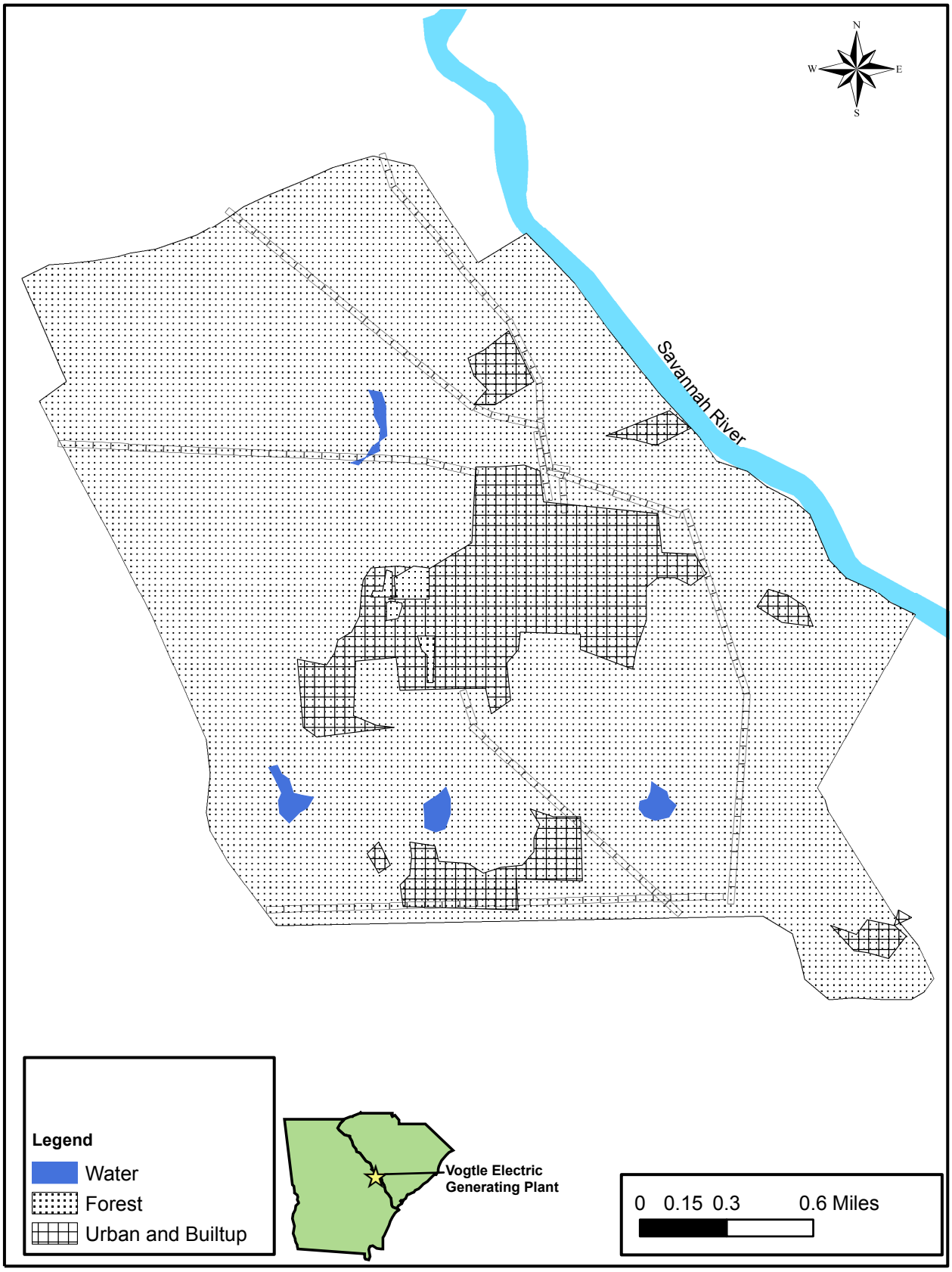

Figure 2.2-1 USGS Land Use Classifications at VEGP Site

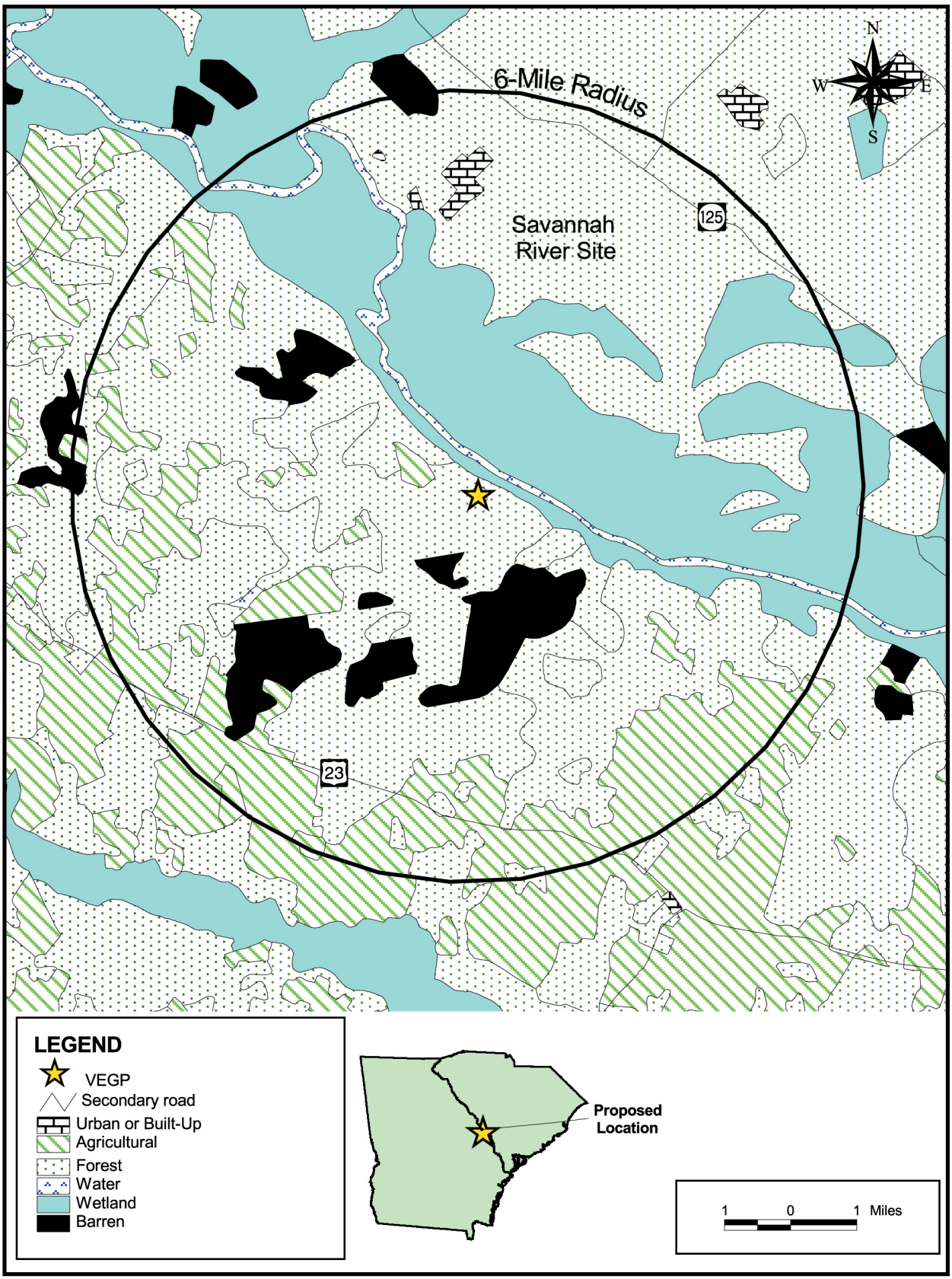

Figure 2.2.-2 USGS Land Use Classifications in the Vicinity of the VEGP Site

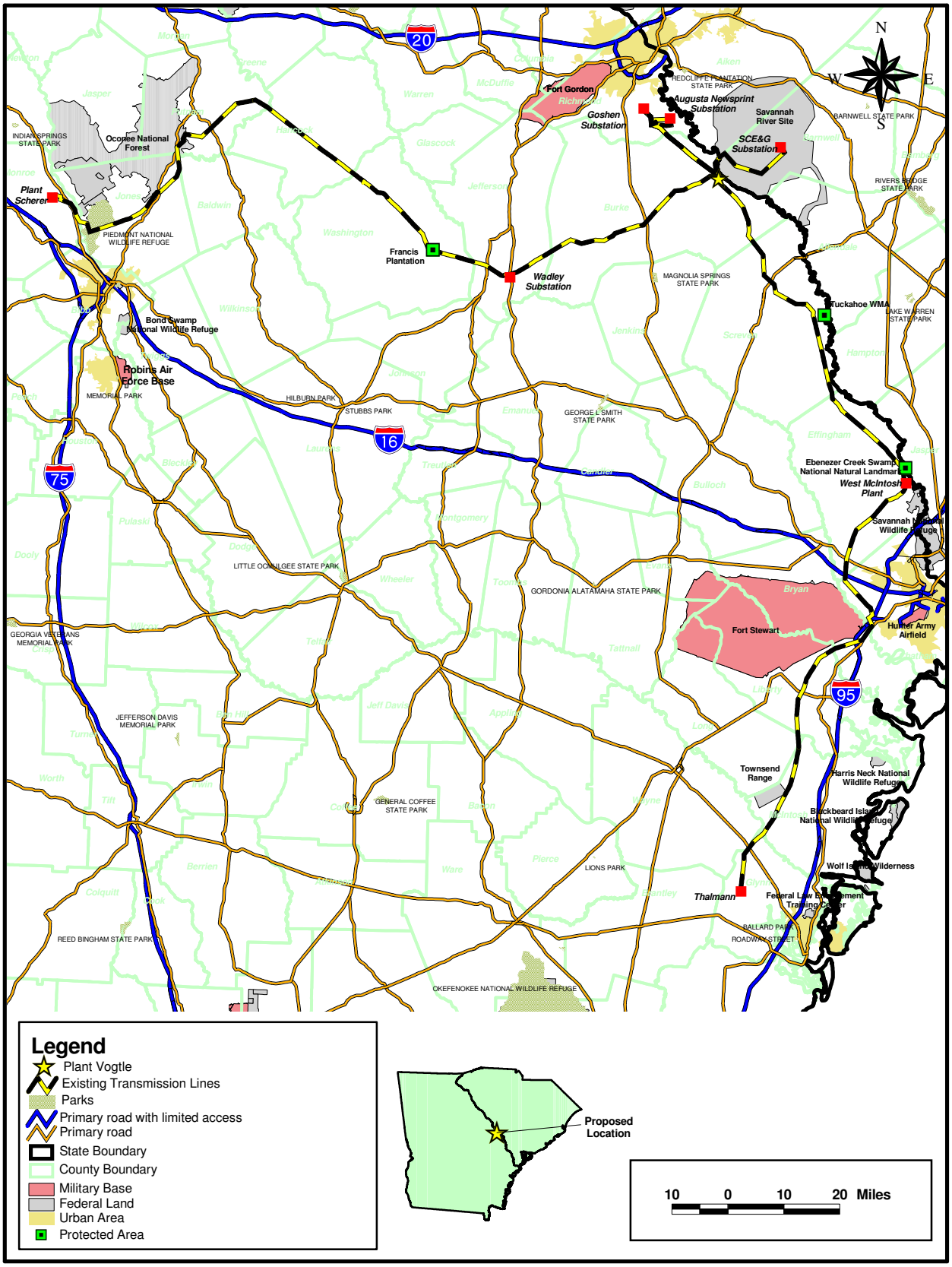

Figure 2.2-3 Existing Transmission System

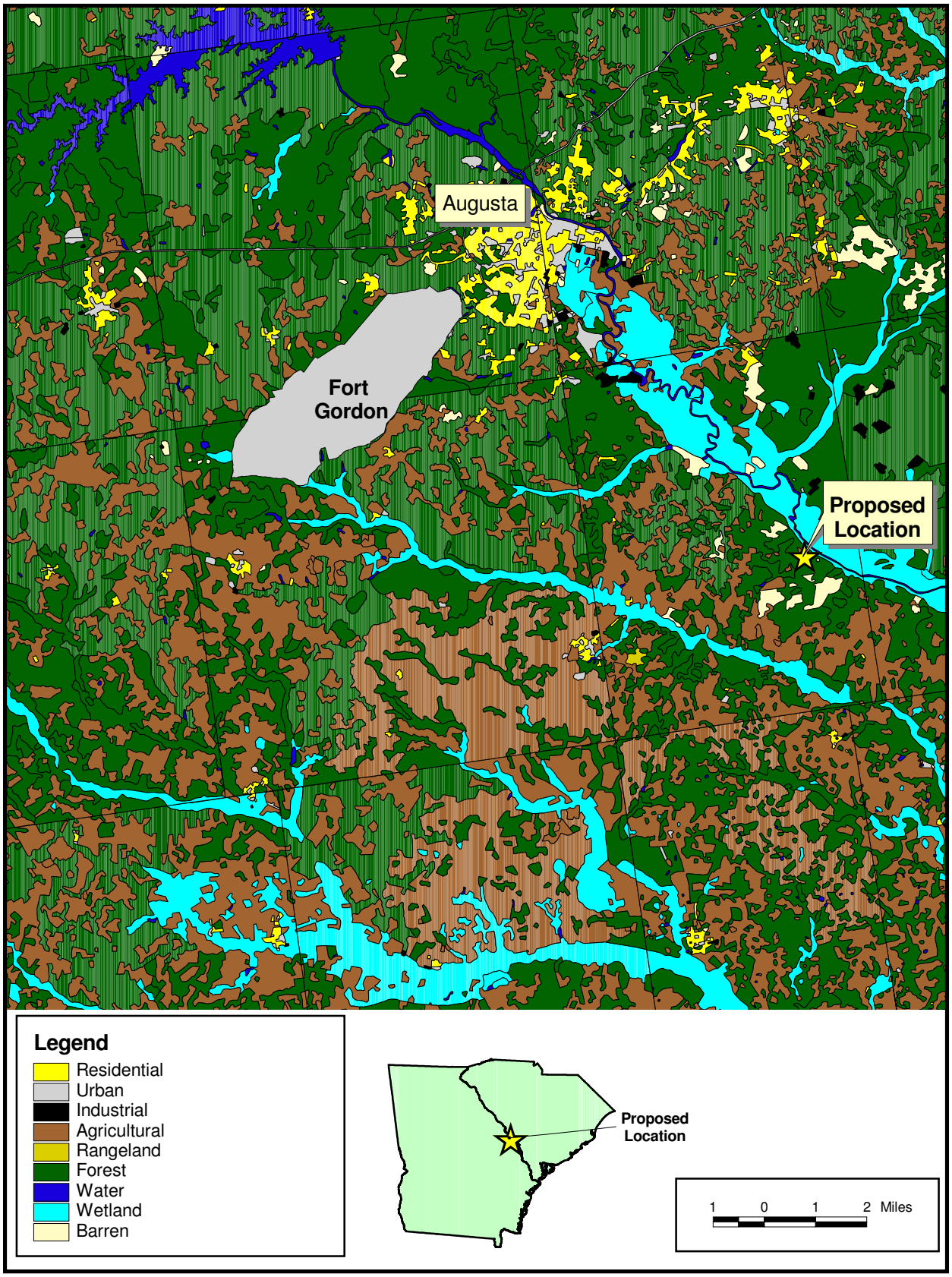

Figure 2.2-4 Land Use in the Area of the Proposed Corridor

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