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Final

environmental statement

related to the proposed
ALVIN W. VOGTLE NUCLEAR PLANT
UNITS 1, 2, 3 AND 4
GEORGIA POWER COMPANY

DOCKET NOS. 50-424, 50-425, 50-426 and 50-427



MARCH 1974

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE OF LICENSING

MASTER

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT RELATED TO THE PROPOSED
ALVIN W. VOGTLE NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1, 2, 3 AND 4
GEORGIA POWER COMPANY
DOCKET NOS. 50-424, 50-425, 50-426 AND 50-427**

**MARCH 1974
U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE OF LICENSING**

MASTER

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This Final Environmental Statement was prepared by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Directorate of Licensing.

1. This action is administrative.
2. The proposed action is the issuance of a construction permit to the Georgia Power Company for the construction of the Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Plant, located on the Savannah River (Docket Nos. 50-424, 50-425, 50-426, and 50-427). Each unit of the Vogtle Nuclear Plant will employ a pressurized water reactor to produce up to 3,425 megawatts thermal (MWt). A steam turbine-generator will use this heat to provide 1,100 MWe (net) of electrical power capacity. A design power level of 3,579 MWt (1,159 MWe) is anticipated at a future date and is considered in the assessment contained in this statement. The exhaust steam will be cooled by a closed-cycle cooling system employing natural-draft cooling towers and using makeup water from the Savannah River.
3. Summary of environmental impact and adverse effects:
 - a. The construction impact will affect 1,011 acres of the site, 245 acres for a railroad spur, and 12,660 acres for transmission lines. About 0.03% of the State's timber acreage will be removed by transmission-line construction. The potential exists for severe erosion during plant construction; however, erosion can be mitigated by strict adherence to preventive and corrective techniques. (Sections 4.1 and 4.3.1)
 - b. In June 1973, an archaeological field survey of the Vogtle plant site was conducted under supervision of the Georgia State Archaeologist. The survey concluded that the artifacts found were not archaeologically significant and did not warrant salvage. The field survey was reviewed for the AEC by the Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution who concurred in the approach and conclusions. (Sections 2.3.3, 4.1.1, 11.5.1 and 11.9.1)
 - c. The use of hyperbolic natural-draft cooling towers for dissipating waste heat will result in consumptive water use at an average rate of 14, 930 gpm per unit (14,860-gpm evaporation and 70-gpm drift) from the Savannah River. For four units, this will total about 1.3% of the river's average flow. This loss will not measurably affect present uses of the Savannah River. (Section 5.2).

- d. The plume from the cooling towers is not expected to add
- d. The plume from the cooling towers is not expected to add significantly to fogging or icing conditions in the area. (Section 3.4.4)
- e. Entrained organisms that enter the circulating-water systems will be killed. Under average river-flow conditions, entrainment losses represent about 1.7% of the river's planktonic populations. This removal is not expected to have an adverse effect on these populations or on the organisms that feed on them. (Section 5.5.2.2)
- f. Liquid effluent from the plant will be discharged to the river at an average rate of about 17,140 gpm; it will consist primarily of main-cooling-tower blowdown at a rate of 4,000 gpm/unit. This discharge will enter the river through a 60-ft-long section of diffuser pipe located on the river bottom. The thermal effects of this discharge will cause no significant impact. (Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 5.5.2.4)
- g. The chlorination procedure proposed by the applicant could adversely affect river organisms. By limiting the total residual-chlorine concentration in the discharge to 0.1 ppm, this potential adverse impact will be avoided. (Sections 5.5.2.3, 6.2.4 and 9.2.5.1)
- h. Based on the information available, impingement on the intake-structure screens is not expected to be significant; however, the Applicant must submit for the staff's analysis sufficient aquatic survey data on the population density of anadromous fish in the vicinity of the proposed intake structure to verify the Applicant's evaluation. (Sections 4.5.2, 5.5.2.1 and 11.3.5)
- i. The commuting of the labor force and the transport of materials to the site may overload certain local roads during certain hours of the day. The main access road to the site, Hancock Landing Road, has been hard-surfaced as far as River Road. Other roads in the Waynesboro area may need to be improved. (Sections 4.4 and 9.3)
- j. Indiscriminate broadcast application of herbicide by spraying from a helicopter could result in excessive impact on the vegetation adjoining the transmission lines rights-of-way. This potential adverse impact will be avoided by using commonly-accepted practices which limit the application of herbicide to the right-of-way in non-sensitive areas and only where this type of control is considered essential. (Sections 4.5.1 and 5.5.1.2)

- k. The risk associated with accidental radiation exposure is very low. (Section 7.1)
- l. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated from normal operational releases of radioactive materials within 50 miles. The estimated dose to the population within 50 miles from operation of the plant is 29 man-rems/year - less than the normal fluctuations in the 71,000-man-rems/year - background dose this population would receive and well below the limits prescribed by 10 CFR Parts 20 and 50. (Section 5.4)

4. Principal alternatives considered:

- . Purchase of power from outside sources.
- . Non-nuclear sources of energy.
- . Alternative sites.
- . Alternative cooling systems.
- . Alternative discharge structures.

5. The following Federal, State and local agencies and individuals were asked to comment on this Draft Environmental Statement:

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Department of Agriculture
Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
Department of Commerce
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of the Interior
Department of Transportation
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Power Commission
National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution
Governor, State of Georgia
Governor, State of South Carolina
State Clearinghouse, State of Georgia
State Clearinghouse, State of South Carolina
Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia
Georgia Public Service Commission
Georgia Water Quality Control Board

Georgia Historical Commission
Central Savannah River Area Regional Planning and
Development Commission
Burke County Board of Commissioners
Waynesboro City Council
Augusta Archaeology Society
Augusta Citizens Concerned About Nuclear Power
Georgia Power Project
Richard C. Palmer
Victor Shorapa

Comments on the draft environmental statement issued in August 1973,
were received from the following Federal, State and local agencies
and other parties:

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of Interior
Department of Transportation
Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Power Commission
Smithsonian Institution
Beaufort-Jasper County Water Authority
Central Savannah River Area Regional Planning and
Development Commission
Georgia Public Service Commission
Governor's Science Advisory Council (State of Georgia)
Lower Savannah Regional Planning and Development Council
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
South Carolina Water Resources Commission
Augusta Archaeology Society
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Georgia Department of Transportation

These comments are appended to this Final Environmental Statement
in Appendix L.

6. This Final Environmental Statement was made available to the public,
to the Council on Environmental Quality, and to other specified
agencies in March 1974.

7. On the basis of the analysis and evaluation set forth in this statement, after weighing the environmental, economic, technical and other benefits of Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Plant, Units 1, 2, 3, and 4, against environmental and other costs and considering available alternatives, it is concluded that the action called for under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Appendix D to 10 CFR Part 50 is the issuance of a construction permit for the facility subject to the following conditions for the protection of the environment:

a. The plant shall be designed such that:

- (1) the plant discharge stream is continuously monitored for total residual chlorine concentration. (Sect. 6.2.4)
- (2) The total residual chlorine concentration within 5 feet of the diffuser ports will be less than 0.1 ppm when all four units are in operation. (Sects 5.5.2.3, 6.2.4 and 9.2.5.1)
- (3) All the cells in the intake structure will normally be used during operation of the intake pumps. (Sect. 5.5.2.1)
- (4) The volume of water enclosed by the 5°F isotherm will not exceed 2400 ft³ when all four units are operating and discharging effluent at the maximum expected blowdown rate. (Sects. 3.4.3.2 and 9.2.3)

b. The construction program and practices shall incorporate the following features:

- (1) Rate of pumpage during dewatering will be low enough to prevent siltation in Beaverdam Creek. (Sect. 4.3.2.1)
- (2) The Environmental Protection Agency's guidelines for the operation of retention basins will be followed in order to minimize the potential adverse effects on Beaverdam Creek as a result of erosion during construction. (Sect. 4.3.2.2)
- (3) The retention basins will be drained between storms when the turbidity of the impounded water has decreased to acceptable levels. (Sect. 4.3.2.4)

- c. Prior to construction of the intake structure, the applicant shall submit the results of the aquatic monitoring programs and an evaluation of the environmental impact of the intake canal and intake structure which will satisfy the staff that impingement will not have a significant adverse effect on the adult population of resident and anadromous fish in the Savannah River.
- d. The applicant shall take the necessary mitigating actions, including those applicant commitments summarized in Section 4.5 (p. 4-29) of this Environmental Statement, during construction of the station and associated transmission lines to avoid unnecessary adverse environmental impacts from construction activities.
- e. A control program shall be established by the applicant to provide for a periodic review of all construction activities to assure that those activities conform to the environmental conditions set forth in the construction permit.
- f. Before engaging in a construction activity which may result in a significant adverse environmental impact that was not evaluated or that is significantly greater than that evaluated in this Environmental Statement, the applicant shall provide written notification to the Director of Licensing.
- g. If unexpected harmful effects or evidence of irreversible damage are detected during facility construction, the applicant shall provide to the staff an acceptable analysis of the problem and a plan of action to eliminate or significantly reduce the harmful effects or damage.

FOREWORD

This final statement on environmental considerations associated with the proposed issuance of a construction permit for the Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Plant was prepared by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Directorate of Licensing (staff) in accordance with the Commission's regulation, 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix D, implementing the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The NEPA states, among other things, that it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to improve and coordinate Federal plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the Nation may:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.
- Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our natural heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Further, with respect to major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, Section 102(2)(C) of the NEPA calls for preparation of a detailed statement on:

- (i) The environmental impact of the proposed action,
- (ii) any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented,

- (iii) alternatives to the proposed action,
- (iv) the relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and
- (v) any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented.

Pursuant to Appendix D of 10 CFR Part 50, the AEC Directorate of Licensing prepares a detailed statement on the foregoing considerations with respect to each application for a construction permit or full-power operating license for a nuclear power reactor.

When application is made for a construction permit or a full-power operating license, the applicant submits an environmental report to the AEC. The staff evaluates this report and may seek further information from the applicant, as well as other sources, in making an independent assessment of the considerations specified in Section 102(2)(C) of the NEPA and Appendix D of 10 CFR Part 50. This evaluation leads to the publication of a draft environmental statement, prepared by the Directorate of Licensing, which is then circulated to Federal, State, and local governmental agencies for comment. Interested persons are also invited to comment on the draft statement.

After receipt and consideration of comments on the draft statement, the staff prepares a final environmental statement, which includes a discussion of questions and objections raised by the comments and the disposition thereof; a final cost-benefit analysis which considers and balances the environmental effects of the facility and the alternatives available for reducing or avoiding adverse environmental effects with the environmental, economic, technical, and other benefits of the facility; and a conclusion as to whether, after weighing the environmental, economic, technical, and other benefits against environmental costs and considering available alternatives, the action called for is the issuance or denial of the proposed permit or license or its appropriate conditioning to protect environmental values.

Single copies of this statement may be obtained by writing the Deputy Director for Reactor Projects, Directorate of Licensing, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D.C. 20545. Richard J. Clark is the AEC Environmental Project Manager for this statement. (301-443-6980)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	iii
FOREWORD	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	1-1
1.1 THE PROPOSED PROJECT	1-5
1.2 STATUS OF REVIEWS AND APPROVALS	1-6
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 1	1-7
2. THE SITE	2-1
2.1 PLANT LOCATION	2-1
2.2 REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHY, LAND USE, AND WATER USE	2-5
2.2.1 Regional demography	2-5
2.2.2 Land use	2-12
2.2.3 Water use	2-14
2.3 HISTORIC, PALEONTOLOGICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND NATURAL LANDMARKS	2-16
2.3.1 Historic sites	2-16
2.3.2 Paleontological sites	2-16
2.3.3 Archaeological sites	2-16
2.3.4 Natural landmarks	2-17
2.4 GEOLOGY AND SEISMOLOGY	2-17
2.4.1 Geology	2-17
2.4.2 Seismology	2-20
2.5 HYDROLOGY	2-21
2.5.1 Surface water	2-21
2.5.2 Groundwater	2-25
2.6 METEOROLOGY	2-26
2.7 ECOLOGY	2-30
2.7.1 Terrestrial ecology	2-30
2.7.2 Aquatic ecology	2-39
2.8 RADIATION BACKGROUND	2-44
2.8.1 Natural radiation background	2-44
2.8.2 Radiation background due to nearby nuclear facilities	2-45
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 2	2-47
3. THE PLANT	3-1
3.1 EXTERNAL APPEARANCE	3-1
3.2 REACTOR, STEAM ELECTRIC SYSTEM, AND FUEL INVENTORY	3-4
3.3 PLANT WATER USE	3-5
3.3.1 Groundwater	3-5
3.3.2 Surface water	3-7

	<u>Page</u>
3.4 HEAT DISSIPATION SYSTEMS	3-9
3.4.1 Main circulating water systems	3-9
3.4.2 Nuclear service cooling-water system	3-12
3.4.3 Thermal effluent dissipation to Savannah River	3-12
3.4.4 Thermal effluent dissipation to the atmosphere	3-18
3.5 RADIOACTIVE WASTE	3-19
3.5.1 Liquid radioactive wastes	3-19
3.5.2 Gaseous wastes	3-25
3.5.3 Solid waste	3-30
3.6 CHEMICAL AND BIOCIDES EFFLUENTS	3-31
3.6.1 Cooling-tower discharges	3-31
3.6.2 Demineralizer-regeneration discharge	3-36
3.6.3 Other chemical discharges	3-37
3.7 SANITARY WASTES AND OTHER EFFLUENTS	3-38
3.7.1 Sanitary wastes	3-38
3.7.2 Nonradioactive gaseous wastes	3-39
3.7.3 Nonradioactive solid wastes	3-39
3.8 TRANSMISSION FACILITIES	3-39
3.9 CONSTRUCTION PLAN	3-42
3.9.1 Schedules	3-42
3.9.2 Manpower	3-42
3.10 DECOMMISSIONING PLAN	3-43
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 3	3-44
4. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF SITE PREPARATION AND OF PLANT AND TRANSMISSION FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	4-1
4.1 IMPACTS ON LAND USE	4-1
4.1.1 Site preparation and plant construction	4-1
4.1.2 Transmission-line construction	4-3
4.1.3 Railroad spur construction	4-4
4.2 IMPACT ON WATER USE	4-4
4.3 ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS	4-5
4.3.1 Impact on terrestrial ecosystems	4-5
4.3.2 Impact on the aquatic environment	4-19
4.4 EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY	4-22
4.5 MEASURES AND CONTROLS TO LIMIT ADVERSE EFFECTS DURING CONSTRUCTION	4-29
4.5.1 Applicant Commitments	4-29
4.5.2 Staff Evaluation	4-30
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 4	4-32
5. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF OPERATION OF THE PLANT AND TRANSMISSION FACILITIES	5-1

	<u>Page</u>
5.1 IMPACTS ON LAND USE	5-1
5.1.1 Impact from plant operation	5-1
5.1.2 Impact due to transmission facilities	5-1
5.2 IMPACTS ON WATER USE	5-2
5.3 RADIOLOGICAL IMPACT ON BIOTA OTHER THAN MAN	5-3
5.3.1 Exposure pathways and dose-rate estimations	5-3
5.3.2 Dose assessment	5-7
5.4 RADIOLOGICAL IMPACT ON MAN	5-7
5.4.1 Radioactive materials released in liquid effluents	5-9
5.4.2 Radioactive materials released to the atmosphere	5-10
5.4.3 Direct radiation	5-11
5.4.4 Population doses from all sources	5-11
5.4.5 Occupational Radiation Exposure.	5-14
5.4.6 Evaluation of radiological impact	5-14
5.5 NONRADIOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS	5-15
5.5.1 Impact on terrestrial ecosystems	5-15
5.5.2 Effect on aquatic environment	5-17
5.6 EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY	5-25
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 5	5-28
6. ENVIRONMENTAL MEASUREMENTS AND MONITORING PROGRAMS	6-1
6.1 PREOPERATIONAL PROGRAMS	6-1
6.1.1 Radiological	6-1
6.1.2 Biological	6-1
6.1.3 Thermal	6-6
6.1.4 Chemical	6-6
6.2 OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS	6-6
6.2.1 Radiological	6-6
6.2.2 Biological	6-7
6.2.3 Thermal	6-7
6.2.4 Chemical	6-7
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 6	6-9
7. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF ACCIDENTS	7-1
7.1 POSTULATED PLANT ACCIDENTS INVOLVING RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS	7-1
7.2 TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENTS INVOLVING RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS	7-5
REFERENCE FOR SECTION 7.	7-7
8. THE REQUIREMENT FOR POWER	8-1
8.1 THE APPLICANT'S SYSTEM AND SERVICE AREA	8-1

	<u>Page</u>
8.2 HISTORICAL RECORD OF ELECTRIC POWER	
DEMAND AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION	8-5
8.3 PROJECTION OF ENERGY USE AND PEAK LOADS	8-11
8.4 PLANNED ADDITIONS TO THE APPLICANT'S SYSTEM	8-14
8.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	8-17
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 8	8-20
9. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT	9-1
9.1 ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES AND SITES	9-1
9.1.1 Alternatives not requiring new generating capacity	9-1
9.1.2 Energy-source options	9-3
9.1.3 Alternative sites	9-8
9.2 ALTERNATIVE PLANT DESIGNS	9-10
9.2.1 Cooling systems	9-10
9.2.2 Intake system	9-12
9.2.3 Discharge systems	9-13
9.2.4 Chemical system	9-17
9.2.5 Biocide system	9-17
9.2.6 Sanitary waste system	9-18
9.2.7 Transmission system	9-18
9.2.8 Transportation procedures	9-19
9.3 ALTERNATIVES FOR MINIMIZING EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY	9-19
9.4 CONCLUSIONS	9-20
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 9	9-22
10. CONCLUSIONS	10-1
10.1 UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS	10-1
10.1.1 Abiotic impacts	10-1
10.1.2 Biotic impacts	10-1
10.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY	10-6
10.2.1 Summary	10-6
10.2.2 Enhancement of productivity	10-6
10.2.3 Uses adverse to productivity	10-7
10.3 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES	10-10
10.3.1 Commitments considered	10-10
10.3.2 Biotic resources	10-11
10.3.3 Material resources	10-11
10.4 BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS	10-14
10.4.1 Benefit description of the proposed facility	10-14
10.4.2 Economic transfers associated with the proposed facility	10-16

	<u>Page</u>
10.4.3 Cost description of the proposed facility	10-18
10.4.4 Summary of benefit-cost balance	10-20
REFERENCES FOR SECTION 10	10-22
11. DISCUSSION OF COMMENTS ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT	11-1
11.1 ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION	11-3
11.2 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.	11-3
11.3 DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	11-4
11.4 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE.	11-8
11.5 DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR	11-8
11.6 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	11-12
11.7 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.	11-13
11.8 FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION	11-19
11.9 SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.	11-20
11.10 GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.	11-20
11.11 SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL.	11-21
11.12 SOUTH CAROLINA WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION.	11-23
11.13 LOWER SAVANNAH REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.	11-26
11.14 AUGUSTA ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY.	11-26
11.15 GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.	11-27
11.16 CENTRAL SAVANNAH RIVER AREA REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION.	11-28
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	SB-1

	<u>Page</u>
APPENDIX A. COMMON TREES OF THE VNP SITE	A-1
APPENDIX B. COMMON SHRUBS AND VINES OF THE VNP SITE	B-1
APPENDIX C. SPECIES OF OLD-FIELD PLANTS IN A ONE-YEAR OLD-FIELD AT VNP SITE	C-1
APPENDIX D. AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES EXPECTED TO BE FOUND ON THE VNP SITE	D-1
APPENDIX E. BIRDS EXPECTED TO BE FOUND ON THE VNP SITE	E-1
APPENDIX F. MAMMALS EXPECTED TO BE FOUND ON THE VNP SITE	F-1
APPENDIX G. PHYTOPLANKTON IN THE SAVANNAH RIVER NEAR VNP SITE	G-1
APPENDIX H. PROTOZOA IN THE SAVANNAH RIVER NEAR VNP SITE	H-1
APPENDIX I. MACROINVERTEBRATES IN SAVANNAH RIVER NEAR VNP SITE	I-1
APPENDIX J. FISHES IN THE SAVANNAH RIVER NEAR VNP SITE	J-1
APPENDIX K. ESTIMATES OF TIMBER: VOGTLE NUCLEAR PLANT SITE AND TRANSMISSION LINE CORRIDORS	K-1
APPENDIX L. COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.	L-1
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.	L-1
Department of Agriculture.	L-2
Department of Commerce	L-5
Department of Health, Education and Welfare.	L-10
Department of Housing and Urban Development.	L-11
Department of the Interior	L-14
Department of Transportation	L-21
Environmental Protection Agency.	L-23
Federal Power Commission	L-42
National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute.	L-47
Georgia Public Service Commission.	L-48
Governors Science Advisory Council, State of Georgia	L-50
State Clearinghouse, State of South Carolina	L-51

	<u>Page</u>
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control	L-52
South Carolina Water Resources Commission	L-54
Lower Savannah Regional Planning and Development Council	L-58
Beaufort - Jasper County Water Authority.	L-59
Augusta Archaeological Society.	L-60
State Clearinghouse, State of Georgia	L-66
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	L-66
Georgia Department of Transportation.	L-68
Central Savannah River Area Regional Planning and Development Commission.	L-70

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.1. Federal Power Commission's Southeast Regional Advisory Committee	1-2
1.2. The Southern Company System and its power- producing affiliates	1-3
1.3. Georgia Power Company service area and its divisions	1-4
2.1. Area within 50 miles of Vogtle Nuclear Plant	2-2
2.2. Area within 5 miles of Vogtle Nuclear Plant	2-3
2.3. Burke County and the Savannah River Plant	2-4
2.4. Area within the Vogtle Nuclear Plant site boundary	2-6
2.5. Population changes for Georgia Counties during the period 1960-1970	2-7
2.6. Population distribution in Georgia in 1970	2-8
2.7. The Central Savannah River Area Planning and Development Commission (CSRA)	2-9
2.8. Indian artifacts (potsherds) from Vogtle Nuclear Plant site (from surface of ground near proposed site of intake and discharge structures and barge slip)	2-18
2.9. Physiographic map of Georgia	2-19
2.10. The Savannah River Basin	2-22
2.11. Annual wind rose observed at the Savannah River Plant, March 1966-February 1968	2-29
2.12. Vegetation of the Vogtle Nuclear Plant site	2-37
2.13. Number of species of algae and protozoa collected during low flow at river mile 149	2-42

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
3.1. An artist's concept of Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-2
3.2. Vogtle site plot plan	3-3
3.3. A schematic representation of the main features of VNP's cooling and discharge systems	3-6
3.4. Vogtle Nuclear Plant intake structure	3-8
3.5. Vogtle Nuclear Plant discharge structure	3-10
3.6. Cross-section of maximum expected extent of 5 F° isotherm	3-16
3.7. Liquid radioactive waste systems for Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-21
3.8. Gaseous radioactive waste systems for Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-27
3.9. Approximate routes of transmission lines required for Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-41
3.10. Existing 230-kV transmission line towers at the Vogtle site	3-42
4.1. An example of erosion at the Vogtle site resulting from road construction	4-6
4.2. Effects of deforestation on ecosystem processes in Watershed Number 2 in the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest	4-13
4.3. Local payroll, new residents in Burke and Richmond Counties, and taxable evaluation during construction .	4-23
5.1. Generalized exposure pathways for organisms other than man	5-4
5.2. Generalized exposure pathways to man	5-8
5.3. Summary of residual-chlorine toxicity data	5-20
6.1. Aquatic-studies stations on the Savannah River	6-5

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
8.1. Distribution of power stations (and their capacities) and power service areas in Georgia that are not operated or served by the Georgia Power Company . . .	8-2
8.2. Distribution of Georgia Power Company power stations	8-3
8.3. Monthly peak power demands	8-6
8.4. Georgia Power Company divisional annual sales	8-8
8.5. Historical growth in peak power demand	8-9
8.6. Historical growth in annual electrical energy demand	8-10
8.7. Predicted peak power demands for several service areas	8-12
8.8. Predicted annual electrical energy demand for several regions	8-13
8.9. Comparison of predicted power demand values for Georgia Power Company service area	8-15
8.10. Sites of planned power plants in Georgia for the period 1972-1985	8-16
8.11. Power-producing capacity planned by Georgia Power Company	8-19
9.1. Thermal plumes from surface discharges from Vogtle Nuclear Plant into the Savannah River	9-15
9.2. Thermal plume, subsurface discharge from Vogtle Nuclear Plant into Savannah River water	9-16

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.1. Federal and State environmentally related authorizations required for the construction and operation of Vogtle Nuclear Plant	1-6
2.1. Agricultural survey of Burke County	2-13
2.2. Total number of vessel trips on the Savannah River below Augusta, 1958-1969	2-15
2.3. Chemical composition of Savannah River water	2-21
2.4. Savannah River hydrology	2-24
2.5. Representative chemical compositions of well water from the Tuscaloosa aquifer	2-26
2.6. Climatology, Bush Field Weather Station near Augusta	2-27
2.7. Summary of the preferred habitats and foods of 136 vertebrate species commonly occurring in the area of the site	2-38
3.1. Acreage occupied by plant facilities	3-4
3.2. Staff's calculation of the 5 F° mixing zone under several discharge conditions	3-17
3.3. Principal assumptions used in calculating releases of radioactive effluents	3-24
3.4. Calculated releases of radioactive materials in liquid effluents from Alvin W. Vogtle Plant	3-25
3.5. Calculated annual release of radioactive material in gaseous effluent from Alvin W. Vogtle Plant (per unit)	3-26
3.6. Chemicals and wastes in the cooling water discharge to the Savannah River from the Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-32

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
3.7. Concentrations of chemicals and wastes from the Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-33
3.8. Construction force for the Vogtle Nuclear Plant	3-42a
4.1. Acreages, mileage, and right-of-way widths for VNP transmission lines	4-1
4.2. Summary of the acreage of the various community types of the VNP site	4-11
4.3. Transmission line rights-of-way required for Vogtle Nuclear Plant	4-16
4.4. Estimated sawtimber and growing stock losses by volume for transmission line rights-of-way	4-18
4.5. Estimated timber growth and removal per year (1971) for transmission line rights-of-way	4-18
4.6. Taxable evaluations in Burke County	4-27
4.7. Taxes and tax rate in Burke County in 1972	4-27
5.1. Freshwater bioaccumulation factors	5-5
5.2. Annual individual doses from liquid effluents	5-9
5.3. Annual individual doses due to the gaseous effluents	5-10
5.4. Cumulative population, average annual cumulative dose, and average annual total-body dose in selected annuli about the plant	5-11
5.5. Environmental impact of transportation of fuel and waste to and from a typical light-water-cooled nuclear power reactor	5-13
5.6. Estimated 1977 annual population doses	5-13
5.7. Estimated taxes and tax rates	5-27
7.1. Classification of postulated accidents and occurrences	7-2

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
7.2. Summary of radiological consequences of postulated accidents	7-3
7.3. Environmental impact of accidents during transportation of fuel and waste to and from the Vogtle Nuclear Plant	7-5
8.1. Power-producing capacity of the Georgia Power Company in 1972	8-4
8.2. Peak power demand of urban load centers in 1970	8-7
8.3. Distribution of electrical energy by class of use (1970)	8-7
8.4. Additional power-producing capacity planned between 1972 and 1985 by Georgia Power Company	8-18
9.1. Estimated capital and operating costs for a nuclear-, coal-, or oil-power plant consisting of four 1,159-MWe units	9-4
10.1. Unavoidable environmental impacts	10-2
10.2. Estimated resources required to support the Vogtle Nuclear Plant (four units) for 40 years at 80% capacity	10-13
10.3. Irretrievable materials contained in fuel and control rods expended in the Vogtle Nuclear Plant (four units) in 40 years	10-14
10.4. Benefits from the proposed facility	10-15
10.5. Economic transfers associated with the proposed facility	10-17
10.6. Costs of the proposed facility	10-20

can be highly destructive of vegetation, especially grasses and annual herbaceous plants. In addition to the loss of vegetation as such, the removal may result in erosion and thus in a general decline in productivity of eroded areas through loss of soils and nutrients. The applicant discourages the use of transmission-line corridors by such vehicles but believes that State-level legislation is required for effective control of this problem.

The applicant has a right-of-way land-management program that will pay as much as \$75/acre to the landowner to plant the cleared right-of-way in pasture, crops, or game-food plots. Planting is limited to grasses, crops, and low-growing shrubs and trees that will not reach a height which will hinder the operation of the transmission lines. The program is actively publicized through advertisement and is administered by GPC foresters. Each acre planted can be maintained by the property owner in a manner both suitable to him and acceptable to the applicant. The use of easements enables property owners to continue to use their land for agricultural or other purposes that do not interfere with operation and maintenance of the transmission lines.

Ozone is recognized to be a major component of the photochemical air pollution-oxidant complex. The National Primary Air Quality Standard for photochemical oxidants, as issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, is 80 ppb (by volume) maximum arithmetic mean for a 1-hr concentration not to be exceeded more than once per year. The toxicity of ozone to vegetation is well-documented; susceptible species show symptoms of damage from exposures to ozone in concentrations as low as 30 ppb.^{16,17} One source of ozone production is believed to be associated with the coronal discharges of high-voltage transmission lines. However, recent studies^{18,19} have shown that no measurable concentrations of ozone (less than 2 ppb) are formed due to the presence and operation of transmission lines that carry up to 765 kV. High-voltage lines for VNP will carry a maximum of 500 kV. Any possible deleterious effects on plants directly beneath these lines and on those adjacent to the corridors which could be affected by chronic exposure to ozone drift have not been identified and are expected by the staff to be undetectable.

5.5.2 Effect on aquatic environment

Several sources of potential adverse impacts on aquatic environments are associated with the operation of nuclear-power-generating facilities. The extent of these impacts depends on the availability of water for cooling and on the mode of operation of the plant (once-through vs closed-cycle cooling). These impacts are associated with both the plant intake (entrainment and impingement) and the release