



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 19, 2012

Mr. David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue South
Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE AREA UNDER
EVALUATION FOR THE GRAND GULF NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1,
LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Mr. Bernhart:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the staff) is reviewing an application to renew the operating license for Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Unit 1 (GGNS). The application for renewal was submitted to the NRC by Entergy Operations, Inc. (Entergy) in a letter dated October 28, 2011, pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 54 (10 CFR Part 54).

The purpose of this letter is threefold: (1) to inform you of the NRC's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process and associated public meetings for the GGNS license renewal review; (2) to request your comments pertaining to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; and (3) to request your concurrence with the NRC's list of Federally endangered and threatened species that may be affected by the proposed GGNS license renewal.

The NRC's Federal action is the decision whether to renew GGNS's operating license for an additional 20 years. GGNS is a single unit boiling-water reactor plant using a closed-cycle cooling water system that withdraws make-up water from the Mississippi River Alluvium groundwater aquifer through Ranney wells. The proposed action includes the use and continued maintenance of existing plant facilities and transmission lines. Entergy states that it has no plans for refurbishment or replacement activities to support renewal of the operating license.

GGNS is located approximately 25 miles south of Vicksburg in Claiborne County, Mississippi. The 2,100-acre GGNS site consists primarily of woodlands and former farms as well as two lakes (see Figure 1 of Enclosure 1). The land in the vicinity of the GGNS site is mostly rural. Entergy constructed three 500-kV transmission lines to connect GGNS to the power grid (see Figure 2 of Enclosure 1). The Baxter-Wilson line runs north for 22 miles from GGNS to the Baxter-Wilson substation just south of Vicksburg in Warren County. This line traverses rural, sparsely populated areas used for agriculture and forestry. The Franklin line runs southeast for 43.6 miles to the Franklin substation near McCall Creek in northeastern Franklin County. This line traverses the Bayou Pierre and Homochitto Rivers and Homochitto National Forest. Both transmission lines have a 200-foot-wide right-of-way. The third line is 300 feet long and is contained within the developed portion of the GGNS site. This line runs from the GGNS Unit 1 Turbine Building to the GGNS switchyard.

NRC's NEPA Scoping Process and Public Meetings

The NRC has established that, as part of the staff's review of any nuclear power plant license renewal action, a site-specific supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) to its "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants," NUREG-1437, will be prepared under the provisions of 10 CFR Part 51, the NRC's regulations that implement NEPA. The SEIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife.

The NRC plans to hold two public license renewal overview and environmental scoping meetings on January 31, 2012. The first session will be held in the afternoon, and an identical session will be held later that evening. Both sessions will be held at the Port Gibson City Hall, 1005 College Street, Port Gibson, MS 39150. The afternoon session will be from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM, and the evening session will be from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. In addition, the NRC plans to hold a one hour open house prior to each meeting to answer public questions. You and your staff are invited to attend the public meetings and open houses.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

To support the SEIS preparation process, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended.

Endangered Species Act

To ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the NRC staff will consider effects of the proposed license renewal on Federally listed species. The NRC has prepared the enclosed table (Enclosure 3) of Federally listed species that may occur in the vicinity of GGNS for your concurrence per 50 CFR 402(b)(2)(c).

Prior to submitting their application to the NRC, Entergy corresponded with your office regarding Federally listed species by letter dated February 4, 2011. You replied by letter dated June 14, 2011. Both the February 4, 2011, letter from Entergy and your June 14, 2011, response letter are enclosed for your reference (Enclosures 1 and 2). The NRC staff will also consider potential adverse impacts to State-listed species as part of its review. The NRC staff requests any information your office may have on the occurrence of Federal or State-listed species on or in the vicinity of GGNS to aid the staff's review process.

D. Bernhart

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To ensure that your reply to this letter contributes to our review process in a timely manner please respond no later than March 15, 2012.

The GGNS LRA is available on the internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/gg1.html>. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact David Drucker, License Renewal Project Manager, by phone at 301-415-6223 or by e-mail at David.Drucker@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. J. Wrona', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David J. Wrona, Chief
Projects Branch 2
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-416

Enclosures:
As stated

cc w/encls: Listserv



March 4, 2011

Mr. David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue South
Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701

RE: Grand Gulf Nuclear Station
License Renewal Application

Dear Mr. Bernhart,

In 2011, Entergy plans to apply to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for renewal of the operating license for the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station (GGNS), which is located in Claiborne County, Mississippi on the east bank of the Mississippi River at River Mile 406, approximately 25 miles south of Vicksburg, Mississippi and 37 miles north-northeast of Natchez, Mississippi. The existing operating license for GGNS was issued for a 40-year term that expires in 2024. If the NRC approves the application, Entergy will then have the option to continue operating GGNS until 2044. In conjunction with this effort, Enercon is gathering information on Entergy's behalf relative to this license renewal project.

The NRC requires that the license renewal application for GGNS include an environmental report assessing potential environmental impacts from operation during the license renewal term. One of these potential environmental impacts would be the effect of license renewal on threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat located on the GGNS site, its immediate environs (6-mile radius), and transmission line corridors constructed for purposes of connecting the plant to the regional transmission grid. Accordingly, the NRC requires that the environmental report for each license renewal application assess such a potential effect (10 CFR 51.53). Later, during its review of the license renewal environmental report pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the NRC may request information from your office to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Enercon is contacting you now in order to obtain input regarding issues that may need to be addressed in the GGNS license renewal environmental report, and to assist Entergy in identifying any information your staff believes would be helpful to expedite NRC's review.

The 2,100 acre GGNS site consists primarily of woodlands and former farms as well as two lakes, Hamilton Lake and Gin Lake (see Figure 1). The land in the vicinity of the GGNS site is mostly rural. There are two transmission corridors containing a single-circuit 500-kV transmission lines that were constructed for purposes of connecting

Mr. David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
Page 2 of 2

GGNS to the regional electricity grid (see Figure 2). These transmission line corridors are considered by the NRC to be within the scope of its environmental reviews for the renewal of the GGNS operating license. Entergy's Transmission group owns and operates these two lines. The total length of the two corridors is approximately 66 miles, and crosses Claiborne, Warren, Jefferson and Franklin Counties in Mississippi.

Based on a review of information available, Enercon did not identify any threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitats under the jurisdiction of the NOAA fisheries service at the station site, the immediate environs, or the transmission line corridors (see Figures 1 and 2). However, even in the absence of these species or designated critical habitats, Entergy does not expect GGNS operations during the license renewal term to adversely affect any threatened and endangered species or critical habitats since there are no plans to alter current operations during the 20-year license renewal period, and any maintenance activities necessary to support continued operation of GGNS would be limited to currently developed areas of the site. Although administrative procedural controls are in place to comply with applicable state and federal laws to preserve biological resources when facility expansion or land disturbance activities do occur, no expansion is planned or needed in support of license renewal. In addition, Entergy's Transmission group has established maintenance procedures for transmission lines that involve minimal disturbance of land, wetlands, and streams and are protective of threatened and endangered species, and designated critical habitats when present.

After your review of the information provided in this letter, I would appreciate you sending a letter detailing any concerns you may have about potential impacts as a result of license renewal to threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat under your jurisdiction on the GGNS property, immediate environs, or along the transmission line corridors, or alternatively, confirming our conclusion that no species or habitats under the jurisdiction of NOAA exists, and thereby no associated impacts. Entergy will include copies of this letter and your response in the environmental report submitted to the NRC as part of the GGNS license renewal application.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (918) 665-7693 or through my email address, jthomas@enercon.com. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Thank you,



James A. Thomas
Manager, Electric Utilities Environmental Services

Attachment – 6-Mile Map
50-Mile Map

cc: Rick Buckley (Entergy)

Figure 1

Location of GGNS, 6-Mile Radius Map

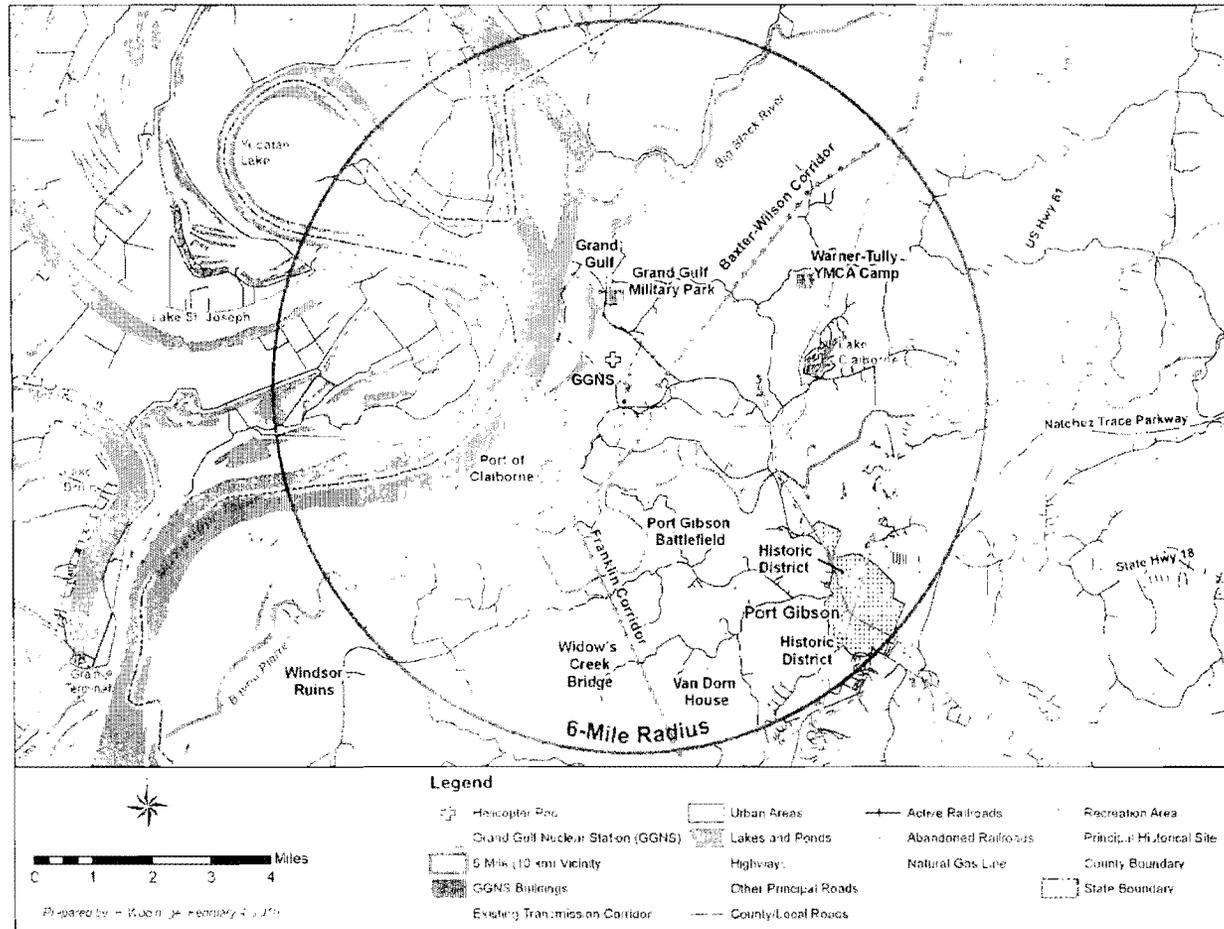
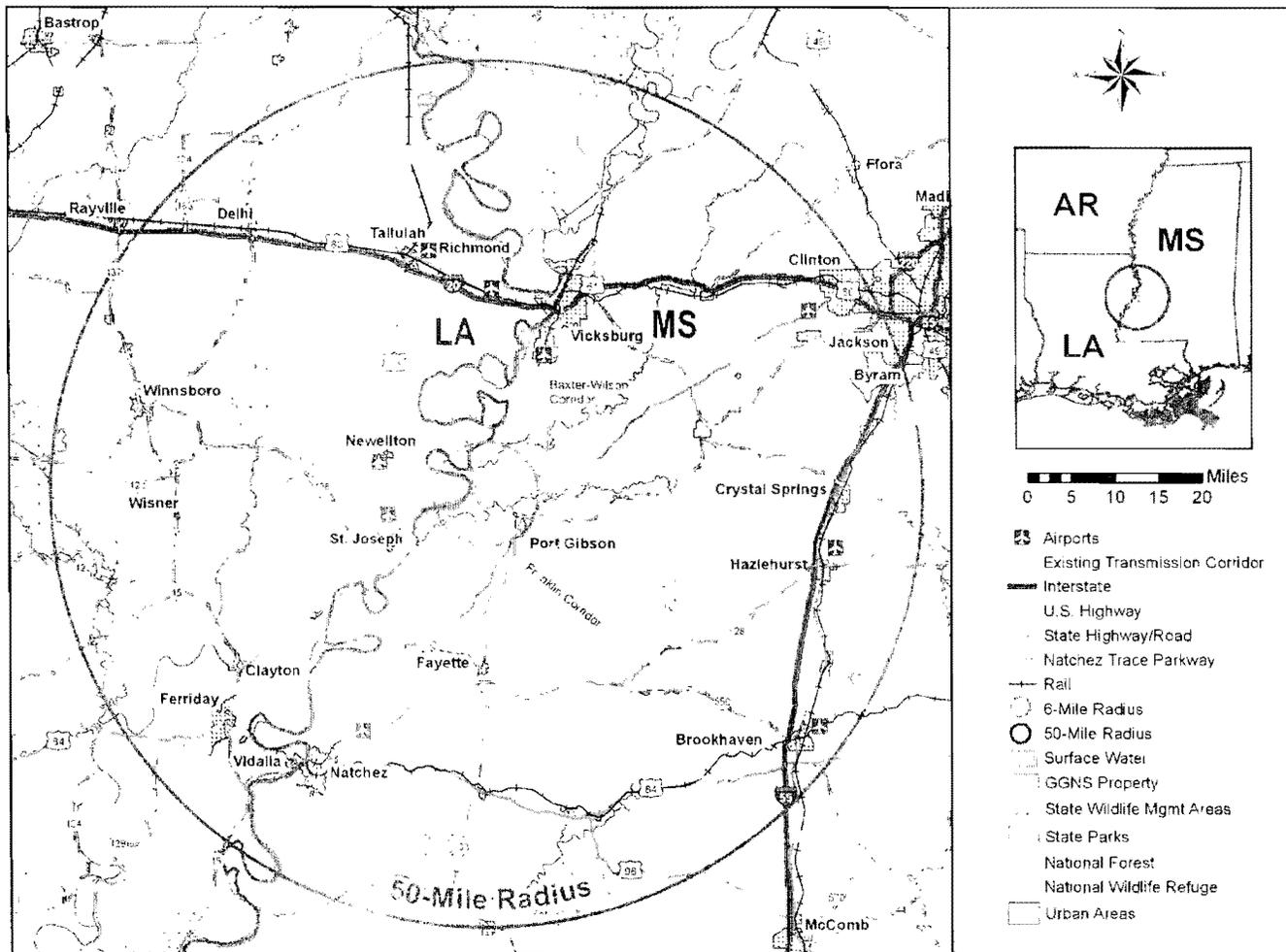


Figure 2

Location of GGNS, 50-Mile Radius Map





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St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505
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F/SER31:NB

Mr. James A. Thomas
Manager, Electric Utilities Environmental Services
Enercon
5100 East Skelly Drive, Suite 450
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135

JUN 14 2011

Dear Mr. Thomas:

This is in response to your letter, received by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on March 4, 2011, regarding the operating license renewal for the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station near Port Gibson, Mississippi. The current 40-year operating license expires in 2024. Enercon is gathering information on Entergy's behalf relative to this license renewal project.

The Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) was listed jointly by NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as threatened on September 30, 1991 (56 FR 49653). Gulf sturgeon are known to inhabit the Mississippi River and have been collected upstream of the project site in the region of Vicksburg, Mississippi¹. The project area is not within designated Gulf sturgeon critical habitat (50 CFR 226.214).

Pursuant to the jurisdictional responsibilities outlined in the final rule designating Gulf sturgeon critical habitat (68 FR 13400), the USFWS would be the lead agency for activities on the Mississippi River. Therefore, consultation regarding potential impacts to Gulf sturgeon from the license renewal of the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station should be coordinated with Karen Harrington, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1601 Balboa Avenue, Panama City, Florida 32405-3721 (tel:850/769-0552).



Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide comments on the project. We look forward to further cooperation with you on other projects to ensure the conservation of our threatened and endangered marine species and designated critical habitat. If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Bailey, ESA Consultant, at (727) 824-5336, or by e-mail at Nicole.Bailey@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Bernhart", written in a cursive style.

David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources

File: 1514-22.m
Ref: T/SER/2011/01889

¹ Ross, S.T. 2001. The Inland Fishes of Mississippi. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.

**Table of Federally Listed Species in the Vicinity of Grand Gulf Nuclear Station
and its Associated Transmission Lines**

Scientific	Name	Status ^(a)	County(ies) of Occurrence ^(b)			
			Claiborne	Franklin	Jefferson	Warren
Birds						
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	red-cockaded woodpecker	E		x	x	
<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	least tern (interior pop.)	E	x		x	x
Clams						
<i>Potamilus capax</i>	fat pocketbook	E	x		x	x
<i>Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica</i>	rabbitsfoot	C	x			x
Fish						
<i>Etheostoma rubrum</i>	bayou darter	T	x			
<i>Scaphirhynchus albus</i>	pallid sturgeon	E	x		x	x
Mammals						
<i>Ursus americanus luteolus</i>	Louisiana black bear	T	x	x	x	x

^(a) C = candidate; E = endangered; T = threatened

^(b) Grand Gulf Nuclear Station (GGNS) is located in Claiborne County, Mississippi. The transmission lines associated with GGNS traverse Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, and Warren Counties.

Data source: [FWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Find Endangered Species Database. Available at <<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>> (accessed 13 December 2011).

D. Bernhart

- 3 -

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Sincerely,

/RA/

David J. Wrona, Chief
Projects Branch 2
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-416

Enclosures:
As stated

cc w/encls: Listserv

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Letter to D. Bernhart from D. Wrona dated January 19, 2012

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF FEDERAL PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE
AREA UNDER EVALUATION FOR THE GRAND GULF NUCLEAR STATION,
UNIT 1, LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION REVIEW

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