

# INTRA-LABORATORY CORRESPONDENCE

OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY

April 9, 1984

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TO: J. F. McBrayer  
FROM: R. L. Kroodsmas  
SUBJECT: Plant Vogtle: Report on Site Visit, March 21-22, 1984

On March 21, 1984, I participated in a meeting with NRC, ORNL, and Georgia Power Company staff at Plant Vogtle, south of Augusta, Georgia. The meeting in the morning was followed by a guided tour of the plant facilities, which are currently under construction. Following a noon lunch, I spent approximately one hour with G. LaRoche and others inspecting from helicopter portions of the power-line routes. The flight covered the portion of the Vogtle west line that had been constructed, which amounts to about half of the total route, and all of the Vogtle-Augusta route. We did not fly over the Vogtle-Thalman route, on which no construction of lines had yet occurred, or the power-line route that remains to be selected in South Carolina. On this flight, I was impressed by the large number of bays in the area, the lack of impact of the power lines on the bays (the lines crossed wetlands in only a few areas, which appeared to be of little significance), and the great extent to which the lines avoided forests and passed through or along the borders of agricultural fields and pastures. Little clearing of forests was required.

Following the helicopter flight, G. LaRoche, Georgia Power Company staff, and I inspected several areas on the site, including a reclaimed borrow area that had been satisfactorily revegetated; Mallard Pond, which had very clear waters and appeared unaffected by plant construction; a cleared and revegetated portion of a power-line corridor; areas where control burns had been conducted to limit the buildup of litter and prevent damaging wildfires; and a portion of the forested floodplain along the Savannah River.

That evening I attended a public meeting held by NRC in Waynesboro. Although the meeting lasted three hours, no one commented on topics that I will be covering in the environmental statement.

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On the morning of March 22, 1984, a final meeting of NRC, Georgia Power Company, and ORNL staff was held at Plant Vogtle. I spent most of the morning with G. LaRoche and several Georgia Power Company staff inspecting maps of the power-line routes. The Georgia Power Company staff had marked the routes on U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 minute topographic maps with green forest overprint. As on the helicopter flight, I was impressed with the extent to which impacts on wetlands and forests had been minimized. Rivers and streams were crossed in apparently appropriate areas at roughly right angles so that a minimum of riparian habitat was affected. The lines did not pass through bottomlands parallel to streams or rivers. In one area, the Vogtle-Thalman line passed for about 7.5 miles between agricultural fields and bottomland swamp forest along Brier Creek. Because of irrigation of agricultural fields, in many cases it was necessary to avoid the interiors of fields where the lines would interfere with irrigation equipment. In another area, the Vogtle-Thalman route passed for about 3 miles down the middle of Moon Change Swamp, a large wetland about 3 miles long and 1.5 miles wide (on the Blue Springs Landing 7.5 minute topographic map GA-SC). This line route crosses the Altamaha River a short distance (less than 0.25 mile) north of the Altamaha State Waterfowl Management area. I will investigate the significance of these areas during the remainder of the environmental review.

Also at this final meeting, we discussed the cooling tower drift assessment and the current use of land on the site. The applicant agreed to provide additional up-to-date information on these topics.

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→ cc: Gerry LaRoche, NRC