

August 22, 2007

Mr. David Bernhart  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR A LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES AND ESSENTIAL FISH  
HABITAT WITHIN THE AREA UNDER EVALUATION FOR THE VOGTLE  
ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2, LICENSE RENEWAL  
APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Mr. Bernhart:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc., for the renewal of the operating licenses for Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2 (VEGP). VEGP is located on the southwest side of the Savannah River in eastern Burke County Georgia. It is approximately 15 miles east-northeast of Waynesboro, Georgia, and 26 miles southeast of Augusta, Georgia. As part of the review of the license renewal application, the NRC is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The SEIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to marine resources and habitat. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973; as amended, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934; as amended; and the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996.

The proposed action is to renew the facility operating licenses for VEGP for an additional 20 years beyond the expiration of the current operating license. The proposed action would include the use and continued maintenance of existing plant facilities and transmission lines. The VEGP industrial facility covers approximately 3,169-acres. Enclosures 1 and 2 provide a general overview of the site location and site layout.

VEGP is equipped with two cooling towers that withdraw makeup water from and discharge it to the Savannah River. The river water intake system includes the intake canal, a four-bay intake structure, four intake pumps, condensers, two natural draft cooling towers, and an underground single port discharge pipe into the Savannah River.

Approximately 360 miles of corridor that occupy approximately 7,200 acres are within the scope of review for this action. The Environmental Report lists six transmission lines that Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc., built to connect VEGP to the transmission system (Enclosure 3):

- Scherer – This 500-kV line runs generally westward to Plant Scherer, north of Macon, Georgia. Built in 1986, it is 154 miles long and in a corridor that is mostly 150 feet wide, but up to 400 feet wide in some locations.

- West McIntosh (Thalmann) – Running 69 miles to the south, this 500-kV line, in a 150-foot wide corridor, connects VEGP to the West McIntosh substation near Plant McIntosh, just north of Savannah, Georgia. It then continues for 90 miles to its termination at the Thalmann substation near Brunswick.
- Goshen (Black) and Goshen (White) – The two 230-kV Goshen lines connect to the Goshen substation approximately 19 corridor miles from VEGP. The corridor is 275 feet wide and the lines were built in 1986. These two lines, plus 17 miles of the Augusta Newsprint line, share the corridor.
- Augusta Newsprint – The Augusta Newsprint substation is approximately 20 corridor miles from VEGP. The corridor is 275 feet wide until the 230-kV Augusta Newsprint line diverges from the Goshen lines at 17 miles and is 100 to 125 feet wide for the remaining distance.
- SCE&G – Built in 1986, this 230-kV line runs north and east for 4.5 miles to cross the Savannah River and then an additional 17 miles to a substation operated by SCE&G. The corridor in South Carolina is 100 feet wide and the Georgia segment is 125 feet wide.
- Wilson – This 1.4-mile long transmission line is wholly contained on Georgia Power Company property. It connects VEGP to Plant Wilson at 230-kV. The corridor is 150 feet wide. Enclosure 3 shows the transmission system of interest.

To support the SEIS preparation process and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the NRC requests a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of VEGP and its associated transmission line right-of-way. In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. Also, in support of the SEIS preparation and to ensure compliance with Section 305 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the NRC requests a list of essential fish habitat that has been designated in the vicinity of the VEGP site and its associated transmission line corridors.

The NRC staff plans to hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on September 27, 2007, at the August Technical College Waynesboro Campus, 216 Highway 24 South, Waynesboro, GA. The first meeting will convene at 1:30 p.m. and will continue until 4:30 p.m., as necessary. The second meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the first meeting, and will continue until 10:00 p.m., as necessary. In addition, during the week of October 15, 2007, the NRC staff plans to conduct a site audit at VEGP. You and your staff are invited to attend both the public meetings and the site audit. Your office will receive a copy of the draft SEIS along with a request for comments. The anticipated publication date for the draft SEIS is May 2008.

D. Bernhart

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If you have any questions regarding the NRC staff review of this license renewal application, please contact the NRC Environmental Project Manager, Mr. J.P. Leous, at 301-415-2864 or via e-mail at [jpl1@nrc.gov](mailto:jpl1@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

***/RA/***

Rani Franovich, Branch Chief  
Environmental Branch B  
Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-424 and 50-425

Enclosures:

1. 50 mile radius
2. Site layout
3. Transmission line map

cc w/encls: See next page

D. Bernhart

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Sincerely,

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Rani Franovich, Branch Chief  
Environmental Branch B  
Division of License Renewal  
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Docket Nos. 50-424 and 50-425

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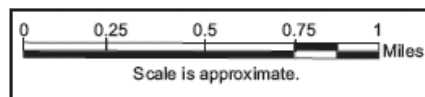
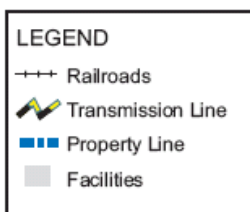
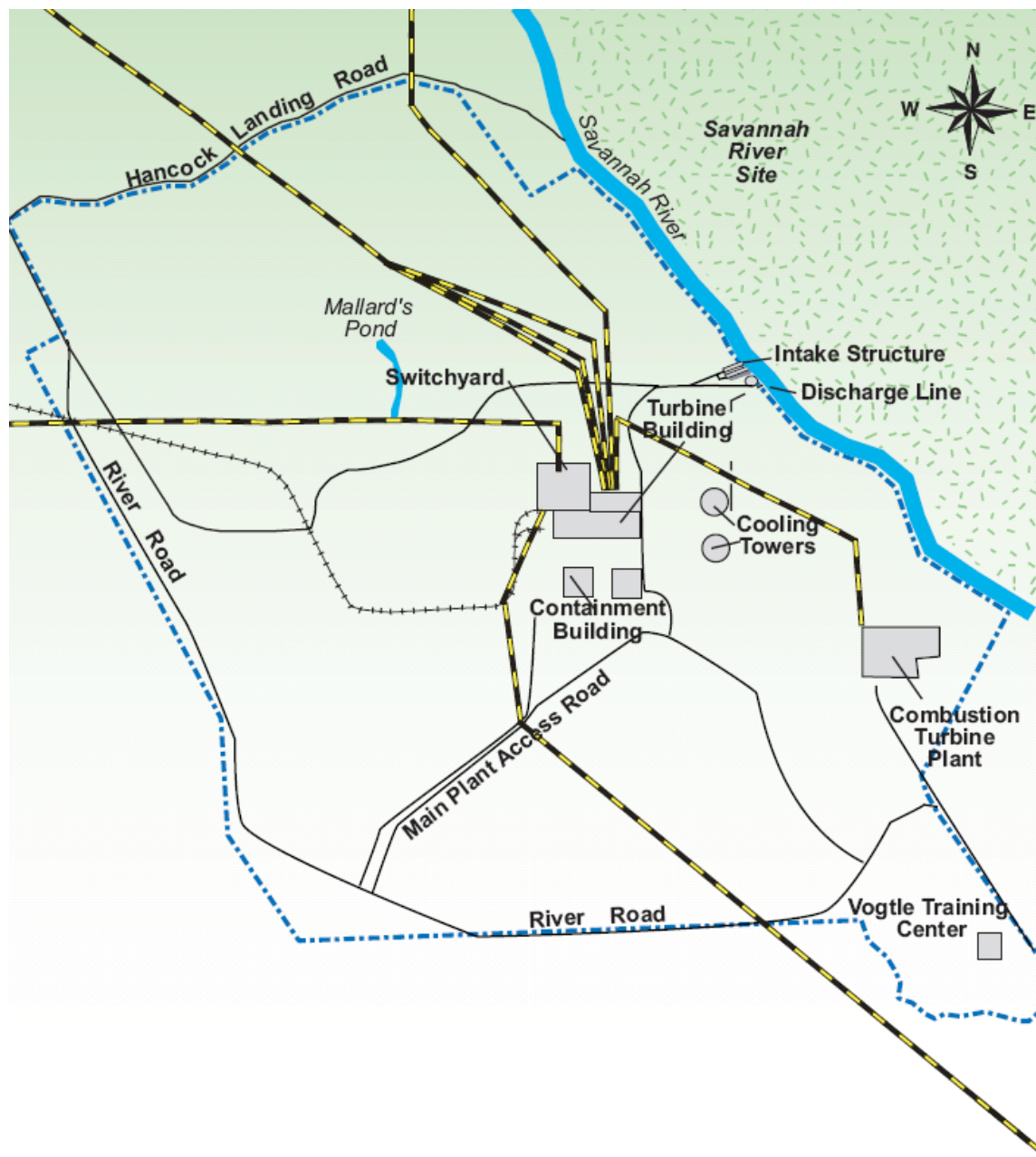
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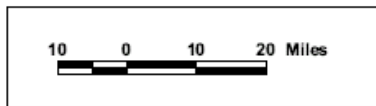
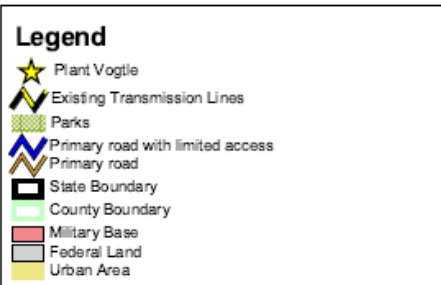
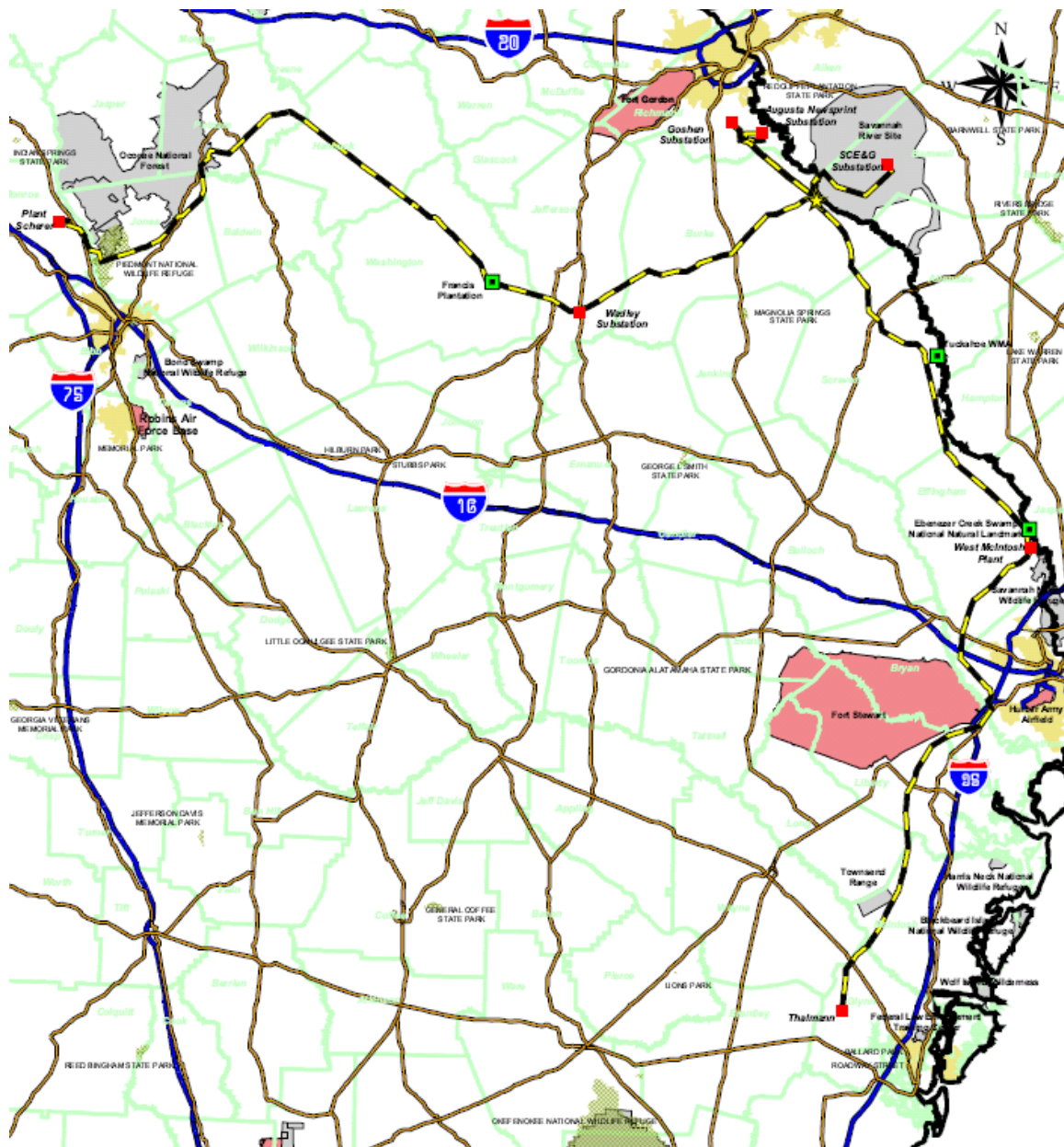
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