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 RECIP. NAME RECIPIENT AFFILIATION
 Rules & Directives Review Branch (Post 920323)

SUBJECT: Comment on environ scoping process for Duke Energy Corp
 Oconee Nuclear Station in Oconee County, SC.

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November 10, 1998

DS09
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QFR 50257

Sept. 21, 1998

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Washington, DC 20555-0001

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RULES & DIR. BRANCH
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Dear Sir/Madam:

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) would like to submit these comments as part of the Environmental Scoping Process for Duke Energy Corporation's Oconee Nuclear Station in Oconee County, South Carolina.

NRCS is an agency of the USDA. Our mission is to help people conserve, improve and sustain natural resources. Over the past decade our agency has partnered with Duke Energy in planning, implementing and promoting environmental stewardship.

A leading example is the cooperative work to prevent and control soil erosion at work sites in the S.C. mountains and foothills. Duke has always sought input from experts in our agency and other resource agencies prior to beginning any major project. In our case, we have worked as partners to develop plans related to erosion control and to provide technical assistance regarding vegetation management. Our comprehensive approach to erosion control included installation of good stable ground covers on new and established ROW's and power plant sites, establishment of wildlife enhancing vegetation plantings into the general ROW program, and experimentation with native species vegetation to determine if these might be used in place of the non-native species presently being effectively utilized throughout much of the southeast.

These successes led us to further cooperate on a major demonstration area (Tater Hill - see enclosed brochure) that illustrated for landowners and land managers how land management, erosion control, and wildlife enhancement can be cost effectively applied in a manner that also provides sound resource management.

Additionally, site employees of the Oconee Nuclear Station have worked in partnership with the NRCS, other agencies and conservation groups as part of a major project to protect and enhance natural resources of the site.

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The Natural Conservation Service works hand-in-hand with
the American people to conserve natural resources on private lands.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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These partnerships have been an effective tool for the sound management of natural resources, both at Duke's project sites and ROW's and at other locations in this area. In addition, the successful resource management applications have provided highly visible examples to the general public.

Duke's role as a resource partner and as a leading industry in natural resource management has been recognized through a series of awards, including:

- **1986 Special Commendation Award from the South Carolina Land Resources Commission and the State Association of Conservation Districts** for outstanding erosion and sediment control measures implemented during the construction phase of the company's Bad Creek Hydroelectric Project.
- **1987 Business Conservation Leadership Award from the National Association of Conservation Districts** for setting an industry standard in wise land management and soil and water conservation; for the exemplary approach to minimizing the environmental impact on its constructions sites, generating facilities and transmission lines; and for being one of the first electric utilities in the nation to provide for its own environmental program.
- **1987 Merit Award from the Soil Conservation Society of America** for interest in and exemplary service to land and water conservation. The company was cited for its successful erosion control work at the Bad Creek Hydroelectric Station.
- **1994 Merit Award from the National Soil and Water Conservation Society** for success in building the Bad Creek Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Station in the mountains of South Carolina with minimal environmental impacts.
- **1995 Environmental Achievement Award from the International Erosion Control Association** for environmentally sensitive management practices used during the construction of the 161KV Nantahala-Marble Transmission Line. In addition to minimal sediment production, the project was cited for low visual impact in areas of high scenic value.

The successes realized by the working partnership between the NRCS and Duke are too numerous to list. I thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments and trust you will find them helpful to the Environmental Scoping Process for Duke's Oconee Nuclear Station.

Sincerely,



Dennis L. Bauknight, CPESC
District Conservationist

The Tater Hill Demonstration Project was established in December of 1995 and will be an ongoing project to show the compatibility of wildlife and forest management. Visitors are encouraged to view the area and witness first hand integrated timber and wildlife management.

The project has received two distinguished awards: The 1997 South Carolina Wildlife Federation Forest Award and the South Carolina Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation's 1997 Project of the Year Award.

The project area will be open to the general public for self guided tours. Educational signs are posted of the practices along the access road.

Contact any of the project cooperators for more information.

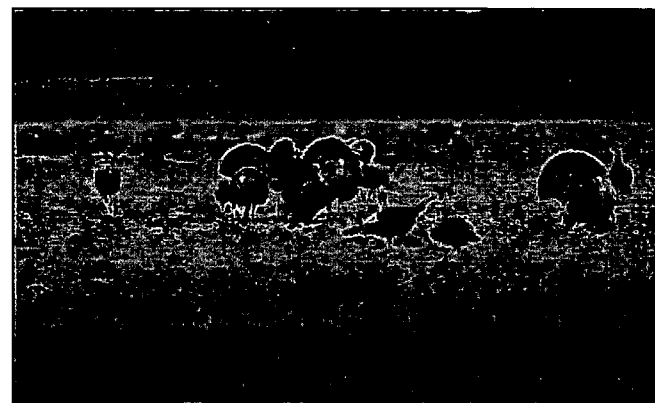


PROJECT COOPERATORS

CRESCENT RESOURCES, INC.
DUKE ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION
DUKE POWER PUMPED STORAGE
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
OCONEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OCONEE COUNTY FOREST LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION
S.C. CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION
S.C. DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
S.C. FORESTRY COMMISSION
USDA - FOREST SERVICE

TATER HILL

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT



TomEvansPhoto/NationalWildTurkeyFederation

Partnering Forest Management with Wildlife

December 1995 - March 1998

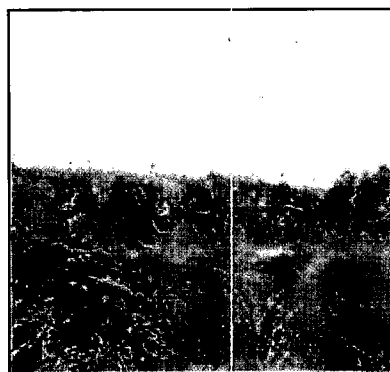
There are many ways to manage a forest. Some landowners are more concerned about timber production while others may be more interested in enhancing wildlife habitat. The purpose of the demonstration area is to show landowners that there is another alternative to managing their land. By integrating sound forest management practices with knowledge of habitat requirements for targeted species, it is possible to have the best of both worlds - a productive working commercial forest and a diverse habitat to maximize the diversity of wildlife species. Foresters and wildlife biologists working together have learned that through careful planning and implementation of various harvesting and cultural techniques it is possible to create a diverse habitat that will support a wide range of wildlife species. Early successional forests, old growth forests and intermediate aged forests each supports its own array of plant and animal communities. This is the message that the cooperators want to convey to forest landowners.



LINEAR WILDLIFE STRIPS

Linear Wildlife Strips Using Roadside Daylighting Techniques - Clearing parallel strips along woodland access roads allows more sunlight to reach the roadbed. This provides food for wildlife and keeps the road drier.

Power Line Rights of Way - are managed for desirable vegetation by planting and periodic mowing. Low growing vegetation provides habitat for ground nesting birds and travel corridors for upland species.

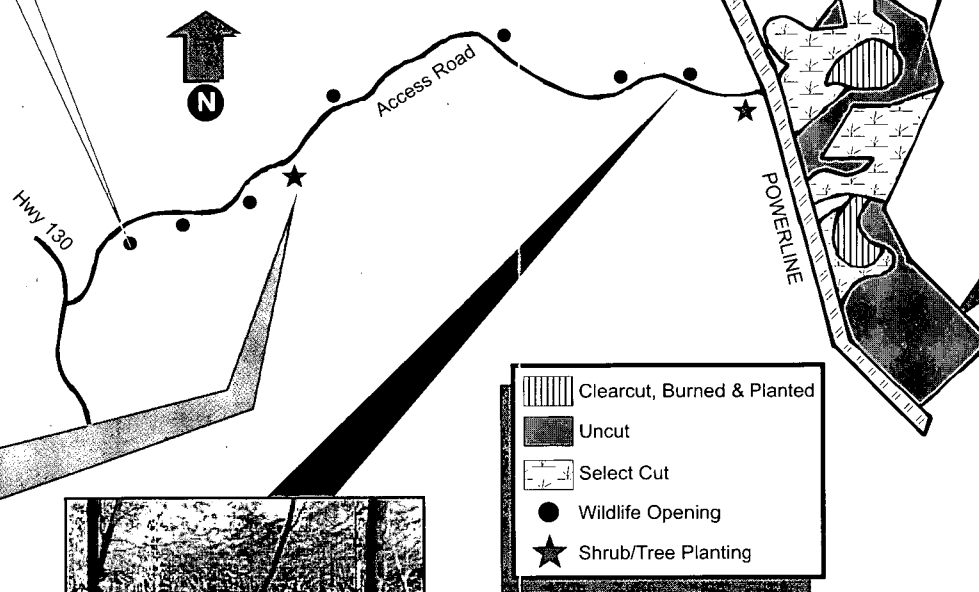


POWER LINE RIGHTS OF WAY



OCONEE BELL

Colonies of the unique Oconee Bell were documented in the project area. Using a Global Positioning System, locations were plotted on project maps to ensure protection of the plant and to assist in future monitoring.



SHRUB/TREE PLANTING

American plums, persimmon, crabapple, and sawtooth oaks, were planted to attract a diversity of wildlife species. Groups of trees were harvested to create these permanent shrub orchards.



WILDLIFE OPENINGS

Permanent wildlife openings make excellent sites for non-woody herbaceous vegetation. Openings are maintained by mowing, disking, or burning so that the areas do not become too overgrown. These areas continuously provide nesting, brood rearing, and feeding sites for wildlife.



TIMBER MANAGEMENT AREAS

High quality food producing hardwoods were maintained through selection cutting to benefit both future timber production and wildlife species. Clearcuts were used to create a more diverse habitat for wildlife species and to form the foundation for a younger, healthier, and more productive forest. Other forest management techniques included prescribed burning, and both natural and planted reforestation. Highly erodible sites and visually and environmentally sensitive areas were left uncut.