

**23 August 2005, 5:00 pm**  
**R.L. Harris Stakeholders Board**  
**Minutes**

Attendees:

Willard Bowers - APC

George Traylor – Middle Tallapoosa landowner

Nick Nichols – Alabama DCNR

Bill Sim - APC

Jim Crew - APC

Bill Dykes - APC

Floyd Davis – Lake Wedowee Property Owners

Gleason Pool – Lake Wedowee Property Owners

Sut Smith – Lake Wedowee Property Owners

Alan Peoples - APC

Dick Bronson – Lake Watch of Lake Martin

Kieth Lightsey – Middle Tallapoosa River Conservation Association

Mark Truett – Emerald Triangle Commission

Bill Dykes: On March 1<sup>st</sup> the flow procedure that was discussed in January was implemented. It has four modes of operation: pulsing operations (4 hours of generation or less), non-pulsing operations (more than 4 hours of generation), flood operations, and spawning operations (with a spawning window). Spawning operations have not yet occurred because of high volumes of water this year.

Sut Smith: How is the hydro set up to operate in peaking mode?

Bill: The operators are looking at inflow, demand, and the rule curve to determine how to balance the resources. At the end of April, for example, they were trying to fill the pool. We also have downstream flow requirements for navigation, etc.

Vern: Bill, as you've implemented the green plan, have there been any surprises, revelations, lessons learned that you wouldn't have expected?

Bill: I don't think we've really tested it yet. There has just been too much water. I don't think we've had conditions to show its value or its deficiencies.

Sut: What are your typical peaking times? Do you peak two hours a day? Is there a limit on that?

Bill: It depends on several things; for one, the time of year or weather pattern. For example, when there's cloud cover, our customers don't want to buy power from us. If it's hot and dry, the load will be late afternoon to early evening. And we are also looking at allocating resources according to factors such as inflow, demand, the rule curve, and downstream flow requirements.

Sut: Do we have a chart to look at lake levels?

Bill: Those are available to the public.

Sut: We need something to track the lake levels.

Bill: I can provide the plots to Katie each month

George Traylor: About the pulse at 6am or 12pm: I've observed a pulse at 6pm as well. What's that based upon?

Bill: There are times when electrical load is midday or morning. At the January meeting, we presented our three-step process (available on the website). See number 3 on the procedure. Also, if there are system needs, the "green plan" allows APC the flexibility to generate. This does not preclude them to add generation, as the system needs. The other thing is that times are approximate. The pulse may start at 5:45 or 6:15 instead of 6:00 am. Also, this process will not be followed if there are problems filling Harris Reservoir.

Sut: In regards to the green plan and the rule curve: after you fill the lake, there is nothing in there to restrict withdrawing water from the lake.

Bill: We're trying to stretch the resource out. The further you deviate from the rule curve, the longer you have to stretch the resource out. We're trying to maximize the use of the water up to November 1. At times, what constricts the amounts of the drawdown is generation, apart from downstream navigation and minimum flow requirements.

Sut: According to the historical average, the lake levels drop consistently in late summer. It appears the only thing that can be changed is generation and downstream allocation.

Willard Bowers: We've been looking at how we use the hydro: how much will be used compared to how much has been used. But we're not in a position to talk about this seriously. Basically, what it amounts to, is if we move forward, there are going to be competing things that affect draw-down.

Sut: We'd like to see something change.

Willard: Understandably.

Sut: We're not against this plan, but there's no control over the lake level. We see you put a lot of water down through Wadley, and we see that as water that should be in the lake.

Bill: What this plan is trying to do is minimize the fluctuations at Wadley. There isn't more water coming out of the lake.

Vern: Any other questions for Bill? *(None)* Dr. Irwin.

Elise: This is the strawdog monitoring plan (*passes out the plan*) that was derived by the stakeholders both through the workshop and discussions at the stakeholder meetings. And then the science team got together and took a really hard look at what was feasible and how we can get out and monitor these things so that we can tie biology and other factors back to the flows provided by the green plan. We're going to sample both invertebrates and fishes to see whether what's happening with these organisms has anything to do with what's happening with flows. We'll also look at vegetation in the river – seeing shoal lily populations change, for example. We were able to get out on the river and sample based on the protocol... we did two river reaches in June, and we were able to get the sampling done with a lot of cooperation with the power company. It's a big production... we've been asking a lot of you folks to help us out... it's a little bit of a challenge. It took us a while to get up to speed... to get out on the river and make sure our equipment doesn't get wet, etc. We have a procedure to get the work done, with lots of help from several landowners. The fish and bugs are in jars waiting for us to identify... which will take a long time. We're still trying to get out on Hillabee Creek and the Upper Tal (the unregulated sites), but have been unable because of the amount of water. We anticipate having some results from this first year sometime maybe in March. Some general observations: one of our hypotheses was that we would sample fewer fish at the Dam and more fish closer to Wadley... and we did observe this. We have

procedures that will allow us to track colonization rates on these shoals, and then compare this to what's happening in Hillabee Creek and the Upper Tallapoosa. Questions?

Willard: How is your funding situation?

Elise: We have a proposal that is set to go to the state for state wildlife grants, which requires a match fund. We were looking to come to y'all for this, and maybe Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), and Auburn University. We do need more funding to continue the monitoring. We also submitted a proposal to NSF for a long-term monitoring program. We anticipate that we'll receive comments back, address these comments, and resubmit the proposal in January.

Willard: So, the special grant that you received has that been used up?

Elise: Yes, that has been used up. The power company provided a special grant that started off the sampling program. We'll continue to look for other funding opportunities. Earlier this year we ran out of a chunk of money that we had to build the first model and run the workshop. And there have been other projects that have been provided through ADCNR via Sportfish Restoration funds.

Nick: How quickly do you need the next round of funding?

Elise: I'll have to look at my specific budgets, but we have to get out and get another round of sampling in. There are some things on the University end that are already set to begin.

Vern: I have some questions for the group. Last time, we took some dings on communication flow. How have we been doing with communication flow? Are we meeting your needs? Too much/too little? Is that part working out?

Elise: I just want to make a point that our new website is [www.rivermanagement.org](http://www.rivermanagement.org). We got sick and tired of backslashes, etc. and went to something simpler. Eventually it's going to take you to an index page that will give you a list of projects going on in the Southeast.

Vern: Back to information flow. Are you getting the updates? Clearly we're sharing the information, but are we doing a better job?

George: I think you're doing a good thing with that.

Vern: More study required, results in March, etc. Is it ok to let that be a TBA meeting? Any other questions or business that needs to be taken care of today?

Elise: One thing we have an option to use is a bulletin board, if need be. So that's something to think about. But we may not need it.

Dick Bronson: Comment on the bulletin board: I guess it would be useful, but just as long as it doesn't replace email.

Elise: If we can make it less cumbersome, we may begin to use it. It's really just another way to communicate.

Vern: Anything about volunteers for sampling?

Elise: Our biggest issue is the flexibility problem. But that's just the nature of the beast. We've been on point since Hurricane Dennis. It's going to be a stretch this fall to get enough folks on the river, so we're going to be asking for help.

Sut: What would you do?

Elise: Wear waders, hold a seine, pick up fish, dig for bugs, among other things.

Mark: How far north do you go? Up as far as Cleveland County?

Elise: We'll be working close to Bells Mill Road on the Upper Tallapoosa. I also want to say that Conservation (Alabama DCNR) has been really good with providing help.

Dan: Do you remember what flow you're looking at for the Upper Tallapoosa?

Elise: Around 3 to 3.5 feet, and it's a fine line. We are going to need help this fall, so if any of you can help, we'll need it.

Vern: Next update on the model sometime around March; update on budgeting as that becomes available.

*(Adjourn)*