Study Plan 7 - Lake Martin – Wildlife Management Plan

1.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) would like to understand more about the lands that are included within the project boundary of the Martin Project (*i.e.*, quantity, location, timber stands, etc.). ADCNR is especially concerned about providing habitat diversity among all APC lands within the project boundary to enhance native vegetation and wildlife species (such as Priority 1 and 2 species and rare, threatened, and endangered species). This would include the conservation, restoration, and management of longleaf pine systems on project lands. ADCNR would like to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Power, and interested stakeholders to develop a viable wildlife management plan for the Martin Project.

2.0 RELEVANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOALS

The ADCNR manages wildlife throughout the state. Knowledge of the lands included as part of the Martin Project would allow them to work with Alabama Power Company (APC) to develop strategies to enhance the public wildlife resources, protect or enhance rare, threatened, or endangered (RTE) species and offset potential impacts associated with development around the project. A CD containing an electronic format of Alabama's Wildlife Strategy will be provided to APC by ADCNR.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING INFORMATION

APC includes approximately 8800 acres of land within their project boundary. These lands are a mixture of both developed and undeveloped property. APC is going to develop a Shoreline Management Plan, which will contain GIS overlays of all lands within the project and includes its current use or designation. APC has land designated as "Natural Undeveloped" that would be of interest to ADCNR for management of wildlife resources. APC is also performing RTE Surveys on the Martin Project lands and some properties adjacent to the project.

ADCNR has management strategies and goals for wildlife resources of the state, including RTE species. A combination of APC data and ADCNR goals would be pooled to determine the best approach for development of a Wildlife Management Plan (WMP) for enhancing wildlife resources within the Martin Project.

4.0 PROJECT NEXUS

The study would result in a WMP that would enhance wildlife resources within the Martin Project. This Plan would also determine management strategies to reduce impacts to and/or enhance habitat quality of RTE wildlife species within the Martin Project.

5.0 STUDY AREA AND STUDY SITES

The primary study area for this issue would include all of the APC owned lands included within the Martin project boundary.

6.0 PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study will generally follow the methods used to develop the WMP for the Coosa Hydroelectric Projects as part of the Coosa relicensing process. First, APC will develop GIS overlays of:

- all lands within the project boundary;
- current land use classification;
- current timber type and timber management;
- locations of known populations of RTE species.

APC will then host a series of meetings with the ADCNR and other interested stakeholders to review and compare the GIS information and develop a consensus based WMP.

The plan will contain the following structure at a minimum:

- Introduction
- Purpose of the Plan
- Wildlife Management Objectives
- Waterfowl Management Actions (if applicable)
- RTE Management Actions (red-cockaded woodpecker, bald eagle, etc.)
- Priority 1 and 2 species (refer to Alabama's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy)
- Timber Management including herbicides, thinning, etc.
- Habitat Management and the use of proper silvicultural systems
- Adjacent Lands – Management Agreements (if applicable)
- Wildlife Openings
- Handicapped Hunting Areas (if applicable)
- General Wildlife Enhancements (controlling non-native invasive plant species, etc.)
- Plan will contain provisions to monitor and measure management productivity.

7.0 CONSISTENCY WITH GENERALLY ACCEPTED SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE

This study employs generally accepted practices for evaluating wildlife habitat at hydroelectric projects. The study methodology is consistent with accepted practices used during the Coosa and Warrior relicensing studies accepted by state and federal agencies.

8.0 PRODUCTS

Data and analyses from this study will be shared periodically with the agencies and MIG 1 during the study phase. Meetings will be hosted by APC to develop a draft WMP that will be distributed for review and comment to the MIG 1 within 6 months of completion of the WMP. The Final WMP will be provided as part of the draft license application.

9.0 SCHEDULE

Develop GIS overlays (percentages of present forest types)	April – December 2008
APC files Final Study Plan	November 2008
Anticipated FERC Approval	April 2009
Periodic Meetings with agencies	March 2008 to December 2009
Draft WMP	June 2010
Final WMP	November 2010

10.0 LEVEL OF EFFORT AND COST

APC estimates the cost of consulting on the study plan, collecting the field data, analyses, and reporting is approximately $70,000.

11.0 REFERENCES

Alabama Power Company. 2005. Wildlife Management Plan for the Coosa Hydroelectric Project.

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. 2005. Alabama Comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan.