

158 FERC ¶ 62,059
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Alabama Power Company

Project No. 349-191

ORDER APPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PLAN

(Issued January 30, 2017)

1. On December 5, 2016, Alabama Power Company, licensee for the Martin Dam Hydroelectric Project No. 349, filed a Public Education and Outreach Plan as required by Article 411 of the project's license.¹ The project is located on the Tallapoosa River in Tallapoosa, Elmore, and Coosa counties, Alabama.
2. Article 411 requires the licensee, within 1 year of license issuance, to file for Commission approval, a Public Education and Outreach Plan to protect the Lake Martin shoreline and aquatic habitat within the project boundary through public education and awareness. The plan must include, at a minimum, the development of public education efforts, including: (1) a brochure for homeowners on best management practices for protecting the Lake Martin shoreline and establishing a vegetative buffer on private lands adjacent to the project boundary; (2) results of a striped bass hooking mortality study; (3) information for boaters and homeowners on methods to prevent shoreline erosion and sedimentation; (4) information about nuisance aquatic vegetation; (5) an "Adopt an Island" program to address litter control on licensee-owned project islands; (6) information on the licensee's participation in efforts to restore longleaf pine forests; and (7) a provision to review and update the plan every 6 years.
3. The proposed plan includes a description of its multi-media public education and communication strategy *Shorelines*. *Shorelines* includes direct mail communication *Shorelines Lake Magazine* (a copy of the 2015 *Shorelines Lake Magazine* is included as Appendix B of the plan), a public website; the *Alabama Power Shorelines* mobile application; the *APCShorelines* blog; and a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The *Shorelines* website contains information regarding the project's reservoir, shoreline permitting, and recreation, as well as information on the prevention of shoreline erosion and sedimentation and about nuisance aquatic vegetation. The plan also includes a copy of the Best Managements Practices Brochure (Appendix C), which

¹ Order Issuing New License (153 FERC ¶ 61,298), issued December 17, 2015.

provides general lake and project information, the licensees permitting requirements, information on recreational opportunities, and shoreline best management practices.

4. As required by Article 411, the results from the Striped Bass Hooking Mortality Study were also included in the proposed plan (Appendix E). The final report determination included that the quality of the striped bass habitat decreased rapidly once the lake stratified during the late-summer and that periodic late-summer mortalities of adult striped bass was likely associated with the less than ideal habitat, especially following periods of heavy rain and subsequent above average temperatures. The licensee proposes to keep the public informed by publishing an article in the *Shorelines Lake Magazine* that provides the results of the striped bass hooking mortality study, within one year of the approval of the Public Education and Outreach Plan.²

5. The proposed plan also includes information on the “Adopt an Island” program, which includes 26 islands and island groups owned by the licensee within the project boundary. The islands included in the program are classified as natural/undeveloped and are open to the public for various recreational uses. The program allows for local groups to “adopt” an island on Lake Martin and partner with the licensee to conduct litter removal throughout the year. Maps of the islands included in the “Adopt and Island” program are provided in the proposed plan (Appendix D).

6. The implementation schedule provided within the plan includes provisions to update several of the media types first following the approval of the plan, and then by December 31 annually. The licensee proposes to update the plan every six years for the term of the license, the first plan update will be due January 31, 2023.

7. Alabama Power provided a draft of the proposed plan to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Bureau of Land Management on August 1, 2016. Alabama Power received comments from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 8, 2016, and October 6, 2016, respectively. Alabama Power incorporated the requested changes from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources into the plan and included the comments from both agencies in Appendix A.

8. The proposed plan incorporates the 9 elements required by Article 411 into the plan and across the various platforms which form Alabama Power’s multi-media public education and communication platform *Shorelines*. Alabama Power consulted with the necessary agencies and where applicable addressed agency comments within the plan.

² Lake Magazine: Lake Martin Alabama Edition is a locally published magazine that serves the Lake Martin region of East Central Alabama.

The plan provides avenues for the public to remain informed and become involved with recreational and educational activities at the project and should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) Alabama Power Company's Public Education and Outreach Plan for the Martin Dam Hydroelectric Project No. 349, filed on December 5, 2016, is approved.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Any party to this proceeding may file a request for rehearing of this order within 30 days from the date of its issuance, as provided in section 313(a) of the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. § 8251 (2012), and the Commission's regulations at 18 C.F.R. § 385.713 (2016). The filing of a request for rehearing does not operate as a stay of the effective date of this order, or of any other date specified in this order. The licensee's failure to file a request for rehearing shall constitute acceptance of this order.

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and Compliance