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December 22, 2005

Ms. Sandy Tucker
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Westpark Center, Suite D
105 Westpark Drive
Athens, Georgia 30606

Dear Sandy:

You will find enclosed a summary of the conservation actions conducted during 2005 for the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the Robust Redhorse, *Moxostoma robustum*, Ocmulgee River, Georgia, as described in Agreement Number 1448-40181-01-K-005.

This report summarizes activities conducted during 2005 in fulfilling the first phase of the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the robust redhorse, Ocmulgee River, Georgia (CCAA). Specific activities addressed include stocking the project site (Conservation Action 1), studying the movement of introduced juvenile robust redhorse (Conservation Action 2), and monitoring the abundance and distribution of introduced robust redhorse (Conservation Action 3).

Please contact me at 404-799-2112 if you have further questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,

Mike Nichols
Environmental Laboratory Manager
Georgia Power Company

MAA

December 22, 2005
CCAA 2005 Progress Report
1448-40181-01-K-005

XC:

With 2005 progress report

Jimmy Evans, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Richard Gooch, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Dave Coughlan, Chairman Robust Redhorse Conservation Committee

Eileen Moorehead, Troutman Sanders

John Biagi, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Mike Harris, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Chuck Huling, Georgia Power

Chris Womack, Georgia Power

Jimmy Helms, Georgia Power

Wanda Greene, Georgia Power

2005 Progress Report: Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the Robust Redhorse, *Moxostoma robustum*, Ocmulgee River, Georgia

Agreement Number 1448-40181-01-K-005

Conservation Action 1. *Georgia DNR will stock the Project Site with approximately 4,000 hatchery-reared robust redhorse fingerlings each year for five years.*

In November and December, Georgia DNR stocked 1620 phase I robust redhorse at the Lloyd Shoals boat ramp and 1885 at the Hwy 83 boat ramp (total of 3505 for the Ocmulgee River in 2005). This number was near the goal of 4000 (J. Evans, personnel communication).

Conservation Action 2. *Georgia Power will fund two surveys, one in year 1 (2002) and one in year 3 (2004) on the movement of introduced juvenile robust redhorse.*

Implementation of the second telemetry study was delayed due to a lack of study specimens. It is planned for spring 2006 and will be a year-long assessment using larger fish than in 2002, which can be tracked longer through the use of larger transmitters and longer-lived batteries (~350 days vs. 100 days in 2002 study; see Attachment).

Conservation Action 3. *Georgia Power will conduct or fund six surveys in order to monitor abundance and distribution of juvenile and adult robust redhorse within Project Site.*

An electro-fishing survey was conducted by Georgia Power biologists May 17, 2005 on the Ocmulgee River from the boat landing below Lloyd Shoals Dam down to the beginning of the shoals at the Highway 16 Bridge for spawning adults or previously introduced robust redhorse. Three robust redhorse were collected during 21 minutes of peddle time (active electro-fishing time). A ripe male from the 1999 year class, as indicated by a coded wire tag, was captured. Additionally, a previously captured wild female and a new wild female were captured. Although more time was allotted towards Ocmulgee River sampling, that time was devoted towards assisting in the collection of brood fish from the Oconee River, by request of the Robust Redhorse Executive Committee.

In addition to electro-fishing a visual survey was conducted May 18-19, 2005 on the Ocmulgee River in the Juliette Dam tailrace. Observations were made of spawning robust redhorse (n=7) for the first time on the Ocmulgee River. Two groups spawned multiple times (separate groups of three and four individuals) at the same location on May 18. Although spawning was not witnessed on May 19 two individuals were captured and the presence of coded wire tags identified fish as having been stocked in 2000. Additional surveys are planned for spring 2006 between Lloyd Shoals Dam and Highway 16 and in the Juliette Dam tailrace in an attempt to locate stocked, spawning robust redhorse.

The third of five status surveys, performed in alternating years, under Conservation Action 3 is scheduled for spring 2006.

Conservation Action 4. *Following the establishment of an adult refugial population in the Project Site, Georgia Power will fund three surveys to measure population size utilizing the mark-recapture methods used to estimate the population size of the Oconee River robust redhorse population.*

Studies under Conservation Action 4 are not scheduled to begin until year 7 (2008).

Mike Nichols
Environmental Laboratory Manager
Georgia Power Company