

Enclosure 21

Memorandum for Record  
Informal Consultation Telecon  
11 May 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Fish Spawn Coordination Teleconference, 11 May 2004

1. The following agency representatives participated in this week's teleconference:

Ted Hoehn, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tallahassee, FL  
Charlie Messing, Florida fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Midway, FL  
Brent Hess, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, West Point lake Contact  
Cheryl Hrabovsky, USACE, Mobile District, Water Management  
Memphis Vaughan, USACE, Mobile District, Water Management  
Rob Erhardt, USACE, Mobile District, Meteorologist  
Joanne Brandt, USACE, Mobile District, Planning and Environmental  
Matthew Lang, USACE, Mobile District, Planning and Environmental

2. Rob gave an update on the amount of rainfall projected due to the weather system that will hopefully pass through the District over the next couple of days and into the weekend. The majority of the rain over the next few days will be localized over the Alabama/Mississippi border (projected to receive 1 ½ to 2 inches). This rain event will not directly affect the lower portions of the ACF basin. Only scattered or spotty rainfall is projected in West Georgia. The greatest possibility for rains within the ACF basin look to be forecasted for the upper reaches of the Chattahoochee River and northern Georgia. Dry and continued warm conditions are forecast for next week.
3. Cheryl noted that we are currently releasing approximately 10,800 cfs due to inflows and head limits at Jim Woodruff Dam. Basin inflows are currently around 10,000 cfs and expected to decline gradually over the next few days. Therefore, we expect to gradually reduce releases over the next few days by approximately 500 cfs per day. Without any rainfall in the basin, this would bring us to approximately 8,100 cfs release from Jim Woodruff by this weekend. If there is no additional rainfall in the basin, this would result in West Point Lake levels remaining at stages between 632 ft. and 633 ft., and Walter F. George Lake stable or slightly falling to around 188.5 ft. over the next couple of weeks, with both lakes just below Zone 2. Lake Seminole could also drop to just above 76.0 ft.
4. Ted and Charlie expressed concern about river stages dropping to the 8000 cfs range, especially during the month of May which represents the peak of spawning for multiple fish spp. on the river. They requested that the 9100 cfs release from Jim Woodruff be sustained as long as possible and that any draw downs on the river continue to be as gradual as possible. Cheryl and Memphis agreed that we would attempt to sustain the 9100 cfs release through this weekend, which would allow us to monitor how much if any rainfall was received in the basin. We would then revisit on Monday to determine the impacts of rainfall

on the lakes and monitor basin inflows, and then determine whether we need to reduce releases below 9000 cfs.

5. We also discussed the minimal flow needs for various fish spp. on the river. Ted noted that when below 14,000 cfs and especially between 6000 cfs and 11,000 cfs, large areas of floodplain habitat become disconnected from the river. Below the 9000 cfs flow, Charlie and Ted noted that significant quantities of habitat area are no longer accessible, and that at 8,500 to 8000 cfs access to thermal refuge areas by striped bass becomes restricted. Stripers are generally confined to these thermal refuge areas in the hot summer months, and drawdowns below 8000 cfs would significantly impact usage of the areas and affect survivability of the fish. Pulses of 1 to 2 days duration, and return to previous or higher flows as quickly as possible, were agreed to be acceptable, at least later in the summer months, since it takes 5-7 days for the fish to complete a spawn that would be impacted by the drawdown. However, during May it was recommended that any drawdown on the river be as gradual as possible.

6. The next Fish Spawn Coordination teleconference is scheduled for Monday, 17 May, 9:00 a.m. CDT / 10:00 a.m. EDT.

Biologist

Matthew J. Lang  
Inland Environment Team