



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

Office of Counsel

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
MOBILE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 2288  
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001  
November 6, 2006

Gregory M. Munson, Esquire  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Mr. Munson:

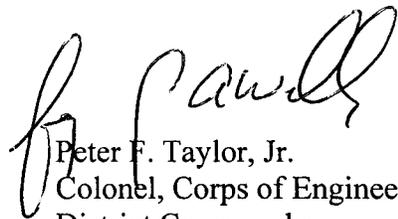
I have received your letter dated November 1, 2006, regarding the provisions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion issued on September 5, 2006, relating to our water management operations at Jim Woodruff Dam and associated releases to the Apalachicola River, pursuant to the Interim Operations Plan (IOP). In particular, you requested an update on the status of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' efforts to comply with the Reasonable and Prudent Measure No. 3 (RPM 3), Drought Provision, which requires the Mobile District to develop modifications to the IOP that provide a higher minimum flow the Apalachicola River when reservoir storage and hydrologic conditions permit. The terms and conditions of the USFWS Biological Opinion require Mobile District to initiate IOP drought provisions by January 30, 2007, with the concurrence of the USFWS, that identify the reservoir, climatic, hydrological and/or listed species conditions that would allow supporting a higher minimum flow in the Apalachicola River, and those water management measures that would be implemented when conditions reach the identified drought "trigger" points.

The Mobile District has begun discussions with the USFWS regarding the identification of drought provisions or drought "triggers" for incorporation into the IOP. We met with the USFWS, Panama City Office staff on October 26, 2006, to discuss information and modeling data that could assist in evaluating possible drought provisions. Both agencies agreed that the first step is to model how various possible reductions in the spring releases may impact composite storage within the basin, and to evaluate whether and under what conditions available composite storage may allow sustained higher releases in the summer months during drought conditions. We have initiated some preliminary modeling and intend to meet again with USFWS in early December to share the preliminary modeling results. We are also contemplating hosting a workshop with the ACF basin stakeholders, before the end of the year, to share our preliminary modeling results and any suggested drought provisions. At that time we would welcome comments, suggestions, and information developed by other stakeholders that could assist

in refining the IOP operations during drought conditions, as well as during normal to wet conditions. Our intent is to identify any proposed components of a drought provision not later than January 30, 2007, in compliance with the terms of RPM 3. Proposed revisions to the spring release schedule (March – May), or other elements of the IOP, may require completion of additional Section 7 consultation prior to implementation under the IOP.

We intend to keep you and the other ACF basin stakeholders informed of our progress in developing a drought provision in accordance with RPM 3 and any proposed changes to the IOP.

Sincerely,



Peter F. Taylor, Jr.  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Commander