



Sharing the Water

in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia

Newsletter No. 2 - June 1998

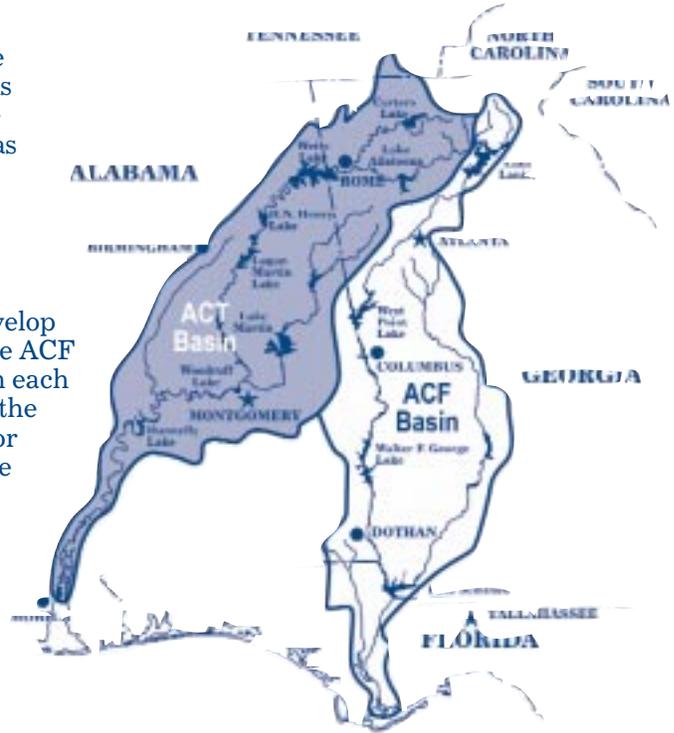
This is the second in a series of newsletters intended to inform you of progress in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements to address water allocation formulas for the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) and Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basins.

Parallel Processes

There are two distinct but parallel processes that are currently underway to develop final water allocations for the States of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. One process is the negotiation of water allocation formulas by the states. The other process is the evaluation of anticipated impacts that might occur as a result of implementation of the allocation formulas.

State Role: Negotiation of Water Allocation Formulas

The states are proceeding with negotiations to develop water allocation formulas for both the ACT and the ACF basins. This process includes representatives from each of the three states, and has as a primary objective the development of a formula for allocation of water for each basin that will best meet each state's resource needs. The Federal Government is not actively involved in these negotiations, and the formulas that will be the product of these discussions among the states will be provided to the Federal Government for use in the evaluation process.

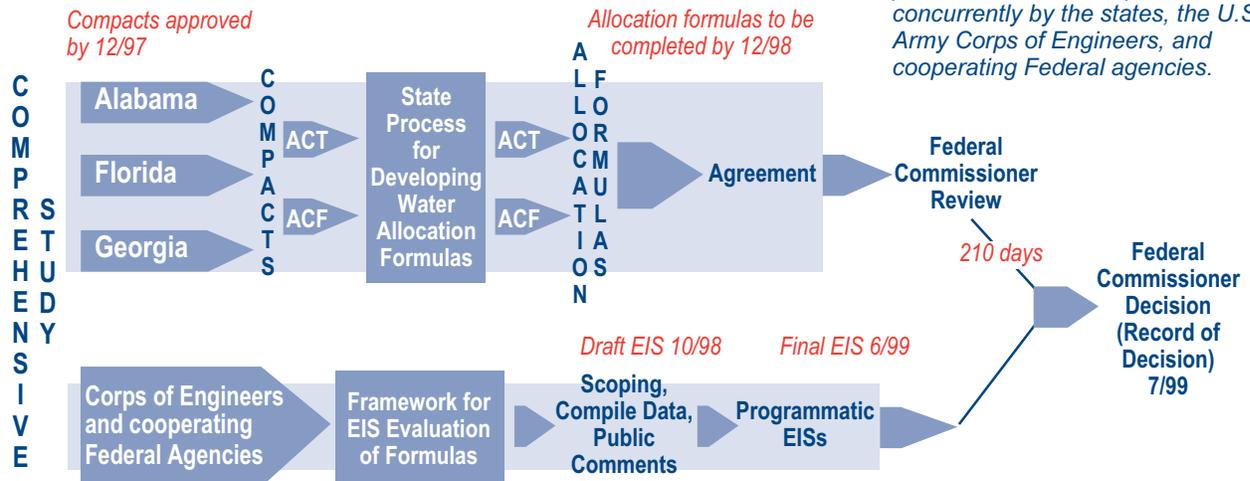


Federal Agency Role: Evaluation of Impacts

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and cooperating Federal agencies have begun work on two Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), one for each basin. The EISs will evaluate potential impacts of a wide range of potential allocation formulas that may result from the negotiations among the states. When the states have completed their agreements, the final environmental document will evaluate the potential effects of the negotiated formulas. An appointed Federal Commissioner will then use the EISs to assist in making a decision whether or not to concur with the allocation formulas.

Parallel Processes Chart

The Parallel Processes Chart below graphically displays these separate processes and the steps taken concurrently by the states, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and cooperating Federal agencies.





Status of Interstate Compacts

Separate interstate compacts for the management of water resources have been approved for the ACT and the ACF river basins. The Compacts establish a commission for each basin. The commissions consist of the governor from each state and a Federal Commissioner to be appointed by the President. The Federal Commissioner has an advisory role during the development of the water allocation formula by the States.

Under the Compacts, the States must approve these water allocation formulas for the two basins no later than December 1998, unless a mutual agreement to extend that date is reached.

The states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia have begun the difficult negotiation process to develop an allocation formula for each of the two basins. Compact Commissioner Committee members have been appointed by the governors of the States to conduct these negotiations. The Compact Commission Committees are holding meetings, which are

open to the public, on a regular basis. Initial meetings have discussed guiding principles and concepts that will form the basis of a negotiated water allocation formula.

If you wish to obtain additional information regarding the status of the allocation formula negotiations or the schedule of upcoming meetings of the Commissioners, you are encouraged to contact your State Commission representative:

Honorable Richard J. Laird
Alabama State House Building
11 South Union Street, Room 539-S
Montgomery, AL 36130

Ms. Virginia Wetherell, Secretary
Florida Department of Environmental
Protection
2600 Blairstone Road
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Mr. Bob Kerr
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
7 Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 450
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Role of Federal Cooperating Agencies

As part of the EIS process, several cooperating Federal agencies are participating on an Interagency Team. Agencies on the team have special expertise or jurisdiction in areas that may be affected by implementation of the water allocation formula.

The agencies will:

- assist in determining "tools" to assess impacts on resources

- verify data for historic, existing, and projected future conditions of resources
- participate in developing and analyzing water resource demands and management scenarios

The table below shows the Federal agencies included on the Inter-agency Team, the types of data they have provided, and their responsibilities for the EISs.

| AGENCY | RESPONSIBILITY |
|--|---|
| Environmental Protection Agency | Evaluation of non-point source loadings and water quality impacts |
| Fish and Wildlife Service | Evaluation of impacts on protected species, wetlands, and aquatic resources |
| U.S. Geologic Survey | Review of impacts on groundwater |
| National Park Service | Review evaluation of recreation impacts |
| Natural Resources Conservation Service | Evaluation of economic impacts on agriculture |
| Forest Service | Review impacts on National Forests |
| National Ocean Service | Hydrodynamic modeling of Apalachicola Bay |
| National Marine Fisheries Service | Review potential impacts on essential fish habitat in estuarine areas |
| Maritime Administration | Review of potential impacts on navigation and shipping industry |
| Southeastern Power Administration | Evaluation of economic impacts on hydropower generation |

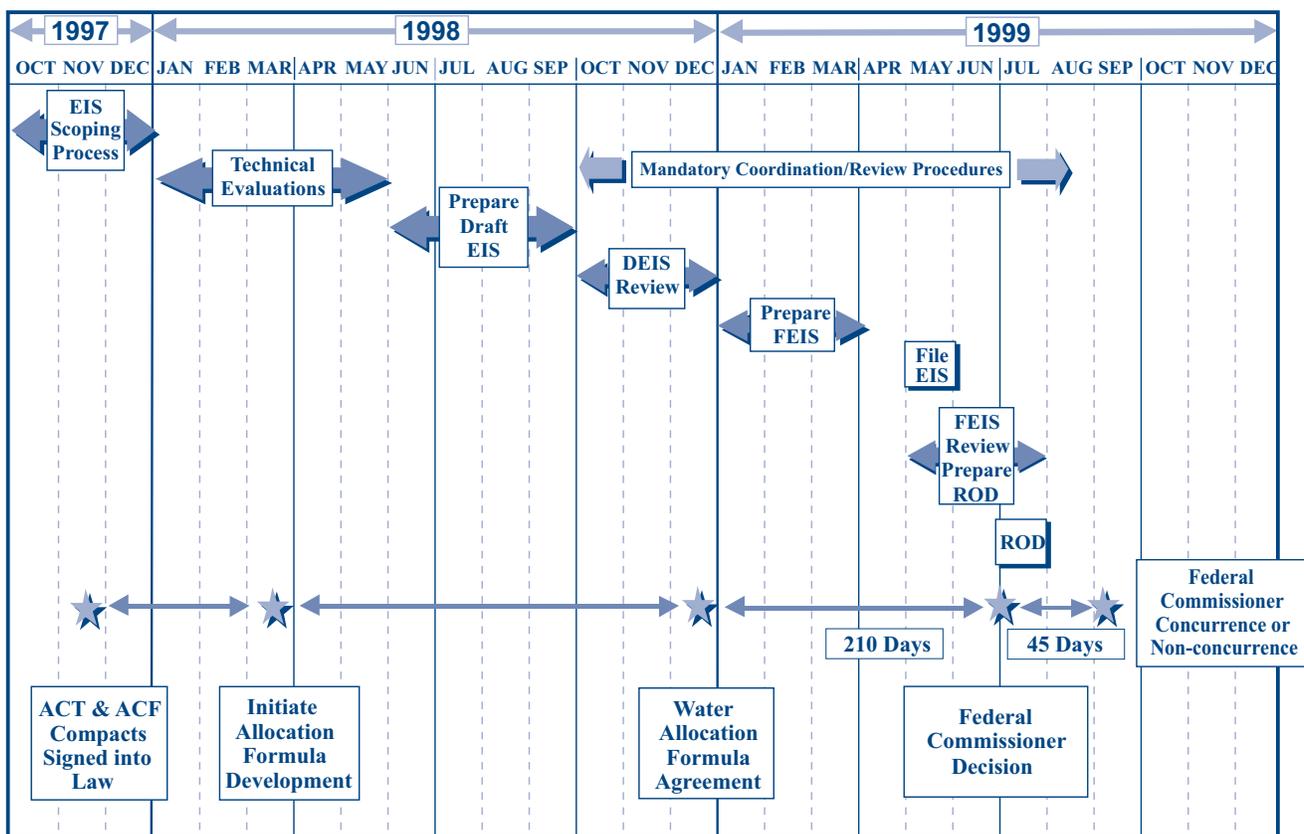


Status of the EISs

The schedule for the EISs is programmed to support a Federal Commissioner's decision on proposed water allocation formulas in the Summer of 1999. An EIS typically takes between 18 months and 2 years to prepare. The EISs required for the ACT and ACF basins were initiated early because the Federal Commissioner is required to submit a letter of concurrence within 210 days after the states agree to a water allocation formula.¹ Therefore, the timetable allowed by the ACT and ACF River Basin Compacts for the Federal Commissioner to make a decision regarding the final allocation formula is not sufficient to allow the EISs to be initiated after the states agree to a water allocation formula. In order to meet the Summer 1999 timetable, the draft EISs are scheduled to be filed with EPA and offered for public comment in October 1998. The key activities which have been accomplished and which will be required to meet these target dates are summarized below.

- Interagency Team Kickoff Meeting - September 1997
- Scoping Brochure and Questionnaire Distributed - October 1997
- Hydrologic Modeling and Evaluation Framework Completed - March 1998
- Preliminary Agency Evaluation Completed - May 1998
- Draft EISs Filed and Available to the Public - October 1998
- Public Meetings to Discuss Draft EISs - November 1998
- Final EISs Filed - May 1999
- Federal Commissioner's Decision - July 1999

¹ In the event the Federal Commissioner cannot concur at the end of 210 days, an additional 45 days will be allowed for resolution of Federal concerns.





What is a Programmatic EIS?

Programmatic EISs are used for "broad actions" or management programs when the actual implementation plans are not yet known. A programmatic EIS will serve as the basis for completing future site-specific EISs or EAs once specific implementation plans are developed. These follow-on, or "tiered" EAs or EISs will incorporate the information and provisions of the programmatic EIS by reference, and will focus on specific effects that may occur for the specific management plan or action.

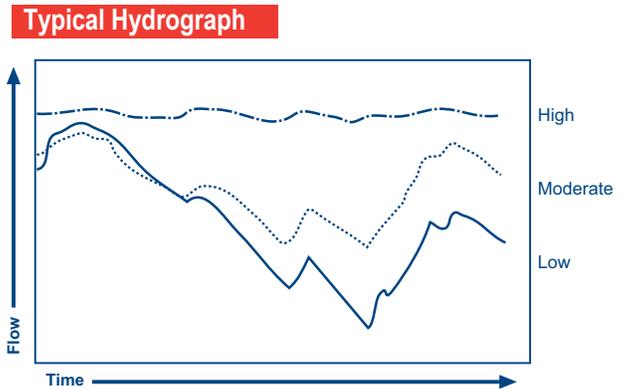
Programmatic Evaluation Framework

Because water allocation formulas have not yet been identified by the States and may not be until late 1998, a programmatic approach will be used to generically analyze a broad range of environmental and socioeconomic factors in each basin and determine the potential basin-wide effects of implementing the proposed water allocation formulas.

The programmatic EISs will use hydrologic modeling tools developed under the ACT and ACF Comprehensive Study (HEC-5 Models) to predict a range of flow conditions at representative locations within the basin. The final water allocation formulas developed by the States are expected to fall somewhere within the predicted range of flows. The impacts of the range of flow conditions will be evaluated in the EISs. The results of the

analyses presented in the EISs will be used to determine the socioeconomic and environmental consequences of the final water allocation formulas.

The HEC-5 hydrologic models will be run for the existing operating conditions in the basin. This will represent baseline flow conditions. HEC-5 models will also be run on the range of flow conditions to simulate the high, moderate, and low range of flows that may result from the water allocation formulas to be developed by the States. An example of simulated high, moderate, and low flows is shown below.



All models will be run for the projected water use demands in the years 1995, 2020, and 2050, in order to consider whether future water needs will be met. The range of alternative flow conditions to be evaluated in the EISs is summarized in the table below:

Range of Flow Conditions Being Considered for the ACT and ACF Basins EISs

| Year | No-Action Alternative ^a | High Flow | Action Alternative ^b Moderate Flow | Low Flow |
|------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 1995 | Existing operations | Highest reservoir releases | Moderate reservoir releases | Lowest reservoir releases |
| | Moderate 1995 demands | Lowest 1995 demands | Moderate 1995 demands | Highest 1995 demands |
| 2020 | Existing operations | Highest reservoir releases | Moderate reservoir releases | Lowest reservoir releases |
| | Moderate 2020 demands | Lowest 2020 demands | Moderate 2020 demands | Highest 2020 demands |
| 2050 | Existing operations | Highest reservoir releases | Moderate reservoir releases | Lowest reservoir releases |
| | Moderate 2050 demands | Lowest 2050 demands | Moderate 2050 demands | Highest 2050 demands |

^a Demand in all scenarios refers to consumptive demand levels based on the Comprehensive Study.

^b High, moderate, and low flow scenarios under the action alternative refer to the low flow rates in the rivers.

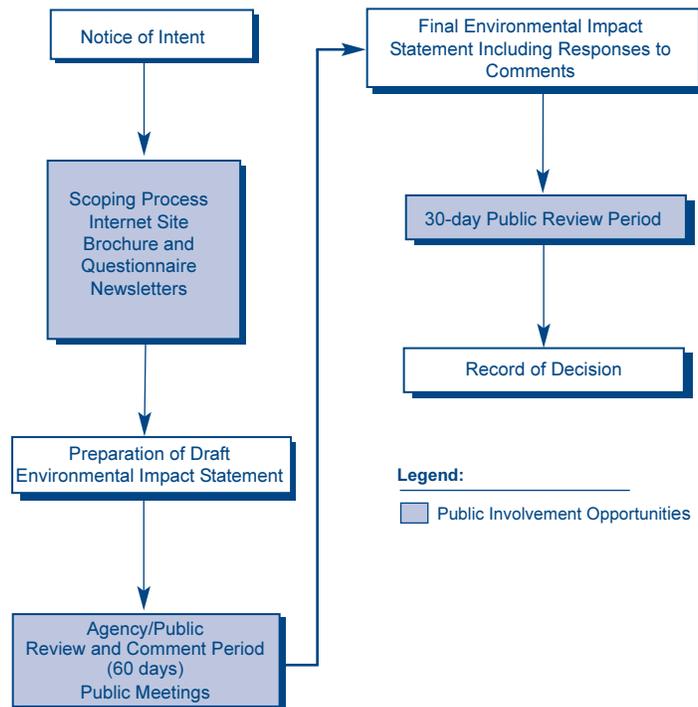


How Can I Get Involved?

There are a number of ways that you can participate in the EIS process. Your comments are invited at any time during the EIS preparation process, including during the formal comment period for the Draft EIS. Here is a listing of ways you can submit your comments:

- Written comments can be submitted using the scoping questionnaire on the ACT & ACF Water Allocation Formula EISs Web Site: <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/sam/pd/actacfeis>
- A toll-free number is available for questions and comments. Brief messages may be left on this toll-free line at 1-800-421-7637.
- Written comments or questions can be mailed or faxed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers EIS Project Managers (see page 6) at (334) 694-3815.
- You can provide written comments on the Draft EISs that are scheduled for release in October 1998.
- You can attend the public meetings scheduled to discuss the Draft EISs in November 1998.

Public Involvement Opportunities in the EIS Process



Update on Scoping Questionnaire Results

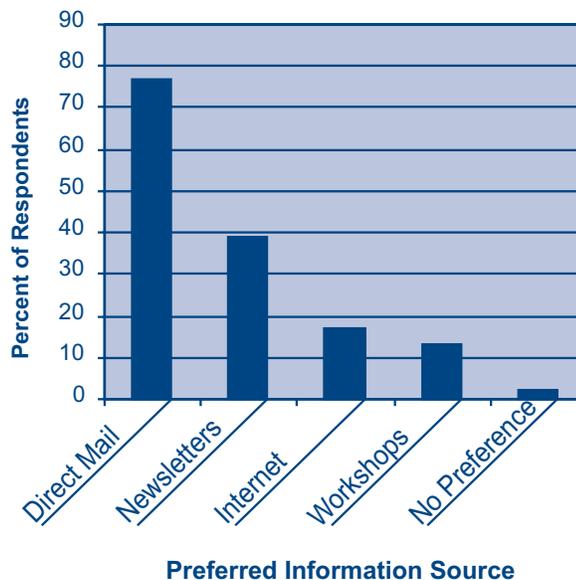
A scoping questionnaire was included as an insert in the initial scoping brochure/newsletter published early October 1997. The questionnaire requested information on areas of concern to the public and methods for communicating with the public, and assisted in the expansion of the public mailing list for the EISs. Approximately 4,500 questionnaires were distributed to agencies and interested parties. Approximately 450 were returned and the responses have been tabulated.

Results indicate a variety of important areas of interest among respondents, which will be addressed in the EISs. Water quality of lakes, rivers, and streams drew the most responses (approximately 87 percent of respondents). Other major issues identified by more than 50 percent of the survey respondents included fish and wildlife habitat; public drinking water supplies; recreational uses such as boating, fishing, swimming, and skiing; and flood control.

Most written comments indicated concerns over water quality issues. Other issues frequently cited were the effects of fluctuating lake and river levels on habitat, property values and recreation; the economic value of barge

navigation; equitable distribution of water between the states; and growth. Results for the preferred methods of communicating with the public for these EISs are shown below.

Questionnaire Results





How Can I Get More Information?

Additional information on the EIS process and supporting information are available from the following sources:

- The Web Site for the ACT and ACF Allocation Formula EISs includes information about the EISs and the Comprehensive Study conducted to support water allocation formula development. The site also includes a copy of the scoping questionnaire. The web site address is <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/sam/pd/actacfeis>.
- A separate Web Site is available that describes water resources information for the ACT and ACF river systems. The site includes information on river stage forecasts, lake level forecasts, weekly basin reports, water volume reports, maps of each basin, and other information. The address is <http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/sam/en/enhw/enhw.htm>.
- Contact your State Compact Commission representative for information on the **Water Allocation Formula Negotiation Process**. (See page 2 of this newsletter.)
- You can also contact the U.S Army Corps of Engineers representatives for the two EISs:

For information about the individual basins, contact:

ACT Basin

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