

Enclosure 19

Memorandum for Record
Informal Consultation Telecon
29 April 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Fish Spawn Coordination Teleconference, 29 April 2004

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

Jerry Ziewitz, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Panama City, FL
Ted Hoehn, Florida Fish and Wildlife Service, Tallahassee, FL
Memphis Vaughan, US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District Water Management
Rob Erhardt, US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District Meteorologist
Joanne Brandt, US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Planning & Environmental
Matt Lang, US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, Planning & Environmental

2. Based on last week's teleconference discussions, we began on Wednesday, 21 April, to cut releases from Jim Woodruff Dam (JWD) to the Apalachicola River by approximately 500 cfs per day, to reduce releases from 11,500 cfs to approximately 9000 cfs. Current ACF basin inflows at that time were approximately 9300 cfs, with no significant rainfall projected in the basin. We have been holding releases from at approximately 9100 cfs since Tuesday, 27 April. ACF basin inflows were as low as 8000 cfs on 25 April, but have recovered to approximately 9400 cfs due to limited rainfall over the weekend.

3. Rob noted that there was a chance of scattered rainfall to occur over the ACF basin late this week and possible heavy thunderstorms over the weekend (Sunday). However, there is not a high confidence in where the rainfall will occur or how much. It is then projected to turn cooler and drier, with no sign of additional rainfall thereafter.

4. Memphis indicated that we could hold releases from JWD at approximately 9100 cfs until early next week, in order to determine how much rainfall may occur in the basin. If we do not receive significant rainfall, then we will plan to reduce releases from JWD by another increment to approximately 8000 cfs, with releases ramped down by approximately 500 cfs per day, beginning on Monday, 3 May. That release would probably be maintained for approximately 1 week. If dry conditions continue, we would then propose to ramp down to approximately 6000 cfs release by mid-May. If we do receive rainfall in the basin, we will evaluate how much and probably be able to sustain releases of 9000 cfs for another week and would continue to monitor reservoir levels and climatic conditions to determine the next action. Our primary goal will be to maintain releases to match inflows into the basin as much as possible, but to also be able to refill the lakes as much as possible to provide storage for future releases if dry conditions continue into the summer. The lake level and Blountstown stage graphs shown on the water management website for this week are based on no rainfall occurring in the basin and on cutting releases to 8000 cfs early next week. These graphs will be updated in the event we do receive rainfall in the basin over the weekend.

5. Jerry indicated they had returned to the river on Tuesday, 27 April, to attempt to track tagged Gulf sturgeon by sonar. They located one tagged sturgeon in the Alum Bluff area (approx. NM) and one on the lower river, but none immediately below JWD. They have not found Gulf sturgeon in the upper Yellow River either. This may just be a poor year for Gulf sturgeon spawning, due to climatic and low flow conditions or other possible factors. Jerry noted that the proposed management plan to continue to match releases from JWD to basin inflows is the best recourse to avoid impact to Gulf sturgeon spawning. This MFR documents informal consultation with USFWS regarding actions taken to minimize impacts to Gulf sturgeon and satisfies Section 7 consultation requirements.

6. The next teleconference is schedule for Tuesday, 4 May, 10:30 a.m CDT/11:30 a.m. EDT.

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Inland Environment Team