

**STUDY PROGRESS REPORT  
WILDLIFE AND BOTANICAL RESOURCES  
MORGAN FALLS PROJECT (FERC NO. 2237)**

**NOVEMBER 2005**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Georgia Power is conducting a study to characterize existing wildlife and botanical resources at the Morgan Falls Project for use in analyzing the potential effects of continued project operation. The study is being conducted according to the study plan for the Morgan Falls Project approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on November 26, 2004. The results of the study will be presented in a Wildlife and Botanical Resources Study Report, which Georgia Power will distribute to participants by December 31, 2005, and file with the Commission by April 1, 2006. Georgia Power will use the information generated by the study to evaluate the environmental effects of its proposed project in the Preliminary Licensing Proposal, to be filed with the Commission by October 2, 2006.

The specific objectives of the Wildlife and Botanical Resources Study are to describe terrestrial wildlife and botanical resources occurring in the project area, including lists of plant and animal species that use representative upland habitats, and to identify invasive species.

**2. STUDY PROGRESS**

**2.1 Activities Completed**

**Review of Existing Information**

- Obtained *Plants of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* and *Checklist of Reptiles and Amphibians* for Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) from National Park Service.
- Updated lists of breeding bird species documented by the North American Breeding Bird Survey in annual surveys along routes in or near Fulton and Cobb Counties.
- Obtained checklists of bird species observed by local birders in the project area, including Morgan Falls impoundment, Chattahoochee Nature Center, Morgan Falls dam, and the Johnson Ferry Unit of CRNRA.
- Compiled lists of plant, mammal, amphibian, reptile, and bird species potentially occurring in the project area.

**Field Reconnaissance Survey**

- Completed field reconnaissance survey of a study area extending 2,000 feet beyond the project boundary between May 12 and 27, 2005.
- Prepared lists of plant and animal species observed in upland habitats in the project area and prepared a list of invasive plant species observed.
- Prepared descriptions of dominant vegetative communities observed in the project area.
- Prepared vegetation cover map and estimated areas of different botanical communities occurring within 2,000 feet of the project boundary.
- Compiled 1972 aerial photography obtained for the project area from the University of Georgia Map Library; began estimating areas of different botanical communities occurring within 2,000 feet of the project boundary before establishment of CRNRA in 1978.

### **Reporting**

- Began preparing Wildlife and Botanical Resources Study Report.

### **2.2 Preliminary Findings**

- A variety of terrestrial habitats and associated plant and wildlife species occur within 2,000 feet of the project boundary even though the predominant land uses surrounding the area include medium density residential, low density residential, commercial, forest/open space, and high density residential.
- Urban growth and development in metropolitan Atlanta have affected terrestrial habitats along the Chattahoochee River corridor, but habitat diversity remains in the project area in large part because of protection afforded by the Metropolitan River Protection Act and establishment of the CRNRA, both of which have provided for maintenance of vegetative buffer zones and limited land-disturbing activities near the river.

### **3. VARIANCE FROM STUDY PLAN AND SCHEDULE**

- There has been no variance to date from the study plan or schedule.

### **4. REMAINING ACTIVITIES**

- Complete compilation of flora and fauna lists and comparison of 1972 vegetative cover with current vegetative cover in the project area.
- Complete the Wildlife and Botanical Resources Study Report.