

## **FAQs**

### **Progress Energy's Environmental Studies – May 8-12, 2004**

#### **Why do we have to conduct these studies?**

Progress Energy is seeking to renew the federal license to operate our hydroelectric generating facilities at Blewett and Tillery. (The current 50-year license expires in April 2008.) A significant part of the license renewal process with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission involves studying the impact of the hydro facilities on the environmental resources of the area.

#### **Why do you need to draw down the lakes to conduct studies?**

Many of the environmental studies required in the process concern fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. Since the shorelines have aquatic habitat areas, our biologists need to be able to inspect these areas – which can only be done during low flow conditions. Other planned studies are designed to gain an understanding of the relationships between the river flow patterns related to the generating facilities and the fish and wildlife populations, their habitat and water quality. Progress Energy has been working closely over the past year with state and federal natural resource agencies, as well as environmental organizations and other interested parties, to develop a series of studies that will investigate the interaction of power plant operations and the environment. In order to file our license application with the FERC in early 2006, we must conduct these studies during 2004.

#### **Will these drawdowns cause fish kills or other problems?**

Since water levels will rise again quickly, we do not anticipate any long term effects on the health of fish or wildlife populations. Biologists will be on-site performing the studies and will be monitoring the rivers and lakes very closely during this period.

#### **Why can't we conduct these studies in the winter, when river and lake use is less frequent?**

To best determine any effects of the facilities on the environment, we want to study the lakes and river when the operations of Blewett and Tillery may have an impact. During the winter and early spring, rainfall is more plentiful and the operations of the Blewett and Tillery facilities do not affect river flows as much as they do in the summer and fall. The warmer periods of the year are when fish, wildlife and plant populations are most active. We want to perform our studies during this time to gain a good understanding of the aquatic ecosystem. Specific studies were developed to evaluate the aquatic populations and habitats during these times of peak biological activity.

#### **What specific studies will be conducted in May and June?**

Some of the planned studies include: river flow studies on the amount of available aquatic habitat, surveys of fish, mussels and wildlife populations, and lake level changes on aquatic habitat – including wetlands. These environmental studies will evaluate the release and post-release periods in the lakes and river.

#### **What are the predicted impacts to water levels?**

As Progress Energy releases more water from the lakes at Blewett and Tillery, water levels in the lake will decrease noticeably. We estimate that the drop in lake level should be around 4 feet, but up to a 7-foot water level drop is possible. Water levels in the Pee Dee River will initially rise as water is sent downriver from the lakes. However, after the lake levels drop, there will be a corresponding drop in river levels at the end of the study period. The changes in river water levels will be most visible closer to the Blewett and Tillery plants. However, we anticipate that the drop in the river levels will be noticeable downstream of each power plant and along the river to around Florence, S.C. Without any unforeseen changes in weather patterns, river and lake levels should return to normal within a few days after the conclusion of the study period.