



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
SAVANNAH DISTRICT  
100 WEST OGLETHORPE AVENUE  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3604

February 24, 2022

Regulatory Division  
SAS-1994-03873

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Savannah District/State of Georgia**

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army Permit, pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. § 403) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344), as follows:

Application Number: SAS-1994-03873

Applicant: Mr. Jim Delano  
Southern Operating Nuclear Company  
3535 Colonnade Parkway, BIN N-218-EC  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243

Agent: Mr. Mark Ballard  
Ecological Solutions, Inc.  
630 Colonial Park Drive  
Roswell, Georgia 30075

Project Purpose as Proposed by Applicant: The applicant's stated project purpose is "to enable Southern Nuclear to continue to withdraw water from the Altamaha River for required HNP plant operations".

Location of Proposed Work: The project site is located in the Altamaha River, at the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant, near Baxley, Appling County, Georgia (Latitude 31.9378, Longitude -82.3443).

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:  
The applicant is proposing to perform periodic maintenance dredging at the existing intake structure to maintain the ability to withdraw cooling water from the Altamaha River. The current dredging location consists of an "L" shaped area adjacent to the existing intake structure. This area is approximately 900 linear feet parallel to the riverbank and approximately 388 linear feet channelward at its widest point (Figures 9 and 10 enclosed).

As proposed, the applicant would expand the dredging area upstream by 600 feet (Figures 9 and 10 enclosed). As a result, the new dredge area would be 1,500 in length and 388 feet at its widest point. However, the requested annual dredging volume of 45,000 cubic yards remains unchanged from the current permit authorization. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is currently replacing the U.S. Highway 1 bridge over the Altamaha River located approximately 2,400 feet upstream and west of the dredging area (Figure 9 enclosed). Reconstruction of the bridge includes the placement of new pilings/bents in the Altamaha River. According to the applicant, placement of these structures has altered sediment deposition patterns in the vicinity of the intake structure and the expanded dredging area is needed to maintain the ability to withdraw water from the river for plant operations and to maintain the expected lifespan of pumps required to operate the intake structure.

The area would be dredged to approximately 5 feet below river bottom at the most channelward point and approximately 10 feet below river bottom near the riverbank. The material would be removed utilizing a hydraulic dredge; however, as necessary, other equipment including a clamshell, dragline, or similar could be used during dredging activities.

The hydraulically dredged material would be transported to an upland dewatering area utilizing existing piping located within uplands. The upland dewatering area is located approximately 1,000 feet west of the intake structure and consists of an approximately 2.2-acre area surrounded by compacted earthen berms (Figures 8 and 9 enclosed). The material entering the dewatering area consists of a mixture of dredged sediments and water. A 24-inch diameter standpipe is located within the dewatering area. A series of risers/stop-logs are placed against the open side of the standpipe to regulate the discharge of water from the area. Water slowly drains out of the disposal area overnight allowing for dredging operations to resume the following day. This controlled release allows for particle settlement within the disposal area. Approximately 98.9 to 100 percent of the dredge material is sand/gravel with zero to minimal silt content. This method along with natural evaporation dewateres the dredged material. Water discharged through the standpipe flows back to the Altamaha River. Once dewatered, the majority of the dredge material is removed via truck from the dewatering area for other beneficial uses including road maintenance.

## **BACKGROUND**

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the Corps and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

HNP is an electrical generation facility operated by Southern Nuclear. The facility has two boiling-water reactors with steam-electric turbines. Unit 1 began operation in 1975 and Unit 2 began operation in 1979. The excess heat produced by HNP's two nuclear units is absorbed by cooling water flowing through the condensers and the service water system. Main condenser cooling is provided by mechanical draft cooling towers.

Each HNP circulating water system is a closed-loop cooling system that utilizes three crossflow and one counter-flow mechanical-draft cooling towers for dissipating waste heat to the atmosphere. Makeup water required for operation of the cooling system is withdrawn from the Altamaha River via the existing cooling water intake structure. Southern Nuclear has a withdrawal permit from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (permit 001-0690-01) that allows the withdrawal of a monthly average of 85 million gallons per day from the river.

The intake structure is located in a relatively straight reach of the river. Due to natural sediment transport within the Altamaha River drainage system and recent sediment deposition changes due to reconstruction of the U.S. Highway 1 bridge over the Altamaha River, sediments accumulate in the vicinity of the intake structure. The accumulated sediments, which consist primarily of sand, limit the ability to withdraw sufficient water for cooling operations and under certain conditions can lead to excessive intake pump wear. Southern Nuclear must periodically conduct maintenance dredging in the vicinity of the intake structure to ensure proper operation of HNP and supporting equipment. The following is the Corps permit history associated with the maintenance dredging:

- July 29, 1994 – DA Permit SAS-1994-03870 was issued for intake structure maintenance dredging. The permit authorized the annual dredging of sediment at the HNP intake structure and expired on November 31, 2004.
- September 8, 2005 – DA Permit SAS-1994-03873 was issued for intake structure maintenance dredging. The permit authorized the annual dredging of up to 45,000 cubic yards of material, included an expansion of the authorized dredging area, and expired on August 31, 2015.
- December 30, 2015 – DA Permit SAS-1994-03873 was reissued for intake structure maintenance dredging. The permit reauthorized the annual dredging of up to 45,000 cubic yards of material and expired on February 1, 2022.

## **STATE OF GEORGIA**

Water Quality Certification: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division will review the proposed project for Water Quality Certification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The applicant has requested a Water Quality Certification from the State of Georgia. Prior to issuance of a Department of the Army Permit for a project located in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia, review for Water Quality Certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act is required. A reasonable period of time, which shall not exceed one year, is established under the Clean Water Act for the State to act on a request for Water Quality Certification, after which, issuance of such a Department of the Army Permit may proceed. This public notice serves as notification

to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) pursuant to section 401(a)(2) of the Clean Water Act for neighboring jurisdiction review and begins the 30-day clock for USEPA to notify affected states.

State-owned Property and Resources: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or other appropriate instrument.

## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army permit.

Cultural Resources: Review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places and the Georgia Natural, Archeological and Historic Resources GIS database, indicates that no registered properties or properties listed as eligible for inclusion are located on the project site. Presently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical or historical data may be located at the site and could be affected by the proposed work.

Endangered Species: A preliminary review the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service's Protected Resource Divisions (NMFSPRD)'s list of Endangered and Threatened Species (IPaC) indicates the following listed species may occur in the project area: Red Cockaded Wood Pecker (*Picoides borealis*); Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*); Gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*); Altamaha Spiny mussel (*Elliptio spinosa*); Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*); Atlantic Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*); and Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*).

Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area.

Public Interest Review: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs,

safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Consideration of Public Comments: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

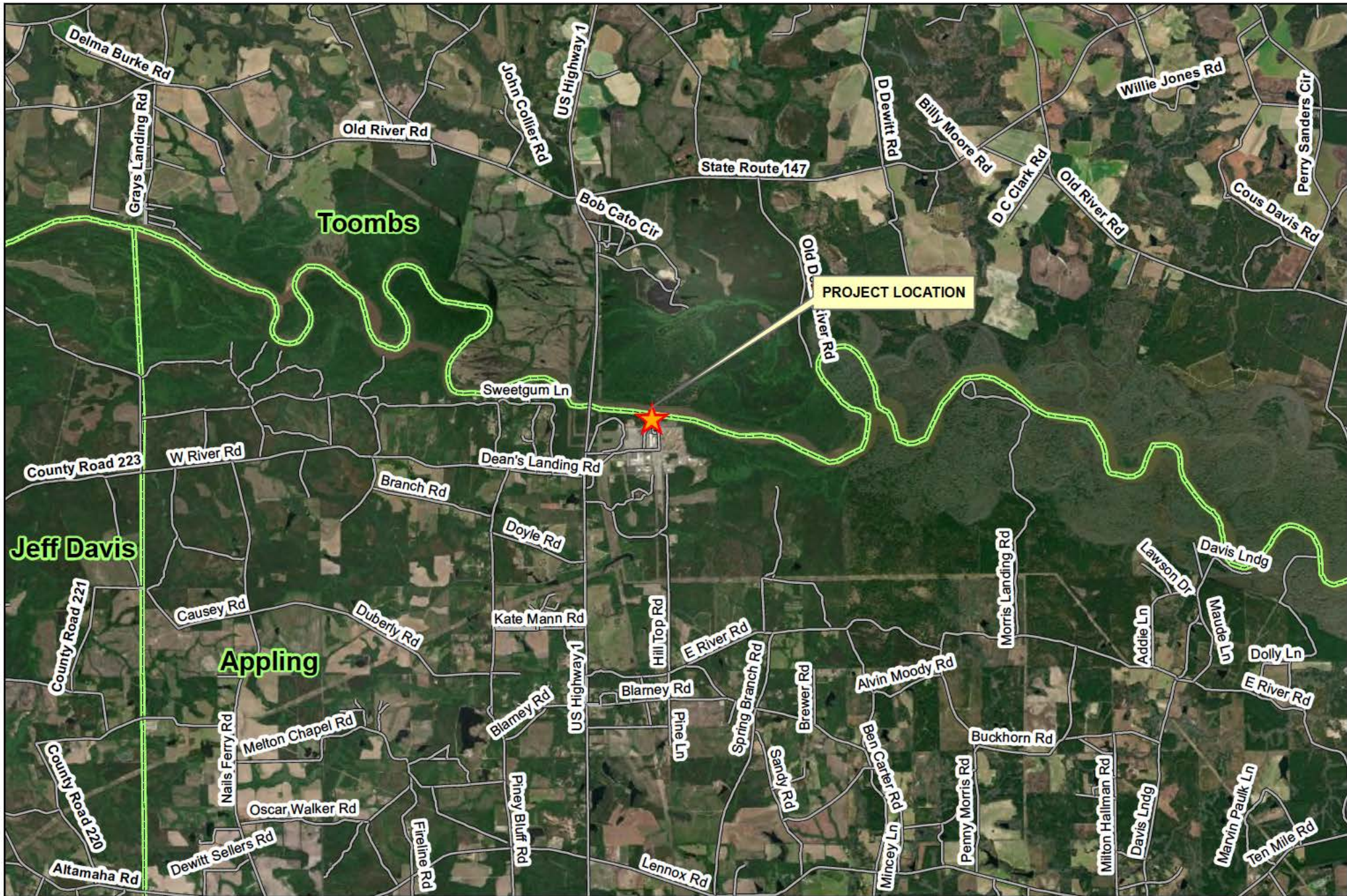
Public Hearing: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantial information necessary in evaluating the proposed project.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army permit should submit comments by email to [sarah.e.wise@usace.army.mil](mailto:sarah.e.wise@usace.army.mil). Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Mrs. Sarah Wise, 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31401, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name and the application number in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Mrs. Sarah Wise, Team Lead, Coastal Branch at 912-652-5550.

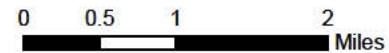
Enclosures:

1. Project Exhibits



Southern Nuclear  
 Plant Hatch Intake Structure Dredging  
 Appling County, Georgia  
 (Altamaha River)

NOVEMBER 2021  
 20285-001



**PROJECT LOCATION - AERIAL**

**FIGURE 1**



**LEGEND**

PERENNIAL STREAM

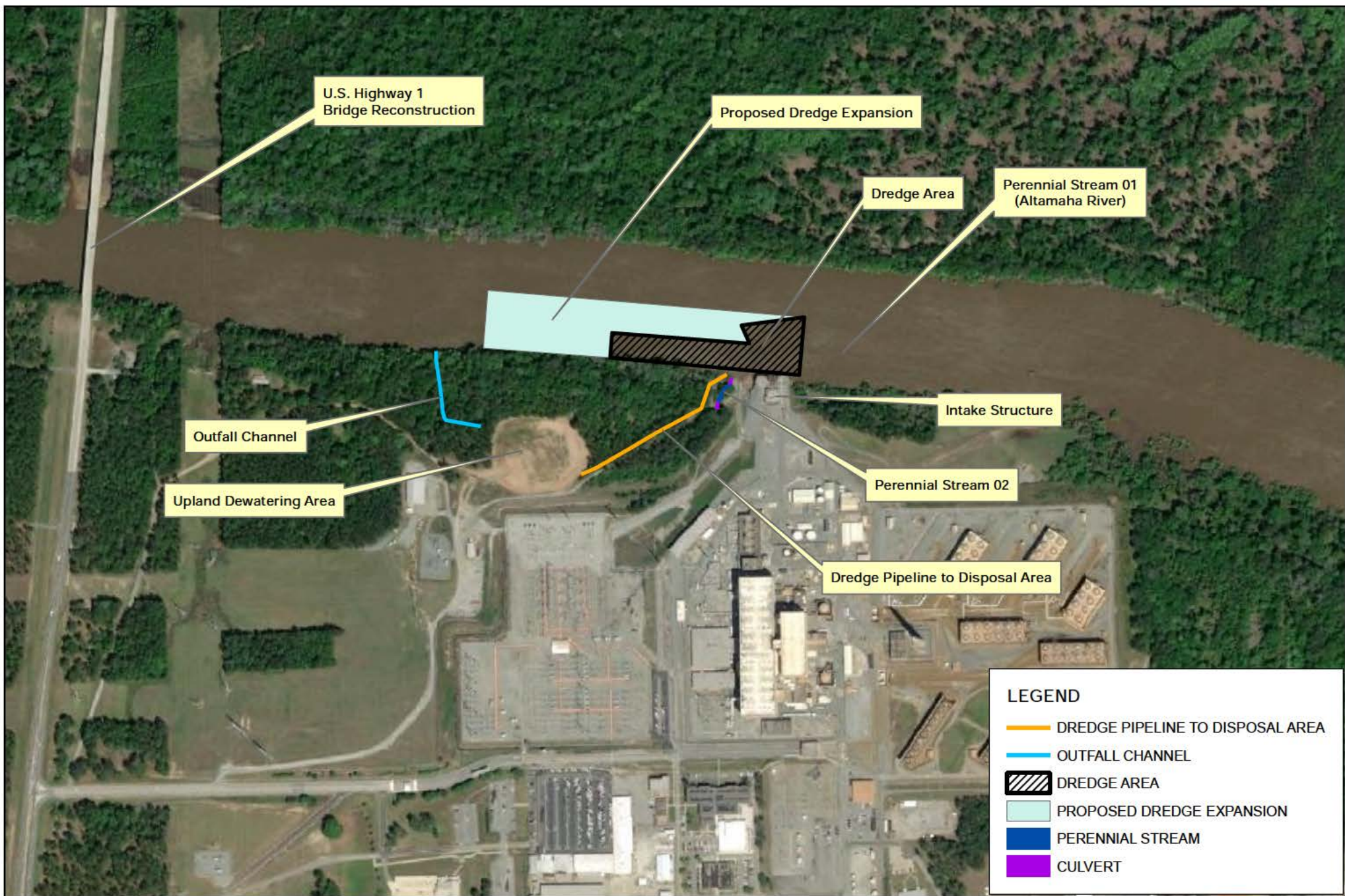
Southern Nuclear  
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 Appling County, Georgia  
 (Altamaha River)  
 AQUATIC RESOURCES

NOVEMBER 2021  
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0 300 600 1,200 Feet  
 1 inch = 600 feet



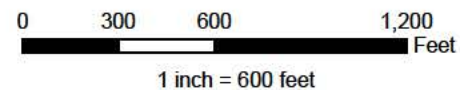
FIGURE 8



Southern Nuclear  
 Plant Hatch Intake Structure Dredging  
 Appling County, Georgia  
 (Altamaha River)

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
PROJECT FEATURES





LEGEND

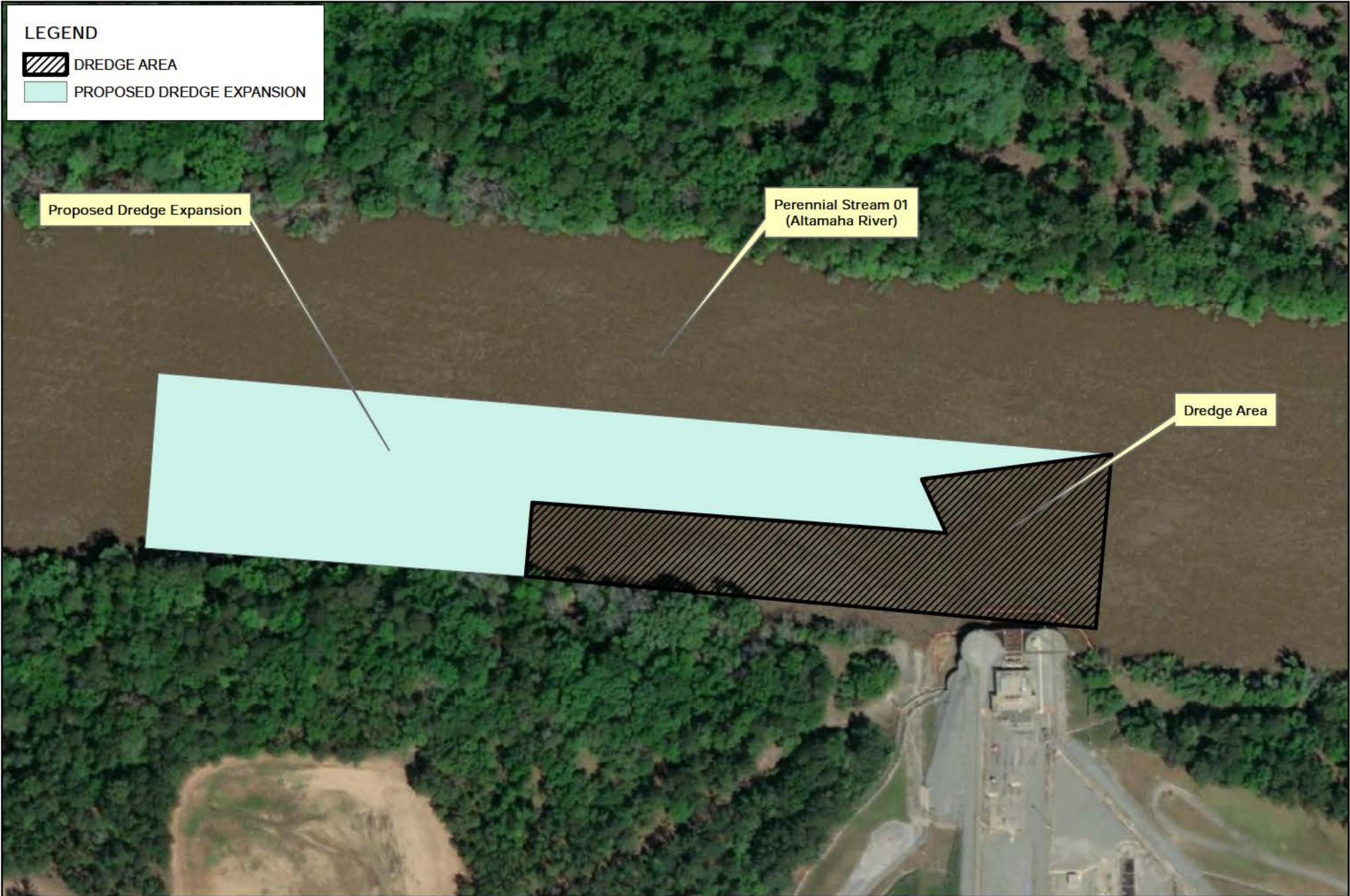
 DREDGE AREA

 PROPOSED DREDGE EXPANSION

Proposed Dredge Expansion

Perennial Stream 01  
(Altamaha River)

Dredge Area

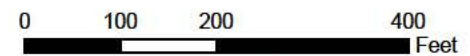


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PROPOSED DREDGE EXPANSION



1 inch = 200 feet

FIGURE 10