



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
SAVANNAH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 889  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31402-0889

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

DEC 21 2005

Regulatory Branch  
200501180

PUBLIC NOTICE  
FOR SALVAGE LOGGING IN  
MONTGOMERY, JEFF DAVIS, TOOMBS, APPLING, TATTNAL, LONG, WAYNE,  
GLYNN, MCINTOSH, DOUGHERY, BAKER, MITCHELL AND DECATUR COUNTIES,  
GEORGIA

The Savannah District Engineer is evaluating the issuance of a Programmatic General Permit (PGP) authorizing work in navigable waters of the United States within the 13 counties of Georgia identified above. This permit will be known as PGP 2 for Salvage Logging.

Programmatic General Permits are authorized by the District Engineer for activities which are:

(1) substantially similar in nature and cause only minimal individual and cumulative environmental impacts; and

(2) would result in avoiding unnecessary duplication of the regulatory control exercised by another Federal, State, or local agency provided it has been determined that the environmental consequences of the action are individually and cumulatively minimal (see 33 C.F.R. Parts 322.2(f), 325.2(e), and 330).

Location of the Proposed Work: The work would occur in select portions of the Altamaha and Flint Rivers. The areas in which work would occur on the Altamaha River are from the Atlantic Ocean, upstream in the main channel of the Altamaha River to the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers. No work would be authorized in the Atlantic Ocean, the Oconee River, the Ocmulee River, any named or unnamed tributaries to the Altamaha River, or any oxbows of the Altamaha River. The areas in which work would occur on the Flint River are from Lake Seminole, upstream in the main channel of the Flint River, to the Broad Street Bridge in Albany. No work would be authorized in Lake Seminole, any named or unnamed tributaries to the Flint River, or any oxbows of the Flint River. More detailed information is included in the attached Policy on Salvage Logging and location maps.

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: This proposed PGP would be issued pursuant to Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403), to authorize work in navigable waters of the US. The work authorized under this permit would include the locating and removing of existing submerged and partially submerged cut timber in select portions of the Altamaha and Flint Rivers.

The PGP would require that persons who intend to use the PGP authority for salvage logging purposes to provide a request to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) for

approval prior to any work in navigable waters of the US. The application procedures and other terms and conditions of authorization are set forth in the GA DNR, Board of Natural Resources, Policy on Salvage Logging and location maps (enclosed pages 1-10).

The Board Policy requires that all persons with a salvage logging permit (or their designated representative) must attend a GA DNR developed log recovery training program in the practical aspects of environmental and archeological protection before salvage operations may begin. Persons will be certified as a “Certified Deadhead Logger” after successfully completing training. Additional training will be offered and required as needed and at least one trained “Certified Deadhead Logger” will be present within a river section at all times during recovery operations. Prior to recovery operations, a pre-recovery assessment will be conducted of the proposed log recovery site and log take-out and off-loading site(s) by a GA DNR employee or representative and the applicant or a designated representative.

Scope: The scope of the PGP includes only those activities which are considered to be in accordance with the guidelines and limitations set forth in the conditions of the Regional Permit.

Individual Permits: Activities which are not specified in the original PGP or which exceed the limitations of the Permit require individual Department of the Army Authorization from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) District Office before work is started. The District Engineer may require individual authorization on a case-by-case basis if he determines authorization under this PGP for a specific project is not in the public interest.

## BACKGROUND

The 2005 Georgia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 283 that allows the recovery of submerged logs, often referred to as “deadhead” logs, from the Altamaha and Flint Rivers. Subsequent to this authorization, the GA DNR began work to facilitate this recovery. Work has included conducting six public scoping meetings, two public hearings, two GA DNR Board meetings and numerous other agency coordination meetings in recent months. In addition, the GA DNR requested authorization from the USACE. The USACE determined that authorization in the form of a PGP would be the most appropriate course of action. The enclosed draft of the GA DNR Board Policies for salvage logging is the product of these efforts and defines how salvage logging would be accomplished.

## US 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 Assessment: Presently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistorical, or historical data may be located within the project’s area of potential effects. The USACE will consult with the GA DNR, Historic Preservation Division, concerning the potential for the proposed salvage logging to affect historic and cultural resources. However, GA DNR has added special conditions to the Board Policies to help assure that no National Register eligible or

National Register listed historic properties are adversely impacted or affected. These provisions include prohibiting salvage logging in certain areas of the rivers where there are known archeological resources. These off-limits areas may be added to, extended, or reduced as additional information becomes available including additional information obtained during the pre-recovery assessment. Logs will be pulled and floated (no dragging on river bottom allowed) and a flotation device shall be used to transport logs to protect the submerged river bottom from damage.

Endangered Species: Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), a determination was made that the Flint River project area contains several Federally endangered mussels, the Shinyrayed pocketbook (*Hamiota subangulata*), the Gulf moccasinshell (*Medionidus pennicilatus*), the Oval pigtoe (*Pleurobema pyriforme*), the Fat threeridge (*Amblema neislerii*) and the threatened Purple bankclimber mussel (*Elliptioideus sloatianus*). The Altamaha River project area contains the Federally endangered shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*). The USACE will consult with the US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) with regards to effects determinations. Additionally, GA DNR has added special conditions to the Board Policies in consideration of any affects to federally listed threatened or endangered species, or any other species of concern. They include provisions where salvage logging is prohibited in certain areas of the rivers identified for species and habitat protection, such as cold water springs, shoals, sand bars, etc. These areas may be added to, extended, or reduced as additional information becomes available including additional information obtained during the pre-recovery assessment. Logs will be pulled and floated (no dragging on river bottom allowed) and a flotation device shall be used to transport logs to protect the submerged river bottom from damage and no blowing of sand or silt will be allowed.

On the Flint River, a pre-recovery survey for federally listed mussels must be conducted by a Department approved person, or entities, capable of mussel species identification before recovery operations are authorized. Surveyors would be required to have Section 10(a)(1)(a) permit by FWS and are encouraged to follow FWS survey protocol. If federally listed mussel species are present in the immediate vicinity (downstream within 300 feet or upstream within 200 feet) of the logs to be recovered, logging may not be allowed at all.

On the Altamaha River, log recovery will not be allowed upstream of the U.S. Highway 84 bridge (near Doctortown) during sturgeon spawning season (February 1 through April 31), and recovery will not be allowed in the Altamaha River downstream of Altamaha River Park between July 1 and September 31 (thermal refuge habitat protection). Studies may also be required by the permittee where State or Federally endangered species or critical habitat may be present. If additional information becomes available on the location of the Altamaha spiny mussel (*Elliptio spinosa*) or the Altamaha arc mussel (*Alasmidonta arcula*), candidate species to become Federally listed as endangered, then logging in those river reaches may be prohibited.

Based on this information, the Savannah District will coordinate a determination of affects for the proposed project on these or any other Federally listed threatened or endangered species that are under the purview of FWS or NMFS pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq).

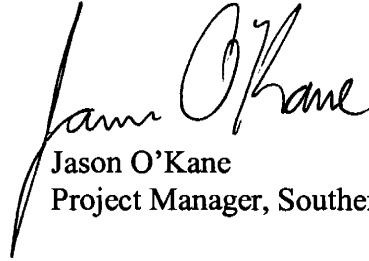
Public Interest Review: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. 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 US Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian 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 US Army Corps of Engineers 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.

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 in writing to the Commander, US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Regulatory Branch, Attention: Jason O’Kane, OP-FS, Post Office Box 889, Savannah, Georgia 31402-0889, 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 me at (912) 652-5349.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason O'Kane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Jason O'Kane  
Project Manager, Southern Section

Enclosures

1. Board Policy on Salvage Logging (pages 1-7)
2. Location Maps (pages 8-10)