

**Study Plan 2 - Socioeconomic Impacts of Rule Curve Change**

**1.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to estimate the social and economic impact of a rule curve change at the Martin Project.

**2.0 RELEVANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOALS**

Fluctuating water levels at hydropower projects may affect resources associated with a hydroelectric project. Not only could fluctuating water levels affect the environmental resources (*i.e.*, fisheries, erosion, aquatic plants, etc.), they also affect social and economic resources (recreation use, property values, etc.). Many Lake Martin stakeholders have requested an examination of how a rule curve change at Lake Martin could potentially affect recreation visitation, property values, and reservoir related businesses.

**3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING INFORMATION**

Fishery Information Management Systems, Inc. (FIMS) conducted a study in the 1990s that estimated recreation visitation, trip expenses, distribution of recreation use, property values, and reservoir related business activity. Much of the information provided in the report (FIMS, 1997) is relevant to possible rule curve changes associated with the relicensing of Lake Martin. The FIMS report will provide the basis for this study and will be used as a template for providing current effects of a possible rule curve change. Furthermore, APC conducted a recreational use study in 2007 that will provide current recreational use patterns as well as an up-to-date inventory of on-the-water businesses at Lake Martin.

**4.0 PROJECT NEXUS**

The nexus to the Project is the FERC project boundary and general project vicinity. The FIMS study also identified the market area for Lake Martin visitors, generally including the counties surrounding the Project, as well as major metropolitan areas in the vicinity (Birmingham and Montgomery).

**5.0 STUDY AREA AND STUDY SITES**

The study area will include Lake Martin, its tributaries, and lands and water within the FERC project boundary for the Martin Project. As noted above, the study area will be expanded to include a qualitative assessment of market areas associated with recreation visitation at the Project.

**6.0 PROPOSED METHODOLOGY**

The draft methodology for inclusion in a Request for Proposals (RFP) to be sent out to a select group of experts will include:

- 1) Use existing data (2007-2009) to estimate current year recreation use.
- 2) Adjust trip expense information from FIMS study using the consumer price index (CPI).