

What is the Santee Cooper Project?

Constructed from 1939 to 1942, the Santee Cooper Power and Navigation Project provided hydroelectric power from the Santee and Cooper rivers and improved navigation from the coast to the midlands through the creation of Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie. The project was intended to spark prosperity in Depression-ravaged South Carolina and electrify rural areas of the region. It was the largest earth-moving project in U.S. history at the time.

The Santee Cooper Project must abide by its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license requirements. License requirements include hydroelectric generation, navigation, aquatic weed control, vector (mosquito) control, water quality monitoring, land management and use classifications, forest management, wildlife habitat, recreation, public access and boat landings, public safety and security, lake management and dam safety.

The Santee Cooper Project is identified by its Project Works, which create parts of the project boundary and are necessary for project operations and maintenance. The Project Works include the 110,000 acre Lake Marion, impounded by the Santee Dams, the spillway and the minimum flow hydro unit on the Santee River, and the adjacent 60,000 acre Lake Moultrie, impounded by the Pinopolis Dams at the headwaters of the Cooper River (a tidal estuary), several dikes, and the Jefferies hydro station and navigation lock, and a 7.5 mile-long diversion canal connecting the two reservoirs.

The Project Works include:

1. Lake Marion
2. Santee North Dam
3. Santee Spillway & Minimum flow Hydro
4. Santee South Dam
5. Lake Moultrie
6. Pinopolis North Dike
7. Pinopolis East Dike
8. Pinopolis East Dam Extension
9. Pinopolis West Dike
10. Pinopolis West Dam
11. Jefferies Hydro Generation Station & Tailrace Canal
12. Pinopolis East Dam
13. Diversion Canal



Project Boundary Overview

The project boundary encompasses approximately 180,000 acres of land and water, which are necessary for project operations and maintenance, and to satisfy terms of the license.

