Attachment **G**

Impacts Assessment

Attachment G—Impacts Assessment/Statement of Avoidance and Minimization

H.1. PROPOSED IMPACTS-

The Gulf Power Company (GPC) North Florida Resiliency Connection (NFRC) project will impact a total of 232.04 acres of wetlands and 13.63 acres of surface waters. Due to the overhead nature of the project, most of these impacts will be temporary in nature and will result from typical transmission line construction activities, such as vegetation clearing, light raking, temporary construction matting, and ground disturbance from construction vehicles during installation.

For purposes of this application, most impacts are considered temporary unless there will be a permanent change in wetland type, (i.e., permanent conversion of forested wetland to non-forested wetland within the permanent maintenance area or permanent fill resulting from installation of a transmission structure). Impacts to non-forested wetland systems and water bodies are also considered temporary, as they will be restored to preconstruction condition once the transmission line has been installed. Construction and restoration activities in wetlands and water bodies will employ best management practices to minimize impacts to wetlands, such as those found in the exhibit included in Attachment C.

Table 8 summarizes the wetland and water body impacts by type, and Table 9 (Environmental Resource Permit [ERP] Table 1) provides the impact type for each wetland and water body within the proposed project impact area.

Figure 5 depicts the location of the proposed wetland and water body impacts along the proposed transmission alignment.

Wetland Impacts

Temporary Construction Impacts

The project will temporarily impact 52.78 acres of wetlands. The temporary impacts to non-forested wetlands within the permanently maintained project footprint (approximately 39.81 acres or 17% percent of total wetland impact) are primarily herbaceous wet prairie (643) and freshwater marshes (641) associated with roadside swales, agricultural fields, or cattle pastures. Approximately 12.97 acres of nonforested wetlands outside the permanent project footprint will be temporary impacted by construction activities. These wetlands are primarily vegetated non-forested wetlands (640) associated with roadside drainages or agricultural pastures.

Approximately 11.95 acres of forested wetland will be temporarily impacted during construction. The majority of these are associated with mixed wetland hardwood systems (617) or mixed forested wetlands (630). The temporary construction right-of-way will be restored to its preconstruction contours to avoid long-term impacts to wetland hydrology. Wetland vegetation will reestablish through natural succession once construction and restoration activities are

complete. In emergent wetlands, herbaceous vegetation is expected to regenerate quickly (typically within one growing season).

Permanent Fill and Conversion Impacts

The project will result in a permanent fill of 0.28 acres of wetlands where transmission poles will be placed. These impacts were minimized by careful consideration of pole placement to avoid wetlands where practicable. Conversion of approximately 178.26 acres of forested wetland to non-forested wetlands will occur in forested wetlands that are within the footprint of the permanently maintained right-of-way, which will not be allowed to reestablish as forest after construction, to minimize potential outages caused by trees and limbs interfering with transmission lines. Restricting the clearing footprint where possible within these permanently maintained areas will further reduce the impact acreage.

Following construction, these areas will be maintained as emergent or scrub/shrub wetlands, so there will be no net loss of wetlands, but rather a change of wetland type in these areas.

Water Body Impacts

Most water body impacts are proposed to be temporary in nature and limited to the construction time frame, which is expected to be approximately 6 months. Each water body crossing will be restored to its preconstruction contour and stabilized to minimize erosion. There will be temporary impacts to several natural streams, man-made ditches, lakes, and reservoirs, with a combined total impact area of approximately 13.63 acres. The larger creeks and streams as well as several other crossings will be traversed using matting or temporary bridges (Attachment C, typical drawing). The construction methods will include matting laid in such a way that allows for transverse water flow so as to minimize interruption to the natural water flow paths. Otherwise, the crossings will be overhead with no resulting impacts to water bodies.

H.2. ELIMINATION OR REDUCTION OF IMPACTS

Impacts to wetlands and water bodies were eliminated or reduced to the extent practicable by using the following standards:

- Designing a route that will meet project objectives while avoiding and minimizing environmental impacts
- Locating permanent structures and other project features in uplands
- Limiting the corridor and construction right-of-way to previously disturbed areas (e.g., electric transmission line corridors, other pipeline corridors, and road and railroad rights-of-way)
- Minimizing impacts to sensitive environmental features by using specialized construction techniques, such as matting and temporary bridges, where appropriate
- Locating temporary workspaces and access areas within existing utility/transportation corridors or in other upland areas such as existing roads

- Implementing BMPs and effective soil erosion control measures (e.g., silt fence, straw bales), including routine inspections during construction and until soil stabilization has occurred

- Minimizing the construction duration to limit the disturbance to natural resources