



March 1, 2023

State of Florida
Public Service Commission

RE: Filing of Report on Standards of Construction
Pursuant to Rule 25.6.0343, F.A.C.

To Whom it may Concern:

Okefenoke REMC herewith files the attached report on Standards of Construction for
Calendar Year 2022.

Regards,

/s/ Ernie Thomas

Ernie Thomas
System Engineer
Okefenoke REMC

Serving - Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, Ware, Wayne, Baker and Nassau Counties

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**Report to the Florida Public Service Commission
Pursuant to Rule 25-6.0343, F.A.C.
Calendar Year 2022**

1) Introduction

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2) Members Served

As of December 31st 2022, Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation serves 28,927 active meters in the state of Georgia, and 11,349 active meters in the state of Florida. The total number of active meters served system-wide is 40,276.

3) Standards of Construction

No report required for this year.

4) Facility Inspections

a) Guidelines, Practices, and Procedures

Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation uses RUS Bulletin 1730B-121, entitled “Pole Inspection and Maintenance” as a guideline for inspecting its distribution lines, poles, and structures. The cooperative owns no transmission facilities. The cooperative has utilized both contractors and cooperative personnel to administer the inspection and maintenance program. This procedure includes visual inspection from ground-line to the top of the pole, sound and bore with excavation, and chemical treatment of the poles.

b) 2022 Inspections

Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation did not participate in pole inspections in 2022. Over the past several years OREMC has inspected approximately 12 to 15 % of our current system. In 2022 we did not focus on this area of our Maintenance Program. With OREMC only inspected 181 distribution poles in 2022. These inspections were completed by in-house crews during storms and such activities. OREMC currently maintains approximately 62,000 poles to date.

Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation performed visual inspections of a substantial number of poles in conjunction with the engineering and construction of many capital projects throughout the year 2022. The capital projects included new pole-line construction, system upgrades, pole replacement projects, conductor replacement projects,

road moving jobs, line relocation projects, and other miscellaneous projects. Many older poles were retired and replaced with these projects.

OREMC’s in-house line and system visual inspection program continues. Meter men and line staking personnel have the necessary tools to conduct routine line, service wire, and meter base inspections as a part of their daily activities. In 2022 routine line inspections totaled approximately 2,700 system wide. These were mainly Meter base and secondary inspections.

c) Rejections

Due to the low number of 2022 inspections, all but a very few rejects have been corrected and repaired at this time.

d) Replacement and Remediation

During the engineering and construction of the capital projects mentioned in section 4b above, many poles were replaced or retired from the Okefenoke REMC system throughout the year 2022. The following table summarizes the projects in which poles were replaced or retired:

Work Plan Code	Description	New Poles Added	Poles Retired
100	New Construction to to new Members	523	116
200/300	System Improvement	155	116
606	Pole Replacement	99	100
607	Miscellaneous Replacements	19	16
608	Conductor Replacements	38	35
609	Misc. Plant Additions	4	0
610	Road Moves	26	23
611	Line Relocations	13	16
702	Outdoor Lighting	45	2
999	Retirement Only	0	61
Totals		922	485

Though the cooperative did not experience a direct hit from a major hurricane during 2022, it did experience tropical storm force winds from a couple of storms during the year. The OREMC distribution system withstood the tropical storm force winds well, with minimal pole damage due to the storms. Most of the outages were the result of trees and debris on the conductors. The minimal pole failure rate is attributed to the cooperative’s past philosophy and practice of upgrading pole class and strength ratings of pole-top equipment.

5. Vegetation Management

a) Guidelines, Practices, and Procedures

Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation utilizes contractors for its vegetation management programs, with supervision from the cooperative’s staff. Vegetation control practices consist of complete clearing to the ground-line, trimming, and herbicide application. The herbicide is generally applied to the sections of line cleared the previous year, thereby extending the clearing cycle beyond what would normally be needed. The cooperative is also widening right of ways from twenty to thirty feet wide, wherever practical. These practices have allowed the cooperative to move to a five-year trim cycle, rather than a three-year cycle.

Problem trees outside the right of way or easement are handled on a case-by-case basis. Often a landowner will contact the cooperative, requesting danger tree removal. The cooperative’s right of way foreman will investigate and facilitate the tree removal if it is feasible to do so. In other instances, problem trees are reported by cooperative employees or other persons, and the right of way foreman will attempt to obtain landowner permission to remove the problem tree. If permission is granted, the process is essentially the same as if the landowner reported the problem tree. The majority of the cooperative’s system is rural, and the rural consumers are generally very supportive of the effort to remove the problem trees to help avoid power interruptions.

b) 2022 Vegetation Management

Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation has traditionally used 500 miles as a targeted annual goal for right of way trimming and clearing. For the year 2022, the cooperative trimmed approximately 433 miles of right of way.

Below is a summary of the past 5 years of the Annual Trimming Cycle.

Historical Trimming

Year	Miles
2018	516.40
2019	511.40

2020	486.67
2021	536.51
2022	433.00

In addition to our routine cut and trim cycle, we are also incorporating a similar 5-year plan to apply spray herbicide to the floor of our existing right of way instead of mechanical mowing. In 2022 we utilized contractors (NaturChem) to treat approximately 235 miles of chemical floor spray to our right of way. In addition to the mechanical miles, we also use the Chemical side trim method to treat and essentially trim an additional 80 miles of side canopy.

OREMC is a proud sponsor and attendee at the annual Woodbine GA Tree seminar. The cooperative strives to take advantage of educational and networking opportunities such as this at every opportunity.

In an effort to automate our ROW program OREMC has implemented the Partner Software ROW module. We have been collecting and posting data to the system since January 2017. The software will allow us to keep track of our trimming and herbicide cycles. It also allows us to keep track of issues like danger trees, cycle busters, and no work zones like organic farms.

In 2022 OREMC continued to implement a “Danger Tree Program” to target trees that may not be within our right of way, but will damage our lines if they fall. This program has targeted dead, weak, or leaning trees throughout our system.

With the use of our Partner Software package, we have documented 1,009 danger trees and disposed of the threat to our distribution lines.

Below is an overview of the data from the program as of 2022 YTD.

<u>Foreman</u>	<u>Danger Trees Removed</u>
Troy	445
Brian	145
Richard	50
Ronald	76
Randall	81
Clay	73
Brooks	60
Other	79
Total	1,009

Okefenoke REMC will continue to consider these and other areas for improvement in its vegetation management processes and will participate in any future conferences or discussions concerning utility best practices. The cooperative has multiple employees who have achieved the Certified Arborist qualifications, as well as licensed pesticide applications, with emphasis on wood treatment and right of way herbicide spraying.