

HYDROPOWER:

Being Good Stewards Has a Price

- As good stewards of our natural resources, Southwestern Power Administration (SWPA) and the Corps of Engineers have altered operations at Tenkiller and other hydro projects to protect the environment and benefit fish and wildlife. This has come at a cost, particularly to power customers who must purchase replacement power at much higher costs. Between 1991 and 1998, changes in operations at Fort Gibson to benefit downstream fisheries have reduced energy production by 6.6 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) and cost SWPA almost \$34,000 in lost revenues. The reduced energy and capacity available from the dam have cost SWPA's customers and their retail electricity consumers nearly \$106,000 in lost power benefits as the rural co-ops and municipals have had to purchase replacement power and energy.
- Changes in operations at other Corps hydro projects to benefit downstream fisheries have also been costly to SWPA and its power customers. Between 1989 and 1998 these changes have reduced energy production by 314.3 million kWh and reduced SWPA's revenues by \$1.6 million. These reductions in energy and capacity cost SWPA's power customers and their retail electricity consumers more than \$6.7 million in lost power benefits.
- Several modifications have been made to several powerplants in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri to increase the dissolved oxygen downstream of the dams. This is done to improve the habitat for the downstream fisheries. SWPA's power customers through their power rates pay for the cost of these modifications.
- On several occasions over the past four years, federal funding has been unavailable to fund powerplant modifications planned to improve water quality. In these instances, SWPA's power customers have provided the money directly to SWPA and the Corps so that the improvements can be completed without delay. For example, in 1997 Western Farmers Electric Cooperative directly funded modifications to the Tenkiller hydro units to improve dissolved oxygen downstream of the dam.

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