Georgia and Coal Ash Disposal in Ponds and Landfills

Summary:[1]

Plant	Operator	Site	County
Bowen Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	1 pond/landfill*	Bartow
Hammond	Georgia Power Co.	Landfill*, 4 ponds (1 listed as inactive)	Floyd
Harllee Branch Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	5 ponds	Putnam
Jack McDonough	Georgia Power Co.	Landfill*, 4 ponds (1 listed as inactive)	Cobb
Kraft Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	1 pond	Chatham
McIntosh Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	1 pond	Effingham
McManus Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	Landfill*	Glynn
Mitchell	Georgia Power Co.	Landfill*, 3 ponds (2 listed as inactive)	Dougherty
Scherer Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	1 pond	Monroe
Wansley Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	1 pond	Heard
Yates Power Station	Georgia Power Co.	Landfill*, 7 ponds (5 listed as inactive)	Coweta
International Paper Savannah Mill	International Paper Co.	Landfill*	Chatham

** indicates one or more coal ash landfills.*[2]

Amount of coal ash generated per year: Over 3.1 million tons. Georgia ranks 13th in the country for coal ash generation.[3]

The U.S. EPA has not yet gathered information on coal ash disposal in landfills, so a detailed breakdown is not yet available. However, according to a 2007 EPA risk assessment, 11 surface impoundments and landfills in Georgia are unlined. Of these sites, 10 do not have a leachate collection system and nine do not have any groundwater monitoring.[4]

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[1] United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Database of coal combustion waste surface impoundments (2009). Information collected by EPA from industry responses to Information Collection Request letters issued to the companies on March 9, 2009.

[2] U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-767, Annual Steam-Electric Plant Operation and Design Data. 2005.

[3] U.S. EPA and U.S. Department of Energy (U.S. DOE). *Coal Combustion Waste Management at Landfills and Surface Impoundments, 1994-2004.* (August 2006).

[4] RTI International. *Human and Ecological Risk Assessment of Coal Combustion Wastes*, *Draft* (August 6, 2007), prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Information on Georgia Coal Ash Ponds

Number of coal ash ponds: There are a total of 28 ponds at 10 power plants. Of those ponds, 16 are active. The remaining ponds are inactive, of which six are inactive and covered and six are inactive and have not been covered.[5]

Pond ratings: One pond at the Harllee Branch Power Station is rated "high hazard".[6]

Age of Ponds: Almost all ponds are over 30 years old. Seven of the active ponds are over 40 years old, while 2 of the active ponds are over 50 years old. Of the inactive ponds, there are five uncovered ponds over 30 years old, two ponds over 40 years old, and one over 50 years old. The age of these ponds makes it unlikely that they have safeguards like liners and leachate collection systems.[7]

Capacity and Releases: Storage Capacity at the 28 ponds is roughly 81 million cubic yards of coal ash. Current volume at the 28 ponds (active and inactive) is roughly 50 million cubic yards of coal ash.[8] The EPA database notes that three releases have occurred at Georgia ponds: two at Plant Bowen (a significant sinkhole failure in the pond in 2002 and a stack failure in 2008). In addition, in 2000, there was a discharge of slurry at a Harllee Branch waste pond.[9]

Damage Cases: According to a U.S. EPA damage case assessment, proven damage cases in Georgia include:[10]

- Georgia Power Company, Plant Bowen: "This unlined CCW management unit was put in service in 1968. On July 28, 2002, a sinkhole developed in the (coal) ash pond of the Georgia Power Company - Plant Bowen Facility (coal-fired generating facility). The sinkhole ultimately reached four acres and a depth of thirty feet. The integrity of the ash pond dikes did not appear to be compromised. The company estimated that 2.25 million gallons of ash/water mixture was released to an unnamed tributary of the Euharlee Creek, containing 281 tons of ash. Georgia's Department of Natural Resources alleges an unpermitted discharge of water containing

[5] Letters from Georgia Power Co. to the U.S. EPA, *Dated April 6, 2009:* "Response to Request to Georgia Power Plant McIntosh for Information Under Section 104(e) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C., 9604(e), dated March 9, 2009"; *Dated May 13, 2009:* "Identification of Georgia Power's Information Subject to a Claim of Confidentiality"; *Dated February 2, 2010:* "Response to Request to Georgia Power for Plants Hammond, McDonough, Mitchell and Yates for Information Under Section 104(e) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C., 9604(e), dated December 29, 2009".

[6] U.S. EPA. Database of coal combustion waste surface impoundments (2009).
[7] Letters from Georgia Power Co. to the U.S. EPA, (2009-2010).
[8] Id.
[9] RTI International. *Human and Ecological Risk Assessment of Coal Combustion Wastes*, *Draft* (August 6, 2007), prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
[10] U.S. EPA. *Coal Combustion Waste Damage Assessments* (July 9, 2007).

approximately 80 tons of ash slurry entered Euharlee Creek through a stormwater drainage pipe resulting in a temporary degradation of public waters."[11]

[11] RTI International. *Human and Ecological Risk Assessment of Coal Combustion Wastes, Draft* (August 6, 2007), prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.