

ALABAMA WATER AGENCIES WORKING GROUP:

Instream Flow Focus Area Panel

*AWAWG Stakeholder Meeting,
Auburn, AL
April 5, 2016*



Why Instream Flow?

- ◆ Essential for Human Life
- ◆ Water Quality Requirement
- ◆ Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Responsibility
- ◆ Ecological Requisite
- ◆ Recreational Desire
- ◆ Economic Necessity
- ◆ Future Obligation

What is Instream Flow?



A Little Water, Some of the Time?



All the Water, All the Time?



A Seasonally Adjusted Flow Regime?

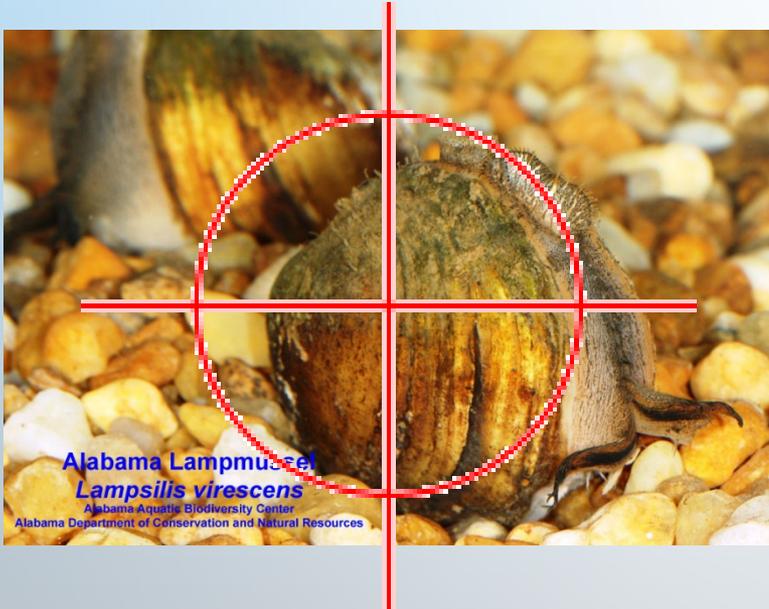




Protection or Restoration?



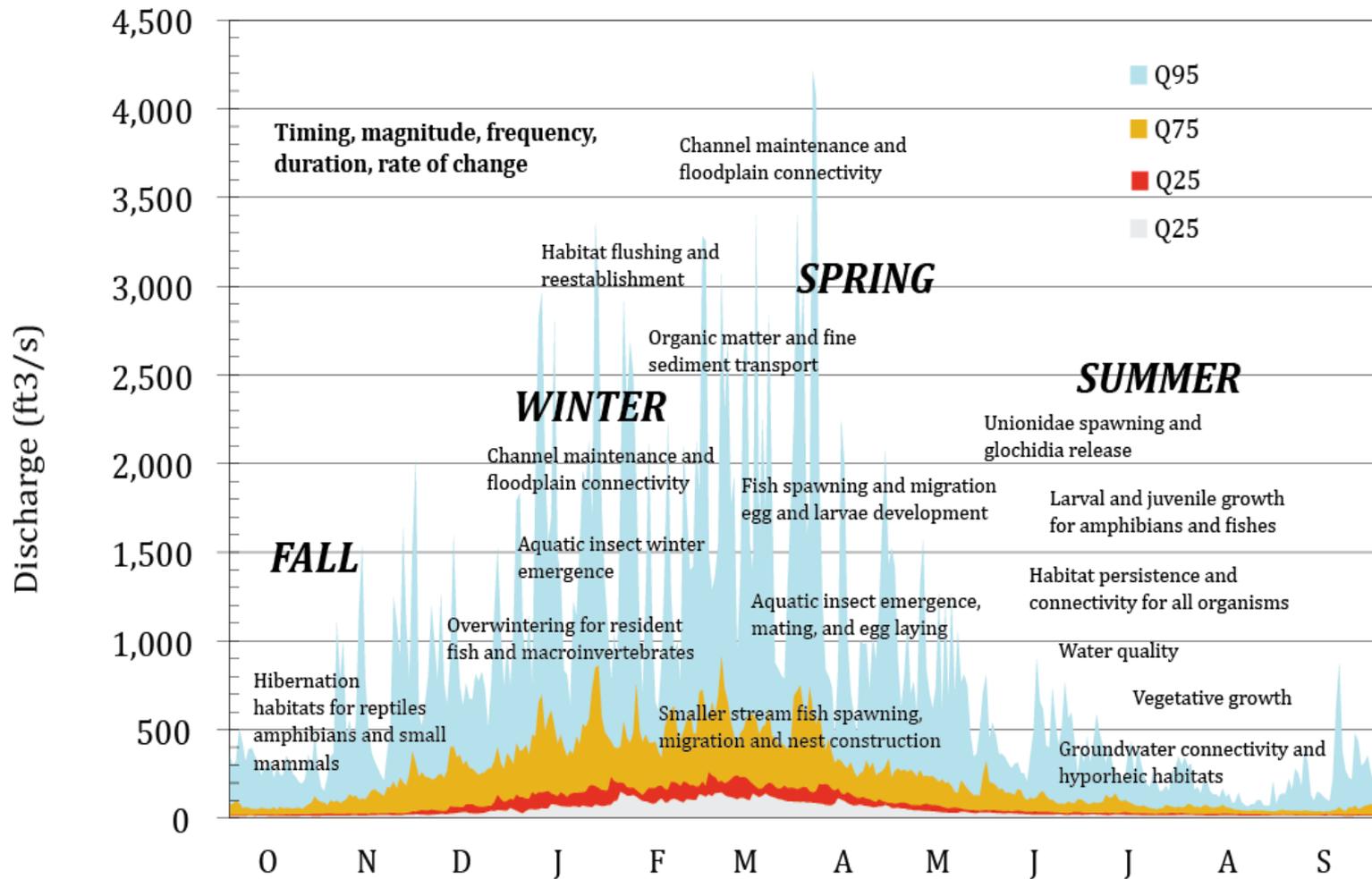
Horseshoes, Hand Grenades, and Instream Flow



Do you need to know the PRECISE effect or result?

Or just ACCURATELY predict trends?





Instream Flow FAP

--AWAWG Goals 2014--

- ◆ Clearly define the term "instream flow" and what the implications are for water resources management and water users.
- ◆ What is the appropriate strategy for implementing instream flow criteria?
- ◆ How could an established process be used to determine flow targets and implement those targets into the water resource management process?
- ◆ What changes in the current State water management structure are needed to effectively implement instream flow targets/criteria?



Instream Flow FAP

--Objectives--

Instream flow
education

Policy
framework

Research
agenda

- ◆ Establish standardized terminology.
- ◆ Compile relevant information with respect to current instream flows in Alabama.
- ◆ Explore how instream flows relate to ecological integrity and how other states have implemented instream flow policies and research activities.



Instream Flow FAP

--Objectives--

Instream flow
education

Policy
framework

Research
agenda

- ◆ Identify a methodology and approach acceptable for including instream flow considerations in water management for Alabama.
- ◆ Create a research agenda to analyze questions and provide guidance for development of instream flow principals for Alabama.
- ◆ Determine how to integrate instream flow considerations for Mobile Bay—economic impact, ecological impact.



Instream Flow FAP

--Activity--

- ◆ Have met six times—24 members
- ◆ Four subcommittees:
 - ◆ Identify a methodology and approach acceptable for including instream flow considerations in water management.
 - ◆ Create a research agenda to analyze questions and provide guidance for development of instream flow principals for Alabama.
 - ◆ Explore how to integrate instream flow considerations for Mobile Bay — economic impact, ecological impact.
 - ◆ Compile all information with respect to currently existing instream flows in Alabama.



Instream Flow FAP

--Activity--

- ◆ Defined the concept of instream flow and instream flow terms.
- ◆ Received an update of the surface and groundwater assessments.
- ◆ Presentations have been made by most FAP members on the following topics:
 - ✓ Review of instream flow FAP objectives and plan for moving forward.
 - ✓ The methods of instream flow science.
 - ✓ Using habitat to determine minimum flow levels.
 - ✓ A presumptive standard for environmental flow protection.
 - ✓ Climate and instream flow – what needs to be considered.
 - ✓ Why historical climate patterns are important considerations in water policy.
 - ✓ Flows to Mobile Bay – what does the science tell us, what is needed, what is the economic link.
 - ✓ How FERC and other negotiated flows come into existence.
 - ✓ Instream flow policy considerations from the water utility, manufacturing, agricultural, and forestry industries.



Instream Flow Definition

The amount of water that supports instream uses including: waste assimilation and maintaining water quality standards; protection of freshwater and estuarine fish and wildlife habitat, migration, and propagation; outdoor recreation activities; downstream uses; navigation, power generation, and commerce; ecosystem maintenance, which includes recruitment of freshwater to estuaries, riparian areas, floodplain wetlands and maintenance of channel geomorphology; and future needs.



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Framework

1. Statement of objective
2. Methods
3. Proposed approach
4. Process



Proposed framework for implementation of instream flows into statewide water management plan

- ◆ Narrative statement of instream flow objective(s).
- ◆ Description of current instream flow designations.
- ◆ General discussion of instream flow methods.
- ◆ Proposed instream flow approach for Alabama.
Conceptual model
- ◆ How approach can be implemented through existing statutes, rules, and regulations.



Questions ?

