

# Metro

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## Cost stands in way of dam's removal

With 2 dams on Twelve Mile coming down soon, focus turns to final one

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CATEECHEE — Residents on the Twelve Mile River will recall 2011 as the year the dams came down.

In the coming months, at least the two lower dams will be removed because of PCBs in the river.

Demolition of Woodside I, the upper of the two dams, will start this month, said Stephen Harris, spokesman for Schlum-

berger Technology Corp.

The removal of the two dams will alter both the river and life in the former mill village on its banks.

The fate of a third dam, owned by the Easley-Central Water District, remains in limbo.

The two century-old dams built to power one of the first Upstate textile mills to have electricity "are coming down," said U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr., who ordered

their removal in a 2006 settlement related to PCB contamination of the river and Lake Hartwell.

"I don't know about the Easley dam. I hope so," he said. "The whole problem boils down to money."

About \$4.5 million is needed to remove the third dam and replace infrastructure for the water district to continue to serve customers, proponents have said.

A sediment study on the extent of PCB contamination behind the third dam begins this month as well.

A contract between set-

tlement trustees and sponsors of the third dam removal project has been signed and work will also begin this month, said Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever, the lead project sponsor.

Trustees "are anxious to see the results," said Ross Self, chief of freshwater fisheries with the state Department of Natural Resources, the lead settlement trustee agency. "It will help fine-tune the value of the cost of taking the third dam out" and determine the extent of contaminated sediment that "may

need to be addressed."

Study results will help determine whether \$2.1 million from the settlement that trustees haven't yet awarded will go toward removal of the third dam.

"Realizing there is not enough settlement money to do it, why doesn't Easley Central Water District have to make up the difference?" asked Tom O'Hanlan, a Liberty resident and former city councilman. "I think Judge Anderson respectfully should order the project finished properly."

Anderson said he hasn't the authority to overturn

the negotiated 2006 settlement that requires Schlumberger Technology Corp. to remove only the two lower dams.

When the two lower dams come out, the third dam would be the only remaining obstacle to a free-flowing river.

A free-flowing river would open multiple opportunities for public recreation and improve the overall health of the river, Wyche said.

The gorge "will be one of the most beautiful places in South Carolina," Anderson said.