

Sediment behind river's last dam to be studied

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CATEECHEE — After months of waiting, money has been released from a PCB settlement fund, and a long-awaited study has started to determine the extent of PCB contamination behind a controversial third dam on the Twelve Mile River.

Settlement trustees want study results before deciding whether to allocate further settlement money toward removal of the dam owned by the Easley-Central Water District.

With good weather, the sediment study should be completed in three months, said Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever, the lead sponsor of a proposed project to remove the dam.

Two lower dams that once powered a long-gone textile mill are slated for removal, with demolition of the first to begin this

month and demolition of the second targeted for this summer.

Project supporters say that removal of the Easley-Central dam, which is third and final dam on the river, would aid the flow of clean sediment to cover PCB contamination in the river and Lake Hartwell, where health advisories warn against eating certain fish that could carry the carcinogenic materials in their fat.

A federal judge ordered removal of the two lower dams in a 2006 negotiated settlement. Money from the settlement money also is paying for the study of the extent of contamination behind the third dam.

The 2006 settlement stems from the release of more than 400,000 pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, between 1955 and 1977 from the former Sangamo-Weston capacitor manufacturing site in Pickens, now owned by Schlumberger Technology

Corp.

Upstate Forever and the other sponsors of the proposal to remove the Easley-Central dam hope to secure funding from the settlement for the project.

Settlement trustees recently awarded money from a \$9 million fund to several projects related to Lake Hartwell and the river, and reserved \$2.1 million that potentially could go toward removal of the third dam.

Trustees allocated \$225,000 for the sediment study, indicating that results were a critical factor in determining the cost and scope of the proposed project and any future support from the settlement fund.

The \$2.1 million is less than project sponsors had hoped for. Sponsors will ask trustees to reconsider the allocation of the settlement money after the study is completed "and we have a clearer idea of the cost," Wyche said.