

Samples spark concern on Twelve Mile

Conservation groups fear further damage to Lake Hartwell

By Anna Simon

CLEMSON BUREAU
asimon@greenvilleonline.com

CATEECHEE - Soil samples were found to contain PCBs in floodplains left after dredging behind the Woodside I dam on the Twelve Mile River, raising public concerns for Lake Hartwell, while a federal judge said this was expected and left any action up to trustees in the natural re-

source settlement.

U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr. also allowed the Easley-Central Water District until early summer to remove a stump lodged in a gate of the water district's dam upstream from the two Woodside dams being removed under the 2006 settlement.

Anderson said little water or sediment passes around the stump, so allow-

ing more time avoids unnecessary drain on the water supply and inconvenience to customers.

The judge on Friday also denied a request from Upstate Forever, the Lake Hartwell Association and the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District for a hearing about recent test results showing PCBs in floodplains left behind Woodside I.

"It was expected that PCBs would be embedded in the banks of Twelve Mile River," Anderson wrote in

PCBs

Learn more about the environmental impact of PCBs and follow developments in the removal of the Twelve Mile River Dam at GreenvilleOnline.com/TwelveMile-Dam.

response to the three conservation groups. "This is a natural consequence of the water that was in the pool behind Woodside I Dam. This is also to be expected in the Woodside II Dam."

Anderson said "voluntary presentations" from

the conservation groups are appreciated but "will not be considered as an official act until the Natural Resource Trustees adopt any (of the) recommendations."

Ross Self, chairman of the trustee council, said trustees haven't had a chance to discuss Upstate Forever's letter to the judge or the judge's response and have no comment.

Upstate Forever paid for 10 samples to be taken from floodplains along the

Get breaking news in your e-mail.



GreenvilleOnline.com/email

banks of the river in mid-February, after the water was lowered for removal of the Woodside I dam and before the dam was removed. Test results, released to GreenvilleOnline.com by Upstate Forever, found PCBs in all 10 samples.

See PCB on page 7B

PCB

FROM PAGE 1B

"Five of the 10 were way above the action level" set by the Environmental Protection Agency for PCB cleanups, said Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever. "Two of the five I would describe as screaming hot."

The highest reading, 54 times the EPA standard, is the highest ever recorded on the stretch of river between the dams and the site of the former Sangamo Weston capacitor manufacturing site in Pickens, where the contamination originated, Wyche said.

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

Members of the conservation groups fear that with the Woodside I gone, high levels of contamination have washed down to

Woodside II, which is slated for removal this summer.

"It is absolutely imperative that the floodplain sediments be removed before the Woodside II dam is taken down," Wyche said. "Otherwise there is a great risk that massive amounts of PCB contaminated sediments will end up in Lake Hartwell and the fish warnings will never end."

The court-ordered removal of the Woodside dams is designed to allow fresh sediment to flow into the lake and cover PCB contamination on the floor of Lake Hartwell, where health advisories have been posted for three decades to warn against eating certain fish caught there.

"We are disappointed with the judge's decision not to hold a hearing, but appreciate his consideration of the report and all the attention he has given us in this case," Wyche said.

"We will continue to plead with the trustees for a change in the restoration plan that would require the removal of the floodplain sediments before the Woodside II dam is taken down."