

Trustees see no risk from river floodplains

Conservation groups say too small a portion of Twelve Mile looked at

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The condition of floodplains on the Twelve Mile River following removal of a century-old dam poses no danger to public safety, trustees in a PCB-related settlement said in response to concerns raised by conservationists.

"The council does not share your belief that an imminent threat to public safety has been shown to exist," trustees responded in a letter to Upstate Forever, the Lake Hartwell Association and the Pickens County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The groups have warned that the unleashed river is collapsing floodplains as it cuts a new path where the dam once stood, releasing a new wave of carcinogens.

Trustees visiting the site on two separate occasions saw no undermining of floodplains or other safety concerns where PCB-contaminated sediment was dredged before dam removal, the letter states.

Schlumberger Technology Corp., the company responsible for cleaning and restoring the river, told trustees there is no threat to public safety and will keep private landowners along the project advised of work progress and bank conditions, the letter said.

Schlumberger has received no complaints about bank stability from any of the landowners along the river where work has been done, the letter states.

Trustees inspected only a portion of the area, according to the letter.

Had there been a complete inspection, "We are confident they would have reached a different conclusion," said Larry Dyck, a river resident and member of the conservation groups that also fear PCBs are being released downstream.

"These PCBs run the high probability risk of contaminating fish and wildlife in Lake Hartwell and thereby impacting human health."