

# EPA to wait for demolition for PCB tests

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## Agency won't intervene in Twelve Mile River debate now

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**CATEECHEE** — The Environmental Protection Agency has told area conservation groups it won't interfere in a court-ordered dam removal on the Twelve Mile River.

The federal agency will require testing after the dam is out and could require clean-up of exposed PCBs moving toward Lake Hartwell.

The EPA plans to "let this project finish up" and "stay out of the way," said Craig Zeller, EPA project manager.

The second dam is to come down in August. Then, the EPA will require tests to see if PCBs remobilized by the project create an unacceptable risk, Zeller said.

"Exposures have changed," he said. With dams in place, PCBs were buried in floodplains and exposure was unlikely. "Now you have volumes of residual sediment being left behind."

Schlumberger Technology Corp. is monitoring the river

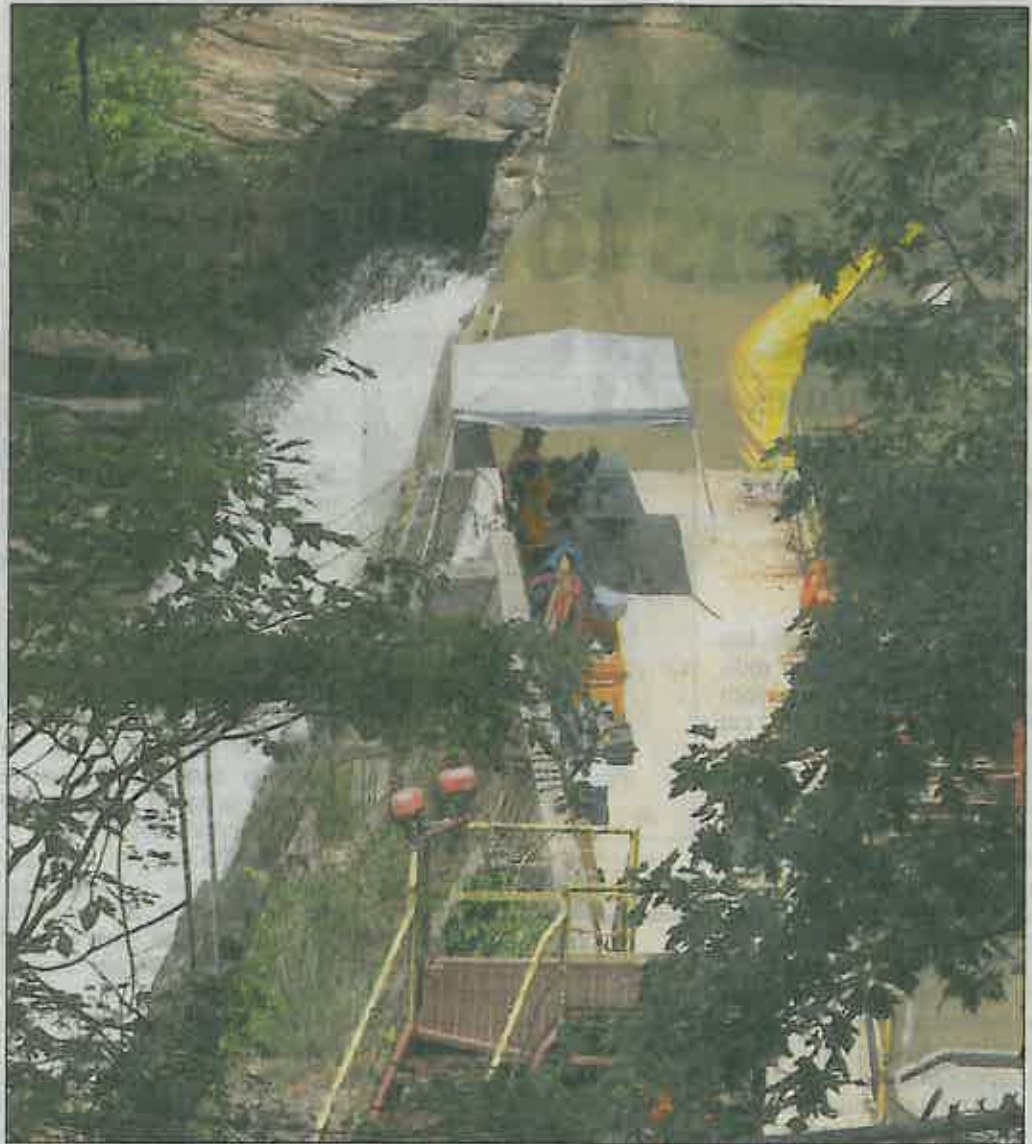
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### PCB DEBATE

- Read previous coverage of the Twelve Mile River project at [GreenvilleOnline.com/pcb](http://GreenvilleOnline.com/pcb)
- Read a copy of the EPA's letter at the link with this story at [GreenvilleOnline.com](http://GreenvilleOnline.com)



SUZIE RIDDLE / Staff



KEN OSBURN / Staff

Workers make preparations to tear down the Woodside II dam on the Twelve Mile River near Norris this summer. Conservation groups fear that will send a wave of PCBs into Lake Hartwell.

# PCB

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and preparing restoration activities, said Stephen Harris, spokesman for the international giant that owns the old Sangamo-Weston capacitor plant upstream that released the contamination and was ordered to remove the dams.

About 350,000 cubic yards of sediment have been dredged so far, Harris said. Another 70,000 cubic yards or more remain to be dredged, and water has been lowered behind the dam so the dredge can get down to bedrock.

After Woodside II is removed, Schlumberger must map sandbars and sediment deposits and, using Superfund criteria, test for PCBs and determine potential risk, Zeller said.

If the risk is unacceptable, further work such as more sediment removal, bank stabilization or capping could be required, Zeller said.

Upstate Forever, the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District and the Lake Hartwell Associa-

tion say the removal is releasing new waves of carcinogens to Lake Hartwell. They asked EPA to delay removal of the second dam until contaminated floodplains are addressed.

EPA is "not a party" to the dam removal ordered in 2006, the agency replied in a letter signed by Gwendolyn Keyes Fleming, EPA regional administrator.

High concentrations of PCBs in floodplains exposed after the first dam came out in March were "not unexpected," the letter said. "EPA would expect some residual PCBs to remain in the system for some time."

Recent testing found PCB concentrations 700 times above residential limits, said Larry Dyck, a river restoration expert who lives on the Twelve Mile and is a soil and water district commissioner.

If floodplains aren't excavated, "upwards of a ton of previously buried PCBs" will be released to Lake Hartwell when Woodside II comes down, Dyck said.

The conservationists have sent new appeals to a federal judge for a hearing.

"I don't think there's sufficient evidence to stop the

work, but we'll stay open on it," said U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr., who ordered the removal in a settlement geared to help clean the waters where health advisories warn against eating the fish.

If EPA says a hearing is needed, "I'll do it," he said. "After (dam removal) is over with, they are coming back again to look."

Anderson said he is confident EPA would advise if removal would hamper a 1994 Superfund decision to let clean sediment flow downstream and cover PCBs in Lake Hartwell.

Anderson said he understands the conservationists' concerns and wants them to keep sending information and comments to the court. "They're rendering a good service," he said.

When trustee agencies and special receivers he appointed in the case "get upset, I'll be upset," Anderson said. So far, trustees and special receivers tell him they are satisfied with the work.

Cindy Lee, a professor of environmental engineering and earth sciences at Clemson University, said it "would be a shame to stop

the removal of the second dam because of the discovery of the PCBs concentrations in the bank sediments."

It's "a necessary evil" in "every remediation strat-

egy that involves dredging" including current dredging in the Hudson River, which also released high PCB concentrations that are assumed to be temporary, Lee said.