

GWS appeals

By Charles Sowell

Staff Writer

The Department of Health and Environmental Control will consider an appeal of the Greenville Water System's plan to expand the raw water pipeline from Table Rock Reservoir Thursday.

The plan was approved by DHEC's staff despite criticism from environmental groups and from state and federal agencies.

They said the pipeline work will hurt rare and endangered species, the river itself, and potentially could affect stream flow in the South Saluda River by withdrawing more water from Table Rock Reservoir.

In a letter dated Jan. 21, Brice McKoy, chief of the Northwest Branch of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, told Greenville Water the Corps had learned the impact areas could be larger than requested in the original permit.

That could be construed as a violation.

"If it is determined that a violation is flagrant, the case could be sent to the U.S. Department of Justice for prosecution," McKoy said in his letter.

W. Wynne Grubbs of Arcadis, Greenville Water's consultant engineering group, would not comment on the letter, referring inquiries to Lynn Stovall, general manager of Greenville Water System.

Stovall provided the Journal with a copy of a letter dated March 13 from Grubbs to McKoy in which Grubbs wrote, "... in an effort to approach this item with an abundance of caution, Greenville Water System has revised its route in the questioned areas. The proposed pipeline has been realigned so that it will be installed in the road to ensure there are no impacts to the nearby wetlands/streams."

McKoy said Greenville Water's pursuit of easements from the state Highway Department to lay pipe in the state's right of way would address most of the Corps concerns over wetlands and on the stream itself.

Greenville Water said the pipeline is crucial because the old water transmission line dates from the 1920s and 1930s. They want to add a 42-inch raw water pipeline to the two existing 30-inch lines along the 7.8 miles between Table Rock Reservoir and the city's water treatment facility on Pumpkintown Road.

Upstate Forever, the Sierra Club, Save Our Saluda, the South Carolina Native Plant Society and the South Carolina Wildlife Federation requested the appeal.

Contact Charles Sowell at 679-1208
or csowell@greenvillejournal.com.