

Reedy banks, shoring up

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City officials hope to avoid any fish kills when work gets underway on a bank stabilization project on the Reedy River at the Peace Center.

Heavy rains have delayed the project on shoring up a 500-foot stretch of the river bank next to the Peace Center for the Performing Arts, just upstream from Falls Park. In 2006 work cleaning out sediments that had gathered behind a dam in the holding pond at the Peace Center sent a slug of mud downstream resulting in a fish kill.

Heather Nix, co-director of Upstate Forever's clean air and water program, said the conservation group is confident the measures taken by the city will be enough to prevent another fish kill.

The city was cited by the state Department of Health and Environmental Control for that incident and has taken measures to ensure that during this work the quality of water downstream will be protected.

"We're making every effort to ensure the quality of the river," said Mike Murphy, city public works director.

Crews will install large rocks along the

bank instead of the more common rip-rap. There will be no heavy equipment sluicing out mud behind the Peace Center dam this time and equipment designed to minimize any mud that does escape will be installed downstream, Murphy said.

The work is being done around a drainage pipe and should be finished in a couple of weeks, depending on the weather and flow in the Reedy.

Cost to the city will be held to the \$4,200 paid for design work, Murphy said. "Both the design and work itself falls beneath the trigger point for competitive bidding. We're using city crews to install boulders taken

from the river to give us a more natural look and minimized impacts."

The Reedy is an urban river with all of the attendant pollution problems that implies, environmentalists have said. Mud both in the river itself and along the banks is a repository of more than 100 years of industrial usage and urban development.

Ongoing efforts during the past years have resulted in a far cleaner Reedy, but pockets of intense pollution remain. Most notably at Conestee Nature Park where many feet of highly polluted

sediment is buried under the waters of Lake Conestee and by cleaner mud that has been washed downstream through the decades.

The city's work this week has been approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and is not expected to produce any releases

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of contaminated sediments.

Fish kills in the Reedy are less common today than at the height of the textile boom and during incidents like the Colonial Pipeline spill in the early 1990s.

That incident resulted in fish kills all the way to Lake Greenwood and money paid by Colonial to mitigate the impacts of the spill was used to finance projects to clean up the river, like Conestee, and the planned county park at Cedar Falls near the Laurens County line.

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