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The Greenville News



Greenville,
South Carolina

GreenvilleOnline.com

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2009 ■ UPSTATE EDITION

Dam left out of PCB settlement

Plans targets fishing; officials look at options to remove final barrier

Greenville News 10/25/09

By Anna Simon
CLEMSON BUREAU
asimon@greenvilleonline.com

CLEMSON — Much of the \$9 million legal settlement over the PCB contamination of Lake Hartwell is designed to be spent to improve fishing on the lake and elsewhere with nothing earmarked to remove a third dam that some consider critical to begin cleaning the lake of the chemicals. Asked about spending a significant share of the

\$9 million for fishing and recreation when the third dam remains, local officials and others involved in how the money will be spent told *The Greenville News* they are exploring alternatives.

U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr. has grown increasingly impatient to move the \$9 million from an account where it has sat for nearly three years. The settlement money belongs to the public and needs to,

be spent to benefit the public, Anderson told the newspaper.

Two other dams on the river already have been ordered removed by the judge. The clean-up remedy prescribed by the Environmental Protection Agency is to remove the dams and free trapped sediment to flow down the Twelve Mile into Hartwell to bury the contamination on the lake's floor.

A complete restoration of the river and the lake can't happen, some lake advocates believe, unless the third Twelve Mile

PCB FACTS

- Read the Pickens County Council resolution
- Read the full settlement plan

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dam is removed. Those exploring ways to move some money from recreational fishing to removal of the dam say it's critical in cleaning PCBs.

The Easley-Central Water District owns the dam and wants the impoundment and associated equipment replaced. The total cost was estimated at \$5 million in re-



Staff file

Some consider the removal of a third dam on the Twelve Mile River, above, critical to the Lake Hartwell cleanup.

cent testimony.

The Lake Hartwell Association and Upstate Forever have a proposal

regarding the third dam "in the works," said Herb

See DAM on page 8A

8A greenvilleonline.com

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2009 THE GREENVILLE NEWS

DAM

FROM PAGE 1A

Burnham, president of the Lake Hartwell Association.

Removal of the dam is first priority for Pickens County, and officials are talking with trustees of the PCB settlement agreement and other parties "to try to make this project work," said County Councilman Jim London.

Funding explored

State Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens, is talking with the state Department of Natural Resources about using other water recreation money earmarked for legislative delegation recommendations to fund some projects and free settlement money for the third dam.

The \$9 million is South Carolina's share of \$12

million paid by Schlumberger Technology Corp. in a 2006 settlement for PCB damage to Hartwell and the Twelve Mile. Between 1955 and 1977, 400,000 pounds of PCBs were released from the former Sangamo-Weston capacitor manufacturing site in Pickens now owned by Schlumberger.

Release of the Draft South Carolina Recreational Fishing Compensation Plan comes at the same time as work starts to remove the two lower dams on the Twelve Mile and PCB-contaminated sediment behind them, also ordered by Anderson in the 2006 settlement. Both pieces languished until Anderson, angered over nearly three years of inaction, brought the parties back to court and put them on a fast track.

The proposal allocates nearly \$1 million to monitoring and stream restoration related to removal of the lower dams.

Other projects chosen for funding would im-

prove fish habitat, public access and fishing piers on Lake Hartwell, add enhancements at Issaqueena Lake and eight other ponds and lakes free of PCB contamination, and build a major fishing events center on Lake Hartwell near Anderson.

The third dam and a Water Educational and Environmental Center on Lake Hartwell are unfunded but included in the draft plan that leaves the door open for partial funding.

"There's a willingness to at least discuss the dam," Martin said. "It's most important to preserve that window of time and get a commitment that money would be available while seeking various funding sources."

Public hearings will be scheduled and public comments will be received at least through early November, said Paul League, an attorney with the state Department of Natural Resources,

the lead trustee agency.

Fishing repair

Posted advisories on Lake Hartwell and the Twelve Mile warn against eating certain fish likely to contain polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, which are linked to cancer and other disease.

"We still do not foresee an end date to the fishery advisories," League said at a recent hearing.

Removal of the third dam is the best way "to ensure the PCB problem will eventually be resolved," Burnham said. "Everything else is second to the third dam removal or we'll be having the same conversations 10 years from now."

Trustees felt there wasn't enough direct compensation for the recreational fishing injury to justify absorbing the entire cost of removing the third dam. Partial funding would be considered "if an appropriate entity came forward with a valid proposal," the plan states.

The plan, prepared by the South Carolina and Georgia Departments of Natural Resources, the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, primarily addresses PCB contamination of recreational fishing.

PCB contamination has resulted in an estimated \$18 million in lost services, according to the plan.

The biggest single chunk of money, \$2.8 mil-

lion, would fund a 10-year project to increase fish population and size in Lake Hartwell by creating protected habitat, spawning and refuge areas for fish.

Another \$1.1 million would improve boat dock and fishing pier access to Lake Hartwell at some existing public areas: Seneca Creek, Fairplay Recreation Area, Lawrence Bridge Recreation Area, Lake Hartwell State Recreation Area, Broyles Recreation Area, Brown Road Waterfront Park and Sadlers Creek State Recreation Area.

A fishing pier and parking lot also would be built at the state DNR office near Clemson University, an undeveloped yet popular shoreline fishing spot.

Another \$300,000 would finish a fishing pier and walkway immediately below the Hartwell Dam that Georgia started building with part of its \$3.67 million in the settlement.

Fishing center

A \$3.17 million event center for major fishing tournaments Anderson County proposed at its 29-acre Green Pond Recreation Area near State 24 would have six boat launches, 150 car and trailer parking spaces, 50 single-car parking spaces, a tournament weigh-in area, courtesy docks, restrooms and improvements to access roads. Added possibilities include bank fishing access, a pavilion or amphitheater, playground and a kayak and canoe launch.

The draft proposal allocates \$1.5 million for de-

sign and construction costs of the recreational fishing aspects.

David Freeman, owner of Portman Marina, half a mile by water from Green Pond, said the proposed facility "would take money out of the pockets of local businesses" including Portman Marina that already offer these services.

The primary reason large tournaments aren't coming to Anderson and Lake Hartwell "is that the county and state have been either unwilling or unable to pay the fees to bring the tournaments to the area to host these large tournaments," Freeman said. His question is whether that support would come.

Smaller tournaments already "come to us all the time," Freeman said. "We've been doing it for 25 years." The greater need, he said, is for the added docks and piers for the general public at existing access areas.

Another \$2.3 million designated for other waters is opposed by the Lake Hartwell Association.

Lake Issaqueena, a popular picnic and fishing spot in Clemson University's Experimental Forest, and eight other small lakes and ponds uncontaminated by PCBs would be added to a state DNR management program. Other sites are the Harper Pond Complex, Danenhower Pond, Dairy Pond, Causey Farm Tract and the Wallowa Reservoir.

The money should be spent on projects on Hartwell and the Twelve Mile and not other locations, Burnham said.