

# PCB projects vie for public support

Leveling third dam, water center, five others on table at Tuesday's hearing

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ANDERSON — Five finalists in a \$9 million PCB settlement and supporters of two unfunded projects including removal of a third Twelve Mile River dam take their causes to the public Tuesday.

The seven hopefuls vying for part of the 2006 settlement for ecological and

fishery damages will line up at information tables at a meeting from 6-9 p.m. at the Anderson Civic Center.

The outcome will impact future use and restoration of Lake Hartwell and the Twelve Mile River, where carcinogenic PCBs taint the sediment and the fish.

Settlement trustees will give brief presentations at 6:15 p.m. and 7:15 p.m., then answer questions at

an eighth table.

Supporters of unfunded projects — removal of the third dam and creation of a Water Education and Environmental Center on Lake Hartwell — hope to win public backing on surveys, available at the meeting and online, to help swing some money their way.

Public input will be considered, however this isn't a "vote" or "popularity contest," said Paul League, a lawyer with the state Department of Natural Resources, the lead settle-

ment trustee agency.

Ultimately, the decision rests with settlement trustees and a federal judge, who has issued a recommendation that would split the money differently from the trustees' plan and who could veto trustees' final action if he feels it doesn't meet the spirit of the settlement.

Public input will be limited to the written surveys, which concerns supporters of the unfunded third dam project.

"Normally in a public

meeting there's an opportunity for all groups to express their opinions. That will not take place in this meeting," said Larry Dyck, a board member of the Lake Hartwell Association, which supports removal of the third dam. "There are compelling cases to be made, and there will be no opportunity."

The workshop format without a public question-and-answer period was chosen by trustees in order

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to avoid "turning into a debate," League said.

Trustees state their funding parameters on the DNR Web site: "Funds must be used to create opportunities for the public to harvest fish that are not subject to fish consumption advisories, enhance the recreational fishery of Lake Hartwell, 12-Mile Creek and the surrounding area and implement projects designed to improve the habitat and natural resources."

Trustees' would fund:

■ **Fish Habitat Enhancement:** A 10 year project using larger wood debris such as stumps to create fish habitat and installation of gravel and aquatic vegetation to provide fish spawning and nursery

areas. \$2.8 million.

■ **Hartwell Fishing Access and Shoreline Improvements:** Six to eight recreation areas would receive improvements such as fishing piers, restrooms and better parking areas. \$1.1 million.

■ **Tailrace Fishing Pier:** More money for a pier, now under construction, to provide 500 feet of shoreline access along the Hartwell Dam Tailrace and provide access to areas of the Tailrace that have been off-limits since the 9-11 terror attacks. \$300,000.

■ **Green Pond Event Center:** A large fishing events facility proposed by Anderson County with approximately 150 car/trailer spaces, 50 car-only spaces, tournament weigh-in area, courtesy dock and restrooms. \$1.5 million.

■ **Off-site Recreational Fishing:** Access and enhancements at up to nine impoundments in the Lake Hartwell area with im-

provements including fishing piers, fish stocking and pond fertilization for approximately 20 years. \$2.3 million.

U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr. has recommended that \$3 million of the settlement go toward the third dam removal, \$3 million for the water education center, and \$3 million be split between the trustees' preferred projects.

Environmental groups and elected Pickens County officials supporting removal of the third dam say it's critical in cleaning the lake of PCBs and is the only proposal that would do so. The cost is estimated at about \$5 million.

"We stand firm that whatever projects they choose should restore the natural resources in addition to the fish. By doing so, you are going to improve recreational fishing anyway and removal of that third dam should be a priority," said Chris Starker, Rural Wa-

ters Project Associate with Upstate Forever.

The judge has ordered removal of two dams. Removing the final dam would open about 100 miles of waterways for passage of sediment and migration of fish, supporters say. That would enhance the fishery and the cleanup prescribed by the Environmental Protection Agency, which is to let clean sediment move downstream to bury the PCB contamination.

Supporters of the Water Education and Environmental Center say it would be a world-class facility to educate people about water and fisheries in the Savannah River Basin, prevent future abuse and overcome stigma associated with PCB contamination in Lake Hartwell.

The \$16 million project is planned at the existing 21-acre Honea Path boat ramp on Lake Hartwell near Anderson and is supported by area water providers, busi-

ness leaders and educators, Dyke Spencer, general manager of the Powdersville Water District, and Scott Willett, executive director of the Anderson Regional Joint Water System, told *The Greenville News*.

"What we felt about PCB contamination was a common thread for everybody: We need to educate the public," Spencer said. "The water environment is a big deal for the future, for the next generation."

An initial \$7 million request has been trimmed to \$3 million that would be used for items directly related to recreational fishing, such as habitat creation, shoreline restoration and boat ramps. The center, which has been established as a non-profit entity, would seek additional funding through federal, state and other grants, organizers said.

The public survey, online at [www.dnr.sc.gov/news/fishingcomp](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/news/fishingcomp), asks

respondents to rank trustees' five preferred projects on a scale from "strongly support" to "don't support." Two other questions ask whether some settlement money should be used to remove the third dam or for the water education center. There's also a space for other feedback.

The public comment period ends Dec. 6, said Ross Self, DNR chief of freshwater fisheries and chair of the trustee council.

More than 250 surveys already have been submitted online and about 170 of them include wide-ranging written comment, Self said.

The \$9 million is the state's share of \$12 million paid by Schlumberger Technology Corp. in 2006 for PCB damage to Hartwell and the Twelve Mile. Between 1955 and 1977, 400,000 pounds of PCBs were released from a Sargamo-Weston capacitor factory in Pickens now owned by Schlumberger.