

# Trustees may be leaning toward third dam removal

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Removal of a third dam on Twelve Mile Creek is still in the running for funding by trustees who are overseeing disbursement of nearly \$9 million in PCB settlement money.

The trustees met Monday in Columbia to go over proposals for restoring fishing habitat to Hartwell Lake, but did not make any definite decisions, said Ross Self, a S.C. Department of Natural Resources biologist and spokesman for the Natural Resources Trustees. They do want to meet with groups backing removal of a third dam, he said.

The trustees were appointed to oversee spending the money to restore fishing in Hartwell Lake and Twelve Mile Creek after they were contaminated with PCBs more than 30 years ago.

A capacitor plant released the PCB chemicals into a tributary of the creek, which empties into the lake. The original settlement calls for removal of two dams on Twelve Mile. The third dam removal is

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part of another proposal not related to the original settlement.

In the settlement involving the \$9 million, the trustees have seven proposals, including one to remove a dam and allow sediment to cover PCB-tainted soil and open up about 100 miles of the watershed for Twelve Mile Creek. That idea has been pushed by the Lake Hartwell Association and others, but originally was not included for funding by the trustees.

The Pickens County

Council had been asked to take the lead on the project, but declined. Others backing the third dam removal include the Pickens County Soil and Water Conservation District, Easley-Central Water District, and Upstate Forever.

On Monday, Self said the trustees plan to meet in the coming weeks with proponents of removing the dam, operated by the Easley-Central Water District. That would indicate an interest in their proposal and possibly funding by the trustees. A federal judge also has recommended the third dam be removed and that the project receive \$3 million in funding.

"We're going to go ahead with the final plan ... but we're not going to finalize that until we have a chance to clear up questions on a proposal with the Easley-Central dam," Self said.

He said the questions were mostly technical issues.

Of the seven projects, also under consideration is a Water Education and Environmental Center on the lakefront in Anderson and Anderson County's proposal for development of the

Greenpond lake access site as a tournament fishing site.

No projects have been rejected, Self said.

"The final decisions are still pending," he said.

But Self said the trustees "would like to get the plans finalized in the next three or four weeks."

Larry Dyck, who represents the Lake Hartwell Association, said he was glad to hear the trustees are still considering the dam's removal.

"I'm pleased that the trustees want to meet with us," he said. "I think we can clarify any questions."

The newest proposal "offers a way to remove the dam with still allowing the Easley-Central Water District to stay in business," Dyck said.

Also, "it really asks for all the funds to be used on the river, not to be used off-site," he said.

He declined to offer a dollar figure, saying "I want to talk to the trustees first."

Besides S.C. DNR, other trustees are Georgia DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.