

New data may seal fate of third dam

Removing barrier could open up new recreation opportunities

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CHEECHEE — The fate of a controversial third dam on the Twelve Mile River hinges on the extent of carcinogenic PCB contamination behind it — a question to be answered through a new work plan sponsors of the removal project have submitted to trustees who hold the purse strings in a \$9 million settlement.

"This is the document we've been waiting on," said Ross Self, freshwater fisheries chief at the state Department of Natural Resources, the lead trustee agency.

Trustees are reviewing the information and will meet soon to discuss it, Self said.

Trustees have "agreed in concept" to fund the approximately \$300,000 study but haven't formally approved funding because they needed the work plan to be finalized in a way that addresses some issues and questions trustees had.

The results will give trustees "a better feel" for the feasibility of the scope of the dam removal project and the amount of money to designate for it, Self said.

Trustees delayed a final decision on spending the settlement money because they are interested in the dam removal if it's

See **DAM** on page 9A



KEN OSBURN / Staff

Removing this 12 Mile River dam could open a recreation corridor into Lake Hartwell.



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Advocates of opening up 12 Mile River by removing all three dams on it say that will both decrease the PCB contamination problems of the river and Lake Hartwell while improving fishing and recreational opportunities in this part of the state.

DAM

FROM PAGE 1A

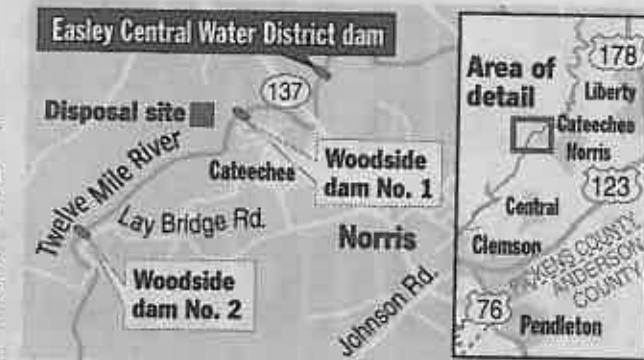
feasible, Self said. The dam removal isn't included in a draft spending plan.

"We have an interest in trying to do something there from the public comments we got," Self said. "Clearly there's public support. We just need to get a better handle on how involved and how complex it will be. There are a number of priorities we would like to address, and this is one of them. We have to see if it will fit within the scope of what we are capable of doing."

Other priorities include fishery related projects funded in a draft plan last year. Although removal of the third dam, owned by the Easley Central Water District, isn't included in the draft, U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr., who ordered removal of two lower dams, strongly recommended that \$3 million of the settlement money be used toward removal of the third dam.

Supporters of the project say removal of the third dam would result in a free-flowing river and clean PCB contamination from the waterway.

Work toward removal of the two lower dams "is con-



SUZIE RIDDLE / Staff

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Ross Self, state freshwater fisheries chief

tinuing on the sediment management unit, and we are pleased with the steady, ongoing progress of the dredging activity, allowing production to stay on target," said Stephen Harris, spokesman for Schlumberger, which is responsible for removing the pair of century-old dams and disposal of contaminated sediment behind them.

The proposed feasibility study will evaluate the quantity and quality of sediment in the river in terms of volume and PCB contamination, the condition of adjacent floodplains and could generate engineering alternatives for implementation of the project,

said Larry Dyck, a river restoration expert who lives on the river and is a board member of the Lake Hartwell Association, a project sponsor. Other sponsors are Upstate Forever, the water district and the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District.

The \$9 million settlement stems from PCB contamination of the Twelve Mile and Lake Hartwell, where health advisories warn against eating certain fish likely to carry PCBs in their fat. More than 400,000 pounds of poly-

chlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, were released between 1955 and 1977 from the former Sangamo-Weston capacitor manufacturing site in Pickens, now owned by Schlumberger.