

# River faces sparkling future

## Twelve Mile to become Park Service Blueway after PCB cleanup ends

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ANDERSON — Pickens County's Twelve Mile River has taken a turn that could transform a legacy of PCB contamination into an Upstate destination as a National Park Service Blueway recreation area.

A proposal has been accepted by the park service, said Larry Dyck, a river restoration expert and citizen advocate who lives on the river, during a federal court hearing Wednesday regarding a court-ordered restoration.

The announcement was good news that punctuated the most recent hearing in a dam removal and restoration project embroiled in

controversy for more than four years.

A Blueway is like a Greenway except that it is a pathway on water rather than land, and it will be open to the citizens of the region, Dyck said.

The focus of Dyck's testimony before U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr. was to present citizen concerns about the amount of PCB-contaminated sediment left behind in a dredging and dam removal project to clean the contaminated river.

Dyck said he fears that rather than restoration of a free-flowing, natural river, the gorge could become a rip-rap lined channel. Rock

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would have to be installed to keep highly erodible sandy sediment left behind in place, he said.

Even with rip-rap armor, potential PCB contamination in sediment deposits left behind would be washed downstream by heavy rains and form islands of sediment and sluggish water in the mouth of the river that empties into Lake Hartwell, Dyck said.

"The community expects the gorge to be restored," Dyck said.

Anderson wanted to know how much contamination could be present.

"We don't know the answer to that," Dyck said. A recent analysis of contamination in sediment behind a third dam upstream found PCB contamination as high as 23-26 parts per million, he said.

The Environmental Protection Agency residential soil standard is one part per million.

Anderson set the hearing after Schlumberger Technology Corp. filed an emergency motion in a dispute with trustees in the court-or-

dered settlement over the extent of sediment removed thus far.

Schlumberger said sediment had been removed to the extent safely possible. Trustees responded that more sediment should be removed. Trustees later agreed that work so far is satisfactory and the motion was dropped.

Anderson held the hearing anyway at the request of Upstate Forever, the Lake Hartwell Association and the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District, which remain concerned over the amount of remaining sediment. Dyck presented the majority of their testimony.

"I'm simply trying to show you that there are other choices," Dyck told the judge in addressing Schlumberger's claims that equipment limitations, presence of trees and other debris and bank stability concerns prevent further dredging on the sides of the river channel.

Anderson said he would consider the information. "If we can correct any problems, that is the course we will take," he said.

"My goal is to end this matter successfully," said Anderson, who called all parties back to court last year after learning in *The Greenville News* that three years after his 2006 order work hadn't started.

Lawyers for Schlumberger and trustees were at the hearing Wednesday, but they didn't address the court.

Paul League, attorney for the state Department of Natural Resources, the lead trustee agency, told *The Greenville News* that the scope of work ordered by

the court requires restoration and bank stabilization. Schlumberger will "have to deal with" any problems with sediment left behind, he said.

Celeste Jones, Schlumberger's attorney, referred any comments to company spokesman Stephen Harris, who couldn't be reached.

Former U.S. District Judge Billy Wilkins and Greenville attorney Leon Harmon, special receivers appointed by Anderson, said they plan to discuss what was said in the hearing with trustees.