

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program

Sangamo Weston, Inc./Twelvemile Creek/Lake Hartwell PCB Contamination Superfund Site, South Carolina

The Problem

The Sangamo Weston, Inc./Twelvemile Creek/Lake Hartwell PCB Contamination Superfund Site, located in Pickens, South Carolina, was a capacitor manufacturing plant that released an estimated 441,000 lbs of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into the Twelvemile Creek system between 1955 and 1977. Operable Unit 2 of the Site consists of the approximately 40 stream miles of Twelvemile Creek and its tributaries; the Twelvemile Creek Arm of Lake Hartwell, a 56,000 acre man-made reservoir created by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers through the construction of Hartwell Dam across the Savannah River in 1963; portions of the Keowee and Seneca River arms of Lake Hartwell; and Lake Hartwell itself. Historical sampling events in the Twelvemile Creek watershed and Lake Hartwell have documented the presence of widespread PCB contamination in sediments, surface water, and fish from the outfall of a now defunct capacitor plant known as Sangamo Weston as far downstream as Hartwell Dam. Fish consumption advisories have been in place on Twelvemile Creek and Lake Hartwell since 1976.

Restoring the Resources

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the South Carolina Office of the Governor, as trustees for the public's natural resources, have reached settlement of the natural resources damage claims brought against Schlumberger Technology Corporation (Schlumberger), current owner of the Sangamo Weston plant site. Final judgment was entered in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, Anderson Division, on May 30, 2006. Schlumberger, headquartered in

Texas, has agreed to pay \$11.8 million to the Natural Resource Trustees for injuries to natural resources caused by PCBs, to spend an additional \$8 to \$10 million to purchase and remove two hydroelectric dams on Twelvemile Creek and to conduct stream restoration activities in the area of the dam removal, and to provide \$160,000 for ecological monitoring of the dam removal project, as well as reimburse costs incurred by the government for assessment of the damages. Monies paid by Schlumberger will be used to conduct or finance restoration projects designed to restore, replace, or protect natural resources at the site and to compensate the public for natural resource injuries and lost resource use. Further detail on these projects will be publicized and public comment taken as appropriate. Purchase and removal of the two hydroelectric dams will provide multiple ecological benefits including speeding the EPA remedy by enhancing transport of uncontaminated sediment through Twelvemile Creek and speeding the burial of contaminated sediment. Dam removal is expected to restore the hydrology of lower Twelvemile Creek to a free-flowing riverine system, improving biodiversity and population density of native species and providing more appropriate habitat for submerged and emergent vegetation. These improvements will be supplemented by stream corridor restoration which will provide better substrate for native vegetation, improve bottom habitat for native fishes, establish a more natural sedimentation regime, and improve riparian habitat.

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Woodside II Dam scheduled to be removed to restore free-flowing Twelvemile Creek. Both photos credit Industrial Economics Inc.

