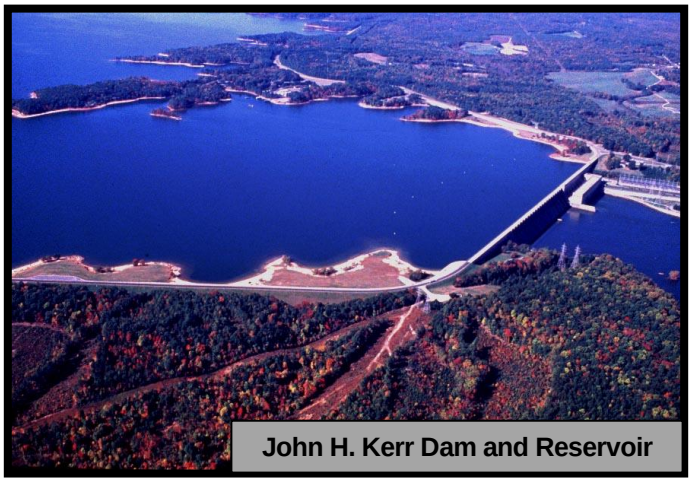
US Army Corps of Engineers
Wilmington District

John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir, VA & NC (Section 216 - Lower Roanoke) Environmental Restoration - Investigations

- **Sponsors: State of NC & Commonwealth of VA**
- **Feasibility cost sharing agreement executed in June 2003**
- **Study evaluating the impacts of changes in upstream releases on the lower Roanoke River and Kerr Reservoir**
- **May recommend operational changes to John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir**
- **Initiate PED in FY 2014 subject to availability of funds**



John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 1, 6, VA 5 DATE: 8 April 2013

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** Section 216 of Public Law 91-611.

2. **STUDY AREA:** The John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir is located in the Roanoke River basin which extends into north-central North Carolina and south-central Virginia. The project was completed in 1952 and provides hydropower, flood risk management, water supply, and recreation to the public. Two downstream non-Federal hydropower reservoirs, Gaston and Roanoke Rapids operated by Dominion North Carolina Power, have minimal active storage for daily hydropower peaking. The Kerr, Gaston and Roanoke Rapids projects operate cooperatively to generate power, reduce flood damage, and ensure appropriate downstream flows including those needed for anadromous fish during the spawning season. The lower Roanoke River basin is one of the finest remaining river swamp forest ecosystems in the eastern United States. The unique vegetative communities and bottomland hardwood forests, wetlands, uplands, and streams provide a high quality habitat for fish and wildlife, including waterfowl.

3. **IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED:** Resource concerns for the lower Roanoke River center on the need for restoration of extensive swamp and flood plain forests and fisheries, through changes to the flow regime. Federal and state agencies also suspect a correlation between the operation of John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir and fish kills in the lower Roanoke River basin due to low dissolved oxygen levels. The feasibility study is considering structural measures including installation of a fabric weir above the dam, and changes to operation of and releases from the project and the resulting benefits and impacts on various project purposes and resources.

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4. **COST ESTIMATE:** $900,000 (PED/Federal)
$300,000 (PED/Non-Federal)
$1,200,000 Total

5. **FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION THRU FY 2012:** $0. No funds have been allocated for PED activities thru FY 2012.

6. **FY 2013 BUDGET AMOUNT**: $50,000 (Feasibility phase)/$0 (PED phase). Carry-in and budgeted funds are being used to continue the feasibility phase including holding the alternative formulation briefing and developing the draft report. No PED activities are scheduled in FY 2013.

7. **FY 2014 BUDGET AMOUNT:** $0 (Feasibility phase)/$0 (PED phase). Carry-in funds are being used to complete the feasibility phase including the issuance of the Division Engineer's final report. The project was not included in the President's Budget to initiate PED. Funds in the amount of $150,000 could be used to initiate PED.

8. **KEY DATES:** June 2003 (Complete reconnaissance phase)
January 2014 (Initiate PED, subject to the availability of funds)

9. **OTHER INFORMATION:** The Corps of Engineers and the Nature Conservancy signed a memorandum of agreement in July 2002, forming a partnership, known as the Sustainable Rivers Program (SRP), to minimize the effects of operation of projects on rivers and to restore and preserve rivers across the country. The Nature Conservancy has designated the Roanoke River and the John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir project for study within the SRP. The Nature Conservancy plays a key role in protecting over 92,000 acres in the Roanoke River flood plain, is the land manager for over 32,000 acres along the Roanoke River and is actively engaged in the Kerr 216 study. Under this program, the Corps and stakeholders tried to develop short term, interim operations changes to benefit the bottomland forest habitats along the lower Roanoke River while awaiting completion of the feasibility study. Work under this interim effort was stopped in FY 2010 due to significant agricultural flood damages that would result from interim operations changes being considered. Interim results will be incorporated into the Kerr 216 study report/EA/EIS evaluations and recommendations. This study has 11 technical work groups comprised of subject matter experts from over 20 Federal, state, local and non-governmental organizations including The Nature Conservancy.