



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Wilmington District

Little River Water Supply Reservoir, Wake County, NC (Regulatory)

- **Project proposal to construct a regional water supply reservoir for Wake County, NC**
- **Current concerns are related to impacts to endangered species, secondary/cumulative effects, alternatives analysis, and compensatory mitigation**
- **Permit request not received to date**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 13

DATE: 8 April 2013

1. **PURPOSE:**

To provide information regarding the proposed construction by the city of Raleigh of an 1,100-acre drinking water reservoir on Little River, a tributary to the Neuse River, in eastern Wake County, North Carolina.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

a. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for this proposal is being developed for the city of Raleigh, and the towns of Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell, Knightdale, Garner, and Zebulon, North Carolina. The DEIS identifies and quantifies impacts to the human environment associated with the construction of the proposed drinking water supply reservoir.

b. All land for this project has been purchased by Wake County, predominately from willing sellers; however, condemnation did occur for the remaining parcels. Wake County is now completing the transfer of property to the city of Raleigh to facilitate the construction of this project (if permitted).

c. Estimated impacts due to implementation of this project include 572 acres of wetlands and 37,000 linear feet of stream channel. Conducting an alternatives analysis review and designing a compensatory mitigation plan will be challenging for these impacts.

d. The dwarf wedge mussel and the tar spiny mussel, both federally endangered species, are found within the scope of the project and will likely necessitate formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In addition, the USFWS has determined that substantial scientific or commercial information may warrant the listing of 5 additional species found in the Little River watershed. While it is unclear if

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the listing procedure will continue for these additional species, it could increase the total number of species under formal consultation to seven.

e. The initial comment letter from the USFWS made a preliminary determination that the Little River ecosystem represented an aquatic resource of national importance (ARNI). This does not yet trigger the elevation proceedings; however, it may do so later in the process.

f. Interagency and public scoping is complete for the issues pertaining to the DEIS.

3. **CURRENT STATUS:**

a. An interagency, Instream-Flow Study Group has been formed to determine downstream flow requirements for maintaining biological integrity of the aquatic system. This portion of the project (study) is somewhat contentious due to the ARNI, federally listed species, and overall cost of the study.

b. An umbrella mitigation bank has been established by the city and is currently banking credits to offset proposed impacts.

c. Maximizing existing sources of drinking water is one of many alternatives listed for evaluation during the EIS process. Three Corps reservoirs, Falls, Jordan, and Kerr Lakes, are near Raleigh and will be included in this analysis. Falls Lake is the only reservoir that does not trigger the need for an inter-basin transfer certificate from the state and is therefore considered the stronger alternative.

d. Use of the newest hydrology model, OASIS, identified the possibility that adequate surplus water may be contained within the Falls Lake water quality pool to offset the need for Little River. Recently, the Corps received a request to begin a re-allocation study to evaluate the potential of reallocating this surplus water to the Falls Lake water supply pool. The initial steps on this study have begun with an initial appraisal underway.

e. Jordan and Kerr Lakes will continue to be assessed as independent alternatives with assistance from the Corps, if needed.

f. To date, a Department of the Army permit application has not been received for this project.