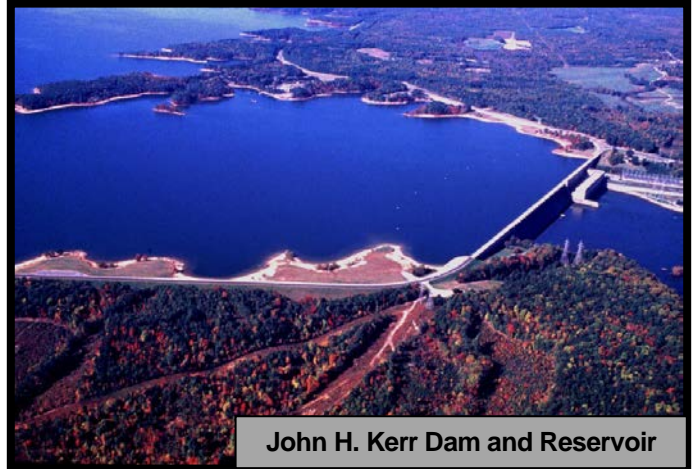




US Army Corps
of Engineers
Wilmington District

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

- **Sponsors: State of North Carolina**
- **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**



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 1, 6

DATE: 6 March 2014

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 and 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 to sustain anadromous fish habitat 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 changes to operation of and releases from the dam and the resulting benefits and impacts on various project purposes and resources.

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

4. **COST ESTIMATE:** \$ 175,000 (Federal reconnaissance phase)
\$2,793,000 (Feasibility/Federal)
\$2,593,000 (Feasibility/Non-Federal)
\$5,561,000 Total
5. **FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION THRU FY 2013:** \$2,953,000.
6. **FY 2014 FUNDING ALLOCATION:** \$0. Carry-in funds are being used to continue the feasibility phase including holding the alternative formulation briefing and developing the draft report.
7. **FY 2015 BUDGET AMOUNT:** To be determined. Carry-in funds are projected to be available to complete the feasibility phase, including the issuance of the Division Engineer's final report.
8. **KEY DATES:** June 2003 (Reconnaissance phase completed)
December 2014 (Complete final Feasibility Report)
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.

In correspondence dated 27 February 2014, the Roanoke River Basin Association expressed their concern to Senator Hagan that the study may be prematurely terminated before its completion. The association is firmly behind recommending the feasible Quasi-Run-of-River alternative plan in a final report. Corps' Headquarters is currently conducting a special review to determine if the project should be or not be continued toward completion. The study sponsor, the state of North Carolina, also supports completing the final report. There are sufficient Federal and non-Federal funds to complete this study to produce this final report.