Local congressmen weigh in on debt/1B

Heritage is special to Bill Haas/1C

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Weather, 4B

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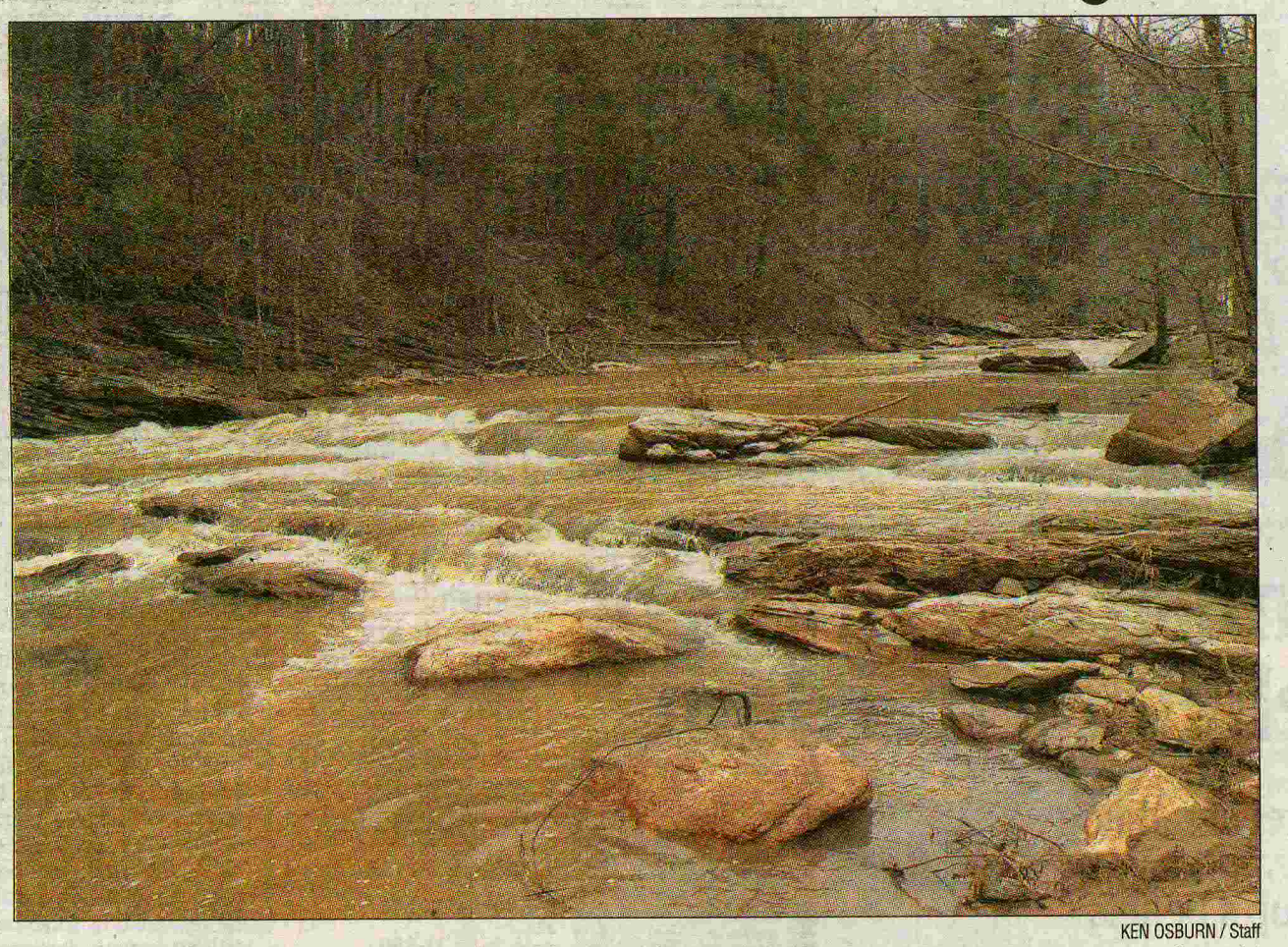
UPSTATE EDITION

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2011

'Astounded by the beauty'



KEN OSBURN / Staff

Plans for a blueway would turn a free-flowing Twelve Mile River into a miles-long recreation area where people could fish and swim, travel by boat, canoe or kayak, watch birds and wildlife, and picnic and play.

Newly free-flowing Twelve Mile River could become recreation area

By Anna Simon
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CLEMSON — One visit to the Twelve Mile River made Jeff Martin a crusader in a movement to turn the whitewater corridor and adjoining area of Lake Hartwell into a scenic blueway now that dams are being removed and toxic PCBs are being cleansed from the water.

"I was astounded by the beauty of the Twelve Mile River gorge and the potential that it has as a recreation and tourism site for this county," said Martin, a Pickens County councilman, who like many residents had been unaware of the raw, unfolding beauty of the gorge.

"No one alive today has ever seen that river free-flowing, and we may have an opportunity in our lifetime to see that happen," said Martin, who is encouraging other council members to support the plans.

"We should be very proactive in finding ways to take advantage of these dams being taken down and utilize that resource for the welfare of our citizens," Martin said.

"I sent a note to my fellow County Council members saying we have an exciting opportunity not only to do the right thing, but an opportunity to provide a service to our community as well as create an economic engine in terms of tourism activity."

Clemson Mayor Larry Abernathy is another passionate advocate for unleashing the scenic beauty and economic development potential of the local waters as a blueway.

"I hope this council will join me in my exuberance about that project," Abernathy said. "Any time we have a chance to make flow

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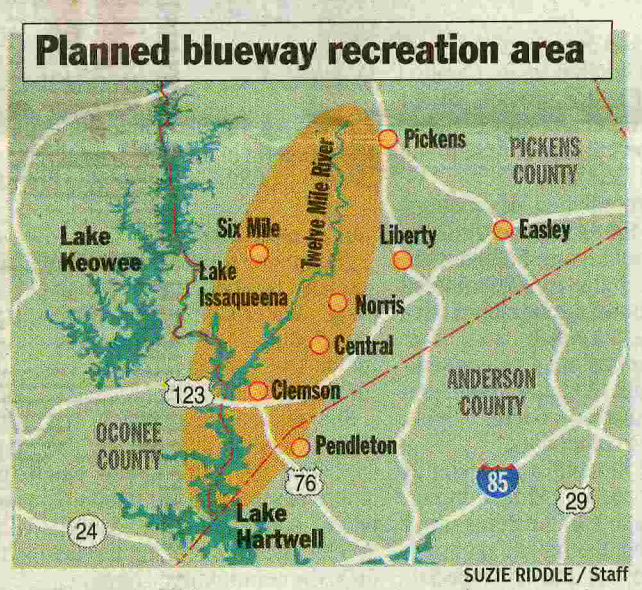
Planned blueway recreation area



SUZIE RIDDLE / Staff

Groups say open incentives to public

Opponents argue proposal would stall job creation here

By Tim Smith
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COLUMBIA — A group of conservatives and taxpayer advocates want the state to end economic incentives, arguing that despite billions of dollars in aid over 13 years, the state's per-capita income remains low and its unemployment high.

The group wants the state to disclose what companies are getting, an independent economic analysis of the costs up front, public hearings and an annual report afterward so taxpayers know the return on their investment.

"There is little to no due diligence on the front end in giving these things away," Sen. Tom Davis, a Beaufort Republican, told the Senate on Wednesday. "We need to get this process under control."

Davis filed legislation on Wednesday to require disclosure, the day after the Senate Finance Committee approved tax breaks for online giant retailer Amazon without any hearing to allow opponents to speak.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Hugh Leatherman asked Davis if neighboring states had co-sponsored his legislation.

"The other states would love this bill," he said. "I'll tell you what it would do. It would shut down creating jobs in our state. You can't mention these people's names until you reach an agreement."

According to the South Carolina Policy Council, a conservative research group, the amount

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School choice bill shot down

Senators disagree on its costs

By Tim Smith
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COLUMBIA — Supporters of school choice say they won't give up after they lost again in the Senate, where legislation to offer tuition tax credits for parents sending children to private schools died in committee, this time without debate.

The Senate Education Committee on Wednesday defeated the latest plan 10-6, leaving options limited for passage in the Senate this year. A similar bill is scheduled to be considered soon by the House Education Committee.

Sen. John Courson, a Columbia Republican who chaired the committee, said he opposes school choice legislation such as that offered Wednesday because he doesn't believe in mixing the state systems for public, private and home school education.

"Philosophically, I believe there are three

Backlash caught Haley off guard

Emails don't support story that Moore refused to respond to governor's calls

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going to stand in the way of hat, you have a lot of answering to do to the people ack home."

Davis said he plans to attempt to amend every economic incentive bill coming to the Senate floor with his disclosure legislation, including the Amazon deal.

Sen. Ronnie Cromer, a Newberry County Republican, said such disclosure could cause problems for companies that make state and local officials promise not to reveal their identities until after the deal is approved.

"Most of the time if you were to do that (disclose their identity), you would be violating a confidentiality agreement, and then they would decide they are going elsewhere," he said.

But Davis said companies should know that if they want a tax break from the state, "Be prepared to talk about that in front of the people."

"I don't like the secret deals," said Davis, a lawyer, who once was chief of staff for former Gov. Mark Sanford. "I don't like confidentiality agreements. I don't like the lack of transparency. How has this worked for us? We need to put a stop to this."

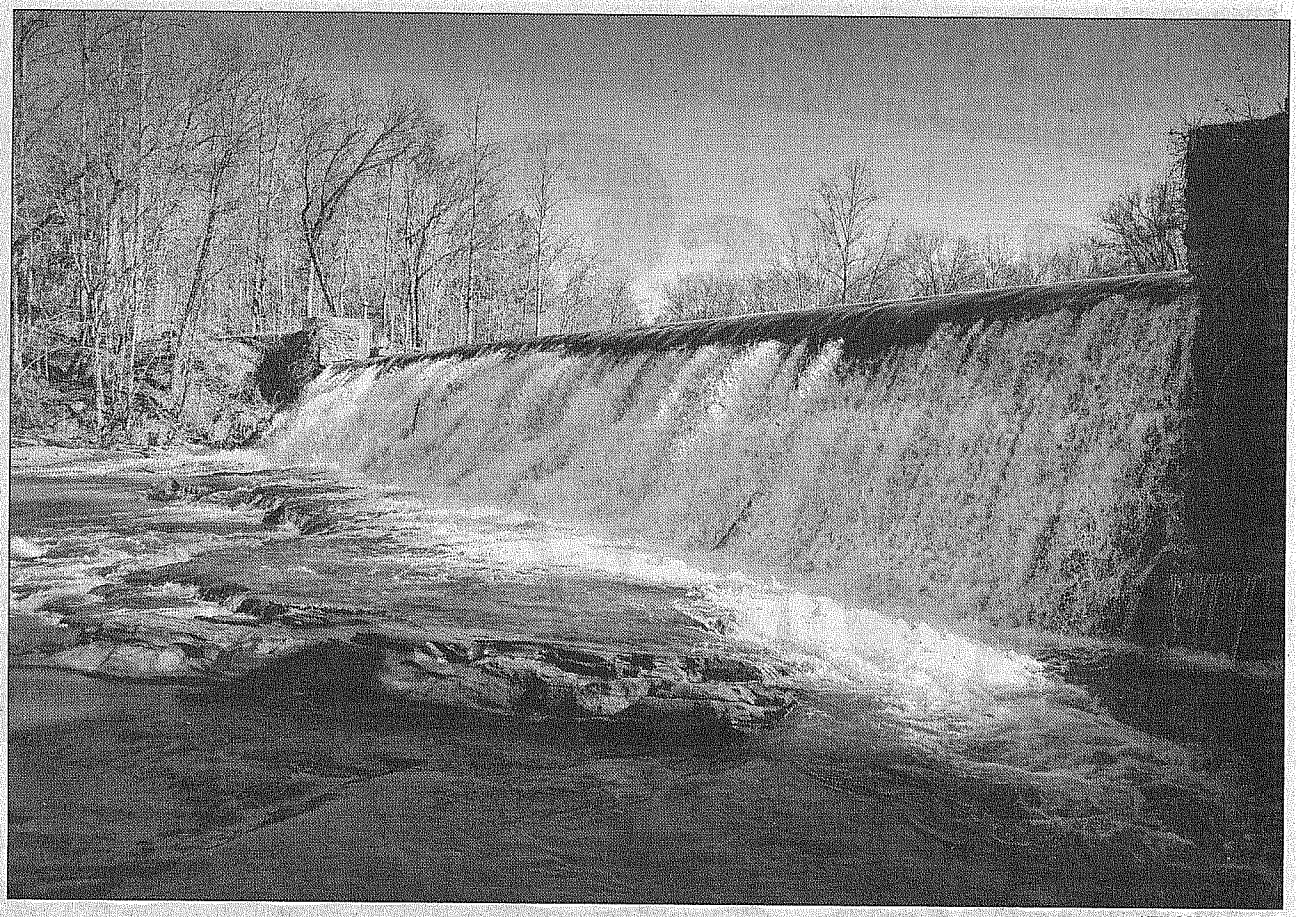
Part of the problem, he and others argue, is that the state is "addicted" to the notion that it can design and run the economy instead of leaving it to the free market.

"Welcome to Soviet South Carolina," said Talbert Black, a state tea party coordinator, who argued that just like the former communist country, major economic decisions in South Carolina are made by a handful of powerful men.

Landess said instead of granting piecemeal incentive deals, the state should lower tax rates across the board and end incentives.

A spokesman for Gov. Nikki Haley said the governor hadn't yet read Davis' legislation.

"We are committed to making sure that South



KEN OSBURN / Staff

The Twelve Mile River flows over the Easley-Central dam. Removing it would completely open the river corridor. Upstate conservation groups are seeking money to allow demolition of this final dam.

RIVER

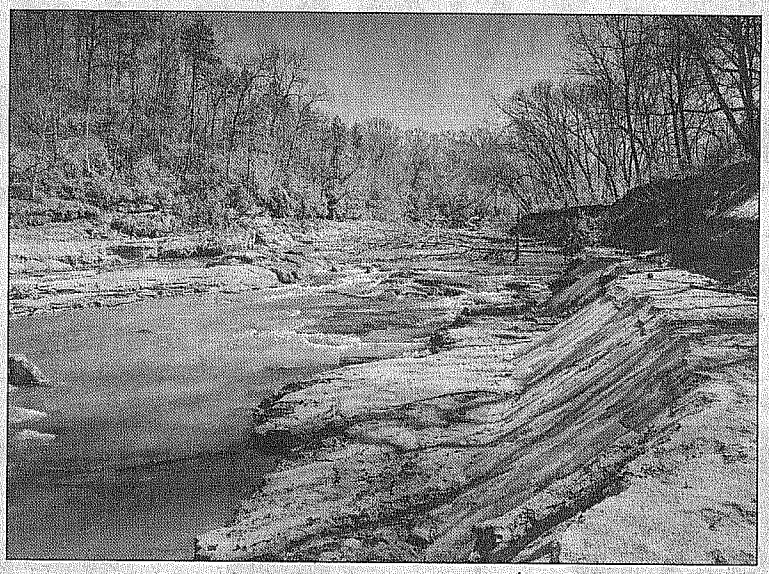
FROM PAGE 1A

of water in and around Clemson more pure, that's a great thing."

A blueway is a trail, like a greenway, but on water rather than on land. The project builds on a court-ordered river restoration now in progress.

It would more fully develop the river and Twelve Mile area of Lake Hartwell as a recreation area encompassing miles of water where people could fish and swim, travel by boat, canoe or kayak, watch birds and wildlife, and picnic and play.

Two century-old dams and contaminated sediment behind them are being removed from the river as part of a 2006 settlement to clean the waters where posted health advisories warn against eating certain fish likely to carry PCBs.



Removing one dam on the Twelve Mile River has allowed the water to cut into the banks at some points, changing the river's bed.

FOLLOW THE RIVER

Follow developments in the removal of the Twelve Mile River dam at GreenvilleOnline.com/TwelveMileDam.

Several Upstate conservation groups have joined in an effort to remove a third and final dam upstream and are seeking funding from the settlement to completely open the river corridor.

The blueway project was recently accepted by the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service.

developed.

The blueway would include the river and parts of Lake Hartwell and Clemson University's Experimental Forest, said Larry Dyck, a member of the steering committee for the blueway project.

Much of the land along the river is private, but Clemson's forest is open to the public.

ral sites along the corridor will be included in a map and guide, as well as many recreational opportunities, said Scott Pigeon, a member of the steering committee for the project.

The 2006 settlement stems from the release of more than 400,000 pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, between 1955 and 1977 from the for