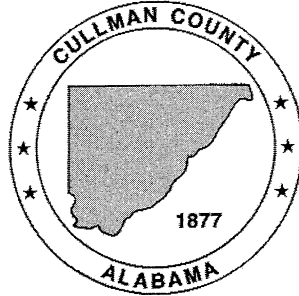


Cullman County Commission

JAMES D. GRAVES
Chairman

DAN WILLINGHAM
County Attorney
For Immediate Release
October 26, 2009



WAYNE WILLINGHAM
Associate Commissioner

DOUG WILLIAMS
Associate Commissioner

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Regional Water Board Proposed Focus on Increased Water Treatment and Redundant Treatment Plant in South at Smith Lake

(Cullman, Ala.) -- Today, Cullman County Commissioners Doug Williams and Wayne Willingham proposed to the Mayor of Cullman a Regional Water Supply and Treatment solution for a stronger working relationship with the City in meeting water needs across Cullman County.

The six-point proposal includes forming a Regional Water Board, upgrading the treatment facilities at the existing Catoma Water Treatment Plant, and placing water supply adjacent to a new water treatment plant in the southern area of the county, where there has been and is expected to be continued population growth in the Smith Lake area.

"This Regional Water Board proposal is about construction time and money. Building a treatment plant at Smith Lake takes fewer years and millions less dollars and we know it is quality water," said Commissioner Wayne Willingham.

The quality of Duck River Reservoir water will be unknown because a new reservoir requires six to eight years to construct a dam for it to then fill with water. Commissioners emphasized that having additional water supply from a new reservoir does not solve the need for increased water treatment. Utilizing Smith Lake water enables almost immediate work on increasing water treatment capacity.

The "Water Supply and Treatment Master Plan", prepared for the City of Cullman Utilities Board, states the goal of increased treated water capacity from 24 million gallons a day (MGD) to 33 MGD by 2012. In addition, the County must meet new Safe Drinking Water Act standards by 2012. A Duck River reservoir does not meet either of those goals.

Catoma Water Treatment Plant is the only water treatment plant the Utilities Board operates and is located to more easily serve the City of Cullman and areas across the northern part of the County. Research has revealed use of a second water supply and water treatment plant at Smith Lake more easily meets safe drinking water standards because this is the location where there is the greater need for increased treated water, in the southern area, and will decrease the time the water is in the system to better maintain water quality.

"Having a second water treatment plant is smart planning for now and for the future. Water treatment redundancy in Cullman County is about location, location, location. The need is in the southern part of the county, and the less time water travels in the pipe the better quality water it is", said Commissioner Doug Williams.

For the Duck River Reservoir, the Utilities Board "Water Supply and Treatment Master Plan" also outlines purchasing approximately 1,200 acres of land for reservoir construction. Both Commissioners clearly state that the County will not support the taking of private property by condemnation when there are viable options for increasing water supply.

For more information on the Regional Water Board proposal, see www.cullmancowater.org/Regional. ###