

## **Duck River Water Supply Project - Cullman, Alabama**

To meet the water supply needs within its service area, the Cullman Utilities Board presently gets its water supply from Lake Catoma. In 1994, Cullman recognized the need for an additional water supply and commissioned a study by the Corps of Engineers to assess the future water needs of the area. That study considered fifteen alternatives and concluded that the Duck River Water Supply Project would be the most cost effective long term water supply option for the region served by Cullman.

In January 2000, the Corps issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on the environmental assessment (EA) and a Section 404 permit for this new water supply reservoir. Subsequently, a Federal lawsuit was filed challenging the Corps issuance of the FONSI and 404 permit. In August 2003, the court ordered the Corps to vacate the Section 404 permit. In 2004, Cullman addressed the judge's order and developed a Supplemental EA to support the Corps' reissuance of a FONSI and the Section 404 permit for the Project. The Supplemental EA was developed to address three main issues that the judge identified in the original ruling: the potential for water quality impacts on the proposed reservoir, the impacts on the Mulberry River downstream of the Duck River reservoir, and the cumulative effects on the hydrology in the Upper Black Warrior River basin. Based on the revised analysis and the Supplemental EA, the Corps reaffirmed the FONSI and reissued the permit for construction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act in November 2006.

This paper discusses the history and future of the Duck River Water Supply project to meet the future water needs of the Cullman regional area.

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