



# ***KING WILLIAM RESERVOIR PROJECT***

*Defending the Planet One Beat at a Time*

## **THE MATTAPONI RIVER AND COHOKE CREEK NEED YOUR HELP!!!**

The City of Newport News, VA is seeking permission from governmental authorities to construct a dam and reservoir (the King William Reservoir) on Cohoke Creek in King William County, VA. In order to fill the reservoir, water will be withdrawn from the Mattaponi River and sent to the reservoir on Cohoke Creek. The City of Newport News will then withdraw the water from the reservoir as needed.



## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN???**

- The 1526-acre, 12.2 billion-gallon reservoir on Cohoke Creek will represent the single largest loss of Virginia wetlands since the passage of the Clean Water Act.<sup>1</sup>
- Studies suggest that the Mattaponi River is the most important shad spawning ground in the state and that removing water to fill and replenish the reservoir is expected to reduce the ability of American Shad to survive, especially in their early life stages.<sup>2</sup>
- The Mattaponi Indian Reservation-one of the oldest tribal sovereign governments in the country is located along the banks of the Mattaponi River. American shad has always been at the center of the Mattaponi tribe's culture and reduction in Shad populations could have significant cultural effects.<sup>3</sup>
- A threatened fish species (Sensitive Joint Vetch) is located in the vicinity of the proposed project. Water withdrawals from the Mattaponi River may reduce the chances of survival for this already threatened species.<sup>4</sup>

## **WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS???**

Presently, the project has received approval by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) and the State of Virginia to permit the construction of the dam and reservoir. However, the State Permits are currently being contested in court. In November 2005, the ACE issued a Federal Clean Water Act permit (under Section 404) to allow for the filling of the wetlands.

## **WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP???**

### **Challenge the Federal Permit!**

Due to the numerous deficiencies in the Federal Clean Water Act Permit, we anticipate that the federal permit will be challenged by a coalition of environmental groups. Join with RtE and others in opposing the King William Reservoir by asking the ACE to reverse its decision to grant the federal Clean Water Act permit by writing to:

Brigadier General William T. Grisoli  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – North Atlantic Division  
Fort Hamilton Military Community, Building 302  
Brooklyn, NY 11252

Please make the following points:

- The quality of the 806 acres of wetlands to be constructed and/or enhanced will not be sufficient to replace the important ecological value of the 400+ acres of mature, forested wetlands to be eliminated by this project;
- The permit was issued without a final, detailed wetlands mitigation plan and without standards as to what will qualify as “successful restoration”;
- The frequency of the wetland monitoring plan required by the permit (9 times over a 20 year period) is insufficient;

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Rock the Earth would like to thank Sugar Hill recording artist Scott Miller for suggesting this project to us.

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- The Final Detailed Mitigation Plan will not require that replacement wetlands be in the Mattaponi River watershed;
- The stream restoration plan, which only requires monitoring for a five-year period is insufficient to ensure the viability of the ecosystem.
- The permit will allow for the application of chemicals to the waterway to fight mollusks that might impede operations without seeking a formal permit modification. The operator only needs to modify the Operational Plan, which will not provide the public adequate notice and opportunity to comment. This is in violation of the federal Clean Water Act

### **Challenge the Federal Permit!**

The City of Newport News has requested to modify the Virginia Water Protection (VWP) permit for the reservoir. Join with RtE and others in opposing the King William Reservoir by writing to the VWP:

Catherine Harold  
 Virginia Water Protection Permit Program Manager  
 Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
 629 East Main St., 9th Floor  
 Richmond, VA 23219

Please make the following points:

- The VWP permit needs to be made consistent with the permit issued by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC).
- The State Water Control Board needs to consider and impose performance standards relating to salinity, ecological monitoring and wetlands mitigation.
- The Wetlands Mitigation Plan is inadequate and does not currently contain properties that are available for mitigation.
- The State Water Control Board needs to re-assess the viability fo the reservoir in light of the pumping hiatus and water withdrawal restrictions imposed by the VMRC and the ACE.

### **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION???**

Rock the Earth: [www.RockTheEarth.org](http://www.RockTheEarth.org)  
 Alliance to Save the Mattaponi: [www.itsyourenvironment.net/alliance/indexx.html](http://www.itsyourenvironment.net/alliance/indexx.html)  
 Army Corps of Engineers: [www.nad.usace.army.mil/kwr/kwr.htm](http://www.nad.usace.army.mil/kwr/kwr.htm)

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.savethemattaponi.org/index.htm>, [http://www.nad.usace.army.mil/kwr/KWR\\_Newsrelease.htm](http://www.nad.usace.army.mil/kwr/KWR_Newsrelease.htm)

<sup>2</sup>Bilkovic, D.M., J.E. Olney, and C.H. Hershner. 2002a Spawning of American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*) and striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*) in the Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers, VA. Fisheries Bulletin 11: 632-640 and Bilkovic, D.M., C.H. Hershner, and J.E. Olney. 2002b Macroscale assessment of American Shad Spawning and Nursery habitat in the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers, Virginia. North American Journal of Fisheries Management 22(4): 1176-1192.

<sup>3</sup><http://www.baylink.org/Mattaponi/>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.nad.usace.army.mil/kwr/KWRFRRD.pdf>