JACKSON COUNTY

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## Does the Pascagoula River need major tributaries dammed?

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JACKSON COUNTY -- The Jackson County Board of Supervisors will host two public meetings this week on Lake George -- a twin-lake project that would required damming tributaries to the Pascagoula River.

## The meetings are:

n Vancleave on Monday, 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the HUD Building on Ball Park Road.

n Hurley on Tuesday, 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the East Central Civic Center, 4300 Mississippi 614.

Representatives from the project designer, the Pickering Firm, will be available to answer questions and address concerns about the project. Visual displays will show what areas the lake will encompass and detail the purpose of the lakes. You can see whose property will be affected.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is in the process of deciding whether the project needs a thorough environmental assessment, a formal process that takes about two years. The public comment period ended Nov. 4, so the Corps is no longer accepting comments or concerns from the public. The Board of Supervisors set the informational meetings 12 days after the end of the official comment period.

As of last week, the Jackson County Board of Supervisors is still on the record as supporting the project.

The project would dam Big and Little Cedar creeks, two miles from the main trunk of the Pascagoula River, to form 3,000 acres of twin lakes near the Coast.

George County leaders have for years looked for a way to provide a recreational lake or lakes in their county as a boost for economic development. This proposal offers the lakes as a solution for low flows in the Pascagoula, which supplies water to major industries in Jackson County.

Gulf Restoration Network has said the river low flows are only occasional and called the dams and lakes "a permanent solution to a temporary problem." Others who oppose the project are Mississippi Audubon, Coastal Rivers, Eco Tours of South Mississippi, Gulf Islands Conservancy, Historic Ocean Springs, Saltwater Fly Fishing Club, the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain and both the local and state chapters of the Sierra Club.

They are interested in preserving the Pascagoula River, the largest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states and fear that damming the tributaries could put that designation at risk, among other things.

Pat Harrison Waterway District, a small state agency that manages water parks, is the official applicant for the project.









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