

**Message from USFWS to TDEC regarding Franklin Water Withdrawal Permit.
Taken from email dated March 15, 2007.**

From: Steven_Alexander@fws.gov [mailto:Steven_Alexander@fws.gov]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2007 11:34 AM
To: Paul.Estill Davis; Robert.D.Baker@state.tn.us
Subject: Public Hearing 2007-05; TDEC NRS06.332; City of Franklin

Paul and Robert -

I was unable to attend the referenced public hearing on March 8, 2007. Please consider the following comments.

Over the last several years, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel have cooperatively worked with the Harpeth River Watershed Association (HRWA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), TDEC, and others in addressing water quality degradation in the Harpeth River. Substantial efforts in the assessment and modeling of depressed dissolved oxygen levels and hydrologic conditions have been conducted by the various partners.

We are concerned that increasing the current rate of water withdrawal from 7.2 to 11.2 million gallons per day (MGD) by the City of Franklin will exacerbate depressed dissolved oxygen levels and degraded habitat conditions in the river. Due to the significant growth in the Franklin area, the potential for increases in the discharge of treated wastewaters and associated effects on water quality in the Harpeth River must be carefully considered. Previous assessments have demonstrated that treated effluent may comprise as much as 73% of the base flow in the river during seasonally low flow periods. We also believe that existing in-stream structures, such as the low-head dam where the existing withdrawal is located, also contribute to depressed oxygen levels and flows in the river. This structure serves as an impediment to fish movement in this reach of the river and contributes to reduced biological integrity.

Since the Harpeth River is currently assessed as partially supporting its designated use of fish and aquatic life due to low dissolved oxygen and other factors, we believe it would be prudent to further evaluate previous modeling efforts by EPA, USGS and TDEC and determine whether the data utilized in those efforts remain valid. The degraded water quality conditions in the river have strongly influenced the aquatic communities and available habitat in the river for a considerable distance downstream. Available data on the aquatic communities is also limited and further assessments of biological integrity appear to be warranted. Additional

analysis and modeling of the hydrologic regime in this reach of the river is also warranted.

If this proposal is approved, we believe it will be necessary to substantially decrease the amount of wastewater currently permitted to be discharged in the river. The increase in water withdrawal rates from the Harpeth River would require consideration of comprehensive wastewater management alternatives such as land application of treated effluent and/or wastewater recycling. We believe those options would substantially increase current utility costs to the community; negate recent improvements to the Franklin POTW; and necessitate a substantial state and federal effort to address the current impairments in the Harpeth River. A more practical solution would be to increase the current capacity of raw water supply from the Cumberland River.

These constitute the comments of the U.S. Department of the Interior in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended: 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347; 83 Stat. 852), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.). We appreciate the opportunity to comment. Should you have any questions, please contact me.

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