

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Citizens for a Sustainable Water Plan Encouraged by Corps of Engineers' Nod to Facts, New Data**

Charlottesville, VA – November 16, 2011

In a recent letter (attached) to the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“the Corps”) asks some probing questions, pointing to several recent studies that Citizens for a Sustainable Water Plan have been highlighting in recent months. Those studies invalidate the fundamental assumptions that were made during formulation of the 2006 “Community Water Plan” that calls for construction of a large new dam at Ragged Mountain.

The CSWP believes this willingness to examine the best available information is an example for Charlottesville and Albemarle elected leaders.

The Corps’s letter advised the RWSA that it was reviewing several new studies, specifically the new AECOM water demand analysis and the HDR dredging feasibility study, to determine if reevaluation of its original permit decision is necessary. That original decision authorized the wetlands and stream impacts associated with a large new dam at Ragged Mountain and a pipeline from South Fork Rivanna Reservoir that is required to fill the new dam.

In its letter, the Corps asked RWSA to respond to three questions. The most important question asks about the potential increase in water storage and “safe yield” based on dredging, now that the RWSA is moving towards a contract for dredging. Another question notes that the most recent water demand projection shows that in 50 years the urban area will use much less water than previously estimated.

CSWP believes the Corps’s reevaluation of its original decision could signal reconsideration of the public interest and whether dredging of the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir is a viable option. Early in the planning process, the permitting and environmental advisory agencies indicated that dredging has “minimal environmental impact.” At that time, the RWSA claimed dredging would cost nearly \$145 million (later revised to upwards to more than \$223 million), which prompted the Corps to consider dredging impractical.

In April, CSWP asked the Corps to reevaluate the dam-and-pipeline project in light of the public interest and public need based on new studies and information. Of note, the recent dredging feasibility study estimated the mid-range cost to dredge is \$29 million. The RWSA is moving forward with a procurement process that will allow bidders to offer flexible and potentially lower cost alternatives.

As CSWP has long argued, new information and studies paid for by the City and the RWSA should be the basis for the region’s water supply plan. We use 20% less water than we did 10 years ago, despite 17% population growth. The new studies show we have abundant water for 40 years or longer.

CSWP asserts that maintaining the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir by dredging, repairing the Ragged Mountain dam spillway, and continuing our strong water conservation efforts would also allow the RWSA to improve environmental flows in the Moormans River downstream of the Sugar Hollow reservoir. Citizens for a Sustainable Water Plan has been steadfast – dredge first, dam later.

For a comprehensive summary go to [http://www.cvillewater.info/CSWP\\_They-Said\\_WeNowKnow\\_092411.pdf](http://www.cvillewater.info/CSWP_They-Said_WeNowKnow_092411.pdf)

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