

LITTLE RIVER LAND ACQUISITION



LITTLE RIVER LAND ACQUISITION FY2004-2010

1. BACKGROUND ISSUES

Based on prior assessments of the total water supply, continued population growth, and increased demand for water, the amount of available potable water is expected to surpass supply in approximately twenty years. As demand continues to rise, the need for the Little River reservoir project will become increasingly critical.

The Little River reservoir was first designated as a future source of high quality drinking water in a 1986 assessment of water supply alternatives to meet the needs of eastern Wake County. The project as currently planned will consist of the construction of a water supply reservoir within the Little River Watershed with a potential yield of 17 million gallons of water per day.

2. PROGRAM & FACILITY GOALS

The primary goal of the Little River reservoir project is:

- Assist municipalities in providing additional water supply resources required to meet drinking water needs of current and future Wake County residents.
- Acquire approximately 2,000 acres of land for the water supply reservoir and 200-foot buffer area in a timely and cost effective manner.
- Foster the partnerships necessary for the long-term consolidation of operations and management of water and sewer systems in Wake County.

3. COMPREHENSIVE FACILITY PLAN

The development of the Little River reservoir to meet the long-term water demand projections for Wake County is based on the recommendations of four technical studies and reports:

- 1998 Wake County Water/Sewer Plan (by CH2M Hill)

- 1993 Draft Environmental Assessment of Little River reservoir (by Hazen & Sawyer)
- 1988 Water & Wastewater Facilities Plan
- 1986 Assessment of Water Supply (by Peirson & Whitman)

Wake County, with financial assistance from five municipalities, has is responsible for funding and completing the initial land acquisition phase of the reservoir project. In 1995, Wake County entered into an interlocal agreement with the Towns of Knightdale, Wake Forest, Wendell, Zebulon, and the City of Raleigh to purchase property needed for the reservoir.

According to the 1998 water/sewer plan, the reservoir should be planned and funded for completion no later than 2025. After completion of the land acquisition phase, several independent intermediate steps are needed to complete the reservoir. These include the following: a) identify an operation and management entity for the reservoir and water treatment and distribution facilities, b) transfer land rights to the operating entity, c) finalize the permitting and design of the reservoir, d) complete design of the water treatment facility, and e) complete construction and begin operation of the designed facilities. At present, the jurisdictional responsibilities for carrying out these steps remain to be determined. However, it is not unusual for projects of this type and scale to take at least 15 years to plan, permit, design, and construct. Discussions relative to an interlocal agreement with municipal partners for development of the reservoir will be initiated in the next few years.

4. SEVEN-YEAR CIP PROGRAM SUMMARY

To complete the land acquisition phase of the reservoir project, the County is focused on acquiring approximately 180 parcels consisting of over 2000 acres to accommodate the reservoir construction and provide the 200-foot buffer area. At the end of fiscal year 2003, 1,587 acres consisting of 128 parcels will have been acquired. Over the next two fiscal years (FY2004 to FY2005) an additional 440 acres consisting of 44 parcels and 11 dwellings will be acquired at an estimated total cost of \$4.5 million (including environmental audits, appraisal costs, surveying costs and legal fees). Acquisition of property for the reservoir is planned to be completed in FY2005 with the exception of a limited number of parcels, which may involve condemnation. Funding is provided through a combination of general fund appropriations, transfers from project closeouts, and municipal contributions.

5. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY2003

In FY2003, the County was able to acquire 24 parcels consisting of approximately 278 acres, for a total of \$2,100,000. The FY2003 activities included the acquisition of four dwellings.

6. FY2004 PROJECT ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In FY2004, new appropriations of \$2.9 million is needed to support the acquisition of 370 acres consisting of 27 parcels and seven dwellings at an estimated cost of \$3,414,000 (\$514,000 is expected in the end of year project balance).

7. SUMMARY OF FUTURE PHASES (FY2005-2010)

FY2005: Acquisition of 70 acres consisting of 17 parcels and four dwellings at a projected cost of \$1.1 million by negotiation or condemnation. Placing signs and marking the outside limits of property owned by the County will be completed in FY2005.

The successful fee simple acquisition of all parcels required for the reservoir is extremely unlikely. Unfortunately, the County will probably be forced to pursue a small number of property acquisitions through the power of eminent domain. The County plans to pursue these acquisitions through the use of outside legal counsel.

8. OPERATING IMPACT

No significant County general fund operating impact is expected because a separate entity will be established to permit, build, and operate the reservoir and associated water supply infrastructure. However, passive ownership of 2,000 acres will require some limited funds to cover routine land stewardship responsibilities.

9. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Little River Land Acquisition project is based primarily on the 1998 Wake County Water and Sewer plan. The establishment of a Little River reservoir is directly linked to the recommendations of the water/sewer plan and is an essential component of the long-term recommendation to develop a single water and sewer utility system in Wake County.

10. ILLUSTRATIONS

10. ILLUSTRATIONS



Little River



Little River

11. FINANCIALS

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PART I. EXPENDITURES								
	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	TOTAL
LITTLE RIVER LAND ACQUISITION	\$2,900,000	\$1,100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,000,000
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS	\$2,900,000	\$1,100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,000,000
PART II. FUNDING SOURCES								
	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	TOTAL
Pay As You Go	\$2,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,200,000
Transfer from Project Closeouts	\$700,000							\$700,000
Municipal Reimbursements	\$100,000							\$100,000
TOTAL	\$2,900,000	\$1,100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,000,000
PART III. OPERATING IMPACT								
	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	TOTAL
Total Operating Cost	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0