D.O.T. 66

ORIGINAL COPY TO GENERAL FILES

# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
# STATE OF GEORGIA

## INTERDEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENCE

FILE STP-1777(4) White County
P.I. No. 132260

OFFICE Preconstruction

DATE November 2, 1993

FROM C. Wayne Hutto, Assistant Director of Preconstruction

TO SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT DETOUR REPORT APPROVAL

Attached for your files is the approval for subject projects.

CWH/cj

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION:

John Lively
Bobby Mustin
David Studstill
Herman Griffin
Darrell Elwell
Jim Kennerly
Paul Liles
Marion Waters
Hugh Tyner

D.O.T. 66

# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
# STATE OF GEORGIA

RECEIVED
OCT 20 1993
PRECONSTRUCTION

INTERDEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENCE

FILE STP 1777 (4) White
P.I. 132260

OFFICE Gainesville

DATE October 18, 1993

FROM Hugh L. Tyner, P.E., District Engineer

TO Wayne Hutto, Assistant Director of Preconstruction

SUBJECT Detour Report

Attached is the above subject document for your review in accordance with May 7, 1990 procedures.

Detour approval will be advertised upon approval of this document.

HLT:jm

C: Charles Lewis
David Freedman

# DETOUR REPORT

PROJECT: STP 1777 (4) White County

PI: 132260

MEETING DATE: September 30, 1993

# DATE OF REPORT

October 18, 1993

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Detour Report

Attachment 1 - Handout

Attachment 2 - Written response from local officials

Attachment 3 - Written comments and sample reply

Attachment 4 - Letter and replies

Attachment 5 - Transcript of oral comments

Detour Report

Project STP 1777 (4) White County

P. I. 132260

Location - SR 356 over Smith Creek @ Unicoi Dam

Description:

A public meeting was held on September 30, 1993 at Unicoi Lodge between the hours of 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm. The attached handout (Attachment 1) was given to each attendee showing the proposed 2½ mile detour along Anna Ruby Falls and Campground Roads for vehicles other than thru trucks and oversized recreational vehicles. Also included in the handout was proposed advisory signing to assist the trucks and recreational vehicles in selecting SR 17, SR 255 & SR 197 as an alternate. A large scale display was also presented as the focal point for discussion. Project plans are available for review, as well as, the Department of Natural Resources' documentation of project need.

Historical information was presented orally regarding DOT/DNR attempts to attract reasonable bids with an on site detour as per project concept. The original concept provided an on site detour parallel to and about 75 ft. upstream of the in place structure. The detour would have been approximately 1200 feet in length with a design speed of 35 mph through the lake bed. This detour concept is considered not cost effective and the 2½ mile off-site detour was presented at the meeting.

The project renovates the Unicoi State Park Dam in accordance with the Safe Dam Act. Roadway and bridge work are incidental to dam renovation since SR 356 traverses the dam and bridges the existing spillway. Dan McGill & Associates, Consulting Engineers developed the core plans which provide a new spillway approximately 400 ft. east of the in place spillway. Additionally the existing spillway would be removed with substratum repairs made and the area reconstructed. A monitoring system would also be installed. DOT's involvement would be limited to maintenance of traffic via detour, and participation in the bridge structure spanning the new spillway and related roadway approaches. DOT construction personnel would provide lead construction supervision.

Summary of Public Meeting:

67 persons attended

35 comments were received (8 to court recorder)

8 post meeting letters received

7 comments supported proposal

20 comments opposed proposal

5 no position but commented negatively

3 noncommittal

Public officials and their comments: (See Attachment 2)

J. Michael Vandegriff - Commissioner City of Helen

Mr. Vandegriff does not support the project. Although his written comments are not sarcastic his verbal comments were antigovernment and anti DOT in particular. State and federal mandates seemed to be his problem with QBE particularly distasteful.

Gilbert Paul - Director of Water & Sewer

Mr. Paul does not support the project. Mr. Paul believes all tax revenue goes into one pot and Helen has greatly contributed to that pot. He believes DOT is discriminating against Helen and desire to spend sales tax revenue they have contributed to state coffiers elsewhere. After two explanations of roadway funding he remained unconvinced.

Fred V. Healan, Jr. - Fire Marshal

Mr. Healan does not support the project. He suggested a permanent bridge upstream from dam. He doesn't believe DOT should consider cost when it involves their unique area.

Kim A. Cox - City Manager

Mr. Cox never appreciated DOT trying to save money. Orally he was anti-DOT but his written comments are milder. Subsequent to the meeting he commented by letter that the economy of Helen would be negatively affected and requested consideration of such impact in the final decision.

Major concerns and comments:

1) Loss of business by merchants on SR 356.

2) Loss of business by merchants in Helen.

3) The Helen area was being treated unfairly by DOT being stingy only in their area.

4) Proposed advisory signing gave an unfair competitive advantage to Unicoi Lodge & Park.

5) DOT hadn't considered alternatives.

6) Would like detour through lake bed as per original design regardless of cost.

7) Didn't like meeting format.

8) Conspiracy of Governor to divert tourist to Towns County in addition to APD highway

Recommendation:

It is hereby recommended that the original project concept for STP 1777(4) White County be retained which would include an on site detour. It is further recommended that construction time be extended to include two construction seasons.

Recommended: _____ Director of Preconstruction
Hoyt J. Lively, Jr., P.E.

Approved: _____ State Highway Engineer
Frank Danchetz, P.E.

ATTACHMENT 1

HANDOUT

Attachment 1

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

September 30, 1993

Dear Citizen,

Thank you for attending the public informational meeting for the temporary closure of State Route 356 for the reconstruction of the spillway on Unicoi Dam. The purpose of this meeting is to inform you on the upcoming project and for the Department of Transportation to gather your comments so that we may better serve the needs of your community.

Unicoi dam was constructed prior to 1955. Repairs were made to the spillway in 1976, 1983, and 1987. Unfortunately, recent inspections of the spillway show that the existing spillway can no longer be repaired but must be replaced with a new spillway built to current specifications in accordance with the Georgia Safe Dams Act. Because the existing bridge is structurally incorporated into the spillway, the bridge must also be replaced.

Construction of the proposed spillway will take approximately 20 months. During construction, it is the proposal of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources that traffic be re-routed around the dam using State Routes 17/75, 17, and 255. Local traffic and patrons of Unicoi Park will have access to an existing road which connects Smith Creek Road to Campground Road around the North side of the lake. This road is presently being cleared and resurfaced by state maintenance forces.

Again, thank you for attending this informational meeting and giving us your comments.

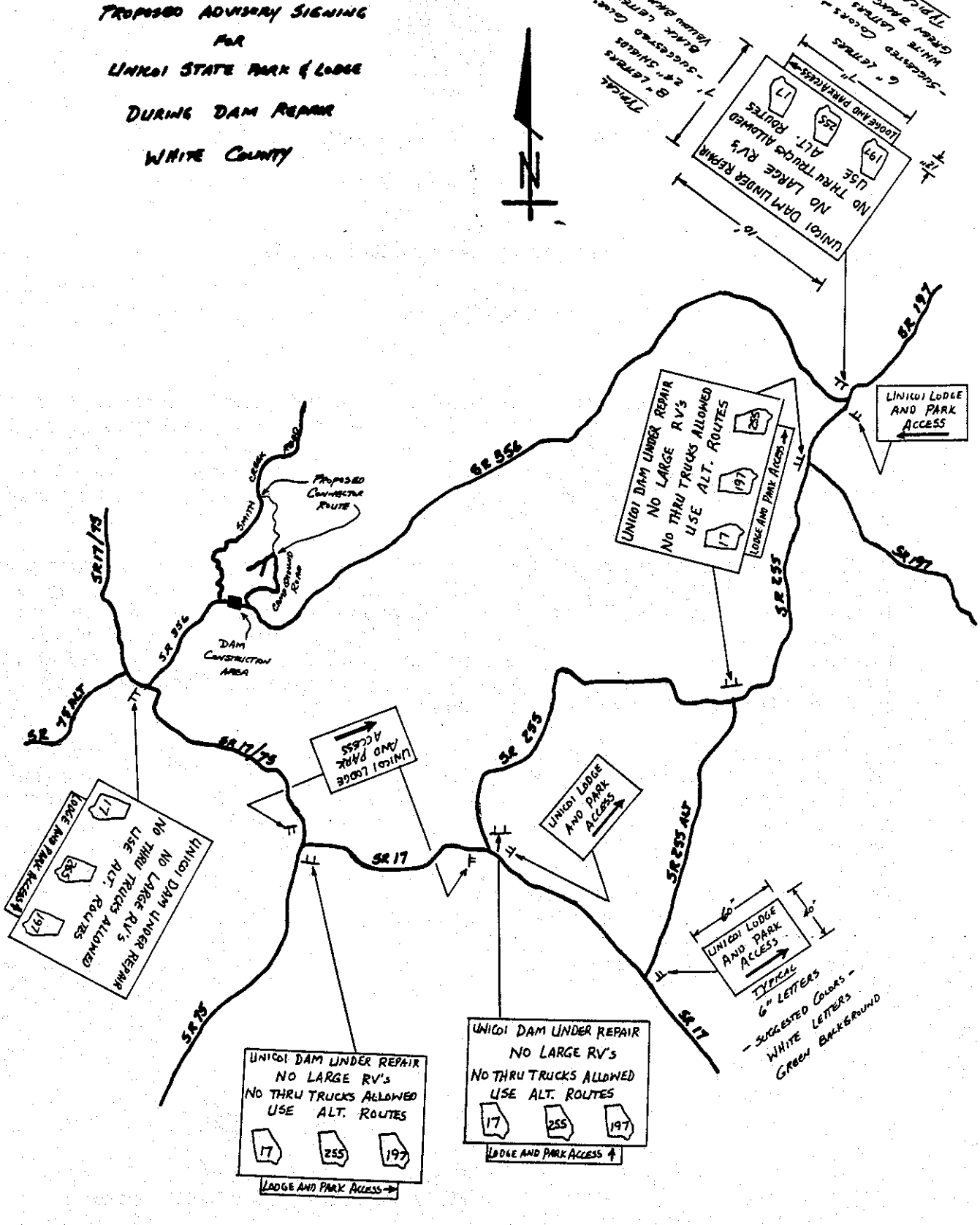
Sincerely,

H. J. Lively Jr.

Hoyt J. Lively, Jr.
Director of Preconstruction

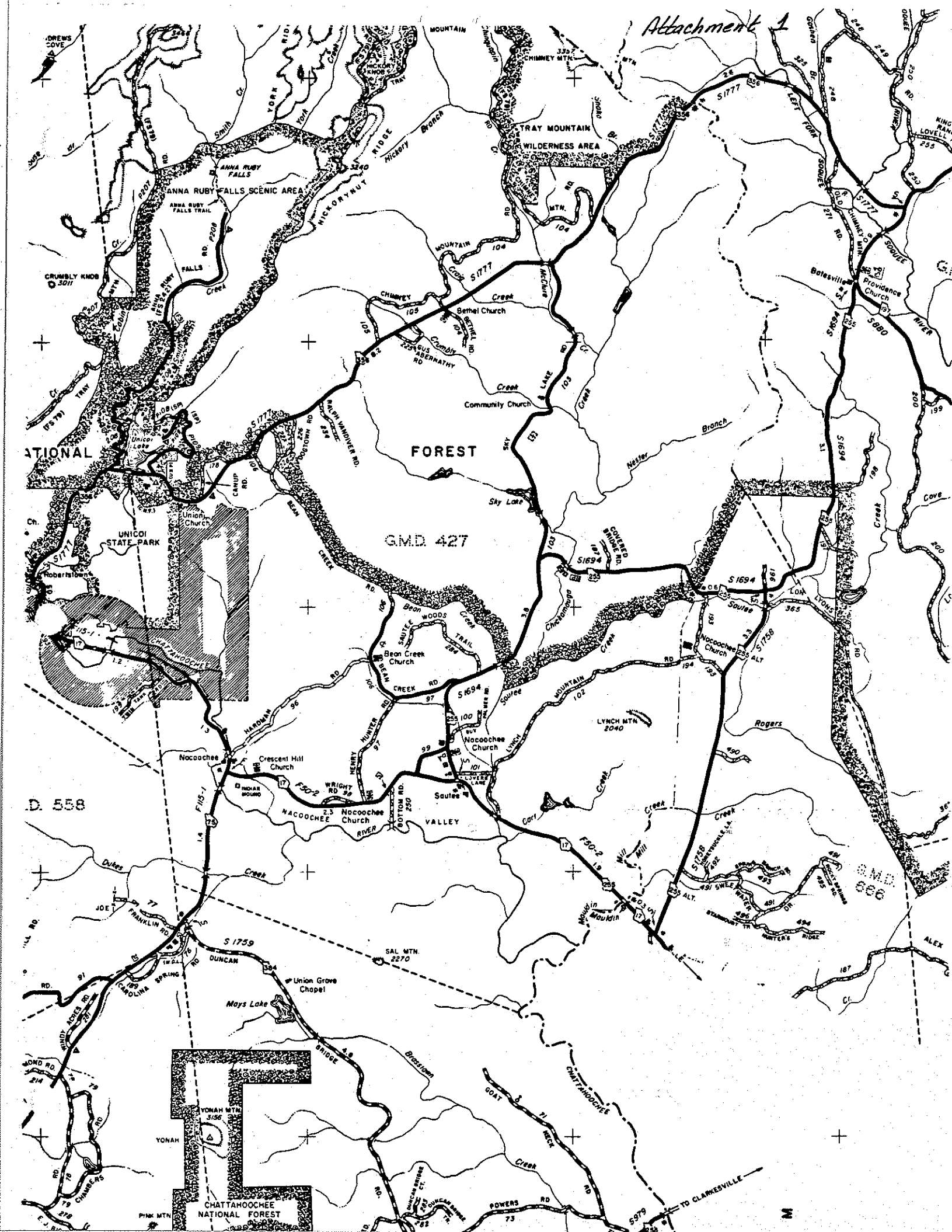
Attachment 1

# PROPOSED ADVISORY SIGNING FOR UNICOI STATE PARK & LODGE DURING DAM REPAIR WHITE COUNTY




08/24/93

Attachment 1



# Attachment 2

# Comments from Officials

NAME J. Michael Vandegriff - City of Helen Commissioner
ADDRESS P.O. Box 1286
Helen, Ga. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? No
COMMENTS I believe there can be an alternate detour devised that could handle all traffic. Such as: For general traffic use Smith Creek, for heavy traffic use the old maintenance road below existing dam. DOT is satisfied by Regulations on their road and DNR controls lower bypass without doing major repairs.

(please print)

WHITE COUNTY FIRE DEPT 356

NAME FRED V. HEALAN JR. FIRE MARSHAL FOR CITY OF HELEN
ADDRESS P.O. BOX 280
HELEN, GA 30545
(706) 878-3676

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS I FEEL THAT D.O.T. SHOULD CONSIDER A PERMANENT BRIDGE WITH A ROADWAY ACROSS JUST IN FRONT OF THE DAM DUE TO THE PROBLEMS THAT THE DAM HAS ENCOUNTERED IN THE PAST AND THAT IT IS NOW ENCOUNTERING THIS WOULD ESTABLISH A DOT RIGHT OF WAY SEPERATE FROM THE DAM FOREVER, AND WOULD FIX THE TEMPORARY DETOUR AND DAM ROAD PROBLEM FOREVER. ALSO THE DAM COULD BE CONSTRUCTED SO TO PROVIDES A DETOUR ROUTE IN THE EVENT THAT THE BRIDGE EVER NEEDED REPAIR.

(please print)

Fred V. Healan Sr

Attachment 2

CITY OF HELEN
P.O. BOX 280
HELEN, GEORGIA 30545
(706) 878-3382

GEORGIA'S ALPINE VILLAGE

CITY COMMISSION:
JEFF N. ASH
WAYNE L. GARDNER
THOMAS W. MANN
J. MICHAEL VANDEGRIFF
BARBARA A. WESTMORELAND
CITY MANAGER:
KIM A. COX
CITY CLERK:
JANIE N. HENDERSON

October 5, 1993

Mr. Hugh Tyner
District Engineer
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

RE: Project STP-1777 (4), White County
Bridge Replacement over Smith Creek
Temporary Closing of SR 356/Detour

Dear Mr. Tyner:

On behalf of the City, I would like to thank you and your staff for disseminating very useful information regarding the above referenced project, as well as facilitating the public meeting at Unicoi State Park. As we all know, public input, opinion, and support are vital to the success of any public works project.

We understand that due to hazards associated with the impoundment, Unicoi lake must remain drained for the associated work. This dry lakebed is a detriment to the local tourism economy, and one that we in the greater Helen area understand that must be endured. However, to not construct a temporary road through the lakebed as an alternative method of ingress and egress to Unicoi State Park and points beyond would seriously undermine the Helen economy for the next two years, or until the project is completed in August of 1995.

Unicoi State Park has been very successful in securing conventions and meetings during our typically slow tourism months, which are January through May. Our local economy relies heavily on the business brought by these visitors, and should the most direct route between Unicoi State Park and the City of Helen be temporarily closed, then a tremendous amount of tourism dollars will be lost. Given this premise, we respectfully request that a brief economic impact analysis be immediately conducted to clearly determine the effects of closing state route 356 versus the construction of a temporary road through the lakebed, which would allow for the aforementioned ingress and egress in a much more convenient manner. To further expand upon the premise, it is our contention that possibly the cost of constructing the temporary

Attachment 2

road through the lakebed would be offset by the state and local revenue not lost to the economy.

We understand from your staff at the recent public meeting at Unicoi State Park, that DOT does not clearly know the actual cost of constructing the temporary road. However, we understand that you have been advised by the first and second round bidders that one of the primary reasons for the bids exceeding the budgeted amount is in fact the cost of the road. Since the temporary road is already designed, it may be possible for DOT to bid the project with the road as an add or deduct alternate. This approach would clearly give you a true cost of the road construction. I realize, not having closely scrutinized the plans and specifications, that this is an oversimplified approach to a potential solution, however you may find that the road construction is not as expensive as once thought. In addition, it would give you a true cost to compare with the economic impact of lost tourism dollars.

I believe our point has been made, and it is simply this: please give due consideration to the overall economy in the Helen area, and the State of Georgia, when making a decision on how to proceed with this project. I appreciate your time, and your consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,

R. A. C

Kim A. Cox
City Manager

xc: All City Commissioners
White County Commissioners
Mike Palmer, County Administrator
Mr. Layland L. Owens, DOT District Preconstruction Engineer

KAC/me
<dot.177>

NAME Jim A. Cox

ADDRESS City Manager
City of Helen
P.O. Box 280 Helen, GA. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?

COMMENTS The City of Helen supports the repair of the dam, but is very concerned about the economic impact of the detour as proposed, on tourism in the area. The verbal proposal of a temporary road through the lakebed is a more favorable approach.
A more formal response to follow.

(please print)

Gilbert Paul - dir of Utilities also attended

# Attachment 3

# Written Comments @ Hearing

# and

# Sample Reply

356

NAME Thomas E Davidson
ADDRESS P.O Box 107
Helen GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Questionable —
COMMENTS The Detour will effect My Travel & My Wife's Travel each day. We Work 100 miles away, this has been expected but this Project was not anticipated Time is important to our family & each member who travels to our home. A Road through the bed of the lake would be acceptable Not the Detour. Allocate the monies Mr Miller our Governor can get monies for his projects. Let's play politics for the people for a Change.

(please print)

356

NAME SARA E. DAVIDSON
House ADDRESS HWY 356 - Chimney MTN Rd.
One-MILE NORTH of Smith CREEK PROJECT
Mail Add: P.O. Box 107 Helen, GA 30545
DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? YES
COMMENTS This PROJECT is going TO Add 30 MINS driving Time TO OUR ROUTE IN and OUT MONDAY THRU FRIDAY GOING and COMING TO and FROM WORK.

3 Adults IN OUR House driving in and out TO Work, Church, etc. every Week M THRU Sunday

(please print)

356

NAME Mrs. Martha J. Blalock
ADDRESS Highway 356
P.O. Box 454
Helen, GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?

COMMENTS Since I live about 1 mile above the dam, I have enjoyed traveling back & forth across it & seeing the beautiful view of the lake. It has distressed me that the lake was drained long before necessary & probably will be drained much longer than predictions. This is one of the most beautiful areas in Georgia & I think it is bound to effect the tourist trade. I feel it should be (please print) done if it is necessary but feel it should proceed without delay.

356

NAME Danielle Bachant
ADDRESS Route 1 Box 1167, Skylake
Sautee-Nacoochee, GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? I need to see all facts, figures & options

COMMENTS I am opposed to any large truck traffic being re-routed onto S.R. 255 and Skylake Rd. They should be directed onto Alt. S.R. 255. We do not need non-tourist traffic coming through that part of the valley.
I would like to see bids on a temporary road and permanent road alternative over the lake and through the lake. I would rather spend money on a road that will continue to be used, than one that will be torn up in the future. (please print)
The currently proposed route will be dangerous, but particularly so in the winter ice and snow. →

356

**NAME** LTC C.B. Cosgrove

**ADDRESS** Box 314 off Bean Creek Rd.
Helen GA 30545

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** Not as currently shown

**COMMENTS** Time for meeting changed to a time not convenient to working people who live in the area to be present. The signage appears good but will cause confusion as many roads provide shortcuts and may create traffic congestion - I.E. Sky lake rd Bean Creek Rd.
I agreed with the original idea of going thru the lake bed. with a temp bridge across the Creek. this type of by pass has been used by military and civilian communities for years

I support a Temp road thru the lake bed versus the detour route

(please print)

I object to the fact that there was no presentation - I.E. no meeting, no options presented. I would prefer a formalized meeting - not a group of people milling around trying to find out answers to questions Very poorly organized!!

356

**NAME** Andrea R. Cosgrove Live: off Bean Creek Rd

**ADDRESS** P.O Box 314
Helen, Ga 30545-0314

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** Not as proposed on hand out. I support the project as originally

**COMMENTS** designed by vehicles traveling thru dry lake bed. All sizes of vehicles should be able to continue normal travels to motels, cottages, restaurants + homes. Alternating the traffic pattern will have a devasting effect on our local economy which is based on tourism! An economic study should be done before construction continues.

(please print)

356

NAME Kay D. Sums
ADDRESS PO BX 562
Helen GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS What if there's an emergency?? A need for immediate medical care - will ambulance get there to us + in time w/ a detour?

You will hurt tourism + the City of Helen + County of White County will suffer.

(please print)

356

NAME JOHN C ANTHONY
ADDRESS POBox 10
SAUTEE, GA, 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO NO NO.
COMMENTS BUILD A STEEL BRIDGE WITH NECESSARY 10 OR 2 LAND KILL SUPPORTS LIKE GENERAL PATTON WOULD HAVE BUILT IN 1943-4 TO CROSS THE SAME PROBLEM. REDUCE SPEED LIMIT TO 5 MPH & LET ANYTHING ON WHEELS OR TREADS (EXCEPT 40 TON TANKS) CROSS. NO PROBLEM

(please print) JOHN C ANTHONY
POBOX 10
SAUTEE GA 30571
706-878-2940

356

NAME Marion Cantrell
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1357
Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS I Cannot operate my Business if I do Not have a way In and out. Why Not put Road down below dam. Leave it For Future use For park access - This proposal is unfair.

(please print)

356

NAME Rachel Cantrell
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1357
Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS This move would Ruin our Business. Other Counties including Towns & Union are reaping From our monies. I Feel this is a political issue instead of a necessary task. I Think our governor is behind all This For his own Gain

(please print)

356

NAME Tommy Cantrell
ADDRESS Route 1 #
Box 1397
Santee GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Not as Currently Shown
COMMENTS Detour Around would affect to many local Business

(please print)

356

NAME HELEN CANTRELL
ADDRESS ~~Box~~ CHIMNEY TOP RD
SANTEE, GA. 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS I FEEL THE PROPOSED TRAFFIC ROUTE WOULD DAMAGE THE TOURIST BUSINESS ABOVE UNICOI. ALSO, THE PROPOSED ROUTE WOULD BE DANGEROUS WITH ~~HEAVY~~ HEAVY TRAFFIC ON IT - VERY CURVY AND TOO LONG TO BE A DETOUR

(please print)

356

NAME Ronald N. Cantrell

ADDRESS Rt. 1
Sautee, Ga. 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO

COMMENTS This Proposal will have a Serious Adverse effect on the Economy of White County - Loss of Jobs due to Loss of business - Loss of Tax Income - Increased Danger of small Curvy Road. Please consider these Adverse effects on White County.

(please print)

356

NAME Paul Cantrell

ADDRESS P.O. Box 1585
Sautee, Ga.

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO

COMMENTS Would affect to Many local business.

(please print)

356

NAME JOHN SNEAD
ADDRESS RT 2 BOX 2614-A
CLEVELAND GA 30528

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? TO REPLACE THE SPILLWAY AND TAKS KEEP THE LAKE, YES.
COMMENTS EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO MINIMIZE ANY DISRUPTION OF NORMAL TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE HWY 356 AREA. THE SIGNS PROHIBITING LARGE RV'S WILL SEVERELY DAMAGE THE SEVERAL RV CAMPGROUNDS NE OF UNICOI.

(please print)

356

NAME Elizabeth Wells
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1321 Skyland Rd
South Hamilton
GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Not in its present form
COMMENTS The format of the meeting (removing the chairs) was not conducive to creating an atmosphere for open discussion & sharing. Citizens are interested in seeing their ideas considered — and heard — and shared rather than going thru the motions to satisfy your obligation to hold a "informational meeting" — Now that said, please use the creative resources shared here plus those " " on your staff. to solve this problem for maintaining

(please print)

356

NAME Bette Spears
ADDRESS Skylake, Rt. 1, Box 1104
Sautee, GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? With modifications
COMMENTS White County, Helen, Tanglewood & other businesses, as well as Unicoi State Park will suffer unless a road above or below the dam is constructed. A road could be constructed below, which I would suggest, with DOT constructing that part which is outside of Unicoi Park and DNR constructing that part inside their jurisdiction. This road would not interfere (please print) with construction of the dam.

356

NAME Jack F. Spears
ADDRESS Skylake Rt 1, Bx 1104
Sautee, Ga. 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? (Yes) with changes
COMMENTS I believe White Co, Helen and Business' such as Tanglewood Rest, Unicoi Park & others will suffer greatly unless a road belowe or above the dam is constructed. I would suggest the road below with DOT taking that outside of Unicoi Park & DNR building inside their jurisdiction. This road would not interfere with Dam construction

(please print)

356

NAME A M TRENCH
ADDRESS P.O. Bx 327 Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? There is no choice (can not Let Lake dry)
COMMENTS coordinate all revenue from all agencies.
Build an additional Bridge - it will serve now and the future.

call another official meeting.

(please print)

356

NAME Caryl Trench
ADDRESS PO Box 327
Sautee GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? If done the right way
COMMENTS There are lots of choices which should have been looked out long ago. MONEY (the Departments' etc.) IS Not The ISSUE. You have limits on your funds - what about private individuals & businesses? They should bear the brunt of this mess. You are paid to do it right - so do what the people that live & work here want.

(please print)

Also - the psychology behind the set-up of this meeting & way it was conducted IS AN ISSUE!

356

NAME James A. London
ADDRESS Rt. #1 Box 1362
Cornelia GA. 30531

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Yes
COMMENTS But The Detour Road Should be Built Accross The Preset Lake bed I Am An. Owner at Unicoi Springs Camp Resort. And We have Approx. 2500 Owner And They can't Drive on Long Detour.

(please print)

356

NAME Sam A. Wells
ADDRESS RT 1 Box 1320
Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?
COMMENTS People need to get together an Lear Rd Plans made by Professional employees or to the Proper Needs at hand.
Landscape Was designed by nature and We need to make the best Solution to the Problem. People in authority have the responsibility to make the proper decisions. Highways are Needed More and more each day, years an Century

(please print)

356

NAME KEN JOHNSON
ADDRESS P.O. BOX 712
HELEN, GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? YES?
COMMENTS LEAVE DAM AS IS UNTIL STATE CAN APPROPRIATE THE MONEY TO DO IT RIGHT IE; MAKE STRAIGHT ROAD INTO LAKE BED. NO DETOUR.

(please print)

356

NAME Harold Blalock
ADDRESS Highway #356 P.O. Box 454
Helen, Ga.

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Yes
COMMENTS Get on the dam.

(please print)

356

NAME JOHN ZIEMER
ADDRESS P.O. Box 13
SAUTEE GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS WOULD ARMY ENGINEERED BAILEY BRIDGES FROM FORMER CAMPER REGISTRATION TO CAMPER BEACH AREA? HOW ABOUT ROAD BELOW THE DAM. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THIS DETOUR ON 356 BUSINESS? WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR INCREASED USE OF BEAN CREEK ROAD & SKYLAKE ROAD THAT THIS DETOUR PLAN WILL FOSTER... THERE MAINTENANCE WILL BE INCREASED DO TO MORE EXTENSIVE USE. (please print)

356

NAME Deborah S. Brooks
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 619
Helen Ga. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? The detour -> NO
COMMENTS Hurt TOO MANY LOCAL BUSINESSES WHO depend ON DRIVE-BYE BUSINESS. THE detour will divert TOO MUCH ~~TAFF~~ TRAFFIC ONTO ROADS THAT AREN'T BUILT TO HOLD THAT KIND OF TRAFFIC.

(please print)

NAME Bill Price
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1150
Sautee, Ga. 30571
878-2010

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? HAIL NO.

COMMENTS I own Tanglewood Rest. I've been in Business 4yrs - Sales Tax Alone has been 102,273 - I've got some kind of a opinion -
My opinion is Build a temp. road through the Lake Bed -
the State won't lose Anything -
The project the ~~State~~ (please print) purposes about the road around the lake -
there will be Accidents and Deaths = Suits (Law)

NAME Linda Price - DBA Tanglewood Restaurant
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1150
Sautee, GA 30571
706-878-2010, 878-1044

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO!!

COMMENTS If you route the traffic around the lake or around to 197 to 356 you will as well Bankrupt us! Now instead of waiting Two Years. We have been in business in the Helen Area for over 13 years and I do know the Tourist Habits. I know they will not detour on a ~~Road~~ curvy road at night to get to our Restaurant. They will turn around and go back to Helen. (please print) Why not take the money you going to spend on the road over the damn and use it to build a permanent Bridge over the lake -

356

NAME Gaylon Lusk / Timberloft Cottages
ADDRESS P.O. Box 1341
Helen, GA. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO !!!
COMMENTS If this Road is Closed it will Absolutely Kill our Business. There is No Way the tourist will Travel these extra miles on this proposed detour.
Why not use old Road below Dam. The cost to get this Road useable would not be that great Amount and the Road could be used for future.

(please print)

356

NAME Cecil Lusk / Timberloft Cottages
ADDRESS P.O. Box 405
Helen, GA. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? No !!
COMMENTS if This Road is Closed & detour 17, 255 I Feel it would Ruin My business At Timberloft Cottages. As we Depend on Tourist & I Don't Think They would go This Distance. I Think A Detour Could be Put below Dam on original Road & would not have to be Removed & be of use To Park in Future

(please print)

356

NAME Cherokee Campground - Edward DiGiorgio, Owner
ADDRESS S.R. 356 + Bethel Church Rd.
Mile Marker 5
Sautee GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NC — NC — NC as proposed

COMMENTS The State is only concerned of it's own welfare. Keep everyone considered or worthy to use the park happy with the proposed access road. Let all the surrounding businesses along S.R. 356 have fair consideration. Our business can not survive with the proposed plan. We will be deprived of off the road business because vehicles will not be passing by as usual.
KEEP THE ROAD OPEN AS A THRU WAY.

(please print)

356

NAME Georgia Mountain Madness Pamela Rogus
ADDRESS PO Box 308
Helen GA 30545
1 mile past Unicoi State Park

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?

COMMENTS A large part of our business comes from "drive-by" traffic. The proposed detour will kill my business. A temporary road thru the lake as originally proposed is the best idea.
If Unicoi Lodge + Park are listed on the detour signs, so should the other businesses. We pay taxes, too.
Why not seek other than Federal funding.

(please print)

Thanks,

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer
Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057
October 7, 1993

Sample Reply

Thomas E. & Sara E. Davidson
P. O. Box 107
Helen, GA 30545

Dear Sir & Madam:

Thank you for taking time to attend the September 30, 1993 information meeting at Unicoi Lodge regarding the repair of Unicoi Dam.

Several alternates were suggested for our consideration in lieu of the proposed 2½ mile detour along Campground and Anna Ruby Falls Roads (P109, P108 & P208).

Alternate 1: Construct a new permanent bridge structure spanning Unicoi Lake upstream and parallel to the existing dam. SR 356 would be rerouted onto the new structure and present and future repairs could be made to the dam without interrupting traffic on SR 356. This would result in adding considerable cost as elevated reinforced concrete structures are very expensive.

Alternate 2: Construct a new dam approximately 200 ft. upstream which would meet Safe Dam Act specifications and not interfere with SR 356 traffic.

Assuming geological conditions are favorable at this location and an engineering design possible that would transmit flood stage volumes past both structures Alternate 2 would add considerably to the project cost and result in about 15% loss of lake area.

Alternate 3: Upgrade old roadbed south of Unicoi Lake from park headquarters to east of Unicoi Lodge with bridge culvert at Smith Creek.

There would be substantial construction cost associated with this alternate and some right of way acquisition would be necessary. It is not possible to estimate associated right-of-way cost without engineering design and appraisal. Wetlands would also be disturbed and federal law dictates that reasonable and prudent alternatives be explored before disturbing wetlands. Right-of-way necessary to construct this roadway would require significant park land also.

Alternate 4: Install Bailey Bridge. Bailey Bridges were developed to get vehicles over wide gaps in short periods of time. Long spans become increasingly uneconomical because of excessive dead weight and oftentimes are restricted to one vehicle at a time on the single lane bridge. Depending on actual design, potential load restrictions would probably negatively affect more vehicles than the proposed 2½ mile detour. Since Smith Creek can adequately be conveyed in this area by a culvert a temporary bailey bridge appears unnecessary and too restrictive. We have no historical data on which to base the cost of Alternate 4.

Alternate 5: Construct detour through lake bed.

As related at the September 30 informational meeting this design was twice offered for bid. The first letting resulted in seven bids the lowest of which was higher in cost than we believe the prescribed work should cost based on prudent estimating. The second letting attracted only one bidder and that firm's proposal increased substantially over the previous low bid.

We believe good judgment mandates avoiding unnecessary expense of taxpayer money. We believe all these alternates have unnecessary expense and therefore explored reasonable substitutes. From cost and operational perspectives the proposed 2½ mile detour appears reasonable. It provides unrestricted access for a large majority of SR 356 motorist with little increase in travel time. It also addresses the need for emergency and school bus access. After the contracting industry gets a look at the redefined work we will know the cost advantage of detouring north of Unicoi Lake instead of through it.

An apparent misconception is that our proposal detours traffic along Bean Creek and Sky Lake Roads. The handout indicates detours would follow SR 17, SR 255, SR 255 Alt. & SR 197.

Your comments have been made a part of the detour report and will be considered by management of both DOT and DNR in reaching a decision on this matter.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

# Attachment 4

# Letters and Replies

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Paul M. & Judy O. Swafford
2725 Titon Way
Lawrenceville, GA 30244

Dear Sir & Madam:

Thanks for your letter regarding the repair of Unicoi Dam.

I believe the handout (enclosed) that was given to attendees of our September 30, 1993 Information Meeting will clear up some of the misinformation you have about proposed signing. The proposed signing does not indicate local traffic. Trucks and large recreational vehicles are the only types of traffic we are attempting to restrict.

Your suggestions of building a temporary road and separating the bridge from the spillway have been considered and both add substantial cost to the project. We have considered other suggestions as well and found neither economically feasible.

The proposed 2½ mile detour provides unrestricted access to the larger share of SR 356 traffic. It also addresses the need for emergency and school bus access. Hopefully it will aalso provide a considerable cost advantage when potential contractors offer bids in November.

Your comments have been made part of the detour report and will be considered by DOT & DNR management.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm
Enclosure

Oct. 11, 1993

Department of Transportation
Office of District Engineer
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, GA 30503-1057

Attention: Leland Owens

Dear Mr. Owens:

We have been informed of the temporary closure of State Route 356 for the reconstruction of the spillway on Unicoi Dam. We understand the need for its replacement. We are, however, very disturbed over the re-routing of traffic in this area.

As residents of Georgia for over 20 years and owners of four cabins in the Tanglewood Resort off of Highway 356, we are concerned that the current proposed plans will severely impact rental income from visitors to the Helen area. The number one employer and source of local and state funds in this area is tourism. The route proposed does not consider the need for clear and specific directions for travelers. The lost revenue due to tourists avoiding the area or losing their way will have a great impact on the community. As your letter states, you want to "better serve the needs of (our) community". We are a vital part of the greater Helen community.

Please consider the following:

1. Sign should state "Temporary Alternate Route To Hwy. 356" not just "local traffic".
2. Build a temporary road on the other side of the bridge.
3. Separate the spillway from the bridge; build a new permanent road through the lake bed.

We know you will weigh all alternatives to this situation. This construction impacts the entire area, its residents, and its tourists. Please contemplate alternatives that address the tourist trade and finacial impact on the local community . We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Swafford

Judy O. Swafford

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Mr. John C. Soeder, Jr.
11717 SW 110 Terr
Miami, FL 33186

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your comments regarding the joint DNR/DOT project to repair Unicoi Dam.

I have enclosed proposed advisory signing for approaches to the area, and as you suggested specific SR 356 detour signing is to be placed at the project site.

Within reason, we desire to accommodate the wishes of those most affected by the project but also have an obligation to be prudent managers of taxpayer dollars.

Your comments will be considered by management and made part of our detour report. Again thank you for taking time to write.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm
Enclosure

Hwy 356

NAME JOHN C SOEDER JR

ADDRESS 11717 SW 110 TERR
MIAMI, FL 33186

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? YES

COMMENTS I am a property owner of a cabin at Tanglewood resort Cabins, at #356 Helen Georgia. I suggest that temporary signs be put up showing Rt #356. or a temporary road be put in bypassing the bridge & spillway. Tourism is a large part of the peoples livelyhood in this area and all means should be taken to make sure it remains so. A positive effort should be made

(please print)

to insure the businesses in this area that the tourists will be given every advantage in finding the places they are looking for on Rt #356. In closing I would like to point out that if proper access is not provided the it could result in loss of income & jobs which could seriously affect white county.

Sincerely

Mr John C Soeder Jr

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Mimi and Gene Perry
1077 S. E. 170 Court
Silver Springs, FL 34488

Dear Sir & Madam:

Thanks for your letter regarding the repair of Unicoi Dam.

Since you evidently have misinformation regarding the project I have enclosed the handout given to attendees of our September 30, 1993 Informational Meeting.

Our proposal is not to close SR 356, but to detour SR 356 along Anna Ruby Falls and Campground Roads. It would not be necessary for you to give directions to your cabin any differently than at present, because once the motorist reaches the project area detrou signing would direct along the detour and SR 356. The proposed detour provides unrestricted access to the larger share of SR 356 users.

Your comments have been made a part of the detour report and will be considered by DOT & DNR management.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

Enclosure

October 7, 1993

Dear Mr. Owens,

We are the owners of a cabin located at Tanglewood, two miles past the Unico spillway and bridge on State Route 356.

We are very concerned about the closure of the road for almost a two year period. Since this is the access road from Helen to the cabin site the loss of income would directly affect us. We are a retired couple and look to this source of income. Such a lengthy time frame would surely affect business. The proposed routes are more than just an inconvenience. The new route is almost impossible to be given as instruction by telephone to people calling for reservations. In addition, it would completely destroy any drive-by trade.

We urge you to reconsider and take steps to provide a road to the business we have worked hard to build over the years.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Gene Perry

Mimi Perry

Mimi and Gene Perry
1077 S E 170 Court
Silver Springs, Fl. 34488
(904) 625-7745

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Elvin M. Pearson
P. O. Box 1264
Helen, GA 30545

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your letter expressing your plans to construct a home, cabin and restaurant north of Unicoi Dam.

Several alternates were suggested for our consideration in lieu of the proposed 2½ mile detour along Campground and Anna Ruby Falls Roads (P109, P108 & P208).

Alternate 1: Construct a new permanent bridge structure spanning Unicoi Lake upstream and parallel to the existing dam. SR 356 would be rerouted onto the new structure and present and future repairs could be made to the dam without interrupting traffic on SR 356. This would result in adding considerable cost as elevated reinforced concrete structures are very expensive.

Alternate 2: Construct a new dam approximately 200 ft. upstream which would meet Safe Dam Act specifications and not interfere with SR 356 traffic.

Assuming geological conditions are favorable at this location and an engineering design possible that would transmit flood stage volumes past both structures Alternate 2 would add considerably to the project cost and result in about 15% loss of lake area.

Alternate 3: Upgrade old roadbed south of Unicoi Lake from park headquarters to east of Unicoi Lodge with bridge culvert at Smith Creek.

There would be substantial construction cost associated with this alternate and some right of way acquisition would be necessary. It is not possible to estimate associated right-of-way cost without engineering design and appraisal.

Wetlands would also be disturbed and federal law dictates that reasonable and prudent alternatives be explored before disturbing wetlands. Right-of-way necessary to construct this roadway would require significant park land also.

Alternate No. 4: Install Bailey Bridge. Bailey Bridges were developed to get vehicles over wide gaps in short periods of time. Long spans become increasingly uneconomical because of excessive dead weight and oftentimes are restricted to one vehicle at a time on the single lane bridge. Depending on actual design, potential load restrictions would probably negatively affect more vehicles than the proposed 2½ mile detour. Since Smith Creek can adequately be conveyed in this area by a culvert a temporary bailey bridge appears unnecessary and too restrictive. We have no historical data on which to base the cost of Alternate 4.

Alternate 5: Construct detour through lake bed.

As related at the September 30 informational meeting this design was twice offered for bid. The first letting resulted in seven bids the lowest of which was higher in cost than we believe the prescribed work should cost based on prudent estimating. The second letting attracted only one bidder and that firm's proposal increased substantially over the previous low bid.

We believe good judgment mandates avoiding unnecessary expense of taxpayer money. We believe all these alternates have unnecessary expense and therefore explored reasonable substitutes. From cost and operational perspectives the proposed 2½ mile detour appears reasonable. It provides unrestricted access for a large majority of SR 356 motorist with little increase in travel time. It also addresses the need for emergency and school bus access. After the contracting industry gets a look at the redefined work we will know the cost advantage of detouring north of Unicoi Lake instead of through it.

An apparent misconception is that our proposal detours traffic along Bean Creek and Sky Lake Roads. The handout indicates detours would follow SR 17, SR 255, SR 255 Alt. & SR 197.

Your comments have been made a part of the detour report and will be considered by management of both DOT and DNR in reaching a decision on this matter.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

Oct. 5, 1993
Helen, Ga.

Re: Project S.T.P 1777(4)

Dear Mr. Owens,

I am writing to you as a Concerned property owner. I am planning on building North of the State Park, both a Cabin and a Restaurant and possibly a home.

There is no way that I would do this and invest in anything unless a road will be built next to the existing road.

The potential of losing revenue from taxes from that area will be tremendous.

Hope you will re-consider your decision. Thanking you,

Sincerely,
Elvin M. Pearson

Brooklet, Ga.
P.O. Box 433
Oct. 13, 1993

Mr. Leland Owens
P.O. Box 1057
Gainsville, Ga

I am enclosing a form letter with some comments about bridge and dam construction on Smith creek.

My wife and I are landowners and are interested in the development

Sincerely
Leonard McElveen

Hwy 356

NAME Mr and Mrs Lenwood McElveen

ADDRESS P. O. Box 433
Brooklet, Ga

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Yes

COMMENTS We are land owners near the bridge to be repaired and rebuilt

Bridge and road should be built separate from the dam.
If dam develops a problem bridge and road would not interfer with the work

(please print)

A temporary road through the lake bed would be good.

Place adequate signs to direct traffic, - if this is not done tourism will be drastically hurt. Lost jobs from lack of tourism will hurt White County

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

404-532-5526 Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 18, 1993

Raymond Packard
4411 SE 107 Lane
Belleview, FL 34420

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your comments regarding the joint DNR/DOT project to repair Unicoi Dam.

Within reason, we desire to accommodate the wishes of those most affected by the project but also have an obligation to be prudent managers of taxpayer dollars.

Your comments will be considered by management and made part of our detour report. Again thank you for taking time to write.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

HWY 356

NAME RAYMOND PACKARD

ADDRESS 4411 SE 107 LANE
BELLEVIEW, FL. 34420

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE AREA TO MAINTAIN UNICOI LAKE.

COMMENTS VERY LITTLE INCONVENIENCE TO UNICOI AND THE BUSINESSES & RESIDENCE ON 356 WOULD RESULT IN A TEMPERARY ROAD COULD BE BUILT THRU THE LAKE BED.

THE PROPOSED ALTERNATE ROUTE IN BACK OF UNICOI COULD CAUSE A LOT OF CONFUSION TO THE TOURIST AND EVEN

(please print)

DISCOURAGE MANY FROM VISITING THIS AREA. THIS WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF A LOT OF REVENUE TO WHITE CO. AND A LOSS OF MANY JOBS TO THE LOCAL RESIDENCE.

Raymond Packard
Owner of Cabin #15
Tanglewood Resort Cabin

President of PREP INC.
a GEORGIA CORP.
HOLDING CABINS & PROPER
AT TANGLEWOOD RESORT
CABINS.

1214 Vista Trail N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30324
September 23, 1993

Mr. Laland Owens
Georgia Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, GA 30503

RE: Unicoi State Park Bridge Replacement
Project #STP-1777(4)

Dear Mr. Owens:

As a property owner on Chimney Mountain Road in White County, I depend on Georgia State Highway 356 for access between my property and the city of Helen. The closing of this road for repair of the dam on Smith Creek/ Unicoi Lake will have an adverse impact on me as well as on many other property owners and businesses in the area. This impact can be greatly reduced if a convenient and reasonable detour is provided near the site of the present dam.

The original construction plans for the new dam included a convenient detour through the now dry lake bed. I understand that this detour may no longer be considered a financially feasible plan for both the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Unicoi State Park) and the Georgia Department of Transportation. Other reasonably convenient alternatives must be considered for the residents, businesses, and the many tourists who use this road. Let us remember that tourism is the "lifeblood" of our area. Tourists especially will not be familiar with the proposed inconvenient detour which takes them a great distance out of the way into the Sautee Valley via Georgia Highways 17 and 255.

Negotiating traffic through Helen can be a nightmare, especially during peak seasons, weekends, and holidays. The proposed inconvenient detour will have a negative impact upon the State of Georgia itself with decreased revenue and visitation for Unicoi State Park. Businesses which depend on tourist access via Georgia Highway 356 will also suffer losses.

Unicoi Lake is a beautiful and valuable asset of the state park and the entire area when the lake is usable. The dam for the lake should be rebuilt as soon as possible. Indeed, this entire project has taken much too long so far. I don't want to call the project a "fiasco" yet, but I may before it is finished! However, the reasonable transportation needs of everyone using

Georgia Highway 356 must not be overlooked. The inconvenience to local residents and the loss of valuable mountain tourist revenues must be taken into consideration when choosing a convenient detour of the highway as near as possible to its present route.

I urge you to detour Georgia 356 for as short a time as is possible and in as close proximity to Unicoi State Park as is feasible for all parties concerned. Thank you for your continued diligent consideration of this matter for all of us who depend on this important road. Since I will not be able to attend the public information meeting in Unicoi Lodge September 30th, please make sure that my views are presented during the meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Steve

Stephen B. Routt

P.S. I look forward with great anticipation to getting Unicoi Lake back for everyone to enjoy once again!

cc: Mr. David Freeman
Mr. Don Hoch

Hwy 356

Do Not Support Project
Bob, Sara, Robyn Revell

SEPTEMBER 29, 1993

TO: DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

WE FEEL THE CLOSING OF STATE ROAD 356, AND REROUTING THE TRAFFIC TO SMITH CREEK ROAD AND CAMPGROUND ROAD WOULD HAVE DAMAGING AFFECTS TO THE BUSINESSES ON THIS STATE ROAD.

TANGLEWOOD CABINS COLLECTED OVER $31,000 IN 1992 FOR GEORGIA SALES TAX, ALSO WE COLLECTED APPROX. $24,000 IN 1991, AND COLLECTED THUS FAR IN 1993 $20,000. WE REPRESENT 37 LAND OWNERS IN WHITE COUNTY. WE HAVE 40 RENTAL CABINS THAT BRINGS IN UNLIMITED REVENUE TO THE STATE OF GEORGIA.

WE FEEL THAT THE STATE OF GEORGIA HAS BENEFITTED FROM THESE TAXES. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THE BIDS WERE FOR THE ROAD THAT WAS PLANNED THROUGH THE LAKE BED, AND WHAT WAS THE AMOUNT ALLOTTED FOR THE TEMPORARY ROAD. WOULD THE DIFFERENCE IN AMOUNTS BE MORE OR LESS THEN THE REVENUES LOST IN SALES TAX SHOULD 6 CABIN RENTAL BUSINESSES, A RESTAURANT, AND 2 CAMPGROUNDS WOULD TO GO UNDER AS A RESULT OF THE STATE WANTING TO "SAVE A FEW DOLLARS"? ANY RESULT OF LOST OF INCOME FROM THE BUSINESSES ON STATE ROAD 356 WOULD ALSO MEAN UNEMPLOYMENT FOR SEVERAL TAX PAYERS IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA. COULD GEORGIA AFFORD TO PAY UMEMPLOYMENT FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS. LOST OF INCOME WOULD ALSO RESULT IN THESE SAME INDIVIDUALS CUTTING BACK IN SPENDING FOR GASOLINE (TAX IN GA.), FOOD, HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, ETC. COULD THE STATE OF GEORGIA AFFORD TO LOSE ADDITIONAL INCOME FROM RESTAURANTS IN THE HELEN AREA, AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS THAT WOULD NOT HAVE THE GUESTS FROM THESE RESORTS BUYING AND SPENDING?

WE ARE ASKING ALL INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN MAKING THE DECISION TO RECONSIDER THE ROAD ROUTE, AND PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE THE BRIDGE/ROADWAY ON STATE ROAD 356.

SINCERELY,
Robyn Revell

BOB, SARA, ROBYN REVELL
TANGLEWOOD RESORT CABINS
706-878-3294

Robyn Revell
P.O. Box 394
Helen, GA 30545
706-878-3294
Resident on Hwy 356

Tanglewood Cabins
P.O. Box 435
Helen, GA 30545
Business on Hwy 356

# Attachment 5

# Transcript of Oral Comments

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re: )
)
PROJECT STP-1777, Unit 4 )
State Route 56 over Smith )
Creek - Unicoi Lake )

Public Hearing, held pursuant to Notice, commencing at 4:00 o'clock, p.m., Thursday, September 30, 1993, Unicoi State Park, Helen, Georgia, reported by Howard E. Worley, Certified Court Reporter.

- - - - -

Worley & Associates Inc.

STENOGRAPH AND VIDEO REPORTERS

559 FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

DECATUR, GEORGIA 30030

(404) 378-6239

MR. CANTRELL: I am Ron Cantrell, former tourist related business owner from east of here on 356. I am very active in the Chamber of Commerce and all other civic organizations.

I feel that on one side of the ballot you have the cost of the road through the bottom of the lake, whatever that cost may be. I think that must be balanced with the loss of property values here above the area, the change in the development of the county, the loss of sales tax dollars. More importantly, the loss of jobs through adverse effects of this proposed route on businesses that are above here. And then also they need to consider the danger involved in the small curvy road going around that lake.

I am a life long area resident of this area and feel that tourism is our number one industry in White County. The adverse effect of this proposed bypass or proposed detour far outweighs the cost of putting a road through the bottom of the lake as was originally planned.

White County is already at a disadvantage from every other county in Georgia in the way QBEIS are funded. We are considered a rich county by property values, although our percapita income does not qualify us as a rich county. Therefore we pay

FORM 745 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

more than our fair share of education because of the QBE formula.

In addition to that, a large percentage of our property is forrestry lands, of which we get very little advalorum taxes.

With these things in mind, please consider the adverse economic impact on White County as a whole and the businesses north of Unicoi in specific before making this decision.

MR. DEGIORGIN: (1) My name is Ed DeGiorgin. I am owner of Cherokee Campgrounds on State Route 356 and Bethel Road at mile marker 5. I am a part-owner in the campgrounds. And we just opened up this year. And we have got a considerable amount of personal money invested in the campgrounds.

And I would say that probably a good fifty percent of our current business or whatever we are doing is drive-by business, is people who see our signs just outside the campgrounds.

It seems to me from what I have been hearing at the so-called meeting, because I protest the form it is taking to start out with -- they have got everybody standing up, they are not affording comfortable seating to them -- they talk about not having any money in the budget. They don't tell us

FORM 740 PENGAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

how much money it is going to be to build the road here or build the dam here or the different alternatives. They just say everything is over budget. But they don't give us any facts and figures.

From what I understand from one statement one person made here at this meeting, the access road is actually going to really serve the benefit of the Unicoi State Park. Light vehicles can travel this round about road they are going to build. But it is primarily in the interest of Unicoi State Park facilities. Therefore, all other vehicles, specifically motor homes and trailers and heavy duty vehicles have to go and access their way through on State Road 255, which is over fifteen miles around the mountain, only to dead end and then return back that same way because they can't get through on State Road 356.

And people, as they become aware of this, as visitors and tourists in the area, are not going to go through this inconvenience. They are not going to come back and keep doing it again, and keep on driving around the mountain, and half of the time they are coming up for the weekend for enjoyment.

So I would like to see some actual figures. And I would like to see different proposed

FORM 740 PENDAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

routes, and I definitely -- whichever way they do it, the road that is going to join back to 356 to service all traffic and be ultimately a through road from State Road 75 to 17 to 55. And our business will not be able to survive under the proposed plan because we will not have that drive-by traffic.

And our business, we collect State taxes for overnight stays and it is the budget and proposed itinary the State wants to do and therefore if we are helping to contribute more sales taxes then we should be strongly considered, and all of the businesses alike along State Route 356 that will be affected by this.

To appease DOT, finish the road so that we will not all be put out of business because of lack of traffic.

Thank you.

MR. ASH: (3) I want to, first of all, commend and thank DOT and Department of Human Resources for holding a public meeting that we could all come together and voice our feelings pro and con for this deal.

I, first of all, want to say that the City of Helen and Unicoi State Park has had a brother - sister relationship for the past twenty years, that we do not want to do anything whatsoever to disturb

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

that by our feelings towards this road. We support the staff, the employees and DNR and everything they are doing in this park. Without it Helen would not be where it is today.

However, over the last twenty years, Helen has thrived and become a profit center for the State of Georgia. Through our work with everyone in White County, we feel like we are making a significant contribution to the State treasury each year through the three percent sales tax, because we have worked very hard to develop a tourist related business.

I realize along with the tourism related business comes additional costs which the State must bear such as roads coming and leaving Helen. Still, however, I feel like we have paid sufficient funds to cover these costs, and these new improved roads have been used by people in a non-tourist related capacity. Please consider in your analysis that if we were to have a ten percent sales in this county, it would far exceed the cost of the temporary road through the lake bottom.

Secondly, I am very concerned that a two year change in the traffic patern through Nachoochee Valley can never be put back like they are. People do not mind inconveniences such as temporary roads.

FORM 740 PENGAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

In fact, it is kind of exciting to show that a few things are being done to our Park System.

We urge you to please consider the loss of property values, the loss of cash f low, which many of these people will have to suffer toward their debt service. And this temporary blockage, I feel, is blocking off one of the best ereas White County has to offer, the tourists, in the next ten years.

Thank you for your attention towards these remarks. I will be at your disposal in any way I possibly can to both DOT and DNR.

MR. ZIEMER: John Ziemer, P. O. Box 13, Sautee 30571. (1)

Do I support the project? No. I would like to see the use of Bailey bridges either below the dam or above the dam, perhaps going from existing registration area of the camping, up to the camping, should allow enough room during the construction of the dam.

I am also concerned about the impact on two county roads that this plan don't take into consideration, those being Bean Creek Road, Sky Lake Road. They are alternative routes to come up to Unicoi. They are not State roads.

And perhaps there is even another

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

alternative: not even rebuilding the dam, building a series of smaller dams and campgrounds down in the lake bed. That is it.

MR. CARROLL: Bill Carroll, Route 1, Box 1392, Sautee. (5)

I just want to kind of throw my hat in with the rest of them. I just don't think the plan they have in front of us now is a very good one because of all of the local people that are going to be hurt.

I am a builder and developer. I know there are other routes up here. But the day to day business type thing, the restaurants, the cabins and that sort of thing are really what is going to be devestated, that is going to destroy everybody's traffic values. The businesses, things changing, the traffic for two years, I am sure they will have their normal over-runs if they are typical.

Like I said, I just want to voice my opinion, it needs some further research. And it seems like one logical solution is a road through the bed of the lake for a while and spread the cost to the whole State and it won't have adverse effect on White County. And tell them to remember that Unicoi is Number 2 tourist attraction in Georgia, second only to Stone Mountain.

FORM 141 PENGAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

Thank you.

MR. HELAN: Fred Vermont Helan, P. O. Box 280, Helen, Georgia.

And I am Fire Marshal for the City of Helen and Chief also for White County Fire Department. I feel like that the DOT should look at the option of building a permanent bridge just in front of the dam in order to provide a permanent road and access with a DOT right of way separate from the bridge itself. This comes with regard to problems the dam has experienced in the past and is experiencing now. It would be a permanent fixture as far as the DOT roadway is concerned, and the dam to be constructed as to support a detour route when the bridge needed repairs.

We realize that the cost would be more but this would be a permanent fix and would take into account not having to put a temporary road bed in and leave the road standing along in the roadway and would be better in the long run for DOT and DNR. I would like to be in non-support of your project. I would like to say that the route they have taken for fire trucks, the route is very unacceptable and we would have to change our response routes.

FORM 740 PENDAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

MR. CANTRELL: James M. Cantrell.

I would like to make this statement as to why the people doing the designing and letting the bids, why can't they let this dam and this road in two bids. I am a contractor. I build roads. I wouldn't bid on the dam. I would bid on the road. I don't understand why they have to put it in one contract and try to get dam builders to build a road. If they put it in two contracts and let the road on one and let the road go through the bottom of the lake and let th dam go through another contract, I don't think they wihl have any problem with it. The road is merely a few drops in the bucket in money compared to the money they are going to spend on the dam. They are going to do the dam any way. Why can't they let the road in a separate bid? I think they ought to look into that.

I think the plan is unfair to the residents and businesses on 356. I am a partner in the J. C. Campgrounds also. And their proposal, if it is done that way, that would eliminate us completely, and we are only one of about twenty to twenty-five small businesses over that way.

People have mortgages on these businesses. They have to pay. And how they expect them to pay

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

that when they are also paying taxes that the State is going to receive off of this, also that they are going to lose while this work is going on, if they closed the road. It is just not fair to the people, to none of the community. And I appreciate your time.

I think they should have another meeting, have a public address system, have seats for the people and take the questions from the floor, and a little bit more organized than they have in this meeting. Also that we should have somebody present that could answer questions and not say, "I don't know."

They should have had a better display, a bigger one and more available. One small display is not enough for a meeting the size of this one.

They should have more information and should be displayed better and be able to answer the questions of the people asked from the floor. Is it possible that there is politics got into the planning of this?

MS. PRICE: I am Linda Price, Route 1, Box 1150, Sautee, Georgia.

My concern is that my husband and I own a half million dollar business on 356 1.7 miles past Unicoi. If you redirect traffic around the lake bed or around to 197 and back up 356, it will bypass our

FORM 740 PENGAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

restaurant, and we have a major chance of going under. If you redirect the traffic to here, you have a big chance of the people not coming back to our restaurant. I don't understand why they can't build a bridge beside the dam to stay there permanently and use that as a passageway over the bed. If they are going to put it into a permanent bridge beside the dam, then they won't have to disturb all of the businesses along 356.

I think that the State has not considered the possibility that the State may lose a million dollars by taking -- putting a permanent bridge over the lake, but they are not considering all of the bridges northward on 356.

When I talked to this man over here, he said he had no idea the revenue that we take in on the businesses, the camp grounds, the restaurants on the other side of Unicoi Lake. My husband and I, we have had our accounts figured out, and we have paid right at $74,000 in sales tax to the State in the last three years alone. Tanglewood Cabins, which is right next-door, we figured them out. They have paid $75,000 in sales tax to the State of Georgia in the last two years.

If you kill our businesses out there, you

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

might as well bankrupt us as well. I will lose my home. You might as well go ahead and have them all go under. And the State can lose that much revenue. That is counting two businesses. That is not counting five camp grounds down from us, plus the property taxes we pay.

As they were saying, White County depends on the revenue mostly from the Helen area and State Park area. And got bonds just to build a new high school. We are going to start on it in a few months. If they take and kill all of the revenue from White County out in this area, who is going to pay for this new school. Not the property taxes, property owners out there. I think our main concern, the State is so concerned about saving a little bit of money by going all up around the lake, stopping all of the bus traffic and camper traffic and everything when they are not considering five million dollars worth of businesses they are going to kill.

(Public statements concluded.)

FORM 740 PENGAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

CERTIFICATE

G E O R G I A )
)
DEKALB COUNTY )

The within and foregoing Public Hearing was reported by the undersigned as stated in the caption, and the questions and answers were reduced to writing by the undersigned.

I further certify the within and foregoing pages 1 through 13 constitutes a true, correct and complete transcript of the public statements made at said time and place.

I further certify I am neither of kin nor counsel to any of the parties, nor in any way interested in the outcome of said case.

This 14th day of October, 1993.

Howard E. Worley, Notary Public, Certified Court Reporter, Class A, Certificate A2

FORM 740 PENSAD INC. BAYONNE, NJ 07002

D.O.T. 66

# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
# STATE OF GEORGIA

Carolyn - route for approval.

INTERDEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENCE

RECEIVED
OCT 20 1993
PRECONSTRUCTION

FILE STP 1777 (4) White
P.I. 132260

OFFICE Gainesville

DATE October 18, 1993

FROM Hugh L. Tyner, P.E., District Engineer

TO Wayne Hutto, Assistant Director of Preconstruction

FILE-REPLACE WITH SIGNED COPY

SUBJECT Detour Report

Attached is the above subject document for your review in accordance with May 7, 1990 procedures.

Detour approval will be advertised upon approval of this document.

HLT:jm

C: Charles Lewis
David Freedman

# DETOUR REPORT

PROJECT: STP 1777 (4) White County

PI: 132260

MEETING DATE: September 30, 1993

## DATE OF REPORT

October 18, 1993

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Detour Report

Attachment 1 - Handout

Attachment 2 - Written response from local officials

Attachment 3 - Written comments and sample reply

Attachment 4 - Letter and replies

Attachment 5 - Transcript of oral comments

Detour Report

Project STP 1777 (4) White County

P. I. 132260

Location - SR 356 over Smith Creek @ Unicoi Dam

Description:

A public meeting was held on September 30, 1993 at Unicoi Lodge between the hours of 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm. The attached handout (Attachment 1) was given to each attendee showing the proposed 2½ mile detour along Anna Ruby Falls and Campground Roads for vehicles other than thru trucks and oversized recreational vehicles. Also included in the handout was proposed advisory signing to assist the trucks and recreational vehicles in selecting SR 17, SR 255 & SR 197 as an alternate. A large scale display was also presented as the focal point for discussion. Project plans are available for review, as well as, the Department of Natural Resources' documentation of project need.

Historical information was presented orally regarding DOT/DNR attempts to attract reasonable bids with an on site detour as per project concept. The original concept provided an on site detour parallel to and about 75 ft. upstream of the in place structure. The detour would have been approximately 1200 feet in length with a design speed of 35 mph through the lake bed. This detour concept is considered not cost effective and the 2½ mile off-site detour was presented at the meeting.

The project renovates the Unicoi State Park Dam in accordance with the Safe Dam Act. Roadway and bridge work are incidental to dam renovation since SR 356 traverses the dam and bridges the existing spillway. Dan McGill & Associates, Consulting Engineers developed the core plans which provide a new spillway approximately 400 ft. east of the in place spillway. Additionally the existing spillway would be removed with substratum repairs made and the area reconstructed. A monitoring system would also be installed. DOT's involvement would be limited to maintenance of traffic via detour, and participation in the bridge structure spanning the new spillway and related roadway approaches. DOT construction personnel would provide lead construction supervision.

Summary of Public Meeting:

67 persons attended

35 comments were received (8 to court recorder)

8 post meeting letters received

7 comments supported proposal

20 comments opposed proposal

5 no position but commented negatively

3 noncommittal

Public officials and their comments: (See Attachment 2)

J. Michael Vandegriff - Commissioner City of Helen

Mr. Vandegriff does not support the project. Although his written comments are not sarcastic his verbal comments were antigovernment and anti DOT in particular. State and federal mandates seemed to be his problem with QBE particularly distasteful.

Gilbert Paul - Director of Water & Sewer

Mr. Paul does not support the project. Mr. Paul believes all tax revenue goes into one pot and Helen has greatly contributed to that pot. He believes DOT is discriminating against Helen and desire to spend sales tax revenue they have contributed to state coffiers elsewhere. After two explanations of roadway funding he remained unconvinced.

Fred V. Healan, Jr. - Fire Marshal

Mr. Healan does not support the project. He suggested a permanent bridge upstream from dam. He doesn't believe DOT should consider cost when it involves their unique area.

Kim A. Cox - City Manager

Mr. Cox never appreciated DOT trying to save money. Orally he was anti-DOT but his written comments are milder. Subsequent to the meeting he commented by letter that the economy of Helen would be negatively affected and requested consideration of such impact in the final decision.

Major concerns and comments:

1) Loss of business by merchants on SR 356.

2) Loss of business by merchants in Helen.

3) The Helen area was being treated unfairly by DOT being stingy only in their area.

4) Proposed advisory signing gave an unfair competitive advantage to Unicoi Lodge & Park.

5) DOT hadn't considered alternatives.

6) Would like detour through lake bed as per original design regardless of cost.

7) Didn't like meeting format.

8) Conspiracy of Governor to divert tourist to Towns County in addition to APD highway

Recommendation:

It is hereby recommended that the original project concept for STP 1777(4) White County be retained which would include an on site detour. It is further recommended that construction time be extended to include two construction seasons.

Recommended: _____ Director of Preconstruction

Hoyt J. Lively, Jr., P.E.

Approved: _____ State Highway Engineer

Frank Danchetz, P.E.

ATTACHMENT 1

HANDOUT

Attachment 1

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

September 30, 1993

Dear Citizen,

Thank you for attending the public informational meeting for the temporary closure of State Route 356 for the reconstruction of the spillway on Unicoi Dam. The purpose of this meeting is to inform you on the upcoming project and for the Department of Transportation to gather your comments so that we may better serve the needs of your community.

Unicoi dam was constructed prior to 1955. Repairs were made to the spillway in 1976, 1983, and 1987. Unfortunately, recent inspections of the spillway show that the existing spillway can no longer be repaired but must be replaced with a new spillway built to current specifications in accordance with the Georgia Safe Dams Act. Because the existing bridge is structurally incorporated into the spillway, the bridge must also be replaced.

Construction of the proposed spillway will take approximately 20 months. During construction, it is the proposal of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources that traffic be re-routed around the dam using State Routes 17/75, 17, and 255. Local traffic and patrons of Unicoi Park will have access to an existing road which connects Smith Creek Road to Campground Road around the North side of the lake. This road is presently being cleared and resurfaced by state maintenance forces.

Again, thank you for attending this informational meeting and giving us your comments.

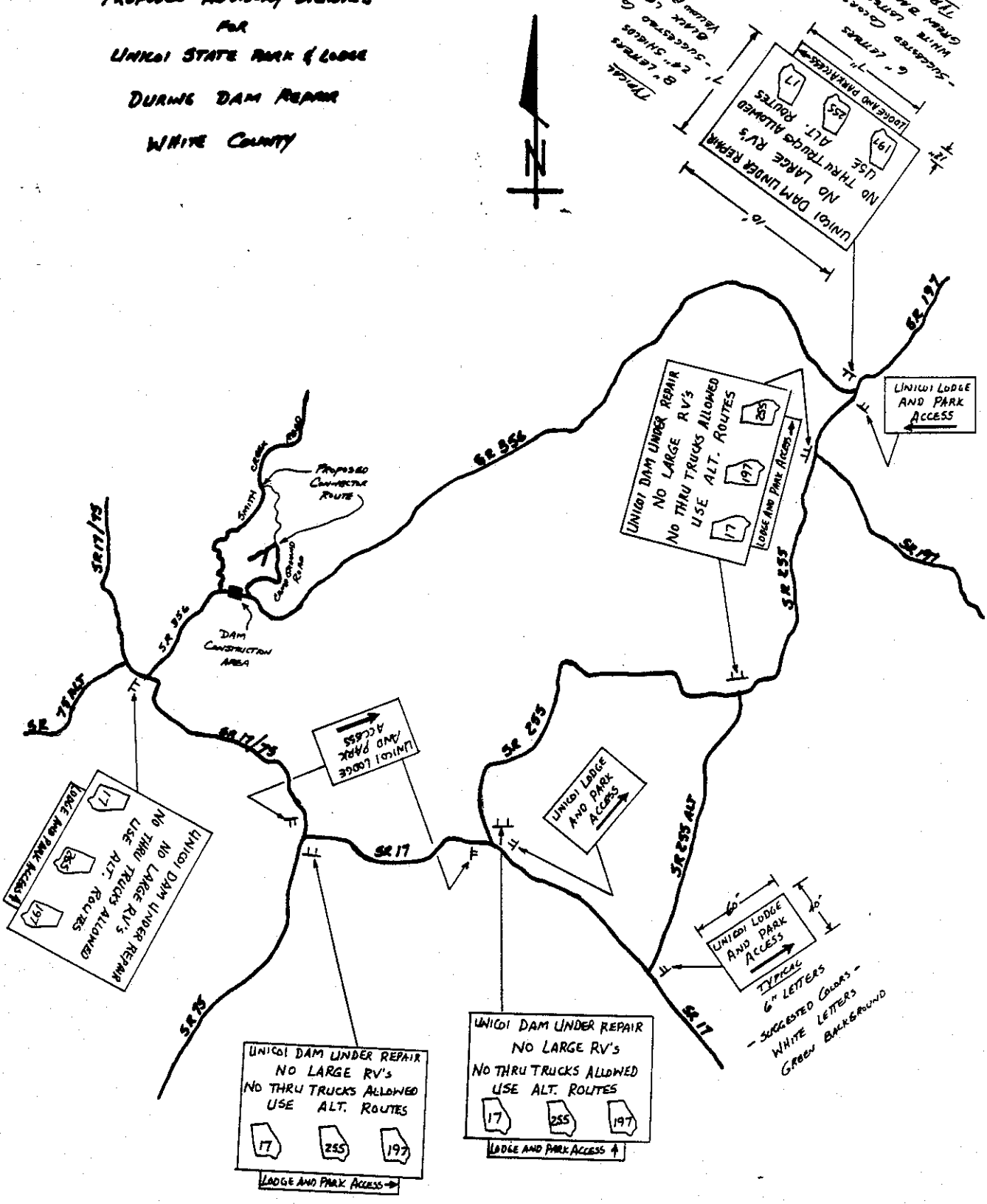
Sincerely,

H. J. Lively Jr.

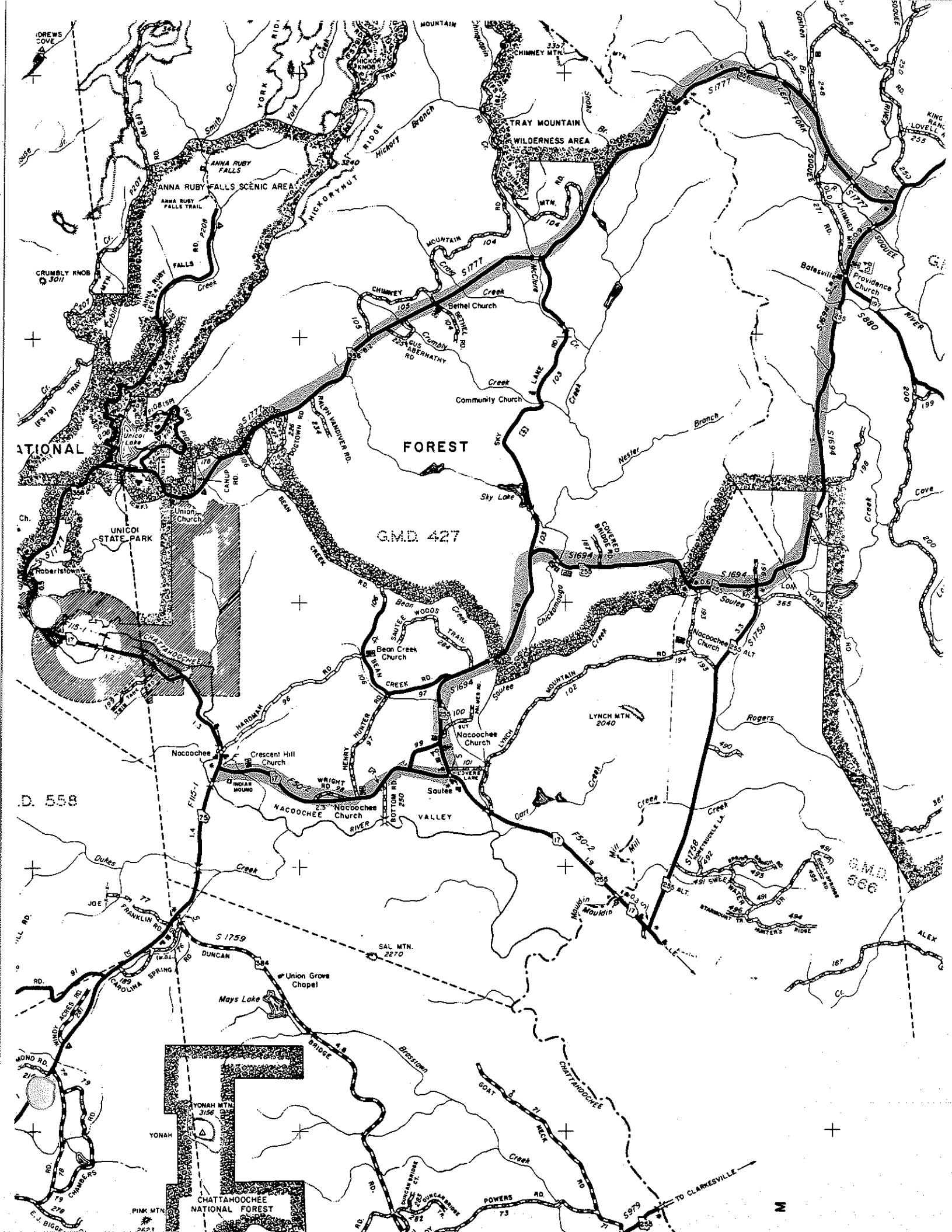
Hoyt J. Lively, Jr.
Director of Preconstruction

Attachment 1

# Proposed Advisory Signing for Unicoi State Park & Lodge During Dam Repair White County




08/24/93



TRAY MOUNTAIN
WILDERNESS AREA
ANNA RUBY FALLS SCENIC AREA
ANNA RUBY FALLS
CRUMBLY KNOB
3011
HICKORY KNOB
CHIMNEY MTN.
Bethel Church
Community Church
Sky Lake
FOREST
G.M.D. 427
UNICOI STATE PARK
Robertstown
Union Church
Nacoochee
Crescent Hill Church
Bean Creek Church
Nacoochee Church
Sautee
LYNCH MTN.
2040
Batesville
Providence Church
Union Grove Chapel
Mays Lake
SAL MTN.
2270
YONAH MTN.
3156
YONAH
CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FOREST
PINK MTN.
TO CLARKESVILLE
G.M.D. 666

# Attachment 2

# Comments from Officials

NAME J. Michael Vandegriff - City of Helen Commissioner
ADDRESS P.O. Box 1286
Helen, Ga. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? No
COMMENTS I believe there can be an alternate detour devised that could handle all traffic. Such as: For general traffic use Smith Creek, for heavy traffic use the old maintenance road below existing dam. DOT is satisfied by Regulations on their road and DNR controls lower bypass without doing major repairs.

(please print)

WHITE COUNTY FIRE DEPT 356

NAME FRED V. HEALAN JR. FIRE MARSHAL FOR CITY OF HELEN
ADDRESS P.O. BOX 280
HELEN, GA 30545
(706) 878-3676

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS I FEEL THAT D.O.T. SHOULD CONSIDER A PERMANENT BRIDGE WITH A ROADWAY ACROSS JUST IN FRONT OF THE DAM DUE TO THE PROBLEMS THAT THE DAM HAS ENCOUNTERED IN THE PAST AND THAT IT IS NOW ENCOUNTERING THIS WOULD ESTABLISH A DOT RIGHT OF WAY SEPERATE FROM THE DAM FOREVER, AND WOULD FIX THE TEMPORARY DETOUR AND DAM ROAD PROBLEM FOREVER. ALSO THE DAM COULD BE CONSTRUCTED SO TO PROVIDED A DETOUR ROUTE IN THE EVENT THAT THE BRIDGE EVER NEEDED REPAIR.

(please print)

Fred V. Healan Jr

Attachment 2

CITY OF HELEN
P.O. BOX 280
HELEN, GEORGIA 30545
(706) 878-3382

GEORGIA'S ALPINE VILLAGE

CITY COMMISSION:
JEFF N. ASH
WAYNE L. GARDNER
THOMAS W. MANN
J. MICHAEL VANDEGRIFF
BARBARA A. WESTMORELAND
CITY MANAGER:
KIM A. COX
CITY CLERK:
JANIE N. HENDERSON

October 5, 1993

Mr. Hugh Tyner
District Engineer
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

RE: Project STP-1777 (4), White County
Bridge Replacement over Smith Creek
Temporary Closing of SR 356/Detour

Dear Mr. Tyner:

On behalf of the City, I would like to thank you and your staff for disseminating very useful information regarding the above referenced project, as well as facilitating the public meeting at Unicoi State Park. As we all know, public input, opinion, and support are vital to the success of any public works project.

We understand that due to hazards associated with the impoundment, Unicoi lake must remain drained for the associated work. This dry lakebed is a detriment to the local tourism economy, and one that we in the greater Helen area understand that must be endured. However, to not construct a temporary road through the lakebed as an alternative method of ingress and egress to Unicoi State Park and points beyond would seriously undermine the Helen economy for the next two years, or until the project is completed in August of 1995.

Unicoi State Park has been very successful in securing conventions and meetings during our typically slow tourism months, which are January through May. Our local economy relies heavily on the business brought by these visitors, and should the most direct route between Unicoi State Park and the City of Helen be temporarily closed, then a tremendous amount of tourism dollars will be lost. Given this premise, we respectfully request that a brief economic impact analysis be immediately conducted to clearly determine the effects of closing state route 356 versus the construction of a temporary road through the lakebed, which would allow for the aforementioned ingress and egress in a much more convenient manner. To further expand upon the premise, it is our contention that possibly the cost of constructing the temporary

Attachment 2

road through the lakebed would be offset by the state and local revenue not lost to the economy.

We understand from your staff at the recent public meeting at Unicoi State Park, that DOT does not clearly know the actual cost of constructing the temporary road. However, we understand that you have been advised by the first and second round bidders that one of the primary reasons for the bids exceeding the budgeted amount is in fact the cost of the road. Since the temporary road is already designed, it may be possible for DOT to bid the project with the road as an add or deduct alternate. This approach would clearly give you a true cost of the road construction. I realize, not having closely scrutinized the plans and specifications, that this is an oversimplified approach to a potential solution, however you may find that the road construction is not as expensive as once thought. In addition, it would give you a true cost to compare with the economic impact of lost tourism dollars.

I believe our point has been made, and it is simply this: please give due consideration to the overall economy in the Helen area, and the State of Georgia, when making a decision on how to proceed with this project. I appreciate your time, and your consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,

R. A. C

Kim A. Cox
City Manager

xc: All City Commissioners
White County Commissioners
Mike Palmer, County Administrator
Mr. Layland L. Owens, DOT District Preconstruction Engineer

KAC/me
<dot.177>

NAME Jim A. Cox
ADDRESS City Manager
City of Helen
P.O. Box 280 Helen, GA. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?

COMMENTS The City of Helen supports the repair of the dam, but is very concerned about the economic impact of the detour, as proposed, on tourism in the area. The parking proposal of a temporary road through the flatbed is a more favorable approach.
A more formal response to follow.

(please print)

Gilbert Paul - dir of Utilities also attended

# Attachment 3

# Written Comments @ Hearing

# and

# Sample Reply

356

NAME Thomas E Davidson
ADDRESS P.O Box 107
Helen GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Questionable —
COMMENTS The Detour will effect My Travel & my Wife's Travel each day. We work 100 miles away, this has been expected but this Project was not anticipated Time is important to our family & each member who travels to our home. A Road through the bed of the lake would be acceptable not the Detour. Allocate the monies Mr Miller our Governor can get monies for his projects. Let's play politics for the people for a Change.

(please print)

356

NAME SARA E. DAVIDSON
House ADDRESS Hwy 356 - Chimney MTN Rd.
One-MILE NORTH of Smith CREEK PROJECT
Mail Add: P.O. Box 107 Helen, GA 30545
DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? YES
COMMENTS This PROJECT is going TO Add 30 mins driving Time To OUR ROUTE IN and OUT Monday THRU Friday Going and coming To and From WORK.

3 Adults IN our House driving in and out To Work, Church, etc. every Week M THRU Sunday

(please print)

356

**NAME** Mrs. Martha J. Blalock
**ADDRESS** Highway 356
P.O. Box 454
Helen, GA 30545

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?**
**COMMENTS** Since I live about 1 mile above the dam, I have enjoyed traveling back & forth across it & seeing the beautiful view of the lake. It has distressed me that the lake was drained long before necessary & probably will be drained much longer than predictions. This is one of the most beautiful areas in Georgia & I think it is bound to affect the tourist trade. I feel it should be (please print) done if it is necessary but feel it should proceed without delay.

356

**NAME** Danielle Bachant
**ADDRESS** Route 1 Box 1167, Skylake
Sautee-Nacoochee, GA 30571

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** I need to see all facts, figures & options
**COMMENTS** I am opposed to any large truck traffic being re-routed onto S.R. 255 and Skylake Rd. They should be directed onto Alt. S.R. 255. We do not need non-tourist traffic coming through that part of the valley.
I would like to see bids on a temporary road and permanent road alternative over the lake and through the lake. I would rather spend money on a road (please print) that will continue to be used, than one that will be torn up in the future.
The currently proposed route will be dangerous, but particularly so in the winter ice and snow. ⇒

356

**NAME** LTC C.B. Cosgrove

**ADDRESS** Box 314 off Bean Creek Rd.
Helen GA 30545

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** Not as currently shown

**COMMENTS** Time for meeting changed to a time not convenient to working people who live in the area to be present. The signage appears good but will cause confusion as many roads provide shortcuts and may create traffic confestion - I.E. Skylake Rd, Bean Creek Rd.
I agreed with the original idea of going thru the lake bed. with a temp bridge across the creek. this type of by pass has been used by military and civilian communities for years

I support a temp road thru the lake bed versus the detour route.

(please print)

I object to the fact that there was no presentation - I.E. no meeting, no options presented. I would prefer a formalized meeting - not a group of people milling around trying to find out answers to questions. Very poorly organized!!

356

**NAME** Andrea R. Cosgrove Live: off Bean Creek Rd

**ADDRESS** P.O Box 314
Helen, Ga 30545-0314

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** Not as proposed on hand out. I support the project as originally

**COMMENTS** designed by vehicles traveling thru dry lake bed. All sizes of vehicles should be able to continue normal travels to motels, cottages, restaurants + homes.
Alternating the traffic pattern will have a devesting effect on our local economy which is based on tourism! An economic study should be done before construction continues.

(please print)

356

NAME Kay D. Sims
ADDRESS PO BX 562
Helen Ga 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS
What of there's an emergency??
A need for immediate
~~ab~~ medical care - will
ambulance get there to us +
in time w/ a detour?

You will hurt tourism + the
City of Helen & County of White
County will suffer.

(please print)

356

NAME JOHN G ANTHONY
ADDRESS PO BOX 10
SAUTEE, GA, 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO NO NO.
COMMENTS BUILD A STEEL BRIDGE WITH NECESSARY 1 OR
2 LAND FILL SUPPORTS LIKE GENERAL PATTON
WOULD HAVE BUILT IN 1943-4 TO CROSS THE SAME
PROBLEM. REDUCE SPEED LIMIT TO 5 MPH &
LET ANYTHING ON WHEELS OR TREADS (EXCEPT
40 TON TANKS) CROSS. NO PROBLEM

(please print) JOHN C ANTHONY
PO BOX 10
SAUTEE, GA 30571
706-878-2940

356

NAME Marion Cantrell
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1357
Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS I Cannot operate my Business if I do Not have a Way In and out. Why Not put Road down below dam. Leave it For Future use For park access - This proposal is unfair.

(please print)

356

NAME Rachel Cantrell
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1357
Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS This move would Ruin our Business. other Counties including Towns & union are reaping From our monies. I Feel this is a political issue instead of a necessary task. I Think our governor is behind all This For his own Gain

(please print)

356

NAME Tommy Cantrell
ADDRESS Route 1 #
Box 1397
Santee GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Not as Currently Shown
COMMENTS Detour Around would affect to many local Business

(please print)

356

NAME HELEN CANTRELL
ADDRESS [redacted] CHIMNEY HILL RD
SANTEE, GA. 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS I FEEL THE PROPOSED TRAFFIC ROUTE WOULD DAMAGE THE TOURIST BUSINESS ABOVE UNICOI ALSO, THE PROPOSED ROUTE WOULD BE DANGEROUS WITH ~~[illegible]~~ HEAVY TRAFFIC ON IT - VERY CURVY AND TOO LONG TO BE A DETOUR

(please print)

356

NAME Ronald N. Cantrell
ADDRESS Rt. 1
Sautee, Ga. 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS This proposal will have a serious Adverse effect on the Economy of White County - Loss of Jobs - to loss of business - Loss of Tax Increased Danger of small County Road. Please consider these Adverse effects on White County.

(please print)

356

NAME Paul Cantrell
ADDRESS P.O. Box 1385
Sautee, Ga.

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS would effect to Many local business.

(please print)

356

NAME JOHN SNEAD
ADDRESS RT 2 BOX 2614-A
CLEVELAND GA 30528

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? TO REPLACE THE SPILLWAY AND THUS KEEP THE LAKE, YES.
COMMENTS EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO MINIMIZE ANY DISRUPTION OF NORMAL TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE HWY 356 AREA. THE SIGNS PROHIBITING LARGE RV'S WILL SEVERELY DAMAGE THE SEVERAL RV CAMPGROUNDS NE OF UNICOI.

(please print)

356

NAME Elizabeth Gullo
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1321 Skylake Rd
South Hamilton
GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Not in its present form
COMMENTS The format of the meeting (removing the chairs) was not conducive to creating an atmosphere for open discussion & sharing. Citizens are interested in seeing their ideas considered — and heard — and shared rather than going thru the motions to satisfy your obligation to hold a "informational meeting" — Now that said, please use the creative resources shared here plus those " " on your staff. to solve this problem for maintaining

(please print)

356

**NAME** BETTE SPEARS
**ADDRESS** SKYLAKE, RT. 1, BOX 1104
SAUTEE, GA 30571

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** WITH MODIFATIONS
**COMMENTS** WHITE COUNTY, HELEN, TANGLEWOOD & OTHER BUSINESSES, AS WELL AS UNICOI STATE PARK WILL SUFFER UNLESS A ROAD ABOVE OR BELOW THE DAM IS CONSTRUCTED. A ROAD COULD BE CONSTRUCTED BELOW, WHICH I WOULD SUGGEST, WITH DOT CONSTRUCTING THAT PART WHICH IS OUTSIDE OF UNICOI PARK AND DNR CONSTRUCTING THAT PART INSIDE THEIR JURISDICTION. THIS ROAD WOULD NOT INTERFERE (please print) WITH CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM.

356

**NAME** Jack F. Spears
**ADDRESS** Skylake Rt 1, Bx 1104
Sautee, Ga. 30571

**DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?** (Yes) with changes
**COMMENTS** I believe White Co, Helen and Business' such as Tanglewood Resort, Unicoi Park & others will suffer greatly unless a road belowe or above the dam is constructed. I would suggest the road below with DOT taking that outside of Unicoi Park & DNR building inside their jurisdiction. This road would not interfere with Dam construction

(please print)

356

NAME A M TRENCH
ADDRESS P.O. Bx 327 Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? There is no choice (can not let Lake dry)
COMMENTS coordinate all revenue from all agencies.
Build an additional Bridge - it will serve now and the future.

call another official meeting.

(please print)

356

NAME Caryl Trench
ADDRESS PO Box 327
Sautee GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? If DONE THE RIGHT WAY
COMMENTS There are lots of choices which should have been looked out long ago. MONEY (the Departments' etc.) IS Not The ISSUE. You have limits on your funds — what about private individuals & businesses? They should bear the brunt of this mess. You are paid to do it right — so do what the people that live & work here want.

(please print)

Also — the psychology behind the set-up of this meeting & way it was conducted IS AN ISSUE!

356

NAME James A. London
ADDRESS Rt. #1 Box 1362
Cornelia GA. 30531

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Yes
COMMENTS But The Detour Road Should be Built Accross The Preset Lake bed I Am An Owner at Unicoi Springs Camp Resort. And We have Approx. 2500 Owner And They can't Drive on Long Detour.

(please print)

356

NAME Sam A. Wells
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1320
Sautee, Ga 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?
COMMENTS People need to get together an Lear Rt Plans made by Professional employees or to the Proper Needs at hand.
Landscape Was designed by nature and We need to make the best Solution to the Problem. People in authority have the responsibility to make the Proper decisions. Highways are needed More and more each day, years an Century

(please print)

356

NAME KEN JOHNSON
ADDRESS P.O. BOX 712
HELEN, GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? YES!
COMMENTS LEAVE DAM AS IS UNTIL STATE CAN APPROPRIATE THE MONEY TO DO IT RIGHT IE; MAKE STRAIGHT ROAD INTO LAKE BED. NO DETOUR.

(please print)

356

NAME Harold Blalock
ADDRESS Highway #356 P.O. Box 454
Helen, Ga.

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Yes
COMMENTS Get on the dull.

(please print)

356

NAME JOHN ZIEMER
ADDRESS P.O. Box 13
SAUTEE GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO
COMMENTS WOULD ARMY ENGINEERED BAILEY BRIDGES FROM FORMER CAMPER REGISTRATION TO CAMPER BEACH AREA? HOW ABOUT ROAD BELOW THE DAM. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THIS DETOUR ON 356 BUSINESS? WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR INCREASED USE OF BEAN CREEK ROAD & SKYLAKE ROAD THAT THIS DETOUR PLAN WILL FOSTER... THERE MAINTENANCE WILL BE INCREASED DO TO MORE EXTENSIVE USE. (please print)

356

NAME Deborah S. Brooks
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 619
Helen Ga. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? The detour -> NO
COMMENTS Hurt TOO MANY LOCAL BUSINESSES WHO depend ON DRIVE-BYE BUSINESS. THE detour will divert TOO MUCH ~~TAFF~~ TRAFFIC ONTO ROADS THAT AREN'T BUILT TO HOLD THAT KIND OF TRAFFIC.

(please print)

NAME Bill Price
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1150
Sautee, Ga. 30571
878-2010
DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? HAIL NO.
COMMENTS I own Tanglewood Rest. I've been in Business 44yrs - Sales Tax Alone has been 102,273 - I've got some kind of a Opinion -
My opinion is Build a temp. road through the Lake Bed -
the State won't lose Anything -
The project the State (please print) purposes about the road around the lake -
there will be Accidents and Deaths = Suits (Law)

NAME Linda Price - DBA Tanglewood Restaurant
ADDRESS Rt 1 Box 1150
Sautee GA 30571
706-878-2010, 878-1044
DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO!!
COMMENTS If you route the traffic around the lake or around to 197 to 356 you will as well Bankrupt us! We have been in business in the Helen Area for over 13 yrs and I do know the Tourist Habits. I know they will not detour on a ~~Curve~~ curvy road at night to get to our Restaurant. They will turn around and go back to Helen. (please print) Why not take the money you going to spend on the road over the dam and use it to build a permanent Bridge over the lake -

356

NAME Gaylon Lusk / Timberloft Cottages
ADDRESS P.O. Box 1341
Helen, GA 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO !!!
COMMENTS If This Road is Closed it will Absolutely Kill our Business. There is No Way the tourist will Travel these extra miles on this proposed detour.
Why NOT use old Road below Dam. The cost to get this Road useable would not be that great Amount and the Road could be used For Future.

(please print)

356

NAME Cecil Lusk / Timberloft Cottages
ADDRESS P.O. Box 405
Helen, GA. 30545

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? No !!
COMMENTS
if This Road is Closed & detour 17, 255 I Feel it would Ruin My business At Timberloft Cottages. As we Depend on Tourist & I Don't Think They would go This Distance. I Think A Detour Could be Put below Dam on original Road & would not have to be Removed & be of use To Park in Future

(please print)

356

NAME CHEROKEE CAMPGROUND - EDWARD DIGIORGIO, OWNER

ADDRESS S.R. 356 + BETHEL CHURCH Rd.
MILE MARKER 5
SAUTEE GA 30571

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? NO — NO — NO AS PROPOSED

COMMENTS The state is only concerned of it's own welfare. Keep everyone concerned or wanting to use the park happy with the proposed access road. Let all the remaining businesses along S.R. 356 fare for themselves.
Our business can not survive with the proposed plan. We will be deprived of off the road business because vehicles will not be passing by as usual.
KEEP THE ROAD OPEN AS A THRU WAY.

(please print)

356

NAME Georgia Mountain Madness Pamela Rogus

ADDRESS PO Box 308
Helen GA 30545
1 mile past Unicoi State Park

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT?

COMMENTS A large part of our business comes from "drive-by" traffic. The proposed detour will kill my business. A temporary road thru the lake as originally proposed is the best idea.
If Unicoi Lodge + Park are listed on the detour signs, so should the other businesses. We pay taxes, too.
Why not seek other than Federal funding.

(please print)

Thanks,
PRogus

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer
Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057
October 7, 1993

Sample Reply

Thomas E. & Sara E. Davidson
P. O. Box 107
Helen, GA 30545

Dear Sir & Madam:

Thank you for taking time to attend the September 30, 1993 information meeting at Unicoi Lodge regarding the repair of Unicoi Dam.

Several alternates were suggested for our consideration in lieu of the proposed 2½ mile detour along Campground and Anna Ruby Falls Roads (P109, P108 & P208).

Alternate 1: Construct a new permanent bridge structure spanning Unicoi Lake upstream and parallel to the existing dam. SR 356 would be rerouted onto the new structure and present and future repairs could be made to the dam without interrupting traffic on SR 356. This would result in adding considerable cost as elevated reinforced concrete structures are very expensive.

Alternate 2: Construct a new dam approximately 200 ft. upstream which would meet Safe Dam Act specifications and not interfere with SR 356 traffic.

Assuming geological conditions are favorable at this location and an engineering design possible that would transmit flood stage volumes past both structures Alternate 2 would add considerably to the project cost and result in about 15% loss of lake area.

Alternate 3: Upgrade old roadbed south of Unicoi Lake from park headquarters to east of Unicoi Lodge with bridge culvert at Smith Creek.

There would be substantial construction cost associated with this alternate and some right of way acquisition would be necessary. It is not possible to estimate associated right-of-way cost without engineering design and appraisal. Wetlands would also be disturbed and federal law dictates that reasonable and prudent alternatives be explored before disturbing wetlands. Right-of-way necessary to construct this roadway would require significant park land also.

Alternate 4: Install Bailey Bridge. Bailey Bridges were developed to get vehicles over wide gaps in short periods of time. Long spans become increasingly uneconomical because of excessive dead weight and oftentimes are restricted to one vehicle at a time on the single lane bridge. Depending on actual design, potential load restrictions would probably negatively affect more vehicles than the proposed 2½ mile detour. Since Smith Creek can adequately be conveyed in this area by a culvert a temporary bailey bridge appears unnecessary and too restrictive. We have no historical data on which to base the cost of Alternate 4.

Alternate 5: Construct detour through lake bed.

As related at the September 30 informational meeting this design was twice offered for bid. The first letting resulted in seven bids the lowest of which was higher in cost than we believe the prescribed work should cost based on prudent estimating. The second letting attracted only one bidder and that firm's proposal increased substantially over the previous low bid.

We believe good judgment mandates avoiding unnecessary expense of taxpayer money. We believe all these alternates have unnecessary expense and therefore explored reasonable substitutes. From cost and operational perspectives the proposed 2½ mile detour appears reasonable. It provides unrestricted access for a large majority of SR 356 motorist with little increase in travel time. It also addresses the need for emergency and school bus access. After the contracting industry gets a look at the redefined work we will know the cost advantage of detouring north of Unicoi Lake instead of through it.

An apparent misconception is that our proposal detours traffic along Bean Creek and Sky Lake Roads. The handout indicates detours would follow SR 17, SR 255, SR 255 Alt. & SR 197.

Your comments have been made a part of the detour report and will be considered by management of both DOT and DNR in reaching a decision on this matter.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

# Attachment 4

# Letters and Replies

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Paul M. & Judy O. Swafford
2725 Titon Way
Lawrenceville, GA 30244

Dear Sir & Madam:

Thanks for your letter regarding the repair of Unicoi Dam.

I believe the handout (enclosed) that was given to attendees of our September 30, 1993 Information Meeting will clear up some of the misinformation you have about proposed signing. The proposed signing does not indicate local traffic. Trucks and large recreational vehicles are the only types of traffic we are attempting to restrict.

Your suggestions of building a temporary road and separating the bridge from the spillway have been considered and both add substantial cost to the project. We have considered other suggestions as well and found neither economically feasible.

The proposed 2½ mile detour provides unrestricted access to the larger share of SR 356 traffic. It also addresses the need for emergency and school bus access. Hopefully it will aalso provide a considerable cost advantage when potential contractors offer bids in November.

Your comments have been made part of the detour report and will be considered by DOT & DNR management.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm
Enclosure

Oct. 11, 1993

Department of Transportation
Office of District Engineer
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, GA 30503-1057

Attention: Leland Owens

Dear Mr. Owens:

We have been informed of the temporary closure of State Route 356 for the reconstruction of the spillway on Unicoi Dam. We understand the need for its replacement. We are, however, very disturbed over the re-routing of traffic in this area.

As residents of Georgia for over 20 years and owners of four cabins in the Tanglewood Resort off of Highway 356, we are concerned that the current proposed plans will severely impact rental income from visitors to the Helen area. The number one employer and source of local and state funds in this area is tourism. The route proposed does not consider the need for clear and specific directions for travelers. The lost revenue due to tourists avoiding the area or losing their way will have a great impact on the community. As your letter states, you want to "better serve the needs of (our) community". We are a vital part of the greater Helen community.

Please consider the following:

1. Sign should state "Temporary Alternate Route To Hwy. 356" not just "local traffic".
2. Build a temporary road on the other side of the bridge.
3. Separate the spillway from the bridge; build a new permanent road through the lake bed.

We know you will weigh all alternatives to this situation. This construction impacts the entire area, its residents, and its tourists. Please contemplate alternatives that address the tourist trade and finacial impact on the local community . We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Swafford

Judy O. Swafford

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Mr. John C. Soeder, Jr.
11717 SW 110 Terr
Miami, FL 33186

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your comments regarding the joint DNR/DOT project to repair Unicoi Dam.

I have enclosed proposed advisory signing for approaches to the area, and as you suggested specific SR 356 detour signing is to be placed at the project site.

Within reason, we desire to accommodate the wishes of those most affected by the project but also have an obligation to be prudent managers of taxpayer dollars.

Your comments will be considered by management and made part of our detour report. Again thank you for taking time to write.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm
Enclosure

Hwy 356

NAME JOHN C SOEDER JR

ADDRESS 11717 SW 110 TER
MIAMI, FL 33186

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? YES

COMMENTS I am a property owner of a cabin at Tanglewood resort Cabins, Rt #356 Helen Georgia. I suggest that temporary signs be put up showing Rt #356. or a temporary road be put in bypassing the bridge + spillway. Tourism is a large part of the peoples livelyhood in this area and all means should be taken to make sure it remains so. A positive effort should be made

(please print)

to insure the businesses in this area that the tourists will be given every advantage in finding the places they are looking for on Rt #356.
In closing I would like to point out that if proper access is not provided the it could result in loss of income + jobs which could seriously affect white county

Sincerely
Mr John C Soeder Jr

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Mimi and Gene Perry
1077 S. E. 170 Court
Silver Springs, FL 34488

Dear Sir & Madam:

Thanks for your letter regarding the repair of Unicoi Dam.

Since you evidently have misinformation regarding the project I have enclosed the handout given to attendees of our September 30, 1993 Informational Meeting.

Our proposal is not to close SR 356, but to detour SR 356 along Anna Ruby Falls and Campground Roads. It would not be necessary for you to give directions to your cabin any differently than at present, because once the motorist reaches the project area detrou signing would direct along the detour and SR 356. The proposed detour provides unrestricted access to the larger share of SR 356 users.

Your comments have been made a part of the detour report and will be considered by DOT & DNR management.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

Enclosure

October 7, 1993

Dear Mr. Owens,

We are the owners of a cabin located at Tanglewood, two miles past the Unico spillway and bridge on State Route 356.

We are very concerned about the closure of the road for almost a two year period. Since this is the access road from Helen to the cabin site the loss of income would directly affect us. We are a retired couple and look to this source of income. Such a lengthy time frame would surely affect business. The proposed routes are more than just an inconvenience. The new route is almost impossible to be given as instruction by telephone to people calling for reservations. In addition, it would completely destroy any drive-by trade.

We urge you to reconsider and take steps to provide a road to the business we have worked hard to build over the years.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Gene Perry

Mimi Perry

Mimi and Gene Perry
1077 S E 170 Court
Silver Springs, Fl. 34488
(904) 625-7745

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 12, 1993

Elvin M. Pearson
P. O. Box 1264
Helen, GA 30545

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your letter expressing your plans to construct a home, cabin and restaurant north of Unicoi Dam.

Several alternates were suggested for our consideration in lieu of the proposed 2½ mile detour along Campground and Anna Ruby Falls Roads (P109, P108 & P208).

Alternate 1: Construct a new permanent bridge structure spanning Unicoi Lake upstream and parallel to the existing dam. SR 356 would be rerouted onto the new structure and present and future repairs could be made to the dam without interrupting traffic on SR 356. This would result in adding considerable cost as elevated reinforced concrete structures are very expensive.

Alternate 2: Construct a new dam approximately 200 ft. upstream which would meet Safe Dam Act specifications and not interfere with SR 356 traffic.

Assuming geological conditions are favorable at this location and an engineering design possible that would transmit flood stage volumes past both structures Alternate 2 would add considerably to the project cost and result in about 15% loss of lake area.

Alternate 3: Upgrade old roadbed south of Unicoi Lake from park headquarters to east of Unicoi Lodge with bridge culvert at Smith Creek.

There would be substantial construction cost associated with this alternate and some right of way acquisition would be necessary. It is not possible to estimate associated right-of-way cost without engineering design and appraisal.

Wetlands would also be disturbed and federal law dictates that reasonable and prudent alternatives be explored before disturbing wetlands. Right-of-way necessary to construct this roadway would require significant park land also.

Alternate No. 4: Install Bailey Bridge. Bailey Bridges were developed to get vehicles over wide gaps in short periods of time. Long spans become increasingly uneconomical because of excessive dead weight and oftentimes are restricted to one vehicle at a time on the single lane bridge. Depending on actual design, potential load restrictions would probably negatively affect more vehicles than the proposed 2½ mile detour. Since Smith Creek can adequately be conveyed in this area by a culvert a temporary bailey bridge appears unnecessary and too restrictive. We have no historical data on which to base the cost of Alternate 4.

Alternate 5: Construct detour through lake bed.

As related at the September 30 informational meeting this design was twice offered for bid. The first letting resulted in seven bids the lowest of which was higher in cost than we believe the prescribed work should cost based on prudent estimating. The second letting attracted only one bidder and that firm's proposal increased substantially over the previous low bid.

We believe good judgment mandates avoiding unnecessary expense of taxpayer money. We believe all these alternates have unnecessary expense and therefore explored reasonable substitutes. From cost and operational perspectives the proposed 2½ mile detour appears reasonable. It provides unrestricted access for a large majority of SR 356 motorist with little increase in travel time. It also addresses the need for emergency and school bus access. After the contracting industry gets a look at the redefined work we will know the cost advantage of detouring north of Unicoi Lake instead of through it.

An apparent misconception is that our proposal detours traffic along Bean Creek and Sky Lake Roads. The handout indicates detours would follow SR 17, SR 255, SR 255 Alt. & SR 197.

Your comments have been made a part of the detour report and will be considered by management of both DOT and DNR in reaching a decision on this matter.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh L. Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

Oct. 5, 1993
Helen, Ga.

Re: Project S.T.P 1777(4)

Dear Mr. Owens,

I am writing to you as a Concerned property owner. I am planning on building North of the State Park, both a Cabin and a Restaurant and possibly a home.

There is no way that I would do this and invest in anything unless a road will be built next to the existing road.

The potential of losing revenue from taxes from that area will be tremendous.

Hope you will re-Consider your decision. Thanking you,

Sincerely,
Elvin M. Pearson

Brooklet, Ga.
P.O. Box 433
Oct. 13, 1993

Mr. Leland Owens
P.O. Box 1057
Gainsville, Ga

I am enclosing a form letter with some comments about bridge and dam construction on Smith creek.

My wife and I are landowners and are interested in the development

Sincerely
Lemuel McElveen

Hwy 356

NAME Mr and Mrs Lenwood McElveen

ADDRESS P. O. Box 433
Brooklet, Ga

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? Yes

COMMENTS We are land owners near the bridge to be repaired and rebuilt

Bridge and road should be built separate from the dam.
If dam develops a problem bridge and road would not interfer with the work

(please print)

A temporary road through the lake bed would be good.

Place adequate signs to direct traffic, - if this is not done tourism will be drastically hurt. Lost jobs from lack of tourism will hurt White County

# Department of Transportation

Office of District Engineer

404-532-5526 Gainesville, Georgia 30503-1057

October 18, 1993

Raymond Packard
4411 SE 107 Lane
Belleview, FL 34420

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your comments regarding the joint DNR/DOT project to repair Unicoi Dam.

Within reason, we desire to accommodate the wishes of those most affected by the project but also have an obligation to be prudent managers of taxpayer dollars.

Your comments will be considered by management and made part of our detour report. Again thank you for taking time to write.

Yours very truly,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hugh Tyner

Hugh L. Tyner, P.E.
District Engineer

HLT:jm

Hwy 356

NAME Raymond Packard

ADDRESS 4411 SE 107 Lane
Belleview, FL. 34420

DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROJECT? It is important to the area to maintain Unicoi Lake.

COMMENTS Very little inconvenience to Unicoi and the businesses & residence on 356 would result in a temperary road could be built thru the lake bed.
The proposed alternate route in back of Unicoi could cause a lot of confusion to the tourist and even

(please print)

discourage many from visiting this are. This would result in the loss of a lot of revenue to White Co. and a loss of many jobs to the local residence.

Raymond Packard
Owner of Cabin #15
Tanglewood Resort Cabi

President of PREP Inc.
a Georgia Corp.
Holding Cabins & Propert
at Tanglewood Resort
Cabins.

1214 Vista Trail N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30324
September 23, 1993

Mr. Laland Owens
Georgia Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 1057
Gainesville, GA 30503

RE: Unicoi State Park Bridge Replacement
Project #STP-1777(4)

Dear Mr. Owens:

As a property owner on Chimney Mountain Road in White County, I depend on Georgia State Highway 356 for access between my property and the city of Helen. The closing of this road for repair of the dam on Smith Creek/ Unicoi Lake will have an adverse impact on me as well as on many other property owners and businesses in the area. This impact can be greatly reduced if a convenient and reasonable detour is provided near the site of the present dam.

The original construction plans for the new dam included a convenient detour through the now dry lake bed. I understand that this detour may no longer be considered a financially feasible plan for both the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Unicoi State Park) and the Georgia Department of Transportation. Other reasonably convenient alternatives must be considered for the residents, businesses, and the many tourists who use this road. Let us remember that tourism is the "lifeblood" of our area. Tourists especially will not be familiar with the proposed inconvenient detour which takes them a great distance out of the way into the Sautee Valley via Georgia Highways 17 and 255.

Negotiating traffic through Helen can be a nightmare, especially during peak seasons, weekends, and holidays. The proposed inconvenient detour will have a negative impact upon the State of Georgia itself with decreased revenue and visitation for Unicoi State Park. Businesses which depend on tourist access via Georgia Highway 356 will also suffer losses.

Unicoi Lake is a beautiful and valuable asset of the state park and the entire area when the lake is usable. The dam for the lake should be rebuilt as soon as possible. Indeed, this entire project has taken much too long so far. I don't want to call the project a "fiasco" yet, but I may before it is finished! However, the reasonable transportation needs of everyone using

Georgia Highway 356 must not be overlooked. The inconvenience to local residents and the loss of valuable mountain tourist revenues must be taken into consideration when choosing a convenient detour of the highway as near as possible to its present route.

I urge you to detour Georgia 356 for as short a time as is possible and in as close proximity to Unicoi State Park as is feasible for all parties concerned. Thank you for your continued diligent consideration of this matter for all of us who depend on this important road. Since I will not be able to attend the public information meeting in Unicoi Lodge September 30th, please make sure that my views are presented during the meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Steve

Stephen B. Routt

P.S. I look forward with great anticipation to getting Unicoi Lake back for everyone to enjoy once again!

cc: Mr. David Freeman
Mr. Don Hoch

Hwy 356

Do Not Support Project
Bob, Sara, Robyn Revell

SEPTEMBER 29, 1993

TO: DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

WE FEEL THE CLOSING OF STATE ROAD 356, AND REROUTING THE TRAFFIC TO SMITH CREEK ROAD AND CAMPGROUND ROAD WOULD HAVE DAMAGING AFFECTS TO THE BUSINESSES ON THIS STATE ROAD.

TANGLEWOOD CABINS COLLECTED OVER $31,000 IN 1992 FOR GEORGIA SALES TAX, ALSO WE COLLECTED APPROX. $24,000 IN 1991, AND COLLECTED THUS FAR IN 1993 $20,000. WE REPRESENT 37 LAND OWNERS IN WHITE COUNTY. WE HAVE 40 RENTAL CABINS THAT BRINGS IN UNLIMITED REVENUE TO THE STATE OF GEORGIA.

WE FEEL THAT THE STATE OF GEORGIA HAS BENEFITTED FROM THESE TAXES. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THE BIDS WERE FOR THE ROAD THAT WAS PLANNED THROUGH THE LAKE BED, AND WHAT WAS THE AMOUNT ALLOTTED FOR THE TEMPORARY ROAD. WOULD THE DIFFERENCE IN AMOUNTS BE MORE OR LESS THEN THE REVENUES LOST IN SALES TAX SHOULD 6 CABIN RENTAL BUSINESSES, A RESTAURANT, AND 2 CAMPGROUNDS WOULD TO GO UNDER AS A RESULT OF THE STATE WANTING TO "SAVE A FEW DOLLARS"? ANY RESULT OF LOST OF INCOME FROM THE BUSINESSES ON STATE ROAD 356 WOULD ALSO MEAN UNEMPLOYMENT FOR SEVERAL TAX PAYERS IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA. COULD GEORGIA AFFORD TO PAY UMEMPLOYMENT FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS. LOST OF INCOME WOULD ALSO RESULT IN THESE SAME INDIVIDUALS CUTTING BACK IN SPENDING FOR GASOLINE (TAX IN GA.), FOOD, HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, ETC. COULD THE STATE OF GEORGIA AFFORD TO LOSE ADDITIONAL INCOME FROM RESTAURANTS IN THE HELEN AREA, AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS THAT WOULD NOT HAVE THE GUESTS FROM THESE RESORTS BUYING AND SPENDING?

WE ARE ASKING ALL INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN MAKING THE DECISION TO RECONSIDER THE ROAD ROUTE, AND PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE THE BRIDGE/ROADWAY ON STATE ROAD 356.

SINCERELY,

Robyn Revell

BOB, SARA, ROBYN REVELL
TANGLEWOOD RESORT CABINS
706-878-3294

Robyn Revell
P.O. Box 394
Helen, GA 30545
706-878-3294
Resident on Hwy 356

Tanglewood Cabins
P.O. Box 435
Helen, GA 30545
Business on Hwy 356

# Attachment 5

# Transcript of Oral Comments

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE OF GEORGIA

In re: )
)
PROJECT STP-1777, Unit 4 )
State Route 56 over Smith )
Creek - Unicoi Lake )

Public Hearing, held pursuant to Notice, commencing at 4:00 o'clock, p.m., Thursday, September 30, 1993, Unicoi State Park, Helen, Georgia, reported by Howard E. Worley, Certified Court Reporter.

- - - - -

Worley & Associates Inc.

STENOGRAPH AND VIDEO REPORTERS

559 FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

DECATUR, GEORGIA 30030

(404) 378-6239

MR. CANTRELL: I am Ron Cantrell, former tourist related business owner from east of here on 356. I am very active in the Chamber of Commerce and all other civic organizations.

I feel that on one side of the ballot you have the cost of the road through the bottom of the lake, whatever that cost may be. I think that must be balanced with the loss of property values here above the area, the change in the development of the county, the loss of sales tax dollars. More importantly, the loss of jobs through adverse effects of this proposed route on businesses that are above here. And then also they need to consider the danger involved in the small curvy road going around that lake.

I am a life long area resident of this area and feel that tourism is our number one industry in White County. The adverse effect of this proposed bypass or proposed detour far outweighs the cost of putting a road through the bottom of the lake as was originally planned.

White County is already at a disadvantage from every other county in Georgia in the way QBEIS are funded. We are considered a rich county by property values, although our percapita income does not qualify us as a rich county. Therefore we pay

FORM 70 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

more than our fair share of education because of the QBE formula.

In addition to that, a large percentage of our property is forrestry lands, of which we get very little advalorum taxes.

With these things in mind, please consider the adverse economic impact on White County as a whole and the businesses north of Unicoi in specific before making this decision.

MR. DEGIORGIN: My name is Ed DeGiorgin. I am owner of Cherokee Campgrounds on State Route 356 and Bethel Road at mile marker 5. I am a part-owner in the campgrounds. And we just opened up this year. And we have got a considerable amount of personal money invested in the campgrounds.

And I would say that probably a good fifty percent of our current business or whatever we are doing is drive-by business, is people who see our signs just outside the campgrounds.

It seems to me from what I have been hearing at the so-called meeting, because I protest the form it is taking to start out with -- they have got everybody standing up, they are not affording comfortable seating to them -- they talk about not having any money in the budget. They don't tell us

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

how much money it is going to be to build the road here or build the dam here or the different alternatives. They just say everything is over budget. But they don't give us any facts and figures.

From what I understand from one statement one person made here at this meeting, the access road is actually going to really serve the benefit of the Unicoi State Park. Light vehicles can travel this round about road they are going to build. But it is primarily in the interest of Unicoi State Park facilities. Therefore, all other vehicles, specifically motor homes and trailers and heavy duty vehicles have to go and access their way through on State Road 255, which is over fifteen miles around the mountain, only to dead end and then return back that same way because they can't get through on State Road 356.

And people, as they become aware of this, as visitors and tourists in the area, are not going to go through this inconvenience. They are not going to come back and keep doing it again, and keep on driving around the mountain, and half of the time they are coming up for the weekend for enjoyment.

So I would like to see some actual figures. And I would like to see different proposed

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

routes, and I definitely -- whichever way they do it, the road that is going to join back to 356 to service all traffic and be ultimately a through road from State Road 75 to 17 to 55. And our business will not be able to survive under the proposed plan because we will not have that drive-by traffic.

And our business, we collect State taxes for overnight stays and it is the budget and proposed itinary the State wants to do and therefore if we are helping to contribute more sales taxes then we should be strongly considered, and all of the businesses alike along State Route 356 that will be affected by this.

To appease DOT, finish the road so that we will not all be put out of business because of lack of traffic.

Thank you.

MR. ASH: I want to, first of all, commend and thank DOT and Department of Human Resources for holding a public meeting that we could all come together and voice our feelings pro and con for this deal.

I, first of all, want to say that the City of Helen and Unicoi State Park has had a brother - sister relationship for the past twenty years, that we do not want to do anything whatsoever to disturb

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

that by our feelings towards this road. We support the staff, the employees and DNR and everything they are doing in this park. Without it Helen would not be where it is today.

However, over the last twenty years, Helen has thrived and become a profit center for the State of Georgia. Through our work with everyone in White County, we feel like we are making a significant contribution to the State treasury each year through the three percent sales tax, because we have worked very hard to develop a tourist related business.

I realize along with the tourism related business comes additional costs which the State must bear such as roads coming and leaving Helen. Still, however, I feel like we have paid sufficient funds to cover these costs, and these new improved roads have been used by people in a non-tourist related capacity. Please consider in your analysis that if we were to have a ten percent sales in this county, it would far exceed the cost of the temporary road through the lake bottom.

Secondly, I am very concerned that a two year change in the traffic patern through Nachoochee Valley can never be put back like they are. People do not mind inconveniences such as temporary roads.

FORM Y-40 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

In fact, it is kind of exciting to show that a few things are being done to our Park System.

We urge you to please consider the loss of property values, the loss of cash f low, which many of these people will have to suffer toward their debt service. And this temporary blockage, I feel, is blocking off one of the best ereas White County has to offer, the tourists, in the next ten years.

Thank you for your attention towards these remarks. I will be at your disposal in any way I possibly can to both DOT and DNR.

MR. ZIEMER: John Ziemer, P. O. Box 13, Sautee 30571.

Do I support the project? No. I would like to see the use of Bailey bridges either below the dam or above the dam, perhaps going from existing registration area of the camping, up to the camping, should allow enough room during the construction of the dam.

I am also concerned about the impact on two county roads that this plan don't take into consideration, those being Bean Creek Road, Sky Lake Road. They are alternative routes to come up to Unicoi. They are not State roads.

And perhaps there is even another

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

alternative: not even rebuilding the dam, building a series of smaller dams and campgrounds down in the lake bed. That is it.

MR. CARROLL: Bill Carroll, Route 1, Box 1392, Sautee.

I just want to kind of throw my hat in with the rest of them. I just don't think the plan they have in front of us now is a very good one because of all of the local people that are going to be hurt.

I am a builder and developer. I know there are other routes up here. But the day to day business type thing, the restaurants, the cabins and that sort of thing are really what is going to be devestated, that is going to destroy everybody's traffic values. The businesses, things changing, the traffic for two years, I am sure they will have their normal over-runs if they are typical.

Like I said, I just want to voice my opinion, it needs some further research. And it seems like one logical solution is a road through the bed of the lake for a while and spread the cost to the whole State and it won't have adverse effect on White County. And tell them to remember that Unicoi is Number 2 tourist attraction in Georgia, second only to Stone Mountain.

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

Thank you.

MR. HELAN: Fred Vermont Helan, P. O. Box 280, Helen, Georgia.

And I am Fire Marshal for the City of Helen and Chief also for White County Fire Department. I feel like that the DOT should look at the option of building a permanent bridge just in front of the dam in order to provide a permanent road and access with a DOT right of way separate from the bridge itself. This comes with regard to problems the dam has experienced in the past and is experiencing now. It would be a permanent fixture as far as the DOT roadway is concerned, and the dam to be constructed as to support a detour route when the bridge needed repairs.

We realize that the cost would be more but this would be a permanent fix and would take into account not having to put a temporary road bed in and leave the road standing along in the roadway and would be better in the long run for DOT and DNR. I would like to be in non-support of your project. I would like to say that the route they have taken for fire trucks, the route is very unacceptable and we would have to change our response routes.

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

MR. CANTRELL: James M. Cantrell.

I would like to make this statement as to why the people doing the designing and letting the bids, why can't they let this dam and this road in two bids. I am a contractor. I build roads. I wouldn't bid on the dam. I would bid on the road. I don't understand why they have to put it in one contract and try to get dam builders to build a road. If they put it in two contracts and let the road on one and let the road go through the bottom of the lake and let the dam go through another contract, I don't think they wihl have any problem with it. The road is merely a few drops in the bucket in money compared to the money they are going to spend on the dam. They are going to do the dam any way. Why can't they let the road in a separate bid? I think they ought to look into that.

I think the plan is unfair to the residents and businesses on 356. I am a partner in the J. C. Campgrounds also. And their proposal, if it is done that way, that would eliminate us completely, and we are only one of about twenty to twenty-five small businesses over that way.

People have mortgages on these businesses. They have to pay. And how they expect them to pay

FORM 140 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

that when they are also paying taxes that the State is going to receive off of this, also that they are going to lose while this work is going on, if they closed the road. It is just not fair to the people, to none of the community. And I appreciate your time.

I think they should have another meeting, have a public address system, have seats for the people and take the questions from the floor, and a little bit more organized than they have in this meeting. Also that we should have somebody present that could answer questions and not say, "I don't know."

They should have had a better display, a bigger one and more available. One small display is not enough for a meeting the size of this one.

They should have more information and should be displayed better and be able to answer the questions of the people asked from the floor. Is it possible that there is politics got into the planning of this?

MS. PRICE: I am Linda Price, Route 1, Box 1150, Sautee, Georgia.

My concern is that my husband and I own a half million dollar business on 356 1.7 miles past Unicoi. If you redirect traffic around the lake bed or around to 197 and back up 356, it will bypass our

FORM 740 PENSAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

restaurant, and we have a major chance of going under. If you redirect the traffic to here, you have a big chance of the people not coming back to our restaurant. I don't understand why they can't build a bridge beside the dam to stay there permanently and use that as a passageway over the bed. If they are going to put it into a permanent bridge beside the dam, then they won't have to disturb all of the businesses along 356.

I think that the State has not considered the possibility that the State may lose a million dollars by taking -- putting a permanent bridge over the lake, but they are not considering all of the bridges northward on 356.

When I talked to this man over here, he said he had no idea the revenue that we take in on the businesses, the camp grounds, the restaurants on the other side of Unicoi Lake. My husband and I, we have had our accounts figured out, and we have paid right at $74,000 in sales tax to the State in the last three years alone. Tanglewood Cabins, which is right next-door, we figured them out. They have paid $75,000 in sales tax to the State of Georgia in the last two years.

If you kill our businesses out there, you

FORM 740 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

might as well bankrupt us as well. I will lose my home. You might as well go ahead and have them all go under. And the State can lose that much revenue. That is counting two businesses. That is not counting five camp grounds down from us, plus the property taxes we pay.

As they were saying, White County depends on the revenue mostly from the Helen area and State Park area. And got bonds just to build a new high school. We are going to start on it in a few months. If they take and kill all of the revenue from White County out in this area, who is going to pay for this new school. Not the property taxes, property owners out there. I think our main concern, the State is so concerned about saving a little bit of money by going all up around the lake, stopping all of the bus traffic and camper traffic and everything when they are not considering five million dollars worth of businesses they are going to kill.

(Public statements concluded.)

FORM 710 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002

CERTIFICATE

G E O R G I A )
)
DEKALB COUNTY )

The within and foregoing Public Hearing was reported by the undersigned as stated in the caption, and the questions and answers were reduced to writing by the undersigned.

I further certify the within and foregoing pages 1 through 13 constitutes a true, correct and complete transcript of the public statements made at said time and place.

I further certify I am neither of kin nor counsel to any of the parties, nor in any way interested in the outcome of said case.

This 14th day of October, 1993.

Howard E. Worley, Notary Public, Certified Court Reporter, Class A, Certificate A2

FORM 70 PENGAD INC., BAYONNE, NJ 07002