

ECOS moves against New Hope

by Lynn Smith
Staff Writer

ECOS, a campus ecology group, is joining with others in a legal suit opposing the construction of the New Hope Dam and Reservoir Project.

The Conservation Council of N.C. and three area residents are joint plaintiffs. The case was filed with the Federal District Court in Greensboro Tuesday.

ECOS is contributing research on the environmental consequences of the project and some financial support. James C. Wallace, president of the Conservation Council, is providing most of the funds.

The ecology groups charge that the Army Corps of Engineers began construction of the dam without filing the environmental impact statement required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

"They've gone against the spirit of the law," said ECOS office manager Watson Morris. "It was meant to supply the public with information before any damage was done."

Morris said the court had assured ECOS the Army Corps would have to file a report before any "irreversible damage" was done to the construction site, but "they lied to us."

"Large areas have already been stripped of growth and the runoff is polluting the rivers below the site," he charged. "I call that irreversible damage. The Army Corps' actions are clearly improper."

The project was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives in 1962 after flooding of the Cape Fear River caused serious damage in the Fayetteville area. Plans were justified on the basis of flood control, recreation, water supply and water quality control benefits.

Ecology groups view the dam as a "leftover from a bygone era." They point out that the House approval was given at a time when voter interest in

environmental destruction was insufficient to question the wisdom of the project.

An ECOS handout claims the reservoir will be "a \$38,000,000 cesspool." Morris explained that the pollution from Chapel Hill and Durham sewage and Haw River industries would cause the basin to be "full of green slime... unfit for any purpose."

The Army Corps of Engineers claims the project will improve the environment by providing water to flush pollution from the lower parts of the river. The plaintiffs charge that this just hides the problem.

"It's an improper use of taxpayers' money," said Morris. "They shouldn't have to pay just because a few industries are too stingy to clean up at the source."

The environmental groups also question the validity of counteracting flood problems by impounding large basins of water. "It would be much better not to build in the flood plain of rivers" is their solution.

Correction

Tar Heel errs in marijuana story

We wish to correct an article in last week's Tar Heel which said that UNC researchers had proved marijuana to be nonaddictive and that massive doses of THC given to animals had shown no ill effects on the animals.

Dr. Donald E. McMillan, one of the researchers, released a statement this week denying the information in the article last week.

"The article attributes to us statements that marijuana is not harmful or addictive and that massive doses of THC produce no ill effects," read the statement.

"These statements are not true and we did not make them. There is ample evidence that large doses of THC are harmful to animals. We have observed many toxic symptoms after large doses of THC, including death in pigeons and dogs.

"What we did say was that following repeated administration of THC to animals, tolerance (more drug is required

to produce effects initially observed at lower doses) develops to some of the effects of the drug. Thus, large doses that are toxic when first administered, produce much smaller effects when they are given repeatedly."

The Tar Heel wishes to apologize to the researchers and to our readers for the inaccuracies contained in last week's story.

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