

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Controversial Pump Station in Fluvanna County Faces New Problems

A controversial project from the James River Water Authority may be back at square one after a new problem has risen.

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FLUVANNA COUNTY, Va. (WVIR) - A controversial project by the James River Water Authority is facing several challenges with the potential to be back at square one after years of work.

The authority has proposed building a water pump station at Point of Fork, which aims to draw water out of the James River to support growing demand in Zion Crossroads. The project has been met with pushback because of the site's historical significance to the Monacan Indians. The site sits on Rassawek, the tribe's capital, which is also home to sacred burial grounds and other artifacts.

Officials from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources informed the JRWA in September that one of the project's consulting archaeologists, Carol Tyrer, falsified her resume, and does not meet the state's qualifications to advise on the project. Tyrer allegedly does not have a master's degree in archaeology or a related field.

The department was made aware of this information from a member of the public, while it was reviewing the authority's request for a burial permit. The JRWA does not agree with the state's analysis of Tyrer; however the VDHR says in order for the permit to be issued, the JRWA will need to find a new archaeologist and meet several other requirements.

"There are standards that have been developed in the National Park Service that are used nationwide when dealing with qualifications for people who work with cultural resources," said VDHR Director Julie Langan. "I wouldn't say that I'm surprised they're contesting it, but I don't think they have very much experience in determining whether or not an archaeologist meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications standards."

Earlier this month, the JRWA hired a new consulting firm to do a peer review of the work that has been done thus far. If that firm finds any field work was done improperly, the authority may have to reconduct analysis of the site, further delaying construction.

"We're going to ask them to give a full and comprehensive review of the information that's already been prepared and developed as well as the comments that have been made and ask them to revise the documents as appropriate," said JRWA attorney Justin Curtis.

Curtis says most of the comments the JRWA has received have to do with how the information and data gathered has been presented in reports, rather than how the actual fieldwork was conducted.

The JRWA is also awaiting a different permit approval from the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps recently changed the permit's categorization from a nationwide permit to an individual permit, which requires more public input and notice before anything is approved.

"If it appears that there may be more than minimal impact or some other concern related to the public's interest, we would not authorize it under that general permit, but instead do it under an individual permit," said Tom Walker, chief of the regulatory branch for Army Corp of Engineers. "There's potential for more analysis, depending on what we get through that public input process."

With all of these obstacles, those representing the Monacan Tribe are hopeful the JRWA will choose a different site for the water pump station.

"We feel that when they do hire a qualified archaeologist, they're going to learn that it's much better to locate this project at a different location," said Marion Werkheiser, an attorney for the Monacan Tribe.

The VDHR has requested a meeting with the James River Water Authority to further discuss their application going forward. The authority says it's determined to get the project done as quickly and efficiently as possible while still being respectful to the tribe.

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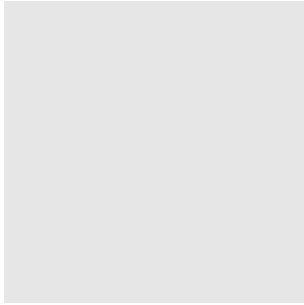
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