

Water district wants to create Northeast Texas lake

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LADONIA, Texas- A former cotton shipping center and the river that flows nearby are now in the target sights of North Texas water planners.

But not all residents agree that damming the North Sulphur River to flood thousands of acres of rural Fannin County is a good idea.

The Lewisville-based Upper Trinity Regional Water District, which provides services to 25 cities and utility systems, is seeking state and federal approval to dam the North Sulphur and create Lake Ralph Hall for its customers in Denton, Dallas and Collin counties.

"We're looking ever which way" for water, Tom Taylor, the district's executive director, told The Dallas Morning News in Tuesday's editions.

The district has applied for a state permit to block the river almost five miles from Ladonia and pipe some of its water to a treatment plant at Lewisville Lake in Denton County, then to thousands of homes in Flower Mound, Argyle, Sanger, Celina and other communities.

The North Sulphur can dry up, but lake planners say they are confident its drainage basin can support a reservoir.

Named for the longtime Democratic Texas congressman from Rockwall, the lake would have a water surface of about 8,500 acres at normal elevation, cost \$200 million and be as many as 15 years in the making, said Taylor.

Federal and state agencies will study environmental impacts and hydrological plans. Public hearings may be held. If the lake is approved, the district will begin securing land _ through condemnation if necessary.

One resident, Richard Fields, said he was resigned to losing about 20 acres and wanted a fair price for his land and straight talk.

"I realize this is progress that's got to happen," he said. "An attorney told me, `Sounds like you paid too much for your property.'"

Ladonia Mayor Leon Hurse and Fannin County Judge Derrell Hall said they wanted to make sure land owners were treated fairly.

But "`fairly' is an abused word," said Flesher said.

Ladonia is about 65 miles northeast of Dallas.

Information from: The Dallas Morning News