

## **Another lake should be last resort**

### **Staff reports**

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The Texas Water Development Board on April 18 approved a long-range regional plan that includes the building of the Marvin Nichols 1 reservoir on the Sulphur River, a project highly contested by area landowners.

The 72,000-acre lake is to include parts of Red River, Titus, Bowie and Morris counties and is one of several lakes proposed along the Sulphur River.

The construction of a \$569 million Fastrill Dam on the Neches River also gained state board approval as did a plan to pump water hundreds of miles to the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

The 5-1 vote came over the objections of landowners, business owners and environmentalists who argue the reservoirs would flood and condemn hundreds of thousands of acres.

The vote does not guarantee the building of the reservoirs, which is likely several years away.

Many anticipate the real fight will come when they actually try to build one of these reservoirs.

The regional water plans are designed to help the state meet the water needs of the next 50 years when the population could nearly double to more than 40 million.

The Marvin Nichols Dam has sparked the most controversy. It is the strategic plan for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, but water planners in northeast Texas —where it would be built — say they don't want it.

The dam would flood about 72,000 acres and was initially agreed to by northeast Texas planners. It was later rejected when residents and businesses learned they could lose acres to mitigate the flood zone as required by the federal Clean Water Act.

Ralph Heath, president of Fort Worth-based defense contractor Lockheed Martin Co., said the plan with the reservoirs is needed to

ensure the Dallas-Fort Worth economy won't suffer because of a lack of water.

Dry weather conditions have prompted many counties across the state to implement strict conservation methods to conserve water. We strongly urge the Dallas-Fort Worth area to follow suit.

Environmentalists argued the Dallas-Fort Worth plan could secure as much water as needed with more conservation and better use of existing resources.

We agree. We feel Marvin Nichols 1 should be viewed as the absolutely last solution to this problem.

When times are tough, we all feel the pinch and do not think the destruction of thousand of acres is the answer to Dallas-Fort Worth's water woes.

Although the reservoir plans were approved last Tuesday, opponents vowed to keep fighting them through the permitting and construction process, which could take years.

State officials predict Texas will have to spend billions to refurbish existing water sources and transfer systems, or build new ones. The state was divided into 16 regions to tackle water issues facing different areas of the state.