

## **Study group will look at water supply options in NE Texas**

**A special study commission to explore water supply options in Northeast Texas for the Dallas area will likely begin work this fall.**

### **From Staff Reports**

June 21, 2007 - Mandated by the recent session of the Texas Legislation, the commission will consist of three members selected by the Region D Water Planning Group, representing Northeast Texas, and three members selected by the Region C Water Planning Group, representing the Dallas/North Texas area.

In a meeting Wednesday in Mount Pleasant, the Region D group agreed to accept nominations for individuals in the region's 19 counties to serve on the commission.

From the nominations, the Region D board will select three individuals who have the support of at least two-thirds of the board membership.

The Texas Legislature developed the special study approach in an effort to resolve water supply differences between the two regions.

The Dallas area region has proposed building Marvin Nichols Reservoir, a 62,000- to 77,000-acre lake on the Sulphur River south of Clarksville, as a future water source for the Dallas area.

Northeast Texas water planners have contended that the reservoir is not needed and Region C's needs can be supplied by other strategies, including conservation, raising the water levels of Wright Patman Reservoir near Texarkana, pumping water from Toledo Bend Reservoir on the Sabine River, and possibly using water from other existing reservoirs.

The legislation establishing the special study said the commission should:

n/ Review water supply alternatives, including supplies from Wright Patman, Toledo Bend, Lake Texoma, Lake O' the Pines and other lakes, and groundwater sources.

n/ Analyze the socioeconomic effect of the development of Dallas area water supply sources on Northeast Texas, including the impact on landowners, agriculture, industries and local taxing entities.

n/ Examine the effect of water availability from Wright Patman Reservoir and the impact of industries now using Patman's water.

n/ Evaluate measures to comply with federal mitigation requirements and consider whether the burden can be shared by the Region C area.

n/ Review innovative methods of compensation to property owners — including royalties and annual payments — affected by the construction of new reservoirs such as Marvin Nichols.

n/ Evaluate the minimum number of surface acres required for proposed reservoirs.

n/ Identify the locations of proposed reservoir sites and possible mitigation sites

The special study will likely start this year, possibly in September, and will be completed by Dec. 1, 2010, and delivered to state officials for consideration.

The study drew criticism from several members of the Northeast Texas water planning group, but others said the study is an opportunity for the group to express concerns over Marvin Nichols' economic and environmental impacts on the region. Members also expressed the sentiment that the special study commission is an opportunity to work toward a win-win scenario in future water resource management.

Several public officials said additional water supplies will not only be needed by Dallas in the next 10 to 50 years, but similar needs will be faced by Northeast Texas.

Speaking in favor of the possible construction of Marvin Nichols were Clarksville Mayor Ann Rushing, Mount Pleasant Mayor Jerry Boatner, and Ty Abston, also of Mount Pleasant, representing the Northeast Texas Water Commission.

“We must face the realities that Northeast Texas has only 600,000 voters while Dallas has six million,” said Abston. “They will ultimately get what they want.”

Max Shumake said Dallas has “all the water it will need” in Wright Patman and Toledo Bend Reservoirs.

In other business, the Northeast Texas planners renewed an administrative arrangement with the Northeast Texas Municipal Water District, headquartered in Hughes Springs.

Appreciation was expressed to the district and its manager, Walt Sears, for work that assists the planning on behalf of Region D.

The next Region D meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 15, starting at 1 p.m. in the Mount Pleasant Civic Center.

The Northeast Texas planning area consists of all or portions of Bowie, Camp, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Gregg, Harrison, Hopkins, Hunt, Lamar, Marion, Morris, Red River, Rains, Smith, Titus, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood counties.

— Information from Region D Water Planning Group

Commission will analyze effect of development of Dallas area water supply sources on region

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There was no mention of the George Parkhouse I and II projects at the meeting. The two reservoirs, which would be built north of Sulphur Bluff and touch parts of Lamar, Delta and Hopkins counties, had been mentioned in deliberations during the recently ended legislative session on state water planning. The Parkhouse projects, however, did not make it into the final legislation, and there are no current plans to build the lakes in the

near future. The projects could be discussed again in the distant future if the Marvin Nichols project and other reservoir proposals do not come to fruition.

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