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In Our View

Conserve first

Texas should listen to its people

A recent poll sponsored by the National Wildlife Foundation says a majority of Texans questioned are dissatisfied with the state's 50-year water plan. Roughly two-thirds say they'd rather the state implement water conservation efforts than create massive reservoirs and the necessary pipelines to move the water to where it is needed.

Three cheers for them. Conservation has all but been abandoned as a crucial part of the state's water plans and it should be considered as the first step toward abating future water shortages.

The results of the poll should be welcome news for area water plan opponents in their fight to keep the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir from being built. Their opposition to building the reservoir and shipping most of the water to the Dallas-Fort Worth area isn't so much a matter of denying critical future water supplies where they will be needed, but that those at the receiving end of this pipeline have done little to curtail what many perceive to be wasteful and gluttonous practices.

Some say they'd be more likely to support the construction of the Nichols reservoir if it could be shown that it is the only viable alternative to potential water shortages. Many suspect it is not, and those poised to suffer the most from building the reservoir-Northeast Texans-have the right to wonder if all other potential sources have been explored and vetted for suitability.

It seems far more sensible to fully implement conservation efforts before embarking on an expensive and environmentally/economically delicate water reservoir plan. Proof of the reservoirs' necessity should be categorically demonstrated, and all prudent alternatives thoroughly explored, before that first shovel of dirt is ever turned over in East Texas.