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If you build it...

More water hustling in yesterday's *Dallas Morning News*. In yet another [pro-reservoir](#) column, William McKenzie begins,

About 20 minutes north of Mount Pleasant, you'll find a bumpy, unpaved road that takes you into the heart of one of Texas's great water disputes. The proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir site lies alongside the pothole-filled road, which curves through acres of private, impenetrable hardwoods until it finally comes upon the Sulphur River.

Downstream from a graffiti-covered bridge is where the Sulphur would be dammed to form Marvin Nichols.

Bumpy unpaved road...pothole filled road...impenetrable hardwoods...graffiti-covered bridge...

How untidy compared to freeways, St. Augustine lawns, business parks, and strip malls. And such a waste of exploitable land!

As usual, McKenzie goes on to claim, with very little supporting data, that North Texas - Dallas and the surrounding suburbs - will run out of water by 2060 or before, if Marvin Nichols Reservoir isn't built. He further claims that conservation measures won't be sufficient, and that alternatives to reservoir construction will be prohibitively expensive.

More than the projected \$2.2 billion cost of Marvin Nichols Reservoir? What alternatives?

All of this is based on predictions that North Texas's population will double over the next 50 years.

But I wonder: Is it a case of build it *because* they're coming or build it

so they'll come?

His language is telling:

Wrong calls on reservoirs would leave *us* [my emphasis] high and dry...

Do nothing and *we're* [my emphasis] way short of water.

Us...we're...

What about *them* and *they're*? You know, the folks in Northeast Texas who'll lose hundreds of thousands of acres to the project?

McKenzie continues,

Complicating this is a wicked set of politics. A triumvirate of farmers, timber interests and environmentalists don't want new lakes, and they have a toehold in the House.

Wicked politics. Makes me feel sorry for those poor, politically outgunned pro-reservoir folks. You know, Metro 8 Chambers of Commerce, Dallas Water Utilities, North Texas Municipal Water District, Tarrant Regional Water District, The City of Dallas. Fighting the big guys against all odds.

McKenzie ends the piece with an anecdote about riding around with Clarksville mayor Ann Rushing who told him that her town has lost half of its population, largely because it relies on well water, and that there isn't enough good water keep people living there. Did she take a poll? Most rural folks depend on wells, and there's no shortage of groundwater in Northeast Texas.

If he hasn't already done so, I hope McKenzie will spend some time with folks who are in danger of losing their property or jobs so that North Texas can ensure its own continued growth.

Posted by Henry Chappell at [12:07 PM](#) [1 comments](#)