

Longview News

Joint study could end water woes

By [JIMMY ISAAC](#)

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Water planners in Northeast Texas and the Dallas/Fort Worth area have been at odds over planned reservoirs for more than a year. A possible joint study of options to meet the regions' future water demands is intended to bring the contention to an end.

The Texas Water Development Board has suggested that the two regions study a proposal to build a 72,000-acre lake in Titus and Red River counties or to explore alternatives, according to officials with the North East Texas Regional Water Planning Group, also known as Region D.

Officials in North Texas, or Region C, want to build the Marvin Nichols Reservoir on the Sulphur River to provide additional water sources for its growing metropolitan area. Region D has opposed the lake because of the possible impact on the region's economy and area landowners.

"I would see this study as a signal of an accommodation or acknowledgement that urban is going to need more water and is done in a way that will minimize the effect to the rural," said Walt Sears, administrator for Region D. "In the dynamic of rural vs. urban, this study is an attempt to find a win-win arrangement as opposed to a win-lose arrangement."

The study is included in a Texas Senate bill relating to the development, management and preservation of the state's water resources. Senate Bill 3, which passed the Senate in late March and will now be debated in the House, provides for a commission of three board members from each of the respective regions to review the water supply alternatives available to the North Texas water planning area. Those alternatives include obtaining additional water from existing reservoirs such as Toledo Bend, Wright Patman Lake, Lake o' the Pines and Lake Texoma, according to the legislation.

The joint regional study would cost \$542,200, with 53.5 percent of that cost coming from state funds set aside for Region D, according to Sears.

The House Natural Resources Committee had removed Marvin Nichols and another future reservoir — Fastrill in Angelina County — from the bill, according to the Dallas Morning News. North Texas officials have told the newspaper they will try to put those reservoirs back onto Senate Bill 3 once it reaches the House floor.

"Whether you're talking about Fastrill or your talking about (Marvin) Nichols, urban area needs are going to have to be met and rural areas are going to have to find a strategy that can accommodate them," Sears said. "No single study or no single activity is going to completely resolve all of those issues. This is just one rung in a very tall ladder."

Once an agreement has been reached, Region D officials will consider signing a contract for the study at a June 20 meeting in Mount Pleasant, Sears said.