

Paper company speaks against reservoir

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TEXARKANA — International Paper officials have taken a strong stand against the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir, telling Texarkana city leaders to pull the plug on any support for the proposal.

“This is an important issue for the future of important forest and paper manufacturing sectors,” said mill communications manager Amanda Black Keeney. “Certainly we want to take time to visit with area leaders and inform them about the harmful effects of this reservoir, our way of life and our industry.”

Mill officials continued their ongoing opposition to the reservoir site which they said would cripple the forest and paper products industry, sap the city of critical water resources and devastate the many area businesses which rely on International Paper as an economic driver.

Both Clarksville and Texarkana city councils have gone on record as backers of the proposed lake, which would lie principally in Red River County and cover much of the remaining hardwood forests in Northeast Texas.

At Monday’s meeting, mill officials pointed to data collected by U.S. Corps of Engineers during the past decade that they believe would muddy the waters for Lake Wright Patman.

“The evidence is clear that an additional reservoir on the Sulphur River basin jeopardizes Texarkana’s future growth as well as crippling water flows necessary for the manufacture of our products,” Texarkana Mill Environmental Manager Doug Wadley said. “Corps data clearly shows a significant decline in average lake levels and downstream river flows.”

“Our manufacturing processes require plentiful wood supply and adequate water flows on both sides of Lake Wright Patman,” Mill Manager of Operational Services Don Forst said. “Any reservoir on the Sulphur River disrupts those necessary flows and eliminates extreme amounts of forestland in a forestry dependent region.”

Although Marvin Nichols was removed from Senate Bill 3 by the House Natural Resources Committee, International Paper and other reservoir opponents predict proponents will actively work to reinstate the language that designates Marvin Nichols as a unique reservoir site.