

Section 4

Summary and Recommendations

4.1 Comparison of Reservoir Sites Recommended for Protection

Information relevant to the criteria adopted for the reservoir site screening process discussed in Section 2 has been updated from the technical evaluations of 16 reservoir sites recommended for protection and summarized in Table 4.1-1. Observations and comparisons of these 16 reservoir sites are presented in the following paragraphs in the order of relative importance for the screening process that was applied to about 150 sites and discussed in Section 2.

4.1.1 Recommended to Meet Needs or as a Unique Reservoir Site in the 2007 State Water Plan

All of the reservoir sites recommended for protection, with the exceptions of Cuero II (Sandies Creek), George Parkhouse I, and George Parkhouse II, are recommended to meet projected water needs and/or are recommended for designation as unique reservoir sites in the 2007 State Water Plan. The Parkhouse I and II Reservoirs are identified as alternative water management strategies for several major water suppliers in the 2006 Region C Water Plan. The Cuero II reservoir site is not explicitly mentioned in the 2006 Region L Water Plan, though it might be considered Additional Storage which is referenced therein as a water management strategy in need of further study and funding prior to implementation.

4.1.2 Firm Yield

The largest firm yield or dependable supply during a drought of record (602,000 acft/yr) can be provided by the Marvin Nichols IA reservoir site. Depending upon the ultimate development of other sites recommended for protection in the Sulphur River Basin (e.g., Parkhouse I, Parkhouse II, and/or Ralph Hall) and their priorities relative to Marvin Nichols IA, the firm yield of Marvin Nichols IA could be as low as 460,800 acft/yr (Appendix A). The Brushy Creek reservoir site provides the least firm yield (1,380 acft/yr) among the sites recommended for protection, however, it is the recommended water supply strategy for the City of Marlin.

Table 4.1-1. Comparison of Reservoir Sites Recommended for Protection

Reservoir Site	River Basin	Region	Recommended to Meet Needs (2006 RWP) or Unique Reservoir Site (2007 SWP)	Firm Yield (acft/yr)	Unit Cost of Water - Raw @ Reservoir (\$/acft/yr)	Special Considerations (Permitted)	Ecologically Significant Stream Segment (# Criteria)	Terrestrial Impacts, Bottomland Hardwood Preservation (Priority)	2060 Water Supply Needs within 50 miles (acft/yr)	Least Distance to Major Demand Center (miles)	System Operations Opportunity	Water Quality Concerns (Treatment)	Yield / Surface Area
Bedias	Trinity	G & H	Yes	75,430	\$228	No	No Impact	Just Upstream (6)	284,552	85	Yes	No	7.5
Brownsville Weir	Rio Grande	M	Yes	20,643	\$182	Yes	Inundating (4)	No Impact	223,489	29	Yes	No	34.4
Brushy Creek	Brazos	G	Yes	1,380	\$455	Yes	No Impact	No Impact	246,820	83	No	No	2.0
Cedar Ridge	Brazos	G	Yes	36,891	\$230	No	No Impact	No Impact	17,240	146	Yes	No	6.0
Cuero II	Guadalupe	L	No	71,437	\$501	No	No Impact	No Impact	346,140	71	Yes	No	2.7
Fastfill	Neches	I	Yes	134,038	\$152	No	Inundating (3)	Inundating (1)	136,476	127	Yes	No	5.4
Lower Bois D'Arc	Red	C	Yes	126,280	\$140	No	Inundating (3)	Inundating (4)	728,028	80	Yes	No	7.6
Marvin Nichols IA	Sulphur	D	Yes	602,000	\$61	No	Indirect (2)	Inundating (1)	103,879	124	Yes	No	8.9
Nueces Off-Channel	Nueces	N	Yes	39,935	\$425	No	No Impact	No Impact	159,640	56	Yes	No	7.5
Palmetto Bend II	Lavaca	P	Yes	22,964	\$515	Yes	Indirect (2)	No Impact	79,857	93	Yes	No	5.0
Parkhouse I	Sulphur	D	No	122,000	\$174	No	No Impact	Upstream (1)	561,591	93	Yes	No	4.2
Parkhouse II	Sulphur	D	No	144,300	\$107	No	No Impact	Upstream (1)	473,850	94	Yes	No	10.0
Ralph Hall	Sulphur	C	Yes	32,940	\$330	No	No Impact	No Impact	419,136	72	Yes	No	4.3
Ringgold	Red	B	Yes	32,800	\$273	No	No Impact	No Impact	313,833	96	Yes	No	2.2
Tehuacana	Trinity	C	Yes	41,900	\$294	No	Indirect (3)	Just Upstream (5)	890,895	79	Yes	No	2.8
Wilson Hollow	Brazos	G	Yes	7,556	\$715	No	No Impact	No Impact	511,124	79	Yes	No	22.7

4.1.3 Unit Cost of Water

The Marvin Nichols IA site provides firm raw water supply at the reservoir for the least unit cost among the reservoir sites recommended for protection. Even with potential reductions in firm yield due to prior development of upstream reservoirs, Marvin Nichols IA would still have the least unit cost for additional firm water supply. The greatest unit cost is associated with the Wilson Hollow site which is an off-channel reservoir including pumping and transmission facilities to move water from Lake Palo Pinto. It is important to remember that costs reported in this study include neither transmission from the source reservoir to the ultimate user nor treatment to drinking water standards.

4.1.4 Special Considerations

Permits have been issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) or a predecessor regulatory agency for reservoirs at the Brownsville Weir, Brushy Creek, and Palmetto Bend II sites. A water rights application is pending at TCEQ for the Ralph Hall site and water rights applications are in various stages of preparation for the Cedar Ridge, Fastrill, Lower Bois d'Arc Creek, and Wilson Hollow sites.

4.1.5 Ecologically Significant Stream Segments

Six of the 16 reservoir sites recommended for protection are expected to have some effect upon stream segments recommended for designation as ecologically significant by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD). The Brownsville Weir, Fastrill, and Lower Bois d'Arc Creek sites would affect recommended segments by inundation, while the Marvin Nichols IA, Palmetto Bend II, and Tehuacana sites could have indirect effects upon recommended segments as a result of changes in flow regime below the reservoirs.

4.1.6 Terrestrial Impacts

Seven of the 16 reservoir sites recommended for protection are expected to have some effect upon prioritized bottomland hardwood preservation sites identified by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Fastrill, Lower Bois d'Arc Creek, and Marvin Nichols IA sites would affect such bottomland hardwood preservation sites by inundation, while the Bedias and Tehuacana sites would be located immediately upstream of potential preservation sites. Although the Parkhouse I and Parkhouse II sites would be located some distance upstream of a

prioritized bottomland hardwood preservation site, detailed hydrological and biological studies would likely be required to assess potential reservoir impacts. Development of reservoir projects at all 16 of the sites recommended for protection in this study would significantly affect only two of 14 Priority 1 bottomland hardwood preservation sites in Texas. Since publication of the prioritized bottomland hardwood preservation sites by USFWS in 1985, no major reservoirs have been constructed that consequentially affect any of the 14 Priority 1 sites.

4.1.7 Water Supply Needs within 50 Miles

The Lower Bois d'Arc Creek, Parkhouse I, Parkhouse II, Ralph Hall, Tehuacana, and Wilson Hollow reservoir sites have the greatest projected needs for additional water supply at year 2060 for counties within (or partially within) a 50-mile radius of the sites. The Cedar Ridge and Palmetto Bend II sites have the least projected needs for potential users geographically proximate to the reservoir sites. It is noted, however, that projected needs near the Cedar Ridge site could be underestimated because existing reservoirs serving users in the area are in the midst of a drought more severe than that experienced in the 1950s.

4.1.8 Least Distance to a Major Demand Center

Among the 16 reservoir sites recommended for protection, the Brownsville Weir and Nueces Off-Channel reservoir sites are the closest to some of the largest current population centers in Texas, while the Cedar Ridge, Fastrill, and Marvin Nichols IA sites are the most distant.

4.1.9 System Operations Opportunity

Each of the 16 reservoir sites recommended for protection, with the exception of Brushy Creek, presents some opportunity for enhancement of firm yield through system operations with one or more existing reservoirs or alternative water supply sources.

4.1.10 Water Quality Concerns

None of the 16 reservoir sites recommended for protection exhibit water quality characteristics expected to significantly affect costs of treatment to drinking water standards.

4.1.11 Yield per Unit Surface Area

The Brownsville Weir and Wilson Hollow reservoir sites, though relatively small, are the most efficient in terms of firm yield per unit of inundated surface area.

4.2 Reservoir Site Acquisition Program

Based on the screening process described in Section 2 and technical evaluations presented in Section 3, 16 reservoir sites are recommended for protection through legislative designation as being of unique value for the construction of a reservoir. Beyond such designation, the Texas Legislature could choose to create a reservoir site acquisition program in order to exercise greater control over federal, state, or local government actions that would significantly impact the feasibility of future reservoir construction for water supply purposes. Table 4.2-1 summarizes the conservation, or normal, pool areas for the 16 reservoir sites evaluated in detail in this study, as well as the estimated costs for acquisition in 2005 dollars. As shown in Table 4.2-1, acquisition of all sites up to the conservation storage level would entail purchase of about 244,000 acres at an estimated capital cost of about \$413,000,000 for land only. This capital cost equates to an annual cost of about \$27,400,000 assuming a 40-year debt service period and an annual interest rate of 6 percent.

A reservoir site acquisition program should include sites that the Legislature has already designated as being of unique value for the construction of a reservoir. These designated sites are: Allens Creek on Allens Creek near the confluence with the Brazos River in Austin County; Columbia on Mud Creek, a tributary of the Angelina River, in Cherokee and Smith Counties; and Post on the north fork of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River in Garza County. As land for Allens Creek has already been purchased, only Columbia and Post need be included in a reservoir site acquisition program.

Consideration may also be given to protection and/or acquisition of five additional sites recommended for designation as unique reservoir sites in the 2007 State Water Plan, but not technically evaluated in this study. These sites are: Lake 07 and Lake 08 on the North Fork of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River in Lubbock County; Little River Reservoir and Little River Off-Channel on, or adjacent to, the Little River, a tributary of the Brazos River in Milam County; and Muenster Reservoir on Brushy Elm Creek, a tributary of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River in Cooke County.

**Table 4.2-1.
Reservoir Site Acquisition Program**

Reservoir	Conservation Pool Elevation (ft-msl)	Conservation Pool Area (acres)	Land Unit Cost¹ (\$/ac)	Conservation Pool Land Cost¹ (\$)
Bedias	210	10,000	\$3,088	\$30,876,000
Brownsville Weir	26	600 / 0 ²	\$0 ²	\$0 ²
Brushy Creek	380.5	697 / 0 ³	\$0 ³	\$0 ³
Cedar Ridge	1430	6,190	\$850	\$5,261,500
Cuero II	232	28,154	\$3,100	\$87,277,400
Fastrill	274	24,948	\$1,825	\$45,530,100
Lower Bois d'Arc	534	16,526	\$2,675	\$44,207,050
Marvin Nichols IA	328	67,392	\$1,201	\$80,937,792
Nueces Off-Channel	275.3	5,294	\$1,111	\$5,881,634
Palmetto Bend II	44	4,564	\$1,627	\$7,425,628
Parkhouse I	401	28,855	\$1,201	\$34,654,855
Parkhouse II	410	14,387	\$1,201	\$17,278,787
Ralph Hall	551	7,605	\$1,201	\$9,133,605
Ringgold	844	14,980	\$850	\$12,733,000
Tehuacana	315	14,938	\$2,009	\$30,010,442
Wilson Hollow	1077	333	\$4,250	\$1,415,250
Totals		244,166		\$412,623,043

¹Land costs in 2005 dollars.

²All of the inundated area associated with the Brownsville Reservoir lies within the channel portion of the Rio Grande and is managed and controlled by the United States and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission for flood protection purposes; therefore, it is anticipated that purchase of this land will not be necessary.

³All of the land to be inundated by Brushy Creek Reservoir has been purchased by the City of Marlin.

Additional acreage for project facilities and above the conservation storage level up to the 100-year or standard project flood level is usually purchased around the perimeter of a reservoir. Comprehensive hydrologic and hydraulic studies that define these flood levels, however, are typically a part of final design and have not been undertaken for most of the 18 reservoir sites recommended for protection and/or acquisition. Implementation of a reservoir site acquisition program will also necessarily entail substantial additional costs for title research, negotiations, land surveying, and legal proceedings.

As an important part of this reservoir site protection study, TPWD performed landcover classifications for each of the 16 reservoir sites selected for technical evaluation. Documentation

of resource information and pertinent assumptions for the landcover classifications is included in Appendix C. Figure 4.2-1 summarizes landcover classification by percentage for the potential acquisition program lands including all 16 reservoir sites technically evaluated herein up to their conservation storage levels. As shown in Figure 4.2-1, the predominant landcovers are Grassland (30 percent) and Upland Deciduous Forest (23 percent). Approximately 19 percent of the acquisition program lands are classified as Bottomland Hardwood Forest with more than 75 percent of such forests located in the Marvin Nichols IA and George Parkhouse I reservoir sites. Only about 7 percent of the acquisition program lands are classified as Agricultural Land.

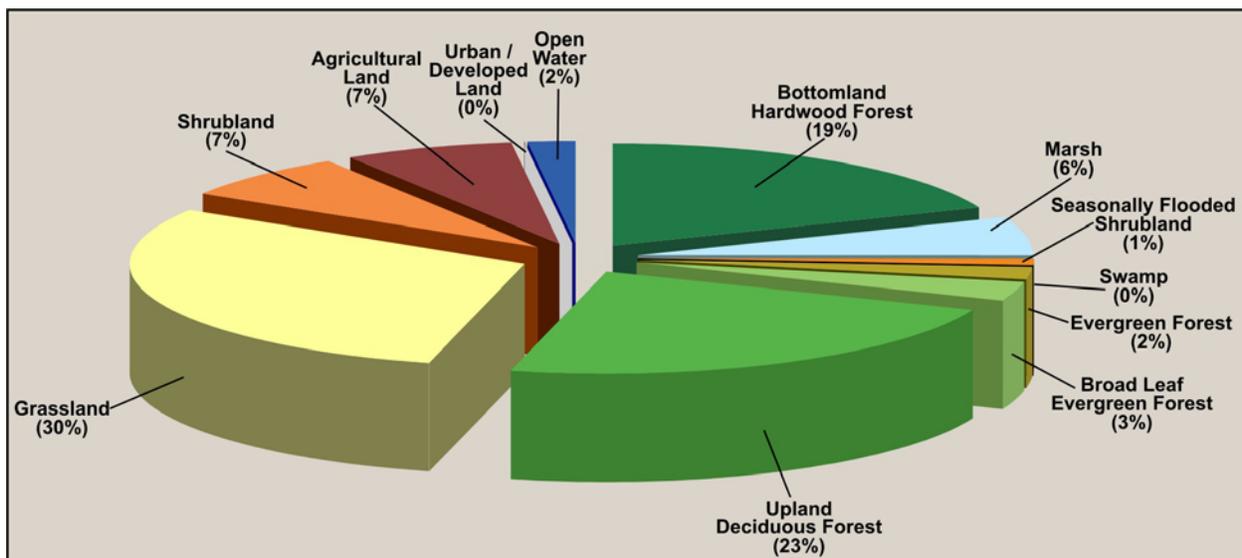


Figure 4.2-1. Landcover Classification for 16 Reservoir Sites

4.3 Recommendations

- Legislatively designate the 16 sites recommended in this study as unique.
- Investigate the feasibility and funding mechanisms for a reservoir site acquisition program including at least the 16 sites recommended herein for which land has yet to be acquired. Evaluate opportunities for revenue generation during debt service period (e.g., timber harvest, eco-tourism, etc.).
- Conduct more detailed studies to define total acquisition lands including flood pools and land required for project facilities.
- Consider multiple objectives for acquisition including potential use as mitigation lands for alternative reservoir projects should a reservoir at the unique site ultimately prove infeasible.

- Develop a reservoir site acquisition plan outlining specific measures to be taken over a designated timeframe, including state and local sponsor responsibilities.
- Consider further investigation (including updated landcover assessments) and potential acquisition of bottomland hardwood preservation sites for mitigation of habitat losses associated with future reservoir development.
- Consider expansion of Section 16.051(g)(2) of the Texas Water Code to include municipalities, water suppliers, utilities, transit authorities, and/or other public entities thereby preventing such entities from obtaining land or easements effectively preventing the construction of a reservoir at a site designated as unique by the Legislature.