

From: Georgia Purdy <gpurdy@cmaaccess.com>
To: <bill.roberts@twdb.state.tx.us>
Date: 10/4/2006 8:01:09 PM
Subject: Region I Water plan

Dear Mr. Roberts,

I have covered two Region I public meetings as a correspondent for the Jasper Newsboy, one in 2005 and the second, last week in Nacogdoches. Today, I speak as a private citizen, and my comments represent no group. I cannot support the building of new dams on the Neches River, nor do I believe the citizens in this region want to see further degradation to the natural resources in our area.

Everyone needs water and I do believe that the various boards across the state have attempted to put forth viable plans that would meet future needs. However, East Texas appears to have been delegated as a place of little value because we are not projected to have the kind of growth that the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex has and will continue to have.

The proposed Fastrill Dam to supply water to the Dallas area comes at the expense of East Texas because it will seriously damage our natural resources, thus, our economy, which depends more and more on ecotourism. People come here to visit The Big Thicket, to fish the lakes, canoe the streams, hunt, walk the hardwood bottoms, and birdwatch. In addition, both private landowners and timber companies depend on these forests.

The reduced flow on the Neches will negatively impact these resources. The Big Thicket is a unique crossroad in the ecosystem. Coastal estuaries depend on considerable inflow of fresh water. The Texas State Railroad will be compromised and so will the new Neches River National Wildlife Preserve.

Those are just the big issues. All along the river, there are beautiful hardwood bottoms that could be destroyed by reduced water flow. There are wetlands, vital to the ecosystem, that would be ruined.

I ask that new dam construction be halted. Find other ways, through better conservation efforts, to provide water to Region C. What we lose is not worth what they gain.

Sincerely,
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