

BMI Tetlay
Sierra Club
Golden Triangle Group

Thank you for the opportunity to express a few thoughts concerning the 2007 Draft Plan.

I represent the Sierra Club, both regionally (Bmt-PA-Orange) as well as the State Chapter.

As was mentioned at last night's public comment meeting in Conroe, this plan, while it makes progress toward environmental needs, still does not address this issue adequately. Within that context, allow me to elaborate.

One of the aspects of this current draft plan is to keep an option open for the creation of Fastrill Reservoir on the upper Neches River.

The Sierra Club both regionally and at the State level believes this ^{will} ~~is~~ not be in the best interests of this Region, the residents of this region, and the state as a whole. Let me explain.

First, the only reason given for the creation of Fastrill is to supply future water to Region C (the Dallas - Fort Worth and surrounding area.) But since that Region has exhibited and continues to exhibit very poor attempts at meaningful water conservation, while exhibiting the highest per capita consumption of any Region in the state, should be sufficient grounds for removing them from the equation. To consider the remote possibility of supplying them additional water in the foreseeable future, also removes water from our Region that may well be needed for our own future development. Then too, Region C appears only interested in obtaining our water to support residential expansion at the expense of the environment and the economies of surrounding Regions. The SC believes that to continue to encourage Region C's, or any Region's hopes of obtaining more water from out of their respective areas while neglecting strong conservation within their own areas, sets a dangerous precedent.

Secondly, impounding water on the upper Neches will have an adverse effect on the environment at the reservoir site, all the way downstream to, and including the coastal drainage. Since there have not been sufficient quantitative studies to determine the complete effects of diminished water supply to the downstream and estuaries communities; to remotely consider decreasing this water supply in the foreseeable future is at best, premature.

It must be remembered that the first and still one of the most ecologically unique National Preserves, much of which borders the Neches, depends on the frequent flooding of the Neches to maintain its special flora and fauna ecosystems. To impound water behind a dam and to allow much of that water to be siphoned off for purely personal property esthetics at the expense of this national treasure trove of plant and animal life would severely impact the quality and the longevity of the Big Thicket National Preserve.