

## Summary of Speaker Comments at the April 25, 2005 RCWPG Meeting

### Comments Regarding Action Items

The following public comments were provided to the RCWPG regarding the following Action Items:

#### Action Item A: Additional Wholesale Water Providers

No one signed up to give comments.

#### Action Item B: Action on Unique Stream Segments

No one signed up to give comments.

#### Action Item C: Action on Policy Topics

No one signed up to give comments.

#### Action Item D: Proposed Strategies to Meet Water Needs

1. Rita Beving, Dallas Sierra Club (provided handout)  
Ms. Beving strongly urged the planning group to make economically and ecologically sound decisions on water management strategies. Ms. Beving told the group that they should rely on increased use of existing water sources. She stated that the planning group was being asked to choose new reservoirs that far exceed the projected demands. She told the group that they could choose to spare 100,000 acres of hardwoods or upset potentially thousands of landowners. Ms. Beving told the group that they have many options and that new reservoirs were not needed. She asked the planning group to choose strategies based on conservation and existing supplies, not new reservoirs.
2. Billie Lindsey, Region D Landowner  
Ms. Lindsey strongly encouraged the planning group to remove Marvin Nichols Lake from the plan. She stated that it was not needed. She is one of hundreds who live in the area of the proposed Marvin Nichols Lake. Ms. Lindsey owns 300 acres in the Sulphur River Basin. She is the fifth generation on her land. Ms. Lindsay stated that hundreds of acres of crops are grown in the area that would be impacted by the lake. She is concerned about all of the people who will lose their homes for the new lake. Ms. Lindsey told the planning group that they were taking away her freedom and her rights by taking her land. Ms. Lindsey urged the planning group to remove Marvin Nichols Lake from the plan.
3. Virginia Blevins, UTRWD Representative for Justin  
Ms. Blevins told the group that she supports the proposed Lake Ralph Hall. She stated that it was the most feasible and reliable alternative for UTRWD. The proposed reservoir has huge environmental benefits. Lake Ralph Hall would increase the safety of future water supply for UTRWD. Ms. Blevins stated that the project is receiving large support, including support from landowners. She urged the planning group to keep Lake Ralph Hall in the plan. Ms. Blevins referred to an article that ran in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram's Parade Magazine

on Sunday regarding the world water resources. Ms. Blevins told the group that if they wait 10 years on Lake Ralph Hall that it will be too late.

4. Liz Wheelan

Ms. Wheelan was no longer at the meeting when her name was called.

5. Bob Larson (provided a handout)

Mr. Larson strongly encouraged the planning group to vote against Lake Fastrill. Mr. Larson told the group that the proposed Lake Fastrill would inundate 25,000 acres and would flood the proposed wildlife refuge. According to Mr. Larson, Lake Fastrill would have a negative impact on the Big Thicket, which is dependant on flood flows. The proposed reservoir would impact the reintroduction of the black bear in Texas. Mr. Larson stated that Lake Fastrill would flood 25 miles of river, including the area of the Space Shuttle Columbia wreckage. Mr. Larson stated that Region C had previously voted down this project. Lake Fastrill is not in the Region I plan. This project will generate intense opposition. According to Mr. Larson, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would not support Lake Fastrill. Mr. Larson urged the planning group to remove Lake Fastrill as a recommended or an alternative strategy. He told the planning group that if they choose to recommend the project that they ought to explain to the public the reasoning for doing so.

6. Janice Bezanson, Texas Committee on Natural Resources

Ms. Bezanson told the group that the proposed new reservoirs would have negative impacts. She noted that the consultants had identified enough water supplies from existing sources that new reservoirs were not needed. Ms. Bezanson urged the planning group to pursue water conservation and existing supplies first. She mentioned that additional water would include the desalination of Lake Texoma. She told the group that Lake Wright Patman should be a recommended strategy instead of an alternative strategy. Ms. Bezanson congratulated the group on the amount of reuse being included in the plan. She added that more reuse could be included. Ms. Bezanson urged the group to remove Marvin Nichols, Fastrill, and any other new reservoir from the plan.

7. Richard Huckaby, Denton County FWSD #1A

Mr. Huckaby supports the strategies for Upper Trinity Regional Water District, particularly Lake Ralph Hall. Mr. Huckaby thanked Judge Hall for his willingness to work out their differences regarding Lake Ralph Hall. He asked the planning group to please keep their options open.

8. Oscar Burchard, President of the UTRWD Board

Mr. Burchard stated that the Upper Trinity Regional Water District must work today to ensure water in the future, including Lake Ralph Hall. He asked the Upper Trinity Regional Water District Board members to stand in support of Lake Ralph Hall. According to Mr. Burchard, 67 property owners support the Lake Ralph Hall project. He told the group that he looks forward to resolving the remaining issues. According to Mr. Burchard, Lake Ralph Hall will resolve an environmental issue. He encouraged the planning group to include Lake Ralph Hall in the plan.

9. Richard Wilkinson, UTRWD – Ponder, TX  
Mr. Wilkinson stated that he loved nature but that he understood the need for water. Mr. Wilkinson wants to work with the environmental groups to resolve their differences. He stated that we don't need to fight – we need to find some way to get water.
10. George Frost, Region D Water Planning Group Member  
Mr. Frost acknowledged the fact that the region needs to ensure the area has enough water for the future. He stated the need to more carefully plan the land use and protect as much land as possible. Mr. Frost's family lost land to Lake Wright Patman. He told the group that they could use every drop of water in the Sulphur Basin without losing any more land. Mr. Frost suggested that Lake Wright Patman could catch and hold the water up to 235 feet and pipe it to Region C. In his opinion, this would triple the supply of Lake Wright Patman. Mr. Frost listed several companies who are opposed to Marvin Nichols Lake, including Union Pacific. He urged the planning group to upgrade Lake Wright Patman and downgrade Marvin Nichols Lake.
11. Todd Madison, UTRWD – Lincoln Park, TX  
Mr. Madison told the group that the UTRWD prides itself on providing clean, safe water. Lake Ralph Hall would solve an environmental condition. Without Lake Ralph Hall, the environmental condition of the Sulphur River will continue to deteriorate. According to Mr. Madison, Lake Ralph Hall will provide \$18 billion in economic benefits. Twenty-five cities and utilities are expected to have a water shortage. Without additional supplies, economic growth will be stunted. Mr. Madison told the group that they must be visionary and bold. He asked the planning group to include Lake Ralph Hall in the plan.
12. Lyndal Burnett  
Mr. Burnett told the group that he was in favor of the proposed Lake Ralph Hall. He lives in Fannin County and has seen hundreds of acres of land washed downstream due to the erosion problem.
13. Max Shumake, Region D Landowner  
Mr. Shumake asked the planning group to stand behind their word. He mentioned that there are folks in West Texas that are willing to sell Region C some water. Mr. Shumake noted that he had seen a tremendous amount of change in planning, including desalination and the use of existing lakes. Mr. Shumake asked the planning group to keep their word and take Marvin Nichols Lake out of the plan.
14. Shirley Shumake, Region D Landowner  
Ms. Shumake told the planning group that if Marvin Nichols Lake is built that her land will be under water. She told the group that the decisions they make will affect her life. She urged the planning group to not recommend Marvin Nichols Lake or any other new lake in the Sulphur River basin.
15. Linda Henderson (Cass County)  
Ms. Henderson listed Marvin Nichols Lake, George Parkhouse Lake, Lower Bois d'Arc Lake, Lake Ralph Hall, and Fastrill Lake. "Build a dam. Drown. Bad." She told the group that this was a bad concept. She said that she supported

- economic development for the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She encouraged the planning group to recommend existing reservoirs to get additional water. She asked the planning group to remove all of the proposed reservoirs from the plan.
16. Nancy Clements (Cass County)

Ms. Clements told the group that building another reservoir on the Sulphur River will cause harm to the economy and the environment. According to Ms. Clements, 10,000 acres of bottomland hardwoods would be drowned. She also noted that farms, cemeteries, archeological sites, and hunting leases would be lost. She urged the planning group to not include any new reservoirs.
  17. Charleen Granberry

Ms. Granberry stated that she was the third generation on her land. She told the group that more 5,000 people wrote letters opposing new reservoirs, including the timber companies, land owners, and public officials. Ms. Granberry urged Region C to use existing reservoirs.
  18. Bessie Neal Heath

Ms. Heath told the planning group that she had already lost land to Lake Wright Patman. According to Ms. Heath, her property is located in the mitigation area for Marvin Nichols Lake. She owns 72,000 acres of ranch/timber lands. She told the planning group that they eat beef, so they need her cattle. She also noted that Region C builds houses and they need her timber. Ms. Heath told the planning group Delta and Lamar Counties have voted to oppose new reservoirs.
  19. John Babers, Landowner on North Sulphur River

Mr. Babers is a landowner on the North Sulphur River in the area of the proposed Lake Ralph Hall. He has farmed and ranched the land and has watched it wash away at great rates. He stated that UTRWD is selling the idea that Lake Ralph Hall would solve the erosion problem on the North Sulphur River. In Mr. Babers' opinion, this is only true for the land that touches the proposed lake. He suggested that less water would be available every year from Lake Ralph Hall unless something else is done to solve the erosion problem. Mr. Babers also expressed his concern regarding the fluctuating lake levels due to water use and the impact this might have on economic development around the lake as people try to guess the water level.
  20. David Hembree, President of Fannin County Farm Bureau

Mr. Hembree does not support Lake Ralph Hall. According to Mr. Hembree, agriculture is the largest industry in Fannin County. In his opinion, the UTRWD is asking Fannin County to give them their land. He urged the planning group to remove Lake Ralph Hall from the plan.
  21. Shane Wallace

Mr. Wallace told the planning group that it was not the landowners' problem that there is a water supply issue. Yet, the landowners are asked to give up their land for water. In his opinion, this all comes down to money. He advocates conservation. In his opinion, society is wasteful. The water needs have to be balanced among all the users. Mr. Wallace concluded by saying that economic development is a by-product of a reservoir, not the reason for building one.

22. Chester Debord

Mr. Debord lives outside Ladonia in Fannin County. In his opinion, Lake Ralph Hall is a very bad idea. According to Mr. Debord, his house and land would be taken. He told the group that those who favor the project would change their minds if it was their homes and land. He noted that when the Corps of Engineers tried to straighten the river to avoid erosion, the area lost 100s of acres of land. Lake Ralph Hall would flood 11,000 acres to prevent erosion. In his opinion, that doesn't make sense. Mr. Debord urged the planning group not to include any new reservoirs.

23. Campbell Read, Texas Committee on Natural Resources

Mr. Read told the planning group that the Neches River in the area of the proposed Lake Fastrill is about to be designated as a scenic river and wildlife refuge. The proposed Lake Fastrill is in conflict with the proposed U.S. Fish and Wildlife refuge. Lake Fastrill would flood bottomland hardwoods and the debris site of the Space Shuttle Columbia. Mr. Read is concerned with the protection of the integrity of the river downstream of the proposed reservoir. Mr. Read referred to a recent publication on the world's water situation and named several well-known rivers that go dry before reaching the sea, including the Yellow River in China and the Colorado River. He is concerned that Lake Fastrill would begin similar impacts to the Gulf.

24. Molly Rooke

Ms. Rooke referred to letters from Texas Legislators urging the idea of no new reservoirs. Robert Puente's letter mentioned that existing reservoirs are available and should be fully used before developing new reservoirs. Ken Armbristor's letter also discussed the idea of fully utilizing existing sources before pursuing new reservoirs with major opposition. Jerry Hodge's letter stated that Marvin Nichols Lake and Lake Fastrill would inundate 100,000 acres of land and would negatively impact the environment. He also stated that new reservoirs should only be developed if no other sources were available. Ms. Rooke also referred to a letter from Chuck Holsten that mentioned the idea that new reservoirs must be shown as necessary.

25. Julie Smith, Flower Mound

Ms. Smith referred to Chapter 358 of the Texas Administrative Code which says that part of the planning criteria is to "plan projects at a reasonable cost." She encouraged the planning group to study the report on Lake Ralph Hall prepared by KBR. She told the group that even if they used the lowest cost in the KBR report that cost is still three times higher than other strategies.

26. Laurie Long, Flower Mound City Council

Ms. Long stated that she opposes the proposed Lake Ralph Hall project. In the 2001 Region C plan, Lake Ralph Hall was included as an alternative strategy. In her opinion, nothing has happened to change that status. Lake Ralph Hall should be on the "back burner. She told the group that Flower Mound is not the only city opposed to the reservoir. Double Oak also opposes Lake Ralph Hall. The justification of Lake Ralph Hall is being questioned. Fannin County residents are in opposition to the lake. Lake Ralph Hall is meeting residential and political

opposition. Ms. Long stated that Lake Ralph Hall is not needed at this time. In her opinion, there is not need to change the status of the proposed reservoir.

27. Jody Smith, Mayor of Flower Mound

Mayor Smith thanked the planning group for their efforts. She told the planning group that Flower Mound understands the importance of progress and the need for planning. She told the group that careful fiscal decisions must be made. She applauded the group in exploring all of the alternatives. Options must be prioritized. Mayor Smith told the group that if Upper Trinity Regional Water District can demonstrate the need for Lake Ralph Hall that she would not be here in opposition to the project. If Mayor Smith felt as if Lake Ralph Hall was a fiscally responsible project then she would not be here speaking against it. Lake Ralph Hall will result in water rate increase of two to three times the current rate. Mayor Smith requested that Lake Ralph Hall remain as an alternative strategy rather than a recommended strategy. She asked why anyone would want to increase their water rates and impact landowners when other options exist. Mayor Smith told the planning group that Upper Trinity just wants to “play with the big boys.”

28. Jan Sanders

Ms. Sanders told the planning group that she could not sleep at night if they take land from these people. She stated that the City Hall wastes water regularly, particularly with the irrigation sprinklers. She told the group that she was against any new reservoir. Ms. Sanders emphasized her concerns of wasted water. Ms. Sanders told the group that her husband carried the bill to create the Trinity River Authority. This creation should not be equated with the destruction of natural resources.

29. Alexis Gerow

Ms. Gerow told the planning group to “do the math”. She asked that if by developing a reservoir, did we make new water. Her answer was that all we had done is moved the water to a new location. She told the planning group to consider the cost of destroying land resources. When these figures are multiplied across time, the picture gets gloomy. The population is expected to double, but our available resources will not. In her opinion, it makes more sense to tap into existing resources. She told the group that planning for the next 25 to 50 years is a short time in the lifespan of humanity. Ms. Gerow asked the planning group to conserve, reuse, and use existing reservoirs. Do not build Lake Ralph Hall.

30. Larry Patterson, Upper Trinity Regional Water District (UTRWD)

Mr. Patterson told the planning group that Lake Ralph Hall could be built and operated safely without a local lake district. Upper Trinity Regional Water District did not intend for the confusion that has resulted from the concept of the local lake district. Mr. Patterson told the planning group that the consultant for Dallas Water Utilities had included Lake Ralph Hall in their plan. With no inflow, Mr. Patterson said that Lake Ralph Hall would take 3 ½ years to drain. Mr. Patterson told the planning group that the provisions in the contract between DWU and UTRWD do not require DWU to give UTRWD water from new supplies. With regards to cemeteries in the area of Lake Ralph Hall, Mr.

Patterson said that there is one cemetery and that it could be protected. He also noted that Mr. Devord would be at the foot of the project and might not be impacted.

**General Comments**

No one signed up to make comments during the general comment period of the meeting.