

Summary of Speaker Comments at the October 4, 2004 RCWPG Meeting

Comments Regarding Action Items

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

Action Item A: Potentially Feasible Water Management Strategies (Interbasin Transfer and Other)

1. David Nabors, Region D Landowner

Mr. Nabors stated that the information coming from consultants (Freese and Nichols) was confusing. He stated that if you can get 300,000 acre-feet from Wright Patman as it is now, it looks like it would be a lot cheaper than new reservoirs. If you raise the level of Patman another twelve feet, how much more can you get from it? It would only take a 30 mile pipeline for Patman. Mr. Nabors wants to see more study on existing reservoirs. He stated that he (and the public participants at the meeting) had different objectives than the Region C Water Planning Group, but that we should all work together. If Region C doesn't have any water, he doesn't have any customers for his cattle, and if you build new reservoirs, he won't have any cattle to sell to Region C. We should work together. He wants clarification and for the Planning Group to look at all the options.

2. Beth Johnson, Freelance Issue Advocacy

Ms. Johnson said that the issue of System Operation for Wright Patman and Chapman was confusing. The Corps of Engineers has a slide presentation that they show to the public that shows 368,000 acre-feet per year is available; this is based on a new baseline study and taking the analysis to the bottom of the lake. Freese and Nichols says that 109,000 acre-feet is available from system operation. The cost of supplying that should be compared to all other water sources for needs. It should be compared as a combination of system operation plus reallocation. Ms. Johnson and the entities she represents are concerned that not considering this water may eliminate a possible source. She wants system operation of Patman/Chapman to be included in the plan.

On the subject of interbasin transfers, Ms. Johnson said that building new reservoirs would have more environmental impacts. She stated that existing sources have sufficient supplies (referring to those listed on the "Connection to Existing Supplies" memo). She questioned how that "highest practicable" level of conservation rule and the benefit/detriment rule would impact the potentially feasible water management strategies presented. She would like to know if the model conservation plans (prepared by Alan Plummer Associates) would be sufficient to meet the "highest practicable" conservation requirement to obtain an interbasin transfer permit.

3. Shane Wallace, Landowner in Fannin County

Mr. Wallace is on the Fannin County Water Committee and the Ralph Hall Lake negotiating team. He questions the feasibility of Ralph Hall. He has been part of the negotiations with Upper Trinity Region Water District. During the negotiation process, he discovered that mitigation would be involved and that land owners would be affected.

He wants the landowners to be fairly subsidized for their land. For what the land appraises for, the owners won't be able to relocate at comparable sites. He has gotten no response from the Ralph Hall Lake people on this issue. He stated that Ladonia, who wants to partner with Upper Trinity to develop Ralph Hall, is a small town and already has more water than it needs for the next 15 years. If Ralph Hall is built, 47,000 to 50,000 acres of land will be lost for the lake and mitigation areas. That would be a big hit on the tax base of the area. If Lower Bois d'Arc Creek Lake were built, that would be a better bang for the buck. Hall won't fix upland erosion. Several landowners are opposed to Ralph Hall Lake. Mr. Wallace submitted a list of landowners opposed to Ralph Hall.

4. Red Birdsong

Mr. Birdsong wanted to ask Tom Gooch a few questions. Jim Parks responded that this time was only for public comment (not a question and answer format). Mr. Parks told Mr. Birdsong that questions could be submitted in writing to the RCWPG and then consultants would respond to those questions. Mr. Birdsong went on to say that if you build Marvin Nichols and build a pipeline from Marvin Nichols to the Metroplex, considering the whole pipeline as a feasible strategy would be incorrect.

General Comments

The following public comments were provided during the general comment period of the meeting:

1. David Nabors, Region D Landowner

Mr. Nabors requested of the RCWPG that everyone needs the same figures, not 30 year old figures. He wants all the memos provided to the Planning Group to be printed and available at the meeting because some people do not have access to the internet. He stated that someone needs to coordinate the efforts for the whole state (the TWDB or someone) and it should not be this one corner of area doing their own thing. He wants to enforce conservation. He wants the RCWPG to look into the desalination work TWDB is working on. He stated that it is part of the RCWPG's job to amend the plan during the 5 year period.

2. Beth Johnson, Freelance Issue Advocacy

Ms. Johnson said the Interbasin Transfer memo presented 3 legal hurdles to interbasin transfers. They are:

1) Detriment to source/benefit to receiver standard. She wants Region C to consider the money, time, and effort spent in getting permits and that getting water from existing reservoirs (not new ones) was more likely to result in successful permitting. There is a big distinction between interbasin transfers for new reservoirs and existing reservoirs. She wants the Group to compare the benefits/detriments in light of all potential sources to the receiving region.

2) Water Conservation plans and the "highest practicable level of water

conservation.” She would like to know if the model conservation plans (prepared by Alan Plummer Associates) would be sufficient to meet the “highest practicable” conservation requirement to obtain an interbasin transfer permit. It would be helpful to get some feedback from suppliers seeking interbasin transfer permits. She wants to defer action on the interbasin transfer strategies until it is clear that the Water Conservation Plan model is sufficient to meet the standard. Questions related to this are: Will suppliers alone be required to have this “highest practicable” level of conservation or would all their customers/member cities need to as well? If all entities are found to have plans that meet the standard, how will Region C ensure that the conservation actually occurs and the entities are actually demonstrating the highest practicable level of conservation? How practical it is to have interbasin transfers as a strategy if we don’t know or can’t assure the receivers will meet the highest practicable standard? She also wants the Group to look at existing sources as legally superior.

3. Red Birdsong, Telephone, Texas

Mr. Birdsong was not available to speak.