

North East Texas Regional Water Planning Group

Region D Initially Prepared Plan

Presentation Material for Public Hearing

Good afternoon, for the record I am Tony Smith, project manager for the North East Texas Regional Water Planning Group's consultant team, responsible for the development of the 2021 Regional Water Plan.

The State of Texas has established 16 planning regions where groups participate in a regional water planning process. The planning group for our area is the North East Texas Regional Water Planning Group, often called 'Region D'. Region D's area of responsibility incorporates 19 counties, from Lamar and Hunt Counties in the west to Bowie and Cass Counties in the East, and south as far as Smith County.

Within these 19 counties are 156 municipal Water User Groups, and when then considering the other use categories of manufacturing, steam electric power generation, irrigation, mining, and livestock, there is a total of 235 Water User Groups in the region. All Regional Water Planning Groups, including Region D, go through a 5-year planning cycle, engaging in a process to develop regional water plans that are eventually aggregated into the State Water Plan. This is the fifth planning cycle for regional water planning.

This process includes the development of a Draft Plan, which is formally called the Initially Prepared Plan, or IPP. Region D's Initially Prepared Plan was recently produced on March 3 of this year. We are now engaged in the input process soliciting comments from the public, water user groups and providers, who can offer comment both in person at this hearing as well as through submittal of written comments which will be incorporated into the Plan, as well as reviews by relevant state agencies. All of this is working towards the production of a final regional water plan scheduled for October 14 later this year.

The essence of the Plan is the evaluation of existing water supplies and projected water demands over the next 50 years, identifying where there are potential shortages, and developing means to conserve and develop strategies to meet the projected needs. We're conservative in the sense of planning for drought-of-record conditions. The Plan preserves existing, legal surface water rights, through application of the State's official Water Availability Models. Groundwater availability is evaluated using the State's Modeled Available Groundwater (or MAG) amounts, and is consistent with modeling performed by the Texas Water Development Board.

The population of North East Texas is projected to increase from approximately 830,000 people in 2020 up to nearly 1.4 Million people by 2070. Water demand is projected to increase from 400,000 ac-ft/yr in 2020 to 480,000 ac-ft/yr by 2070.

Between 1.6 – 1.8 million acre-feet of water is potentially available from sources within Region D. Approximately 300,000 ac-ft is available from groundwater, while the majority of available water is from surface water, namely from the various reservoirs and surface water diversions in the region. Water users presently have the legal capability and physical infrastructure to access approximately 700,000 ac-ft/yr, less than half the amount potentially available in the region.

So given these projected future demands and the extent of our existing supplies, how much water is needed? The Initially Prepared Plan identifies 78 Water User Groups with shortages totaling

approximately 81,000 ac-ft/yr by 2020. These shortages increase to approximately 117,000 ac-ft/yr by 2070.

The Initially Prepared Plan identifies 112 Water Management Strategies and Projects recommended to meet these identified projected shortages. This includes 8 conservation strategies, 59 strategies to utilize groundwater, 29 contractual strategies, reuse, voluntary reallocations, and livestock supplies. Ten strategies requiring infrastructure are recommended. These include strategies for Riverbend WRD, pipelines for water users in Hunt County where significant growth is occurring – including treatment plant expansions and eventually an additional treatment plant for the City of Greenville, a tie-in pipeline for the City of Clarksville to Riverbend’s and Texarkana’s water system, and pipelines for agricultural and livestock users in Lamar County.

The Plan then provides information on potential impacts, considering multiple factors, along with the long term protection of the state’s agricultural and natural resources. It is this area where the Region D Plan offers information and opines upon the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir, which is a strategy that’s in the Draft Region C Plan for North Central Texas, although it’s proposed by that Regional Water Planning Group to be physically located in the North East Texas region.

The Region D IPP notes that, “It has been, and continues to be the position of the NETRWPG that due to the significant negative impacts upon environmental factors, agricultural resources/rural areas, other natural resources, and third parties, Marvin Nichols I Reservoir should not be included as a water management strategy in any regional water plan or the State Water Plan.”

and the Region D IPP notes,

“Per the terms of agreement set forth from the October 5, 2015 mediation between Regions C and D and ratified by the NETRWPG at its October 21, 2015 meeting, the NETRWPG does not challenge Marvin Nichols Reservoir as a unique reservoir site for the purposes of this Plan. At the time of publication of this Initially Prepared Plan, no agreement has been made between Regions C and D for the purposes of the 2021 Region D Plan.”

Lastly, the IPP includes conditional recommendations for three stream segments as ecologically unique, identifies voluntary instream flow goals, provides information on reservoir sites, and offers a number of legislative, regulatory, and administrative recommendations.

The Initially Prepared Plan for Region D can be found in each of the 19 counties at the county clerks’ offices, libraries, and on the North East Texas Municipal Water District’s website (www.netmwd.com).