

City of Canton planning to build 1,500 acre lake

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More people could be coming through Sulphur Springs to reach the city of Canton on future weekends if a proposal submitted this week to the Region D Water Planning Group is approved.

The planning group, which oversees plans for water usage in the area, heard a proposal for a new reservoir in Van Zandt County at a meeting Wednesday in Mount Pleasant.

The city of Canton proposes to build a 1,500-acre lake to serve the growing community's future water needs, Canton City Engineer Gary Burton told the water planning group's members.

Burton asked the regional planners to include the proposed reservoir in the state's 2007-2012 water plan, now being developed by regional groups across the state.

Burton said Canton would likely purchase 2,500 acres of land to include mitigation needs for the lake. The reservoir would yield about five million gallons of water a day, supplementing the city's existing sources.

The impoundment would be on Mill Creek, about nine miles from Canton. The new lake would also require upgrading the city's existing water treatment plant.

Mill Creek is a tributary of the Sabine River. A 237-acre reservoir named Mill Creek Lake already exists southeast of Canton, but it is not considered a major draw for fishing or other recreational pursuits. And while the main focus of the new reservoir is water storage, the lake could be tailored to help draw more water enthusiasts to the area already known for its First Monday Trade Days.

Richard LeTourneau of Harrison County, a member of the regional planning group, said he looks forward to receiving more information as the proposal is considered by the planning group. He also said he expects group members will have a number of questions when they continue to consider the lake proposal at the next Region D meeting.

In other business, the planning group's engineering consulting team, headed by Ray Flemons of Dallas, said work is under way on draft reports dealing with area population projections, water availability modeling and additional items affecting the state's 2007-2012 water plan.

The regional planning group also discussed planning for steam-electric water demands for the new water plan. Possible future action includes the authorization for methodology to be used to determine water demands projected for the stream electric needs within Region D.

Later, the planning group approved a minor amendment in its regional plan to include the Bright Star-Salem Special Utility District's surface water management strategy and heard reports on other regional water planning groups, special study commissions, a water advisory council, and other advisory groups.

The Region D Executive Committee members were selected at the meeting held Wednesday in Mount Pleasant.

LeTourneau was elected chairman of the planning group, succeeding Jim Thompson of Cass County. Also named were Don Hightower of Wood County, vice-chairman, and Brent McCoy of Morris County, secretary. Named as at-large members of the board of directors were Gary Cheatwood of Red River County and Bob Staton of Smith County.

Chosen as liaison for the East Texas Water Planning Group (Region I) was Mendy Rabicoff of Gregg County, while David Wideman of Franklin County will serve as liaison for the Dallas-Fort Worth Planning Group (Region C).

Sharon Nabors and Max Bain were named liaisons for two groundwater conservation districts, District 8 and District 11.

The Northeast Texas Regional Water Planning Group encompasses all or parts of 19 counties, including Hopkins County. Precinct 3 Commissioner Don Patterson represents Hopkins County on the board.

The planning group's next meeting starts at 1 p.m. Wednesday, May 27, in the Mount Pleasant Civic Center.