

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Fort Worth District has approved the tentatively selected plan to reallocate Wright Patman Lake and raise it to a level of 235.

The multi-year study, done in partnership with the Sulphur River Basin Authority, shows the lake could be raised six to seven feet and provide an additional 200,000 acre-feet per year. An acre-foot of water is the amount of water that would cover one acre of land one foot deep, equal to 325,851 gallons of water.

"SRBA is certainly encouraged that this federal study at this point is recommending reallocation," SRBA Chairman Chris Spencer said. "We believe that reallocation of Patman would be the most environmentally friendly in protecting local property rights in the most efficient manner possible. What we want is minimal impact to private property owners. We believe reallocation at this point in time is the best solution to meet future water needs of Texas."

A press release from SRBA states: "The approved Texas State Water Plan identifies approximately 600,000 acre-feet of water needs from the Sulphur River Basin to meet increasing demands from population and economic growth in the DFW Metroplex region of the state by 2070, and is premised on access to both water from Wright Patman Lake for short-term needs (2040) and from the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir for long-term needs (2070). USACE's announcement today regarding reallocation of water in Lake Wright Patman would provide a cost-effective solution for the short-term needs of 200,000 acre-feet by 2040, but also confirmed that the federal government will not recommend a reallocation of that lake water to meet the entire 2070 need of 600,000 acre-feet, thus implicating the continued need for the construction of the Marvin Nichols Reservoir in the future."

The proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir has long been a point of contention in East Texas, with staunch opinion both for and against the construction.

Liz Fazio Hale, Riverbend Water Resources District's executive director/CEO, said they are dedicated to meeting local water needs first.

Steve Mayo, water liaison and former mayor of the city of Texarkana, Texas, said the city also wants to meet local needs before those outside the region.

"I'm cautious about any true 'milestone' having been accomplished," Mayo said

State Rep. Lyle Larson, chairman of the Texas House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, said the cooperation to provide additional water is much needed.

"We commend the Army Corps of Engineers for partnering with Texas water suppliers in helping to identify water supply solutions for our growing economy," Larson stated in the press release. "This partnership between the corps and the Sulphur River Basin Authority to make additional water available from our existing reservoirs is exactly the type of federal-state cooperation that we need in Texas and around the nation."

For more information on the study, go to www.srbatx.org.