

## **Section 8**

### **Unique Stream Segments/Reservoir Sites/ Legislative Recommendations**

#### **8.1 Identification of Unique Ecological Stream Segments and Reservoir Sites**

The Llano Estacado Regional Water Planning Group (LERWPG) does not recommend any stream segments within the planning area for designation as stream segments of unique ecological value. In 2001, with the passage of HB 3096, the 77<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature designated the Post Reservoir Site as a unique reservoir site.<sup>1</sup> The LERWPG continues to support this designation with the inclusion of Post Reservoir as a component of the 2006 Strategy to meet water supply needs for the City of Lubbock and White River Municipal Water District.

#### **8.2 Legislative and Administrative Recommendations**

1. Since the completion of the 2001 Llano Estacado Regional Water Plan, it has been clear both within this region and statewide that if the regional water plans are going to be implemented within the needed timeframe, some level of state financial assistance will be required. The LERWPG strongly supports the funding provided by the 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislatures in 2007 and 2009 for funding projects in the 2007 State Water Plan. Furthermore, the LERWPG recommends that the Texas Legislature identify a dedicated source of revenue for funding projects in the regional and state water plans so that future generations of Texans will have reliable, affordable, and sufficient water supplies. The funds could include low interest loans, direct grants, or cost-sharing arrangements. High priority items include public water supply, watershed management, water conservation, and development of drought-tolerant crops and more efficient irrigation strategies.

2. The 2011 Llano Estacado Regional Water Plan completes the third round of regional water planning. After three rounds of planning, we have reached a point of diminishing benefits in the recognition that the 2011 Llano Estacado Regional Water Plan is primarily an update of the 2006 plan. We believe the planning process needs to be expanded to allow for the evaluation of additional region-specific planning options. This change will allow planning groups to participate

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<sup>1</sup> Kretzschmar, Gilbert E, P.E., Samuel Vaughn, P.E., Robert Perkins, P.E., Robert Brandes, Ph.D.,P.E.,Richard D. Purkeypile, P.E., Thomas C. Gooch, P.E., Simone F. Kiel, P.E., and Barney Austin, "Reservoir Site Protection Study," (Report 370) Texas Water Development Board, Austin, Texas, July 2008.

more directly in the development of the most likely future supply and demand projections for the region. The current procedure requires the planning groups to focus on closing hypothetical gaps between projected water demands and supplies at various points in time, but when the group does not agree with the projections provided by the TWDB, the experiences of the past planning cycles have greatly improved the ability of the LERWPG to participate in the discussion of realistic forecast scenarios.

3. The next round of water planning must incorporate the desired future conditions (DFCs) that are adopted for the Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs). After the Managed Available Groundwater (MAG) amounts are set, the GMA policies will establish the distribution of that supply over the DFC time period. That distribution of supply will replace the current projections of groundwater supply in the 2011 plan. Obviously, any changes in the planning process need to be identified early in the planning cycle to allow the RWPGs the maximum time to consider the options that best fit their regional needs. Since changes to the planning process do not require legislative action, we recommend that this review proceed now with a goal of having a revised planning process defined by the end of 2010.

4. The LERWPG recommends that the planning process be reviewed by a representative stakeholder group made up of planning group members from across the state, and then revised to better capture region-specific characteristics throughout the planning process. Possible revisions may include more alternative scenario analysis on both the demand and supply side of the process. Changed conditions resulting from the potential impact of climate change and policy changes such as those made through the 2008 Farm Bill may have dramatic effects on the Llano Estacado Planning Region, and as such, should be a more fundamental component of the planning process than currently allowed.

5. The LERWPG recommends that the Texas Legislature continue to support the regional water planning effort and to provide funding for the following.

- a. The implementation of water management strategies and water conservation incentives for water user groups in the plan, including loans for public water supplies, precipitation enhancement, brush management, water conservation, and research/development of drought tolerant species and more efficient technology.
- b. Increased public awareness and education regarding water supply issues including water conservation.

- c. Continued funding and support of basic water data collection, processing, and analysis of basic data needed to continually update and improve our understanding of surface water and groundwater resources.
  - d. Continued funding and support of the ongoing development and improvements to the TWDB's Groundwater Availability Models for the major and minor aquifers of Texas. We fully appreciate and recognize the importance of systematic review, integration of new data and affects of changed conditions, re-calibration and re-verification of these models, and feel it imperative that funding for this effort is sustained.
  - e. Implementation of a statewide public awareness program for water conservation achievements.
  - f. Continuation and funding of the Water Conservation Advisory Council.
6. The LERWPG supports the Water Conservation Advisory Council efforts to develop standardized methodologies, definitions, and data for characterizing and computing per capita daily water use and other water use metrics.
7. The LERWPG continues to support the following recommendations from the 2006 Llano Estacado Regional Water Plan.
- a. Support the Rule of Capture as modified by the rules and regulations of existing underground water conservation districts.
  - b. Support the state's policy that groundwater conservation districts are the preferred method of managing groundwater and support the creation and operation of groundwater conservation districts that are organized and function under Chapter 36 of the Texas Water Code.
  - c. Urge the Texas Legislature **not** to empower the regional water planning groups with any water management or regulatory authority.
  - d. Support the continued funding by the Texas Legislature of studies to achieve a better understanding of the recharge mechanisms of the Ogallala Aquifer.
8. The LERWPG supports and encourages the development and voluntary use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to improve recharge and to protect playa basins from siltation, including creation and preservation of

native grass buffers on land surrounding playas to maintain their water holding capacity. The Texas Water Development Board's BMP guide (Report 362, 2004) should be updated and new BMPs added to provide a valuable resource for those developing water management plans and practicing water conservation.

9. The LERWPG supports controlling aquatic vegetation as a water conservation practice, and particularly supports and encourages the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority's efforts of controlling salt cedar along the Canadian River drainage above Lake Meredith as a means to increase water flow to the reservoir for water supply and environmental purposes. Further, we encourage similar controls be applied to other watersheds regionally, including those of Lake MacKenzie, White River Lake, and Lake Alan Henry.

10. Finally, the LERWPG supports voluntary protection of springs and seeps as they exist and encourages landowners to use best management practices to maintain remnant springs and seeps in the region.