



## **Neches Wild and Scenic River Initiative**

### **RESERVOIRS PROPOSED FOR THE NECHES**

The heart of the Wild and Scenic Rivers program is keeping rivers free-flowing. Designating the Neches River as a National Wild and Scenic River would prohibit construction of reservoirs proposed on the Neches River. These reservoirs would inundate thousands of acres of private property and reduce flows in the Neches, as most of the water would be piped out of East Texas. Avoiding these reservoirs and keeping the water in the river would protect riverside landowners, the timber and agribusiness industries, sportsmen who hunt and fish along the river, and industries, businesses, and tourism in downstream counties.

One dam proposed for the Neches River, called Rockland Dam, would flood 100,000 to 125,000 acres of timber, agriculture, and hunting land. 80% of the water from the new reservoir would likely be sold outside of the Neches Basin, significantly reducing the flow of the Neches downstream. Another reservoir, Fastrill, has been blocked by a national wildlife refuge, but the City of Dallas continues to talk about a reservoir on the river downstream of the refuge. It is periodically proposed that Dam B be raised, to increase the size of B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir. Raising Dam B would flood Martin Dies, Jr. State Park and the Angelina-Neches/Dam B Wildlife Management Area, known locally as “The Forks”.

Landowners along the river would not only lose the land inundated by the reservoirs. Many thousands of acres would also be taken out of production to “mitigate” the wildlife impacts of the reservoirs. It is estimated that well over 250,000 acres would be taken out of production for Rockland Dam.

Diverting water to other parts of the state would reduce the flow of the Neches, impacting industry, business, and nature in downstream areas that depend on the river.

### **Plenty of Water in Existing Reservoirs for DFW and East Texas**

There is no need for new reservoir development to meet the future water demands of the Dallas-Fort Worth or Houston areas, or for East Texas. Current supplies in Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend Reservoirs could provide far more than any foreseeable demand for future water in East Texas. Wright Patman Reservoir, Lake Texoma, and Toledo Bend have far more than is need to to meet future demands to help DFW and North Texas grow. Houston has access to more-than-adequate supplies for decades to come. Should Southeast Texas ever need additional water from the Neches, it could be drawn directly from the river (as is currently done) without building an upstream reservoir.

### **Economic Importance of Neches River Flows**

Preventing new reservoirs protects landowners’ families and the valuable economic resources of the Neches corridor. New reservoir construction means massive land condemnation, uprooting of families, loss of homes, cemeteries, and historic sites, and taking land out of production. It

floods bottomland forests that provide timber to local mills and terrific hunting opportunities that generate income for the region. The Neches River provides outdoor recreation for East Texans and tourists alike. Industries downstream of the proposed Wild and Scenic River rely on Neches River flows to dilute effluent. Marshes that help protect Southeast Texas cities from hurricane storm surges depend on freshwater inflows from the Neches to maintain marsh vegetation. Waterfowl hunting, shrimping, and commercial and sport fishing in Sabine Lake is dependent on Neches River flows, as is the habitat of the Big Thicket National Preserve, which draws more than 100,000 tourists per year to the area.