



## Editorial

### Upper Neches doesn't need new reservoir

**July, 7, 2008**

A decision by a federal judge last week will have a big impact on people in Dallas and also those in East Texas northwest of Lufkin. It will also affect people in Southeast Texas, for the decision involves our Neches River.

Judge Jorge A. Solis properly upheld plans by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a 25,000-acre national refuge in Cherokee and Anderson counties. His ruling means the land won't be inundated by a reservoir the city of Dallas wants to build for its water needs.

For two key environmental reasons, this was the right call.

The land in question contains some of the few remaining bottomwood hardwood forests in East Texas. This region is home to lots of wildlife that can't exist in more developed counties.

Just as importantly, the reservoir would have disrupted the natural flow patterns of the Neches River. With less fresh water coming down the Neches, saltwater intrusion from the Gulf would be a bigger problem for Sabine Lake and the lower reaches of the river in Southeast Texas.

The era of irresponsible dam-building and river-killing is over. Massive ecological disruptions like that should be a last resort, not a first one. Dallas has other options for its future water needs. It should pursue them.