

## **EDITORIAL: Federal judge's ruling on Neches wildlife refuge good news for East Texas**

By The Lufkin Daily News and the Nacogdoches Daily Sentinel

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A federal judge's ruling that a big swath of land in Anderson and Cherokee counties is better suited for a wildlife refuge than a lake is good news for those of us who live downstream.

The city of Dallas wants to use the area for a reservoir that would not be built for several decades. Conservationists have been pushing, quite successfully, for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a national wildlife refuge at that site, because it supposedly contains one of the best remaining bottomland hardwood forests in Texas.

We side with the ones who want to preserve a relatively small portion of our state — it *is* a big state, after all — for future generations. We agree with the judge that the city of Dallas has failed to prove that there are no alternatives for its future water supply.

Most of all, we're pleased that, unless a Hail Mary appeal by Dallas is successful, the Neches River will not be dammed —something that surely could cause great damage to the land along the river as it flows south along Angelina County's western edge and into the biologically diverse Big Thicket National Preserve.

We continue to be disappointed with the stance of Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who arrogantly suggests that a manmade water source for people who don't even live in the region is more important than taking care of a pristine part of our state — *his* state. "This is, unfortunately, another example of the federal government being part of the problem instead of the solution," Allison Castle, a spokeswoman for Perry, stated in a Houston Chronicle story this past week.

Nobody wants the federal government meddling in issues that states should be deciding on their own. In this case, though, with Perry and the state water board being so wrongheaded, we appreciate the help from Uncle Sam.