

In 2050, we'll have twice the number of Texans we do now. If we're not careful, supplying water for those 40 million people could spell trouble for our rivers, bays, and aquifers. We've already dammed up our rivers to build hundreds of reservoirs, pumped our aquifers faster than rainfall can replenish them, and deprived our coastal bays of needed fresh water. With its new State Water Plan, the state is proposing a new list of high-dollar dams and pipelines – we've highlighted six in this report – that rely on the old "concrete and steel" approach to water development. This time though, that approach may take too heavy a toll on both our wallets and our natural environment, and it may not be necessary. There *is* a way to make sure we have water for people *and* wildlife. It's time for a fresh look at water in Texas. Let's not send our hard-earned money and our precious natural heritage. . .

DOWN THE DRAIN

MARVIN NICHOLS 1 RESERVOIR	\$1.7 BILLION
LOWER COLORADO RIVER PIPELINE	\$1 BILLION
LITTLE RIVER DAM/RESERVOIR	\$361 MILLION
CARRIZO-WILCOX AQUIFER WITHDRAWAL	\$332 MILLION
GULF COAST AQUIFER WITHDRAWAL	\$38 MILLION
BROWNSVILLE WEIR	\$81 MILLION

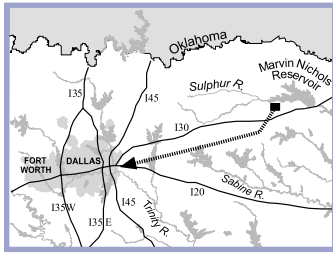
**TOTAL TAXPAYER DOLLARS
DOWN THE DRAIN**

\$3.5 BILLION



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PROJECT:
**MARVIN NICHOLS I
DAM/RESERVOIR**



COST:
\$1.7 BILLION

DESCRIPTION:

The Marvin Nichols I reservoir would be built on the Sulphur River in Northeast Texas. The project would flood 72,000 acres in Red River, Morris, and Titus counties and transfer 161 billion gallons of water per year, via 172 miles of pipeline, to the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

Marvin Nichols I would cost \$1.7 billion just to build. Water treatment plants needed for the water would add \$430 million to the pricetag.

All this to supply water to the area of Texas with the highest per-person water use. Even with a doubling of population, Dallas, Ft. Worth and surrounding communities could do without Marvin Nichols if they reduced their per-person water use by 22 percent over 50 years. (San Antonio reduced its per-person use by 30 per-

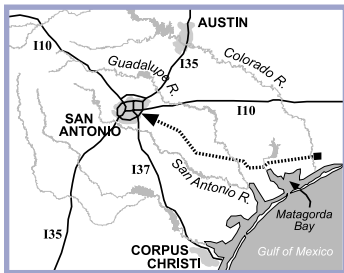
cent in just 13 years.) A 22 percent reduction would still leave the Metroplex on the high end of the scale for municipal water use in Texas.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Marvin Nichols I would flood 30,000 acres of high-quality bottomland hardwood forest, 15,000 acres of mixed post-oak forest, and thousands of additional acres of grasslands and family farms. This heavily forested area provides essential habitat to hundreds of species, possibly including 27 threatened or endangered species. It is prime hunting and fishing country, beloved by many Texans.

The project also would disrupt the natural flow of the Sulphur River, which could harm fish and wildlife habitat downstream by, for example, depriving forested wetlands of the seasonal over-bank flows they need.

PROJECT:
**LOWER COLORADO
RIVER PIPELINE**



COST:
**\$800 MILLION-
\$1 BILLION**

DESCRIPTION:

This project would pump water from the Lower Colorado River into four off-channel storage reservoirs located somewhere in Wharton, Matagorda and Colorado counties. It would then send between 43 and 49 billion gallons per year to San Antonio for municipal water uses, via a 170-mile pipeline. The project would also provide funding to area rice farmers for water conservation practices and increased groundwater pumping.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

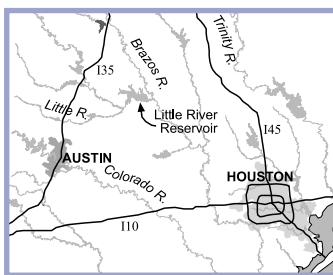
The project would cost taxpayers between \$800 million and \$1 billion. Though San Antonio is expected to bear this cost, new statewide revenue streams for water development are under discussion.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Because the Colorado feeds into Matagorda Bay, which needs fresh water to maintain its productivity, the project could have a catastrophic effect on the marine life that incubate and mature in its waters. The project could restrict freshwater inflows to the Bay to 87,000 acre-feet during the driest years, which is just 51% of the "critical" (subsistence) level the Lower Colorado River Authority established for the Bay in 1999. This loss of inflows could cripple the more than \$178-million commercial and recreational fishing industry.

It also threatens area wetlands, which are critical to both migratory and resident bird species. The Matagorda Bay area has recorded the country's highest count of bird species in winter bird counts.

PROJECT:
**LITTLE RIVER
DAM/RESERVOIR**



COST:
\$361 MILLION

DESCRIPTION:

The Little River is formed in Bell County by the union of the Leon and Lampasas Rivers and flows southeast for 75 miles to join the Brazos River in Milam County. The dam would be located right next to the city of Cameron on the main stem of the Little River. It would flood 35,000 acres and yield 129,000 acre-feet (42 billion gallons) of water, of which 75% would go to the Houston area and 25% would go to Williamson County.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

The project would cost \$361 million, not including transmission pipelines. Productive farmland would be sacrificed to supply water for Round Rock, Georgetown, and suburban Houston. Though these areas are growing, their per-person water use is high, especially given the rainfall they

receive. More aggressive conservation could reduce this demand, rendering the Little River Reservoir unnecessary. Even without that additional conservation, the Houston area projects a water supply surplus of over 250,000 acre-feet (81.5 billion gallons) per year by the year 2050.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

This project would build a dam and reservoir on one of the last un-dammed rivers in Texas. It would flood 35,000 acres, much of it highly productive farmland and range land that has been worked by area families for generations. The project would also dramatically reduce river flows and degrade downstream wildlife habitat. It could also adversely impact the endangered Houston Toad and Interior least tern, along with sensitive mussel species now thriving in this free-flowing river.



HEY TEXAS:

**IT'S TIME FOR
A FRESH LOOK**

AT WATER