

Lake could be big economic boon to parish

Allen Parish Lake Commission Consultant Mike Thompson told Oakdale Chamber of Commerce members last Thursday that the lake at Poverty Point is similar to the lake planned for Allen Parish.

"Bundick is not what Mill Creek will be," Thompson said "It will be what Poverty Point is. It will be the best of the best. The Poverty Point dam cost \$6 million, but nobody will ever flood. That's the kind of facility you will have here."

Thompson said the Mill Creek location was the best they could come up with. It will provide 50,000 acres of watershed.

"Don't let anybody tell you this is not about water," Thompson said. "This is about water."

Thompson said there is water, but there are problems such as salt water infiltration that must be dealt with. Surface reservoirs are the answer to water shortage because it takes years for an aquifer level to rise when it goes down. Allen Parish uses about 38 million gallons of water each day.

Site selections are much more complicated now than they were in the

past when DOTD chose random sites for lakes. State projects must now be permitted by the federal government.

In Allen Parish, multiple sites were tested before Mill Creek was chosen. Mill Creek was recommended after evaluation of all sites. That site offers the least amount of

problems.

Thompson said the lake will be an on-stream reservoir that will provide enough water to do anything in the parish. Potable water will be available.

Thompson said if it was easy to get a lake, everyone would have one, and they don't.

Thompson said this lake has the potential to boost tourism in the area, as well as draw new residents.

"Louisiana is ranked fourth in the ability to attract retirees," Thompson said. "This is a cheap state to live in. These reservoirs projects bring new people, new

money, and these retirees. This is a tremendous opportunity. Don't let it slip by you."

Thompson commended the lake commission for their persistence in pursuing the lake project in the face of difficulty. He said land acquisition should begin within the next six months.



Members of the Allen Parish Lake Commission were guests at the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce meeting last Thursday to listen to lake consultant Mike Thompson give an update on the lake status. Pictured are (from left) A.M. "Buddy" Farris, Billy Reeves, Phil Beard and Mike Thompson. Not pictured are commission members Roland Hollins and Gary Pelican.

LAKE_____From P. 1A

months.

Thompson also said Louisiana is on the verge of a great economic boom. What Louisiana has to offer is a rural way of life, and children leave the state because there is no place for them here. The reservoir projects will enhance the quality of life in the state and this area.

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