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# Sierra Club will fight reservoir

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## Environmental group says development isn't needed

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**BY ELEANOR EVANS**  
THE DAILY NEWS

FRANKLINTON – The Sierra Club has continued its support of anti-reservoir groups in Washington Parish, announcing an official opposition to a reservoir that is planned for the Oak Grove Community.

The official decision was made last week, when the Washington Parish Reservoir Commission

unanimously voted to accept the recommendation for Oak Grove, previously known as Site Two, as a viable location for a reservoir.

The site is located south of La. Highway 10 between Franklinton and Bogalusa, extending north to touch the south side of Sheridan.

The project would build a reservoir on the Bogue Lusa Creek below La. Hwy. 10.

Sierra Club officials say the eight-square-mile reservoir will

also inundate historic homes, farms, cemeteries and timberland.

Although the reservoir has been touted as a recreational area that will attract retirees and jobs to the parish, Sierra Club Delta Chapter Vice Chair Leslie March stated that “a feasibility report on the economic benefits has not been made available to the public. The studies presented to the Commission were prepared by the same firms that helped develop the Poverty Point project.

The Poverty Point project exceeded its initial cost projections and hasn't created the jobs that were promised.

“The proponents are now trying to play down the recreation aspect to local residents by promoting the reservoir for future water needs,” March said. “Yet we haven't seen any scientific evidence that Washington Parish has a water

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## **RESERVOIR:** *Sierra Club stands in opposition*

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shortage now, nor is it in danger of having one in the future. In fact, Washington Parish's own official website lists an abundant water supply as being an advantage to prospective new businesses."

Terry Denmon of Denmon Engineering stated to the Commission that, according to data from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the United States Geological Survey, aquifers in Louisiana "are declining by at least one foot per year."

"Local members of the Sierra Club, as taxpayers and residents of the

Northshore, question whether the estimated \$29 million cost of building the reservoir couldn't be better spent in a parish that needs dollars for its school system."

March added that the proposed site would flood a portion of Ben's Creek Wildlife Management Area, 13,000 acres of land owned by Weyerhaeuser and managed by Louisiana Fish and Wildlife.

"The question will be whether the public is being served by flooding an existing outdoor recreation area," March said. "The Sierra Club continues to be concerned about any loss of native plants and animals,

in particular the endangered gopher turtle found in Bogue Lusa Creek.

"We have pledged to work with the community groups to continue to oppose the reservoir," March said. "We understand that the Site Two community group obtained 1400 signatures in three days in opposition to language within the house bill that allowed for eminent domain."

The Washington Parish Reservoir is only one of a group of similar reservoirs being proposed throughout Louisiana. The Sierra Club - Delta Chapter is opposed to all of these reservoir projects.