

A WATER SOURCE

Proponents of local reservoir say it is needed water source

A FINITE RESOURCE

Groundwater management has become hotly debated issue in LA

TWO ARGUMENTS

Environmentalists say the state has plenty of water sources

Reservoir touted as source for drinking water

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fourth in a series re-examining the process and potential impact of constructing a reservoir in Washington Parish. The stories will be published each Sunday and Wednesday in *The Daily News*.

BY ELEANOR EVANS
THE DAILY NEWS

BOGALUSA — In addition to becoming a recreational facility that will bring in tourism and revenue for the parish, the proposed Washington Parish Reservoir is touted by proponents of the project as a source of potable water for years to come.

"There are two ways to get water now," said reservoir project consultant Mike Thompson. "There is groundwater and surface water...there is just no other way of forming crystals in the sky."

Hydrologist Bruce Darling, a consultant with LBG-Guyton Associates in Lafayette, says management of groundwater, which currently serves as the water supply for Washington Parish, has become difficult to maintain in the past few years with population increases.



DANNY HANEMANN/STAFF

The increasing demand for clean drinking water by an ever-increasing population has spurred a heated debate over the issue across the state. The argument hits home as proponents of a reservoir in Washington Parish say it is a needed source for potable water.

However, contrary to the opinion of environmentalist groups, there is no "water shortage" in the state.

"There are certainly problems in Louisiana, but not of the magnitude" that some suggest," Darling said. "The state as a whole does have more than adequate water resources. The problem is not so much a shortage as it is one of management."

Darling is also the principal author of the management plan written for the Louisiana Ground Water Management Commission.

One of these management problems arises from increases in populations, including Slidell and other areas in the North Shore.

[SEE **RESERVOIR**, PAGE A3]

RESERVOIR: *the great water debate*

FROM PAGE A1.

"There is definitely a lack of infrastructure when people start moving to areas; they stress on the existing infrastructure. They cannot store, distribute and treat the water effectively," he said.

And as a result, the volumes of persons place more stress on aquifers that are already in place.

Louisiana Office of Conservation Ground Water Sources Division Director Anthony J. Duplechin agrees.

"Water's a finite resource," Duplechin said.

"New Orleans takes their water from the Mississippi River and cleans it and it's fine."

Anthony J. Duplechin
LA Office of Conservation
Ground Water Division Director

Especially with "drinking water out of streams of Louisiana, because the water isn't clean. Not to say that it's polluted, but you have to worry about bacte-

sider seeking better water management sources. According to the latest figures from the United States Geological Survey, Washington Parish persons

“The amount of water on earth is the amount there’s always been and always will be.” However, it’s a “matter of how clean it is,” and how it can be used as a potable water source.

Once the water is polluted by natural or industrial means, it becomes difficult to maintain over the years.

And although Louisiana is encompassed of and surrounded by several natural bodies of water, Duplechin says it can’t necessarily be used as potable water.

“It’s very rare that you can drink water out of a stream,” Duplechin said.

ria in the stream.”

However, it is possible to import drinking water from streams if it is cleaned properly. “New Orleans takes their water from the Mississippi River and cleans it and it’s fine,” he said.

Duplechin also said other areas in the state, including Monroe, are “increasing the use of water out of the Ouachita [river] and lessening their dependency on groundwater.”

And if the population in Washington Parish grows according to projections, the area may need to con-

sumed a total of 27.5 million gallons a day of groundwater; 14 million of which for industrial use and the rest used as public supply.

And if the rate increases, the groundwater will not be able to replenish itself, Duplechin said.

In some places, including north Louisiana, aquifers supplying groundwater are dropping constantly with increases in water usage. It’s one of the reasons reservoirs are being promoted in the state to supply water for generations, Thompson said.

Sparta Aquifer in critical condition

Consumption threatens sustainability of aquifer

BY ELEANOR EVANS
THE DAILY NEWS

BOGALUSA — Problems arising from groundwater consumption have most recently been seen in Northern Louisiana, where several areas of the Sparta Aquifer, the main

groundwater supply for the area, were declared by the Louisiana Commissioner of Conservation as critical ground water areas in July.

Commissioner James Welsh named areas of the aquifer in Ouachita, Lincoln, Jackson and Bienville Parishes as critical areas.

After several months of evaluation, study and public hearings, the state Department of Natural Resources' Office of Conservation determined these

areas exhibited water level declines that threatened the sustainability of the aquifer.

"If the water level decline goes unchecked, it could lead to unacceptable environmental, economic, social or health consequences," said OC Director of Ground Water Resources Anthony Duplechin. "Water is being pumped out of the Sparta faster than nature can replenish it, and water conservation is

[SEE AQUIFER, PAGE A3]

AQUIFER: *water levels dropping in North LA* FROM PAGE A1

necessary for the recovery of this aquifer."

The draft order called for monthly reporting to the department on how much water is being pumped out of non-domestic water wells. In addition, if any restrictions on existing or

new water wells were needed, these would be made on a case-by-case basis with groundwater for human consumption and public health and safety as its first priority.

No restrictions on water withdrawals have been

made as of yet, Duplechin said.

Act 49 of the 2003 Regular Legislative Session authorized the Office of Conservation to manage, protect and conserve the state's groundwater resources.