

SIERRA CLUB



Houston Regional Group
1413 Westheimer
Houston, Texas 77006

It's Now or Never for Wallisville

In a blatantly illegal move and an attempt to circumvent Congress' own rules, proponents of the Wallisville Dam, are trying to insert language into the Omnibus Water Projects Bill, HR6, to reauthorize this destructive project. Unless this duping of Congress is prevented we will have lost the Wallisville case by imprudent and ignorant Congressional action.

All the so-called benefits for this disasterous dam are in fact fallacious:

- 1) Only about 1/3 of the claimed 320 million gallons of water will actually be generated by the project.
- 2) Navigation benefits are predicated on a sulfur mine closed since 1980 and nonexistent barge traffic to Liberty.
- 3) Recreational benefits for this 5,600 acre, four foot deep reservoir have been disputed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
- 4) There are no fish and wildlife benefits. The Corps' own estimates show there will be a \$1 million loss for fish and wildlife each and every year.

If the dam, sponsored by the Trinity River Authority and the City of Houston is approved it will jeopardize the \$55 million commercial and sport fisheries in Galveston Bay. Since the Houston area is already suffering from a recession, further economic losses will only worsen unemployment, bankruptcies, and lower the Quality of Life.

It is important to note that the modified Wallisville Dam has never gone through the Corps of Engineers own review process or Congressional hearings. The Wallisville project should not be given special treatment and be exempt from environmental laws. This is no time for the Texas Delegation to bow to Congressional courtesy to let a home pork barrel water project pass illegally through Congress.

We need your letters now to your Congressional Representative and Senators telling them to take Wallisville out of this bill now! Thanks for your help. Write your Representative at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515 (see the list below for your district and representative.

Write Senators Lloyd Bentsen and Phil Gramm at U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

District

1	Jim Chapman	10	Jake Pickle	19	Larry Combest
2	Charlie Wilson	11	Marvin Leath	20	Henry Gonzalez
3	Steve Bartlett	12	Jim Wright	21	Tom Loeffler
4	Ralph Hall	13	Beau Boulter	22	Tom Delay
5	John Bryant	14	Mac Sweeney	23	Albert Bustamante
6	Joe Barton	15	Kika De la Garza	24	Martin Frost
7	Bill Archer	16	Ron Coleman	25	Mike Andrews
8	Jack Fields	17	Charles Stenholm	26	Dick Armey
9	Jack Brooks	18	Mickey Leland	27	Solomon Ortiz

THE WALLISVILLE LAKE PROJECT IS A TOTAL FRAUD!

It has recently been shown that all of the alleged benefits from the multi-purpose Wallisville dam are completely based on fraudulent information.

The Corps of Engineers has claimed that 180 million gallons per day (MGD) of Lake Livingston water are released for SALINITY CONTROL. The Corps claims that water is released at 1100 cubic feet per second (CFS) for an average of 28 days each year to keep salt water from intruding into the river mouth during periods of low river flow, rendering river water unsuitable for irrigation. But 1100 CFS for 28 days averages out to only 55 MGD, not 180. Furthermore, the 1100 CFS is based on a "worst case" estimate calculated during the 1978 drought. The Trinity River Authority, in 1985 revealed to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that only 500 CFS are actually released. Thus only 25 MGD of water will be "saved", one-seventh of the claimed 180 MGD.

The Corps also claimed that 140 MGD of "new" WATER SUPPLY would be created, but most of the water captured by Lake Wallisville will be water released from Lake Livingston. The Corps has calculated that only 28 MGD of additional water will flow into the river from downstream tributaries and much of this will be lost each time the lock is opened for passing barge traffic. Thus only 22 MGD may be realized as actual gain, one-seventh of the claimed 140 MGD.

The Corps claimed substantial NAVIGATION benefits for barge traffic. The Corps projected 114 round trips annually to a sulfur mine which exhausted its resource, dismantled and sold its physical plant, and was permanently closed in 1980. The Corps also estimated 28 round trips annually to the Port of Liberty, which this past February docked its first barge in nearly two years.

In 1982 the Corps doubled the RECREATION benefits it had claimed for Wallisville Lake in 1981. Wallisville will not be a deep, open water reservoir like other east Texas lakes. The area is now a heavily wooded swamp and none of these trees will be cut down. The lake will be four feet deep, which will kill all the trees, but will not create new open water. The Texas Dept. of Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have refuted the Corps' claim and insist that recreational benefits for this 5600 acre swamp of dead trees will decline, not increase.

The Corps has claimed FISH AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT benefits because they will manage 14,000 acres of marshes for wildlife purposes. This totally ignores their own estimate of \$1 million annual losses to the fish and wildlife resource to be inundated by the lake. Furthermore, the Corps has never estimated the adverse effect the dam will have on the \$55 million annual commercial and sports fisheries of Galveston Bay, which will be seriously jeopardized by the reduction in freshwater inflow, sediments, and nutrients.

In summary, the Corps and local sponsors are promoting a project whose alleged benefits are totally based on fraudulent data. They have duped the City of Houston into believing the City will gain seven times more water than the project is capable of producing. They have twice duped the U.S. Congress into "reauthorizing" the project without benefit of an honest and good faith assessment of its potential environmental impact, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The Corps of Engineers itself has never approved the greatly modified 5600 acre project, which will totally abandon a nearly-completed 6.4 mile dam and build an entirely new one. Surely this \$63 million fraud will earn its place in the annals of Texas history. Why don't you let your Congressional representatives and Houston City Council members know how you feel about this?

Bob McFarlane