

## Comments on Region L Plan by San Marcos River Foundation 4/15/10

The Lower Blanco River dam is listed in the plan as being a recharge dam, between Kyle and Wimberley, to capture "flood flows". This has been on regional water plans for some time, but we recently learned that some believe a dam is needed to scalp floodwaters and pipe them to Sink Creek for boosting flows of the San Marcos springs. There are many problems with this idea, one being that the Blanco is a river that has a huge watershed and floods violently so it would have to be a huge dam, like damming the Llano River. The Blanco is one of the last undammed big rivers in the state. Sediment builds up behind dams and renders lakes shallow and less useful in certain kinds of rivers, and we know the Blanco is that kind of problem river with gravels and sediments shifting in each flood, in enormous drifts that completely change the landscape at times. We also know the Blanco dries up in dry periods, so there would not be water there during drought for recharge, which is the issue that we really need to deal with, to help the springs. And a major point, dams cause great loss of water to evaporation in our semi-arid climate, which is the last thing we need to be doing with our precious water in this region. There may be ways to use floodwaters but a big dam is not a preferred option on this river. We need to think a little more creatively than that. The rest of the country is removing dams, having found how harmful they are, and here we are, planning dams as though it is 1950.

The bays of Region L are shown to have dangerously low freshwater inflows twice as often in this plan, which is bad news enough. But the plan also has water coming from LCRA in another basin included in its projections. This is not likely to actually happen. So the projections are not realistic, and the bays will be the ones to suffer, even more than projected.

The plan has so many ideas for water projects that are called approved strategies that the projected needs of the region are way over-met. The plan should have strategies that equal the amount of water needed and then list quite a few alternatives that can be brought into play if the original strategies do not work out. The types of plans that could be called alternatives are those that will not likely happen in the next five years. The Lower Guadalupe Diversion, Mid-Basin Guadalupe project, and the Exelon project would be some that would be most likely to be called alternatives, simply because of timing.

Thank you for coming to San Marcos to hear comments on the Region L Plan.

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