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**Taking Care of Creeks
and Streams** **PAGE 7**

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water

Proposed Texas Water Grid to Share Water Statewide

THIS IS A LITTLE True or False quiz. Often, in my distant past as an agricultural and biology teacher, I considered T-F tests too easy. But, this one is not easy and has far-reaching effects.

The following is in reply to state Rep. Lyle Larson, R–San Antonio District 122, and his published article about the State Water Grid proposal:

The piece is well written by Rep. Larson, and knowing of him, I am led to believe Lyle is sincere in his humanitarian view of why a state plan or grid for sharing water across the state sounds logical. The idea seems good on paper and at a quick glance, just as did earlier plans from the 1960s to bring water from the Mississippi River to Lubbock or Great Lakes water to the Southeast. This type of grandiose plan “to save Texas” often sounds great and easy to do, especially on TV news bites

or in a newspaper headline. But the devil is in the details for sure.

For some reason, spending hundreds of millions on a pipeline or a new reservoir is often easier to sell to we voters than cheaper, safer, common sense options. Are we too busy or lazy to put out the effort which may be required for us taxpayers to carry out a home or community project? Or do we no longer care enough to learn the facts and vote? I hope not. I don’t think Texans and Americans are that noncaring down deep.

Unless Rep. Larson is “speaking with a forked tongue”—and I do not feel he is—there is some logic to sharing our water, and to some extent we already do. We should be using carefully thought out plans *when no or few other options are left*. There are some pipelines and reservoirs on rivers which share water now. Some drier areas are maxed out now or will be soon.



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More growth could cause the entire domino stack to fall and maybe others as well.

I also believe that if Rep. Larson is sincere in his message, then he is likely in a minority among Texas legislators and bureaucrats who are pushing for the statewide water sharing plan. Most, in my opinion, are mainly looking at more water for urban areas to grow and expand—at the expense of our Texas resources, our Texas agriculture, our Texas bays and estuaries and the future of our Texas rural communities. Sadly, I think most of our leaders and some water folks either do not know or they don’t understand the full consequences of pulling groundwater or river water from one aquifer or river basin to another region—or they just honestly do not care. I hope it is the former.

Do our legislators and power brokers really realize that water IS NOT a commodity like oil, coal or grain? In order to have a sustainable Texas—both the economy and the supporting environment—we must realize that water is in a special category. If we overbuild or overuse our water resources or pollute them too badly, there are NO substitutes.

Research this matter and think about it. Have we maxed out our water conservation efforts in every city, in every town, for every water-using industry and on every irrigated farm? Has every alternate option been considered, planned and put to use? Those options might be: rainwater harvesting, efficient ag and urban irrigation, groundwater desalination, wastewater re-

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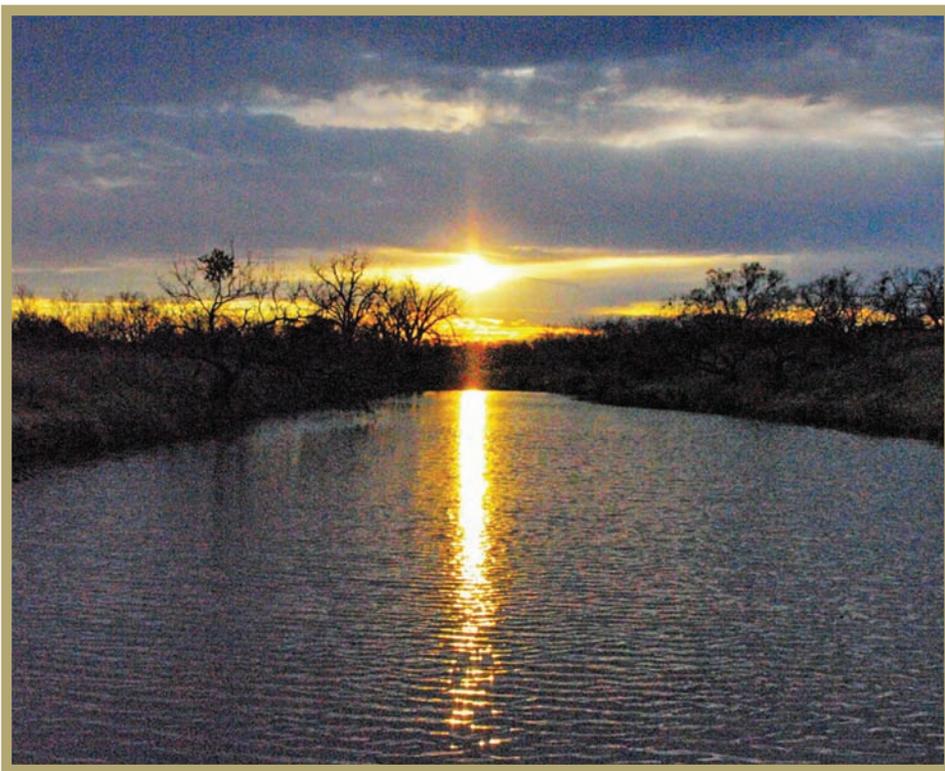


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cycling, stormwater harvesting, switching to new financially rewarding low water-use crops, xeriscape landscaping or Gulf water

desalination. Not hardly. Not even close. Have all cities, towns and counties moved to a better method of growth plan-

ning such as Low Impact Development or Smart Growth?

We should not be considering any state water sharing plan such as this until all other logical efforts at solving water issues to reach sustainability have been fulfilled.

Have you heard this? *Majority rules and the votes and dollars are in the cities!* "Water flows uphill to the money!" Are these sad truths going to rule Texas waters and leave our descendants with another California or worse? Does a statewide run plan for "sharing" our water resources begin to look and sound like a federal plan for "sharing the wealth?" Do you feel Austin leadership and state agencies have the knowledge, judgement and wisdom to decide who across Texas gets their water and grows or who does not? Do they know which far-off springs, creeks or rivers can be dried up and which bays or estuaries will become too salty to be sustainable? This is the heart of the issue.

Can we educate the legislature and local authorities in time, before this is legislation, passed and signed by the governor? Will the wisdom of King Solomon win out or will our state's water future go down the pathway of greedy kings?

This is very crucial to the future of Texas, truly "*Water is Life.*" ♦

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