

Researchers receive grant for study of reservoir

A team of A&M researchers from a variety of disciplines have received a federal grant for an in-depth study of the Canyon Reservoir.

The 14-month project is funded by an \$80,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Interior's Water Resources Research Office, through the Texas Water Resources Institute at TAMU.

Dr. Earl Cook, geosciences dean, heads the study. Other members of the multi-interest team are Dr. John E. Pearson, business administration dean; Dr. Ruth Schaffer, sociologist; Dr. Robert Clark, hydrometeorologist, and Dr. Warren Trock, agricultural economist.

Dr. Jack R. Runkles, TWRI director, noted the study probably is the first in the U. S. to consider the total impact of a reservoir on man and his environment.

Canyon Reservoir is in Comal County, 40 miles north of San Antonio.

Included in the research will be the history of the project, attitudes of interest groups during the planning stages, and a comprehensive evaluation of the reservoir impact today in terms of recreation, flood control, municipal-industrial water supply, pop-

ulation, irrigation, economic and social consequences.

Dean Cook, a geographer with current interests in resource and environmental decision making, noted the federal government has shown a change in attitude and planning during the past few years as it relates to dams and reservoirs. He said today there is more concern for social science than water engineering, with social benefits and costs much harder to formulate.

"The objective," the dean stressed, "is to see if there were defects in the planning processes, and if these defects still remain in the process of planning big dams."

He estimated Texas has over \$3 billion of federal money invested in reservoir projects. There have been some economic and industrial studies, he added, but none have looked at the whole

reservoir picture—before and after construction.

Canyon Reservoir was selected because it is relatively new (completed in 1964). The researchers will be able to use photographs and data collected before the dam was constructed, they can talk directly with the people involved in the planning and decision process and it is an isolated reservoir big enough to have considerable impact on the area.

The Canyon project was built by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose planning group in Dallas will cooperate in the TAMU study.

A major problem, Dean Cook noted, will be separation of effects of the reservoir from what would have happened anyway in that area.

One of the interesting aspects of the research will be Dr. Schaffer's attitude survey.

She plans to look at approximately 20 large Texas reservoirs and study the attitudes of interest groups during the planning stage, as well as after construction, to find out what changes in viewpoints have occurred as a result of the reservoir impacts.

Dean Cook acknowledged it is a short-term study, but he hopes to gather information which will improve planning for similar projects.

For example, many points are argued frequently during reservoir planning, points dealing with ecology, economics and benefit ratios. Such arguments are without reference to what actually happened in projects already built, he said.

The study should make it possible to speed up the decision-making process to eliminate or accelerate many future reservoir projects, the dean stated.

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