

Millican history full of flurries

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The present Millican Dam site was born of a joint venture in 1960 between Dow Chemical Co., irrigation canal companies and the cities of Bryan, College Station and Waco. The partnership hired a private engineering firm, which designed Millican Dam to create a massive 200 square mile reservoir. In 1961 the Texas Board of Water Engineers approved a permit for the Millican site. It was submitted to Congress but withdrawn when the dam did not get support in Congress. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers brought the dam proposal back to life in 1966 when it set forth Millican Dam as part of a two-dam project along with a dam 25 miles north of College Station. House Document 341, providing for the two dams, was approved by Congress in 1968 at an estimated cost of \$119 million. Federal funds were appropriated initially in 1970 for design studies and have been similarly given every year since. In 1972 the Corps of Engineers was given responsibility for issuing construction permits. A flurry of public stands began with an area Environmental Action Council (EAC) report that listed some biological and agricultural effects of damming so much land. The FAC report was based on a 1970 Texas A&M University task force, which made public the issues of water quality and projected wildlife populations for the reservoir.

In April 1974 the College Station City Council passed a resolution supporting continued funding of re-construction planning for Millican Dam, but reversed their support a year later. The BRA requested over \$800,000 in April 1975 for extensive planning and design of Millican Dam. The EAC, lead by Cornelius Van Bavel, continued to fight the project. A 1974 EAC report suggested alternatives to damming the river, such as levees and improved river channels.

Van Bavel called Millican a poorly designed project in a statement before the Bryan City Council in 1975. But the appropriations for planning were granted by Congress in June 1975, and Gerald included the necessary funds in his 1976 budget. In the spring of 1975 the issue of extractable lignite coal in the reservoir area became prominent.

"This is the richest valley in the state of Texas we're going to flood," said Rep. Olin Teague (D-Tex.) said of the time. "Millican is on the road—lignite may change the picture."

In February 1976, the U.S. Bureau of Mines reported that a band of economically extractable lignite lay in the proposed reservoir site. The Corps of Engineers immediately began to plan alternative dam sites to allow excavation of the coal.

The EAC formally requested Congress to cut off federal funds for the Millican Dam project March of 1976, but Congress ignored the request.

Funding to the Corps of Engineers continues as they study possible sites for the dam. Planning was delayed at least two years by the coal discovery, one Corps of Engineers official said recently.

No definite decision has been made about future construction of the dam because new feasibility studies are not complete. If the decision is made to build the dam, the dam will require over seven years to build and the reservoir four years to fill completely.

So Millican Dam, at the least, is over a decade away

Robb new Virginia Lt. Gov.

RICHMOND (UPI) — Charles Robb, a political newcomer and son-in-law of the late President Lyndon Johnson, is the only glimmer of gold Virginia Democrats are seeing at the end of their disastrous "Rainbow" ticket.

Robb, 38, was elected Tuesday as lieutenant governor, a mostly ceremonial post considered a stepping stone to higher office, to give Democrats their only victory in three statewide races.

Robb posted a landslide win over two-term state senator A. Joseph Canada of Virginia Beach, waging a carefully balanced and vigorous campaign that overcame any ill feeling toward Johnson's "Great Society" without repudiating his wife's father — or the initial name recognition he had.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Henry Howell dubbed his party's candidates the "Rainbow" ticket because of the diverse mix of his neopopulist stance, Edward Lane's conservative views in his race for attorney general, and Robb's non-ideological campaign.

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