GROUP AGAINST RESERVOIR DEVELOPMENT

GARD Update

No case for Reservoir

As we emerge from one of the driest summers on record and the drought media frenzy, you might want to clutch at apparently common sense solutions such as new reservoirs. Many newspapers wrongly blamed local opposition groups for blocking such projects while simultaneously showing pictures of near-empty reservoirs across the land. How ironic!

See the fallacy of this argument. A reservoir, like a phone battery, needs to be filled / charged. If there were less electricity to go around, you wouldn't buy a bigger battery but you might look for another source of electricity, such as solar or wind power.

Thames Water is proposing a vast reservoir to be filled from the Thames, a limited water source in the most water-stressed region of the UK. This makes for an utterly flawed strategy, leaving you vulnerable to multi-year droughts such as those we are experiencing today. In addition, the time it would take to bring this into play means the immediate needs of the Southeast won't be met for a generation.

Fix the Leaks

138 million gallons of water, equivalent to the daily usage of around 1.75 million households, are wasted every day because of an aging water supply system in which our water companies have consistently under-invested. To bring leakage into acceptable levels and ensure reliability of supply Thames Water must now bring the Victorian engineering up to date.

Christopher Furlon / Getty Images

Baitings reservoir, West Yorkshire during 2022 drought.

We need new water

The problem of water supply for the Southeast and London is not solved through storage but by transferring NEW WATER from the west. GARD has always advocated the Severn Thames Water Transfer (STT - detail inside).

It's cheaper to build, makes use of existing infrastructure, causes significantly less disruption and environmental damage. It also crucially resolves the immediate water stress which buffers well into the future.

Together with other schemes (desalination, water reuse and recycling) supported by an effective national water transfer system, the Severn Thames Transfer can meet the needs of the future in a scalable, environmentally sensitive, and resilient manner.

Support GARD and help fight the Megavoir!

Become a GARD member:

gard.membership@gmail.com

Call: 07773 029409

Window Poster on back page

5 DANGERS ABINGDON RESERVOIR

SIZE

25-30 metres high (for comparison, the reservoir at Farmoor is 3-4 metres high).

Will hold at least 100 million cubic metres of water.

Will stretch for around 4 square miles, which is roughly the size of Gatwick Airport, meaning Hanney Road will need to be re-routed.

DISRUPTION

Work would start in 2025 and finish in 2037 meaning more than 3500 days of noise, air pollution, and traffic in the surrounding villages.

SAFETY

A reservoir of this size has never been built anywhere else before, meaning it is untried and untested.

Building over flood relief zone areas creates a very real flood risk. Having at least 100 million tonnes of water sitting above ground makes this an even bigger risk.

If the reservoir walls were to develop cracks, the surrounding homes would need to be evacuated for as long as it takes to safely drain (up to 20 days).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Habitats for wildlife will be destroyed creating a loss of biodiversity.

Over 10 years of building works carried out by heavy machinery will create an enormous carbon footprint.

Due to the high-sided walls, the local climate will likely change creating local micro-climates.

COST

More than £1.5 billion.

Funded by raising huge water company debt, with all Thames Water customers paying off the interest via their bills for up to 200 years - yet another utility bill going up!

Thames Water takes the profits though of course.

PS.

Contrary to what has been presented, there won't be any leisure facilities such as sailing or SUP boarding available on the reservoir. The sheer size and scale simply makes it too dangerous. It is something to entice us, which will then be scrapped when building starts.

Unanimous support across the political spectrum

We have seen opposition to the reservoir rally and come together at all levels, discarding political allegiance to oppose as one this project of monstrous proportions.

Here's what's happened at a political level in the last year

- **GARD recognised as source of expert advice on water issues by the County Council**
- **A parliamentary debate led by Layla Moran**
- **A parliamentary question by David Johnston**
- **An Oxfordshire Water Summit on the 30th November 2022**

We would like to thank all our elected representatives in their efforts so far.

There is more fight yet to come, but together we can win.

Make your objection to reservoir known and help raise support for the STT option.

Oxfordshire County Council

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Vale of the White Horse District Council

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Water Transfer – A solution whose time has come

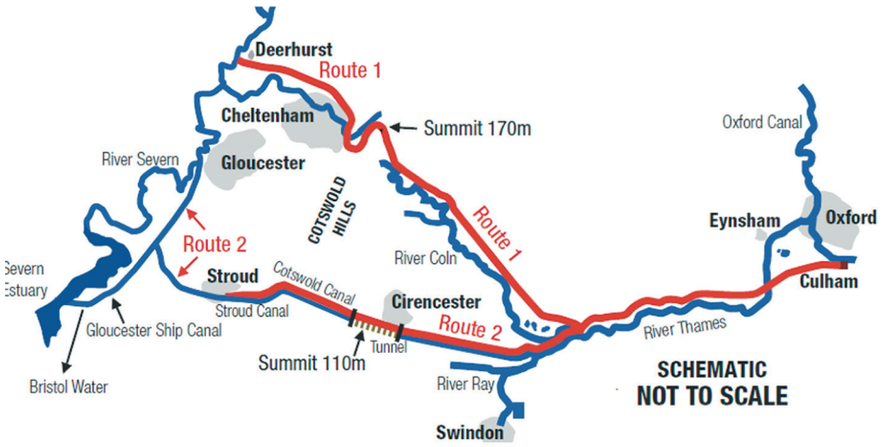
Transferring water is an idea as ancient as the Romans.

A solution requiring far less investment and less environmental damage than the reservoir, is the Severn to Thames Transfer (STT). This has been touted as far back as a strategic water resource investigation carried out in 1970 by the then Water Resources Board. Again, in 1994 the National Rivers Authority looked at it, followed by the National Infrastructure Commission in 2020.

All concluded first priority was to transfer water from the North-West to the Southeast

The project involves an investment in infrastructure that would see water flow, when needed, from the River Severn, extracted either at Deerhurst and transported by pipeline directly to Culham or extracted at Gloucester & Sharpness Canal with water flowing through the existing Cotswold Canals.

The pipeline from Deerhurst could allow for a larger capacity, up to 500 million litres per day, and has advantages in terms of management and security, but comes at a slightly higher energy use when compared to the low energy option of the Canal transfer route. This has a capacity for up to 300 million litres per day and brings with it significant socio-economic benefits from the restoration of the canal.



Proposed routes for the Severn Thames Transfer

The STT takes less time to come online and is substantially cheaper than the Abingdon Reservoir. Either STT transfer option could see water coming in by the early 2030s which is significant because it would enable water providers to stop extracting water from vulnerable chalk streams. Bringing this volume of water into the supply-mix earlier enables the plans to be truly adaptive because water-need can be reliably assessed once the transfer is operating.

This in turn brings better decisions around water needs and storage requirements. WRSE claims that its water resource plans are adaptive, but the Reservoir, with its 15 -year delivery is anything but.

Experience and modelling both show that water transfer options, in particular when coupled with recycled water, are very robust to climate change impact, giving us certainty well into the future. In years which are average or wetter there is always water to extract from the Severn. In contrast, there would be, on average, insufficient water in the Thames to fill the Abingdon Reservoir each year from early June to late October, and records show that in 1975-76 there would have been insufficient water in the Thames to fill the Abingdon Reservoir for 15 consecutive months, meaning the Southeast would have been ill-prepared for the 1976 drought. In contrast, the Severn's low flow lasted for a much shorter time, and, as usual after a dry period, the Severn flow, due to the area's geology, recovered much quicker than that of the Thames.

So, overall, STT is a better, cheaper and safer option that will serve the needs of the Southeast.

Anglian Water pipeline currently being constructed from the Humber to Essex. At 400km, it is intended to be much longer than the proposed STT at a cost of £0.5 Bn.

Public Village Hall Meetings

STOP THE RESERVOIR

ALL MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7.30PM

Steventon:	Friday 25 November
Drayton:	Tuesday 29 November
Marcham:	Thursday 1 December
Garford:	Tuesday 6 December
East Hendred:	Thursday 8 December
The Hanneys:	Friday 9 December

STOP THE RESERVOIR

FIX THE LEAKS!

TRANSFER WATER

design@organgraphic.com

BETTER CHEAPER SAFER

GARD: www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk