



# PROJECT UPDATE

*Lake Ralph Hall is a special place (a natural place, a quiet place, a hospitable place) both for people and for the environment, assuring a reliable water supply for generations to come.*

## Getting the Seal of Approval — From Permits to Funding

It takes decades to permit a major reservoir, and years to build it. Ronna Hartt, Upper Trinity's Assistant Director of Operations – Water Resources, has played a key role shepherding the Lake Ralph Hall project through these critical phases.

Planning for the lake began in 2001, and the project obtained its U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Section 404 permit needed to start construction in 2020.

"From 2008 to 2019 I worked closely with the Corps and a third-party contractor to develop the project's Environmental Impact Statement, and I collaborated with many other agencies—including Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Environmental Protection Agency and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality—to develop the project's Mitigation Plan," Hartt explained. "These are the two key documents that led to the Section 404 permit. After receiving the Section 404 Permit, we completed design of the dam, bridges and roadways, and then began construction in June 2021."

What's kept her going these 14 years? It all comes down to one word—perseverance. "Permitting a new reservoir is a lengthy process," said Hartt. "With any project of this magnitude, there will be challenges. You must acknowledge that going in and choose to persevere"

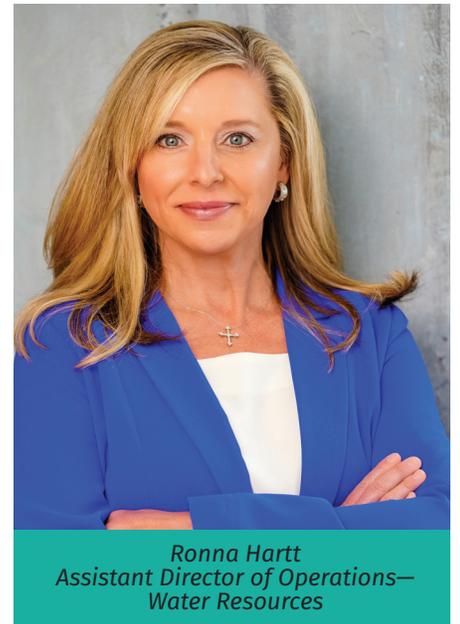
Now that construction has started, Hartt has taken on a range of new, but related responsibilities. She continues to work closely with other government agencies, particularly the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), which is financing the majority of Lake Ralph Hall thru the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas programs.

In addition, Hartt also oversees other elements of the project. "I directly manage our roadway Progressive Design Build contract and provide oversight of the other program elements," which include the dam, aquatic mitigation, conveyance system and other onsite facilities.

Her years with a front row seat to the project have given Hartt a clear vision on the importance of water, and specifically Lake Ralph Hall.

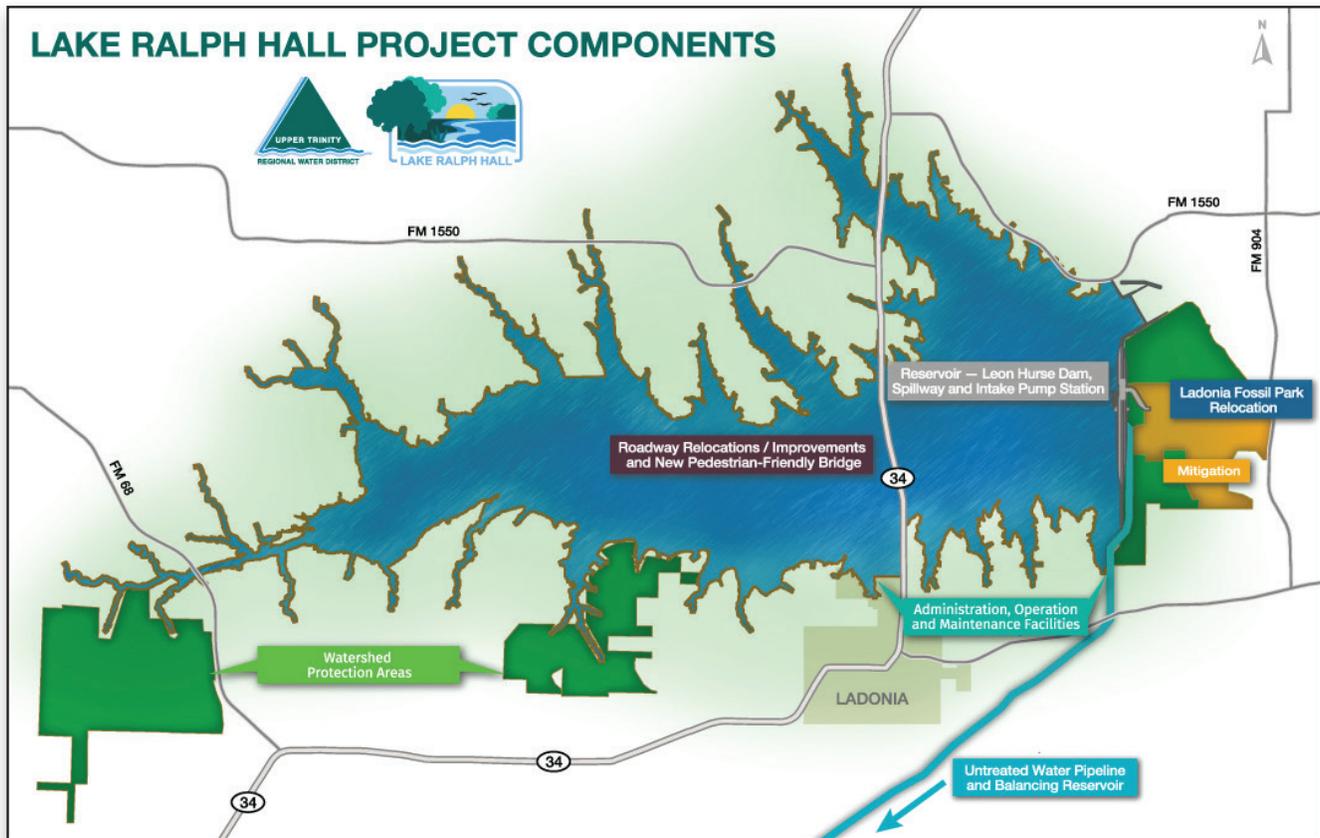
"Water is the life blood of everything," she pointed out. "No one can live without water—it's an absolute necessity that is often taken for granted. I've come to realize just how precious our water is, and how much time, energy and effort it takes to treat and deliver it to our communities. That's why those of us at Upper Trinity have to plan 50 years in advance and track our population growth—so we can keep up with demand."

"Lake Ralph Hall is going to be a critical water source for our customers, and we need it by 2026," she concluded. "Being a part of such a monumental water supply project is incredibly rewarding."



**Ronna Hartt**  
Assistant Director of Operations—  
Water Resources

# PROJECT COMPONENTS UPDATE



## Reservoir, Leon Hurse Dam & Spillway

Constructing a 2.3 mile-long dam, intake pump station to pump water into the untreated water pipeline and spillway to release excess water back into the North Sulphur River.

- About 95% of the dam site is now clear. Around 70 construction workers have been onsite each day, clearing brush and beginning to place and compact dirt for the embankment on both the sides of the dam.
- Crews are around 85% finished with demolition of structures and removing debris from the project area.
- Excavation for the spillway is mostly finished, and crews will begin to pour concrete next month.



## Roadway and Bridge Improvements

Constructing a new pedestrian-friendly SH 34 lake bridge, relocating part of FM 1550 and improvements and closures to various county roads.

- Large beams continue to arrive, and crews are laying them on top of concrete pillars and bents to form the new SH 34 bridge. The last beam is on schedule to be placed in the next few weeks.
- Workers, including subs, continue pouring the bridge decking on areas that are now structurally completed.
- Workers have also started construction on Merrill Creek bridge, which will provide access over a finger of the future lake.
- Construction continues on new sections of FM 1550 to accommodate the future lake shoreline, with plans to open the new roadway in October.

## Administration, Operation and Maintenance Facilities

*Building facilities for the lake's day-to-day operation, management and maintenance facilities.*

- Halff Associates is currently planning/designing all the lake facilities.

## Pipeline

*Installing a 32-mile underground pipeline and creating a balancing reservoir to provide water to Upper Trinity's water system for treatment and delivery.*

- UTRWD continues the process of acquiring the necessary land for the pipeline and balancing reservoir.
- Engineers and construction managers are preparing construction plans for the pipeline and balancing reservoir.

## Mitigation/Watershed Protection Areas

*Returning a portion of the former North Sulphur River to its natural, meandering path. Leaving other areas in their natural condition to protect water quality in the lake.*

- UTRWD selected Texas Mitigation Solutions as its full-service mitigation contractor earlier this year. The company will be restoring some minor river tributaries.
- The temporary fossil park continues to attract fossil hunters from all around.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Lake Ralph Hall Construction Progresses

With just over a year of construction activity, significant work has been completed to make Lake Ralph Hall a reality.

When finished, the earthen dam will be about 2 miles long and 90 feet high with a width of 1,000 feet (approximately 3 football fields) at its widest point. About 95% of the entire site has been cleared of brush and trees for the dam floor. Dirt is being placed and compacted for the embankment on both the sides of the reservoir. Excavation is underway for the future spillway. Over the next few years, crews will place about 5 million yards of dirt and 200,000 yards of concrete to finish the spillway.

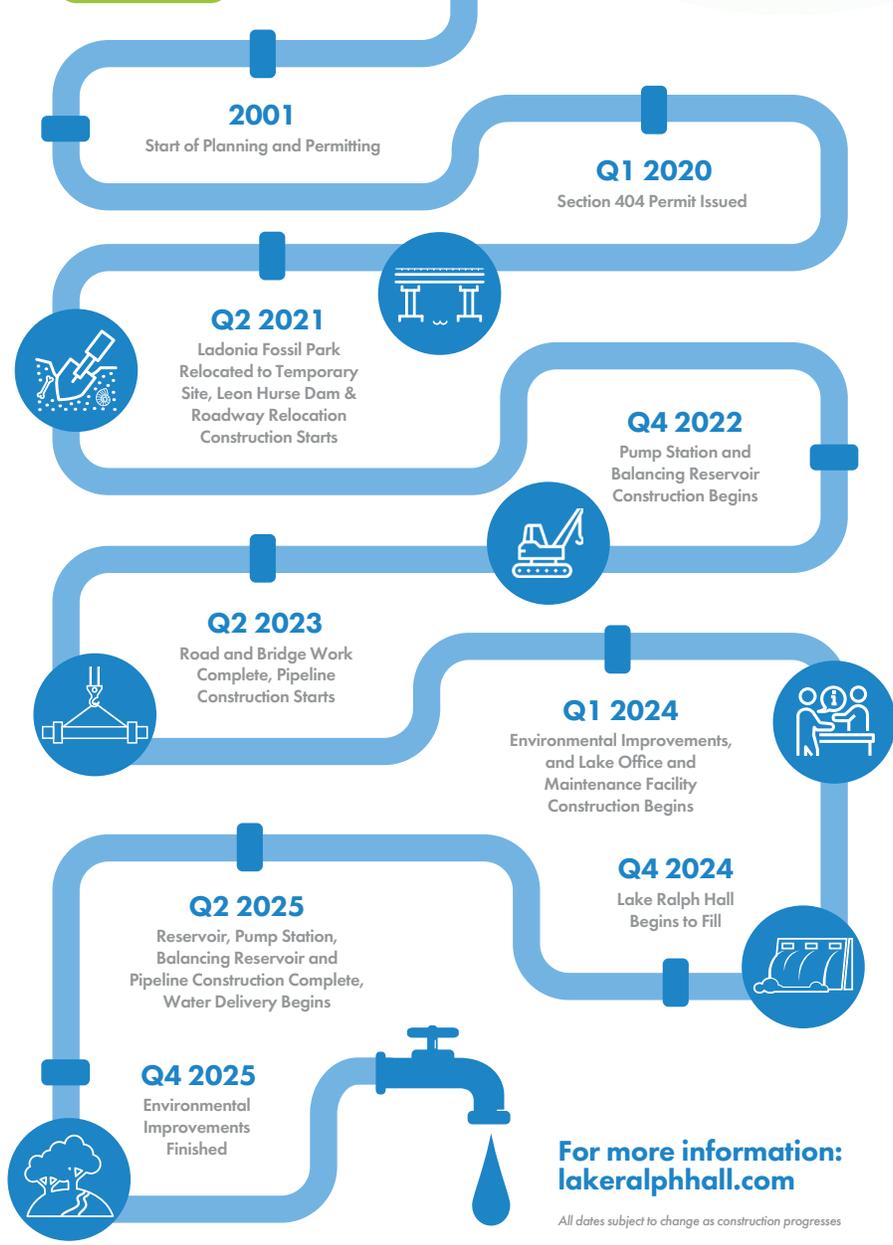
The State Highway 34 North Sulphur River bridge that will span the new lake is also advancing. The columns and caps have all been placed, and the contractor Flatiron



Construction is installing the last of the 343 large, 125-foot-long beams this summer. Merrill Creek Bridge, a second bridge that will offer access over a finger of the lake, is also underway with columns being placed and beam installation continuing in the coming months.

For information on construction progress, watch the newest construction update video at <https://youtu.be/6TLNHL67lvY>.

# Lake Ralph Hall Project Schedule



**For more information:**  
[lakeralphhall.com](http://lakeralphhall.com)

*All dates subject to change as construction progresses*