

# Palacios Beacon Online

## **COUNCIL PASSES RESOLUTION TO 'SAVE' MATAGORDA BAY**

After being told that Matagorda Bay is one of five major bays on the Texas coast “at risk” of possible serious damage from inadequate freshwater flow, the Palacios City Council is calling on the State Legislature to take protective action.

A resolution calling on lawmakers to make protecting freshwater inflows a priority action item at their upcoming session, was unanimously passed at the council's Dec. 6 meeting.

Under the state's current water permitting rules, Susan Kaderka, director of the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Natural Resource Center in Austin, told the council there was no guarantee that any freshwater would reach Matagorda Bay at sometime in the future.

Water demands by cities, river authorities, farmers, industries and other holding state water permits upstream could claim all of upstream freshwater from rivers— especially in times of drought, she said, referring to an extensive study the NWF has compiled.

The study points out that freshwater inflow into the bays is a must for survival of the ecosystems. Inflows are essential to the nourishment of fish, shrimp, oysters and birds.

For coastal communities, such as Palacios, she said that's a serious concern on economies that depend on healthy bays, healthy fish and wildlife populations to support commercial and recreational fishing, as well as other nature-related activities and tourism.

Along with Matagorda Bay, the NWF survey includes Galveston Bay, San Antonio Bay, Corpus Christi Bay and Sabine Lake on the “in danger” list.

In other activity at the Dec. 6 meeting:

- Mayor John Connor said an appropriate proclamation will be prepared for presentation to Charl deVilliers, when the deaf sailor returns to Palacios from his record-setting solo sailing trip around the world. Villiers is on schedule to sail back into Palacios this coming weekend (Dec. 18-19).
- City Administrator Charles Winfield showed photos of drainage ditches and other problem causes for flooding in Bethany Park, which was built before it became a part of the city. Winfield said Bethany Park is in Drainage District #3 and that the city and drainage district “were talking” about a partnership effort to correct the problems.
- Although the council has yet to establish regular meeting dates in accordance to the Home Rule Charter, which says only that regular meetings will be “at least once monthly,” council approved “rescheduling regular meetings” that fall on the following holidays in 2005: Jan. 3, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, July 4 and Sept. 5, to the next day (Tuesday). Apparently the present first and third Monday schedule will be continued as regular dates.
- A request by Family Heritage Life Insurance to make a presentation to the city council was approved. City Administrator Winfield said he had been advised by the city attorney that the insurance company could meet with city employees, as long as the meeting was off city property.
- Winfield said the city attorney was working on a proposed contract that Palacios Community

Medical Center (PCMC), in exchange for receiving water, sewer and garbage service, PCMC would provide various types of medical service to employees of the city's water, sewer and animal control departments, plus jail inmates.

- Bills totaling \$129,912.95 were approved for payment.