

## Publisher to fight for fresh inflows of water

### **Stakeholder nominee for San Antonio and Aransas bays wants to seek alternative sources other than river, groundwater**



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SEADRIFT - One Seadrift man lives and breathes fishing. San Antonio Bay serves as his lifeblood.

Everett Johnson retired as an industrial manager and came to Calhoun County to become a fishing guide in 1999. He always came down to the Port O'Connor and Seadrift areas while living in Navasota. He acquired a small fishing newspaper called "Gulf Coast Connections" and turned it into today's "Texas Saltwater Fishing Magazine."

Biologist Norman Boyd in Port O'Connor thought he would be a perfect stakeholder for the San Antonio and Aransas bays. So, Boyd took nomination paperwork to the Calhoun County commissioners, who approved the nomination of Johnson on Feb. 26.

"He's tied to the health of the estuary financially. He's got a vested interest on several levels," Boyd said. "He cares about the environment. He's smart enough to understand the issues and weigh all the evidence."

Johnson, 57, lives and works close to the water on Lane Road and stays active with the Coastal Conservation Association and Texas Parks and Wildlife. He hopes to bring diverse views to the water committee table, pulling from his 30 years in industry and his addiction to recreational fishing.

Johnson talks about this new endeavor.

Q: Why do you want to serve on the stakeholder committee?

A: I see the management of water in the next 50 or 100 years to be the top-of-the-list primary responsibility. We've got a growing population. People need to have clean water flowing from the tap. Some like to have a reasonable quantity of water to put on their yard. Some people depend on agriculture. Crops need water. We should not become lopsided. We shouldn't give all the water to one side or the other. We shouldn't give all the water away. We still got these wonderful marine resources out here. The basic foundation, the primary building block of the food chain, relies on freshwater inflow. We must strike a balance. I think it's even past time we utilize other sources of water.

Q: Why devote so much time to this?

A: The Guadalupe system is a gem. It's beautiful. To continue a management effort to make sure it flows to the bay is a worthwhile endeavor. I would like someday to be assured that we will never in our development of a society turn our back on the importance of those inflows. It's very easy - when water rights are so valuable and water rights are traded like commodities- to forget about the bay.

Q: What would you like the average person to understand?

A: I think that the average citizen needs to understand our water resources are finite. I would like to raise the awareness of all Texas citizens that we need to begin planning. We need to put people in elected positions. We need to petition our government to seek alternative sources other than just river water and groundwater. We need to constantly ask them to be mindful of all users and to stress the importance of inflows to the bays.

#### ABOUT BAY & BASIN STAKEHOLDERS

Bay and basin stakeholders will assist the Environmental Flows Advisory Group in balancing the demand for water needs for the entire state. The group will determine how best, including granting permits, to keep water flowing down river and into the bays.

Lawmakers passed Senate Bill 3 in the 80th Legislature, which created the group and environmental flows allocation process.

Nominations for the Colorado and Lavaca rivers/Matagorda Bay system and the Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission and Aransas rivers/Mission, Copano, Aransas and San Antonio bays system will be appointed by June.

Flows for these river and bay systems are scheduled to be adopted in 2012.

For more information, visit the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Web site at [www.tceq.state.tx.us](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us) or [texaswatermatters.org](http://texaswatermatters.org).