

National Wildlife Federation
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\$1.7 Billion Marvin Nichols Dam Tops National Wildlife Federation Report of Texas' Unnecessary Water Projects

NWF Says Six Projects Total \$3.5 Billion in Taxpayer Dollars "Down the Drain"

(Austin, TX) - The proposed Marvin Nichols Dam in Northeast Texas received top billing in a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) report highlighting expensive and inappropriate state water projects. The NWF announced the list today in a report entitled "Down the Drain."

The NWF says the six highlighted projects, recommended in a draft State Water Plan the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) released recently for public comment, would damage the environment, harm fish and wildlife resources and rural economies, and waste billions of taxpayer dollars. The featured projects and their estimated costs are:

Marvin Nichols 1 Dam/Reservoir \$1.7 billion
Lower Colorado River Pipeline \$800 million - \$1 billion
Little River Dam/Reservoir \$361 million
Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer Withdrawal \$332 million
Brownsville Weir \$81 million
Gulf Coast Aquifer Withdrawals \$38 million

Total Taxpayer Dollars Down the Drain \$3.5 billion

"The State's population is expected to double in the next 50 years which means Texans clearly do face a water challenge," said Susan Kaderka, Director of the National Wildlife Federation's Gulf States office in Austin. "But we've got to find a way to supply water for human needs without drying up our streams and rivers and without wasting billions of dollars. That means looking at how we can use water more efficiently, and not just assuming we can pump or divert or capture all the water we might want," she said. "Unfortunately, these projects illustrate that water planners are relying largely on outdated concrete-and-steel approaches to supplying water that threaten to send our hard-earned money and the natural heritage of Texas down the drain," continued Kaderka.

NWF Water Resources Scientist, Dr. Norman Johns, said rivers, streams and aquifers in Texas are already stressed. "We've got to get serious about conserving water," said Johns. "For example, if the major cities in the

Dallas/Ft. Worth area would bring their water usage down to the level of other major Texas cities, the so called 'need' for the Marvin Nichols dam would evaporate. State water planners are proposing to trade healthy rivers and coastal bays, along with the rural communities they help support, for the privilege of maintaining big green lawns even during a severe drought."

The "Down the Drain" report provides a brief analysis of six projects. NWF's concerns with the featured projects include loss of freshwater inflows to coastal bays, which are critical to survival of coastal fish and wildlife and their associated fishing and tourism industries (Lower Colorado River Pipeline and Brownsville Weir); loss of family farms and ranches as well as important wildlife habitat (Little River and Marvin Nichols Dams/Reservoirs); and depletion of groundwater resulting from over-pumping of aquifers (Carrizo-Wilcox and Gulf Coast Aquifer projects).

The complete NWF report is available online at <http://www.nwf.org/texaswaterforwildlife/>

"NWF is encouraging Texans to get more involved in the water planning process," said Kaderka. "This State Plan will affect both the bank accounts and the legacy of Texans, so we've all got a stake in it." Kaderka noted that state officials are talking of new statewide taxes and fees to help pay for new water projects. "But regardless of who pays, no decisions are more critical to future generations of Texans than those about water. The Water Development Board needs to hear that Texans won't support new water projects until we have a Water Plan that supports the efficient use of water and protects our natural heritage."

The Texas Water Development Board is holding hearings on the draft State Plan around the state and is accepting written comments through November 12.

The nation's largest member-supported conservation education and advocacy group, the National Wildlife Federation unites people from all walks of life to protect nature, wildlife and the world we all share. The Federation has educated and inspired families to uphold America's conservation tradition since 1936.