

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

8/13/02

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Contact: Norman Johns,
Myron Hess or John Hannah
at 512/476-9805

Report Shows Conservation can Replace Proposed Dams

Report by National Wildlife Federation shows San Antonio and El Paso models can prevent the need for controversial and destructive projects

Austin, TX – The State of Texas could – through conservation efforts at the municipal level – avoid many controversial and environmentally damaging projects such as the eight large dams proposed in the new State Water Plan, according to a report released today by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). The analyses in the report use the successful programs of San Antonio and El Paso as guides for determining how much water could be saved.

According to NWF's report, *Save Water, Save Rivers, Save Money*, municipal conservation could yield up to 1.048 million acre-feet per year (341 billion gallons/year) in water savings above that proposed in the 2002 State Water Plan. Eight new multi-billion dollar dam projects proposed in the Plan are estimated to provide 1.116 million acre-feet of water per year.

According to Dr. Norman Johns, the NWF author of the report, said "We knew that water conservation should be an important part of Texas future water supply strategies, but these results really underline how fundamentally sound this approach is. We could avoid a lot of really controversial and environmentally damaging projects if we get started on a statewide effort at municipal water conservation today."

The recently completed Texas State Water Plan (formally known as *Water for Texas – 2002*) is the principal document guiding the state's future water development. Although the 2002 State Water Plan gives some attention to municipal water conservation, the National Wildlife Federation contends that the potential of water conservation, especially in municipalities, remains largely untapped.

San Antonio and El Paso already have achieved about 30% reductions in per person water use and have plans for future reductions to reach about 37%. The NWF analysis used three scenarios: minimal effort (10% reduction), moderate effort (25%), and higher effort (37%) with no city expected to do more than what San Antonio or El Paso are planning to do. In addition, cities in drier regions were presumed to use slightly more water per person.

NWF's Dr. Johns says the successes of San Antonio and El Paso are key to the analysis. "We wanted to base our work on real-world results here in Texas. We'd like to see the rest of the state follow the admirable initiative that these cities have taken."

The calculation of water savings was based on the projected population and water use data for 94 medium to large cities and heavily urbanized counties for the year 2050 as contained in the State Water Plan. The NWF report found that water savings would range between 0.407 million acre-feet per year for the minimal effort program to 1.048 million acre-feet per year for the higher effort.

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

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