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**For Immediate Release (Thursday, March 29, 2012):**

**International Water Expert to Highlight Sierra Club Water Conference -- Statewide Gathering Set for April 27 in Austin**

(Austin)—Brian Richter, an international authority on river conservation and the director of The Nature Conservancy's Global Freshwater Program, will be the keynote speaker for a statewide water conference being held by the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club in Austin on Friday, April 27. The "Water for People and the Environment" conference will explore some of the key ways in which Texas may meet its water challenges through more efficient and effective management of the state's water resources. Major topics covered will be drought and drought response, innovative water conservation measures, and balancing human and environmental needs in water reuse projects.

Keynote speaker Richter heads a Nature Conservancy program that promotes sustainable water management with governments, businesses, and local communities. He has consulted on more than 120 river projects worldwide, focusing on the challenge of sustaining healthy rivers and lakes while meeting human needs for water and energy. Richter is the co-author (with water policy expert Sandra Postel) of the book *Rivers for Life: Managing Water for People and Nature*. He will bring his knowledge and experience from around the world to address Texas water challenges.

"This statewide water conference comes at a critical time," said Ken Kramer, Director of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club. "The drought of 2011 highlighted the challenges facing Texas in meeting the water needs of Texans and the environment in which they depend. Key decisions about how Texas faces its water future in light of the possibility of more frequent drought situations are likely to be made within the coming year. The recent rains should not cloud the very real need to take steps now to manage our water resources better. The conference will highlight some of the tools to help us achieve that goal."

Conference sessions will focus on how Texas state agencies, regional water authorities, and communities may enhance drought management and response, water conservation, water reuse, and other tools to assure that Texas has adequate water resources to sustain our people and the rivers, wetlands, and coastal bays and estuaries critical to the state's economy as well as its ecology. Speakers will include experts from the Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, San Antonio Water System, Alliance for Water Efficiency, Texas Water Foundation, Lower Colorado River Authority, and National Wildlife Federation.

The conference will be held at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center on The University of Texas at Austin campus. Registration and check-in for the conference will be from 8 to 9 AM on Friday, April 27. Conference sessions will run from 9 to 4 PM. Lunch and materials are covered in the registration fee for attendees. For more information or to register for the conference, go to <http://action.sierraclub.org/site/Calendar?id=161061&view=Detail>.

The conference is an activity of the Texas Living Waters Project, a joint water policy and education project of the National Wildlife Federation and the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club in cooperation with regional partners such as the Galveston Bay Foundation. The project is funded by a variety of charitable organizations in Texas. For more information on the project, go to [www.texaswatermatters.org](http://www.texaswatermatters.org).

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