

Texas bays and wildlife are at risk

-NWF report highlights need for changes in state water policy

Texas bays and the wildlife and coastal economies they support may suffer serious damage before long unless the state acts to protect them, according to a new National Wildlife Federation (NWF) report entitled *Bays in Peril*. The report concludes a two-year study of how Texas' growing water demands and its century-old water permitting process threaten freshwater inflows to Texas bays. These inflows from rivers are essential, the report says, if the bays are to continue nourishing abundant populations of fish, shrimp, oysters and birds while contributing billions of dollars to the Texas economy.

"The report's findings paint a terrible picture for our coast," said Norman Johns, an NWF water resource scientist and the report's author. "Five of Texas' seven major bays received a 'danger' ranking in our study, which means their shrimp, crab, oyster and fish populations could decline dramatically in the future unless protective action is taken."

The Texas chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association is also concerned by NWF's findings. "The NWF results underscore our concerns about the maintenance of freshwater inflows that are so important to our coastal fisheries," said Ben Vaughan, III, the chair of CCA Texas' water subcommittee. CCA Texas is one of the

state's largest marine conservation associations with more than 48,000 active members.

At the heart of the problem is Texas' historical practice of granting perpetual water permits without considering their effects on rivers and bays. "With this study, we've looked at what those effects are likely to be as more and more of the water authorized under these permits actually gets used," said Myron Hess, NWF legal counsel. "If nothing is done, the outlook is grim, not just for fish and wildlife but for the tens of thousands of people who depend on the bays to make a living or who use them for recreation."

Hess noted that over the last 100 years, the state has granted permits authorizing 23 million acre-feet of water to be taken from Texas' rivers and streams every year. Many permit holders are not using their full allotment of water right now, but that will change as the state's population grows. Hess said increased water demands likely will be met largely by using existing water permits more fully. And this means less water will be flowing to the coast.

Bays in Peril uses computer models developed for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to determine how much freshwater would make it to the bays if all existing wa-

ter permits were used to their full capacity. The report then compares those results to state estimates of how much freshwater each bay needs. Sabine Lake, Galveston Bay, Matagorda Bay, San Antonio Bay and Corpus Christi Bay are most at risk, according to the study and receive "danger" rankings. The Upper Laguna Madre and the Copano/Aransas bays systems both receive "good" rankings in the study.

Hess said that despite the alarming results, Texas can still act to protect its bays. "First and foremost, we need to conserve water so we can meet human needs without unnecessarily harming the bays," he said. "Next, we need to adopt some common-sense legal protections for the coast." Among the remedies Hess cited: the state could reserve for inflow-protection purposes a portion of the water that has not been permitted yet, and add inflow protections to existing permits when they are sold. The state could also create new programs to encourage the voluntary conversion of some existing permits to inflow-protection purposes.

"We owe it to ourselves, our children and their children to be good stewards of these wonderful Texas coastal resources," Hess said. "If we act now, while there is still time, we can meet human water needs while protecting this amazing natural heritage for future generations."

Sheridan News

By Velma Kutzner

The October monthly PTS meeting was held Tuesday, Oct. 19 in the school cafeteria. President Penny Dodd called the meeting to order with the pledge and prayer. Most of the new business concerned the upcoming annual Halloween Carnival. With good weather the carnival is scheduled to be held Saturday, Oct. 30 on the cement slab adjacent to the school.

Some of the booths will be the popular cake walk, country store, a general store, ring toss, and others. A moon walk, a favorite with the youngsters, will also be set up on the site. Food will be served beginning at 4:30 in the kitchen, offering hamburgers, hot dogs and nachos.

The king and queen contest will begin at 5 followed by the costume judging. This year there will be a costume contest for each age group and prizes will be awarded to each participant.

A new booth this year will be the chance to win over \$400 in prizes in a jackpot drawing. Everyone is asked to bring your lawn chair and enjoy an evening under the stars.

(See Sheridan, Page 11)

Nativity Festival soccer tournament champions



Team Eagle Lake, pictured above, were the winner of the Soccer Tournament held Sunday, October 17, that was for the first time part of the Annual Parish of the Nativity Fall Festival. Manuel Baltazar holds the trophy with Eddie Winkler, pastor (right).



Edmundo Rubio, captain of Team Columbus, holds the second place trophy with Eddie Winkler (right).



Manuel Rodriguez of Team Eagle Lake was high scorer for the Tournament with seven goals.

Photos courtesy of Parish of the Nativity

The other two teams in the Tournament were Cruz Azul, the other Eagle Lake team, and employees of Hanson Rice Construction at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center site. Sealy, Ismael Samañiego organized the event, and primary workers on preparing the field and providing services were Rafael Escobar, Felipe Garcia, Moisés Gasca, Armando Marquez, Oscar Martinez, Alfonso Moreno, and Isidro Samañiego.

Question

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The cost to build the sewer plant was: (1) \$350,000 grant; (2) 350,000 STEP grant; (3) the residents of Alleyton had to match the STEP grant with either money or in-kind labor. Which they did above and beyond the \$350,000 that was needed.

My math says that is 1 MILLION HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS, \$1,150,000.

Estimate say that it will probably take the same amount of money for the water plant, \$1,150,000.

Total 2 million, 300 thousand dollars. \$2,300,000.

And LCRA will not "purchase" the two plants until the water plant is finished and all the homes are hooked up by the residents.

Forgive a loan for \$200,000. Get property that cost \$2,300,000 to build.

What a deal for LCRA. Question: If citizens think the government is wrong to "forgive" Halliburton billing practice, why aren't these same citizens making a fuss about the county giving away property worth \$2,300,000 for \$200,000? People complained about the no bid clause for Halliburton. Why aren't you upset about this?

If the county wants to sell these two plants, why doesn't the county advertise them for sale statewide and take bids to get a fair price.

Also why is the news media not interested in this waste of money, especially at election time, when the political individuals are all running around talking about all the money they are going to save us.

Sherman Kearbey
Oct. 23, 2004

Pastor News

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It seems that since the programs inception last year more than 160 young people have come through the doors, and I met two of them who were on their first visit Wednesday.

Through an interpreter, as they did not speak English, I asked them what they knew about the lighthouse. The kids said they had heard it was a nice place to be with their friends, have a bite to eat, and to get wise advice from elders.

While there I saw ministry in action, and one staff member went so far as to say that they thought more ministry to our youth happened in a week at the lighthouse than in the entire rest of the community weekly.

I met a fourth grader, a fourth grader who has been taken to jail, and was almost in boot camp.

Another young person who was one bad conduct mark away from boot camp, the grandchild of a local alleged drug dealer, and one young man a local official had said would probably be in prison before he was 20. What were these young people doing?

They were playing checkers, doing artwork, playing touch football, chilling out, and having a bite to eat with loving, caring, Christian volunteers. Some were using the computers that had been restored by other volunteers, to learn to type, and still others were playing action games.

This is a place where the volunteers know the kids by name, check on their grades, and support them.

A place where kids walk three miles one way to be with people of faith in a safe and friendly environment. I wondered out loud where was the support of the people of Eagle Lake?

Why was there a concrete pit foundation in the middle of the football field, and another concrete mess in the middle of the basketball area? How could the people of Eagle Lake not be supporting this vital ministry? It seems that the five or six volunteers have given much, and asked for so little in return.

Could a local church group send over one of two members to play board games with the kids, or bake three cakes to feed them a snack? How about some financial, or technical support?

Can anyone loan the skills and heavy equipment to break down the concrete foundations, and get them removed from the football field, and basketball court.

People are always speaking about going on a mission, or finding a mission for their church groups. One is sitting right here in Eagle Lake, you need to look no further than the 'Light House' off Lake Street, at the train tracks, in the old ice house.

Please put them in your prayers, and then get up and do something. Faith without works, is lacking according to the Apostle Paul.

Register

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Pictured above is one of the many signs informing hunters of the location of a place to register their bucks and possibly win a prize.

Exxon Station in Weimar. TPWD personnel will be at the check stations periodically to collect age and antler measurements. If no TPWD person-

nel are at the check stations, a registration folder is available which contains forms, instructions, and a measuring tape to collect the required information.

It is not necessary to bring the entire deer to the check station (only the head with attached antlers and jaw is required). Please do not bring in frozen heads as this makes aging the deer almost impossible.

Sixteen lucky hunters will walk away with one of these valuable prizes: This is not a big buck contest so every legal buck has an equal chance to win the grand prize (a lifetime hunting and fishing license donated by the Texas Sportsman Association).

One of eight rifles including two 7mm Mags., two .270s, and two .22-250 in Remington 700 BDL, a Marlin 17 MHR and a Ruger 10/22 SS have been donated by the following associations and businesses: Fayette, Lavaca, and Washington County Wildlife Management Associations, M.G. Inc. Weimar; Mustang Engineering, L. P. Houston; Hoffer's Drive-In Grocery and Washateria, Hallettsville; Drymalla Construction, Columbus; and J. Frank Monk Real Estate, Bellville.

Other prizes are as follows: A 20 ga. Remington 870 express magnum shotgun donated by The First State Bank of Columbus; a digital game call donated by Bill Johnson and Associates Real Estate in Bellville; a custom made hunting knife donated by Knives by Charlie in Sheridan; a LAMCO Protein feeder from El Campo; an All Season broadcast feeder donated by Capital Farm Credit in La Grange; A \$250 gift certificate from Wildlife Creations Taxidermy in Columbus; and 2,000 lbs. of Antler Max feed from Purina Mills.

TPWD would like to have all harvested bucks registered. Last year approximately 840 bucks were registered. Don't let this opportunity to win a great prize slip by.

Deadline to enter the drawing is January 4, 2005.

Bucks harvested on ranches receiving level 2 or 3 Managed Land Deer Permits are not eligible.

Eagle Lake Volunteer Fire Department

STEW SUPPER

& Silent Auction



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2004

Eagle Lake Fire Station

Serving 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

\$5.00 Per Ticket

Curb Service or Dine-In at the Fire Station!

Tickets can be purchased from any Eagle Lake Volunteer Fireman.

Rice Medical Center Employee Volunteers would like to thank the following individuals that helped make our 9th Annual Harvest Ball a success.

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- Brent Hernandez
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- Texas Home Health
- Lake Crest Entertainment
- Tara Dilly
- Mr. & Mrs. Mark Anderson
- Dr. & Mrs. Leonard Bornstein
- Glueck Tree Farm

We would also like to thank everyone who purchased tickets and bid on and purchased silent auction items.

Always get a second opinion.

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