

In 2050, we'll have twice the number of Texans we do now. If we're not careful, supplying water for those 40 million people could spell trouble for our rivers, bays, and aquifers. We've already dammed up our rivers to build hundreds of reservoirs, pumped our aquifers faster than rainfall can replenish them, and deprived our coastal bays of needed fresh water. With its new State Water Plan, the state is proposing a new list of high-dollar dams and pipelines – we've highlighted six in this report – that rely on the old "concrete and steel" approach to water development. This time though, that approach may take too heavy a toll on both our wallets and our natural environment, and it may not be necessary. There *is* a way to make sure we have water for people *and* wildlife. It's time for a fresh look at water in Texas. Let's not send our hard-earned money and our precious natural heritage...

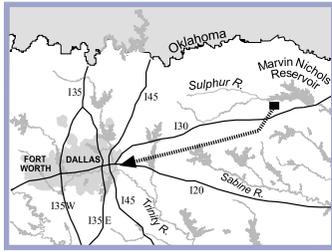
DOWN THE DRAIN

MARVIN NICHOLS 1 RESERVOIR	\$1.7 BILLION
LOWER COLORADO RIVER PIPELINE	\$1 BILLION
LITTLE RIVER DAM/RESERVOIR	\$361 MILLION
CARRIZO-WILCOX AQUIFER WITHDRAWAL	\$332 MILLION
GULF COAST AQUIFER WITHDRAWAL	\$38 MILLION
BROWNSVILLE WEIR	\$81 MILLION

**TOTAL TAXPAYER DOLLARS
DOWN THE DRAIN**

\$3.5 BILLION

PROJECT:
**MARVIN NICHOLS I
DAM/RESERVOIR**



COST:
\$1.7 BILLION

DESCRIPTION:

The Marvin Nichols I reservoir would be built on the Sulphur River in Northeast Texas. The project would flood 72,000 acres in Red River, Morris, and Titus counties and transfer 161 billion gallons of water per year, via 172 miles of pipeline, to the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

Marvin Nichols I would cost \$1.7 billion just to build. Water treatment plants needed for the water would add \$430 million to the pricetag.

All this to supply water to the area of Texas with the highest per-person water use. Even with a doubling of population, Dallas, Ft. Worth and surrounding communities could do without Marvin Nichols if they reduced their per-person water use by 22 percent over 50 years. (San Antonio reduced its per-person use by 30 per-

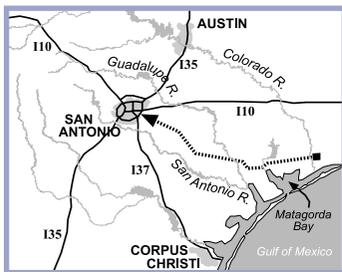
cent in just 13 years.) A 22 percent reduction would still leave the Metroplex on the high end of the scale for municipal water use in Texas.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Marvin Nichols I would flood 30,000 acres of high-quality bottomland hardwood forest, 15,000 acres of mixed post-oak forest, and thousands of additional acres of grasslands and family farms. This heavily forested area provides essential habitat to hundreds of species, possibly including 27 threatened or endangered species. It is prime hunting and fishing country, beloved by many Texans.

The project also would disrupt the natural flow of the Sulphur River, which could harm fish and wildlife habitat downstream by, for example, depriving forested wetlands of the seasonal over-bank flows they need.

PROJECT:
**LOWER COLORADO
RIVER PIPELINE**



COST:
**\$800 MILLION-
\$1 BILLION**

DESCRIPTION:

This project would pump water from the Lower Colorado River into four off-channel storage reservoirs located somewhere in Wharton, Matagorda and Colorado counties. It would then send between 43 and 49 billion gallons per year to San Antonio for municipal water uses, via a 170-mile pipeline. The project would also provide funding to area rice farmers for water conservation practices and increased groundwater pumping.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

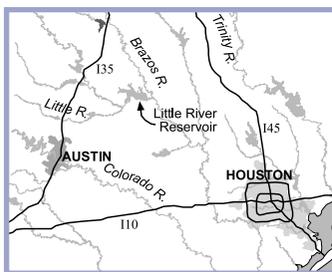
The project would cost taxpayers between \$800 million and \$1 billion. Though San Antonio is expected to bear this cost, new statewide revenue streams for water development are under discussion.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Because the Colorado feeds into Matagorda Bay, which needs fresh water to maintain its productivity, the project could have a catastrophic effect on the marine life that incubate and mature in its waters. The project could restrict freshwater inflows to the Bay to 87,000 acre-feet during the driest years, which is just 51% of the "critical" (subsistence) level the Lower Colorado River Authority established for the Bay in 1999. This loss of inflows could cripple the more than \$178-million commercial and recreational fishing industry.

It also threatens area wetlands, which are critical to both migratory and resident bird species. The Matagorda Bay area has recorded the country's highest count of bird species in winter bird counts.

PROJECT:
**LITTLE RIVER
DAM/RESERVOIR**



COST:
\$361 MILLION

DESCRIPTION:

The Little River is formed in Bell County by the union of the Leon and Lampasas Rivers and flows southeast for 75 miles to join the Brazos River in Milam County. The dam would be located right next to the city of Cameron on the main stem of the Little River. It would flood 35,000 acres and yield 129,000 acre-feet (42 billion gallons) of water, of which 75% would go to the Houston area and 25% would go to Williamson County.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

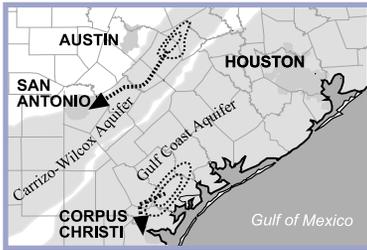
The project would cost \$361 million, not including transmission pipelines. Productive farmland would be sacrificed to supply water for Round Rock, Georgetown, and suburban Houston. Though these areas are growing, their per-person water use is high, especially given the rainfall they

receive. More aggressive conservation could reduce this demand, rendering the Little River Reservoir unnecessary. Even without that additional conservation, the Houston area projects a water supply surplus of over 250,000 acre-feet (81.5 billion gallons) per year by the year 2050.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

This project would build a dam and reservoir on one of the last un-dammed rivers in Texas. It would flood 35,000 acres, much of it highly productive farmland and range land that has been worked by area families for generations. The project would also dramatically reduce river flows and degrade downstream wildlife habitat. It could also adversely impact the endangered Houston Toad and Interior least tern, along with sensitive mussel species now thriving in this free-flowing river.

PROJECT: CARRIZO-WILCOX AND GULF COAST AQUIFER WITHDRAWALS



COST:
\$370 MILLION

DESCRIPTION:

The proposed State Water Plan includes a number of unsustainable groundwater withdrawals, many of which would move water from rural to urban areas. One such project would pump 17.9 billion gallons a year from the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer in Bastrop, Milam and Lee counties and pipe it 120 miles to San Antonio. Another would withdraw 9 billion gallons a year from the Gulf Coast Aquifer in Refugio County and pipe it to Corpus Christi.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

Carrizo-Wilcox: \$332 million, Gulf Coast: \$38 million.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

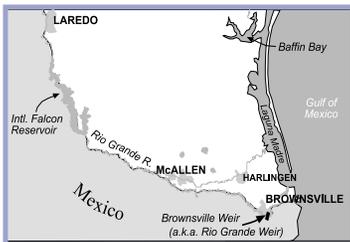
Aquifers are replenished largely by rainfall seeping through the soil. If water is removed faster than it is replaced, the aquifer will eventually go dry, or its

water will become unusable. Sustainable groundwater use means withdrawing water no faster than it can be replaced.

As currently designed, the Carrizo-Wilcox project would lower the aquifer water level by up to 100 feet over 50 years. Such a large drop would hurt current users of the aquifer, including many small towns in Bastrop, Milam, and Lee counties. Because it would also reduce spring flows, and the base flows that springs provide area streams during a drought, it would harm area wetlands and the wildlife that depend on them.

The Gulf Coast Aquifer withdrawal would lower the aquifer water level by 200 feet over 50 years, potentially leading to saltwater intrusion and land surface subsidence. Since the State Water Plan overestimates Corpus Christi's water use by 25 to 45 percent, this project is unnecessary.

PROJECT: BROWNSVILLE WEIR



COST:
\$81 MILLION

DESCRIPTION:

The Brownsville Weir, a dam-like structure within the Rio Grande channel, would be built near the city of Brownsville. It would create an in-channel reservoir that is expected to provide 20,600 acre-feet (6.7 billion gallons) of water to area users.

COST TO THE TAXPAYER:

The Brownsville Weir and associated water treatment plants will cost taxpayers \$81 million to build. Though the city of Brownsville is expected to bear this cost, new statewide revenue streams for water development are under discussion. The Weir is not necessary to provide Brownsville with drinking water over the next 50 years. Area needs can be satisfied through a combination of conserva-

tion, acquisition of agricultural water rights, the use of reclaimed wastewater, and development of groundwater supplies. Much of the water that would be captured by the Weir is slated for new industrial use.

TOLL ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Already dams and pumps have lowered flows in the Rio Grande so much that the river recently stopped short of the Gulf of Mexico. The project would further limit the flows of fresh water from the Rio Grande into the Gulf, which will increase salinity levels in the lower reaches of the river. This rise in salinity would degrade fish and wildlife habitat between the Weir and the Gulf, and in particular would adversely affect shrimp and other shellfish development.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP!

With a serious investment in water conservation, smart distribution of existing supplies, and the development of carefully chosen new water supply projects, Texas *can* meet the water needs of people *and* wildlife. In the process, we can eliminate the need for wasteful water projects, save billions in tax dollars, and preserve our natural heritage for generations to come.

• Send in the postcards attached to this brochure. (For the name of your State Senator or State Representative, visit: www.capitol.state.tx.us/ and click on Who Represents Me?)

• Call, write a letter, or email your state legislators. Tell them you oppose spending public money on new water development projects until our State Water Plan provides water for people *and* wildlife and invests seriously in water conservation. (For the name of your State Senator or State Representative, visit: www.capitol.state.tx.us/ and click on Who Represents Me?)

• Write a letter to the Texas Water Development Board (Chairman/P.O. Box 13231/Austin, Texas 78711-3231) and give them the same message.

• Contact the National Wildlife Federation's Gulf States office in Austin: 512/476-9805. Or visit www.texaswatermatters.org



HEY TEXAS:

**IT'S TIME FOR
A FRESH LOOK**

AT WATER