

Water conservation plan questioned

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Conservation strategies for North Texas cities are disappointingly shallow in a draft plan to meet water needs here, an environmental advocate said.

"They're just doing as little as possible to fulfill the requirements — if even that," Jennifer Ellis of the National Wildlife Federation said.

The conservation measures and water savings in the draft plan are adequate, a local water official said. "Conservation in many

ways in this area has always been a way of life," said

Curtis Campbell, chairman of Water Planning Group Area Band general manager for the Red River Authority.

A draft of the updated plan for North Texas is due to the Texas Water Development Board by June 1.

State rules now require planning groups to consider conservation strategies first when updating plans to meet city water needs to

2060, Ellis said. "And they just haven't done a good job of that, at least not yet," she said. "This is still very much in

the draft form."

Group members could have chosen more municipal conservation measures, Ellis said.

Putting conservation strategies in place is more cost-effective and easier in areas with larger populations than rural North Texas, Campbell said. The draft will go before the public for comment before final approval.

Group members will take into account comments from the general public on conservation, he said. "The draft's measures for cities include the following:

■ Conservation education.

■ Water audits to find waste.

■ Low-flow clothes washers required by new federal rules.

■ Water pricing to encourage conservation — already in place in many parts of North Texas.

Campbell said the draft plan includes another conservation measure: a project to improve the irrigation system for areas of Archer, Clay and Wichita counties.

The improvements, estimated to cost \$58 million, will save almost 5 billion

gallons of water a year, according to previous *Times Record News* reports.

