

# Ways to manage water debated

Steps include reclaiming wastewater, new pipeline

**By fanny s. chirinos Caller-Times**  
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ROBSTOWN - National Wildlife Federation spokeswoman Lacey McCormick believes the way to plan for future water needs is through conservation efforts instead of water-management strategies.

McCormick was one of about 20 people who attended a meeting of the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group on Thursday to view a draft of the group's regional water plan and one of four who commented on the draft.

"We'd prefer to see the region craft a vision of where the region ought to go to provide as little damage to the environment as possible," said McCormick, a communications manager for the National Wildlife Federation. "We'd like for things in the plan that don't seem logical to be removed."

An engineering group making recommendations on water strategies for the Coastal Bend said, in addition to conservation efforts, 13 water-management strategies are being recommended. Those include tapping into groundwater supplies in Refugio, Bee and San Patricio counties; reclaiming wastewater supplies; and building a pipeline between Choke Canyon Reservoir and Lake Corpus Christi.

The planning group was created from Texas Senate Bill 1, which was enacted in 1997 and has the goal of preparing and adopting a regional water plan. A plan was adopted in 2001 and must be updated every five years. The group is updating the plan, and this was the only opportunity for the public to address the members of the group in connection with the draft.

Written comments will be taken through Sept. 12 by e-mailing [rfreund@nueces-ra.org](mailto:rfreund@nueces-ra.org) or by writing the Nueces River Authority.

The update proposes a water plan to meet the needs of 12 Coastal Bend counties, Region N, through 2060. HDR Engineering conducted population-growth and water-demand studies on behalf of the group and officials, with the company predicting a water shortage by 2030.

"Certain counties and municipalities will incur water shortages before others do," said Kristi Shaw, consultant with HDR Engineering. "The guidelines state that conservation efforts should be looked at first. This group took that guideline a step further and recommended water conservation efforts for all counties, not just those that will have shortages."

Johnny French also is concerned about the environmental impact the water strategies might have.

"Some of the numbers would change if that is taken into account," French said. "I'd like to see the plan reflect that."

## Send your comments

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Bob Warren said he is worried the many strategies might not achieve the desired goal.

"We have to take into account how much these strategies will cost the communities," Warren said. "Is it feasible? I'd like to see some more figures about the cost of these recommendations."

Overall cost also is a concern to Garrett Engelking, who said the recommendations are more than are needed to provide the water needs of the future and should be reconsidered.

Rocky Freund, director of the Coastal Bend Division of the Nueces River Authority, said the comments received, and those she expects to receive, will be used by the group to draft a final plan. The final plan must be presented to the Texas Water Development Board by Dec. 31.

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