

# **On the Agenda: The Future of East Texas' Rivers**

**When:** November 3, 2008, at 10:00 am.

**Where:** Public Library and Recreation Center, 1112 North Street, Nacogdoches, Texas.

**What:** Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake Bay Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder Committee meeting

## **Why it's newsworthy:**

Monday in Nacogdoches, a group of appointed stakeholders will meet to discuss the future of the Sabine and Neches Rivers and their tributaries.

A groundbreaking law passed last session created a comprehensive process for determining how much water should remain flowing in Texas's rivers and into the state's coastal bays. The process will solicit input from stakeholders, scientific experts and the general public.

"This new process is groundbreaking—few states have taken such a comprehensive look at this issue," said Myron Hess, manager of Texas Water Programs for the National Wildlife Federation. "Previously, Texas water law had done a poor job of considering how much water our rivers need to remain healthy."

The Sabine and Neches Rivers will be one of the first groups of rivers to go through the process.

"East Texans know the Sabine and Neches are incredibly important for wildlife and the region's economy," Hess added. "This new process takes us one step closer to ensuring that we can pass on that amazing natural heritage to future generations of Texans."

At Monday's meeting, the committee will be discussing who should be appointed to serve on a special team of scientists. These scientists will look at all the available evidence and develop recommendations of how much water the Sabine and Neches Rivers and Sabine Lake need to remain healthy.

Once selected, this group of scientists will have until December 2009 to make recommendations to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The stakeholder committee will consider the science team's proposal as it develops its own set of recommendations.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will consider both sets of recommendations and adopt formal "environmental flow" standards, which will determine how much water should remain flowing in the Sabine and Neches Rivers and into Sabine Lake on the coast.

“It is hard to overstate how critical the outcome of this process will be to the future environmental and economic health of the region,” said Hess. “East Texans would be wise to follow this process closely and make their views known.”

For more information:

<http://www.texaswatermatters.org/flows.htm>

[http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water\\_supply/water\\_rights/eflows/sabinenechesbaystake.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/water_rights/eflows/sabinenechesbaystake.html)

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