

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Community of Texas Water Specialists
FROM: National Research Council Committee to Review Bases for
Instream Flow Standards on Rivers in Texas
RE: **Invitation to Provide Scientific and Technical Input on the Texas Instream
Flow Program**
DATE: 17 November 2003

In 2001, the Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 2, which established an Instream Flow Program for the state. The program's goal is to determine flow conditions necessary to support a sound ecological environment in Texas rivers, with studies in selected sub-basins (priority sites) to be completed no later than December 31, 2010. The Texas Water Development Board, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department share responsibility for studies of environmental flows and managing water resources in Texas. Together, these three agencies established a Programmatic Work Plan that defines an assessment framework and a Technical Overview Document that details how the framework will be applied to instream flow studies in Texas rivers. The three agencies jointly requested the Water Science and Technology Board (WSTB) of the National Research Council (NRC) to appraise the scientific and engineering methods used to help establish instream flow recommendations in Texas rivers. To carry out this task, the NRC appointed the Committee to Review the Bases for Instream Flow Standards for Rivers in Texas. The Committee held its first meeting in Austin on October 14-16, 2003. The Committee membership includes expertise in engineering, policy and legal disciplines, and physical, chemical, and biological sciences. See <http://www7.nationalacademies.org/wstb/> for full committee.

Recognizing that the community of Texas water specialists has spent many years studying Texas rivers, the NRC Committee invites scientific and technical input from this community to assist it in meeting its statement of task.

The Committee's statement of task may be reviewed in full at <http://www7.nationalacademies.org/wstb/>, but in brief, the statement of task contains three elements:

- Evaluate the Programmatic Work Plan and Technical Overview documents. The Programmatic Work Plan and the Technical Overview Document are available at <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/data/instreamflows/index.asp>,
- Provide advice on specific issues related to setting instream flows: appropriate spatial scales of analyses, use of habitat-flow relationships, use of landscape ecology metrics, applicability of biophysical model parameters and water quality models used in the Texas TMDL program.
- Review the extent to which legal, economic and policy considerations affect the establishment of instream flow standards in Texas.

When commenting on aspects of the Work Plan or Technical Overview Documents, please reference your comments to the numbered section of the document to which the comments refer. To be considered in the Committee's deliberations, comments must be submitted in written form to Dr. Lauren Alexander, Water Science and Technology Board, at LEAlexander@nas.edu by **December 1, 2003**. Please entitle email submissions on the subject line as "TXWater", followed by your first initial and last name, i.e., "TXWater—LAlexander", and include name, affiliation, and contact information in the body of the message. Please direct all questions to Dr. Alexander.