

From: Gene Pollard [mailto:pollard@iodp.tamu.edu]
Sent: Thursday, August 11, 2005 10:36 AM
To: Teresa Clark
Cc: alerts@nwf.org; ellis@nwf.org
Subject: Comments: Region G (Brazos River) Texas Water Plan

Dear Ms. Clark,

I would like to voice my concern about the increasing closure of free Texas river public access points for recreational purposes. Texas rivers provide a great public water recreational asset that provides the public (especially children and young adults) with clean and healthy and affordable recreation for fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, tubing, and camping.

Texas rivers are public property; however, large housing developments are increasing their attempts to close the few free public river access points in order to have exclusive river access for their projects. In Brazos County, the Koppe Bridge and Batts Ferry access points are prime examples. Closure of those free access points will eliminate free public access to nearly 23 miles of the Brazos river. A landowner has already built an illegal steel rail fence across the Koppe Bridge access, which is used for fishing and is a launch for river races to Hidalgo Falls.

This is also in the public interest, as these access points provide ready access for law enforcement, rescue, fire fighting, and fishing/wildlife enforcement.

I urge the Texas Water Plan to consider absolutely forbidding the closure of free public river access points:

- A) In situations where a new development will be beside or overlap a public access, developers should be legally required to maintain a clearly marked free public access and parking as a condition of the permit.
- B) River access roads beside bridge crossings are being closed by the Highway Dept. due to landowner complaints about trash. I urge the Texas Water Plan to consider absolutely forbidding the closure of free public river access points at all bridge crossings.

The Plan should include a strong program to add access points along rivers at 10-15 mile intervals as convenient based on access and terrain. The public river banks (up to the high water mark) make a good parking and primitive camping spot that can be developed and maintained by the state at very low cost with minimal land acquisition cost.

Yours very truly,
Eugene Pollard
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