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## **Conservation Alliance named NWF Affiliate of the Year**

*Special to the Progress from the Texas Conservation Alliance*

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RUSK —

Texas Conservation Alliance will be honored as the National Wildlife Federation's Affiliate of the Year in 2011, at the Federation's 75th Anniversary celebration.

Larry Schweiger, president and CEO of National Wildlife Federation, announced the award.

He cited Texas Conservation Alliance's impressive record in building a network of nearly 50 organizations, bringing together a broad spectrum of wildlife conservation and environmental education groups.

"It's remarkable to have a coalition that involves hunting and fishing organizations, Audubon groups, advocates for parks and refuges, outdoor recreation clubs, education organizations, and land trusts," said Schweiger.

"Texas Conservation Alliance exemplifies the kind of leadership that NWF encourages – bringing in a broad range of interests with the shared goal of protecting wildlife and our rich natural heritage."

Texas Conservation Alliance is a 40-year-old statewide organization with an exceptional record of protecting rivers, forests, and other wildlife habitats in Texas, and connecting people with the natural world.

"We're excited to be given such a prestigious award," said Mack Turner, chairman of the Alliance. "We have an amazing group of individuals who work and volunteer for the Alliance. It's very special to see their efforts rewarded."

Texas Conservation Alliance is particularly known for protecting rivers.

The Alliance leads a coalition urging that the Neches River in East Texas be designated as a National

Wild and Scenic River.

Adding the Neches to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System would celebrate the history and culture of this unique part of Texas.

It would prevent further damming of the river, and protect landowners, wildlife, hardwood forests, and industries that benefit from the river's flows.

Texas Conservation Alliance works with cities and water providers to find plentiful sources of water without damaging river and bottomland ecosystems, such as the Sulphur, Sabine, and Little Cypress Rivers in East Texas.

The Alliance also helped Hill Country residents protect their region's beautiful limestone rivers from being overwhelmed by off-road driving in riverbeds.

And the Alliance helped landowners along the Navasota River push back an ill-planned reservoir project that would have flooded homes and farms.

"Texas has amazing natural landscapes," continued Turner. "But they won't stay natural without the energies of Texans who care about the outdoors. That's what this award is about: Texans caring about Texas -- and about giving future generations the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and diversity that has been our heritage."

The National Wildlife Federation will recognize Texas Conservation Alliance's selection as Affiliate of the Year by presenting the Alliance with a statuette of a whooping crane at the NWF's 75th Anniversary Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, in April 2011.

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