

# Court Rules for Neches Refuge



The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals March 12 affirmed the lower-court decision in favor of the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's June 2006 decision to create the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge was heralded as one of the great Texas conservation victories of the decade. The City of Dallas and the Texas Water Development Board filed suit hoping to overturn the refuge and make way for a reservoir Dallas had in its plans for fifty years from now. Federal Judge Jorge A. Solis ruled in favor of the refuge in July of 2007. On March 12, a three-judge panel affirmed the lower court's decision, concurring with Judge Solis that the Neches Refuge was properly established.

The ruling sparked jubilation among conservationists, sportsmen, and many other Texans who care about the state's amazing outdoors. The Neches River National Wildlife Refuge is exceptional wildlife habitat -- one of the most important wildlife areas left in Texas. Thousands of Texans wrote letters or signed petitions in support of its creation.

The City of Dallas can appeal to the Supreme Court. Proponents of the refuge, pointing out how strong the opinions are from both the lower-court and the appeals court, are hoping that Dallas and the Texas Water Development Board will opt for one of the many other water supply options available rather than filing a further appeal.

If Dallas and the Water Development Board do not appeal the decision, the Fish and Wildlife Service will soon begin acquiring land for the refuge. Texas Conservation Alliance, Friends of the Neches River, and the many other organizations who support the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge look forward to seeing land added to the refuge once the lawsuit is final.



**For more information,  
Alliance@TCAtexas.org or 254-947-5572**