

USGS Program Funding

The U.S. Geological Survey's National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) and Cooperative Water Program (CWP) are aimed at providing scientific information to improve understanding of water resources through partnerships with state, tribal, and local governments. Texas water resource agencies depend on the data and information generated by the NSIP and CWP and are active financial contributors to numerous CWP projects.

Texas enjoys a sterling reputation for comprehensive water resources planning, and now seeks to construct high-priority water infrastructure projects identified and prioritized, in part, on the basis of data provided by the NSIP and CWP. In Texas, CWP data also provide the basis for flood warnings and characterization, flow measurements to maximize hydropower generation as well as to determine healthy instream and environmental flow regimes, and assist in reducing pollutant loads to address environmental concerns. Texas' emergency management personnel depend on the accessibility and accuracy of streamflow information provided by the CWP streamgages during flood events. Streamgages actively measure flow, allowing emergency management personnel to plan and respond promptly.



Historically, the CWP funds projects using a 50/50 cost share with local partners. The CWP's budget, however, has not kept pace with increasing stakeholder needs and the cost-share ratio has dropped. The 2010 enacted budget allocated \$65.5 million to the CWP, of which approximately \$3.5 million was directed to Texas. CWP projects in Texas were funded by an average 37/63 split. Local project sponsors contributed approximately \$9.4 million in FY '10, accounting for 5.6% of the total national co-sponsors' contribution of \$166 million.

Streamgages play a vital role in the management of our water resources. Water managers use the information provided by streamgages for a variety of purposes, including monitoring water quality, administering water rights, forecasting drought conditions, and planning for climate variability.

The NSIP is designed to maintain a "backbone" of core streamgages that are critical to national, regional, and local needs and provide a uniform communications framework for this information. Unfortunately, funding for all the needed streamgages has never been appropriated and water managers do not have the tools they need to properly monitor our water resources.

◆ **SUMMARY:** Texas urges your support to enable the USGS to fully implement the NSIP beginning in FY 2011 and to restore the USGS capacity for matching non-federal cost-share investments in the CWP on a 50/50 basis. Full implementation of the NSIP will require \$110 million annually (substantially more than the \$27.2 million available this year). With a fully-functioning NSIP, the USGS would also need approximately \$95 million for the CWP to match state, tribal, and other non-Federal investments in data collection and interpretive investigations (the budget for this year included only \$65.5 million).

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◆ **SUPPORT:** Funding the USGS CWP in the FY '11 budget at a total of \$95 million specifically for the U.S. Geological Survey's Investigations and Research Account for the Cooperative Water Program, which is part of the FY 2011 Interior and Environment spending bill. This increase would include \$3.2 million for Texas to help restore the 50/50 cost share and fund much-needed research.

◆ **SUPPORT:** Increasing the NSIP budget to \$110 million to fully fund the installation and maintenance of streamgages around the nation. These gages provide valuable information to help manage our nation's water resources and better prepare for climate variability and other future challenges.