

July 8, 2005

For Immediate Release

Contact

Emily Whitted, The Nature Conservancy, (703) 841-8745, ewhitted@tnc.org
Jane Lazgin; Nestle Waters North America, (203) 863-0240

Nature Conservancy Announces \$1 Million Donation from Nestle Waters to Preserve Threatened Waters

The Nature Conservancy Will Use Funds for Freshwater Protection

ARLINGTON, VA — With a donation from Nestlé Waters North America, The Nature Conservancy announced a project to protect important freshwater ecosystems across the United States. Nestlé Waters, the world's largest manufacturer of bottled water, is donating one million dollars over the next five years to support the Conservancy's efforts to advance sustainable water management practices on Caddo Lake in Texas and on the Rivanna River in Virginia. The funds will also go toward Conservancy projects to find new approaches for storing and using water to serve human needs, including drinking water and electricity, while preserving the health of the nation's critical rivers and lakes.

Freshwater systems throughout the United States face several threats, including expansion of urban areas that require more water supply and operations of dams that change natural patterns of water flow.

“We are thrilled to have this generous donation from Nestlé Waters to help us work toward protecting the ecological health of such freshwater systems as Caddo Lake and the Rivanna River,” said Brian Richter, director of The Nature Conservancy's Sustainable Waters Program. “The lessons we learn from this project can be implemented across the country where a balance of human and environmental water needs is crucial.”

“Our company takes a genuine interest in sustaining health ecosystems and water resources. We are proud partners of this program that combines a scientific approach with the practical human needs of water,” said Kim Jeffery, president and chief executive officer, Nestlé Waters North America.

Caddo Lake is the largest natural lake in Texas. Believed to have been created by logjams, it borders Louisiana and Texas and covers 50 square miles. It is a maze of bayous, cypress swamps and ponds, and is home to the richest array of aquatic creatures in the area, including 20

mussel species and more than 90 species of fish. Unique large aquatic plants that inhabit the waters include the spatterdock, the white water lily and the water locus.

“Currently, we recognize several problems downstream associated with both water quality and quantity,” said Dan Weber, the Conservancy’s northwest Louisiana program manager, who provides oversight for the organization’s Caddo Lake projects. “The effort underway is a science-based approach to determining exactly how much water is really required, and under what conditions, for the downstream environment to persist over time, while continuing to provide quality habitat for associated flora and fauna.”

The Rivanna River was once the lifeblood of Thomas Jefferson’s vast Monticello estate and remains both a vital resource and ecological treasure for the people of central Virginia, including the rapidly-expanding Charlottesville urban area. Its swift streams harbor abundant life, including the federally endangered James spinymussel. While the Rivanna River and its tributaries have so far proven resilient to development, it now faces unprecedented peril.

“As the region’s population continues to grow, inappropriate residential development and excessive water withdrawals pose the most imminent threat in the Rivanna River watershed,” said Ridge Schuyler, director of the Conservancy’s Piedmont Program in Virginia. “Sediment runoff is suffocating the river system and reducing the capacity for the region’s water supply, while water withdrawals have the potential to suck life out of critical rivers and streams. We believe that with good science-based information, The Nature Conservancy and its partners can help to protect the river as the region’s water demands increase.”

###

The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Visit us on the Web at nature.org.

Nestlé Waters North America Inc., based in Greenwich, Connecticut, is the leading bottled water company in the U.S. with many of the nation’s strongest trademarks including Poland Spring from Maine, the leading spring water brand in America. Consumers also enjoy the company’s popular regional brands such as Arrowhead, Deer Park, Ice Mountain, Ozarka and Zephyrhills. As well as Nestlé Pure Life, which is available nationally. Nestlé Waters North America also imports globally-recognized brands such as Perrier and San Pellegrino. The company’s parent organization is Nestlé Waters, based in Paris, the bottled water division of the Swiss company, Nestlé, S. A. Visit us at www.nestle-watersna.com.