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*For Immediate Release*

## **The 5th season of the Texas Water Symposium begins October 13 in Junction**

Austin, TX (October 6, 2011) - The first of four Texas Water Symposia will be held Thursday, October 13, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Texas Tech University campus in Junction. The topic will be, "Drought: What, Where, Why and When...will it end?" The panel of experts will include John Baccus, TTU, Natural Resource Management: impacts on fish and wildlife; John Nielson Gammon, State Climatologist: science and climatology; Bruce McCarl, Texas A&M, Agricultural Economics: agricultural and economic impacts; and Todd Votteler, Guadalupe Blanco River Authority: Texas drought history.

Some predict the Texas drought could last until 2020. Panelist John Nielsen-Gammon, who serves as Texas State Climatologist and professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M, says the culprit is the likely establishment of a new La Niña in the central Pacific Ocean. A La Niña is formed when colder than usual ocean temperatures form in the central Pacific, and these tend to create wetter than normal conditions in the Pacific Northwest but also drier than normal conditions in the Southwest. A La Niña has been blamed for starting the current drought but the new one, which began developing several weeks ago, is likely to extend drought conditions for Texas and much of the Southwest.

Panelists: Dr. Bruce A. McCarl, Regents Professor of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University. He received his B.S. in Business Statistics at the University of Colorado and Ph.D. in Management Science from Pennsylvania State University. His recent research efforts have largely involved policy analysis (mainly in climate change, climate change mitigation, water economics, and biosecurity) as well as the proper application of quantitative methods to such analyses. He teaches graduate courses in applied mathematical programming and applied risk analysis. He was part of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

John W. Nielsen-Gammon is an American meteorologist and climatologist. He is a Professor of Meteorology at Texas A&M University, and the Texas State Climatologist, holding both appointments since 2000. His research group uses a combination of observational and computational techniques to study the characteristics, dynamics, and forecasting of certain weather phenomena. Much of his recent work has involved air pollution meteorology.

Todd Votteler served as the federal special master for the U.S. District Court, Midland, in *Sierra Club v. San Antonio, Endangered Species Act* litigation over the Edwards Aquifer. He has in-depth, firsthand knowledge of the complex legal, hydrologic, economic and cultural issues attached to the aquifer. He was also assistant to the federal court monitor assistant during *Sierra Club v. Babbitt*, which established the first limits on pumping from the Edwards Aquifer. A Texas native, Votteler has a Ph.D. in environmental geography from Texas State University and is a frequent contributor to popular publications on the Edwards and other Texas water issues. He is also editor-in-chief of *The Texas Water Journal* and Executive Manager of Intergovernmental Relations and Policy for Guadalupe Blanco River Authority.

John Baccus recently joined the faculty at Texas Tech University as a professor for the Department of Natural Resources Management and is a Wildlife Ecologist. Previously at Texas State University he was Regents' Professor, University Distinguished Professor, recognized as Robert B. Packard Distinguished Educator by Southwestern Association of Naturalists and Outstanding Educator, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society. He was Director, Wildlife Ecology Graduate Program, and has numerous publications and over \$7 million in grants investigating the ecology and management of Texas' wildlife and birds.

The annual Texas Water Symposium series is co-sponsored by Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas Tech University, Texas Public Radio and the Hill Country Alliance. These events are free and open to the public. All of the water forums are taped and aired on Texas Public Radio.

For more information about the series check the Web at [www.schreiner.edu/water](http://www.schreiner.edu/water) or contact Dr. Tom Arsuffi at 325-446-2301 [tom.arsuffi@ttu.edu](mailto:tom.arsuffi@ttu.edu).

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. Please visit the HCA website, [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org), for more information about the latest news, events and initiatives, and how you can contribute to our activities.

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