



*Drought near Bracketville, Texas, in 1980 ravaged the landscape, almost drying up this livestock watering pond.*

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION**

In the National Drought Policy Act of 1998, Congress presented this country with a significant opportunity. The law recognized the need to prepare for and lessen the severe impacts of drought on the American people and the environment. It created the National Drought Policy Commission to advise Congress on formulation of national drought policy based on preparedness, mitigation, and risk management rather than on crisis management, which is the cornerstone of current federal responses to drought. The Act also directed the Commission to present a strategy that shifts from *ad hoc* federal action toward a “systematic process similar to those for other natural disasters” and to integrate federal programs with “ongoing state, local, and tribal programs.”

The National Drought Policy Act assigned eight tasks to the Commission, listed on the next page. The remainder of the report describes the

consequences of drought, discusses drought definitions, and presents our findings of needs related to droughts, followed by conclusions of unmet needs and lack of coordination, and recommendations for action.

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