



## Pecos River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation

June 2011 Newsletter



The **Texas Watershed Steward Program** is on its way to the Pecos River watershed! Make plans to attend one of the two workshops being provided locally on June 28 at the Community Hall in Pecos or June 29 at the Civic Center in Iraan. This day-long workshop provides science-based watershed and water quality education to help landowners identify and take action to address local water quality issues. Those participating in the free Texas Watershed Stewards program learn about the nature and function of watersheds, potential water quality impairments, and strategies for watershed protection and restoration.

Participants who complete the workshop are also eligible to receive a variety of Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Available CEUs include:

- 7 CMs: American Institute of Certified Planners
- 7 CEPHs: American Society of Landscape Architects
- 7 CEUs: Certified Crop Advisors
- 7 CEPs: TX Board of Professional Engineers
- 7 CPEs: State Board for Educator Certification
- 4 CEUs: Nutrient Management Certification
- 3 CEUs: TX Department of Agriculture
- 3 CECs: TX Floodplain Management Association

To ensure that adequate workshop materials are available, please pre-register for Texas Watershed Stewards by June 20. Register now by calling 979-845-2425 or online at <http://tws.tamu.edu/workshops/online-registration>.

### Watershed Protection Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Pecos River Watershed Protection Plan is underway and there are several opportunities that you can participate in to help do your part to protect and improve the water quality in the Pecos River.

#### Water Quality Management Plans

Water Quality Management Plans (WQMP) are a voluntary, site-specific conservation plan developed by local soil and water conservation district (SWCD) technicians at the request of the landowner. Free technical assistance will be provided through the Crockett or Upper Pecos SWCDs to landowners to prescribe applicable land treatment, production, and management practices that achieve pollution prevention or abatement consistent with state water quality standards and the landowner's management objectives.



Once a WQMP is certified, the landowner is eligible for up to \$15,000 in financial assistance provided through the Pecos River WPP Implementation Project. It supports the implementation of conservation practices along the river. Priority for financial assistance is currently given to operations

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along the river; however, all landowners interested are encouraged to contact the appropriate SWCD technician on page four. Conservation practices eligible for financial assistance include:

1. Cross Fence for grazing management
2. Water Facility for livestock
3. Pipeline
4. Water Well
5. Pumping Plant
6. Range Planting
7. Riparian Herbaceous Buffer
8. Riparian Forest Buffer
9. Nutrient Management

Additional financial assistance to implement best management practices outlined in a WQMP is available through various USDA Farm Bill programs.

### *Saltcedar Control*

Continued efforts to control saltcedar along the river and throughout the Pecos River watershed were included in the Pecos River WPP as a means to continue to fight the establishment of this invasive species along the local waterways. A three-pronged approach is outlined in the WPP and includes the following mechanisms:

**Saltcedar spraying** is being offered through the Pecos River WPP Implementation project at no cost to the landowner on saltcedar stands adjoining the river that have not been sprayed previously. Spraying is planned for September, so we need you to sign up now.



If you are interested in spraying saltcedar, please contact your appropriate SWCD technician.

**Prescribed burning** is another tool being used to control saltcedar regrowth and reduce the amount of woody debris left behind from earlier saltcedar treatment efforts. Prescribed burning is being funded through WPP implementation efforts and will be provided to volunteering landowners at no cost. Areas south of US 67 where saltcedar was sprayed at least three years earlier will be targeted through this effort.



Prescribed burns will only be conducted under certain weather conditions in order to prevent fires from escaping and to ensure that burning objectives are met. Favorable weather conditions are sometimes few and far between, so please sign up early if you are interested in having your river frontage burned. Interested landowners contact your appropriate SWCD technician for further information.

**Saltcedar leaf beetles** are the other tool being used to fight saltcedar infestations. Saltcedar leaf beetles were released at eight sites last year. These beetles, paired with previously released colonies, combined to feed on approximately 14,000 acres of saltcedar. This is by far the best year yet and we hope for continued success this year. Last year's success will be monitored and hopefully the beetles will emerge from all 14,000 acres and continue to spread throughout the watershed. Thus far, beetles are proving to be a good, long-term, cost-effective approach for controlling saltcedar.

For more information about the beetles, contact Amy Porter, Upper Pecos SWCD Technician or Ty Allen, Crockett SWCD Technician. You can also download the latest Beetle-Mania newsletter on



the Pecos WPP Implementation website at <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/media/147399/beetlemanianewsletterspring2011.pdf>.



### **New Pecos River Compact Commissioner Appointed for Texas**

Frederick "Rick" Rylander of Iraan, TX has been appointed as the next Commissioner of the Pecos River Compact Commission from Texas by Governor Rick Perry. Commissioner Rylander grew up on the banks of the Pecos River and has held several public servant offices, including city councilman and mayor, and is honored to serve as the next Pecos River Compact Commissioner from Texas.

### **Upper Pecos River Aquatic Life Monitoring**

This past winter the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department conducted an aquatic life monitoring event. Data are being processed and final results should be ready by the end of the year. To see a video of what was found, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYZNyoCt65s>. Previous aquatic life assessments can also be found on the USIBWC website at <http://www.ibwc.gov/CRP/studies.htm>

### **2011 Basin Highlights Report Available**

The *2011 Basin Highlights Report for the Rio Grande Basin* in Texas is now available online at [http://www.ibwc.gov/CRP/documents/USIBWC\\_2011BHR\\_final.pdf](http://www.ibwc.gov/CRP/documents/USIBWC_2011BHR_final.pdf). This year's report includes information on the aquatic life monitoring, a special salinity study

on the Upper Pecos, the Pecos River Water Quality Coalition, salinity studies, the Pecos River WPP, continuous water quality monitoring, Iraan ISD volunteer monitoring efforts, the Kokernot Springs Restoration project and provides a quick update on water quality trends over time. Please be sure to download your copy today for more information about the Pecos River as well as the Rio Grande.

## **Watershed Meetings**

### *Past Meetings*

#### **WPP Implementation Update Meetings**

The Pecos River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Team conducted meetings with Pecos watershed landowners in Pecos and Imperial on March 15 and with landowners in Iraan and Ozona on March 16, 2011. A review of the current WPP implementation efforts was delivered and upcoming opportunities and efforts were discussed. A detailed overview of the water quality management plans, salt cedar spraying, debris burning and saltcedar leaf beetle establishment efforts were provided. Additionally, a review of recent water quality data was provided to those in attendance. Opportunities were also provided for volunteering landowners to sign up to receive technical and/or financial assistance through ongoing WPP implementation efforts.

For more information on materials covered during the meeting, contact Gary at 432-336-8585 or view the meeting presentations and minutes on the project website at <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/meetings>.

#### **Pecos River Coordinated Monitoring Meeting**

Each year the USIBWC hosts Coordinated Monitoring Meetings (CMM) for the Pecos River and Rio Grande. The Pecos CMM meeting was held in Midland on April 28. Updates were provided on Pecos River WPP Implementation efforts including all of the efforts mentioned earlier in this newsletter. Other items discussed during the meeting included ongoing water quality analysis, recent aquatic life monitoring, water quality impairments and concerns, the coordinated monitoring schedule and the *2011 Rio Grande Basins Highlights Report*.

## *Upcoming Meetings*

**Texas Watershed Stewards** is a watershed and water quality education program that provides science-based, watershed specific information to participants to enable them to identify and take action to address local water quality issues. Two events will be held in the watershed: June 28 at the Community Hall in Pecos and June 29 at the Civic Center in Iraan. To register, contact Mark McFarland, AgriLife Extension Specialist at 979-845-2425 or online at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu/workshops/online-registration>.

**Forage Field Day** – Pecos Research Station July 22. Contact Logan Lair, Reeves County Extension Agent at 432-447-9041.

**State Youth Water Camp** engages high school students from across the state in current water issues. Held in Monahans July 10 – 14, Water Camp is an intensive study of water issues related to industrial, agricultural, municipal and recreational water use. For registration information contact the Ward County FCS agent, Abigail Pritchard at 432-943-4112.

## **WPP Implementation Update Meetings**

Another round of Pecos River WPP Implementation update meetings is scheduled for August 2–3 throughout the watershed. In an effort to give other options for meeting times, meetings will be held during the morning, afternoon and evening. Meeting locations and times are currently scheduled as follows:

Pecos: August 2, 8:30 a.m.  
Pecos Community Hall, 508 S. Oak Street

Imperial: August 2, 6:30 p.m.  
Buena Vistas School Cafeteria

Ozona: August 3, 1:30 p.m.  
AgriLife Extension Office, 1301 Ave. AA

Iraan: August 3, 6:30 p.m.  
Scout Hut, 9243 Alley Oop Lane

Hopefully the different meeting times will allow for more of you to attend the meetings and hear about WPP implementation progress being made

and learn about how you can participate in future implementation efforts. Be sure to make plans to attend based on the new meeting times.

For information on project happenings and other meetings in and around the watershed, please visit our website at <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/>

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