



Pecos River Watershed Protection Plan Implementation

March 2014 Newsletter

Heliborne Electromagnetic Survey Project Cancelled

Elevated levels of salinity along with reduced streamflow in the river, especially between Coynosa and Girvin, have had adverse impacts on the river's uses and its aquatic life. The Pecos River WPP listed identifying the sources of these salts and developing a better understanding of the local hydrology in that area as one of the priority management measures needed to address this problem. In response, the Pecos Heliborne Electromagnetic Survey Project was developed.

Prior to conducting the electromagnetic survey, letters and return postcards were sent to landowners of record for properties in the study area seeking their permission to conduct the survey over their property. The response rate was very low and permission to conduct the study was received for only 16% of the planned study area. This level of permission did not warrant proceeding with the HEM study as it would not produce the desired information. Therefore, landowners were notified via a second round of post cards that the HEM will not be applied and they were thanked for their cooperation.

Alternative approaches to collecting similar information that still met project goals and objectives were discussed; however, the granting agency felt that similar issues would be faced. As a result, the project is in the process of being completely terminated.

Pecos River WPP Update Published

The recently completed Pecos River WPP Update is available on the project website at: <http://twri.tamu.edu/publications/reports/2013/tr-447/>.

The update highlights implementation progress to date, discusses additional management needs identified by landowners and reports on recent trends in water quality.

Pecos River Compact Commission Meeting

The Pecos River Compact Commission administers the Pecos River Compact to ensure that Texas receives its equitable share of quality water in the Pecos River and its tributaries from New Mexico as apportioned by the Compact.

The annual meeting of the Pecos River Commission will be held April 10 in Marfa, Texas, at the Hotel Paisano, 207 North Highland St. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. (CDT). During the meeting, federal and state agencies will provide annual reports on multiple topics, including streamflow, reservoir levels, and the water allotment from New Mexico to Texas.

Prior to the meeting, a hospitality reception will be held April 9 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. (CDT) at the Hotel Paisano. All Compact participants and their guests are invited and encouraged to attend. A block of rooms has been set aside at the Hotel Paisano (432-729-3669 or 1-866-729-3669).

If you have any questions concerning the meeting, please contact Suzy Valentine, PRC Texas Engineer Advisor, at suzy.valentine@tceq.texas.gov or 512-239-4730.

DO Modeling & Monitoring Report Published

Based on water quality monitoring data, a portion of the Pecos River is presently considered impaired due to dissolved oxygen (DO) levels that are occasionally below the allowed 3.0 milligrams per liter (mg/L) standard. To determine the main cause of these periodically low DO levels, scientists from the Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research developed a computer-based water quality model and simulated the impacts of potential management strategies on DO levels. Their findings have been published and are now available online

at: http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/media/441220/pecos_do_model_final_02jan2014.pdf.

Results of the modeling exercise indicate that a variety of factors influence instream DO levels in the Pecos River. Primarily, low DO levels are caused by hydrological modification of the river that has occurred over the years; however, other conditions resulting from lower water levels and infrequent flushing events leading to excessive aquatic plant life and warmer water temperatures also contribute to the impairment.

Through modeling various management options to restore DO in the Upper Pecos River, the findings indicate that it will be extremely difficult, if

not impossible, to bring about restoration of the depressed DO levels in the impaired portion of the river without more water.

Technical and Financial Assistance Available

Through the Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) Program, farmers and ranchers are eligible to receive technical assistance and apply for financial assistance to implement conservation practices. Each operating unit is eligible for up to \$15,000 in financial assistance. For more information, contact your local SWCD office or Judy Albus, Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board Regional Manager, at 325-949-3213 or jalbus@tsswcb.texas.gov.

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Need Information?

For information on project happenings and other meetings in and around the watershed, please visit our website at pecosbasin.tamu.edu or contact:

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