

PECOS RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION COMMITTEE
JANUARY 20, 2005
MINUTES

Attendance

W.R. Edmiston	TCEQ – Region 7
Calvin Gerke	Upper Pecos – Ward 1
Ronnie Cooper	Pecos Co. WID #3
Alan Zeman	Reeves Co. WID #2
J.W. Thrasher	Pecos River Compact Commission
Charles Hart	TCE
Michael McCulloch	Pecos Co. WID #3
Tom Nance	Ward Irrigation District #1
Mark Muegge	TCE – Entomology
Cindy Breiten	Upper Pecos SWCD
Dick Slack	Red Bluff
John Searcy	McCulloch Land & Cattle
Schuyler Wight	Concerned Citizen
Robin Le Beouf	Concerned Citizen
Angie Scasta	Concerned Citizen

- Presentation of “Biological Control of Saltcedar: Progress and Plans in Texas” by Dr. Mark Muegge
 - *Diorhabda elongate*. Saltcedar Leaf Beetle comes from China, Central Asia, Mediterranean Sea and North Africa.
 - Beetles defoliate Saltcedar but don’t actually kill the tree. However, since the Saltcedar needs its leaves to photosynthesize, repeated defoliation will eventually kill the tree. Will primarily be used to implement continual maintenance of Saltcedar populations.
 - Tests have concluded that the beetle only feeds on Saltcedar and Athel, a desert shrub. The beetle has been tested for other Saltcedar family members as well as 30 additional non related, agricultural type plants (ie cotton, pecan trees, alfalfa)
 - Since 2001, test plots have been established in 6 different states. Very successful results have occurred and within the next year, plans to release these beetles along the Pecos River will be set.
- Prescribed Burn & Report
 - The test plot is still in Preparation Stage, because the Saltcedar still need to dry out and also because the tumble weeds are still blowing. The Texas Forest Service is ready to go when environmental conditions permit a burn.
- BOR Easements
 - Still trying to find an agency to accept.
- Grants
 - The following grant information was briefly presented to the committee informing them of grant proposals turned in, and upcoming due dates for grants. A unanimous decision was made to support funding for a grant writer.

- Grant Writing Workshop – January 13 -15, 2005 in Fort Stockton, but no one was available to attend
- Larry Brown – Michael McCulloch read letter of Mr. Brown’s interest in writing grants for PRERC, and information of credentials
- Dick Hagelstein – Retired from NRCS, no response yet of any interest
- RC&D – NRCS branch to help locate grants
- TWDB – Solicitation of Research Topics, turned in Dec. 31
- NFWF – General Matching Grants Program, turned in Jan. 7
 - Dick Davis called, would like to help with funding under the conditions that Saltcedar programs are being implemented in New Mexico also
 - Five-Star Restoration Matching Grants Program, due March 1
 - Has helped with funding for PRERP before
- TWDB – RFA: Agricultural Water Conservation Grants, Due Feb.14
- USDA – National Research Initiative (NRI) Competitive Grants Program, “Watershed Processes & Water Resources,” due March 1
- USGS – Unsolicited proposals accepted all year round, however it is best to submit proposals at the beginning of year, just after the budget has been approved
- EQIP Meeting
 - A listening session will be held March 1, 2005 at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel, Austin, Texas to hear comments on the national priorities of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and to provide an update of all the 2002 Farm Bills programs they are implementing in Texas.
- Presentation to Red Bluff, at request of Upper Pecos Water and Soil Conservation District
 - On January 11, 2005, Angie Scasta presented Red Bluff with three proposals at their monthly Board meeting.
 - Request meeting with Red Bluff and all Water Districts on Pecos River
 - Request representative from Red Bluff to attend PRERC meetings every third Thursday of each month.
 - Request Red Bluff to consider in cooperation with other water districts, to help fund Cindy Breiten’s salary as Project Coordinator for the PRERP
 - No action was taken by Red Bluff Board.
- Propose changing meeting site to more neutral location in Monahans
 - Monahans Convention Center is available at given day and time at no charge.
 - Convention Center is located at 400 East 4th Street, just behind the Courthouse.

A request was made to make committee more organized by designating a Mission Statement, Budget, Newsletter, Mailing List, and Banking Account in hopes to gain more participation from government agencies and concerned citizens and for administrative purposes.

This month they would like to see a formal letter sent to Red Bluff and all its districts to send one or more representatives to the meeting in February. If no representative from a given District attends, it will be assumed they prefer not to

be involved. This representative will be used to relay information, requests and progress back to their District committees.

- Propose changing sponsoring agency and responsibility of administrative assistance
After budget has been settled, have representatives take back to District to vote on these two options for Administrative Assistant.
 - Fund Cindy hourly, and supplies for Administrative duties. Approximately 10 hours per month.
 - Pecos WID 2 & Pecos WID 3 share responsibilities of Administrative duties and supplies.
- Funding and technical assistance from Pecos River Compact Commission
Funding for Secretary has been taken away; TCEQ has no money for Administrative Assistant either.
- Funding & Administrative Assistance from Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board
No word yet.
- Meeting with Debbie Hughes, New Mexico Association of Conservation District, regarding Federal Legislation
She would like to meet with the Pecos River Ecosystem Committee to discuss Federal funding of Saltcedar eradication.