

PECOS RIVER ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 17, 2005 1:00 P.M.

Monahans Convention Center  
400 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Monahans, Texas 79756

In Attendance:

Ben Munoz	Ward County Irrigation District #1
John Carr	Ward County Water Improvement District #3
Ethel Allgood	Ward County Water Improvement District #3
J. M. Rusty Carpenter	Upper Pecos SWCD #213 and Ward County Water Improvement District #3
Cindy Breiten	Upper Pecos SWCD #213
E. A. Curtis	Concerned Citizen
Tom Nance	Ward County Irrigation District #1
Alan Zeman	Reeves County Water Improvement District #2
Robin LeBeouf	Ward County Irrigation District #1
Calvin G. Gerke	Upper Pecos SWCD #213 and Ward County Irrigation District #1
Larry Brown	Consultant and Grant Writer
Charlotte Brown	Grant Writer Assistant
Larry Drgac	USDA/NRCS – Pecos County
Arnold Braden	Upper Pecos SWCD #213
Charles E. Brandenburg	Ward County Water Improvement District #2
Brad Heidelberg	Texas Wildlife Association
Michael McCulloch	Pecos County Water Improvement District #3
J. W. Thrasher	Pecos River Compact Commissioner
Dick Slack	Red Bluff Power Control District
Charles Hart	Texas Cooperative Extension
Bart Reid	Pecos County Water Improvement District #2
Greg Huber	USDA/NRCS – Reeves County
Bill Davis	Texas Forest Service
Schuyler Wight	Concerned Citizen
Terry Whigham	USDA/NRCS-Pecos County

Calvin Gerke called the meeting to order for the Upper Pecos SWCD Board of Directors for the purpose of an open meeting discussion regarding the Pecos River Ecosystem Advisory Committee.

Michael McCulloch called the meeting to order for the Advisory Committee. He introduced himself and began with the organization of this committee and the purpose being the restoration of the Pecos River. He then made the request for all participants in attendance to introduce themselves and their representation.

Mr. McCulloch introduced Larry Brown who was invited to attend this meeting by the Upper Pecos SWCD #213 and Pecos County Water Improvement District #3. This discussion will be regarding his expertise in grant writing and consulting. Mr. McCulloch also introduced Brad Heidelberg with the Texas Wildlife Association.

Dr. Hart began with the background of the Pecos River Project. The Upper Pecos SWCD began as lead agency for the project in 1999 and has taken the liabilities, the responsibilities, and has valuable experience with many different aspects of the project and with the landowners involved. The Advisory Committee has been organized for the purpose of assisting the Upper Pecos with input and advice from several different agencies and landowners. Each participant has supplied important input to this project. The committee is growing and all input and opinions are welcome.

Presently, the Upper Pecos and the Committee are asking for help from Dr. Brown. The Committee and the Project need his expertise with organizational efforts and grant writing. The Project is in need of grant funding and assistance for:

- Administrative Support
- Salt Cedar Spraying
- Debris Removal
- Maintenance
- Identifying In-Kind Costs

The Project began with the eradication of salt cedar from the Red Bluff District down the river to Girvin. The last two years, the salt cedar has been sprayed by way of the EQIP Cost Share. Aerial photography has been done and 80% of the Pecos River has been completed. Only 2000 acres are left to spray. Many landowners do not qualify since they are not agriculturally related. It is possible that the State Board may fund what is left and this possibility is being worked on. The burn program needs to continue to be worked on with the legislators. The Forest Service has the expertise on this issue. Different parts of the river would require different ways to administer. This part of the project is continually being worked on. It is very important that letters of support from all involved be sent to our legislators, especially to Jason Anderson with Senator Madla's office who is writing a bill and Jason Skaggs with Duncan's office who is going to carry the bill. Also, appropriations to the Forest Service budget are being worked on for the burning.

Michael McCulloch discussed that Upper Pecos SWCD will continue on as lead agency and will provide Cindy Breiten for the minutes, meeting notices, and the agendas and also to provide technical assistance. This was approved at the last Upper Pecos SWCD board meeting.

Charlie Hart discussed with the committee that an important deadline is approaching on the EQIP sign-up. March 18, 2005 is the last day for qualified applicants to sign up. The State Board is supposed to make contacts with landowners. The State Board is paying the 25% of the cost share and the EQIP will pay 75%. This has been confirmed and this

will mean that the landowner will not have to pay anything out of pocket. It is important that the word gets out about the sign-up deadline. 1.3 million dollars has been appropriated for invasive species and the Pecos River is top priority.

Greg Huber explained the EQIP Program and that the problem is that landowners have to be ag related or have a leasee that is ag related. Landowners need to contact their local NRCS agency. Rusty Carpenter can help with the Pecos area. A meeting is set for Charlie Hart, Cindy Breiten and Greg Huber to review the maps to identify landowners that have not had their land sprayed for salt cedar. Charlie Hart has the aerial photography to show the acres left. There is the problem of landowners that have not signed off on giving their permission to have their salt cedar sprayed and the maintenance that follows. Charlie said that the purpose of the eradication is for restoration and that some of the landowners do not understand that. The ultimate goal is for the State of Texas and landowners and others need to be aware of the bigger picture and the ultimate goal. And also, that the spraying is not the end of the project. There is a lot of follow up maintenance that occurs during the years after. The Upper Pecos has done a lot of work dealing with the Pecos River landowners including contacts and obtaining signatures from the biggest percentage of them. Also, part of this landowner work has been respecting their privacy rights.

Michael McCulloch has talked with Susan Combs about the possibility of some boll weevil monies being used, but Charlie Hart said that his contact was not very hopeful on this happening.

Tom Nance gave a report on the test plot that has been prepared for burning. Bill Davis has looked at the plot and said that, at this time, it is too wet. It will probably be the middle of March before this part of the project can begin. The Forest Service has offered assistance of a terra-torch so that both sides of the river can be burned. The test plot is a two mile area that will provide cost figures and resources that will be needed. J. W. Thrasher has spoken with Tex-Dot and they will assist with firebreaks for the bridges.

Ronnie Cooper was going to give a brush cutter demonstration, but had another obligation and will present at a later meeting.

Alan Zeman gave a report regarding the easements and the BOR. Bill Davis is going to be able to receive these perpetual easements for the Forest Service. At J.W. Thrasher's request, Alan gave an explanation of the BOR easements and their original purpose. This transfer has been an ongoing project for quite some time now. The BOR has to transfer to a state entity and the Upper Pecos SWCD has been the original agency intended to receive. The Upper Pecos SWCD is a political sub-division of a state agency and is not eligible.

Michael McCulloch reported that a grant application has been submitted and Charlie Hart discussed that grant searches and someone that has the time to spend on this task is an important part of the project that is necessary. The hiring of a grant writer is needed for the grant searches and the cost share issues. Larry Brown gave a history of his work and

farming experience and also how grant applications work. He explained how his services are paid for and how to figure costs, write grants and manage grants after they are received. He can write his fees into the grant which are part of management expenses that occur. Also, he can work with the in-kind and administrative expenses. His fees can be on a project basis and the largest part can be written into the grant application. Charlie Hart asked his opinion on where we would need to begin. The information needed will be:

- Background of the Project
- Where to go from here
- Budget Costs
- Cost Share
- Time Frame

A 501C3 can be formed if desired. The RC& D Council can assist with this or we can go through the lead agency. The Upper Pecos can oversee the project. Different approaches and strategies can be looked into and discussed. Different types of grant funding can be applied for, but first is the need for administrative costs. The Upper Pecos will need some funding to get started. The meeting notices, the agendas, and the minutes need to be kept up with and the participants need to be kept informed by way of receiving copies of the minutes of each meeting.

Michael McCulloch said that his district will probably participate if a set amount and specific purpose is given. Also, information will be helpful on the other water districts that are willing to participate. Upper Pecos will need to provide a detailed plan and a budget to show how much money is needed. This is his opinion of his District's thoughts and that they want to be supportive. Three Districts have obligated money and are waiting on the other Districts to participate. In conclusion, a budget and a mission will need to be provided to each of the water districts to show how much and accountability of how the money would be taken care of. Larry Brown will work with Cindy Breiten to get this done.

Another subject discussed was that the Water Districts and the Upper Pecos want the grants to be for the whole project, an equal benefit to the entire river, not just for one certain district area. This is a consideration request that each district will need assurances for. A long term management plan will need to be put in place for the entire river. It was agreed upon by all present that this is important. There were no opinions voiced otherwise. So, information that is going to need to be worked on and provided to everyone involved, so that the project and the commitment will be understood will be:

- Budget
- Mission
- Long Term Management Plan

Also, it is also possible to request funding from the counties. This is a possible suggestion for funding, but some of the counties do not have the money to donate.

Larry Brown explained how the grant writing process works as far as a grant writer and project coordinator. The Committee would need to come up with money initially to pay for the administrative costs and then this money can be written in the initial grant administrative application. Cooperating agencies can provide contributions, commitment, equipment, and technical assistance. Offers of assistance from partners and supporting agencies have been and will be very important. Charlie Hart suggested talking with Ben Wilde, the Upper Pecos's State Board representative, to see if any funding may be available for the beginning of the grant writing administrative costs.

Larry will need an inventory of costs that can be in kind. Grant application requests and deadlines come up fast and he will be able to monitor the grants available with his resources. Anyone that gets word of grant possibilities will need to keep him informed.

It was decided that the first plan of action will need to be for the Upper Pecos directors, Cindy Breiten, Bill Davis, Charlie Hart and Larry Brown to plan a meeting to get the background, agenda, budget and the ultimate goal plans made. Also needed in grant writing are letters of support. A tentative date of February 28<sup>th</sup> was set for this meeting at 1:00 p.m. in the Upper Pecos SWCD's conference room. This meeting will be confirmed in the next few days.

Charlie Hart discussed with the group that the EPA has a water quality plan called the 319 program. There is money available and they look at river systems. The project that he is working on is a Pecos River Watershed Management plan and a long term salt cedar plan is being implemented. Long term funding is needed. His agency is six months into a three year project.

March 17, 2005 is the date for the next Advisory Committee meeting. Discussion was held on where the meeting will be held. It was agreed on to have the meeting in Monahans again. Charlie suggested that Iraan could be a possible meeting place.

J. W. Thrasher gave a Pecos River Compact Commission report. Malaga Bend Project and USGS Funding were reported on. These are ongoing projects going on the Pecos River. Also discussed was the lawsuit with New Mexico which has been settled. The next Compact meeting is in Roswell, New Mexico on April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> and everyone is invited.

Travel expenses for Larry Brown will be paid for by the Upper Pecos SWCD. Michael McCullough will check into the meeting of the 28<sup>th</sup> being paid for by his District. Travel expense for Mr. Brown has been approved by both of these districts.

The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by Cindy Breiten  
Upper Pecos Soil and Water Conservation District #213

