

PECOS RIVER ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 17, 2005 1:00 P.M.

Monahans Convention Center
400 East 4th Street
Monahans, Texas 79756

In Attendance:

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
Arnold Braden	Upper Pecos SWCD #213
Deborah Braden	Pecos County Water Improvement District #2
Michael McCulloch	Pecos County Water Improvement District #3
Dick Slack	Red Bluff Power Control District
Charles Hart	Texas Cooperative Extension
Greg Huber	USDA/NRCS – Reeves County
Bill Davis	Texas Forest Service
Michael Edmiston	TCEQ
Jason Wrinkle	Texas Nature Conservancy
Jed Elrod	Pecos County Extension Service
Philip Dickerson	Texas Parks and Wildlife
Skeet Jones	Loving County Water Improvement District #1
Derek Scosta	TCE-Ward County
Ernest Woodward	Pecos County Water Improvement District # 3
Angie Scasta	Pecos County Water Improvement District #3
Leo Carrillo	USDA-NRCS, Monahans

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 requested that everyone in attendance please sign in. He clarified that this committee is an Advisory Committee to the Upper Pecos SWCD. Also he explained the agenda that he prepared for the meeting. First item up for discussion:

- NRCS-EQIP – Greg Huber reported that he has one application for salt cedar so far and there are a few more that are planning on signing up. Also, Greg has spoken with Ullis Hunt and has plans on speaking with Michael Riley. These are Ward County landowners. Terry Whigham has four or five contracts for Pecos County. The deadline for sign-up is this Friday, the 18th.
- Burn Report – Bill Davis reported that he is still waiting on the test burn plot to dry before he can begin. He will give advance notice of three to four days. TCEQ will need to be notified each day that a burn is taking place. There is supposed to be money tagged for the Forest Service for the burn project. Something should be known within the next couple of months, but it is looking good.
- BOR Easements – Bill Davis is still waiting on word from Miquel Rocha. He will contact for status. The plan has been to have their perpetual easements transferred to the Forest Service.

Alan Zeman went to Carlsbad recently for a salt cedar meeting. New Mexico has a planning committee that is similar to our advisory committee. He thinks that it would be to our project's advantage to work with them. Their area is a seed source for the Pecos River in Texas. There is a lot of difference in the Pecos River in New Mexico from the river here in Texas. Their main concern is serious bank erosion. They want bank stabilization quickly after killing the salt cedar. The Bureau of Reclamation is working with them and they have ten million dollars for their project. Charlie Hart and Alan Zeman think that a joint meeting could be very beneficial, since ultimately our goals are the same – to eradicate salt cedar and restore the Pecos River. Their next meeting is May 26th. Discussion will be held further on this subject in future meetings. Also, it would be good to make arrangements for Debbie Hughes to attend one of our meetings in the near future. She works with the New Mexico Project.

Alan Zeman discussed a letter he had submitted to the Interstate River Authority regarding the quality of water from CID. New Mexico's contract obligations with return water flow are being met, but the drainage water could be a potential problem and will affect the Pecos River in Texas.

Charlie Hart discussed the monitoring. Below Imperial, the salt was 40 thousand per million whereas sampling in 2003 was generally 20 thousand parts per million. Red Bluff is about 10-15 thousand parts.

County Judges and Commissioners Courts will need to be discussed in the next meetings as more people will need to get involved down river. As we get a Plan of Action and Long Range Plan made, this information will need to be submitted to these judges and commissioners courts.

The next topic for discussion is the proposal submitted by Larry Brown to the Upper Pecos SWCD Board of Directors. The proposal was submitted for the board meeting on

the 1st of March and was approved. Cindy Breiten explained the proposal and how Mr. Brown works. He will attend all of the water district meetings to meet with as many of the directors as possible and also Red Bluff so that he can establish communication. He is ready to go forward with the grant writing work. So far, Ward #1 has approved \$1,500.00, Reeves #2 - \$1,500.00, Pecos #2 - \$1,000.00 and Pecos #3- \$1,500.00 less Larry Brown's travel invoice that they paid for his last trip here.,

Cindy Breiten has prepared a report that will show all of the monies that were donated by the water districts in 1999 and 2000 and the expenses that were made from those donations. Also included in the report is the breakdown of the expenses for the million dollars that was received by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Each budget report submitted for reimbursement was approved by the Upper Pecos Board and the TDA before payments were made. If there are any questions after the report is reviewed or copies of receipts for any expenses are desired, Cindy Breiten will be available.

The donations for the grant writing and other financial responsibilities will be handled by the Upper Pecos SWCD. Two board members sign each check after board meeting approval. Monthly financial reports will be submitted for each meeting to keep the committee members up to date on the status of the financial situation and also to send a report to each of the water district offices.

The EPA Targeted Watershed Grant Program – Information about the program was provided. The Governor will appoint two river basins per state. The deadline for the application is April 8, 2005, so time is very limited. The information that Larry Brown will need needs to be sent to him as soon as possible. Cindy Breiten will get him this information. Lobbying is going to be very important Larry Brown also needs to be contacted about the water district meetings.

Michael McCulloch discussed Land and Water Stewardship. Feedback is needed from landowners and this it is important that this committee promotes this program.

- a. Legislative – The legislature is in session now and our committee needs to pay attention to Chapter 76 of the Water Code.
- b. Programs – Prescribed burning technical advice and assistance for landowners to implement on their land
- c. Public Relations and Education

Charlie Hart discussed the Pecos River Basin Assessment Program. This 319 Water Quality Program assesses the river's quality and quantity in order to make a watershed plan. There is a big educational aspect stressed with this project. Currently, this project addresses salt cedar issues, what steps need to be taken and the results of these actions. The "effects of how salt cedar control is helping the river" is being assessed. There will be a series of landowner meetings going on to educate and to get feedback. With adequate funding, the next phase of this project could turn into an implementation phase. For one of the next meetings, Charlie may have a communication specialist come and write a story about this group's work and goals that would be published in a region wide

publication. This will benefit the entire area. For more information about this project, visit www.pecosbasin.tamu.edu.

There will be a meeting on March 31, 2005 in the Midland TCEQ office with different agencies meeting to see who is doing what.

A thought for us all to keep in mind is to keep issues in the forefront, so that everyone will know what is going on.

The next meeting will be held on April 21, 2005 at 1:00 P.M. in Monahans.

The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by Cindy Breiten
Upper Pecos Soil and Water Conservation District #213
and
Angie Scasta
Pecos County WID #3