

PECOS RIVER ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 21, 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
Tom Nance	Ward County Irrigation District #1
Alan Zeman	Reeves County Water Improvement District #2
Arnold Braden	Upper Pecos SWCD #213
Charles Hart	Texas Cooperative Extension
Greg Huber	USDA/NRCS – Reeves County
Angie Scasta	Pecos County Water Improvement District #3
J. W. Thrasher	Pecos River Compact Commissioner
Ronnie Cooper	Pecos Count Water Improvement District #3
Greg Larson	TCEQ-Midland
Joe Shuster	Pecos County Judge

Charlie Hart called the meeting to order for the purpose of an open meeting discussion regarding the Pecos River Ecosystem Advisory Committee.

NRCS-EQIP – Greg Huber reported on the Salt Cedar EQIP contracts in Reeves, Culberson and Pecos counties. There are three contracts in Reeves, one in Culberson and about five or six in Pecos County. Greg also let the members present know that as of May 15, 2005, he will be the Pecos Valley RC&D Coordinator and will be leaving the Pecos NRCS DC position.

Burn Report - Tom Nance reported that he is still waiting on the Texas Forest Service to set a date for the test burn. Bill Davis was not able to be present today to give an update. This will be a topic for discussion for the May meeting.

Discussion was held on the burn funding. This is funding that has been discussed as part of Senate Bill 1. It is now dead on 1 and hopefully it will be part of Senate Bill 3. Whether or not this funding will happen is still up in the air. It is going to be an uphill battle. Alan Zeman said that Gary Walker thinks that it still may go through. J. W. Thrasher is going to contact Duncan. Letters need to be written regarding this subject. Cindy Breiten can contact Denise as she is working closely with Jason Anderson. There was further discussion on Senate Bill 3.

BOR Easements – There is not an update on this subject at this time.

County Judges and Commissioners - Ronnie Cooper has met with Judge Joe Shuster who is present for this meeting. Discussion was held on the possibility of holding a workshop with commissioners' courts with presentations regarding salt cedar restoration. This is one idea on getting the county judges and courts along the river involved in the project. A long term commitment plan is being worked on by Larry Brown. All eight of the counties that have contact with the Pecos River need to be involved in representing the river for legislative advantage. Judge Shuster talked about improving the water table from start to finish benefiting all. J. W. talked about how it is hard to get appropriations for the river. Charlie thinks that all of the state agencies need to be involved including all of the SWCDs and the water districts as well as the commissioners' courts. We need to get everybody involved including more Senators past Crane County. Gallego and Madla have a lot of the counties along the river.

A place to start planning would be a workshop in Pecos County for educating the counties about the purpose of the project. Judge Shuster will send out a letter to all of the courts so that a representative from each could attend and arrangements can be made to schedule far enough ahead of time so that plans can be made. Larry Brown's presentation can be utilized for this workshop. A scheduling of late June or July should give everyone plenty of time. Judge Shuster can figure out a date and correspond with the county courts. (Also discussed were how many diversions there are in the seven districts). Also, the City Councils should be approached to get involved. Judge Shuster can make some arrangements and contact Cindy.

A Salt Cedar Biological Control Consortium is a meeting where the entomologists come together to make data comparisons. There have been bug releases in several places closest to Big Spring. Our entomologist is planning on setting up releases and needs to know where. This matter was discussed.

Grants and Grant Writing

EPA Target Watershed Grants Program Update – The grant application and the letters of support that have been received looks really good. There have been a lot of favorable comments. Larry Brown and Denise Gentsch have both received calls suggesting that a multi-state joint proposal with New Mexico be considered at some point. Five applications have been submitted and three will be kicked out since the Governor can only nominate two applications. Charlie's question regarding the joint proposal is whether our budgets would be combined and how exactly would this joint proposal be combined. We know that we can get Debbie Hughes's support with a joint proposal and she will need to be contacted regarding this matter. J. W. thinks that a joint proposal is a good idea. Alan Zeman has talked with Tom Davis with the Carlsbad Water District about this and thinks that we could get their board approval. The opinion is also that a joint proposal would show the Governor how serious we are about this project and the work that needs to be done. And the joint venture may give us a better chance of funding. The group decided for Cindy to talk with Larry Brown to try and get the joint done, but if time does not permit, then submit our application as is.

Land & Water Stewardship – Angie talked about the information provided and Texas Water Day which is sponsored by the Texas Water Consortium Association. Also, U.S. HR 489. This is being sponsored by Conaway and Pierce. Bonilla needs to be contacted.

Pecos River Basin Assessment Program – Charlie said that Bill Thompson will be attending the May meeting to give his presentation regarding this program.

Financial Report by Cindy Breiten - The report was given and copies are included in the information book she has prepared and provided. Larry Brown has been paid \$1,000.00 so far and will be paid \$1,000.00 additional at the Upper Pecos SWCD May board meeting. Currently Cindy is working on scheduling appearances at water district meetings that will be held in May. He will be attending as many meetings as he can so that our long term plan can be discussed and he can listen to individual opinions.

Other Business and Discussion – Greg Larson with TCEQ discussed the continuous monitoring sites that are set up. There is one at Coyanosa, the State line, Girvin and Langtry that has flow data and this data will be important. An impact can be seen since the salt cedar eradication with this flow data. This will be a benefit for our long term plans with the positive water quantity and quality. Charlie can make contacts for attendance to future meetings for additional data reports. Also data needs to be taken above Malaga and below the Delaware.

Also, Alan Zeman provided a proposal from Lindsay Construction to give to Larry Brown for our future planning discussions. This proposal is a cost projection for clearing brush beside the river from Red Bluff Lake to the Rio Grande River. One river mile constitutes two miles clearing. The projections are for \$900.00 cost per mile and \$1,800.00 per river mile with 15 ‘wide fire breaks.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting will be May 19, 2005 at this same location.

Meeting Notes Prepared by Cindy Breiten