

*Pecos River Ecosystem Advisory Committee  
&  
Salt Cedar EQIP 2006 Stakeholder Program*

*August 18, 2005*

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

**Attendance:**

Cindy Breiten	Upper Pecos SWCD #213
Michael McCulloch	Pecos County WID #3
Charles Hart	Texas Cooperative Extension
Calvin Gerke	Upper Pecos SWCD #213 and Ward County WID #1
Ronnie Cooper	Pecos County WID #3
Bill Thompson	Texas Cooperative Extension
Philip Dickerson	Texas Parks and Wildlife
Bill Davis	Texas Forest Service
Charles Anderson	USDA-NRCS
Gregory Huber	USDA-NRCS
Leo Carrillo	USDA-NRCS
Levi Tibbs	USDA-NRCS – Odessa
Harlan Hopper	Loving County
Alan Zeman	Reeves County WID #2

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Michael McCulloch.

The Salt Cedar 2006 EQIP Program is being presented by Greg Huber and Charles Anderson for the purpose of gaining input of State Resource Concerns that will be submitted to the State Technical Committee for their meeting in Austin on September 15, 2005. Discussions during this meeting will be on funding levels, practices, cost share rates and incentive levels.

The previous years' background information was presented by Greg Huber which included past concerns and priorities, as well as the number of contracts that were funded in 2003, 2004 and 2005 which were:

2003	67 Contracts for \$931,452.
2004	60 Contracts for \$877,121
2005	30 Contracts for \$295,257.

First discussion was regarding priorities. In 2005, all of the watersheds were ranked with equally. The group discussed designating high, medium and low priorities for the Pecos River Basin, the Upper Colorado, the Canadian, and the Brazos. The Pecos River Project began back in 1999 and is the project that is the furthest along, so this project is considered a model or example for the other salt cedar projects. While the Upper Colorado has been in the planning stages for several years, they are actually beginning their spraying today and interest is just beginning on the Brazos River. The Rio Grande River basin gets into international issues, so the consensus of the group is to rank as follows:

Pecos River Basin	High Priority
Upper Colorado	Medium Priority
Canadian & Brazos	Low Priorities

Prioritizing this way could give the Pecos the advantage of being able to complete their program, since it is important to eliminate seed sources that remain. Last year, all applications were accepted and ranked.

Brush Management and Range Planting have been the eligible practices in the past years and most of the group agrees that Prescribed Burning should be included. Also recommended is that at least one follow-up be included in the contract. The prescribed burning would be more complicated since there are restrictions and guidelines that would have to be followed, but it would be an important addition.

It was agreed upon to leave the Incentives the same as last year which is \$.50 per acre/ per year for a maximum of three years and would be applicable for all acres where brush management is being applied.

It was also agreed upon to leave the cost share rates as is, which are:

- 90% on all practices for Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers
- 75% on Brush Management and 60% on Range Planting
- 75% on Brush Management and 50% on Range Planting for all other contracts

Practices will be cost shared based on the established county average cost of the practice. Also two criteria that are used on any brush control contract for consideration are 11% canopy cover or 50 live plants per acre.

The ranking criteria discussion was regarding the control methods which are chemical, mechanical, and brush management followed by range planting. A person cannot have a second contract on the same acreage, but can have a second contract on different acreage. Part of the discussion was on the subjects of secondary treatments and debris burning, but the main topic was control method systems which are:

- (a). Chemical Control and Prescribed Burn
- (b). Prescribed Burn and Individual Plant Treatment
- (c). Mechanical Control and Individual Plant Treatment
- (d). Initial Treatment, then Mechanical, and IPT

The individual plant treatment could also be individual spot treatment by helicopter. The group agreed that chemical control, removal and secondary treatment be all in one package. Also discussed was a possible priority being secondary treatment on prior non-EQIP land and where could bank stabilization come in.

The five recommended control methods are:

1. Chemical System
2. Chemical only
3. Mechanical and Follow-up
4. Mechanical only

5. Brush Control with Range planting.

The point system could be left as is or appropriately assigned points as to a system.

- **Burn Report by Bill Davis**

Bill is aiming for sometime in the next couple of weeks to begin work on the test burn plot. He will notify Calvin Gerke and Cindy Breiten when the exact date is known.

- **PREP Workshop – Pecos County – 8-23-05**

The workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, August 23, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. in Ft. Stockton. Work is being done on the RSVP list and calls are being made. We will begin the day with Michael McCulloch giving introductions and explaining the purpose of the meeting. Charlie Hart will give a slide presentation and a summary of the survey results will be discussed. The scientists and the experts will be available for a question and answer session and the government officials present will provide their input. After a break, the reason the county governments are important to the project, their feedback being the main purpose of the day and also how each county can help the project. Lunch will be provided and at 1:00 pm., Mr. Miyamoto will give an updated salinity presentation. J. W. Thrasher has encouraged Red Bluff representatives to be present and all of the irrigation districts have been notified.

- **Carlsbad Project Vegetation Management Program Meeting September 20, 2005**

This meeting will be held in Carlsbad on September 20th and 21st according to Marsha Carra. The field visits will be held on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Michael McCulloch and Alan Zeman are planning on attending and will give a report at a future meeting.

- **Long Range Plan/EPA Update/Larry Brown**

We should find out sometime in September if our EPA Grant application will progress to the next level. The group discussed the Dominichi Bill and Cindy will ask Larry to keep close tabs on this and to follow it closely. Also, if our grant is approved, it may be possible to apply for a grant to assist with the in-kind with the Texas Water Development Board. It is something that needs to be checked into. Larry Brown is working on the long range plan and will have further information after the workshop.

- **Upper Colorado River Watershed Restoration & Management Plan Meeting**

Cindy Breiten, Michael McCulloch and Ronnie Cooper attended this meeting which was held in Big Spring on August 9<sup>th</sup>. The minutes from this meeting were reviewed and, after hearing more about the Pecos Project, are interested in a video, mail outs and a website. They plan on spraying

2500 acres on the Colorado River this year and are beginning today. One of the things that our members stressed to the Colorado group is to plan far ahead for their debris removal plans and funding.

- **Project Website**

The minutes from each of our meetings are available on the website and the information on biological control is going to be available soon.

- **Clean Rivers Program – Red Bluff Continuous Monitoring Station (s)**

Ronnie Cooper gave an update on the continuous monitoring station. He met with TCEQ and Allison McDonald so that the site could be determined, which is where the state line crosses the river on the west side. TCEQ does not feel like they can monitor monthly or monitor what we want to test for. They can monitor 3 times per year which would be May, August, and October or November. We discussed having someone volunteer to take monthly samples for a period of one year. Wayne Belzer with IBWC can provide the testing equipment. Charlie Hart suggested speaking with Mr. Miyamoto after his presentation on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. He may want to be involved in this effort. Also, Cory Horan needs to be contacted and all of the different things that we wish monitored needs to be coordinated. Herbicides, pesticides and this type of sampling will not be done with the continuous monitoring.

- **Biological Control – Test Plots**

This project is proceeding and additional bugs have been obtained. Mike McMurry is working on some aspects of this control project and plans to have this brought up to the State Technical Committee. Also, this will definitely be part of the long term plan.

- **Future Meeting Place**

The group decided that the meetings can continue to be in Monahans. Arrangements will need to be made to verify that the meeting room is available.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be on September 15, 2005.