

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

*November 15, 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
Alan Zeman	Reeves County WID #2
Greg Huber	Pecos Valley RC&D
J. W. Thrasher	Pecos River Compact Commissioner
Greg Larson	TCEQ
Bill Davis	Texas Forest Service
Cory Horan	TCEQ – Austin
Larry Brown	Consultant
Charlotte Brown	Consultant
Bill Roberts	Trans Pecos Water Trust
Ronnie Cooper	Pecos County WID #3
Philip Dickerson	Texas Parks & Wildlife
R. C. Slack	Red Bluff Water District
Jed Elrod	Texas County Extension – Pecos County

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

First item discussed was the Upper Pecos SWCD #213 November 1, 2005 Board Meeting. J. W. Thrasher, Charlie Hart, Michael McCulloch, and Alan Zeman were in attendance at Cindy Breiten's request. The Upper Pecos board members had some concerns on communication between the Advisory Committee and the District. The Upper Pecos board members requested that the agendas for the meetings be submitted and approved at the regular board members which are on the first Tuesday of the month. The Advisory Committee meetings are on the third Thursday of the month. A preliminary agenda will be submitted to them as other items come up before the meeting. Other topics were discussed such as the monitoring stations, the burn, meeting with Kathleen White, and the grant status. Upper Pecos Board members requested that at least one member of the committee attend the regular board meeting to keep them updated on what is going on with the Project. Members of the Advisory Committee requested that Upper Pecos Board members attend the committee meetings whenever possible. The goal is for better communication between the agencies.

Michael McCulloch invited Larry Brown to give his presentation on the status of the grants and the Plan of Action. First of all, Mr. Brown advised the group that the EPA Grant application was not one of the grants that were funded. Our proposal was very strong; it just was not one of the projects chosen to fund. There were not any projects chosen in the State of Texas and he advised that the way to go for the next grant application process would be to do a joint proposal with New

Mexico. This was discussed for this year's application, but there was not enough preparation time. A grant proposal combined with New Mexico's project would not have to be recommended by the Governor and would automatically be accepted for consideration. Therefore, since this proposal was not funded, other grant opportunities will be looked into. The first thing Brown needs to know from the group is whether or not the Upper Pecos and the water districts still intend to pledge in-kind and dollar matches for other grants, as in the EPA grant application process. This would be for the 06 and 07 fiscal years. The commitments pledged by the water districts for the EPA grant are null and void since it was not funded, and each of these agencies will need to be notified of this fact. A letter will be submitted by the Upper Pecos District to each of the water districts requesting this same kind of commitment. These letters will need to be submitted to them before their next board meetings so that decisions can be made at their December board meetings. Most of the districts meet the second week of the month except Upper Pecos meets on the first Tuesday and one of the districts meets on the first Monday. These letters will need to be presented as soon as possible as Mr. Brown will need this information before he can submit any other grant application opportunities that come available. Mr. Brown will assist Cindy Breiten in the drafting of these letters. It will not be known until the time comes how much dollar commitment or in-kind the districts will need to commit to. When funds are finally provided, each District's matching and in-kinds are monitored by each and accurate records have to be kept. Other grant opportunities were discussed and Charlie Hart found one for fire but it is for research and that is not really what the PREP needs at this point.

Next, the monitoring topic was discussed. J. W. Thrasher reported that, according to Senate Bill 1, monitoring cannot be done in New Mexico using the equipment TCEQ has available. This state line site that was wanted is not going to work for a continuous station, nor will a site at the dam that was discussed. Cory Horan, with TCEQ, discussed the monitoring programs he is involved in and the problems we are looking at as far as long term probes. Satellite software was discussed as equipment that would be needed. Other equipment has been purchased and Charlie Hart is going to be doing the maintenance on those sites. A solution will need to be worked out; because opinion is that we need to know the quality of the water after Carlsbad gets through with it. J. W. Thrasher has had discussion with USGS and they can put in without a permit. Privately, we would have to get a permit from the state. It would cost \$3,000.00 to install and approximately \$30,000.00 to maintain and that is not considering the cost of the equipment itself. The problem is that TCEQ would not be able to monitor the data from a gauge that is located in the State of New Mexico. Alan Zeman requested from Cory that he submit in writing what TCEQ can and cannot do. There are two continuous stations presently operating by USGS, but the data is only for salinity. The ideal solution would be to go in with Red Bluff and update their equipment. If that would work with Red Bluff, then Upper Pecos could request each water district contribute maintenance funding. Mr. Thrasher is going to get upgrade prices from USGS. Ronnie Cooper was asking about retrieving salinity data below and above Malaga Bend from a website. J. W. Thrasher is going to arrange for the Interstate Stream Commission to plan on coming here sometime the second week in March for a special hearing. It is important to get as many different agencies and water districts as possible interested in attending this hearing.

The next topic up for discussion is the salt cedar debris burn part of the project. Michael McCulloch spoke to the group about possibly working with the Carlsbad Project. They are going to start the burn on the New Mexico part of the river on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. The Bureau of Land Management will be using a heli-torch and will be burning 21 river miles of debris which is on state land and some private land and is federally funded. Our test burn of 2 miles is scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>. This is the only part of the burn that is scheduled right now.

Larry Brown submitted a preliminary draft of his Plan of Action for the Project. The plan was reviewed and he requested recommendations, suggestions, and comments be sent to his e-mail address. He discussed the advantages of forming a 501C. Just one of the advantages would be the organization could apply for certain types of funding and also donations to the organization could be written off. For the public interest part of the plan, Alan Zeman suggested doing radio spots and public information spots. Greg Huber will look into finding a person that could do the spots. IBWC can pay for outreach projects such as this which would include radio spots, brochures, and any other educational part of the project. Cory Horan or Wayne Belzer can be contacted for more information. Larry Brown is still checking into other grant opportunities for the project as a whole and is going to talk with Comer Tuck with the Texas Water Development Board. Part of the plan is to try and get all of the counties along the river and other organizations to come together to participate in the river project. Also, we need to pursue the Corps of Engineers and the Texas Parks and Wildlife to get help with the Project.

Jed Elrod was present today to talk about a prescribed burn workshop. There will be an informational meeting by Dr. Charles Taylor on March 1<sup>st</sup> in Ft. Stockton. There will be a three day introduction workshop in Sonora January 19<sup>th</sup> thru the 21<sup>st</sup>. Another is scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup> thru the 18<sup>th</sup> and an advanced course from March 2<sup>nd</sup> thru the 4<sup>th</sup>. The workshop costs \$400.00 per person which includes meals and lodging. Topics will include cool season and warm season burns. The March 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Ft. Stockton is an overview of the workshop and will be an all day deal. Information will be forwarded. Also, there will be a pesticide workshop on November 15<sup>th</sup> for private applicator's license beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Charlie Hart was unable to attend the meeting today, so we will get an update on the biological control and the Invasive Species conference during the next meeting.

Michael McCulloch discussed the Executive Order RP50 by Governor Perry.

After discussion, the committee decided to have a meeting in December to see if we have received answers from the water districts on the commitment letters for the grant applications. The meeting will be on December 15<sup>th</sup> in Monahans.

The meeting was adjourned.