

Pecos River Ecosystem Advisory Committee

February 22, 2006

*Monahans Convention Center
400 East 4th Street
Monahans, Texas
1:30 PM*

Attendance:

Cindy Breiten	Upper Pecos SWCD #213
Michael McCulloch	Pecos County WID #3
Alan Zerman	Reeves County WID #2
Greg Huber	Pecos Valley RC&D
J.W. Thrasher	Pecos River Compact Commissioner
Bill Roberts	Trans Pecos Water Trust
Charlie Hart	Texas Cooperative Extension
Ronnie Cooper	Pecos County WID #3
Okla Thornton	Colorado River Municipal Water District
Frank Tirey	Concerned Citizen
David Guerin	Ward County WID #2
Delmon Hodges	Pecos County Landowner
Ernest Woodward	Pecos County WID #3
Philip Dickerson	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Tinita Cooper	Landowner
Will Hatler	Texas Cooperative Extension
Ed Curtis	Concerned Citizen
Rusty Carpenter	Ward County WID #3
Ethel G. Allgood	Ward County WID #3

The meeting was called to order by Michael McCulloch and he welcomed the group in attendance today. He thanked Rusty Carpenter for her efforts in getting people here to discuss the 501(C)3. The purpose of the filing of the 501(C)3 is to secure private funding and several committee members, such as Larry Brown, our consultant and grant writer have recommended this be done.

Ms. Carpenter voiced objections to the filing saying that there is no reason for another beauracracy and that the Upper Pecos has been working on this project and it should

stay that way. Cindy Breiten gave the results of the Upper Pecos SWCD #213 Board meeting, which was held on February 7, 2006. The Board members felt that after the spraying and burning is complete, the District will have fulfilled their obligations to the Project. They were in approval of the filing of the 501(C)3 for the long term planning and the grant opportunities that are available to a non-profit organization. Charlie Hart explained that the Project is bigger than the Upper Pecos and that the long term planning includes the entire watershed which a 501(C)3 is better capable of handling. Ernest Woodward was concerned about the filing and voiced his opposition. There are concerns about the structure of the sample by-laws that have been reviewed. Assurances were given that the by-laws are negotiable and will be discussed and changes can be made to alleviate concerns. Charlie pointed out that the whole purpose of the filing of the 501(C)3 is to get rid of the politics.

Greg Huber, Pecos Valley RC&D explained the status of his agency and that his agency is a 501(C)3 and that it is not a beauracracy and that the organization would have plenty of technical advice and contributing information. Also, anyone that is interested can be as involved as the want to be. It would be a Texas Cooperation and an IRS designation and non-profit. Most importantly, nothing can be done to any land without the landowner's permission. As far as the sample by-laws, the wording was taken from two established 501(C)3, being the New Mexico Project and the Trans Pecos Water Trust. Bill Roberts, with the Trans Pecos Water Trust explained his organization, their efforts, and the people involved. They would not have been able to receive their grant funding or deal with the private foundations without the IRS determination. A lot of the wording of the by-laws came from theirs and they can always be worked out.

J.W. Thrasher said that the purpose of the 501(C)3 is to restore the watershed. He said that he would be working with the organization and the main purpose is to get tax free money. There is no federal money out there. Money left over is not going to come to us and we are going to have to fight for every dollar. The State of New Mexico's Project has sprayed their salt cedar and has already started their burning process. It is urgent that this group pull together to make things happen. Personality conflicts need to be set aside. We are just trying to get money to fund this project. He stressed that no one can do anything to anyone's land without their permission. Also, he reminded everyone about the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Meeting on March 9, 2006 in Pecos at the Reeves County Civic Center.

Ernest Woodward discussed problems with mistrust and water district concerns on where money would be spent. Also, what was sprayed in the past and why there were delays with that State money. The year that the salt cedar turned yellow prematurely was explained again by Ronnie Cooper. Greg Huber and Charlie Hart explained that there are no hidden agendas and that no federal or state employees would be able to serve on the board and that everyone is always invited to participate in the meetings.

Charlie has a report showing where and when the spraying has been done. The last couple of years, the only money that has been available for spraying has been EQIP money.

Michael McCulloch expressed his concern on getting the EPA Grant application done. This will be a grant application between the Texas and New Mexico projects and one project. Dr. Brown is working on this application for spraying and salt cedar debris burn funding.

Other points that were made:

- Problems with the long term plan and public use land
- Another layer of control
- By-laws be re-addressed
- Suggestion of a director from each county in the watershed
- Discussions on how directors would be appointed
- How administrative money would be spent
- Water District participation with a 501(C)3

Cecil Lee, Michael McCulloch, Alan Zeman, and Ronnie Cooper, all water district board members, are in favor of getting the 501(C)3 organized and applying for foundation grant money.

Michael McCulloch recognized Okla Thornton with the Colorado Rover Municipal Water District and thanked him for his attendance today.

EPA Grant Application - The grant application will be a joint proposal with the New Mexico Project. New Mexico will take the lead as far as the administering of the funding and the Upper Pecos SWCD will be the Texas agency in the application. An approval will have to be given by the Upper Pecos SWCD Board since the 501(C)3 organization will not be ready. We will still need the irrigation districts' pledges as in the application last year. The application will be for \$350,000.00 for the Texas project, \$350,000.00 for the New Mexico project, and \$200,000 .00 for Red Bluff to Malaga. Another reason that the 501(C)3 is important is because the Upper Pecos SWCD does not have any money. Discussion was held on how the joint proposal has a better chance of getting funding than an agency applying solo. Ronnie cooper suggested the irrigation districts sending letters to the Upper Pecos requesting them to be the lead agency again in this application proposal. Also, letters of support will be needed. Some of the committee members will try and attend the Upper Pecos Board Meeting.

GLCI Grant Application - This application would be for demonstration burn money. Larry Brown needs more information; therefore, Cindy Breiten will set up a

teleconference for Friday afternoon between her, Larry Brown, Bill Davis, and Alan Zeman.

Biological Control – Mark Muegge reported to the committee that he finally got a couple of walk-in cages. They have been extensively tested and the insects feed exclusively on salt cedar. Ronnie Cooper and Alan Zeman will be working with Mark on site locations. The beetles will be gathered in the spring and they will defoliate the plats and will eventually kill them. 400,000 acres of salt cedar has been defoliated in the original location and it will take several years, but the beetles will go where the salt cedar is. A suggestion was made by a representative of the Texas Department of Agriculture to use the beetles in the areas that are harder to spray in Val Verde County. This may be able to be part of a long term plan since there is not a lot of population built up yet. They are still in the early stages.

SEP Program – Cindy Breiten received an e-mail from Greg Larson with TCEQ regarding this program. This may be a way to get match money for grants. It is definitely a program to be looked into. Cindy will contact for further information.

Individual discussions were held regarding the 501(C)3 and it was suggested having a separate by-laws meeting. Also, Cindy gave some committee member copies of the Conflict of Interest Policy for review.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be on March 16, 2006.

Minutes prepared by Cindy Breiten