

Sept.11, 2007

Public Feedback Sought on Pecos River Watershed Protection Plan

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FORT STOCKTON – Persons interested in the future of the Pecos River are asked to give input to a draft plan aimed at improving the river and its watershed.

The Pecos River Basin Assessment Program authored the document now available for public review and comment.

Will Hatler, Texas Cooperative Extension eco-systems sciences assistant at Stephenville is the project's coordinator. He said the draft is a cooperative plan driven by landowner desires and drafted with administration and assistance from public agencies.

"The Watershed Protection Plan promotes a holistic approach to improving and restoring the Texas section of the Pecos River," Hatler said. "The river is a tremendously important resource to the area agriculturally, economically and historically. The water quality and quantity of the Pecos River has significantly declined. In dry years, the river flow is only a trickle at some sites."

Hatler said the management measures suggested in the document are based on project research results and public comment, and are strictly voluntary.

Draft copies of the protection plan and on-line comment instructions are available at <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu>. For paper copies contact Choyia Holley at 254-968-4144 or CHolley@ag.tamu.edu. Comments will be accepted through Oct. 15.

Project representatives will be available at the following locations to receive comments personally, and the public is urged to obtain and read a copy of the document before attending:

- Oct. 2, 9 a.m.- noon at the Loving County Courthouse in Mentone.
- Oct. 2, 1- 4 p.m. at the Community Building in Pecos.
- Oct. 3, 9 a.m.- noon at the Community Center in Imperial.
- Oct. 4, 9 a.m.- noon at the Civic Center in Iraan.
- Oct. 5, 9 a.m.- noon at Dink Wardlaw Ag. Complex in Del Rio.

After the public comment period ends, comments will be incorporated into the final draft, which will be submitted to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board for approval and forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency. Proposals to implement the plan's recommended management projects will begin once the final draft is approved Hatler said.

The Pecos River Basin drains all or part of 17 counties in the West Texas area. The counties are: Andrews, Brewster, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, Ector, Jeff Davis, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reagan, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Val Verde, Ward and Winkler.

Project collaborators include landowners and stakeholders, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and Districts, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Water Resources Institute, the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission, and Texas Clean Rivers Program. Funding is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board.

For more information go to: <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/>.