

Arroyo Colorado Habitat Workgroup

Estero Llano Grande World Birding Center

3301 S. FM 1015, Weslaco, Texas 78596

February 10, 2011

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Attendees:

Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB

Allen Berthold, TWRI

Chris Hathcock, USFWS

Omar Rios, Harlingen

Laura De La Garza, LRGVDC

Jaime Flores, TWRI

Kati Carberry, NRA

Jaime Longoria, HSWCD

Kyle O'Haver, TPWD

Ernesto Reyes, USFW

Tim Cawthon, TCEQ

Sam Simmons, Producer

Beth Almaraz, NRA

Sam Sugarek, NRA

Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC

Ludy Saenz, LRGVDC

Christina Mild, NPP

Frank Wiseman, RGVMTN

Tony Reisinger, TX Sea Grant

Jose Uribe, TPWD

Jimmy Stout, TPWD

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions..... Tony Reisinger, TX Sea Grant

Co chair of habitat workgroup

Introductions and intro of speaker

Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan

Vegetation and Tree removal from Arroyo Colorado Rodolfo Montero, IBWC

Presentation – Tree assessment of Arroyo Colorado

Flooding History

Possibility that Harlingen could have flooded if more water had been released so tree removal is proposed

Resistance of cleanup from landowners along the area but during the floods the trees were underwater so there was a tremendous amount of resistance.

The water was higher during dolly according to the gauge height as well as resident visuals.

Mexico has not followed their flooding treaties and is a concern for the reasoning of flooding (according to Sam Simmons)

90% of Rio Grande watershed is in Mexico.

Alex went into Mexico side of watershed and dumped water that flowed into Rio Grande

During alex the dams were fine until the second depression hit and the floods were management for 45 days

Concern of the Arroyo is the Capacity of the floodway and IBWC is claiming that the trees are creation resistance to the floodwater causing the water level to rise above the norm for that amount of water

Sediment level has drastically risen in the last 10 years (reporter lady)

LIDAR is going to be taken and completed by APRIL to see if the original capacity is there

There is a misconception of why IBWC is there because he needs the trees for erosion purposes
Not as much population along the north floodway

Picture of Harlingen expressway 77 to sunshine strip

Bottlenecks where river narrows

Harlingen thicket is part of the national wildlife refuge

Budgeted for one pass per year to maintain clearing

Canopy under 21,000 cfs will potentially be removed

Some areas are bare but there are needs to remove the bottlenecks

Jaime Ernesto Reyes, Chris Hathcock and Rodolfo Montero met Monday and it seems that the impacts can be substantial

Want to be selective so that certain species can be left

Biggest concerns are bottlenecks

Identify ahead of time to reduce invasive species and potentially keep the natives

Concern is that if trees are in middle then they fall and create bottleneck...can take them out

Jaime, Get group of volunteers to flag trees according to importance...

IBWC is looking upon the partnership to identify the selective species

Bottom line is habitat will be lost so that lives can be saved.

IBWC will have a plan to Fish and Wildlife by next week

Subcommittee should make recommendations to spray Brazilian pepper

Area to be mitigated is approximately 343 acres

Hwy 509 to 77 first and then 509 to POH

Recommended public meeting to let everyone know about the clearcutting. Set up meeting in Harlingen

Project Updates and Discussions:

POH Wetland Project Jaime Flores, TWRI

Feasibility study for dredging the port and create wetland. The survey was to be conducted and survey was rejected by the board of directors. The POH is currently coming up with match and because of budget restrictions the wetland project will be terminated.

Currently the COE is dredging in 6 locations of the POH

Los Fresnos Resaca Project Jaime Flores, TWRI

Mark Millum, Los Fresnos city manager, reported that the city had approved proposal to buy the property to develop the wetland. They currently have approx \$600,000 to purchase and Jaime has asked the group to come up with funds for purchasing the area. This is in the rasaca next to the higschool. Jaime will talk to the valley land fund and the city will put this into an easement for???.

LID Project Javier Guerrero, TAMUK

Jaime and some task force members traveled to TCEQ to discuss phase I and II of the project. Funds should be received for phase I.

Solar Powered Circulator Project Jaime Flores, TWRI

Some difficulty and TSSWCB may be looking into purchasing SBs for the POH. If not funded, Wilbur Ellis will be asked to fund the project.

Available Grants/Potential StudiesAllen Berthold, TWRI

TCEQ and GLO will be coming out with their RFP in May/June

Other Business Jaime Flores, TWRI

Laura De La Garza has handout for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council disaster mitigation. First round of public meetings was in January where people can express concerns about flooding. Comments are welcome to help identify possible wetland locations. Laura will send survey out to the workgroup. It is located on the website and it will be very beneficial to them for everyone to fill it out to give thoughts and recommendations

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn..... Jaime Flores, TWRI

Next meeting will be dependent upon when Rodolfo comes up with the proposal and Chris Hathcock and Ernesto Reyes from USFW have a chance to review plan and decide what is the best way to proceed.