

# The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership NEWSLETTER



## Don't miss this year's "Save the Arroyo Fiesta"

By Jaime Flores

The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership (ACWP) is hosting its second annual "Save the Arroyo Fiesta" from 6-9 p.m. on Oct. 9 at the Dargel Boats Showroom, 4110 N. FM 493, in Donna, Texas.

The fiesta will be similar to last year's event with an update on the partnership's activities, great BBQ, and bucket and silent auctions. We will, once again, raffle off a new 190 Dargel Skout. Raffle proceeds will be used to continue our outreach and education programs throughout the watershed and the continued implementation of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan.

The Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee (ACSC) started planning the first "Save the Arroyo Fiesta" in 2012 to raise awareness about the issues facing the Arroyo Colorado. The first fiesta was Oct. 10, 2013 in Donna with around 110 people attending. The ACSC wanted the fiesta to be educational, while including a membership drive/fund-raising event.

The fiesta also highlights current ACWP research projects in the watershed. Last year, Dr. Jude Benavides, ACSC chairman, gave a brief overview of the problems facing the Arroyo Colorado and a presentation on a dissolved oxygen sampling project conducted by his research team last summer in the tidal segment of the Arroyo Colorado.

The fiesta was a huge success and enjoyed by everyone who attended.

The winner of last year's boat raffle was Butch Palmer from Harlingen, a lifelong Arroyo Colorado watershed resident. He purchased his ticket just two days before the raffle and was present when we pulled his winning ticket from the bin.

This year's total raffle package is valued at more than \$35,000. Tickets are \$100, and we are printing only 400. Don't miss this great event and an opportunity to win a new boat!



For tickets to this year's fiesta or raffle tickets, please contact Jaime Flores at 956-495-5532 or [jjflores@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jjflores@ag.tamu.edu). If you or someone you know is interested in being a sponsor, please have then contact me at the number or email above. You can also contact me if you are interested in selling raffle tickets.

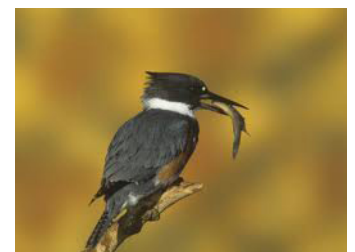
## Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership photo contest

By Jaime Flores

To continue the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership's (ACWP) efforts in improving the water quality of the Arroyo Colorado and the Lower Laguna Madre, ACWP is assessing the effectiveness of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan (ACWPP) and developing Phase II of the plan. The first published plan was full of great pictures of the Arroyo Colorado and the native flora and fauna found in the watershed. ACWP hopes to have photos of the same quality for this phase of the project. That is where you, the Arroyo Colorado Watershed residents and stakeholders, come in.

We are asking you to submit photos of the Arroyo Colorado and its native plants and animals between October 1, 2014 and January 31, 2016 as part of ACWP's photo contest. The ACWP photo contest committee will select the very best photos to be included in Phase II. Of the photos selected by the committee, one photo will be selected as the Grand Champion and will be used as the update's cover photo. The winner will also receive a \$250 prize.

There will also be a special category in which the Arroyo Colorado logo is replicated through photography. The ACWP's logo is the Ringed Kingfisher sitting on a branch with a small fish in its beak—see photo below. The winner in this category will receive \$500.



Photos must be in .jpg or .tiff image file format, at least 300 dpi resolution, and at least 4x6 inches.

Photographs submitted must be taken within the Arroyo Colorado watershed during the contest period. It will be the responsibility of the photographer to provide the proper evidence, including date, time and GPS coordinates, to demonstrate that the photograph meets the requirements of the contest.

## Workshop discusses agricultural water issues and conservation

By Ashley Gregory

South Texas farmers, crop consultants, technicians and many others gathered for a workshop Aug. 20 to discuss agricultural water issues and conservation ideas at Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Weslaco.

The workshop was held as part of a grant awarded by the Texas Department of Agriculture to the Texas International Produce Association.

The workshop, "Rio Grande Valley Agricultural Water Conservation Workshop," was attended by almost 60 people and opened up a dialog between producers, irrigation districts and other industry professionals about how to approach future water needs of the agricultural industry.



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*(cont. from pg. 1)*

“Our water reservoirs have not been at full capacity since January 2011; as of Aug. 4, Amistad Lake was at 39 percent of U.S. capacity and Falcon was at only 30 percent,” said Dr. Juan Enciso, a Texas A&M AgriLife Research irrigation engineer at Weslaco and program organizer and presenter, in an AgriLife TODAY news release.

There is no denying that water will continue to be a hot topic in the Rio Grande Valley, and we have to face the fact that our water delivery systems are aging and need updates. There are 27 individual irrigation districts in the three-county area of Hidalgo, Willacy and Cameron. Each district faces its own unique set of challenges, and the large cost of improving the canal systems is only the beginning.

The general consensus of the workshop seemed to be that producers need to be educated to be as efficient as possible with current irrigation methods. Workshops such as this one will be important for the future to keep the lines of communication open between educators, industry representatives and agricultural producers.

“July rains have helped, but the agricultural industry is still in crisis,” said Dr. Juan Anciso, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service fruit and vegetable specialist at the Weslaco center.

“Water problems won’t just go away, so we need to keep looking at cost-effective methods of water conservation,” he said in the news release.

One method, he said, could be drip irrigation. “Drip irrigation is nothing new, but we’re starting to see that more vegetable crops can benefit from such systems.”

Unfortunately, drip irrigation is not as economically viable for lower-value crops such as corn, grain and sugar cane. After all, producers have to meet the bottom line, and the high cost of drip installation is only worth the investment

for higher value crops like vegetables.

Other topics and speakers at the workshop included:

- The current water situation in the Rio Grande; Pablo Medrano, watermaster specialist, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Harlingen
- Weather update and prediction for the coming season; Barry Goldsmith, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Brownsville
- The Rio Grande Regional Water Authority and Emerging Technology Fund; Joe Barrera, Rio Grande Regional Water Authority, Harlingen
- Irrigation water conservation, tools for irrigation management and watermelon experiment results; Enciso
- Humic acids: Their role in moisture management ; Dr. Mir Seyedbagheri, University of Idaho Extension, Elmore County
- Panel discussion on irrigation districts and on-farm water conservation: Incentives for water conservation, and irrigation districts’ ideas for water conservation. Panelists included Wayne Halbert, Harlingen Irrigation District; Troy Allen, Delta Lake Irrigation District, Monte Alto; Joe Hinojosa, Santa Cruz Irrigation District; Dale Murden, Rio Farms, Inc., Monte Alto
- Water economics; Dr. Luis Ribera, AgriLife Extension agricultural economist, College Station
- Managing soil moisture with cover crops; Bruce Henderson, NRCS zone agronomist, Corpus Christi
- Arroyo Colorado Watershed update and cost share opportunities; Ashley Gregory, Texas Water Resources Institute; Arroyo Colorado Watershed

**UPCOMING MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES**

<i>Habitat Workgroup Meeting</i>			<i>Steering Committee Meetings</i>		
Oct 23	2–4 PM	Estero Llano Grande World Birding Ctr, Weslaco	Oct 23	5–7 PM	Estero Llano Grande World Birding Ctr, Weslaco



**The Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership**

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