

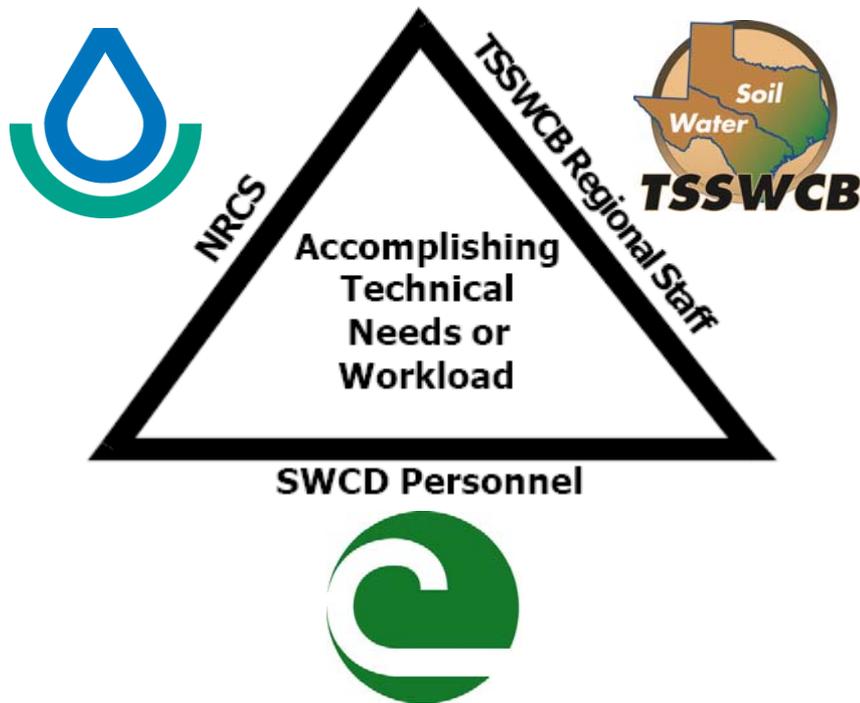


Technical and Financial Assistance for Cattlemen in the Atascosa River Watershed

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Pleasanton, TX

Texas Conservation Partnership



Providing Conservation Assistance to Private Landowners for 70 Years

–LOCAL

216 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

–STATE

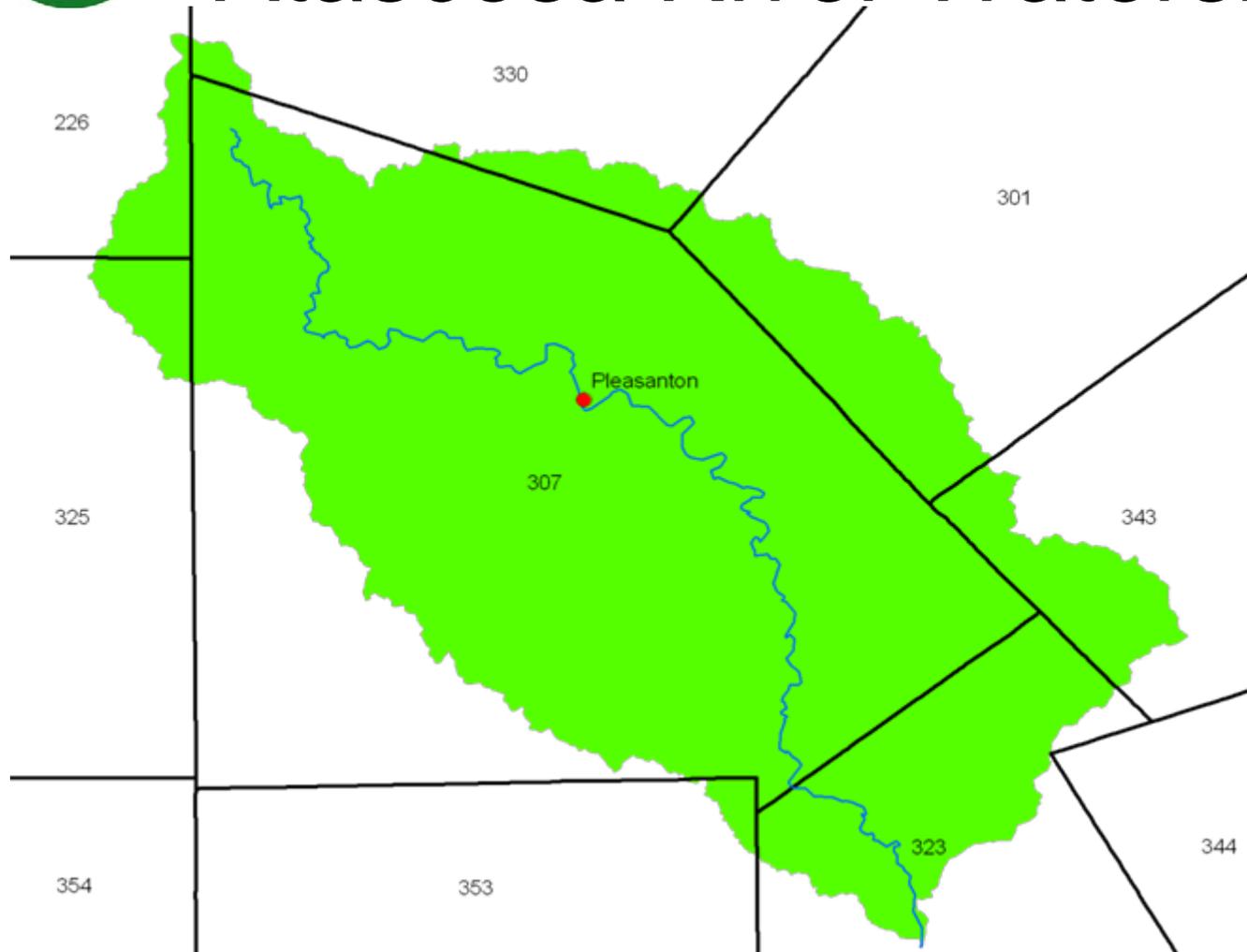
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)

–FEDERAL

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)



SWCDs in Atascosa River Watershed



- Medina Valley SWCD #226
- Wilson County SWCD #301
- Atascosa County SWCD #307
- Live Oak SWCD #323
- Frio SWCD #325
- Alamo SWCD #330
- Karnes County SWCD #343
- McMullen County SWCD #353



Strategy to Address Water Quality Issues

- Proactively address agricultural sources (livestock) of pollutants (bacteria) through voluntary implementation of best management practices (BMPs) by private landowners to bring streams back into compliance with state water quality standards
- Technical assistance for private landowners to develop Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs) that implement BMPs
- Financial assistance for private landowners through traditional cost-share programs to implement WQMPs and BMPs



Technical Assistance

- Since December 2006, Atascosa County SWCD has received grant funding from TSSWCB
- Provide needed technical assistance to livestock producers in Atascosa River watershed to develop and implement WQMPs
- Increase utilization of available financial assistance programs by livestock producers in Atascosa River watershed
- <http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/managementprogram/3EQIPTech>



Water Quality Management Plans

- Site-specific plan for land improvement measures developed through SWCD for agricultural lands
- Provides farmers and ranchers a voluntary opportunity to achieve a level of pollution prevention or abatement consistent with state water quality standards
- Includes appropriate and essential land treatment practices, production practices, management measures, or technologies applicable to the planned land use
- Best available management and technology as described in NRCS Field Office Technical Guide



WQMP Contents

- District-Cooperator Agreement
- Request for Planning Assistance
- Conservation Plan Map
- Soils Map & Description
- Narrative record of decisions needed to implement the WQMP
- Implementation schedule indicating years practices to be applied
- Worksheets used during the planning process
- NRCS Practice Standards and engineering designs
- Signature sheet to verify individual's privacy



Why have a WQMP?

- Abate/prevent erosion and promote conservation
- A “management” plan for your operation
- “Assurance” policy – proof that you aren’t just sitting around doing nothing
- Demonstrate that agriculture is doing our part to protect water quality
- Resolve water quality complaints through voluntary process with SWCD and TSSWCB



How to get a WQMP?

- An individual within the watershed requests planning assistance through the Atascosa County SWCD
- The WQMP is developed by the Atascosa County SWCD Technician with NRCS and TSSWCB assistance
- The WQMP is approved by the landowner, the SWCD and NRCS and then certified by the TSSWCB
- Producer implements the WQMP on their land
- Annual status reviews are conducted to ensure that the landowner implements BMPs as agreed to in the implementation schedule



Financial Assistance

State (TSSWCB) or Federal (NRCS) assistance is obtainable for certain conservation practices

Atascosa County SWCD will assist producers in obtaining available financial assistance (state and/or federal programs) to implement practices to reduce bacterial pollution in Atascosa River watershed

Examples of some practices eligible for financial assistance:

- ***Cross Fencing***
- ***Livestock watering facilities***
- ***Prescribed grazing***
- ***Riparian buffers***
- ***Pasture and Hayland Planting***

Practices will be conducted in compliance with NRCS Standards and Specifications as noted in the Field Office Technical Guide.



Financial Assistance

- Cost-share allocation (state funds) from TSSWCB to Atascosa County SWCD
 - \$35,200 allocated for FY2010
- Must have a WQMP to qualify
 - Maximum of \$15,000 cost-share per operation



Financial Assistance

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) State Resource Concern for Water Quality in South Central Texas
- Directed toward protection of streams impacted by bacterial contamination from livestock
- Targeted to watersheds of Elm and Sandies Creeks, Peach Creek, Lower San Antonio River and Atascosa River



Financial Assistance

- Applications are ranked for funding
- Higher rank if:
 - livestock operations located in close proximity to impacted streams
 - Livestock operations develop and implement a WQMP
- Allocation in FYs 2006-2009
- http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP/09/stconcrns09/so_central_tx.html



Implementation To Date

- 3 WQMPs
 - 1,333 total acres under WQMP
 - 310 head of cattle managed
 - 1,333 acres under Grazing Management Plan
 - 352 acres of riparian buffers
- Cost-share obligated/spent
 - EQIP = \$110,473
 - WQMP = \$15,000



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