

TR-305

Aquatic Life and Habitat Inventory Assessment

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Traditionally, water quality monitoring has been focused on chemical attributes such as mineral content, metals, and other contaminants. Biological monitoring is becoming more frequently utilized to assess overall ecological integrity of the water body. Biological monitoring is particularly useful in assessing the effects of nonpoint sources of pollution such as nutrient enrichment and sedimentation. Biological monitoring data collected during this project will provide baseline data that will allow comparisons to be made between sites on the Pecos River as well as comparisons to similar rivers in the state. Monitoring efforts will also provide a baseline for sites along the Pecos River. This data can be used to assess trends and future changes that may occur as conditions in the river change.

The development of a sustainable Pecos River Basin water management plan would be a giant first step forward and a great aid to maintaining or increasing populations of endangered species found in the Basin. A healthy, natural watershed and riparian zone is critical to life, especially in semi-arid and desert regions.

The U.S. Section International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) Clean Rivers Program (CRP) coordinated a biological assessment with assistance from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in the upper Pecos and with the United State Geological Survey (USGS) in the lower Pecos. Sites were selected along the Pecos River in Texas for assessment of biological condition. At those sites, data on benthic macroinvertebrate organisms, fish, and physical habitat characteristics of the river were collected and catalogued according to protocols previously published by the TCEQ.

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