

San Marcos/Hays & Caldwell Counties – NRCS Watershed Plan for Blanco River

Summary and Background



Devastating flood events in May and October of 2015 resulting in loss of life and property has brought focus on mitigation of future events. In 1978 the Upper San Marcos Watershed Plan was approved covering portions of Hays and Comal Counties. The result of the plan was the construction of 5 flood control structures located on Sink and Purgatory Creeks. These structures have played a significant role in the protection of San Marcos.

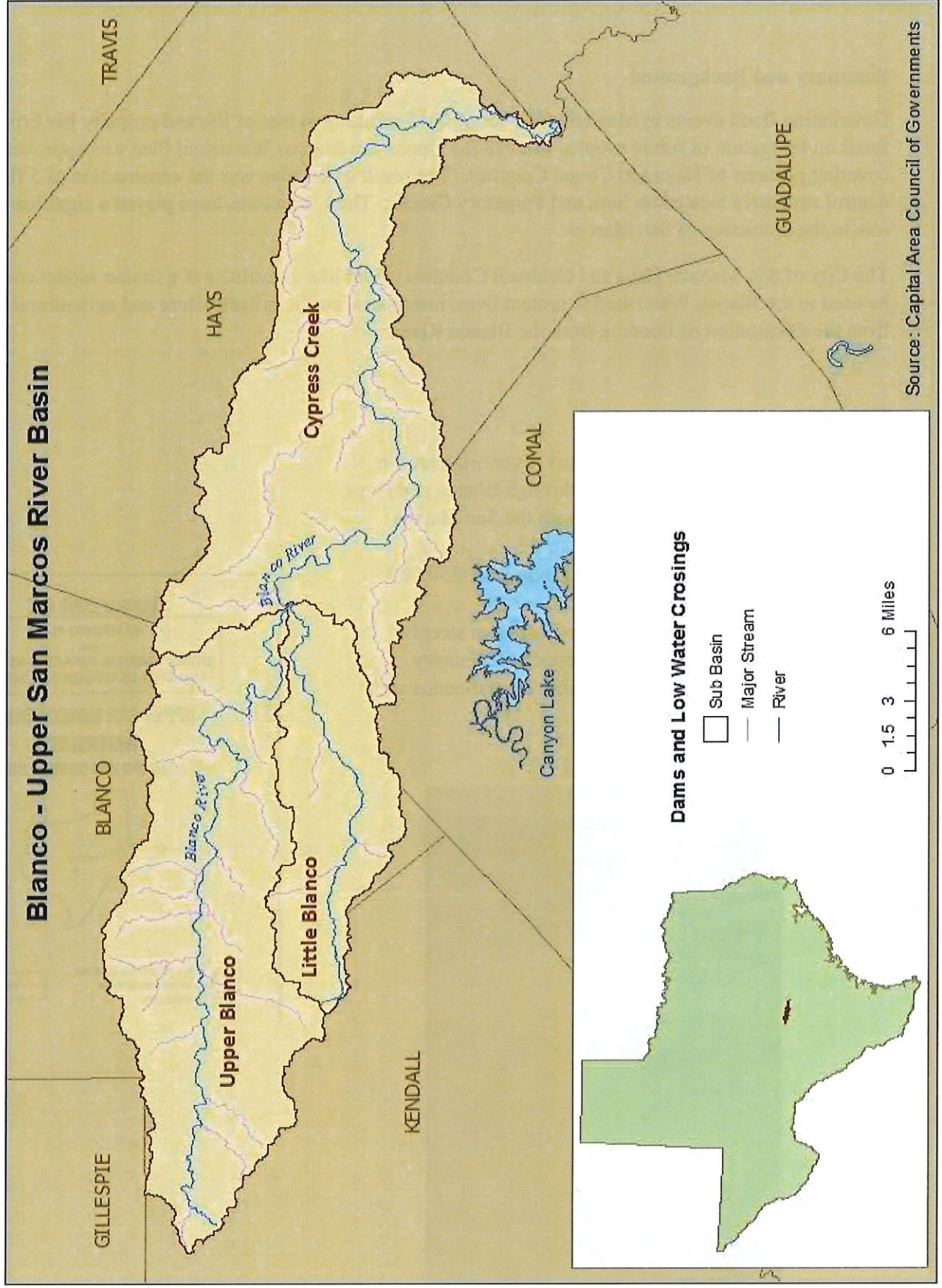
The City of San Marcos, Hays and Caldwell Counties would like to evaluate if a similar model could be used in the Blanco Watershed to protect lives, residences, public infrastructure and agricultural lands from the devastation of flooding from the Blanco River.

Key Facts.

- The headwaters of the Blanco River originates in Kendall County and flows through Blanco and Hays Counties to its confluence with the San Marcos River.
- It has a drainage area of approximately 250,000 acres.
- Primary damages occur as runoff from steeply sloped and largely undeveloped Hill Country terrain meets Blackland Prairie at confluence with San Marcos River.



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WATERSHED PLAN and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT USDA-SCS-EIS-WS-(ADM)-78-2-(F)-(TX)	
UPPER SAN MARCOS RIVER WATERSHED COMAL AND HAYS COUNTIES, TEXAS	
	
 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE TEMPLE, TEXAS	JUL 1978



NRCS Meeting Notes April 30, 2019

Kevin Farmer, Deputy Director of the Conservation Engineering Division
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
South Building
Washington, DC 20250

- Funding call issued to states May 15th (Salvatore Salinas) with 60 days for states to submit project requests (July 15th)
- Projects developed by state office and submitted to DC for evaluation
- Decision of selected projects in mid-August with funding notice to state in September
- 3 pools of funding – Backlog projects, New and Remedial
- \$150 million this year – believes this will continue annually. Additional \$50M tied to Farm Bill (2017 & 2018 \$150M each)
- Funding participation requirement depends on phase
- 100% funding for planning and design
- On-line document submitted by state (sponsors assist state with completion)
- Favorable consideration is given to projects/sponsors with:
 - Previous watershed project level work within last 5-10 yrs
 - Demonstrate results
 - Solve regional issue
 - Public participation
 - Protection of threatened/endangered species
 - Protects limited resource/socially disadvantaged
 - Must show 20% agriculture benefit
 - Want projects that show flexibility/habitat enhancement
 - Recreational/education benefit (trails in lieu of recreational pool)
- Preference is for Watershed Plans to be developed in-house but can use consultants.
- Plan can take 12-18 months to develop and includes EA/EIS
- Land rights and permitting are sponsor costs (need to check on how that works if plan includes EA/EIS)
- Need to have written agreement of sponsors prior to completion of plan
- All sponsors (affected land area) must be at the table. Because Blanco Watershed encompasses large area think about getting TCEQ, SCS or Soil & Water Conservation District to act as overall sponsor to make it easier.
- Need to have discussion with Sal's office. City has had conversation with Mark Northcut.
- Construction costs are 65/35

USDA Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program

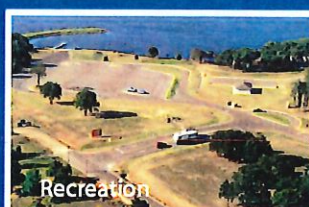
The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566) has been used as an effective tool to conserve natural resources by thousands of local communities for over 60 years. The watershed program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



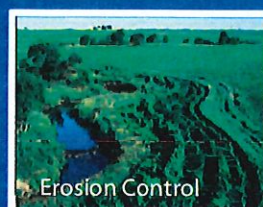
Flood Control



Water Supplies



Recreation



Erosion Control

Watershed Program

There are 2,000 watershed projects in the nation, with projects in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Pacific Basin. Forty-seven states have projects that include flood control dams. Watershed plans have been carried out in these projects that have included installation of thousands of conservation practices and the construction of 11,800 flood control dams that provide multiple benefits to thousands of citizens including:

- ◆ Reduced flooding
- ◆ Erosion control
- ◆ Reduced sediment in streams and rivers
- ◆ Reduced agricultural related pollutants
- ◆ Municipal and rural water supplies
- ◆ Water quality protection
- ◆ Recreational areas
- ◆ Wildlife habitat
- ◆ Groundwater recharge

Watershed Plans

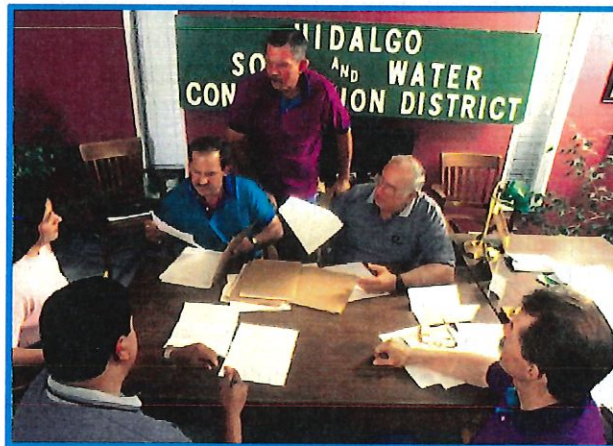
A watershed plan is developed for each project that includes environmental impacts, costs and benefits, planned conservation practices and the responsibilities of involved parties. A variety of agencies and organizations can assist local project sponsors in plan development.

Local Leadership

Watershed projects are planned and carried out jointly by local, state, and federal agencies with support of land owners and citizens in the watersheds.

Local units of government, usually conservation districts, cities or tribes, identify resource problems to be addressed and practices to be installed.

These local project sponsors carry out major portions of a watershed plan, such as obtaining easements, rights of ways and permits, and providing cost-share funding.



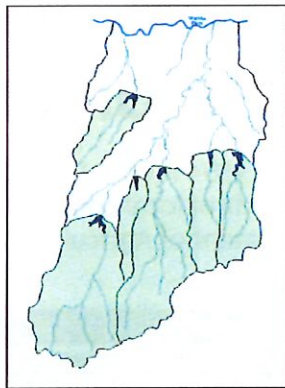
Local units of government such as conservation districts and cities serve as project sponsors for watershed projects.

Project sponsors obtain public comments and input throughout the planning process. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to local project sponsors.

NRCS assistance is available for engineering and construction costs of flood control measures, conservation practices for water quality, erosion and sediment control and for municipal and industrial water supplies and recreation facilities.

Everyone Lives in a Watershed

Everyone lives in a watershed. Watersheds are the area of land drained by a particular surface stream system and that drains into a larger stream.



Watershed projects are developed for watersheds 250,000 acres or smaller. Some have flood control dams built on tributaries to larger streams or rivers. Other projects may only have land and water conservation practices.

A series of flood control dams are usually constructed in a watershed that store water during heavy rainfall events and release it through a pipe through the dam over a period of days or weeks. This reduces the amount of water that flows into larger streams or rivers downstream and reduces flooding.

Conservation Measures

A project can consist of a combination of conservation practices such as flood control dams and conservation practices like terraces, waterways, grade stabilization structures, animal waste management, and wetlands restoration.

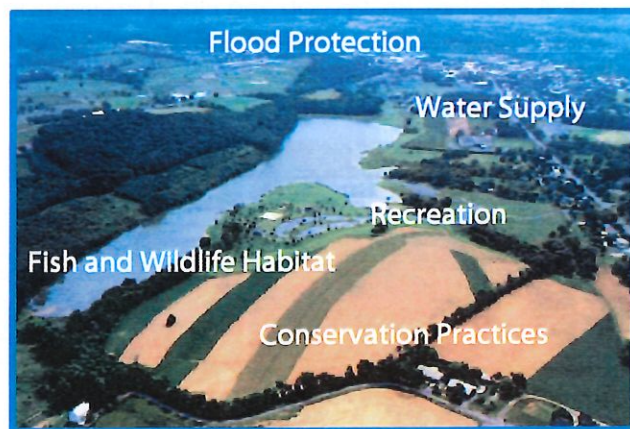
Other measures can also be used such as zoning, enforcing building codes, land acquisition, and emergency flood warning systems.

Water Management

Management of both agricultural and nonagricultural water supplies can be a significant component of watershed projects.

Measures to increase or conserve present and future water supplies in rural areas, improve water quality impacted by pollutants, and ground water recharge can be part of a watershed plan.

Management for nonagricultural uses such as municipal and industrial uses, recreational uses and improved fish and wildlife habitat represent other opportunities found in watershed projects



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP)

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP) is a new, comprehensive and flexible program that mobilizes partnerships to multiply conservation investments and reach common conservation goals on a regional or watershed scale.

The program is available in critical conservation areas and assistance is available using the Watershed Program and other USDA program authorities.

RCCP applicants (local organizations) may request to use the Watershed Program authority in designated Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs).

For More Information

For more information about the Watershed Program contact any local NRCS field office or visit the NRCS web page (www.nrcs.usda.gov), click on Programs, then Landscape Planning, and then on Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention.

