



FACT SHEET



Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Improvement Initiative

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project will seek to address both water quantity and water quality resource concerns in the Lower Rio Grande Valley by improving nutrient management and agricultural water use efficiency through improved irrigation scheduling and use of innovative irrigation techniques and technologies that decrease water use, improve productivity, and reduce irrigation return flows thus reducing nutrient and sediment loading to local waterbodies.

The success of this initiative will be monitored and gaged by tracking the on-farm practices implemented, estimating their impacts on water use efficiency and nutrient and sediment runoff at the field level, then comparing these estimated on farm benefits to monitored water quality. Further, the Extension education program will assess increases in knowledge of irrigation management, nutrient management, and water resource issues using pre-/post evaluations.

FOCUS AREA

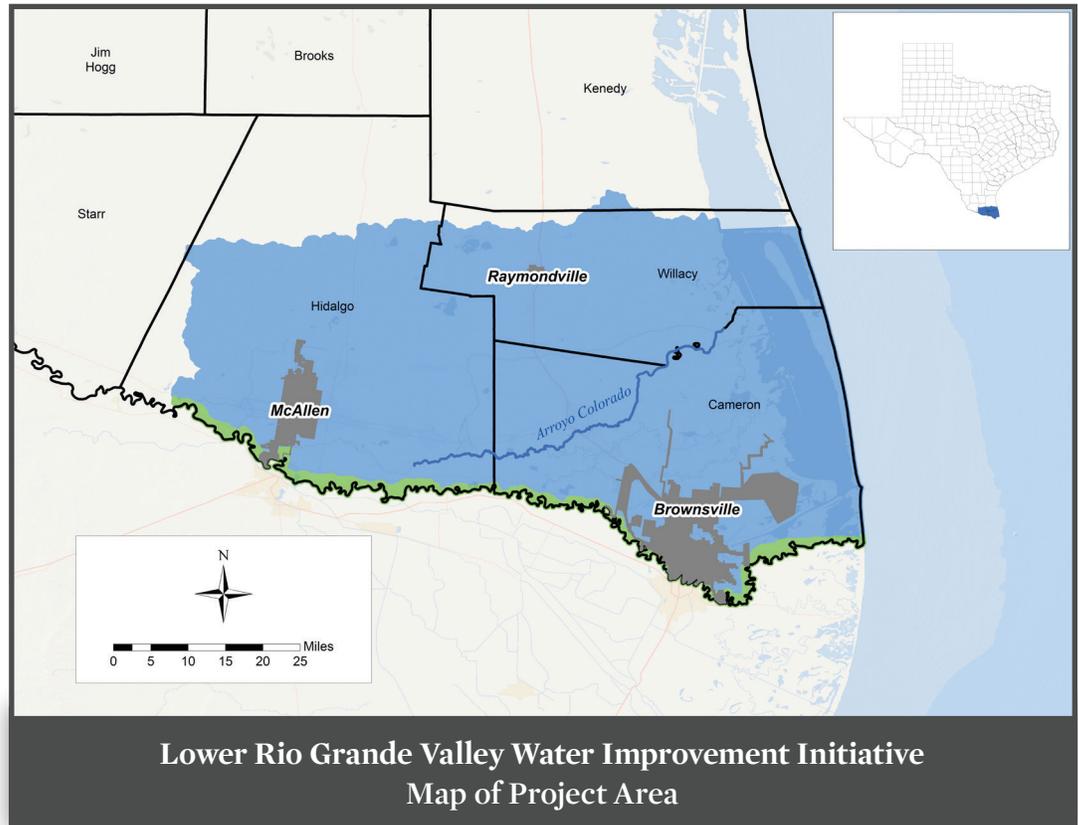
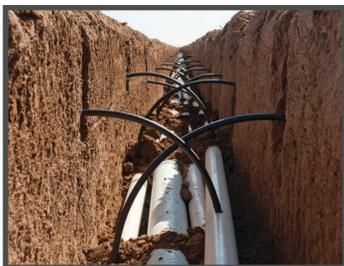
The targeted area for this project encompasses Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and includes the lower Rio Grande River, Arroyo Colorado, and north Floodway, all of which are important sources of freshwater for the Laguna Madre and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico.

Potential Practices

Resource Concern	Objectives	Specific Conservation Practices	
WATER QUALITY <small>(NATIONAL AND STATE RESOURCE CONCERN)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reduce nutrients loadings to waterbodies » Reduce bacterial loadings to waterbodies » Increase dissolved oxygen » Reduce sediment entering waterbodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conservation Crop Rotation ⁽³²⁸⁾ » Residue Management ⁽³⁴⁴⁾ » Irrigation Water Management ⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ » Irrigation System ⁽⁴⁴¹⁻⁴⁴³⁾ » Irrigation Tail Water Recovery ⁽⁴⁴⁷⁾ » Nutrient Management ⁽⁵⁹⁰⁾ » Pest Management ⁽⁵⁹⁵⁾ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Irrigation Land Leveling ⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾ » Subsurface Drain ⁽⁶⁰⁶⁾ » Irrigation Pipeline ⁽⁴³⁰⁾ » Grade Stabilization Structures ⁽⁴¹⁰⁾ » Pasture and Hay Planting ⁽⁵¹²⁾ » Filter Strip ⁽³⁹³⁾
WATER QUANTITY <small>(NATIONAL AND STATE RESOURCE CONCERN)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase irrigation water use efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Irrigation Water Management ⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ » Irrigation System ⁽⁴⁴¹⁻⁴⁴³⁾ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Irrigation Land Leveling ⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾ » Irrigation Pipeline ⁽⁴³⁰⁾

The long-term goal adopted by Arroyo Colorado stakeholders but applicable regionally is to encourage the voluntary implementation and maintenance of conservation plans on at least 50% of the irrigated cropland in the region by providing educational programs, technical assistance and cost-share assistance. As some practices reach the end of their design life, additional assistance, both technical and financial, will be needed to rehabilitate them. Proper nutrient and irrigation water management is expected on

additional acres as a result of educational programs within the watershed. Achievement of this goal is contingent on the availability of funding for cost-share, technical assistance and educational programs. Extension also provides nutrient management training along with soil testing resources to local producers in the region to help reduce nutrient runoff into the Arroyo Colorado, Rio Grande, and ultimately the Laguna Madre and Gulf of Mexico. 



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MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet was last updated January 2015.

For more information and updates about the RCPP Initiatives and other 2014 Farm Bill topics, visit the NRCS website at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmland/rcpp/>

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