

## **PECOS VALLEY WATER THREATENED**

The water of the Roswell Artesian Basin is once again under siege. The Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District, PVACD, which is charged with conserving the waters of the Roswell Artesian aquifer and the Pecos River, is responding to a call for priority administration of waters in the Pecos River Stream System which was made on March 19, 2021 by the Carlsbad Irrigation District.

The PVACD is strongly opposed to a priority call by the Carlsbad Irrigation District because if successful, the area would suffer historic and crippling economic, cultural, and social injury which would take decades to repair. At risk is over 110,000 acres of irrigated farmland along with municipal and industrial water supplies. Agriculture, oil and gas, manufacturing, large and small businesses and municipalities contribute approximately one billion dollars annually to the area economy. The economic impact of a priority call will devastate the entire Pecos Valley, and will not selectively ignore any user of water. Almost twenty years ago, the PVACD entered into a settlement with the Carlsbad Irrigation District, the State of New Mexico and the Bureau of Reclamation to ensure that New Mexico met its obligations to Texas and to provide water to the Carlsbad Irrigation District in times of shortage. The PVACD has fulfilled its part of the settlement without hesitation, and now the Pecos Valley is once again faced with more demands.

The ongoing drought which has hit the southeast part of New Mexico extremely hard, has reduced the flow of the Pecos River and has caused the aquifer to decline to 1970 levels. Despite the difficulties associated with the drought, the PVACD has worked with the Interstate Stream Commission and the Carlsbad Irrigation District to provide water for irrigation and for Pecos River Compact compliance. The PVACD refuses to surrender to threats of a priority call, and it will fight to protect the waters of the Basin.

For almost ninety years, the PVACD has fought to keep the Pecos Valley a vibrant area which welcomes everyone as their neighbor. The present threat could pit neighbor against neighbor. The PVACD will not allow this to happen and is confident that it will continue to be successful in protecting the water users of the Roswell Artesian Basin, whether they be municipal, industrial or agricultural.

For further information, contact Aron Balok, Superintendent, PVACD.