



Estero Americano Rangeland Water Quality Management and Sediment Reduction Program

Program Description: The program was designed to address 303(d) listed water quality impairments to the Estero Americano by assisting dairy and livestock with development conservation ranch plan, funding infrastructure improvements to enhance pasture management, and implementing priority restoration projects designed to reduce sediment loading to the estuary and its tributaries.

Project Elements:

1. The primary components of a conservation ranch plan include: an inventory of production-related resources, operational goal setting, an inventory and assessment of natural resources, identification of potential water quality problems based on resource conditions and current management practices, and a grazing plan. During the planning process, landowners have worked with a conservation planner to identify best management practices and needed infrastructure improvements such as off-channel water development, cross-fencing, animal walkways, streambank stabilization and riparian pasture development that will result in improved water quality conditions in the watershed.
2. Priority gully restoration/mitigation sites were selected based on the likelihood of sediment delivery to the estuary. A careful assessment of soils, slope, vegetation, and hydrologic connectivity above and below selected sites was used to determine potential sediment delivery. Priority sites have been limited to erosion problems that are management induced, and have the highest mitigation potential. Implementation of restoration sites will begin summer 2009.
3. A ranch road erosion assessment will also be conducted in the fall 2009 to estimate sediment loadings from these sources and to identify needed road improvements in the watershed.

Project Goals: 1) To assist dairy and livestock operators in the Estero Americano Watershed reach full compliance with current and future water quality standards, 2) to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution from entering the estuary and its tributaries, and 3) to enhance forage productivity and the economic viability of agriculture in the watershed.

Project Budget:

\$1,716,845 - Funded by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 (ARRA, Federal Stimulus), the State Water Resources Control Board, the State Revolving Fund, the Natural Resources Conservation Service EQIP Program, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

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