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EFFICIENT IRRIGATION FOR WATER CONSERVATION IN THE RIO GRANDE BASIN

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The Rio Grande Basin Initiative began in 2001 aimed at improving irrigation and water use efficiencies, and meeting present and future water demands throughout the Basin in Texas and New Mexico.

This Congressionally-funded project involves research and Extension professionals with both Texas and New Mexico Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension. Other partners include irrigation district personnel, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Texas Water Development Board, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, local and county governments, and numerous other groups and individuals. Extension agents and specialists in counties along and near the river provide critical educational and technical programming, demonstrations, applied research, and educational and training material development. Research scientists are initiating new studies, and enhancing existing efforts, providing science and engineering technologies to facilitate discoveries guiding water conservation programs.

Areas included in these research and Extension efforts include: irrigation district studies; irrigation systems design, education and training; institutional incentives for efficient water use; on-farm irrigation system management; urban water conservation; environment, ecology and water quality protection; saline and wastewater management and reuse; and basin-wide hydrology, salinity modeling and technology.

This project is a model outcome-based program with careful accountability and benefits assessment built into all efforts. Significant water savings have resulted from implementation of various project efforts. In addition, these efforts are also models of teamwork and joint state efforts.

This federal initiative provides excellent opportunities for enhancement of water supplies for stakeholders, and expansion of our water research and Extension programs in Texas and New Mexico.

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