



Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust

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www.gbrtrust.org

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GBR Trust Developing Priorities for Next Five Years

The mission of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is "to preserve the unique natural heritage of the Guadalupe watershed for future generations, by protecting open landscapes, working farms and ranches, and wildlife habitat through conservation easements, education, and outreach that connects people to the water and the land." To accomplish this mission, the work of the GBR Trust can be thought of as having two major components—completion of land conservation projects using conservation easements and outreach and education.

During a strategic planning process, the GBR Trust Board and staff determined the need to make outreach and education a priority. The GBR Trust serves a large basin with a small staff and volunteer board.

Conservation easement projects emerge from across the watershed and the GBR Trust has easements in nine counties. Outreach efforts are more proactive and determining where best to invest time and energy are decisions worth deliberating.

During the summer, the staff and board worked on bringing focus to its outreach work. Information collected included spatial or location-based data on natural resources,

completed and ongoing natural resource conservation work, conservation challenges, and information on priorities of other land conservation organizations active in the Guadalupe River watershed.

While the work is ongoing, several things about the land conservation environment in the watershed have become apparent. The

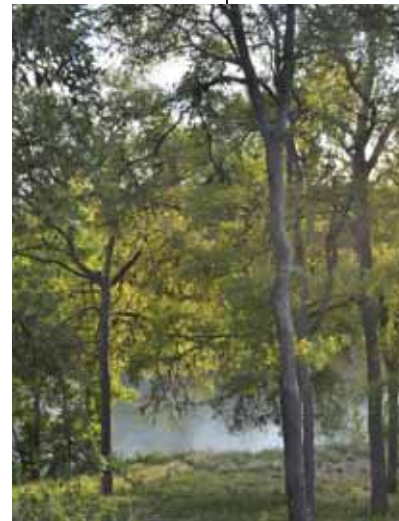


Photo by Janet Thome

situation in respect to partner organization focus is not uniform across the basin. The Upper Basin in the Hill Country is served by a number of land conservation groups and sees a lot of outreach effort. The lower or coastal area sees less attention and the middle or oak prairies portion sees less still. Additionally, the conservation challenges and opportunities are both different and evolving. Subdivision and development pressures are generally more intense in the

upper portion of the basin as the major metro areas of Austin and San Antonio continue to expand.

The bottom line is that while the GBR Trust serves one watershed, there are regional differences in opportunities, challenges and strategies that hold the most promise of being successful. Look for more news on this planning effort and the work that flows from it soon.

Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust

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Preservation Matters

Fall 2011

Design

Janet Thome – Projects and Publications Specialist

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The GBR Trust is a charitable, non-profit 501(c)3 organization that was founded to conserve the land and water of the Guadalupe River watershed for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic and productive value. The mission of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is to preserve the unique natural heritage of the Guadalupe watershed for future generations, by protecting open landscapes, working farms and ranches, and wildlife habitat through conservation easements, education, and outreach that connects people to the water and the land.

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Historic Partnership Provides Conservation of Wetlands and Wildlife in Guadalupe River System

Environmental organizations operating in and around the Guadalupe River Basin recently formed an historic four-way partnership to work together for the conservation of wetlands and wildlife in the Guadalupe River system.

Formed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), this partnership includes the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust), the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), the San Antonio Bay Foundation (SABAY) and Ducks Unlimited (DU), and is evidence of the broad array of supporters who recognize the Guadalupe River as being among the most unique rivers in the country and are committed to protecting the river

and its associated habitats.

The agreement was conceived in 2009 when Todd H. Votteler, Ph.D., representing both the GBRA and the GBR Trust met with Scott Yaich, Ph.D., director of conservation operations for DU at Ducks

"This is an unique and innovative partnership that will draw on the strengths of the each group to facilitate a broader conservation effort than what could be obtained by each group on its own."

Unlimited's national headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. The purpose of the discussion was to begin exploring a formal



Photo by Earl Nottingham, TPWD ©

relationship regarding cooperative conservation projects in the Guadalupe River Basin. Calhoun and Refugio counties have been identified as priority wetlands conservation areas in the North American Waterfowl Conservation Plan, a plan that has been a major focus of DU's conservation efforts. After the initial meeting additional steps were taken to explore the possibility of a more formal working relationship, including contacts between DU management and the GBRA Board, and the addition of Todd Merendino, Ph.D., DU's Texas manager for

conservation programs, to the GBR Trust Board.

The goal of this MOU is to establish a framework between the participants to facilitate cooperative efforts in the conservation of important natural

resources of mutual concern associated with the Guadalupe River system through the establishment of a formal relationship. "This agreement will be a model for cooperation and achievement between

international conservation organizations, and local conservation and government entities around the country. I have already heard from other groups that want to create similar partnerships," said Votteler.

With its origins in the Texas Hill Country and its connection to the major springs of the Edwards Aquifer to the delta and bays on the Texas Coast, the Guadalupe River system supports an astonishing array of unique natural habitats while providing for the needs of people.

"San Antonio Bay is surrounded by priority wetlands. Having an agreement in place with such respected environmental organizations will only help facilitate future conservation projects," said Tommie Streeter-Rhoad, executive director of the San Antonio Bay Foundation.

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Historic Partnership (Cont.)

“Conservation is most effective when supported by diverse partnerships,” said Steve Jester, executive director of the GBR Trust. “While each organization in the partnership has a different focus, each values the water, wetlands and associated habitats of the Guadalupe River system, particularly those found in counties along the Texas coast.” Consequently, even though organizational missions and methods may differ, there is broad overlap in desired outcomes of long-term conservation of functional wetland and riparian habitats that provide such great benefit to both nature and local communities.

conserve their property through a donated conservation easement typically incur a number of costs associated with the transaction. Ducks Unlimited has agreed to consider reimbursing some transaction costs for landowners who donate a conservation easement to the GBR Trust in areas where DU is actively working on habitat restoration and conservation. Ducks Unlimited in turn will seek to leverage the value of the donated conservation easements as match for grants to restore and enhance more wetland habitat, ultimately contributing further to the mission of all signatories of the four-party agreement.



(Pictured L to R) Todd Merendino, Todd Votteler, Tommie Streeter-Rhoad and Steve Jester
Photo by LaMarriol Smith

“The Trust is looking forward to many more cooperative efforts with DU, GBRA and the SA Bay Foundation” Jester added.

The mission of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is to preserve the unique natural heritage of the Guadalupe watershed for future generations, by protecting open landscapes, working farms and ranches, and wildlife habitat through conservation easements, education, and outreach that connects people to the water and land. 🌿

“This is an unique and innovative partnership that will draw on the strengths of each group to facilitate a broader conservation effort than what could be obtained by each group on its own,” said Merendino. “Our conservation activities overlap a common geographic area, and this partnership will help to increase our collective conservation efforts.”

The GBR Trust and DU have already found a way to put this new partnership to work on the ground. A large part of the GBR Trust’s efforts in conserving the resources of the Guadalupe River system involves the use of perpetual conservation easements donated by landowners. Landowners who want to permanently

A new publication “*Ten Years of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust*” is available for download at www.gbrtrust.org. If you would like a printed copy, please contact Steve Jester at sjester@gbrtrust.org.



If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, send a note to sjester@gbrtrust.org. Please indicate if you would prefer to continue receiving the print version along with your electronic copy.

GBR Trust Gains Mathews as New Board Member

Tommy Mathews of Boerne, Texas, joined the Board of Trustees of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust in August 2011. Mathews is president of Westward Environmental, Inc., in Boerne. He is a member of the National Registry of Environmental Professionals, Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists, Associated General Contractors of Texas, and Texas Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement Association.

He is also president of the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District.

Mathews is a past board chair of the Allied Division of the Texas Aggregate and Concrete Association, and past board member and secretary of the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association. Mathews is also a former president of the Hill Country Alliance of Groundwater

Conservation Districts, past citizen representative of the Lower Guadalupe River Water Supply Project Advisory Forum, and former board secretary of the Winston School San Antonio Board.

Mathews earned his bachelor’s degree from Trinity University. Mathews also serves on the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority Board through Feb. 1, 2015. 🌿

Upper Guadalupe River Authority's Water Enhancement Cost Share Program

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) offer financial assistance to landowners working to enhance range lands with the use of brush management in the Upper Guadalupe River watershed (North Fork, South Fork and Johnson Creek watersheds) in Kerr County.

Properly designed brush management targeting Ashe Juniper can enhance aquifer recharge and springflow while improving the productivity of rangelands. By working cooperatively, UGRA, NRCS and the Kerr County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) are helping landowners maximize the acreage they can improve with brush management.

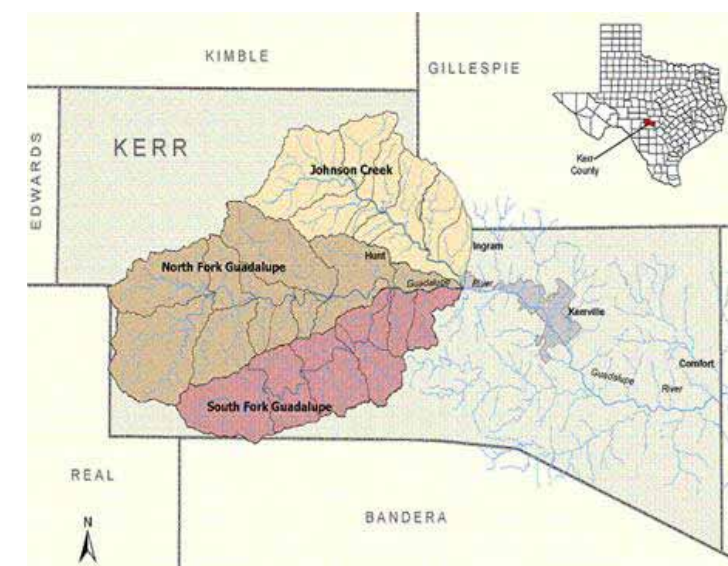
Through the current NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the TSSWCB Kerr County Guadalupe River Water Enhancement Project (WEP), landowners



Photo provided courtesy of UGRA

may be reimbursed for a portion of the costs associated with the removal of Ashe Juniper. Under UGRA’s Water Enhancement Cost Share Pilot Program, landowners performing Ashe Juniper removal may be reimbursed an additional portion of the costs for projects located in the targeted watersheds. To qualify for

UGRA cost share funding, participants must be enrolled in EQIP and/or WEP and the treated property must be located in the North Fork, South Fork or Johnson Creek watershed. The reimbursement percentage for individual projects are based on landowner payments and are payable upon certified task completion. 🌿



Brush management in the Upper Guadalupe River watershed (North Fork, South Fork and Johnson Creek watersheds) located in Kerr County.

Eligibility for UGRA Water Enhancement Cost Share

1. Participate in the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) EQIP and or WEP programs
2. Perform brush management in compliance with an NRCS or Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) contract.
3. Treat property located in the North Fork, South Fork or Johnson Creek watersheds of the Upper Guadalupe River within UGRA’s jurisdictional boundary.
4. Provide UGRA the NRCS-CPA-1245 Form, Practice Approval and Payment Request form or like form from the TSSWCB.