

## Brush Workgroup

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Meeting Summary  
October 16, 2013

### **Attendees:**

Chuck Brown, UCRA	Scott McWilliams, UCRA	Lauren Oertel, TCEQ TMDL
Faith Hambelton, TCEQ NPS	CJ Robinson, Runnels Co SWCD	Mike Arrott, Coke Co SWCD
Tim Timmerman, Landowner	Jana Lloyd, TSSWCB Temple	Ben Wilde, Field Rep TSSWCB San Angelo

The workgroup reviewed the original brush control feasibility study and SWAT modeling predictions (UCRA 2000) for the upper Colorado River sub-basins, specifically the watersheds along segment 1426. The group unanimously decided that pursuing upland brush control would be a recommended strategy for the I-Plan update.

Another water enhancement strategy identified in the original I-Plan is salt cedar control along the river. Jana Lloyd discussed previous TSSWCB 319 projects that have aerially treated salt cedar along segment 1412 (Colorado River between JB Thomas and EV Spence reservoirs) in the early 2000's with a great deal of success. However, salt cedar trees are beginning to return to that area, mostly due to new trees sprouting from seedlings along the reach.

Biological control for maintenance was mentioned and Ben Wilde gave an update on the salt cedar beetles that have been released within the upper Colorado watershed. Wilde stated that the original beetle released to control salt cedar was from the Greek island of Crete. That beetle has proven to have a hard time establishing populations, likely due to the harsher winter environment of Texas. Another beetle, from Tunisia, has been recently introduced in the upper watersheds and at OH Ivie Reservoir. These beetles are currently thriving. The hope is that the Tunisian beetle will survive much better through the winter and establish larger populations next spring within the areas where they have been released. The group unanimously agreed that initial aerial treatment of salt cedar with herbicide and a follow up maintenance with the beetle would be a recommended strategy.

Chuck Brown made a presentation on the newly TSSWCB funded feasibility study to be conducted at OH Ivie Reservoir in FY 14. The reservoir basin will be computer modeled to assess the water savings within the reservoir from brush removal. If significant water conservation can occur from brush removal, then a brush control project could be funded through the TSSWCB Water Enhancement Program. The group agreed that brush control along segment 1426 would be required to keep a seed bank from repopulating the OH Ivie basin.

In closing, the workgroup decided that all brush control strategies from upland to riparian areas would be recommended to the coordination committee for the I-Plan update. With this consensus, the group decided that no other brush work group meetings are needed. UCRA will draft the brush control section of the update, send to TCEQ project manager for review, and then to the committee for review and comments.