

For Immediate Release

Volunteers and Partners Work to Control Invasive Chinaberry Trees Along Llano River

(June 16th, 2017) – On Monday, June 12th, volunteers joined staff from the Hill Country Alliance and Native American Seed at the Texas Tech University (TTU) Llano River Field Station in Junction, Texas. There, they set fort an ambitious goal: control the more than 100 Chinaberry trees that are quickly spreading their footprint along the Llano River at the TTU field station.

Chinaberry trees were first introduced to Texas from Asia in the mid-1800s and continue to be used as an ornamental yard tree today. When this non-native tree invades river bottoms, it can degrade the quality of wildlife habitat and decrease livestock forage. Chinaberry trees have greater resistance to native insects and pathogens, and can change the character of the soil around them, making it even harder for some native plants to thrive.

“It’s amazing what a few committed volunteers and partnering organizations can accomplish. In just a few hours, we were able to complete the Chinaberry control project,” said Daniel Oppenheimer, with the Hill Country Alliance. “With the right partners, supplies, and best management practices, these types of community-based stewardship projects can be replicated effectively in other Hill Country river basins.”

Volunteers employed a “hack-and-squirt” method, using hatchets and herbicide that was applied to each hatchet-cut wound in the Chinaberry tree trunk. These treated chinaberry trees will be monitored by Texas Parks & Wildlife, the Llano River Watershed Alliance, and the TTU field station to inform future management needs.

Chinaberries are sometimes mistaken for the native Western Soapberry. Chinaberry has leaflets with toothed edges and round, yellow berries that are toxic to humans, pets, and goats.

To learn more about upcoming volunteer events, check out HCA’s webpage at <http://www.hillcountryalliance.org/upcomingevents/> or contact Daniel Oppenheimer at Daniel@hillcountryalliance.org.

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

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