

Post-Flood Riparian Recovery Workshops Planned for Wimberley and Blanco Communities



In the wake of the Memorial Day 2015 floods that roared through Central Texas, people in the Hill Country are left grappling with the aftermath. Images of hundred-year-old cypress trees, stripped bare of their bark and ripped up from their roots, inevitably turn our minds to our creeks and rivers and prompts the question- *what can we do to heal our streamsides?*

This first in a series of Recovery Workshops has been planned to help landowners identify the steps they can take to improve the health of their riparian areas (where the river and land intersect). Each workshop will include 1 hour of discussion indoors followed by a 1 hour field trip.

Wednesday, June 10th 9:30 - 11:30 am
Old Blanco Courthouse in the City of Blanco

Thursday, June 11th 5-7 pm
Turkey Hollow Ranch in Burnett Ranches subdivision (rsvp for directions)

Friday, June 12th 8 am breakfast, 9-11 am workshop
Wimberley Community Center

These workshops are being coordinated in partnership of The Nature Conservancy, the Hill Country Alliance, the Texas Forest Service, Hays County Master Naturalists, the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Speakers include representatives from Texas Forest Service, and Steve Nelle, retired Natural Resource Conservation Service State Wildlife Biologist. Speakers will cover the do's and don'ts of riparian recovery.

Email Rachael Ranft rranft@tnc.org or call Vanessa Martin (512) 623-7249 for more information.

Nine Recommendations for Riparian Recovery

1. The broken and uprooted cypress can be good for the future health and stability of the river.
2. Leave large and small woody debris in place, if possible. Do not burn, remove, or saw it up in small pieces. The wood helps to dissipate energy, and stabilize banks, channel and floodplain.
3. These debris piles are where new plants will establish easily. This is nature's way to hasten recovery.
4. Minimize or eliminate tractors and large equipment unless absolutely necessary. Take protective measures if using heavy machinery.
5. Repairing banks, removing gravel, or altering the channel can do more harm than good to an already fragile area.
6. Be patient – natural recovery processes are very effective when allowed to work.
7. Be very aggressive in killing axis deer – they can be very detrimental to recovery.
8. Reimagine what is a beautiful riparian area – they are healthiest when thick with wood and vegetation, and most sensitive when clean and manicured.
9. Take photos now and every 6 – 12 months – repeat photos at fixed points to show the recovery process. This will be very meaningful in the future.

- Steve Nelle, retired Natural Resource Conservation Service biologist



“What is most important for damaged creek and river channels and the riparian area is to re-establish strong stabilizing vegetation.”

- Steve Nelle, retired NRCS biologist

Beware contractors offering debris removal services with heavy equipment!

Be sure that any debris removal is done with a careful eye to protecting and restoring stability in riparian areas.

Find a certified arborist here:
<http://www.isatexas.com/>

Helpful Resources

[Blanco River Valley Restoration Project Facebook Page](#): latest news and events about efforts along the Blanco

[Remarkable Riparian](#): educational materials including videos about riparian restoration.

[Letting the River Heal](#): Hill Country Alliance newsletter

[Don't Give Up On Your Trees](#): Hays County Master Naturalists document on critical first steps

[Blanco River Restoration Tips](#): Mark Lundy video on Blanco restoration