

For Immediate Release

Healthy Creeks Initiative BBQ and Information Session planned for May 2nd

(April 26, 2019) – On Thursday, May 2nd, from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm at the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office, community members can learn about non-native, invasive plants that are encroaching on local creek banks as well as some resources available to landowners for controlling these plants effectively to improve creek and river health.

Since 2016, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD), Hill Country Alliance (HCA), City of Fredericksburg, and other organizations have partnered with volunteering landowners through the Healthy Creeks Initiative to enhance the creek-side (or riparian) habitat along Barons Creek, Town Creek, and other portions of the Pedernales River Basin.

Controlling *Arundo donax*, commonly called giant reed or carrizo cane, has been a major focus of the Healthy Creek Initiative. *Arundo*, which has a cane-like stem that looks similar to bamboo, is a highly invasive, non-native grass that can grow more than 25 feet tall.

Arundo has the potential to significantly damage the health of Hill Country streams and rivers by affecting water quality and quantity, worsening flooding, displacing native plants, destabilizing banks, contributing to erosion, degrading fish and wildlife habitat, and increasing fire risk.

Daniel Oppenheimer, Land Program Manager at Hill Country Alliance, notes, “Landowners should not cut, mow, or bulldoze *Arundo*. These mechanical methods are likely to spread *Arundo* infestations to downstream neighbors through small fragments of the cane or root material.”

Over the past three years, more than 100 landowners have volunteered to participate in the Healthy Creeks Initiative to control *Arundo* in the Pedernales River Basin using targeted, aquatic-approved herbicide application. This control method has the least impact on the stream ecosystem and is currently being provided at no cost to the landowners.

On May 2nd, community members can learn from some of these participating landowners about their experience controlling *Arundo* and how to get involved in restoring habitat along Hill Country creeks and rivers. The Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office is located at 95 Frederick Road in Fredericksburg.

RSVPs are requested to either healthycreeks@tpwd.texas.gov or 512-389-8750. To learn more about the Healthy Creeks Initiative, visit Texas Parks and Wildlife’s website at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/healthycreeks>.

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.

###

Contact: Daniel Oppenheimer
Hill Country Alliance
daniel@hillcountryalliance.org
210-287-0478

Photographs provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



