WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW

Caring for our Watershed

Thanks to Brie Lehmberg of Mason for posting to Facebook her recent 'haul' at James River Crossing.

My haul from the west side point of James ... come one people !! Who is the heck brought wood with nails and blind hangers to burn and leave !!! Kids run around bare foot !! Not to mention the other bull I picked up , socks , cans , food trash etc !!! Keep it clean people.

Sumac Lemonade?

Hopefully we are all taking this opportunity to learn more about your land and your watershed. Sometime these lessons are happenstance.

Last week, this editor came across a recipe that called for sumac and gazed out the window at several specimens. Could it be?

Sure enough, check out this ***website.***

FORAGING TEXAS
KNOW WHAT YOUR ANCESTORS KNEW

Sumac berries can be used for seasonings, tea and sumac-ade. Even Bastard Cabbage can be consumed at the right time of year. Yep, *Ashe juniper* too.

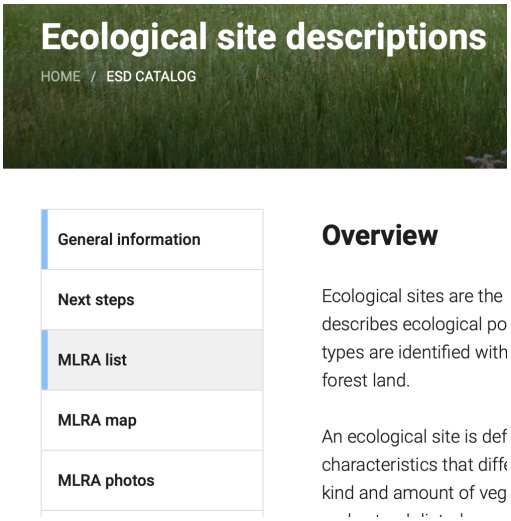
Obviously, please use extreme caution and note the website author's disclaimer at the bottom of each page.

Great Info from NRCS

We recently learned of a great source of information from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). It is Ecological Site Descriptions.

According to NRCS, "Ecological Site Descriptions provide a consistent framework for classifying and describing rangeland and forestland soils and vegetation; thereby delineating land units that share similar capabilities to respond to management activities or disturbance...and provide land managers the information needed for evaluating the land as to suitability for various land-uses, capability to respond to different management activities or disturbance processes, and ability to sustain productivity over the long term."

To view the Ecological Sites, go to the Ecosystems Dynamics Interpretive Tool or EDIT. Scroll down and select catalog. We find that easiest way to proceed is select MLRA List (as shown in lower left), then filter by State. The Llano watershed is located in both the Edwards Plateau and Texas Central Basin Major Land Resource Area list (Edwards Plateau is divided into 4 sections-Llano is Central and Eastern). Select the MLRA of choice then select the Ecological Site List.



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How do you know your Ecological Site?

Go to the Web Soil Survey. Through the Survey, you can see the type of soil you have as well as the Ecological Site.

As we found using the Survey is not immediately intuitive, we will offer these suggestions. Begin by clicking the Start WSS Button. Under Quick Navigation, enter your address or lat/long. An image of the area will appear. Above the image you see 

. Use these drawing tools to select your Area of Interest.

Report — Map Unit Description

San Saba County, Texas

RgD—Roughcreek very stony clay loam, gently rolling

Map Unit Setting

National map unit symbol: dh22
Elevation: 1,000 to 2,400 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 24 to 30 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 64 to 66 degrees F
Frost-free period: 215 to 235 days
Farmland classification: Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

Roughcreek and similar soils: 100 percent

Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects mapunit.

Description of Roughcreek

Setting

Landform: Ridges
Landform position (two-dimensional): Shoulder, summit
Landform position (three-dimensional): Interfluve
Down-slope shape: Convex
Across-slope shape: Convex
Parent material: Residuum weathered from limestone

Typical profile

H1 - 0 to 7 inches: very stony clay loam
H2 - 7 to 18 inches: very stony clay
H3 - 18 to 24 inches: bedrock

Properties and qualities

Slope: 1 to 10 percent
Percent of area covered with surface fragments: 15.0 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: 10 to 20 inches to lithic bedrock
Natural drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately low to moderately high (0.06 to 0.20 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum in profile: 5 percent
Available water storage in profile: Very low (about 2.5 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): None specified
Land capability classification (nonirrigated): 6s
Hydrologic Soil Group: D
Ecological site: Redland 23-31 PZ (R081BY340TX)
Hydric soil rating: No

Then select the Soil Map tab just under the webpage header. The soil units will appear on the image as well as a table of selected soils. Select the soil unit of interest and a description of the that unit will appear (see left as an example).

The second to the last line of the pop-up box contains the Ecological Site information. In this example, the Ecological Site is Redland 23-31 PZ .

BTW...23-31 PZ signifies the unit is located in the 23-31 inch precipitation zone.

Enjoy and if you have problems using this tool, drop us a line.

Other Impediments to Riparian Recovery

In the previous newsletter, we continued the discussion regarding the important nature of riparian zones and identified some of the aquatic invasive species that are a problem in the watershed, Elephant Ears and Giant Cane. This week we will look at another aquatic invasive species and caution against getting it confused with a very beneficial species.

Chinaberry (*Melia aedarach)*


Photo : Wikipedia

Chinaberry were first introduced to Texas from Asia in the mid-1800s. Because they are a fast-growing tree, early settlers often planted then for shade and a grove of these trees are often clues to the location of old homesteads. Chinaberry trees have the ability to change the chemical composition of the soil, creating monocultures that displace native vegetation. Their berries are easily dispersed by birds, animals, and unfortunately, waterways.

The Alliance has partnered with Hill Country Alliance, Texas Tech Llano River Field Station, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Native American Seed and Texas Master Naturalist to combat these invasive species. A technique coined the 'hack and squirt' method uses a hatchet and spray bottle of herbicide to cut rings into the bark of the tree and apply the herbicide directly to the cut. This technique appears to work better on the smaller trees. Cutting and applying the herbicide directly to the stump is more effective for the larger trees. Without the application of an appropriate herbicide, the tree will vigorously re-sprout and become more difficult to manage.

Soapberry (*Sapindus saponaria var. drummondii)*

Please do not confuse the native and beneficial Soapberry tree for a Chinaberry. Note the smoother leaf edges, lack of flowers and translucent berries on the Soapberry.

To learn more about controlling Chinaberry, contact Daniel Oppenheimer at Hill Country Alliance