**Appendix K: RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS ON WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN**

The Upper Llano River Watershed Protection Plan was made available for public comment for a 30-day period between June 8 and July 8. Comments were received from one landowner and one organization. The responses to these comments are presented below.

Landowner Comment:

1. **My wife and I own land on the North Llano River down from the KC 275 bridge crossing.  Every time the River has a good rise we have to pick up all kinds of trash.  Obviously people are dumping in the watershed.  I believe dumping in the city limits is addressed in the plan but not rural areas.  These illegal dumps should be located, cleaned up, and areas monitored.  I am sure not only trash but toxic materials are dumped together.  We have picked up oil cans and filters and old paint cans left from high water.  With water quality a primary concern I feel this situation should be addressed.**

Response: Section 6.8.6 Roadway Signage discusses the plan to have signage at river crossings as part of TCEQ’s “Don’t Mess with Texas Water” program or LCRA’s illegal dumping program. In addition, County Road 275 bridge will be one of the water quality sampling locations monitored during the 10-year implementation of the plan.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Comments:

**1) Page 23.  “Headwaters of the Llano” hyperlink has not been working**

Response: Hyperlink and URL have been updated. Thank you.

**2. Page 39.  Do you also want to include “Black = low” in the table title or is it assumed?**

Response: A value that should have been Blue was inadvertently black. Thank you for catching this oversight.

**3. Page 39. 45.5 (41-49(  Fix the parenthesis in blue**

Response: Corrected.

**4.  Page 43 “These are elephant ear, *Arundo donax* (giant reed or Carrizo cane), and chinaberry”.  Consider using scientific or common names throughout the document for consistency.**

Response: *Arundo* tends to be both the scientific and common name used by residents in the watershed. Clarifications were made in several places (Section 3.6.3.3/Section 3.7/4.1.5/5.6.3/.

**5.   Page 43 “An additional 0.35 miles of river below the confluence of the two rivers was documented with elephant ears.”  Might want to update to… An additional 6 miles of river below the confluence of the two rivers has been documented with elephant ears.**

Response: Agreed.

**6.  Only three invasive species are mentioned in the document.  Maybe adding a small note that there are other riparian/aquatic invasive species, but these three common ones are the focus.  I would hate for people to get the impression these are the only ones out there/the only ones for concern.**

Response: The following footnote was added to Section 4.1.5: Other invasive species such as Malta Star Thistle (*Centaurea melitensis*), Mexican Feather Grass (*Nasella or Stipa tenuissima*), and Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactlyon*) are found in riparian areas of the watershed but are not having as serious impact on the riparian corridor at this time.

**7. Pg 58 same comment here – might want to use scientific or common names for all of them for consistency.  Some people might not know that Giant reed in paragraph 2 (under 4.1.5) is the same as *Arundo* mentioned in the first paragraph.**

Response: See response #4.

**8.  Page 59.  “but only if there are minimal impacts on hunting”.  I remember having these discussions with the committee and I still disagree.  Axis and exotics are causing extensive damage to riparian habitats and an aggressive control program (with concurrent educational program) should be implemented.**

Response: The Coordination Committee recognizes that controlling axis deer is potentially contentious for residents who rely on axis-deer hunting revenues. The language regarding ‘minimal impacts on hunting’ was adopted by consensus of the Committee.

**9.  Page 61. “The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), TSSWCB and TPWD offer agricultural producers technical guidance as well as financial incentives for implementation of BMPs.”   Want to make sure TPWD’s role here is more clear – TPWD provides wildlife and habitat technical guidance which includes ranches that are involved in agriculture and those that focus and habitats/wildlife.**

Response: The paragraph is reworded for clarification: *“The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and TSSWCB offer agricultural producers technical guidance as well as financial incentives for implementation of BMPs. TPWD provides wildlife and habitat technical guidance to ranches involved in agricultural production or management of wildlife habitat.”*

**10.  Page 61. “TPWD Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and others will be sought to support implementation of agricultural management measures”.  Same concern here – don’t want it to seem like we only will work with Ag lands or only support ag practices (some of the practices listed in the WPP aren’t “ag” practices but are instead good conservation practices).  Maybe wording it like “will be sought to support implementation of conservation management measures”.**

Response: Sentence reworded, “*…TPWD Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and others will be sought to support implementation of agricultural and conservation management measures in the watershed.”*

**11. Page 64. Under the section that discusses mechanical removal of Ashe juniper, didn’t the sub-group recommend wording like “Landowners should seek the technical guidance from NRCS, TFS, TPWD, USFWS, etc. on the most appropriate methods for brush management and removal”.   My concern is that there is a recommendation for clearing brush but many landowners will turn to bulldozing the landscape to accomplish this goal.  TPWD recommends the use of less soil disturbing methods like skid steers, hand clearing, etc.  I am also concerned that there no clear recommendations on what size of juniper to recommend.  TPWD does not recommend the removal of mature Ashe juniper because this would remove an important, native part of the plant community and could impact Golden Cheeked Warbler habitat depending on location.**

Response: The last sentence of Section 5.5 was recommended by the Coordination Committee as a catch-all to address this concern: *All implementation measures should consider any potential impacts on wildlife*. This sentence will be amended to address soil erosion: *“All implementation measures should consider minimizing soil erosion and any potential impacts on wildlife.”*

**12.  Page 68. Exclosures can also be created with T-posts and net wire/livestock panel for individual trees or small groups of trees.**

Response: Will add this as an additional sentence after 1st sentence on page 68.

**13.  Page 68.  Add the removal of all elephant ear as well.**

Response: Elephant ear are already mentioned in the text: “These same chemicals are also used to control elephant ear.”

**14.  Is page 95 supposed to be blank?**

Response: Yes, all chapters begin on the right-hand page following a picture on the left-hand page.

**15. Page 98 TPWD does support brush control but it isn’t for range improvement or WSE – it’s for habitat conservation and restoration**.

Response: Paragraph reworded as follows: *“Brush control in conjunction with prescribed burns are the key management measures to improve upland rangeland and enhance water supplies. Programs for both management practices are available through NRCS and TSSWCB. In addition, local SWCDs and prescribed burn associations play a critical role in implementing these practices at the local level. Programs to improve and restore wildlife habitat through brush control and prescribed burning are also available through TPWD. LRWA, LRFS and TWA can help expand landowner participation through outreach efforts to members.”*

**16.  Appendix C –**

**a. Invasive Species: Take off Levi Sparks and change to Melissa Parker and Megan Bean – TPWD**

**Water Quality – same as above**

**Riparian Management – Melissa Parker and Megan Bean**

Response: Corrected.