# Upper Llano Watershed Protection Plan October 9, 2012 Meeting Summary

**Welcome**

Honorable Souli Shanklin, Edwards County Judge

* Judge Shanklin welcomed all interested stakeholders to the meeting.

--Ranchers and landowners are encouraged to manage their land sustainably. Ranchers are the best stewards of the watershed because they intimately know their property.

**Updates on Field Work and Ongoing Efforts**

Emily Seldomridge, TTU Llano River Field Station

* The Upper Llano River is a healthy watershed with historically few water quality impairments. The Upper Llano Watershed Protection Plan is developed under the Healthy Watersheds Initiative. The Healthy Watersheds Initiative encourages states, local governments, local organizations and others to take a strategic, systems approach to conserve healthy watersheds with a goal to protect high quality waters and prevent future water quality impairments.
* The TTU Llano River Field Station research team conducted the first field sampling in September 2012. Sampling included water quality, flow, macro-invertebrates, fish, and habitat. Samples were taken at 14 main stem sites Llano and 6 spring sites along the North and South.
* Data is currently being processed, and updates will be presented at the next stakeholder meeting.

**Values of Ecosystem Services**

Tom Arsuffi, TTU Llano River Field Station

* An ecosystem is defined as a dynamic complex of plant, animal, and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. The services provided by ecosystems to humans are valued from many perspectives (e.g. aesthetic, cultural, scientific, etc.), and those can be discussed in future meetings. Here, we looked at the value of free ecosystem services through the economic perspective.
* Our society often mistreats the very systems that sustain it; ecosystem values are largely taken for granted and undervalued. When valued economically, ecosystems are worth conservatively, $33 trillion; more than twice the global gross national product.
* Maintenance of a healthy ecosystem provides numerous benefits including reduced costs of water treatment, reduced impacts of floods, recreation, improved land values and many more. It is much more costly to restore an ecosystem than to preserve one, so by acting proactively to preserve the health of the Upper Llano River Watershed, we that live here receive benefits and we leave a good thing for future generations.

**Organizational Structure and Stakeholder Representation**

Kevin Wagner, Texas Water Resources Institute

Tom Arsuffi, TTU Llano River Field Station

* The planning process will include involvement of a diversity of interests, collaborative decision-making based on sound science and accurate information, strong communication and outreach, and short-term doable action items and long-term objectives/goals.
* The goal of this meeting is to determine the organizational framework of the stakeholders.
* Organizational frameworks may take the structure of a coordination committee (overall stakeholder group is utilized to come up with recommendations that everyone can agree on), work groups (stakeholders contribute to a topic grouped together to develop solutions), or any variation of the above. The framework is adaptive and can be amended as the planning process progresses.
* Upper Llano River stakeholders decided to organize into a coordination committee with representatives from the following:
  + City of Junction
  + County Extension Agents
  + County Judge/Commissioner/Water Districts
    - Edwards
    - Kimble
    - Real
    - Sutton
  + Soil Water Conservation Districts
    - Edwards Plateau
    - Upper Nueces-Frio
    - Upper Llanos
  + Outfitters – Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Paddling Trail Rep
  + Real estate
  + South Llano Watershed Alliance
  + South Llano State Park
  + Upper Llano Prescribed Burn Association
  + Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
  + Several Types of Landowners
* The next meeting we will discuss the possibility of ground rules and/or bylaws for the coordination committee and formation of work groups.