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**For Immediate Release**

## **Implementing Brush Control to Help Save Our Water Supply**

Between increasing water demands and the drought that continues to plague our land, conserving water and increasing recharge of our groundwater should continue to be a goal for Texans.

One way to accomplish this goal is by implementing brush control. Noxious brush, detrimental to water conservation, has invaded millions of acres of rangeland and riparian area in Texas, reducing or eliminating stream flow and aquifer recharge through interception of rainfall and increased evapotranspiration. It is estimated that these invasive brush consume as much as 10 million acre-feet of water in Texas each year. Removal of brush has the potential to enhance water yield, conserve water lost to evapotranspiration, recharge groundwater and aquifers, enhance spring and stream flows, improve soil health, restore native wildlife habitat by improving rangeland, improve livestock grazing distribution, protect water quality and reduce soil erosion, aid in wildfire suppression by reducing hazardous fuels, and manage invasive species.

The predominant threat in our area is mesquite. It is estimated that a single adult tree can consume up to as much as 20 gallons of water per day. Reading this statistic can be alarming when we begin to think of how quickly the total number of water can be consumed by this invasive brush. Mesquite, along with other water sucking brush such as salt cedars, have an extended tap root system which allows the species to extract water from greater depths than do grasses and forbs, and they can also grow over shallow aquifers near streams and can be expected to use large amounts of groundwater, likely reducing the amount in both the interconnected stream and aquifer. Brush control can reduce the total amount of water used by vegetation and can increase runoff and/or subsurface flows to streams or aquifers. However, in order for brush control to have substantial long-term impacts on water yield, most or all of the woody vegetation in the treated area should be killed, and regrowth of brush and herbaceous vegetation should be controlled so that it is less dense and more shallow rooted than the pretreatment vegetation.

As this region still faces severe drought conditions, it has never been more critical to manage water resources in every type of consumption. Keeping high water consuming brush species managed and under control should continue to be a key focus

for landowners and of the state's Water Supply Enhancement Program, whose primary purpose is to increase available surface and ground water through the targeted control of brush species that are detrimental to water conservation.

For more information regarding brush control, the Permian Basin Underground Water Conservation District invites you to visit their website at [www.pbuwcd.com](http://www.pbuwcd.com) or call them at 432-756-2136.