



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

RIO GRANDE CARRIZO CANE ERADICATION PROGRAM

Program Overview

Senate Bill 1734 (Added by Acts 2015, 84th Legislature) tasked the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) with administering a voluntary program to eradicate carrizo cane along the Rio Grande. Large dense stands of non-native Carrizo cane (*Arundo donax*) now occupy the banks and floodplains of the Rio Grande, thwarting law enforcement efforts along the international border, impeding and concealing the detection of criminal activity, restricting law enforcement officers' access to riverbanks, and impairing the ecological function and biodiversity of the Rio Grande River.

Carrizo Cane

Carrizo cane is an exceptionally fast-growing plant, able to grow about 4 inches per day and reach a mature height of over 25 feet in about 12 months. It is considered one of the greatest threats to the health of riparian ecosystems in the southwestern United States, with great negative impact to biodiversity and ecological processes. Stands of invasive riparian weeds present considerable obstacles for the protection of the international border by law enforcement and agricultural inspectors, by both significantly reducing visibility within enforcement areas and by providing favorable habitat for agriculturally-damaging cattle ticks. It does not provide any food sources or nesting habitats for native wildlife. Carrizo cane is linked to sediment accumulation, channel constriction, and increased flooding frequency threatening the riparian ecosystem of the Rio Grande. Carrizo cane is a noxious brush species that consumes precious water resources to a degree that is detrimental to water conservation. As a result of this weed's high evapotranspiration capacity, infestations threaten water supplies for agriculture and municipal drinking water uses in South Texas.



PROGRAM PROGRESS

AS OF AUGUST 31, 2022

29,441
ACRES
TREATED

250
APPROXIMATE
RIVER MILES





Eligible Geographic Area and Funding

All program activities must be toward the removal of Carrizo cane on lands along the Rio Grande River on the border between the State of Texas and the United Mexican States, including tributaries and canals associated with border security priority areas. Treatment costs financed through this program shall be reimbursed at a 100-percent basis.

Prioritization of Treatment Areas

TSSWCB coordinates closely with Texas Department of Public Safety, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, and local law enforcement entities regarding prioritization of activities. TSSWCB approves all allocations of funding to specific geographic areas based on political subdivision boundaries, watershed boundaries, or boundaries as defined by TSSWCB based on coordination activities with the above referenced law enforcement entities.

Conservation Planning and Maintenance Treatment

All lands that are treated through this program must agree to a conservation plan for mitigating after-effects of treatment to address soil and water conservation issues. Each of these conservation plans are considered confidential in accordance with Texas Agriculture Code, Section 201.006. All participants in this program are eligible for follow-up treatment at the discretion of the TSSWCB, the local soil and water conservation district, and in coordination with law enforcement entities on an as needed basis.



TO PARTICIPATE:

Contact the Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Eradication Office directly at **325.481.0335** for more information and availability of services.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Reduce cane canopy, density, and biomass

Improve border access for law enforcement officers

Improve visibility to allow better detection of illegal activities

Restore ecological function, degraded riparian habitats, and biodiversity of the Rio Grande

Improve river function, decrease in-channel sedimentation, and reduce potential for flooding

Enhance water savings by conserving water lost to evapotranspiration by cane, even accounting for water use by regrowth of native riparian plants