

## **River Boundary Divides Private and Public Ownership**

Submitted by the South Llano Watershed Alliance

Where is the boundary line that divides public ownership from private ownership along a river in Texas? Did you know that the line is called the "gradient boundary?" Its concept was developed in a U.S. Supreme Court case involving the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas along the south bank of the Red River. Surveying the gradient boundary is a complex task performable only by specially trained persons. However, with a little "on the ground training" of how to recognize this boundary line, much conflict might be avoided between landowners and the public along rivers.

To become better informed on how to recognize the approximate location of this often controversial boundary, mark your calendar for Saturday, March 3rd. Beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the TTU Center at Junction dining hall, the South Llano Watershed Alliance will host its first membership meeting and program for 2012. A brief SLWA update for members will be followed by a nontechnical program on the "gradient boundary" for the public. In addition to landowners along rivers and the general public, law enforcement officers are encouraged to attend. The morning will begin with a coffee social and be finished by noon.

The speaker will be Ben Thomson of Junction. Ben is a Registered Public Land Surveyor, a Licensed State Land Surveyor, and a Licensed Professional Engineer. He is an emeritus member of the Texas Board of Professional Land Surveying and a retired Senior Surveyor of the Texas General Land Office. In addition to his credentials he has more than once served as an expert witness in court cases involving the gradient boundary.

Following a brief introduction and overview of the gradient boundary, Ben will take the group outdoors and use part the South Llano River bank along the TTU campus to help illustrate examples of the approximate location of the boundary. Appropriate clothing and shoes for the day's weather is recommended.

During the membership meeting part of the program, a brief update will be SLWA activities since the last membership meeting in June, 2011. Topics covered include the Oasis Fire Recovery Workshop, the TPWD Guadalupe Bass Initiative, the development and opening of the South Llano Paddling Trail, and most recently, the awarding of the EPA Healthy Watersheds/TSSWCB grant.

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