

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 , 2 0 1 6

Watershed Week in Review

Llano River Watershed Alliance

Parks step up efforts to control Axis deer

South Llano River State Park, along with many areas along the Llano River, has a problem with an overabundance of axis deer. These non-natives not only compete with native wildlife for food, their habit of making trails from the uplands to the riparian area cause erosion along streambanks.

South Llano River State Park is contracting with private companies for contracted harvests of axis deer. The park will be closed Sunday night until Tuesday noon as a result.



Photo by Donn Edwards



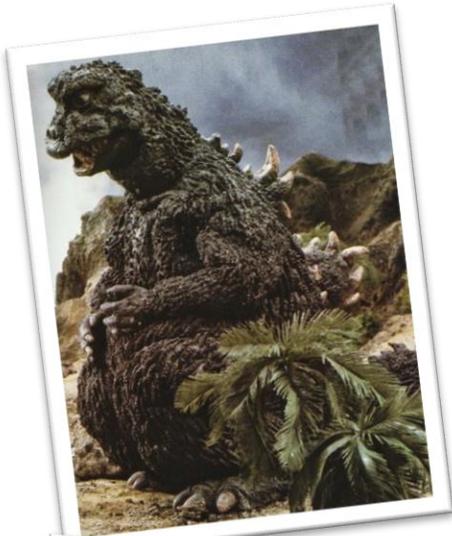
Latest Water Quality readings on the Llano

Thanks to members of the Llano River Watershed Alliance and the Hill Country Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist, we now have over one year of monthly water quality data for the Llano River below the James River Crossing.

Dissolved Oxygen is the metric of most concern at this location. This month's reading was 7.8 mg/L, with a water temperature of 14 degrees Celsius. This is good.

During the summer months, when the water is warmer and cannot hold as much oxygen, readings at this location dropped to 4.4 mg/L as water temperatures rose to 29 degrees Celsius.

Dissolved Oxygen readings below 5 mg/L can be stressful for aquatic life. Readings below 2 mg/L can be lethal.



And now the weather...

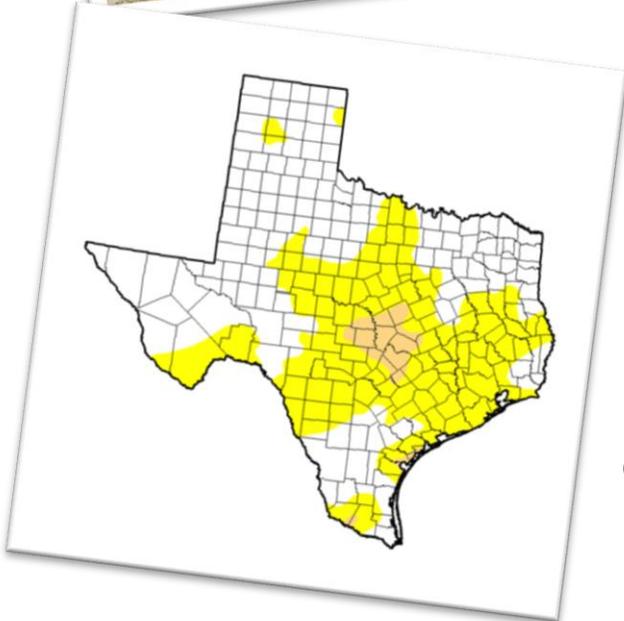
No one can complain much about the weather this winter, except...

What happened to Godzilla El Niño?

The normal ones tend to bring higher-than-typical rainfall. The really strong ones actually don't. It's not clear exactly why.

Paul Yura-National Weather Service

[Read more](#)



Drought returns to watershed

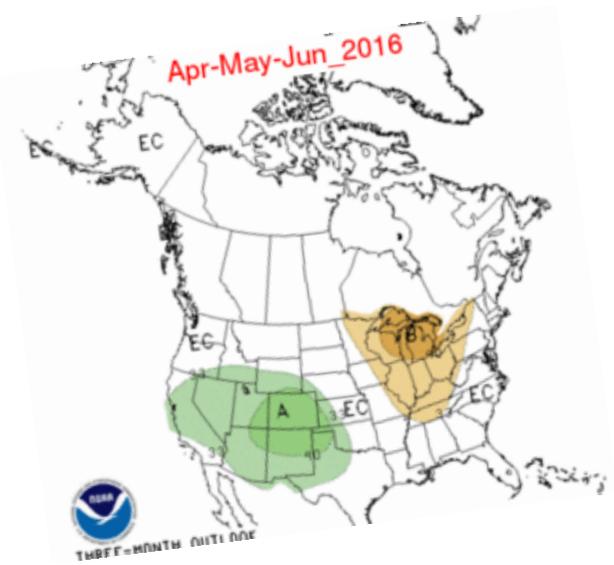
Earlier this month, portions of Central Texas, including parts of the Llano Watershed, returned to Moderate Drought Conditions.

[Read more](#)

...and the long range forecast

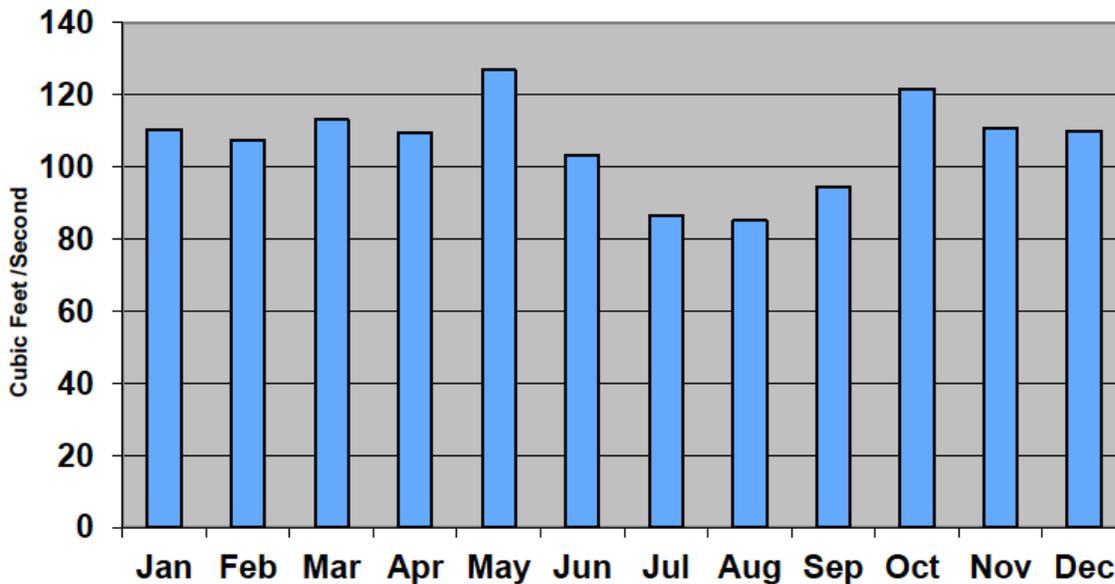
The [long-range forecast](#) from the Climate Prediction Center calls for Average Conditions across Central Texas thru this spring and summer. It's next fall and winter's predictions that are a bit unsettling.

That being said, these predictions have been wrong before...



When are our wettest months?

Figure 2. Median Monthly Discharge for Llano River at Junction, Texas (1915 – 1993 & 1997 – 2011) ¹⁰



This figure comes from a Llano River Watershed Alliance publication, *Headwaters of the Llano River: A characterization and comparison of the rivers, springs, and watersheds of the North Llano and South Llano Rivers.*

Based on the historical monthly flow of the Llano River near Junction, May is our wettest month, followed by

September.

The fact that September is wetter than April may come as a surprise, but tropical systems from the Gulf or the Pacific can bring large volumes of precipitation to the Edwards Plateau in early fall.



Court defers on hearing water case

In what is being called a ‘win’ for ranchers and farmers in Texas, the Texas Supreme Court yesterday denied the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality’s petition to review an Appeals Court decision last year that said Texas cannot give special treatment to cities or power generators when it comes to water rights.

[Read more](#)

Soil Board releases annual report on Water Supply Enhancement Program

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board has released its [2015 Annual Report](#) on the Water Supply Enhancement Program. Formerly called the Brush Control Program, the purpose of the program is to increase available water supplies through targeted control of brush.

The report mentions the brush control feasibility study currently underway in the North and South Llano as part of the Upper Llano Watershed Protection Program. The Llano River Field Station at Texas Tech Junction is conducting this study in collaboration with the Texas A&M Water Resources Institute. Results of this study should be available in the near future.



Make plans to attend this year's [Llano Earth Art Fest](#) just below the bridge in Llano.

The Alliance will be hosting a booth. Look for our banner and stop by and say hello.

Llano Earth Art Festival March 11-13th Llano

