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Watershed Week in Review

Llano River Watershed Alliance
and
Llano River Field Station

Special Visitors



Heather Williams and Jacob Hamutenya share a laugh during an evening tour of the Llano River Field Station. Heather is a TTU graduate student working on Guadalupe Bass research; Jacob is the Regional Manager for Agro-Marketing and Trade Agency in Namibia where he promotes market access for local fresh produce by providing cold storage and marketing facilities.

Participants in the [Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders](#) visited the Llano River Field Station last week. These 25 exceptional students are visiting Texas Tech campuses as part of a Public Management Academic and Leadership Institute. While in Junction, they learned about Field Station activities and the Upper Llano River Watershed Protection Plan.

Trailing Axis



Axis Deer natural predators include Bengal Tigers, Asiatic lions, leopards, pythons and mugger crocodiles.

Thankfully, we don't have these in the Llano Watershed, but that leaves much of the predatory responsibility up to us.

Axis deer, a native of the Indian subcontinent, are becoming a big problem. Besides outcompeting native white-tailed deer and overgrazing riparian vegetation, their trailing behavior (as shown in the above photo from Robert Stubblefield) damage stream banks, increasing erosion.

More exceptional people visit Junction

Llano River Field Station was a busy place for exceptional young people last week. In addition to the Young African Leaders, students from the [Talkington School for Young Women Leaders](#) in Lubbock returned for their annual visit to the Outdoor School.



Talkington students determine the water quality of the South Llano River by identifying macroinvertebrates they collect from the River (right).



Outdoor School Educator Sarah Hilburn helps students learn about Buoyancy and Density by seeing how many marbles their boat will hold



Who Dunit? Talkington students sleuth what preyed on a simulated next in Quail C.S.I

Attack begins on Chinaberry Trees in Mason



This coming **Monday, July 24th**, invasive chinaberry trees will begin to be marked for future herbicide treatment in **Mason City Park**. Tony Plutino, with Texas Master Naturalist, along with Daniel Oppenheimer with Hill Country Alliance, are asking volunteers to meet at the picnic tables at the camping area at 8am.

For more details contact Tony (512.496.2020) or Daniel (210.287.0478)

Native Bunch Grasses and the Health of the Hill Country

Fredericksburg Chapter

Native Plant Society of Texas



Tuesday, July 25th, the Fredericksburg Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will host noted naturalist Dr. Jim Stanley to discuss *The Critical Importance of Native Bunch Grasses to the Health of Hill County Habitats*.

Volunteers facilitate Quail Research at Mason Mountain

*By Tony Plutino
Hill Country Chapter
Texas Master Naturalist*

Fifteen volunteers from the Hill Country Chapter and Highland Lakes Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists (TMNs) along with volunteers from the San Saba Birding and Nature Club recently spent 8 mornings at the Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) assisting TPWD staff with vegetation data collection and other WMA projects.



Tony Cieszkiewicz, a Hill Country Texas Master Naturalist from Fredericksburg measures prickly pear height along a vegetation transect (photo Tony Plutino)

Right: Hal Zesch, a recent TMN graduate from Mason runs a transect

The vegetation data collection was in support of the WMA's Small Scale Quail Management Project and involved gathering plant structure data along transect lines within 72 study plots. Finishing the vegetation data collection early allowed volunteers time to also assist with a search for Horned Lizards and also to prepare a xeriscape garden area for future planting. This is the third year for TMNs and other volunteers to assist with the data collection project.



TMN volunteers have made it possible for us to complete our surveys in less than half the time it took us without them. The extended time involved threatened to bias our data collection, so their help has been vital to the project. Having fun people to interact with is just a bonus!

***Dr. Jim Gallagher
TPWD Biologist***

The Small Scale Quail Management Data Collection Surveys occur annually during the second and third weeks of July. For more information or to volunteer, contact Tony Plutino, a Texas Master Naturalist from Mason who coordinates the volunteers. Tony can be reached at 512-496-2020 or tonyplutino@gmail.com.