

J U L Y 7 , 2 0 1 7

Watershed Week in Review

Llano River Watershed Alliance
and
Llano River Field Station

Riparian Restoration Opportunity

Join the Llano River Watershed Alliance, Llano River Field Station, Hill Country Alliance, and Texas Parks and Wildlife this Sunday as we place exclosures around native trees at South Llano River State Park.

Riparian areas along the Llano are often void of young trees due to overbrowsing from deer

and axis. As the older trees die, having established younger trees becomes vital to preserving the riparian area, helping to prevent bank erosion, mitigating the force of floodwaters, and providing shade for both aquatic and terrestrial species.

Join us Sunday at 9am at the State Park Office (park entrance is waived for volunteers). Bring work gloves, a refillable water bottle, appropriate field clothes (long pants, closed-toe shoes, hat) and sunscreen. Drinks, snacks, and hand tools will be provided.

[More info...](#)



Not an Otter



We have been discussing otter sightings recently in the newsletter, but here is something different.

A baby badger paid a visit to the air intake of a ranch truck in San Saba County last week.

Badgers are found throughout almost all of Texas. They are immune to a rattlesnake bite, except on the nose.

[Learn more...](#)

Time to visit Eckert James River Bat Cave

The [Eckert James River Bat Cave](#), located southwest of Mason, is home to one of the largest bat nurseries in the country. About 4 million female bats inhabit the cave from May to June near the banks of the James River, a major tributary of the Llano.

Texas Nature Conservancy, owners of the property, open the cave to viewing each Thursday through Sunday during the summer months. Entry fee is \$5. To get the latest emergence times, call (325) 347-5970.



This Saturday (*tomorrow*), the preserve provides a special treat—watching the bats return to the cave. Gates open tomorrow at 6:45am to view this unique spectacle. Reservations are requested at the above number.

To learn more about the James River, [download this report](#) prepared for the Alliance

Get to know Mason Mountain

A unique opportunity to visit Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) will present itself over the next two weeks. The WMA, set amidst some of Mason County's most beautiful scenery, is not open to the general public.

From July 10-13 and July 17-20, the WMA is seeking volunteers to gather vegetation data within their Quail Management Program study area. In addition, volunteers will be treated to a tour of the property and a glimpse of other WMA projects, including Horned Lizard Reintroduction, Black-tailed Prairie Dog Reintroduction, and Monarch Habitat Improvement.

[Contact Tony Plutino](#) for more info



LRFS Fellow studies impact of wildlife on riparian zones



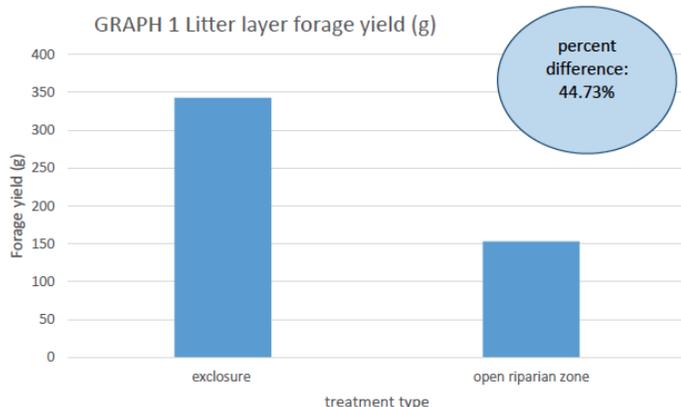
Loyola University junior [Maggie Yarnold](#) has returned this summer to the Llano River Field Station to continue her research on wildlife impacts on riparian zones along the South Llano. Maggie is on a [SPURS Fellowship](#) through the Ecological Society of America.

Maggie's research evaluates the plant communities both inside and out of an enclosure in the riparian zone at the Llano River Field Station.

Last year's research found that browsing pressure from wildlife (primarily white-tailed deer and axis) not only impacts plant growth, but the litter layer as well, resulting in increased erosion and changes to the Carbon:Nitrogen ratio, impacting plant response.

This year's research will help determine the length of time enclosures need to remain in place.

[Read Maggie's Report](#)



Fire may be remedy for Chronic Wasting Disease

By Carl Zimmer, New York Times



chronic wasting disease. It's caused not by a virus or bacterium, but a deformed protein called a prion...

Mark D. Zabel wants to set some fires.

Dr. Zabel and his colleagues are developing plans to burn plots of [National Park Service](#) land in Arkansas and Colorado. If the experiments turn out as the researchers hope, they will spare some elk and deer a gruesome

death.

Across a growing swath of North America, these animals are dying from a mysterious disorder called

...Dr. Zabel and his colleagues hope to test controlled burns. While the fires won't be hot enough to destroy the prions, they might kill off enough prion-laden plants to lower the odds of healthy animals getting sick...[read full article](#)



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Family Park Programs

South Llano River State Park

Phone: (325) 446-3994

Butterfly Walk

Friday, July 7th, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Meet at the 2nd Day Use parking lot

(take the road across from Headquarters, follow to the end)

Come join us as we find out about the butterflies who call the park home, and go for an easy walk to look for and watch butterflies in action! Good walking shoes, sun protection, and drinking water are recommended. All ages welcome.



Red Admiral



Shaded Lowlands Nature Walk

Saturday, July 8th, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Meet at the 2nd Day Use parking lot

(take the road across from Headquarters, follow to the end)

Join us for a guided stroll on the interpretive trail, as we find out about the plants and animals that live in the pecan forest! Walk is less than 1 mile round-trip. Good walking shoes, sun protection, and drinking water are recommended. All ages welcome.

River Bugs!

Saturday, July 8th, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Meet at the 2nd Day Use parking lot

(take the road across from Headquarters, follow to the end)

Come find out what kinds of insects live in the river! We will show you how to use a dip net and a magnifying glass to show you what kind of cool insects you can find! Sun protection and drinking water are recommended, and wear clothes you can get wet!

Children must be accompanied by an adult.



Buck Lake Nature Scavenger Hunt

Sunday, July 9th, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Meet at the Acorn Bird Blind

(down the path from the restrooms, between campsites 39 and 41)

Bring the whole family for a nature scavenger hunt to search for bugs, tress, and all kinds of other fun stuff. Snap a photo or take notes and see how many items you can check off your list! Good walking shoes, sun protection, and drinking water are recommended. All ages welcome.

Park programs are open to the public and free with park entrance fee