

Watershed Weeks In Review



Dr. Blake Grisham, Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Resources Management, named Director of the Llano River Field Station

Dr. Grisham has been named the Director of the Llano River Field Station in Junction, Texas. The Llano River Field Station was established as part of TTU Center in Junction in June of 2002 to provide a laboratory and classroom environment for undergraduate and graduate students from numerous universities, institutes, and public schools. The Llano River Field Station (LRFS) is the largest inland field station in Texas. Founded and formerly led by Dr. Thomas Arsuffi; the mission of the LRFS is to

encourage, conduct and coordinate basic and applied research projects dealing with water/watersheds, invasive species, range management, natural resources, ecological restoration and environmental education in the Central Texas Hill Country.

For over a decade now, the Llano River Field Station (LRFS) at the Texas Tech University regional site in Junction, Texas, has brought a diverse mix of stakeholders together to research and address solutions to essential natural resources and water issues. Among those stakeholders are federal and state agencies, municipalities, universities, K-12 schools, landowners and other local groups, who share expertise, planning and resources. Alongside these community partners, our faculty, students and staff cultivate relationships and collaborate on solutions.

The Llano River Field Station is a unique initiative by Texas Tech University to use its vast resources and academic expertise to assist Texas Hill Country communities in solving natural resource and education problems.



LRFS's efforts on behalf of the community have had a phenomenal impact.

Dr. Grisham has been a faculty member in Natural Resources Management since 2013. His research centers on incorporating weather and climate data into ecological field studies, with emphasis on ground-nesting birds, and more recently, disease ecology of upland game birds and ungulates. He has secured funding to study multiple species, including sandhill cranes, lesser prairie-chickens, northern bobwhite, scaled quail, axis deer, and waterfowl. His research expertise for all species includes population demography, habitat selection analysis, and biostatistics. Since joining NRM, he has published 32 peer-reviewed scientific papers, 2 scientific book chapters, presented or co-presented 98 oral or poster presentations, and authored 28 successful proposals exceeding \$4 million dollars in extramural research grants and gifts. His duties with the LRFS will be to facilitate and coordinate research on the Junction Campus within and outside of the TTU System and oversee the Outdoor Education Program.

Dr. Grisham will retain his appointment in NRM, and will continue to teach NRM classes, serve as the faculty advisor to The Wildlife Society at Texas Tech, and coordinate NRM marketing and alumni engagement.

"TTU at Junction is the most important TTU campus outside of Lubbock County. I am excited and grateful for this opportunity and look forward to working on behalf the campus and field station at the university level. My goal is to work towards, increase, and expand on Dr. Arsuffi's vision for the field station, making the LRFS the premier research and educational field station in the United States. I am eager to engage colleges and leaders on campus to maximize research and assist with TTU's research initiatives."

Welcome note from the (still new!) Llano River Watershed Alliance President: Linda Fawcett

As of January 1, 2022 I began serving as the LRWA's newest President. I have a lot to learn, but am committed to and



believe in the importance of the goals of the LRWA, that is, to protect, educate about, and promote the Llano Rivers and its watershed. I live on 75 acres along the North Llano River about

10 miles west of Junction, and over past decades have indeed personally witnessed an increase in the number of extreme low river flows. Droughts, yes, as a cause, but otherwise exacerbated by larger ranches being cut up and sold as small acreages with all the accompanying increase in need for infrastructure affecting the river and the water table. That is one of the big reasons why I joined the LWRA Board in May 2021.

I, like some of you, was an absentee landowner for over 13 years before retiring (from teaching art at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene) and permanently moving to the family

ranch in the late spring, 2020. I see the concessions that I made concerning the care of my land and am attending as many seminars and workshops as I can to make up for lost time. Now, through LWRA activities, I am meeting and learning from amazing experts about conservation of land, watershed and wildlife. Also, how to facilitate the implementation of grants, in particular the ones currently in play for the LRWA: a continuing TPWD Arundo donax education and eradication grant, and a USFWS Southeast Aquatic Research Partnership (SARP) grant to hold workshops and reach out with free site visits to landowners to help them maintain ideal conditions in their riparian zones.

I am sorry to report the LRWA has not been 100% successful in all its recent endeavors. Namely the subject of the renewal by the TCEQ of a controversial wastewater discharge permit for the City of Junction, despite a poor record of exceeding the permitted limit of phosphorus directly into the Main Llano. But we will not give up and I am quickly realizing that the best strategy for the future is in CONNECTING with similar grass-roots organizations like ourselves throughout the Hill Country to WORK TOGETHER on our similar goals. Therefore, the LRWA has aligned itself with the [Hill Country Alliance](#) to increase our communication network/ information bank and to pool our respective resources as needed. I have also recently become aware of the important activities of the [Devil's River Conservancy](#) and their efforts on maintaining the natural "pristine status" (that is, no pollution, i.e. zero phosphorus) of many of the rivers in the Hill Country. After being unable to get state legislation passed, the DRC is currently petitioning a new TCEQ rule to forbid direct water dumping into pristine rivers. (Doable alternatives being TLAPs: Texas Land Application Permits for disposal of wastewater discharge.) Contact DRC to find out more!

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Take the Texas Landowner Survey!

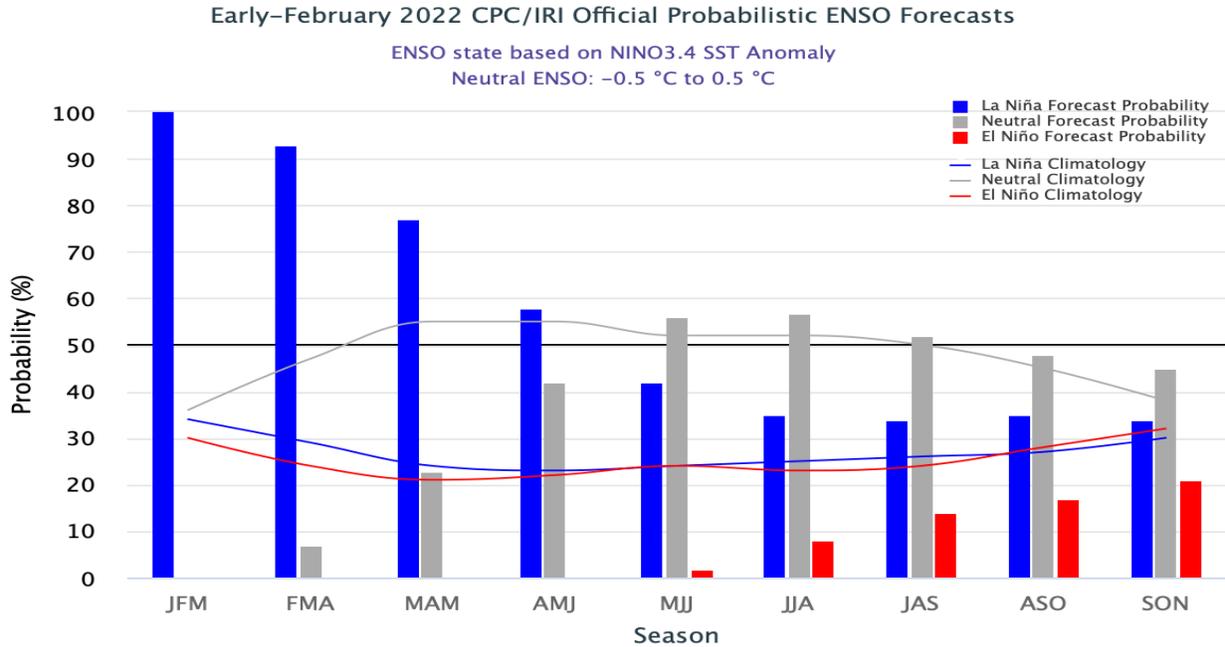
Texas has over 141 million acres of privately-owned farms and ranches, with each landowner having their own management objectives. You are receiving this questionnaire because you own or manage private working lands, and with your help, we would like to find better ways to serve you and meet your land management needs.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to better understand private landowner needs, preferences, concerns, and challenges regarding the everyday management of their operations and natural resources. This survey is part of and informs the Texas A&M Land Trends Program (<http://txlandtrends.org/>) and repeated every 5 years to determine if landowner preferences and needs have changed and how land and natural resource agencies and/or professionals can assist. Your participation and your individual responses will remain confidential – your responses will not be associated with you or your property and will only be presented in aggregate form.

The landowner questionnaire is divided into 6 topic areas (Land Management, Landowner Concerns, Land Loss/Fragmentation, Water, Hunting, and Landowners), is mostly multiple choice, and should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. To finish more quickly, it is strongly recommended that you fill out the survey using a tablet/iPad, laptop, or desktop computer. Here is the online survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MYFDX3B>.

Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute is very grateful for your time and participation. Your responses are important and will help landowners across the state. **As a token of our appreciation, for participating in our survey, you have the option of entering a raffle to win 1 of 15 Yeti® Texas Land Trends mugs.** If you would like to enter the random drawing, please follow the instructions at the end of the survey. Your entry information will not be associated with your responses or your property. Thank you for participating!

No surprise: LA NINA still in charge (for now)



Probable forecasts of El Niño, La Niña, and La Nada (neutral) conditions ([graph from the Climate Prediction Center and International Research Institute](#)).

Etcetera

If the headline below intrigues you, go to the TexasClimateNews.org [link](#) for the full article:
Earthquakes. Drought. Geysers. Permian oilfield water woes pile up

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN THE LWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We have several Board members rotating off soon, so if you...

- 1) Want to be Informed first
- 2) Want to be in on policy decisions and choosing priorities
- 3) Want to help educate new folks on the stewardship of their land and water
- 4) Want to learn kool new skills OR share your special skills

PLEASE LET US KNOW! By emailing Linda Fawcett at lrwatx.edu or call 325-665-4165

2022 LWRA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IS UNDERWAY!

You might be getting a letter in the mail soon. It's our MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL or NEW MEMBERSHIP form for 2022. Please Join/Renew! You may also do so from the LWRA website:

<https://www.llanoriver.org/llano-watershed> and at the top right corner of the main page are links to renew by credit card, by check/postal mail (downloadable membership form) or to Donate online. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

