

F E B R U A R Y 2 7 , 2 0 1 6

# Watershed Week in Review

Llano River Watershed Alliance



Photo : Dave Britton-USFWS

## Don't dump that aquarium!

A friendly reminder as part of National Invasive Species Week, please do not release your aquarium pets into Texas rivers.

The Armored “suckermouth” catfish is a popular aquarium fish, native to South America. When illegally released to the river, they grow large and outcompete native fishes, voraciously eat native vegetation, and burrow into stream banks, causing erosion.

To date, this is not a big problem on the Llano, but tilapia was found in the South Llano during the most recent electrofishing effort for Guadalupe Bass broodstock.

## Texas Academy of Science comes to Junction

The Llano River Field Station will host to the [Texas Academy of Sciences](#) 119<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting next weekend in Junction.

The Academy promotes scientific research in Texas universities.

Alliance Board Members, Dr. Tom Arsuffi, Tyson Broad, and Dr. Gary Garrett will be making presentations. More than 500 individuals are expected to attend this year's conference.

The Field Station previously hosted this event in 2009.

[Read more from the Junction Eagle](#)



## Groundwater District must pay pecan farmer for ‘takings’ associated with pumping regulations

*“The question before the Hondo jury was how much the Bragg’s orchards were worth with unlimited water from the Edwards Aquifer and how much they were worth without it”*

In a case that has been watched by agricultural interests and water managers for years, a Hondo, Texas court ruled last Monday that the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) must pay a local pecan farmer over \$4 million for a ‘regulatory takings’ of their property.

Following the creation of the EAA by the Texas Legislature in 1993, the Authority set pumping limits to afford protection to Comal and San Marcos Springs, home of several federally listed endangered species.

Local pecan farmers (the Braggs) applied for two pumping permits under the EAA’s new pumping limits, which the Authority based on historical use. The EAA denied one of the Braggs’ permit requests and granted one-half of the amount of the other. The Braggs sued the Authority for regulatory takings in 2006. The case has been winding its way through the legal system since then. [Click here for a history of the case.](#)

How this ruling will impact the ability of other groundwater districts to manage aquifers through pumping regulations is yet to be seen.

[Read more from San Antonio Express-News](#)

## Protecting Vernal Pools on Enchanted Rock

Starting March 1<sup>st</sup>, dogs will no longer be allowed on the Summit Trail that ascends the top of Enchanted Rock.

*“Enchanted Rock State Natural Area is an incredibly special place for thousands of Texans who visit the granite dome every year...It is equally important for a number of plants and wildlife that inhabit the area...”*

--Doug Cochran, Superintendent



The surface of Enchanted Rock is covered with natural depressions, called vernal pools, which routinely fill with water and create miniature ecosystems on the bare granite surface. Many of these pools support a unique species of invertebrate, the fairy shrimp. “Unfortunately, we are seeing these pools become more polluted with increasing human and pet encroachment,” said Cochran.

The new rules are the result of preliminary findings on a two-year research study on the conditions in the vernal pools. When compared with a baseline study from 1965, these initial findings have necessitated a need to tack action to protect these miniature ecosystems. [... learn more](#)



Photo: US Fish Wildlife Service

### More on Fairy Shrimp

Have you ever noticed what appear to be tadpoles swimming around in a puddle following a rain? Look more closely. These may be fairy shrimp, a relative of the “Sea-Monkeys” our parents used to buy us when we were kids.

Fairy Shrimp eggs (actually cysts) survive in small landlocked temporary pools (like vernal pools) for years between periods of inundation. Then, when conditions are right, they come to life.

[Read more about these fascinating creatures](#)

## Llano Earth Art Festival March 11-13<sup>th</sup> Llano

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.



## Monarchs Headed North!

According to Journey North, the first monarchs are starting to be seen on their migration northward.

Follow their migration path with the tracking website.

