

WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW



BOLO!



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Photographer: Joseph M. DiTomaso, University of California - Davis
Source: Bugwood.org

With the blossoming of springtime, also come a few bad actors, or thistles, in this case.

The Malta Star thistle (*Centaurea melitensis*) seems to be expanding across the Edwards Plateau ecoregion.

With the wet ground and emerging vegetation, now is the time to control it; it is easy to pull, but wear gloves. According to one reader, the flooding in 2018 seems to have helped their spread, so check your riparian zones.

[For More Info...](#)

Guadalupe Bass in South Llano featured in new TPWD Podcast

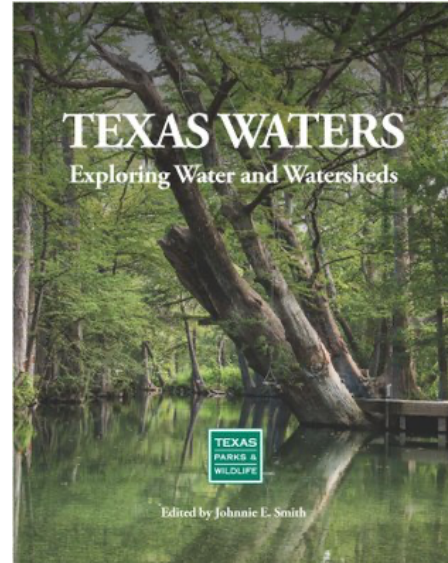


Beginning the New Year, Texas Parks and Wildlife premiered a new Podcast Program, *Under the Texas Sky*. The podcast is not just about TPWD programs and projects, it is about the people who benefit from the work the agency does to keep Texas wild things and wild things vibrant.

[Check out the available list of programs.](#)

Texas Waters : Exploring Water and Watersheds

A couple of weeks ago, the Newsletter featured Texas Parks and Wildlife's Water Specialist Program, an extension of their Texas Master Naturalist Program. *Texas Waters : Exploring Water and Watersheds*, the curriculum for this program is now [available for download](#).



Climate - What to Expect?

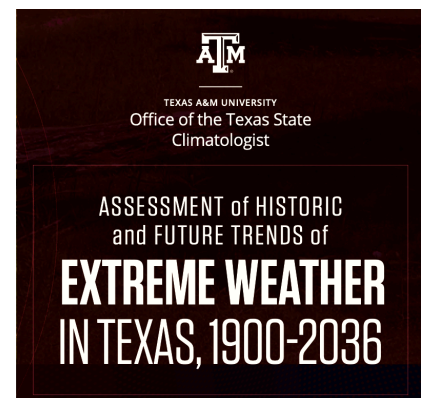
The Office of the Texas State Climatologist recently released an assessment of what our climate may look like over the next 16 years.

[The report is available here.](#)

Major take-aways :

- Temperatures in Texas are predicted to be 1.6°F warmer in 2036 than the average temps the last 18 years.
- The number of 100-degree days will likely double.
- Because El Niño/La Niña tended towards unusually dry conditions in the first part of the 21st century, this trend is expected to change and Texas is likely to see equal or more precipitation in the coming years. The Hill Country could be an exception.
- Summertime evaporation from reservoirs is expected to increase by 4%.

The discussion about drought beginning on page 15 raises many interesting points.



Other Impediments to Riparian Recovery

In last week's newsletter, we discussed the important nature of riparian zones and identified impairments to establishing and maintaining these critical ecosystems. Two impairments we discussed were motor vehicles traffic and overgrazing. This week we will look at another one.

Manipulation and Manicuring



Before and after showing flood results (right) following bulldozing of riparian area in January 2018.

One of the biggest impediments to establishing a healthy riparian area in the Hill Country is our image of what a riparian area should look like. Unfortunately, there is a tendency amongst landowners to want the riparian area to look like a park with a great view of the river. Many of us grew up being told that our creeks and banks need to be cleaned out to reduce flooding. This is simply not correct.

(One of this editor's first childhood memories is from the early sixties sitting in the lap of the bulldozer operator as we cleared out our little creek in Burnet County.)

As depicted in the photos above, this property along the South Llano was cleared in January of 2018. With nothing to hold the banks in place, the floods of October 2018 quickly removed it.

TCEQ Responds to Comments re City of Mason Waste Treatment Facility Permit

In January of this year, the Alliance submitted comments to TCEQ regarding the City of Mason's renewal of its permit to discharge wastewater into Comanche Creek, a tributary of the Llano River. The Alliance is supportive of the renewal of the permit as it will allow the City to irrigate the golf course at Fort Mason Park with wastewater, rather than freshwater, a technique we believe to be a wise use of resources. In commenting about the permit, however, we wanted to raise awareness of the low Dissolved Oxygen (DO) readings we recorded downstream of the plant. Original LRWA comment letter.

TCEQ recently responded to our comments. While we do not necessarily agree with their hypothesis regarding the algal blooms, we do appreciate that total discharge volumes and ammonia limits are being lowered for the permit.



*Comanche Creek, downstream of
City of Mason Waste-Water
Treatment Plant, December 20,
2019, approximately 12:30pm.*

The Alliance will continue to monitor this section of Comanche Creek and will contact the TCEQ Regional Office if necessary, as suggested in the response to comments. The Alliance will also continue to work with the City to find solutions for improving water quality in Comanche Creek.

