

# WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW



## It's All Connected



How do raccoons have an impact on Horned Lizards?



Check out David Hillis' reprint of Mason County Science Corner on page 2.

Photos: TPWD

## Collier Materials Proposes Facility at Lake LBJ

Collier Materials has announced plans for a new Lake LBJ sand dredging operation and plant in Kingsland. Formerly, the mining company had sought to set up a sand refining plant near Sandy Creek but met opposition from residents.

The new plant, scheduled to be up and running in March or April of 2021, will refine dredged sand so it can be sold commercially or used in construction. The proposed plant will be at County Road 309 and RM 2900 near the Comanche Rancheria community with access to the Llano River. [More from DailyTrib.com](#)



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## Where have all the quail (or frogs, lizards, and turtles) gone?

By David Hillis

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Anyone who is over 60 and grew up in Mason County knows that wildlife in the county today is very different than it was in their childhood. They may remember quail hunting, when many coveys of quail could be seen every day. Or they may remember “horny toads” (Texas Horned Lizards), which every child of the 1960s and 1970s remembers with fondness, but almost no one in Mason under 50 remembers at all. Or they may remember that Ornate Box Turtles were once common in Mason County, but they haven’t seen one in the last twenty years. But why have all these species declined?

All of these declines are connected to a set of common reasons that have resulted in major changes in the wildlife of Mason County. Like most things, the answers are not simple. Multiple reasons combine to produce the overall problem. But there are things we can do to reverse the declines.

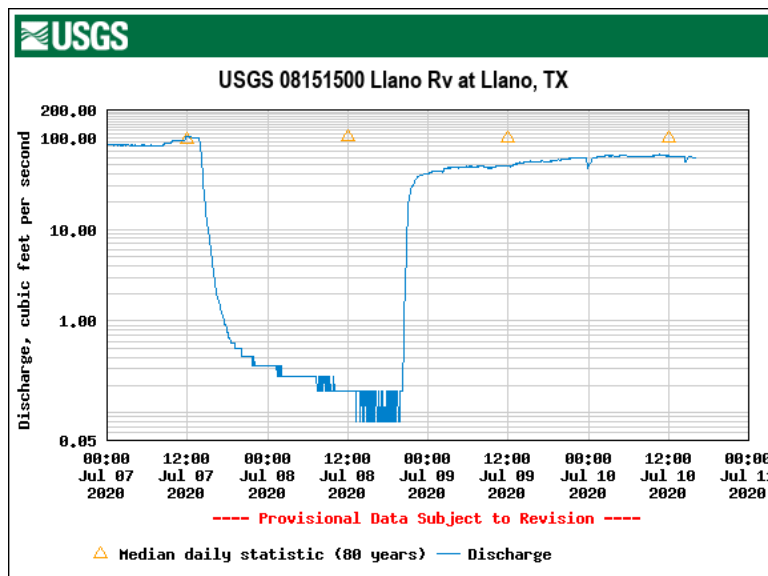
The reasons for the declines include loss or degradation of habitat (including the insect prey base, such as native Harvester Ants), introduction and increase of exotic species, and increases of some medium-sized predators such as raccoons. Let’s consider why each of these problems exist.



Photo : TPWD

[continue reading](#)

## *What happened to the Llano?*



Between July 7 and July 8 of this week, and July 1 and July 2 of last week, the flow of the Llano River at Llano dropped precipitously to less than 1 cubic feet per second (cfs) for about a 24-hour period. At first believed to be a gage malfunction, the Alliance investigated and found that the gage

was unfortunately measuring correctly.

Since late March, the City of Llano has been operating the sluice gate on Town Lake to lower the lake for dredging operations. According to the City of Llano, a malfunction on the dam gate at Llano Reservoir caused the recent reduction in the flow. City crews were forced to manually adjust the gate to allow flows to return to normal.

Hopefully, aquatic species below the dam were able to find refuge in deeper pools of water until the regular flows resumed.



*Llano River at less than one cfs*



## Texas A&M Study - Texas Will Face Driest Conditions of the Last 1,000 Years



A drought-stricken wheat field bakes in the sun July 27, 2011 near Hermleigh, Texas. A severe drought had caused the majority of dry-land crops to fail in the region. The past nine months had been the driest in Texas at the time since record keeping began in 1895.

Scott Olson/Getty Images

Texas' future climate will feature drier summers and decreasing water supplies for much of the state for the remainder of the 21st century – likely resulting in the driest conditions the state has endured in the last 1,000 years, according to a team of researchers led by a Texas A&M University professor.

Using the most advanced climate models, the team projected drought conditions and relevant information for stakeholders like agricultural producers, large surface water suppliers, small groundwater water districts and regional water planning districts.

The researchers found the message is clear: Texas is getting hotter and drier, and the time to take action is now.

### Collier Materials...continued

According to the [#savelakelbj Facebook](#) page however, over 500 residents of the Lake LBJ area have signed a petition in opposition the plant. The status of the proposed plant will be discussed at Llano County Commissioner's Court next Monday, July 13 at 9:30am. The meeting will be closed to the public due to Covid-19 concerns, but will available for viewing via Zoom. [Details on accessing the meeting can be found here.](#)