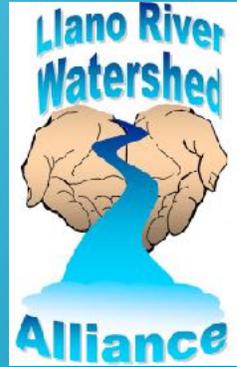


# WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW



## Birding Festival Filling Up

Registration space is filling quickly for the 2nd Annual South Llano River State Park Birding Festival.

**April 26-28, 2019**

Over 60 of the 85 available spaces have been claimed.

[Request a Registration Packet here.](#)



## From There to Here

How did this Mason County Ranch look like it is today? Check out the story of [Blue Mountain Ranch.](#)



## Axis and Exotics vs White-tailed deer

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Kerr Wildlife Management Area has compiled a study on food competition between axis and other exotics (sika, fallow, blackbuck, aoudad) and white-tailed deer.

Deer prefer forbs when they are available, then shift to browse. They cannot live on grass. Exotics on the other hand, can survive on all three food sources.



White-tailed were enclosed with a sample of each of the exotic species in six 96-acre pastures with deer proof fencing. The results are presented in [Texas Fish and Game Magazine](#).

## Did you know Llano has its own gopher?

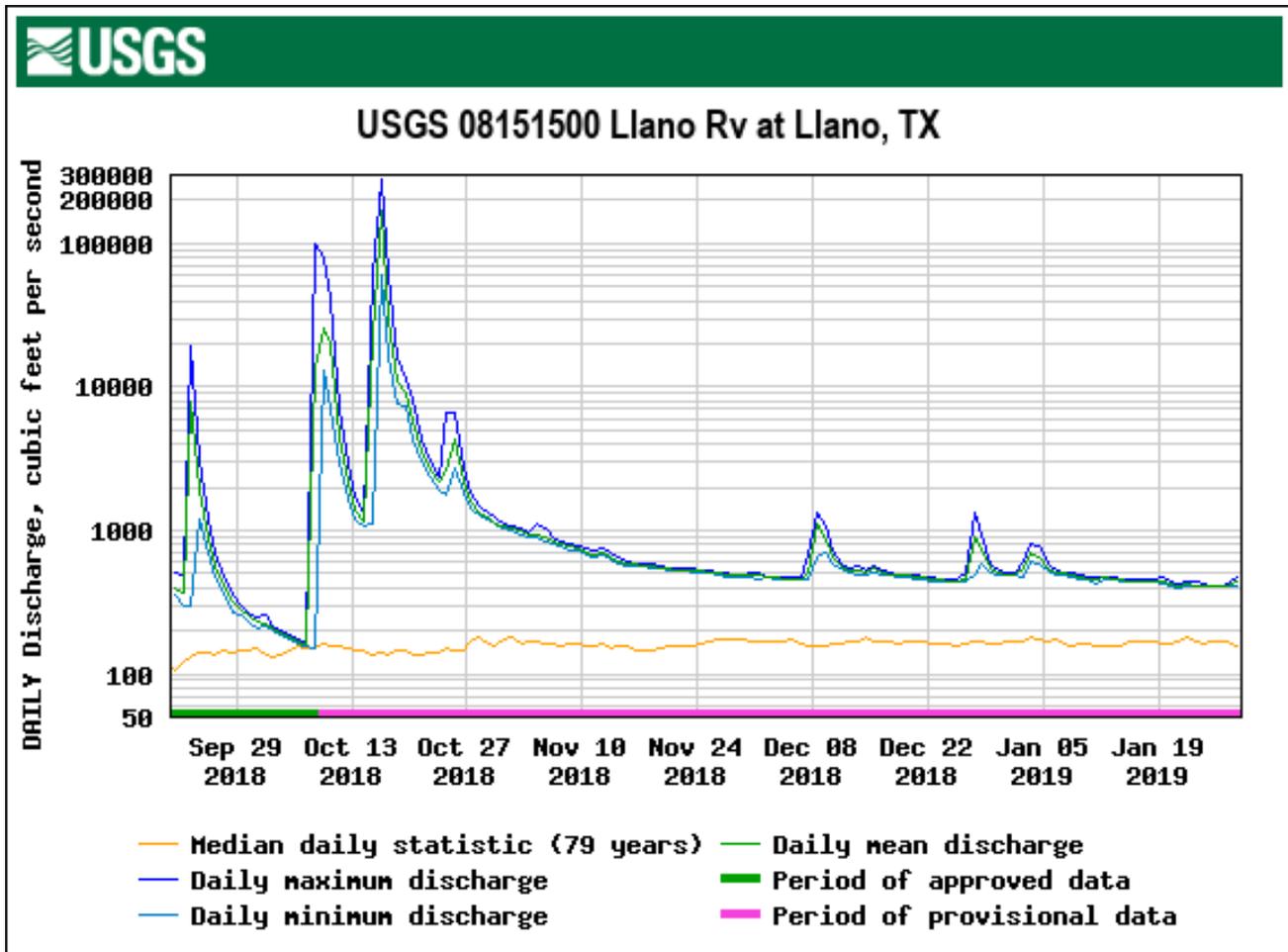
*From David Hillis Facebook page...*

The hardest mammal to photograph in the wild on the Double Helix Ranch is our locally endemic Llano Basin Pocket Gopher, *Geomys texensis*. It spends 99.999999% of its life underground, and when it pops its head above ground, it is only for a few milliseconds. One can go insane trying to photograph one!

This genus often drives gardeners crazy, as they can be very hard on gardens and fruit trees and even irrigation systems. But they serve an important ecological role in tilling the soil, helping water to penetrate deep underground. Many other species also use gopher tunnels as retreats from the cold or the heat, and many species specialize on eating gophers, including gopher snakes and badgers. When you find one making a mound (removing soil from its new burrow, as here), they are fun to watch, even though you only get to see them briefly.



## Flows of the Llano Still Strong



The Llano River continues to flow strongly past the gage in Llano; the latest reading is 442 cfs, well above the median flow of 157 cfs. Over the three months since last fall’s rains, the Llano has flowed at a 3-month average of 4,111 cfs, greater than the previous recorded 3-month average of 3,137 in late 2000. The next highest 3-month average is 2,591 cfs in 1992, then 2,315 cfs during the drought breaker in 1957.

Average flow for the one-month period between September 22 and October 22, 2018 (above) was 10,780 cfs, the highest recorded average monthly flow for Llano River at Llano. Monthly flows for November 2000 were 7,149 cfs, followed by February 1992 at 3,754. May of 1957 (3,350 cfs) was the 6th highest monthly average.

**Just released** : Due to delays associated with the shutdown, USGS just published discharge measurements made last December at 700 Springs. The flow is 24.4 cfs, the highest recorded since 2008, following a very wet 2007.

# Proposed Pipeline Causing Stir across Hill Country



In the [December 1, 2018 newsletter](#), we reported on the proposed Kinder Morgan Permian Highway pipeline slated to run through parts of the Llano watershed. The pipeline is to carry fracked natural gas from the Permian Basin to Katy, Texas. Since that time, considerable opposition has grown against the pipeline, especially in the counties to the east.

The San Antonio Express News carried a story in late December about the [pipeline across the Hershey Ranch in Stonewall](#). Earlier this week, the [Austin Statesman featured the conflict](#) over the pipeline through Hays and Gillespie counties, as did [kut.org](#).

The majority of these articles mention part of the opposition re the pipeline has to do with a larger issue, eminent domain. A bill was also [filed in the Texas Legislature last week](#) to reform the eminent domain process, used by entities such as Kinder Morgan to acquire right-of-ways.

[Meetings to discuss the pipeline](#) have been set for Wimberley, Kyle, Blanco and Fredericksburg. To date, the Alliance is unaware of any proposed meetings for the western portion of the proposed route.

## Voters may get Chance to Guarantee \$\$\$ for State Parks

State Sen. [Lois Kolkhorst](#), R-Brenham, and Rep [John P. Cyrier](#), R-Lockhart, have filed legislation that would ensure that the state parks department always gets the maximum amount of money it is authorized to receive from a tax on the sale of sporting goods to maintain parks and build new ones – but only if voters approve it.

[Learn more](#)