

# WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW



## Your Chance to Comment

The City of Junction seeks to renew their permit to discharge wastewater into the Llano River below Junction.

The public is encouraged to comment. See page 3.



## How to Make your Creek 'Wetter'



## What are Riparian Areas?

### *Why are they Important?*

This 20-minute video from Hill Country Alliance features a great overview of the value of riparian areas and why we work to improve and protect them.

While many riparian areas are able to heal themselves if left alone, there are ways we can jump start the process.

[Watch Video](#)

## Opportunity to Improve your Riparian Zone

The Llano River Watershed Alliance is offering riparian landowners the opportunity to give an additional kick-start to helping their riparian areas, especially those areas damaged by the 2018 flood.

Over the next few months, LRWA will be offering on-site technical guidance visits to inform landowners of the role of properly functioning riparian areas provide to the aquatic ecosystems and the Best Management Practices (and plants) to restore these areas.



If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact [southllanoriver@gmail.com](mailto:southllanoriver@gmail.com).

This service is free to all, but priority will be given to Alliance members.

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## BMPs in the Riparian Zone

The term ‘Best Management Practices’ or BMPs is used quite often in stream restoration work. What exactly are BMPs and how can they help my restoration efforts?

The Alliance, with assistance from TPWD, recently re-created the Best Management Practices website originally housed on the TPWD website.

On this website, users will find a variety of Riparian BMPs, including Planning and Management, Protection, Revegetation, and Exotics.

### Best Management Practices

For the Conservation of Texas Aquatic Ecosystems

[Home](#)[BMPs Index](#)

## City of Junction seeks to Renew Wastewater Permit

Last fall, the Newsletter did a three-part series of articles regarding sewage problems and solutions in the Texas Hill Country (see October 23, 2020-November 6, 2020). Much of the series focused on problems associated with the City of Junction wastewater treatment facility, located downstream of Junction.

TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) oversees permitting of direct discharges to the waters of the State, such as from a municipal wastewater treatment plant. Junction's existing permit requires the City to self-monitor and report samples for Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Suspended Solids, and *E-coli*.

BOD is the amount of oxygen in the water that will be consumed by the ammonia and aerobic bacteria remaining in the treated sewage. It is a measure of the effectiveness of the treatment plant; the higher the BOD, the less available dissolved oxygen (DO). When DO is low, aquatic organisms become stressed and can eventually die. Total Suspended Solids is a measure of water clarity and *E-coli* is an indicator of how much bacteria is in the water.

Since the beginning of 2018, there has been only one quarter in which no violations occurred at the facility. In September of 2020, TCEQ assessed a \$16,287 penalty against the City for failure to comply with permitted effluent limitations for BOD and *E-coli*.

In addition, Hill Country rivers, such as the Llano, naturally have very low amounts of nutrients and are very susceptible to algal blooms resulting from excess nitrogen from treatment plants. Despite the vulnerability of the Llano River to nutrients, there are no nutrient standards associated with Junction's permit.

The City of Junction now seeks to renew the permit for this facility.

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## City of Junction -continued

As part of the renewal process, TCEQ allows 30-days for public comment. The notice for permit renewal was published in the *Junction Eagle* on March 24, so **comments to TCEQ may be made by the public until April 23, 2020.**

The Alliance will make comments sharing the concerns we have received from landowners regarding the exceedances over the last three years. In addition, the Alliance will encourage TCEQ to begin requiring limits on nutrient discharge to the river. A copy of these comments will be shared in an upcoming newsletter.

As part of the permit renewal process, concerned citizens may also request a public meeting about the application. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator.

The Alliance, hopefully with the support from newsletter reader who also submit comments, plans to request a public meeting. The primary purpose for requesting a meeting is to begin dialogue with the community, the City and TCEQ about changing the process for waste disposal to reuse or irrigation, rather than discharging it back to the Llano River. The City of Llano has utilized this approach for many years, growing hay on lands surrounding the wastewater facility with treated effluent. There is already ample acreage surrounding Junction's facility and TCEQ recently revised its rules for the TLAP (Texas Land Application Permit) program to facilitate the process. And while this change will incur the City with new infrastructure costs, there are several programs available to help offset these costs.

More information to come in next week's newsletter...