

WATERSHED WEEK IN REVIEW



More Trout Coming to the Llano

Mason County Winterfisch Part II

will be February 2 at
the James River
Crossing (Highway
2389) of the Llano.

One thousand 9 to 12-
inch Rainbow Trout
will be released.

Bring your own gear
or borrow a pole once
you get there.

Assistance will be
available for those
new to fishing.

This is a great
opportunity for kids.

State Climatologist *Climate Change and Water* *Monday 7pm - Kerrville*

The Hill Country Chapter of
Texas Master Naturalist is
hosting State Climatologist Dr.
John Nielsen - Gammon this
Monday evening at Upper
Guadalupe River Authority, 125
North Lehman in Kerrville.

Monday's evenings topic will
be "Climate Change and
Water".



"Climate change affects water in many different ways, which in turn affects supplies and ecosystems. Higher temperatures allow for faster evaporation and more water in the atmosphere, but globally-averaged rainfall amounts should not change much. Instead, precipitation is expected to become more erratic and intense, and some of these changes are already evident in historic data across Texas. At the same time, increased carbon dioxide concentrations reduce the water needs of plants, potentially making them more resilient to drought...". Continue reading

Coming to your home screen soon



The Llano River Watershed Alliance is editing GoPro imagery from a reconnaissance flight over the Llano last December. The video is being used to evaluate habitat changes to the river, identify areas of significant bank erosion, and document navigation hazards for paddlers.

Here is a comparison of pre and post-flood habitat changes downstream of the US 87 bridge in Mason County. Stay tuned.

NRCS Still Open for Business

From US Department of Agriculture website...

During a government shutdown, agencies that receive mandatory funding or have funds appropriated in prior years that are carried forward can continue to serve customers using that money.

NRCS is in this category and will be open for business. If you have business with NRCS or want to begin working with NRCS, our offices will be open.

Wind Turbine Proposals Circulate the Hill Country



For the past 10 years, there have been developer proposals and landowner push-back about locating wind turbines in the Hill Country. In 2008, Llano County Commissioners passed a resolution noting, *“the negative impact of industrial wind farms, including the potential economic loss to the county as a whole, would outweigh any benefits that they would bring to Llano County.”* More recently, Mason and Menard County

residents opposed and defeated a wind farm proposal for those counties.

Currently, folks along the Devils River are actively opposing a 140,000 acre wind farm proposal through their “Don’t Blow It” campaign. In their campaign, the Devils River Conservancy says, “While we fully support renewable energy, **Don’t Blow It** by placing wind energy solutions in the wrong place.”

The Alliance recently learned of landowners in the South Llano watershed receiving letters from a company in Florida stating,

“...(we have) identified your property as having significant potential benefits for both you and (our company) to develop renewable energy facilities which could include wind and / or solar energy should you wish to participate...”

...Now could be your opportunity to reap the benefits of hosting renewable energy on your property, as many in the great state of Texas already have. For the landowner, the benefits prove to be long term. Depending on the number of wind turbines constructed and in operation, the financial benefits can be a lucrative source of income.”

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Wind (continued)

The Llano River Watershed Alliance has taken no formal position to date on wind farms in the area. And, as the Alliance consists primarily of landowners in the watershed, we fully respect private property rights. However, we also wish to help landowners protect their investments by providing information regarding the potential long-term implications of leasing their lands for wind turbine development.

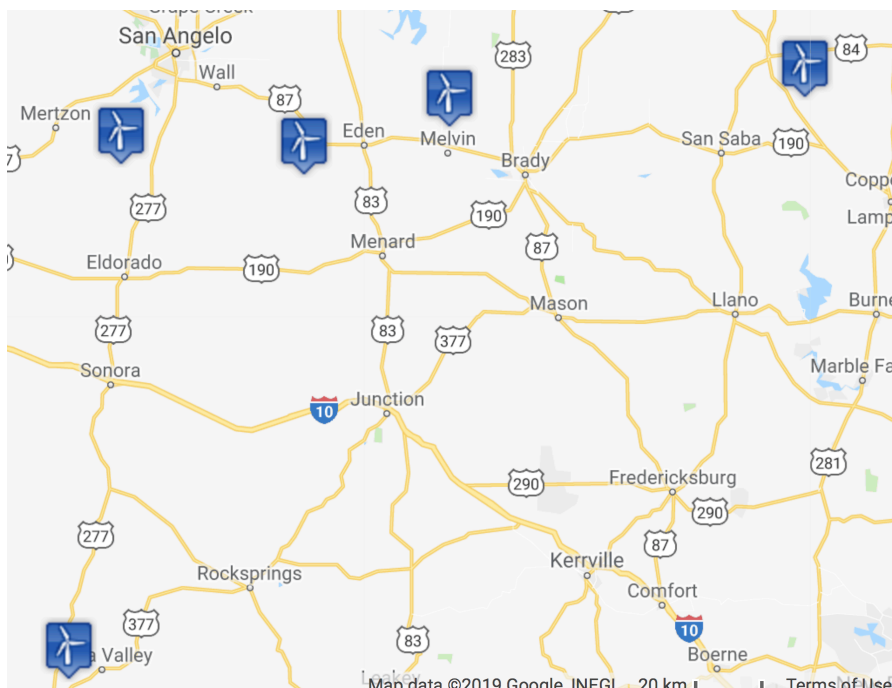
As the Devils and Llano have much in common (first and second cleanest rivers in the state), many of the implications mentioned for the Devils at Don't Blow It also apply for the Llano:

- Disturbs the habitats of native endangered animal species and obstructs the migration paths of eagles, monarch butterflies, Mexican free-tailed bats and other wildlife;
- Degrades the spiritual aspects of this country side and the frontier legacy character of this region;
- Poses a direct threat to recreation, ecotourism and property values.

In regards to diminution in property values, Texas Wildlife Association presented findings from a study in Taylor County (Abilene area) in 2007. Locating turbines on a property diminished values by 37%; having turbines within 0.4 miles of a property diminished values 26%; and

having turbines within 1.8 miles diminished values by 25%. For a 1,000-acre wind farm, this is total land devaluation of \$11 million assuming, land values at \$3,000 per acre.

There are several other resources for landowners facing a leasing decision. National Wind Watch and windAction provide resources that address the negative aspects of wind energy. The American Wind Energy Association and Greenbiz promote information on the positive aspects.



In addition, Hill Country landowners can see for themselves. The map above shows existing wind farms in the Hill Country area. One farm is located above the City of Goldthwaite, while the second location is southwest of Rocksprings. Others are located near Melvin, Eden, and Christoval.