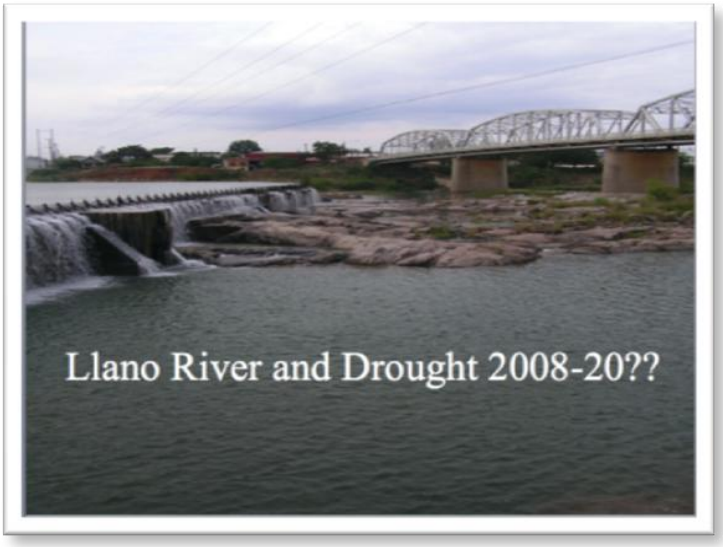
FEBRUARY 27, 2015

South Llano Watershed Alliance

Watershed Week in Review



This is the title slide from a talk given in Junction in 2009. Given the content of this newsletter, we all wish the presenter wasn't quite so prophetic.

The good news, however, is that there is now a satellite in space to monitor soil moisture and help us better manage our lands that feed the Llano.

Save the Date!

Oasis Fire Restoration Workshop

April 18, 2015

details coming soon

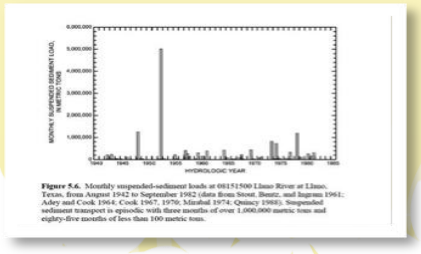
700 Springs Tour

April 25, 2015

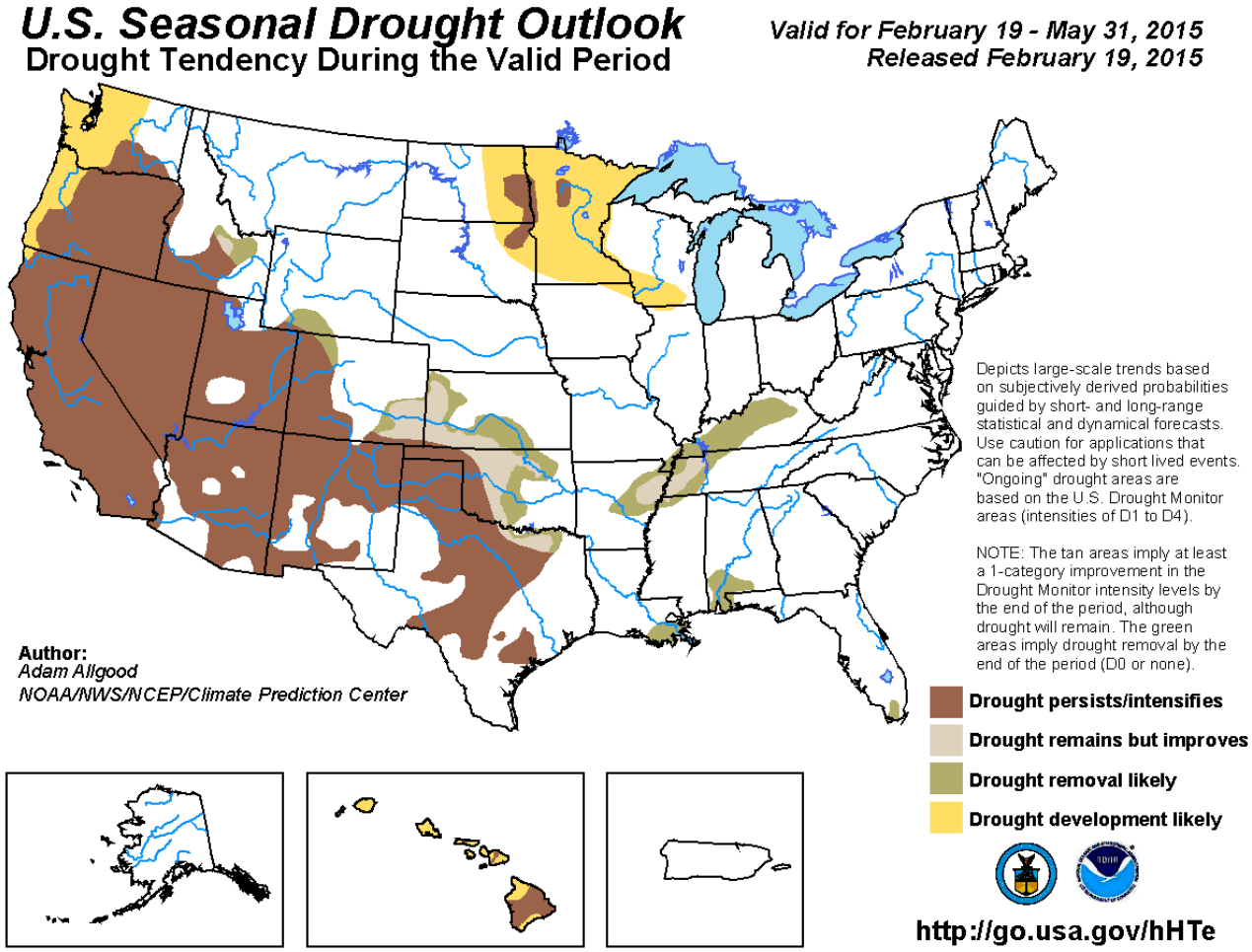
Click for details

Flood of 52 wiped out most of mussels in Llano R

You may remember the graph below from last week's newsletter. Dr. David Hillis, Professor of Integrative Biology at UT-Austin, saw it as well and posted the following on his Facebook page:… *That single event changed the Llano River forever. For example, before this event the Llano River was noted for its abundant and diverse unionid mussel fauna (and it sustained a major fishery for unionids). Today, unionids are extinct in most of the watershed. Changes in grazing practices, land management, retention pond construction, etc have improved the soil erosion problem, but all that soil accumulated over many millennia, and washed away in a few days time.* Editors Note: A few mussels have been found in the upper portions of watershed.



Drought predicted to persist through May



LCRA: Drought Conditions worsen along Highland Lakes

Record low inflows to Lakes contribute to revised water inventory estimate

As a direct result of the prolonged record-dry conditions and record-low inflows from the streams and tributaries feeding the Highland Lakes, the "firm yield," or inventory of water LCRA can provide reliably every year, has been decreased by about 100,000 acre-feet, to 500,000 acre-feet per year.

Read LCRA Press Release

Region	County	Water User Type	Strategy Name
K	LLANO	MUNICIPAL	DEVELOPMENT OF ELLENBURGER-SAN SABA AQUIFER
K	LLANO	MUNICIPAL	DEVELOPMENT OF HICKORY AQUIFER
K	LLANO	MUNICIPAL	MUNICIPAL CONSERVATION

Texas Water Development Board's New Interactive Map of 2012 State Water Plan

While Regional Water Planning Groups around the State are currently working to finalize their draft plans for the 2017 State Water Plan, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has developed a great interactive map to show water supply demands, existing supplies and deficits, and strategies to meet these deficits for all 16 regions in the State.

Three planning groups cover the counties in Llano River watershed: Region J (Edwards and Real), Region F (Sutton, Kimble and Mason), and Region K (Llano and San Saba).

Through the map, users can see if their community has enough water during a repeat of the drought of record (1947-1956) to meet their future needs, and if not, how they plan to meet these needs.

For example, the City of Llano (Region K) has a projected water demand in 2060 of just over 1,300 acre-feet. Because the current source for the City, the Llano River, ceased to flow in 1956, the City only has a drought supply of 87 acre-feet. The City plans to meet future needs during drought (click on the Strategy Supply graph) through conservation and new groundwater supplies from the Ellenburger-San Saba Aquifer and the Hickory Aquifer.

Dispute grows over dam on Colorado

"I fail to see why their needs would be greater or supersede the needs of countless others who have, and are currently, depending on that river for livestock water, irrigation water, and who have built and maintained recreational facilities as a livelihood along the banks of the river," Mike Millican, who owns a downriver fishing camp, wrote to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which will take up the matter in coming months. *Read Statesman article*

Sobering…worst drought in 1000 years predicted for southwest

They found that the megadrought that struck the region in the 1100s and 1200s – which has been tied to the decline of the ancient Pueblo peoples, or Anasazi, of the Colorado Plateau – was likely not as severe as the one expected in the near future

Read National Geographic News


Photo by Ethan Miller-Getty Images

Measuring the missing component of the hydrologic cycle-soil moisture

A new satellite, launched last month, will start to regularly measure the earth's soil moisture. This type of information will not only help farmers, it will help scientist better understand our water budget. Learn more about SMAP (Soil Moisture Active Passive)

The El Niño Flop

Since last March, forecasters have said an El Niño was on the way. The only trouble is, it hasn't arrived.

See Bloomberg Business article

The Buda Water Wars

A commercial well field being built near Wimberley has brought together a broad coalition of Hays County residents and officials united in their outrage against Electro Purification, the Houston-based company behind the project.

Read Statesman article