



Pedernales River: Community News and Events *July 2015*

HCA is a passionate community caring for the unique features, spring-fed streams, heritage ranch lands, spectacular beauty and culture of the Texas Hill Country for the benefit of future generations.

PEDERNALES NEWS



The Meadows Center Plans Hydro-Blitz for Pedernales in August

This summer, [The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment](#) at Texas State University is coordinating a long-needed research project in the Pedernales River watershed as part of a broader program to answer the question: “*How Much Water is in the Hill Country?*” With funding from the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation, the Meadows Center and local volunteers will “blitz” the entire Pedernales River - from west of Fredericksburg to east of Johnson City - in early August. Teams will collect information about the river and its environment during this Hydro-Blitz event.

Under the direction of Mr. Douglas A. Wierman, P.G. and Dr. Benjamin Schwartz, the Meadows Center has developed an approach that will shed light on the complex interactions between groundwater, surface water, geology, land cover and other relevant hydrogeographic characteristics of the Pedernales River watershed. The Hydro-Blitz will take place at 935 sites throughout the entire watershed where a public road crosses tributaries or the main river. Teams of volunteers will collect estimates of water flow, turbidity, the presence of invasive plant species, riparian cover and evidence of feral hog activity. Volunteers will also take pictures of each site and note overall riparian health.

The Hydro-Blitz will be followed up by intensive water quality testing at 100 selected sites. Texas State Master’s Student Saj Zappitello will test each site for water quality indicators such as levels of dissolved oxygen, E. Coli bacteria, total dissolved solids (TDS), pH, and nitrates.

Since this work will cover a very wide area and will be very time intensive, volunteers will play a vital and highly appreciated role in completing the Hydro-Blitz. The Meadows Center hopes to visit all 935 sites over the course of only a few days in order to maintain consistent weather and flow conditions for each visit.

The Meadows Center’s goals are to better understand our water resources within the Pedernales River watershed, and eventually develop informed recommendations for managing the water to ensure there is enough for future generations.

Partner organizations include the Hill Country Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, Alamo Area Master Naturalists, Lower Colorado River Authority, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Hill Country Underground Water Conservation District, and the Texas State University’s Department of Biology.

If you are interested in learning more or volunteering, contact Hydro-Blitz coordinator Will Butler at wb1108@txstate.edu.

Calendar of Pedernales Events

Soil for Water

Friday, July 17th

At the Fredericksburg Inn & Suites
201 S Washington St, Fredericksburg
9am-12pm

Learn about a new project aimed at empowering landowners to improve soil health on their land for better rainfall retention. Every drop counts in Central Texas! Program is free- RSVPs are appreciated but not required. Email peggysechrist@gmail.com

Teachers' Day Out at the Hill Country Science Mill

August 5th, 6th and 7th

At the Hill Country Science Mill
101 S Ladybird Lane, Johnson City
All day!

All K-12 teachers, administrators and employees will receive free admission to the Science Mill from August 5th – 7th. You can also enter to win Science Store credit! Click [here](#) for details.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 17th

Pedernales Wildlife Management Co-op Annual Meeting

@ Methodist Church in Johnson City, 105 LBJ Drive

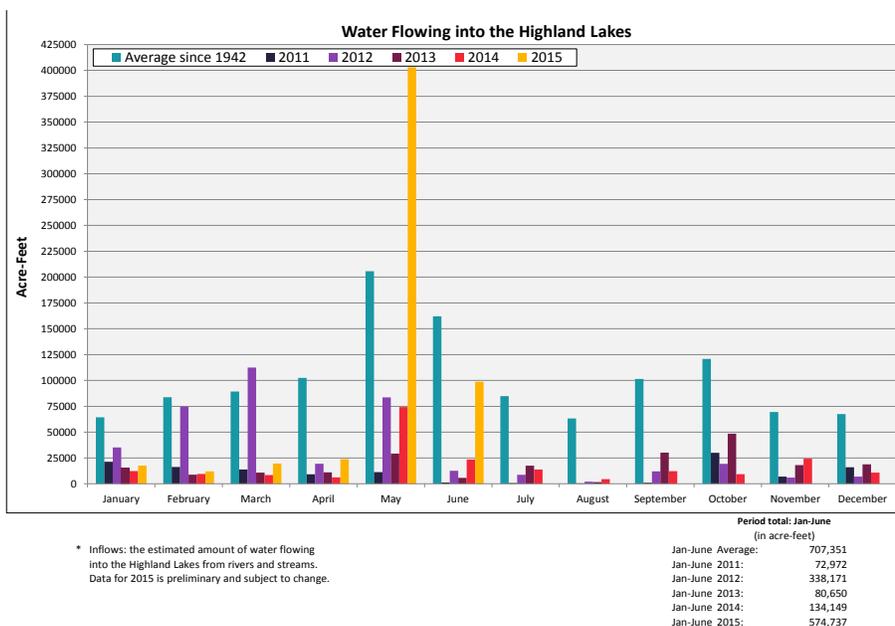
Please mark your calendars- the Pedernales Wildlife Management Co-op will be featuring guest speaker Carter Smith, Director of TPWD. The program usually begins in the afternoon and will run for an hour or two. More information as the date approaches.

Just when you were ready to celebrate the end of the drought...

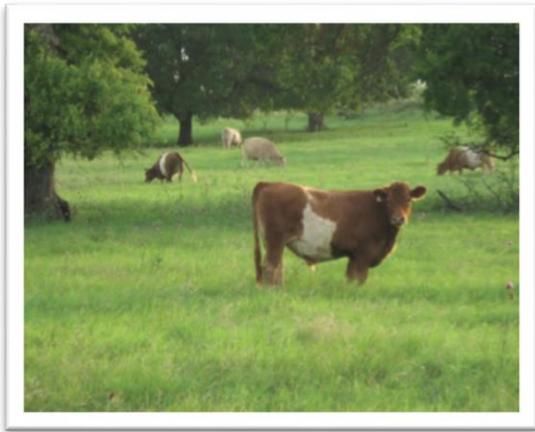
It turns out that it is not uncommon for extreme drought to follow periods of intense rainfall- so water managers across the state are urging residents to think twice before blasting their outdoor sprinklers. Even with the [record rainfall](#) that we had in the month of May, we saw average January - June inflows into the Highland Lakes were [well below average](#). More than 130,000 acre-feet below average, in fact. And the Pedernales at Johnson City hasn't seen a drop [of rainfall](#) since the end of June. But with experts predicting an El Nino pattern that may bring extra rain this fall, is it a stretch to say that [the next drought may have already begun?](#)



The Texas Water Development Board is cautioning against the assumption that the drought is gone for good.



This graph from the LCRA shows just how abnormal our May rainfall totals were- and how far below average we still are when it comes to inflows into the highland lakes system.



Reminder: Soil for Water Program Kickoff this Friday, July 17th

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) has chosen the Pedernales Basin to target outreach and research efforts on their new program, Soil for Water. Research shows that healthy soil rich in microorganisms and organic matter can capture and retain more rainwater than soil that has been depleted of its carbon. Grazing animals play an important role in maintaining and improving your soil's health. Interested in learning more? Come on Friday, July 17th from 9am-12pm at the Fredericksburg Inn & Suites conference room.



Unique Way to Deal with Troublesome Invasive- or Playing with Fire?

Many in the Hill Country are familiar with the problems associated with Carrizo Cane, otherwise known as Giant Reed, Giant Cane, River Cane or Arundo donax. It takes over creeks and rivers, alters the natural flow path of water and displaces native plants. Much attention has been focused recently on the safety challenges it causes at the US/Mexico border. But a researcher from the USDA believes he has a solution- and it comes in the form of tiny French wasps. Click [here](#) for details.



Blanco River Riparian Recovery Videos

In the wake of the devastating Memorial Day flooding on the Blanco River, a number of agencies and organizations came together to host several workshops on the recovery of the riparian areas. A series of videos from those workshops have been produced and posted [here](#). There are some important lessons here that can be applied to any Hill Country river- including the Pedernales. As riparian expert Steve Nelle points out, the river will heal up- it is only a matter of time. A longer riparian video is in the works.



Do you have an event or news item that is of particular interest to the Pedernales Basin? Capture a great image of the Pedernales after our recent rains? Have a question or topic that you would like to see covered here?

We want to make this newsletter as informative and helpful as possible for you- the residents, stakeholders and friends of the Pedernales. Please email Katherine@hillcountryalliance.org for inclusion in our next newsletter.

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