

Pedernales River: Community News and Events October 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

How Much Water is in the Pedernales? Meadows Center for Water and the Environment releases report

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment released [a report](#) this month looking at major trends in the Pedernales basin. The report falls under the Center's work to answer the question "How much water is in the Hill Country?" and is the first step toward a better understanding of the connection between groundwater and surface water resources in the Pedernales.

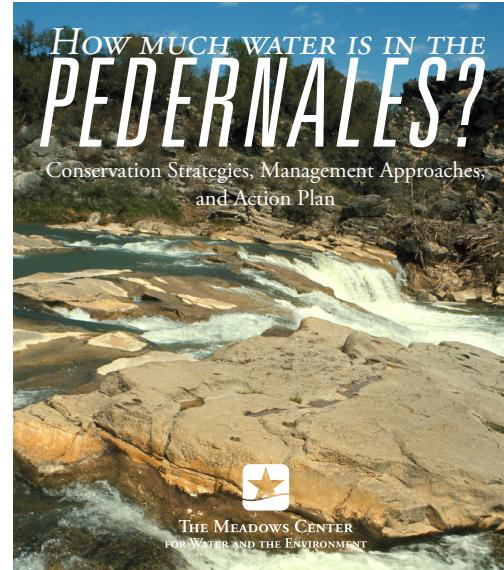
One of the features of the report is a brief summary of the "Hydro-blitz" that was conducted by Meadows Center staff and volunteers in early August. More than 930 publicly accessible stream and river crossing sites were visited over the course of two days to document the presence of water, flow rates and basic water quality parameters, as well as instances of invasive species.

According to the report, of the 931 sites visited, just under 200 had water present. A smaller fraction—only 159 sites—had discernable flow. These findings seem consistent with research from an intensive gain/loss study of the Pedernales completed in 1962, which found that more than 60% of the Pedernales River's flow comes from its largest tributaries.

The Meadows Center report goes on to identify threats to both water quantity (including the booming growth of the wine industry, the anticipated 30% increase in population by 2070, a 30 foot aquifer drawdown in the eastern portion of the basin, and invasive species) and quality (including wastewater discharges associated with Fredericksburg and Johnson City, changing land uses, and growth of sand and gravel operations in the basin). A number of strategies for addressing these issues are laid out in Appendix 1.

The next steps for the Meadows Center include recreating the 1962 gain/loss study, which will provide better insight into surface water and groundwater interactions, and how changes in the basin over the past 50 years may have impacted those connections.

If you are interested in reading the full report and associated appendices, visit the Meadows Center's [webpage](#). A Hill Country Alliance watershed summary is also available by [clicking here](#).



Partnership forms to control Arundo in Fredericksburg Creeks

The Hill Country Alliance, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the City of Fredericksburg, and an alliance of creekside landowners in Fredericksburg are joining forces to address a growing threat to the natural biodiversity, function and resilience of Barons Creek and Town Creek: [Arundo](#). Commonly known as Giant Reed or Carrizo Cane, Arundo populations in the creeks of Fredericksburg have expanded drastically in recent years. An initial [control effort](#) was undertaken in [early September](#), the results of which are just beginning to be noticeable in the yellowing leaves and stalks of treated plants. Residents are cautioned NOT TO CUT Arundo, as fragments of cut stalks can re-establish and create a new plant. If you believe you have Arundo on your property, contact the Hill Country Alliance. For more information on the Fredericksburg Healthy Creeks initiative and upcoming Healthy Creek Happy Hours, visit their [Facebook Page](#).

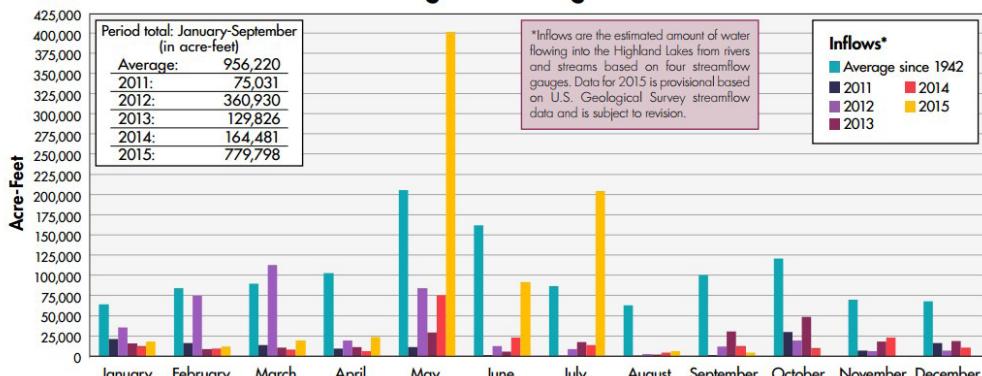


Arundo before treatment and 2.5 weeks after treatment.

Waiting on El Niño

In the words of Robert Mace, deputy executive administrator for water science and conservation at the Texas Water Development Board, "El Niño has been El no-no so far" for the Hill Country. According to the LCRA's hydromet, the Pedernales at Fredericksburg has seen a whopping .37 inches of rain since August 1st. The largest total rainfall in that time period? A measly [.22 inches](#) that fell on August 15th; 2 months ago. The Pedernales at Johnson City saw .14 inches on September 9th but is still at only .4 inches total since August 1st. According to the [LCRA](#), September's combined inflows into the Highland Lakes were the 4th lowest on record- only 4% of average inflows for this time of year. Another spike in temperatures, coupled with extremely dry & windy weather, has caused high fire risk and is making containment of [the Hidden Pines fire](#) in Bastrop difficult. All this sad dry news has us wondering, where is the El Niño we were promised?

Water Flowing Into the Highland Lakes



EVENTS CALENDAR

Conservation Easement Workshop

Friday, October 23rd

10am-3pm

Pedernales Electric Cooperative Auditorium, Johnson City TX

Sponsored by the Hill Country Land Trust and HCA, this workshop will cover a range of topics from the basics of what a conservation easement is, to the potential income and estate tax benefits of donated easements. Registration is \$15 per person and includes lunch. Click [here](#) for more info.

Soil Talk: Grazing Planning

Friday, October 23rd

9am-5pm

Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Building, 95 Frederick Road, Fredericksburg

There is a way to manage grazing livestock to improve soil's water holding capacity and maintain excellent livestock performance. Come learn how. First 25 rsvp's to soilforwater@ncat.org will receive free boxed lunch.

BBQ on the Pedernales

Saturday, October 24th

5pm to 10pm

LBJ National Historic Park

Join the Friends of LBJ National Historic Park for their annual BBQ on the Pedernales- [tickets](#) are on sale now.

HCA 10 Year Celebration

Sunday, November 1st

3pm-8pm

Albert Dance Hall,

The Hill Country Alliance is proud to celebrate 10 years of working throughout the Hill Country. Join us for good food, good music, and a celebration of both HCA and all of our partners as we look toward the next 10 years. Tickets available [here](#).

Soil Talk: Financial Sustainability

Friday, November 13th, 9am-5pm

Hill Country University Center, Fredericksburg

RSVP for the FINAL Soil for Water talk! soilforwater@ncat.org



WORKING LAND LOSS

More than 54 percent of total land conversion occurred in the state's 25 fastest growing counties. During this period (1997-2012), approximately 590,000 acres were lost from the agricultural land base in these counties.

Texas Land Trends releases new web-based data viewing tool

The Institute of Renewable Natural Resources out of Texas A&M is responsible for Texas Land Trends, [a report](#) that comes out every five years on the changes to landownership and size of agricultural lands throughout the state. The newly released [data viewer tool](#) will allow users to access the data that was used for the 2014 Texas Land Trends report. Of interest to the Pedernales: Blanco County saw the market value of land go up 400% between 1997 and 2012, to \$5,000 per acre. Gillespie saw a 336% increase over the same time. Looking at the [Hill Country](#) as a whole, our region gained close to 1 million residents in the 15 years between 1997 and 2012, and saw the average market value of land increase to \$2,500/acre- a roughly 295% change. That change has serious implications for land fragmentation in the region.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2015

\$15 REGISTRATION

PEDERNALES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Johnson City, TX

WORKSHOP • 10-3 PM
Lunch provided

NETWORK SOCIAL • 3-4 PM
Pecan Street Brewery

WORKSHOP TOPICS

- What is a Conservation Easement (CE)?
- Details about the Conservation Easement
- Landowner income and estate tax benefits
- The role of the land trust organization
- Discussions with CE donors

REGISTER ONLINE @
WWW.HILLCOUNTRYALLIANCE.ORG

For information, please contact:
Workshop Coordinator Carolin Vogel
Texas Conservation Connection
carolin@txconservationconnection.com

Presented by: Hill Country Land Trust, Colorado River Land Trust, Hill Country Conservancy, Pedernales River Ranch River Trust, Green Spaces Alliance, The Nature Conservancy

Sponsored by: Texas Land Conservancy, Hill Country CONSERVANCY FOREVER, Hill Country WILDLIFE FOREVER, HILL COUNTRY RIVERKEEPERS

Reminder: Conservation Easement Workshop Planned for Pedernales

A workshop is planned for October 23rd in Johnson City to explain the basics of conservation easements, how they work and some of the benefits they can provide private landowners. The workshop will feature discussions from experts in the field of conservation easements, as well as a panel discussion with landowners who have put easements in place on their properties. The event is being co-hosted by the [Hill Country Alliance](#) and the [Hill Country Land Trust](#), and has been sponsored by a number of land trusts that work throughout the region. Registration is \$15 and includes lunch as well as a networking reception after the event. Registration will be available the day of the event. To register or learn more, [click here](#), or visit HillCountryAlliance.org.

Texas Monarch and Native Pollinator Conservation Plan

OCTOBER 2015

A large image of a monarch butterfly on a pink flower.

Monarchs on the Move

The annual migration of monarch butterflies from their summer grounds in the northern US to their overwintering hideouts in the remote mountains of Mexico brings them through Central and Western Texas each year. There are some very cool tools online to [track the migration](#), which seems to be moving through West Texas at the moment. Some of the posts include images and [video](#) of monarch roosts here in Texas. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has also gathered information about monarchs on their [website](#). A brand-new [monarch conservation plan](#), released this month, details how the Department plans to halt the dramatic population decline we have seen in the last few decades. Want to create pollinator-friendly habitat on your property? [Click here](#) to find out how. #savethemonarch

10 Years Together

Sunday, November 1st

Albert Dance Hall

INcredible Music

Terri Hendrix & Lloyd Maines • The Derailers • Shinyribs

PASSIONATE PEOPLE IN A PERFECT SETTING

All of our partners and supporters coming together to Celebrate 10 Years of HCA

I'm for the Hill Country

hill country alliance

Join HCA in Celebrating 10 Years Together!

On Sunday, November 1st, please join HCA, our partners, supporters and friends in celebrating the wonderful collaboration we have accomplished over our organization's 10-year history. [Tickets](#) are on sale now and include a delicious meal at the Historic Albert Dance Hall, with live music from Terri Hendrix & Lloyd Maines, The Derailers, and Shinyribs. It's an event you won't want to miss!



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