

# Watershed Weeks In Review

Junction Mural. sewage permits,  
new funding opportunities

Editor: Linda Fawcett



## **WATER** - the millions of ways Junction uses its greatest resource... Downtown Junction is getting a new mural!

Community members in the Llano River Watershed Alliance (LRWA) and Junction Texas Tourism Board (JTTB) are working on plans for a new mural in downtown Junction that showcases Junction and Kimble County's various connections to water. This mural will be part of a statewide campaign, *Texas Runs on Water*, that aims to address the state's growing water supply needs by spurring action and conversation around water.

*"The importance of water can be seen and felt all around Junction and Kimble County," says Llano River Watershed Alliance President, Linda Fawcett. "Kimble County is sometimes called 'the Land of Living Waters' because of all the water that runs through our region, including the beautiful South and North Llano Rivers that run through Junction. The river is our water supply, a source for irrigation, and a place to recreate."*



To organize this mural, the mural committee has joined forces with the Hill Country Alliance (HCA), a nonprofit that works with local partners to protect the clean waters, starry night skies, and open spaces of the Hill Country. This mural will be the first of its kind in the Hill Country, and Hill Country Alliance hopes it inspires murals like Junction's around the Hill Country.

"Because water is so local, and people's relationships to water so personal, it was hugely important that this mural project be led by local Junction residents," says HCA's Water Program Manager, Marisa Bruno. "This effort wouldn't be possible without the ideas, support, and action of community members."

The mural is slated for completion in April and will be painted on the side of the Meals on

Wheels Thrift Shoppe on Main Street. For technical support and artist recruitment, the mural committee is partnering with Big Seed, a Kerrville-based nonprofit that provides a medium for creative young people throughout the Texas Hill Country to explore and develop their artistic passion. Big Seed will provide the artist coaching and mural expertise to bring the mural designs to life.

Significantly, the ideas for the mural will come from within the community. The mural

committee is partnering with Junction High School to get input and inspiration from students. Additionally, the mural committee welcomes ideas from the community.

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If you wish to donate to help fund the mural please visit: [lrwatx@gmail.com](mailto:lrwatx@gmail.com).

## ANYTHING HAPPENING WITH THE DAMN DAM?

**Honestly, not much happening at the moment. We are patiently awaiting notice of the date and place that the TCEQ will set for a Public Meeting (or meetings - a meeting in each affected county was requested).**

**When a meeting is set, then there will be a process to sign up to speak (for a brief period), first-come, first-serve.**

**Perhaps this can be a period in which each of us can review our Public Comment we sent to the TCEQ last summer to see if anything needs updating, and while you're at it apply the favored TCEQ litmus test of "how will this dam meaningfully affect me personally? (to live, to earn a living, recreation).**

**Relatively new NRCS Programs to assist small acreage and urban gardeners**, for more info: contact Wilma Tichelaar, email: [wilma.tichelaar@usda.gov](mailto:wilma.tichelaar@usda.gov). cell: 254-500-6483,

The new programs are all part of NRCS/USDA's EQIP assistance (Environmental Quality Incentives Program).

They focus on:

- 1) Population clusters, especially near food deserts, that are located up to 20 miles from access to fresh food (usually low income areas).
- 2) To help with growing your own food (resale NOT necessary or prohibited).



High Tunnel

- 3) High tunnel funding (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-high-tunnel-initiative>)
- 4) Soil Health (restore, create, maintain).
- 5) Irrigation efficiency

- 6) Weed and pest management
- 7) Also some new pilot programs called interim practices: 812 - help to establish **raised beds**, and 821 - **low tunnel** funding.



low tunnel example

**Of note is that there is up to \$75K in grants available for urban community gardens.** They must benefit the local community, be collaborative, use sustainable practices, and engage in education for the public on food, gardening, wildlife habitat, conservation, and beautification. For more info: <https://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden>

Another set of grants: **Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP)** for planning or implementation, serving non-profits, units of local government, tribal governments and K-12 schools. [www.usda.gov/topics/urban/grants](http://www.usda.gov/topics/urban/grants).



## **ALERT:**

**The Llano River Watershed Alliance NEEDS YOU TO HELP US HELP YOU (and the river!)**

**(and so we can deliver our grants)**

**1) If you live in Kimble County and have Arundo cane on or near your riverbank, please contact us so that we may visit with you about it \*(see INFOGRAPHIC Last Page).**

**AND/OR**

**2) If you live anywhere along the Llano Rivers or their tributaries, LRWA consultants will do a FREE assessment of your riparian condition and vegetation to give suggestions on how to better achieve your objectives!**



## DID YOU KNOW?

“...over 60% of landowners in the District are now non-residents, mostly using their properties for hunting, recreational and vacation purposes, using water that is not taken into account by the Texas Water Development Board projections.”

“Newcomers appear to be coming from areas where they are accustomed to higher levels of water use than the long-time residents. The District has experienced a significant increase in numbers of inquiries about irrigation wells from new county residents for properties that have not previously had irrigation.”

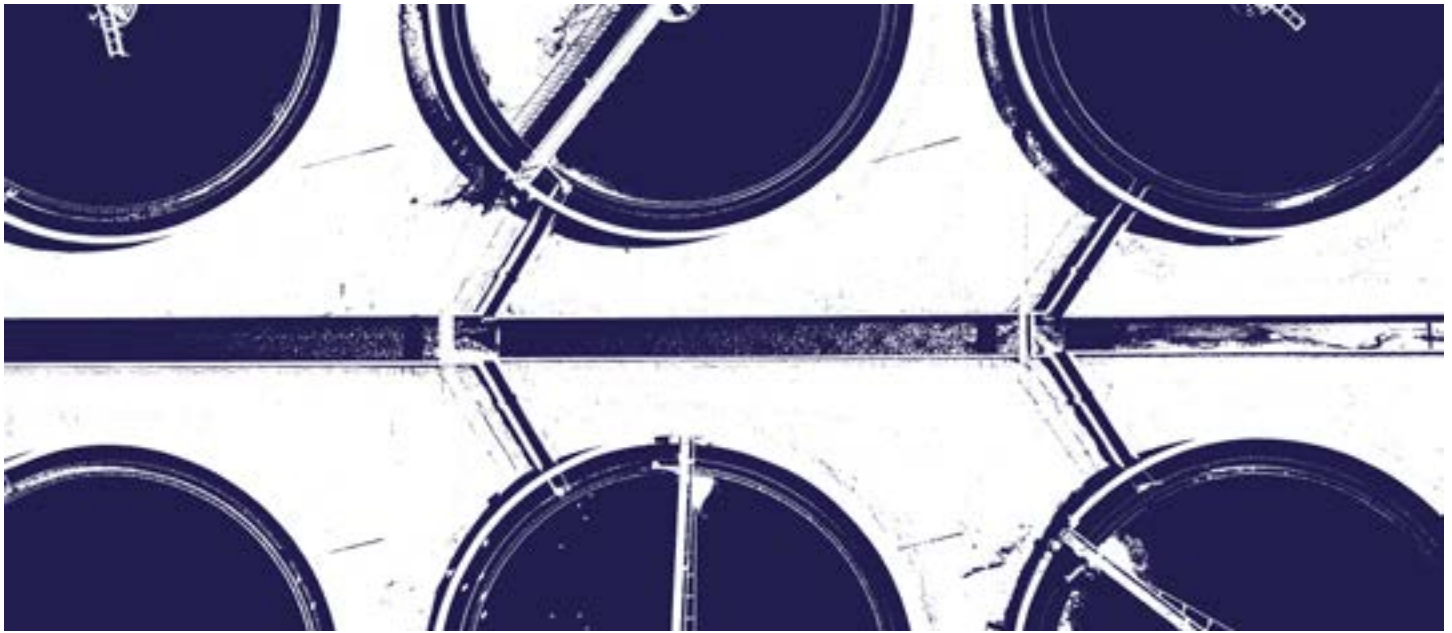
“One of the disquieting developments concerning groundwater use in Kimble County is an increase of the impoundment of riparian waters (use of dams) for domestic and livestock use [pursuant to the statutory exemption], on creeks and streams where water was formerly withdrawn for those purposes on a daily-need basis, but not impounded.”

“Despite studies that say Kimble County has adequate water supplies, in the most recent several years of below-average rainfall the District has received a number of reports of wells going dry and drastic declines in surface water flows. There is increased drilling in the county, but driller’s logs submitted to the District have indicated as many dry holes as successful wells.” \*



\* Excerpts from p. 14 of the current Kimble County District’s Groundwater Management Plan.

<https://kimblecountygcd.org/about-the-district/>



## **JANUARY 11 REPORT FROM THE NO DUMPING SEWAGE COALITION (also the Wastewater Subcommittee of the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network)**

NDS and Save Barton Creek Association advocate director **Brian Zabcik** reported that after TCEQ commissioners narrowly rejected the Pristine Streams Petition last year (March 30, 2022) with a vote of 2 to 1 (see April '22 LRWA Newsletter), followed by a TCEQ stakeholders meeting (August 31; see Sept '22 LRWA Newsletter), a Pristine Streams will not be filed in the current Texas legislative session. Several groups have continued to work with TCEQ and hope it will voluntarily take up the issue of creating a new rule to more strictly limit or (best) eliminate new wastewater dumping permits into pristine streams.

Meanwhile, **Annalisa Peace** of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Association (GEAA, <https://aquiferalliance.org/>) said that new wastewater permits are coming in fast to the TCEQ from all over the aquifer, mostly direct discharge (versus TLAP – land application – or beneficial reuse (see <https://nodumpingsewage.org/solution/>)).

Recent wastewater applications being tracked by GEAA and other NDS members include:

1. Diamante Ranch (Comal County, Permit WQ0016060001) in which the applicant, South Central Water Co. asks for effluent direct discharge of 600,000 GPD (gallons per day) to an “unnamed ditch,” subsequently flowing to Upper Cibolo Creek. A public meeting is scheduled for January 26 in Bulverde. [Annalisa Peace noted: “...the city of Bulverde has no centralized water system and many problems with overflows and floods, so presently each developer is ‘doing their own thing.’ A unified policy recommendation is obviously needed.”]
2. Harrison Tract (Comal County, Permit WQ0016211001) requested by Douglas T. Harrison of New Braunfels, to authorize discharge of 600,000 GPD. The effluent will go from West Fork Dry Comal Creek to Dry Comal Creek to the Comal River (TCEQ segment 1811). Currently awaiting a Public Meeting with TCEQ.
3. Guajolote Ranch (Bexar County, Permit WQ0016171001) requested by Municipal Operations, to be located at the corner of Babcock Rd and ... [if you want to continue reading, please click HERE.](#)



## MEET LRWA's newest Board Member: GLEN COLEMAN

**G**len grew up on the South Llano River and graduated from Junction ISD in 1987.

After getting his degree from The University of Texas, he remained in the area and became active on issues centering around water, water conservation, housing and transportation. He served on several bond

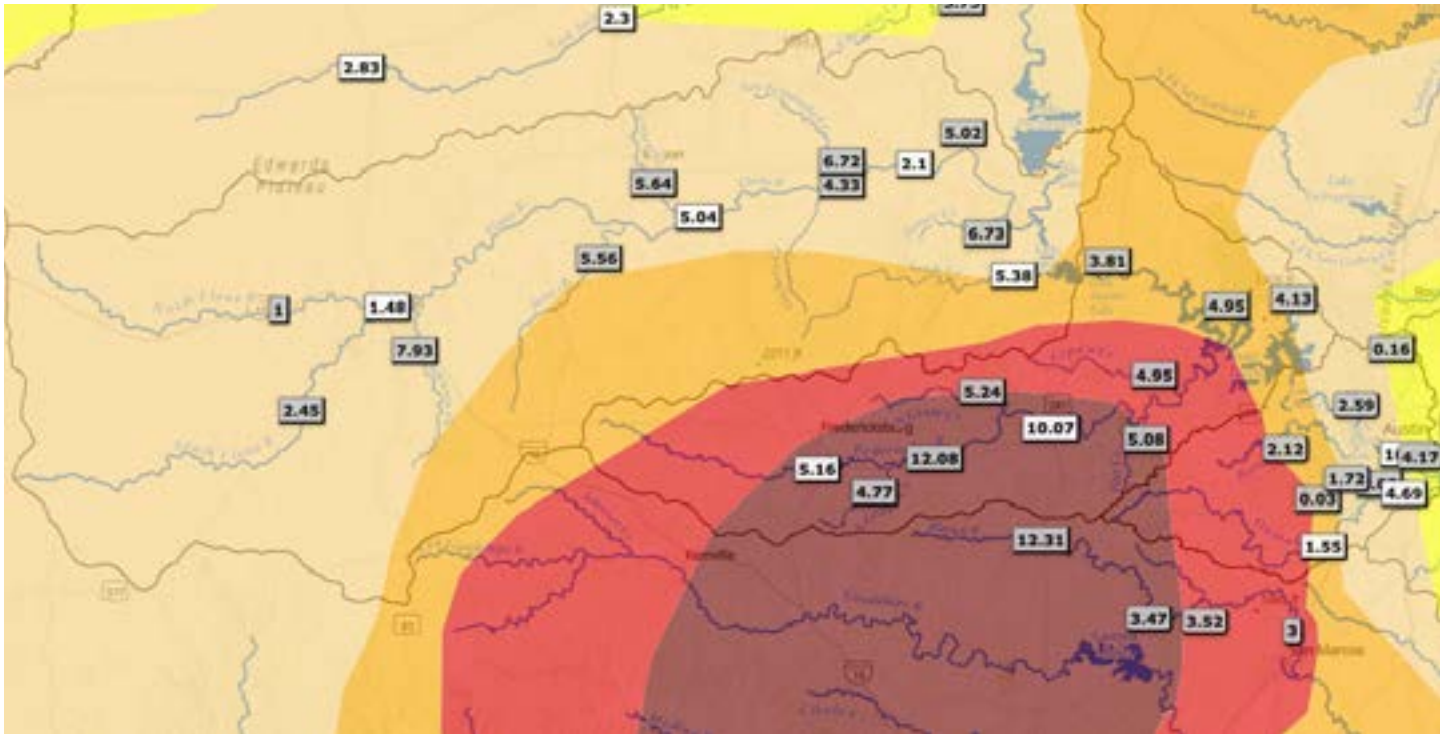
committees, on The City of Austin's Water & Wastewater Commission and was a policy aide to the Austin City Council. He was on the board of the Texas Riparian Association and active in water supply issues along the Texas Colorado River. In 2013 he founded South Llano Strategies to assist in the creation of zoning and entitlement for more abundant housing in central Texas and still serves in that capacity. He is the co-founder of Evolve Austin, a non-profit dedicated to opposing urban sprawl and the creation of more equitable housing policy. Glen now offices in his hometown where he also runs a bed and breakfast, Cupgrass Cabins. [www.cupgrass.com](http://www.cupgrass.com) He has a daughter Ellie Coleman, and an Australian Shepard, Koda.

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FIELDGUIDE for riparian plants:

***Your Remarkable Riparian***, available from Nueces River Authority or locally at NCRS (\$50) OR GET ONE FREE if you ask LWRA to do a FREE assessment of your vegetation to give suggestions on how to better achieve your objectives!



## TOP: LCRA Hydromet River Stage and Drought Monitor for this year as of 1.23.23



Lower Colorado River Authority's Hydromet is a system of more than 275 automated river and weather gauges throughout the lower Colorado River basin in Texas. The website displays gauges maintained by the City of Austin and USGS. The Hydromet provides near-real-time data on stream-flow, river stage, rainfall totals, temperature and humidity. <https://hydromet.lcra.org>

### **ONE LAST THING...**

#### **HOW CAN WE MAKE TLAP LAND APPLICATION SYSTEMS BETTER?**

**Mateo Scoggins, Ecological scientist, City of Austin**

Environmentalists have in general been advocating for the greater use of **TLAPs** (Texas Land Application Permits) that dispose of treated wastewater effluent by land application in the form of surface or subsurface irrigation. But they are not perfect, and more research is needed to establish new rules and recommendations.

**Mateo Scoggins**, a scientist with Austin's Watershed Protection Department, announced the creation of a new working group consisting of environmentalists, engineers, scientists, and developers, with the goal of updated rules and recommendations for TLAPs. Subjects of inquiry will include but not be limited to: 1) evidence of leaking from current TLAPs, 2) other contaminants getting into TLAPs, 3) failing systems, and 4) the importance of site location and adequate setback from surrounding entities. **MORE INFORMATION, contact Mateo Scoggins** [mateo.scoggins@austintexas.gov](mailto:mateo.scoggins@austintexas.gov).

**INVASIVE SPECIES IN TEXAS**


# ARUNDO DONAX IMPAIRS CREEK HEALTH.

Invasive species like Arundo (giant cane), privet and others can harm Texas creeks and rivers. They devastate habitat and keep our waterways from providing essential ecosystem services, such as recreation, fresh water supply, and drought and flood protection.

DOCUMENTED IN


## 136+

Texas counties,  
most problematic in several Hill Country rivers and along the Rio Grande.




Arundo can grow up to  
**2 INCHES PER DAY,**  
crowding out and replacing native plants.

**FISHING & BOATING IMPACTS**




Arundo and other invasive plants degrade habitat for fish such as Guadalupe bass, the official state fish of Texas.




Blocks access for bank, wade, and kayak fishing, a **\$14-32 million industry** in the Hill Country.

**DAMAGE TO RIVER BANKS**




Arundo roots are very weak below the surface, causing river bank erosion.



They crowd out native grasses whose roots reach more than **6 times** deeper, stabilizing banks. An unmowed native buffer acts as a sponge and helps absorb water.

**DROUGHT & FLOOD RISK**




Arundo's high wax content makes it a wildfire hazard—particularly during drought.

Can increase the area impacted by flooding up to **10%**

**Keep our creeks healthy. Prevent invasives:**

1 **Don't mow, let it grow**
2 **Let woody debris be**
3 **Plant natives**

Join the Healthy Creeks Initiative: [tpwd.texas.gov/HealthyCreeks](https://tpwd.texas.gov/HealthyCreeks)



# Healthy Creeks Initiative to Combat Invasive Arundo

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION, Please go to <https://www.llanoriver.org> and then click on the link that reads: **Healthy Creeks Initiative to Combat Arundo**