

Watershed Week in Review

A publication of the
Llano River Watershed Alliance
and
Llano River Field Station

January 5, 2018

Llano River Polar Bear Plunges 2018

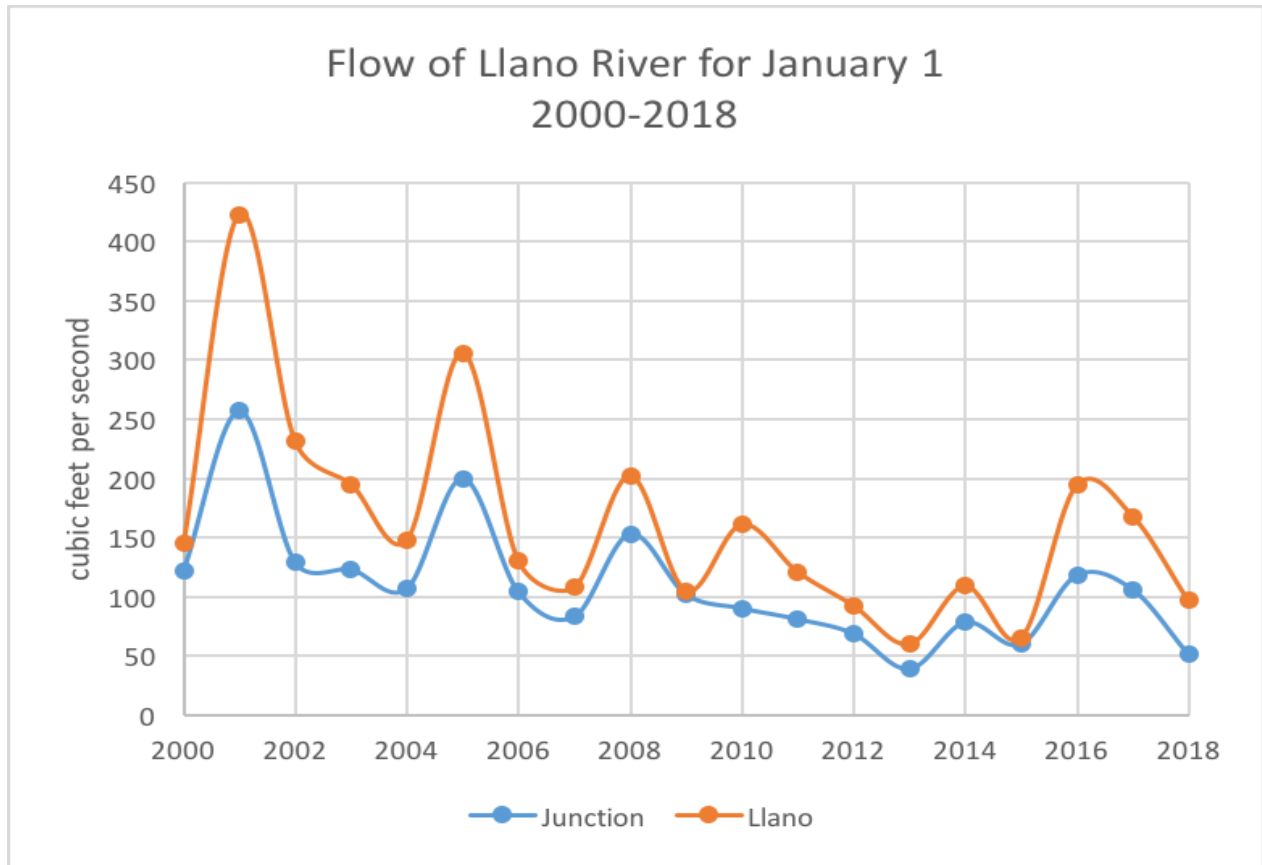


Sub-freezing temperatures and 44-degree water made this year's Polar Bear Plunge true to the Title

Above : Masonites taking the plunge below James River Crossing (Photo: Tony Plutino)

Left : Downstream at Castell, a toast of liquid courage(?) before the icy plunge into the Llano (Photos: Karen Rogers Marion)

Llano River starts off 2018 on a 'low note'

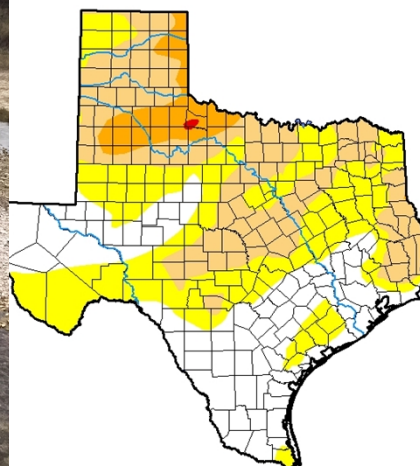


With the Llano Watershed in a Moderate Drought (see below right), the flows of the Llano at both Junction and Llano have begun 2018 on the low side (above). At Junction (see photo), the recorded flow of 51 cfs for the first day of the year was the second lowest since 2000, second only to New Year’s Day in 2013, at the tail end of a significant drought. A forecasted [La Niña Pacific Oscillation](#) does not bode well for seeing significant increases in flow in the coming months.



U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

January 2, 2018
(Released Thursday, Jan. 4, 2018)
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

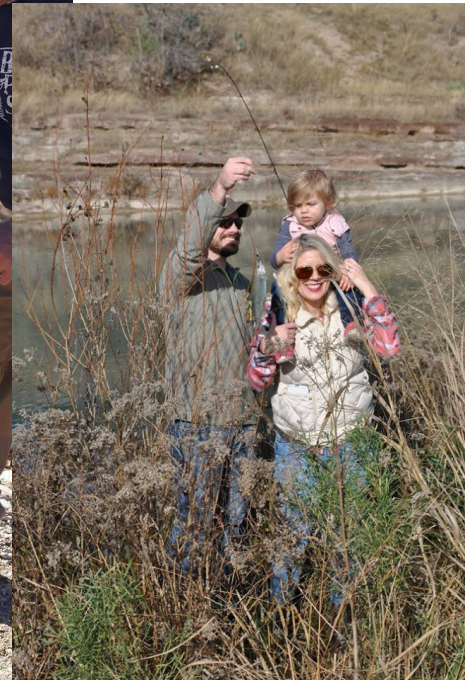
Family Fun at Winterfish in Mason County



By Tony Plutino – for Mason County News

The rainbow trout fishing was hot this past Saturday as WinterFisch kicked off on the banks of the Llano River at the James River Crossing. Over 50 anglers of all ages enjoyed the gorgeous weather and an afternoon of extraordinary trout fishing.

The WinterFisch Celebration kicked off 3 months of rainbow trout fishing on the Llano, with 1500 rainbow trout released. It's estimated that about 200 fish have been taken, so they action is going to stay lively through the next release, scheduled for January 25th. Fifteen fish have been marked with red and yellow tags and fishers who catch these fish can turn in the tag for a special prize. Only one yellow tag was redeemed during the WinterFisch Celebration.



[Read more](#)



Remember:

- There are still tagged fish to be caught for prizes.
- The next trout release at James River Crossing is scheduled for January 25th

Photos : [Mason County Winterfish Facebook Page](#)

Hog Poison to be Texas Tested next Month

Federal agriculture regulators have chosen Texas as the nation's first testing site for a new type of poison aimed at culling the state's feral hog population.

An estimated 2.6 million feral hogs have caused more than \$50 million in damage to ranches and farms annually throughout Texas.

That's one reason why the U.S. Department of Agriculture chose Texas as the first site to begin testing a new type of poison specifically designed for these intrepid

animals, whose home base can range up to 70,000 acres.

Michael Bodenchuk, state director for the USDA's Wildlife Services division, said the poison being tested is a sodium nitrite compound that causes the animal to die by reducing its oxygen-efficiency.

"Sodium nitrite when metabolized inside the pig causes the hemoglobin — the red blood cells — to become met-hemoglobin, and met-hemoglobin does not carry oxygen," Bodenchuk said. "So the pig becomes drowsy, becomes a little wobbly and then lays down and goes to sleep and doesn't wake up."

[read more](#)



Free Publication on Mexican Needle Grass Available from Texas AgriLife

Mexican Needlegrass is an invasive species that is quickly infiltrating the Llano Watershed and the Edwards Plateau.

Texas A&M AgriLife has released a [free publication for download](#) re this rapidly emerging pest.

The 4-page publication discusses why it is a problem, how to prevent it, and how to control it.

Although the publication is free, one still has to fill out a billing form. This only takes a few minutes and helps all of us do our part to help the watershed.



Mexican needlegrass. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Dr. Morgan Russell)

Weekend Programs at South Llano River State Park



Life's better outside.™



Like us on Facebook!
Facebook.com/SouthLlanoRiver

Family Park Programs
South Llano River State Park
Phone: (325) 446-3994



Bird Walk

Saturday, January 6th, 9:00 am - 10:00 am
Meet at the Fawn Trail parking lot
(behind Park Headquarters)

South Llano River State Park is a great place to go birdwatching. Join us and see what you can spot! We will walk to the bird blind and see what birds come in to bathe, drink, or feed. Good walking shoes and drinking water are recommended, and dress for the weather! Binoculars provided, or bring your own. All ages and skill levels welcome!

Geocaching 101

Sunday, January 7th, 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Meet at the Acorn Blind

(down the path from the restrooms, between campsites 39 and 41)

Join us for Geocaching, a high-tech treasure hunt you can do anywhere in the world using a GPS unit or your smartphone! Loaner GPS units will be provided for this activity. Good walking shoes and drinking water are recommended. All ages welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



Park programs are open to the public and free with park entrance fee

Park Closure This Week

South Llano River State Park will be closed from 10pm Jan 8 – 2pm Jan 11 for managed game hunts.