

Conservation Matters

THE TEXAS LAND, WATER AND WILDLIFE CONNECTION

A publication of the Texas Water Resources Institute and the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources

[Buck Creek Watershed Partnership recognized with Texas Environmental Excellence Award](#)

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has announced the winners of the 21st annual [Texas Environmental Excellence Awards](#), a statewide honor that recognizes 10 projects that demonstrate positive effects on air, water, and land resources. The Texas Water Resources Institute and Texas A&M AgriLife have been selected as the winner of the award in the agriculture category for the [Buck Creek Watershed Partnership](#).

Created by the Texas Legislature in 1993, the awards honor individuals, organizations, and businesses that protect our state's human and natural resources while ensuring clean air, clean water, and the safe management of waste, according to TCEQ officials. TCEQ commissioners will present the awards to the winners at a banquet, to be held **May 1**, as part of the TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair and Conference at the Austin Convention Center, **April 30–May 1**.

Visit buckcreek.tamu.edu for more information about the partnership and teea.org for more on the award winners.

[New Texas A&M survey: Texans care about water issues](#)



A recent survey has revealed that Texans are interested in, and concerned about, the quality and quantity of water in the Lone Star State. Respondents reported being concerned about the increasing number and severity of droughts in Texas and about the availability of enough water to serve all water needs, according to Texas A&M University researchers

The survey was led by **Dr. Arnold Vedlitz**, director of the Institute for Science, Technology and Public Policy (ISTPP) in the [Bush School of Government and Public Service](#) at Texas A&M University.

“This survey revealed that Texans are very worried about our state’s diminishing water resources, and that they are willing to see conservation methods put in place,” Vedlitz said. “They are also concerned about how our water resources are managed and used.”

[IRNR providing social media training May 15](#)

The [Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources](#) (IRNR) will conduct two “Social Media 101—Raising Stakeholder Awareness in an Information Age” training workshops in May.

Amy Hays, IRNR’s emerging technology specialist and workshop trainer, said one workshop is set for **May 15** in San Antonio. The workshop, sponsored by the Texas Wildlife Association, will be held at the association’s office, 3660 Thousand Oaks Drive, Suite 126. The second workshop, sponsored by the Houston-Galveston Area Council, is **May 23** in Houston and will be held at council’s office, 3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120.

[Management of invasive aquatic fern continues at Caddo Lake](#)



Caddo Lake, the only natural lake in Texas, has seen no reprieve from the fast-growing biomass of giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*), a free-floating aquatic fern first introduced in the United States by the water garden industry.

The [Caddo Lake Giant Salvinia Eradication](#) project, established within the [Center for Invasive Species Eradication](#) (CISE) as a joint effort between Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, through the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI), has made progress in salvinia management. Biological and chemical controls have been helpful in efforts to limit the invasive plant and help minimize the negative economic and ecological impacts to Caddo Lake since the salvinia infestation began in 2008, according to CISE scientists.

[Range and wildlife management field days set for May in Brown, Kerr counties](#)

Two interagency range and wildlife management field days for landowners, land managers and brush control contractors operating in possible endangered species habitats have been scheduled in late May.

“Both field days will follow a similar agenda but are tailored for their specific site,” said **Brian Hays**, [Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources](#) associate director. “Registration for each site will last from 7:45–8:15 a.m., followed by the programs which should conclude by 4:15 p.m.”

The first field day is set for **May 29** at the Muse Wildlife Management Area, located on County Road 478, about a mile and a half north of Farm to Market Road 1467 in northeastern Brown County. The second program is scheduled for **May 30** at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area, located at 2625 Farm to Market Road 1340 near Hunt.

“We especially encourage any landowner or contractor who plans to conduct brush management within the vicinity of golden-cheeked warbler or black-capped vireo habitat as part of work involving the Natural Resources Conservation Service to attend one of these events,” Hays said.

[Arroyo Colorado cleanup efforts paying off](#)



The award-winning cleanup efforts to help revitalize a highly polluted yet important waterway in South Texas are entering their second phase, and officials want public input as they begin updating the [Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan](#), according to the program coordinator.

Jaime Flores, the Arroyo Colorado watershed coordinator with the [Texas Water Resources Institute](#) in Weslaco, said that phase one of the state’s first watershed protection plan is coming to a close, and cleanup efforts through 2020 and beyond need to be defined.

“We need to update the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan, which was intended to guide implementation efforts through 2012,” he said. “There was so much to do, we couldn’t get everything into the first plan. We want stakeholders, which includes the general public, to assess our original plan and help us determine how our future efforts should evolve.”

[AgriLife Extension publishes new native grassland management resource](#)

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has a new resource available to help landowners monitor and manage the health of their native rangeland. The publication, *Native Grassland Monitoring and Management*, targets landowners within the Trinity River Basin and similar areas, said **Blake Alldredge**, AgriLife Extension associate with Texas A&M University's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.



He said the publication describes in detail several range monitoring and management techniques. It is now available in the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Bookstore](#). Alldredge noted that the monitoring and management information offered is applicable across the state.

[Universities Council on Water Resources conference set for June](#)

The 41st annual [Universities Council on Water Resources Conference](#) will be held in Lake Tahoe, California, June 11–13. The conference theme is “Sustaining Water Resources and Ecological Functions in Changing Environments,” and it is coordinated by the Universities Council on Water Resources (UCOWR) and National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR). According to organizers, the event is designed for water managers, educators, researchers, and other water professionals. Several Texas A&M University and Texas A&M AgriLife researchers will be presenting at the conference.

[Environmentally Friendly Drilling program hosting May 14 workshop](#)

The Environmentally Friendly Drilling (EFD) Systems Program is hosting a workshop **May 14** at Pearl Studio, 200 E. Grayson Street, in San Antonio. According to organizers, the workshop will bring together research teams that have been reducing the environmental footprint of oil and gas for over a decade. The EFD program conducts quarterly workshops all over the United States.

"At this workshop, attendees will hear from top industry professionals on the successes and challenges of powering energy production with natural gas," said **Dr. Susan Stuver**, research scientist at the [Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources](#) and manager of the Environmentally Friendly Drilling West Regional Center.

[National Drinking Water Week is May 5–11](#)

The [American Water Works Association](#) (AWWA) organizes the annual National Drinking Water Week, which is **May 5–11** this year, and provides an opportunity for educators to share information and resources on drinking water. The following sources have educational resources that can be used for National Drinking Water Week:

- [Take Care of Texas](#), an initiative of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, has many resources for educators and citizens.
- [Water IQ](#), developed by the Texas Water Development Board, publishes a wide variety of water education resources.
- The Texas Water Resources Institute's [Water Conservation Resources](#) page provides science-based information and materials.
- [AWWA National Drinking Water Week](#) materials include posters and activity pages.

[Riparian area grazing workshop set May 10 in Ennis](#)

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will partner with several other agencies and entities to conduct a grazing workshop to focus on riparian areas **May 10** in Ennis.



“With most of the land in the Trinity River basin under cattle production, this workshop is designed especially for cattle producers who have creeks or rivers on their property,” said **Blake Alldredge**, AgriLife Extension associate with the Texas A&M University Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

“It’s important for landowners to understand how these systems work and how to properly manage them,” he said. “Good land stewardship in these areas can provide long-term sustainability and increased land productivity for landowners and have positive effects on the quality and quantity of water for both rural and urban populations.”

Individual registration is \$10 and includes a barbecue lunch. The workshop is limited to the first 100 registrants, and an RSVP is required. For more information and to RSVP contact Alldredge balldredge@tamu.edu or 979.845.0916, or see the full [AgriLife TODAY article](#).

[Ground Water Research and Education Foundation events coming to Grapevine](#)

The [Ground Water Research and Education Foundation](#) is hosting the Stray Gas Incidence and Response Forum and the Unconventional Oil and Gas Water Management Forum, at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, **July 9–11**. According to the foundation, the development of unconventional gas resources poses new challenges for the management and protection of water resources. The Unconventional Oil and Gas Water Management Forum will focus on the status of current regulations and the potential risks and challenges associated with safe-guarding and managing water resources in areas of shale-gas development. Organizers say the Stray Gas Incidence and Response Forum is an opportunity for regulatory officials, industry, consultants and other interested parties in the region to learn, interact and develop recommendations that will improve protocols for response to the prevention of stray gas incidents.

[Southwest Stream Restoration Conference coming to San Antonio](#)

Resource Institute, Inc. is presenting the inaugural [Southwest Stream Restoration Conference May 28–30](#) at the Hyatt Regency Riverwalk in San Antonio.

The conference will provide an opportunity for natural resource professionals to share knowledge, experiences and innovations in stream restoration, according to organizers. It will include presentations, panel discussions, exhibits and professional networking focused on ecosystem and watershed restoration.

Dr. Kevin Wagner, Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) associate director, is leading the organization of a pre-conference workshop on riparian vegetation establishment, which will cover stream bank stabilization, overcoming challenges of riparian management and restoration and methods of establishment. TWRI has partnered with Resource Institute, Inc. to provide this conference.

For more information and registration, visit southweststream.org.

Newly Awarded TWRI/IRNR Projects

Ellison Creek Reservoir Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) Source Study

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The project objective is to provide the information needed to determine the strategy for addressing the Ellison Creek Reservoir PCBs impairment. Located west of Lone Star, Texas, in southern Morris County, Ellison Creek Reservoir has a surface area of 1,516 acres and a capacity of 24,700 acre-feet. The reservoir was constructed in 1942–43 by the United States Defense Plant and was later acquired by the Lone Star Steel Company in 1947. The reservoir is also the site of a power plant operated by the Southwest Gas and Electric Company. Ellison Creek Reservoir has been listed on the Texas 303(d) list for PCBs in edible tissue and toxicity in sediment since 2006 and for copper in water since 2010.

Funded by: Texas Commission of Environmental Quality

Partners: Texas Water Resources Institute, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences

RAPID Collaborative Research: Post Sandy Linkages in Energy-Climate Discourse in the U.S.

The devastation and disruptions of Superstorm Sandy provide emerging linkages between the critical issues of energy infrastructure investments and climate change preparedness in the United States. The superstorm highlighted the vulnerability of energy systems including electricity infrastructure damage that resulted in power outages to 8.6 million customers and gasoline distribution challenges leading to severe gasoline shortages in New York and New Jersey. Superstorm Sandy also re-introduced climate change into the political discourse of the 2012 Presidential election. This grounded theory research will explore how Superstorm Sandy, a focusing event, is influencing energy discourse in the United States. The research is guided by two questions: (1) How is Superstorm Sandy and its aftermath influencing discourse among energy sector actors by linking energy infrastructure and climate change – two issues that are often kept separate? To what extent do these linkages between energy and climate discourse differ regionally (including regions not directly impacted by the storm)? **Funded by:** National Science Foundation

Partners: Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Clark University, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, University of Minnesota

FY2013 Annual Application under Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984, as amended

This project provides funds for program administration and information/technology transfer of the Texas Water Resources Institute. In addition, two water assistantship students are will be funded for projects dealing with invasive species and horizontal wells.

Funded by: U.S. Geological Survey

Partners: Texas Water Resources Institute, Department of Entomology, Department of Geology and Geophysics, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Water Conservation and Technology Center

[New Publications/Papers and Training Courses](#)

New Extension publications

[Native Grassland Monitoring and Management](#), Blake Aildredge, Larry Redmon, Megan Clayton, James Cathey, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, WF-001 , 2013.

New TWRI and IRNR publications

[Soil & Water Assessment Tool Input/Output Documentation Version 2012](#), J. Arnold, J. Kiniry, R. Srinivasan, J. Williams, E. Haney, S. Neitsch, TR-439, 2013.

[A range-wide survey of the endangered black-capped vireo in Texas](#), T. M. McFarland, H. A. Mathewson, J. F. Cross III, L. Morrison, R. N. Wilkins, Southeastern Naturalist 12:41-60. 2013.

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Natural Resources Training Courses

Watershed Modeling using LDC and SELECT	May 7-8
Social Media 101-Raising Stakeholder Awareness in an Information Age	May 15
Social Media 101-Raising Stakeholder Awareness in an Information Age	May 23
Texas Riparian & Stream Ecosystem Workshop, Lockhart	June 25