

FY 2014

TXFWCO Activity Report: April



Fish Sampling on the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande

Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Texas Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Monthly Report

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office April Activities

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Uvalde County Low Water Crossing

The Uvalde County Road Department has completed the new concrete low water crossing on County Road 416. The new fish friendly crossing will allow the river to pass through the crossing unimpeded, even at low flows. The new design should also keep the river from widening at the crossing and reduce maintenance for the county. A final inspection and ribbon cutting ceremony took place on 9 April 2014. Due to the ongoing severe drought, this section of river is currently dry.



Uvalde County has completed the low water crossing on CR 416.

Rio Grande Lower Canyons Ecological Monitoring Trip



Pete Diaz uses a Hess sampler to collect invertebrate samples. (Photo by Aimee Roberson USFWS)

On 6-13 April 2014, the TXFWCO and its partners conducted the Lower Canyons Ecological Monitoring on the Rio Grande. The partners include Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the National Park Service (Big Bend NP), Sol Ross University, and several divisions of the USFWS (Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Science Applications, and the TXFWCO). Eight sites were monitored in the Lower Canyons (El Reliz, Silber, Chimenea Grande, Belwo Wesache, Lower Madison, Below Panther, San Francisco, and at Dryden). Monitoring included; water quality of river and springs, discharge measurements, ecological cross sections, collections of fish and benthic macro invertebrates, and the reestablishment of historic photo points. The TXFWCO would like to thank Chris Harper of the Partners Program for filling in for the trip on short notice.

Two Rio Grande silvery minnows (*Hybognathus amarus*) were collected downstream of Lower Madison rapid in a spring fed pool. DNA were collected from both specimens.

Paddlefish Reintroduction Project

On 21-25 April 2014 Pete Diaz, with help from TPWD in Marshall TX, conducted American paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) radio telemetry monitoring at Caddo Lake and the Big Cypress Bayou. On 22 April 2014, Pete Diaz installed two attenuators on the upstream most telemetry tower to improve the directionality data from the antennas.

46 of the 47 paddlefish released on 5 March 2014 have been detected by the telemetry towers or by boat tracking. 21 of the 47 paddlefish (44%) were detected below the spillway of Lake O' the Pines between 21-24 April 2014.



Pete Diaz releases a radio tagged American Paddfish at Caddo Lake State Park.

Salamander Toxicity Project

On 29 April 2014, Pete Diaz deployed a passive water quality sampler and collected aquatic invertebrates at the Robertson Ranch to begin the second year of the Salamander Toxicity Project. No salamanders were collected due to the low densities of salamanders at this site, though one salamander was detected (See picture below).



Saledo salamander at Robertson Ranch. (Photo by Pete Diaz)

The TXFWCO has submitted a salamander monitoring proposal to Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District.

May Schedule of Activities:

May 2014: Potential fish passage site visits with The Nueces River Authority

5-8 May 2014: Devils River Minnow Monitoring

19-23 May 2014: Paddlefish Radio Telemetry at Caddo Lake